

Public administration, democracy and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



Jean Chrysostome K Kiyala

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Jean Chrysostome K Kiyala



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The publisher (AOSIS) endorses the South African 'National Scholarly Book Publishers Forum Best Practice for Peer-Review of Scholarly Books'. The book proposal form was evaluated by our Social Sciences, Humanities, Education and Business Management editorial board. The manuscript underwent an evaluation to compare the level of originality with other published works and was subjected to rigorous two-step peer review before publication by two technical expert reviewers who did not include the author and were independent of the author, with the identities of the reviewers not revealed to the author. The reviewers were independent of the publisher and author. The publisher shared feedback on the similarity report and the reviewers' inputs with the manuscript's author to improve the manuscript. Where the reviewers recommended revision and improvements, the author responded adequately to such recommendations. The reviewers commented positively on the scholarly merits of the manuscript and recommended that the book be published.

Research justification

The collapse of institutional structures, coupled with an ineffective public administration and a broken democratic system, can hinder the delivery of social and public goods in any country. An evidence-based response is necessary, particularly in the context where public administration is limited to restoring peace and security and creating an environment that is propitious to sustainable development. Such a response should start by uncovering the root causes of government systems' failure, particularly for a country that emerges from large-scale violent conflicts and human atrocities. This assertion describes the current state of affairs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which is characterised by persistent violence ensuing from ongoing armed conflicts, wars, minerals, land, identity and ethnicity-driven conflicts. The DRC is one peculiar paradoxical case of a struggle between wealth (enormous natural resources and mineral resources reservoirs) and lingering poverty (the lack of basic infrastructure such as roads, railways, transportation systems; dilapidated schools, hospitals and bridges; an eroded education system and the precariousness of daily life). The overall crisis experienced by the country stems from a problematic public administration and the political leadership's style. To manage the actual DRC's cataclysmic background (civil war and urban gangsterism; mineral, territorial and ethnicity-driven conflicts and violence), a systematic and critical scientific inquiry is paramount to provide evidence-based strategies aimed at helping scholars understand the hindrances to peacebuilding and economic development in conflict zones and developing countries. The desired present and future of the DRC are supposed to arise from the nexus between public administration, democracy and peacebuilding. These three concepts should be understood in their synergic relations and functions to foster peace and advance a development agenda in the aftermath of despotic rules, brutal public administrations, failed transitional justice and national reconciliation processes, and persistent armed conflicts.

Relying on a multimethodological research approach that combines literary research methods with empirical studies supported by both qualitative data analyses, this book provides a comprehensive roadmap for the DRC's recovery, which depends largely on the revitalisation of the state's institutions.

It begins with a diagnosis of the entire crisis and unravels the root causes of the social and economic ills that hinder peace and development. Giving an overview of the past decades of successful administrations, the book underlines the key failures of the state, from the Congo Free State to the Republic of Congo and from Zaïre to the DRC.

The findings from both literary and empirical data analyses substantiate that it is imperative to forge new pathways for peacebuilding and development that are contingent upon effective and public administration, ethical leadership, strong and viable institutions, and the upholding of democratic values.

To redress the DRC's endemic crises, public administration should primarily address the country's thorny issues that apparently sustain insecurity and instability. These are mainly: (1) employing The *Dodd-Frank Act*'s Section 1502 on conflict minerals by imposing a *de facto* embargo on minerals from the DRC, particularly the 3Ts (tin, tungsten and tantalum); (2) the Congolese citizenship and identity of the Banyamulenge (Tutsi communities of the DRC) by an Act of Parliament; (3) putting in place a regional and international coalition to deal with the remnants of the *Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) and other forces perceived as threats to peace and security of Rwanda; (4) dealing with the

complexities of absorbing the M23 insurrectionist movement and armed factions into the DRC's army (screening, vetting and identification) and finally, (5) reviving transitional justice, reconciliation and national healing processes. All efforts to pursue and attain durable peace without adequate strategies and political will to resolve those contentious matters will be counterproductive and will jeopardise the prospects of the country's prosperity, and provide an important lesson for understanding similar dynamics in other countries marked by conflict.

Finally, the framework that emerged from this inquiry – the 'peacebuilding evolution systems theory' (PBEST) developed by interlinking peacebuilding theories and neuroscience – is crucial for the future of both domestic and international peace. The PBEST serves as a catalyst for global peace, unfolding systematically and progressively from each individual's inclinations towards peace, as well as from the collective agency for domestic, regional and international peace and security.

This book represents a reworked version (more than 50%) of the author's dissertation and reports as per the requirements of the Department of Higher Education and Training, which are listed as follows:

Kiyala, JCK 2009, 'Reconciliation in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and its relevance to Zaïre/The Democratic Republic of the Congo post-1990 context', research paper presented to St Augustine College of South Africa in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in the field of Pastoral Theology with Dr Anthony Egan as supervisor.

Kiyala, JCK 2008a, 'Ability and practicality of non-party polity in contemporary Africa: A critical appraisal of Kwasi Wiredu's plea for non-party polity as an alternative practice of democracy in Africa', a report presented to St Augustine College of South Africa and submitted for the Module: Social and Political Ethics: The ethics of democracy in the MPhil in Religious Education and Pastoral Theology with a specialisation in Pastoral Ministry with Dr Lucinda Manda as lecturer.

Kiyala, JCK 2008b, 'Nature and challenges of democracy in Africa: Critical appraisal of African democracies – *Modus operandi* and ethos', a report presented to St Augustine College of South Africa and submitted for the Module: Social and Political Ethics: The ethics of democracy in the MPhil in Religious Education and Pastoral Theology with a specialisation in Pastoral Ministry with Dr Lucinda Manda as lecturer.

The author confirms that no part of the work has been plagiarised.

The target audience of the book is fellow scholars in peacebuilding, history and public administration.

Jean Chrysostome K Kiyala, International Centre of Nonviolence, Faculty of Management Sciences, Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa.

A book project facilitated by the Durban University of Technology (DUT) Research and Doctoral Leadership Academy (RADLA), headed by Professor Cheryl A Potgieter.

Biographical note

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Jean Chrysostome K Kiyala is a senior lecturer at the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON), Faculty of Management Sciences (FMS), Durban University of Technology (DUT), South Africa. Kiyala holds a diploma in philosophy from St Augustine University of Kinshasa, Kinshasa (DRC); a Bachelor of Philosophy (BPhil) from Pontifical Urbaniana University (Rome); a diploma in Theology, a Bachelor of Theology (BTh) and a Bachelor's in Mission Studies from Tangaza University College (Nairobi); a Honours in Religion Education from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (Nairobi); a second BTh from Pontifical Urbaniana University (Rome); a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Religion Education and Pastoral Theology from St Augustine College of South Africa (Johannesburg); a conferred Master of Technology (MTech) in Public Administration from DUT (Durban) and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Management Sciences specialising in Public Administration in the Peacebuilding Programme from DUT (Durban).

Kiyala is the recipient of noteworthy and acknowledged scholarships that include the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) Postdoctoral Research Fellow Scholarship (2017–2019), NRF Free Standing Doctoral Scholarship (2014–2016), DUT Doctoral Scholarship (2013) and the St Augustine College of South Africa (Catholic University) MPhil Scholarship (2007–2010). Kiyala is also the recipient of four awards, namely the Future Professors Programme Appointment Award from DUT (2024–2027), a Certificate of Recognition for Most Published Research Fellow in the DUT FMS for 2022, awarded on 12 May 2023 and the DUT Research Directorate Publication Recognition Award 2022 for the book *Child soldiers and restorative justice: Participatory action research in the Eastern DRC* (Springer, 2018). Kiyala was awarded an NRF C2-rating in 2024.

Kiyala's fields of research interest encompass child soldiers, peacebuilding, nonviolence, civil society, post-conflict nation reconstruction, transitional justice, public administration, peace ecology and Indigenous restorative justice processes. Kiyala is an associate editor for the Springer Nature Switzerland

book series, The Anthropocene Politik-Economics-Society-Science (APESS). He has published a monograph, co-edited two books and has two additional co-edited books forthcoming. Furthermore, he has authored seven peer-reviewed journal articles, 22 peer-reviewed book chapters and one non-referred book chapter.

Declaration

This book is my original work in its entirety. It comprises unpublished essays, dissertations, fieldwork and literary research. Where published materials are included, they are adequately referenced. No part of it has been plagiarised. Where materials have been translated from other languages, I have stated this accordingly.

Researchers and historians may find it an enriching resource for fostering a comprehensive understanding of the nexus between public administration and peacebuilding. The complementary and contrasting study of both areas could significantly contribute to sustaining democracy, promoting good governance and enhancing sustainable development.

- Jean Chrysostome K Kiyala

Dedication

I devote this book with profound respect to:

the victims of all inhumanities from the establishment of colonial administration to the present;

the victims of brutal colonial rule under the Congo Free State,
particularly Blessed Isidore Bakanja;

the victims of sexual violence, where rape has become a 'weapon of war';
national heroes Patrice Emery Lumumba, Maurice Mpolo and Joseph Okito;
the martyrs of Pentecost on 01 June 1966 at Kamanyola or the Martyrs Stadium, namely: Jérôme Anany, Alexandre Mahamba, Emmanuel Bamba and Évariste Kimba Mutombo;

the revolutionaries Pierre Mulele, Mzee Laurent-Désiré Kabila and Colonel Mamadou Mustafa Ndala;

human rights activists Rossy Tshimanga Mukendi, Frédéric-Marcus Kambale, Floribert Chebeya Bahizire and others whose blood was shed for freedom and human rights. Your exploits are engraved in our memories and will remain so for generations to come. Your legacy continues to sustain our resilience.

To prominent peacemakers such as Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya and Archbishop Christophe Munzihirwa of Bukavu;

to the members of the Sovereign National Conference;

and to the people of Congo who hope for justice, peace, stability and sustainable development.

Abstract

Public administration as a catalyst for peace and development is one of the least-studied aspects of management sciences. This case study examines the nexus between public administration and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the potential of public administration in building peace and leveraging sustainable development. It begins by establishing that the DRC exhibits characteristics of a 'failed state' because of a series of successive and systemically dysfunctional post-colonial governance systems. This alarming finding stems from an empirical survey which was conducted in the North Kivu province. Structural equation modelling (SEM) unravelled the intervariable systems of relationships that connect public administration and the precarious governance systems that hinder peace and sustainable development.

The study suggests a principle-based model of public administration, which integrates multisectoral reforms such as good governance, better judiciary and rule of law, and investment in basic and peace infrastructure as pathways to durable peace and economic growth. This model should be supported by a governing system founded on transparency, legitimacy, pluralism, responsibility, integrity, subsidiarity, accountability, representation, equity and access to services.

This inquiry explores the concept of public administration and the extent to which this conceptual framework informs and sustains peace – or fails to promote it. Peacebuilding practices, along with conflict transformation theory, are examined and discussed through the lens of various public administration paradigms, focusing on their relationship to positive peace by addressing structural violence. Starting with analyses of public administration and peacebuilding concepts, and the assumptions underpinning the reliance of peacebuilding upon a functional and effective public administration, the book will assess the viability – or shortcomings – of public administration in fostering an environment conducive to lasting peace. The impacts of public powers at both the macro-level (specifically, the United Nations and the African Union's Peace and Security Council) and the micro-level (the three branches of government: legislative, executive and judiciary) will be investigated using empirical data collected in the eastern DRC, where the efforts of public powers remain overstretched and constrained by a range of multifaceted challenges.

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The overall objective of this inquiry is to rethink the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding and expand the new conceptual boundaries of peace. This includes not only positive peace, but also the drivers of peace that can only be understood through conflict prevention, peace reestablishment, peacebuilding and consolidation. The underlying assumptions of this inquiry are: (1) the prospect of durable peace relies upon multisectoral reforms in the DRC, particularly in the security sector, armed forces, judiciary, legislature and conflict resolution; (2) peacebuilding can be effective if it is supported by good governance, the rule of law, and the adoption and implementation of robust and efficient conflict prevention strategies. The study will combine literary research and case study designs which draw its outcomes from empirical research grounded in a mixed methods approach, using the DRC as a case study. The book advances the emerging discovery presented as the PBEST that evolves from the nexus between peacebuilding and neuroscience; it has the potential to develop a society that is pervaded by peace-generating attitudes and actions at all spheres of life and levels of society. The PBEST is envisioned as a catalyst for global peace, systematically and progressively emerging from each individual's inclinations towards peace and the collective agency for peace and security. This represents a cutting-edge contribution of this book to the fields of knowledge, peace, democracy and good governance across the globe.

Contents

Biographical note	vii
Declaration	ix
Dedication	x
Abstract	xi
Abbreviations and acronyms, a box and figures and tables appearing in the text and notes	xxi
List of abbreviations and acronyms	xxi
Box	xxvii
List of figures	xxvii
List of tables	xxviii
Foreword	xxx
Preface	xxxiii
Acknowledgements	xxxv

Part 1: General perspectives on the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Chapter 1: Overview of the Democratic Republic of the Congo	3
Introduction	3
Complexified history and environment	12
Land, identity and ethnicity conflicts	12
Mineral resources	16
Various conflict phases	18
Post-independence phase (30 June to 11 July 1960)	18
The phase leading to the demise of the <i>Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution</i> and the mono-party system: 29 July 1978 to 30 September 1996	18
Rwanda-Democratic Republic of the Congo hostilities: 01 October 1996 to 26 December 2002	19
Conflict settlement and the <i>Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2002-2022</i>	22
Post-transition conflicts: 2003 to date	24
Metastasising M23 and the <i>River Congo Alliance</i> : 2022 to date	25

Social context	27
Economic context and pathways to development	30
Political context	33
Irredentism or balkanisation	35
Military strength and peacekeeping	44
Local Development Programme of 145 Territories	45
<i>Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires'</i> aims and objectives	45
<i>Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires'</i> rural and local economies development components	47
<i>Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires'</i> expected outcomes	48
Challenges in <i>Programme de Développement Local de 145</i> <i>Territoires'</i> implementation	49
Perspectives and recommendations for 2023	50
Conclusion	51
Chapter 2: Successive administrations (1885–2023)	53
Introduction	53
Public administration in African kingdoms and empires	55
Leopold II administration	57
Administration of Joseph Kasa-Vubu: 30 June 1960 to 24 November 1965	59
Mobutu administration	60
Patrice Emery Lumumba	63
Pierre Mulele and the Pentecost Martyrs	63
Laurent-Désiré Kabila administration	66
Joseph Kabila administration	68
Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo administration	70
Conclusion	71
Chapter 3: Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	73
Introduction	73
Structural violence	76
Congo Wars	81
March 23 insurgency and insecurity in the East	82
Rebellions and violence	85
State terrorism	86
Failed state	86
Conclusion	91

Chapter 4: Peace processes and reconciliation	93
Introduction	93
Sovereign National Conference	94
<i>Marche d'Espoir</i> [March of Hope]	98
<i>Lusaka Peace Accord</i>	98
Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue	99
Reconciliation	101
Theological perspectives of reconciliation	101
Reconciliation as 'peaceful coexistence'	103
Reconciliation in the African worldview and ethos	105
Philosophy of <i>Bisoïté</i>	106
Ethics of <i>Ujamaa</i>	107
Intercommunity reconciliation	107
Faith-based approach to reconciliation	108
Was the Sovereign National Conference a step towards peacebuilding?	109
Conclusion	111
 Chapter 5: Transitional justice	 113
Introduction	113
Transitional justice approach	114
Prosecutorial measures	119
Transition without justice	120
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	123
Establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission	127
Making reparation and restoring justice	127
Telling stories and healing memories	128
Promoting reconciliation through the Catholic Church	130
Healing locations and communities	130
Using symbols and rituals	132
Taking vicarious responsibility	132
Planning a Day of Atonement in Christian communities	133
Using an African worldview and ethos	133
Truth and Reconciliation Commission v. the Judeo-Christian reconciliation model	134
<i>Baraza</i> jurisprudence and transitional justice	138
Conclusion	141

Part 2: Public administration and democracy

Chapter 6: Public administration	147
Introduction	147
Evolution of public administration	148
Conceptual analysis	151
Public administration and development	157
Public administration and the rule of law	158
Public administration and governance systems	158
Public administration and globalisation	161
Public administration and democracy	162
Ubuntu-informed public administration	164
Understanding Ubuntu philosophy	165
Ubuntu, nonviolence and peacebuilding	167
Ubuntu-informed leadership and public administration	169
Conclusion	171
 Chapter 7: Democracy	 173
Introduction	173
Conceptual overview	174
The republic as locus of democracy practice	179
Democracy and a principled governance system	181
<i>Modus operandi</i> of African democratic system	182
Authority in traditional African society	183
Polity in traditional and modern African states	184
Perspectives on democracy in Africa	185
Democracy perceived as a foreign system of governance	188
Lack of civic education and misconstrued notion of democracy	188
Government of national unity in democracies	189
Challenges to democracy in Africa	189
Democracy and the crisis of leadership in Africa	190
Democracy in Africa	191
Preliminary remarks	191
Ceremonial democracy in African countries	192
Mono-party system	193
Multi-party system	194
Conclusion	195

Part 3: Peacebuilding theories and practice

Chapter 8: Peacebuilding theory and praxis	201
Introduction	201
Faith-based interpretation of peace	202
Positive peace	202
Negative peace	204
From contemporary Africa to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's conflicts	205
Peacebuilding conceptual framework	208
Peacekeeping	211
Peacemaking	213
Peacebuilding	214
Liberal peacebuilding theory	214
Building peace amid natural resources-driven conflicts	215
Conclusion	217
 Chapter 9: Key players in peacebuilding	 219
Introduction	219
Actors in conflict transformation and peacebuilding	221
Strategic peacebuilding roadmap	223
Faith-based organisations	225
Indigenous leadership and peacebuilding	227
The ecology of peace	229
Peace from neurobiological development in early childhood	230
Affiliative bonding (oxytocin and bonding in early life)	231
Birthing and parenting towards peacemaking	231
Peacemaking from early teaching and learning	232
Peacebuilding from child development perspectives	232
Conclusion	233
 Chapter 10: Peacebuilding evolution systems theory	 235
Introduction	235
The ecology of peace	238
Locally based peacebuilding theory and actors	238
National peace networks	241
Regional peace networks	244

International peacebuilding framework	246
Peacebuilding in diverse and complex contexts	249
Peacebuilding in the context of social violence	250
Peacebuilding in the context of cultural violence	250
Peacebuilding in the context of economic and political violence	251
Rethinking and shifting to focus on key players in peacebuilding	251
Culture of peace and nonviolence, and peace education	254
Culture of peace	255
Peace education	256
The scientific community and peacebuilding	256
Conclusion	258

Chapter 11: Civil society, democracy and peacebuilding 259

Introduction	259
Semantic development	260
Civil society's role in democratisation and electoral processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	263
Faith-based civil society and democratisation process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	266
The Democratic Republic of the Congo and its relationship to civil society	268
Civil society and public administration	273
Conclusion	274

Part 4: Empirical studies on public administration, peacebuilding and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Chapter 12: Public administration, peacebuilding and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo 279

Introduction	279
Aims and objectives of the study	280
Conceptual analysis	280
Methodological approach	281
Sampling	281
Data analysis	282
Quantitative data	282

Qualitative data analysis	283
Paradigmatic framework	283
Ethical procedures	284
Pilot study	285
Aims and objectives	285
Methodological approach	286
Results	288
Characteristics of the sample	288
Occupations of participants	288
Participants' territorial origins	289
Violence	289
Prevailing insecurity	291
Lack of infrastructure	292
Rule of law and state authority	292
Preliminary remarks	293
Large-scale research	295
Methodological approach	295
Design and methods	296
Results	297
Causes of rural exodus	298
Remedy for insecurity	302
Public administration and positive peace	307
Public administration and violence prevention	308
Public administration and security	311
Public administration and peacebuilding	311
Public administration and sustainable development	312
Rural exodus as an effect of dysfunctional public administration	313
Structural equation model: Mediated variables	314
Results (default model)	314
Structural equation modelling results	318
Structural equation model: Interpretation of results	318
Remedies for rural to urban migration and internally displaced persons	321
Discussion	322
Impact of structural violence on peace	324
Infrastructure	324
Prevailing insecurity	324
Rule of law and state authority	325

Contents

Sustainable development	325
Early childhood development and peacebuilding	326
Conclusion	327
Chapter 13: Considering and recommending pathways to peace	329
References	335
Index	363

Abbreviations and acronyms, a box and figures and tables appearing in the text and notes

List of abbreviations and acronyms

3TG	tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold
AB	affiliative bonding
ABAKO	<i>Association des Bakongo</i> [Bakongo Association]
ABAZI	<i>Alliance des Bayanzi</i> [the Bayanzi Alliance]
ACN	Aid to the Church in Need
ADCP	Action for the Dignity of Congo and its People
ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
ADF-NALU	Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
ADFL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation
AETA	<i>Agir pour des Elections Transparentes et Apaisées</i> [Acting for Transparent and Peaceful Elections]
AFC	<i>Alliance du Fleuve Congo</i> [Congo River Alliance]
AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
ANR	<i>Agence Nationale de Renseignement</i> [National Intelligence Agency]
APC	All People's Congress
APESS	Anthropocene Politik-Economics-Society-Science
APR	<i>Armée Patriotique Rwandaise</i> [Rwandan Patriotic Army]
AU	African Union
BCeCo	<i>Bureau Central de Coordination</i> [Central Coordination Bureau]
BDK	Bundu dia Kongo
BEI	Office of Study and Investigation
BSRS	Special Investigation and Surveillance Brigade

CANRAD	Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy
CENCO	Congolese National Episcopal Conference
CENI	National Electoral Commission of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
CFI	comparative fit index
GC	Civil Guard
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLC	Council for the Liberation of the Congo-Kinshasa [<i>Conseil pour la Liberation du Congo-Kinshasa</i>]
CMIN	chi-square statistic (compares the tested model and the independence model to the saturated model)
CNDP	National Congress for the Defence of the People
CODECO	Cooperative for Development of the Congo
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CONAKAT	<i>Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga</i> [Confederation of Tribal Associations of Katanga]
CPAT	classical public administration theory
CPD	The People's Defence Committees [<i>Comités de Défense Populaire</i>]
CPP	People's Power Committee
CR	critical ratio
CSD	Catholic social doctrine
CSOs	civil society organisations
CST	Catholic social teaching
CVR	<i>Commission Vérité et Réconciliation</i> [Truth and Reconciliation Commission]
DCE	<i>Deus caritas est</i> [God is love]
DEMIAP	<i>Détention Militaire des Activistes Anti-patrie</i> [Military Detection of Anti-homeland Activities]
DF	degrees of freedom
DGCMF	<i>Direction Générale du Contrôle des Marchés Publics</i> [General Directorate of Public Procurement Control]
DGSE	<i>Direction Générale de Sécurité Extérieure</i> [General Directorate of External Security]
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSIR	Special Investigation Bureau
DSP	<i>Division Spéciale Présidentielle</i> [Special Presidential Division]
DUT	Durban University of Technology

EAC	East African Community
EACRF	Eastern African Community Regional Forces
ECD	early childhood development
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPS	European Center for Populism Studies
EFA	Education for All
EIC	<i>État indépendant du Congo</i> [Congo Free State]
EU	European Union
EUFOR	European Union Force
FAB	<i>Forces Armées Burundaises</i> [Burundian Armed Forces]
FAP	The People's Self-defence Forces
FARDC	<i>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> [Armed Forces of the DRC]
FAZ	<i>Forces Armées Zaïroises</i> [Zairian Armed Forces]
FCRD	<i>Front Congolais pour le Rétablissement de la Démocratie</i> [Congolese Front for the Restoration of Democracy]
FDLR	<i>Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Rwanda</i>
FMS	Faculty of Management Sciences
FPLC	<i>Forces Patriotiques pour la Libération du Congo</i> [Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo]
FPR	Rwandan Patriotic Front
GBV	gender-based violence
GC	<i>garde civile</i> [civil protection]
GDP	gross domestic product
GNI PPP	Gross National Income in Purchasing Power Parity
HCR-PT	<i>Haut Conseil de la République-Parlement de Transition</i> [High Council of the Republic-Transitional Parliament]
HI	Health Index or Hypothesis Testing
HPR	hermeneutic phenomenology research
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IBM	International Business Machines Corporation
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICON	International Centre of Nonviolence
ICTR	International Special Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IDP	internally displaced persons

IFI	incremental fit index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	international non-government organisations
INSD	Investigation and National Security Directorship (Security Agency of the Kabila regime)
IOL	Independent Online
IPA	interpretative phenomenological analysis
IPs	indigenous peoples
IS	Islamic State
JNIM	Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin'
LD	Laurent Désiré
LDP	local development programme
LO	log-linear model or a log-likelihood function
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MINUAR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MLC	Movement for the Liberation of the Congo
MMAPA	modern managerial approaches to public administration
MNC	<i>Movement National Congolais</i>
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPR	<i>Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution</i> [Popular Movement of Revolution]
MT	metric tons
NALU	National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NC	National Conference
NCSCF	National Civil Society Consultation Framework
NFI	normed fit index
NGOs	non-government organisations
NOEE	National Order of Electoral Experts
NPAR	network partitioning

NPMT	new public management theory
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSC	National Sovereign Conference
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OLA	Oromo Liberation Front
OT	oxytocin
PARECO	Coalition of Congolese Resistant Patriots
PBEST	peacebuilding evolution systems theory
PCLOSE	close a pipe stream to or from a process
PDL	<i>Programme de Développement Local</i> [Local Development Programme]
PDL-145T	<i>Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires</i> [Local Development Programme of 145 Territories]
PIR	<i>Police d'Intervention Rapide</i> [Rapid Intervention Forces]
PO	proportional odds
PPAT	postmodern public administration theory
PPP	purchasing power parity
PPRD	People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy
PSA	<i>Parti Solidaire Africain</i> [African Solidarity Party]
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
QCA	qualitative content analysis
RADLA	Research and Doctoral Leadership Academy
RCA	River Congo Alliance
RCD	<i>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie</i> [Rally for Congolese Democracy]
RCD-G	Rally for Congolese Democracy-Goma
RCD-ML	Congolese Rally for Democracy/Movement for Liberation
RCM	regional certification mechanism
RFI	radio frequency interference
RMSEA	root mean square error of approximation
RPT	<i>Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais</i>
RSF	Paramilitary Rapid Support Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADR	Sarahawi People's Democratic Republic

SAMIDRC	Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
SARM	<i>Service d'action et des Renseignements Militaires</i> [Military Investigations and Action Unit]
SATRC	South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission
SCCs	small Christian communities
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone
SDCC-DRC	Special Domestic Criminal Court for the DRC
SDGs	sustainable development goals
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SE	standard error
SEM	structural equation modelling
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SME	<i>petites et moyennes entreprises</i> [small and medium-sized enterprises]
SNC	Sovereign National Conference
SNC-PT	SNC-Parliament of Transition
SNIP	<i>Service National d'Intelligence et de Protection</i> [National Intelligence and Protection Service]
SPLA	Sudanese People's Liberation Army
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSA	singular spectrum analysis
TCA	thematic content analysis
TLI	Tucker-Lewis index
TPLF	Tigray People's Liberation Front
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDPS	<i>Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social</i> [Union for Democracy and Social Progress]
UEA	Evangelical University in Africa
UFERI	<i>Union des Fédéralistes et des Républicains Indépendants</i>
UMHK	<i>Union Minière du Haut-Katanga</i> [Mining Union of Upper-Katanga]
UN	United Nations
UNC	<i>Union pour la Nation Congolaise</i> [Union for the Congolese Nation]
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force

US	United States
USA	United States of America
USOR	Sacred Union of Radical Opposition
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization
WWII	Second World War

Box

Box 11.1:	Civil society's opportunities.	270
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List of figures

Figure 1.1:	War and conflict-affected Kiwanja Town, Masisi district, North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.	5
Figure 1.2:	Complex interrelationships of peacebuilding and agents of development.	8
Figure 1.3:	Cycle for prospective solutions to conflict resolution and instability.	40
Figure 1.4:	Configuration of major actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's protracted conflicts.	41
Figure 1.5:	(a) and (b) Compliance process with Section 1502 of the <i>Dodd-Frank Act</i> .	43
Figure 3.1:	Housing on the outskirts of the Coltan mines of Rubaya, Democratic Republic of the Congo.	78
Figure 3.2:	Road condition in Masisi from Goma to Kitchanga Township, Democratic Republic of the Congo.	79
Figure 5.1:	Composite justice structure.	116
Figure 6.1:	Interrelation of factors that lead to peace and development.	155
Figure 8.1:	Galtung's (1976) three approaches to peace.	212
Figure 9.1:	Map of peacebuilding.	224
Figure 9.2:	Major faith-based organisations involved in peacebuilding.	226
Figure 10.1:	Ecology of peacebuilding.	236
Figure 11.1:	Structure of civil society in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.	269

Figure 11.2: Trajectory of delivery of social and public goods.	270
Figure 11.3: Layers of civil society's effectiveness enterprise.	272
Figure 11.4: Interlinks between three spheres of influence on society.	273
Figure 12.1: Pilot study process.	287
Figure 12.2: Participants' occupations.	288
Figure 12.3: Existing types of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.	290
Figure 12.4: Effective administration of police service.	292
Figure 12.5: Occupations of participants.	296
Figure 12.6: Types of violence identified by participants.	308
Figure 12.7: Participants' experience of violence.	309
Figure 12.8: Impact of structural violence on peace.	310
Figure 12.9: Effectiveness of public administration in ushering in development.	312
Figure 12.10: Consequences of rural exodus.	313
Figure 12.11: Structural equation modelling diagrammatic presentation of intervariable systems of relationships.	315
Figure 12.12: Inclusive peacebuilding architecture.	323

List of tables

Table 12.1: Frequency distribution for gender.	288
Table 12.2: Territory of origin of respondents.	289
Table 12.3: Impact of structural violence on peace.	290
Table 12.4: Public powers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's effectiveness in increasing police presence countrywide.	291
Table 12.5: Respondents' views on the commitment of public powers to developing socio-economic infrastructure.	292
Table 12.6: Structural violence and peace.	310
Table 12.7: Public powers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's effectiveness in reinforcing law and order.	310
Table 12.8: Participants' views on training of leaders in peace and conflict transformation.	311
Table 12.9: Maximum likelihood estimates.	316

Table 12.10: Correlations (group number 1 – Default model).	316
Table 12.11: Model fit summaries.	316
Table 12.12: Occupations of participants.	319
Table 12.13: Participants’ views on the causes of rural exodus and internally displaced persons.	320
Table 12.14: Consequences of rural exodus.	321

Foreword

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The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has suffered for far too long. Its conflict is the deadliest after the Second World War (WWII). This book on public administration and peacebuilding in the DRC is an eye-opener. It provides the richest account of any research conducted on the relationship between this conflict and peacebuilding on the one hand and public administration and governance on the other. As a survivor of the armed conflicts in the DRC and a peacebuilder, I find the depth of analysis fascinating. Democratic Republic of the Congo's public administration suffers from many ills, some of which are inherited from the Belgian colonial masters, which has led to the failure to meet the promises of independence, such as freedom, security, dignity and a better life for all through good and participatory governance. There is a pyramid of ills culminating with all forms of violence: structural, physical, psychological and cultural. This pyramid includes corruption, impunity, clientelism, human rights abuses, nepotism, tribalism, clannism, gender discrimination and 'the winner takes all'. African values of Ubuntu, community, solidarity and continuity are hardly seen in the governance system. This has led to the breakdown of the entire public administration to the extent that there is no longer a chain of command or respect for instructions from senior to junior administrators in any sector. As a son of Chief Juma Lubambo M'sambya III of l'amba Basilwanba community in Makobola II village in South Kivu, I lived this first-hand. Despite two court rulings in favour of my father and family in a conflict with another family over chieftaincy and results of investigations led by the provincial government reaching the same conclusions as the courts (including the court of appeal), a provincial Minister of Interior and Traditional Affairs still wrote a letter recognising the loser as the chief instead of the rightful holder, even though by law the Minister has no authority to recognise a traditional chief of a village.

International actors, such as multinational companies, superpowers, neighbouring countries and other interested parties, find it easier to plunder

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the rich natural resources of the country. Hence the birth of many armed groups, millions of displaced people and a high number of women being victims of rape used as a weapon of war, especially in the eastern part of the country. To deal with these many issues, national, regional and international actors tested many formulas, including negotiations (from Sirte in Libya to Goma in eastern DRC) and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes for former combatants. These efforts received the support of the largest peacekeeping mission in the world, the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the DRC. Despite these efforts, the conflict did not end, and peace was not restored. The main reason is that these efforts failed to effectively address the issue of public administration and link it to peacebuilding.

Throughout this book, the critical analysis of how public administration strengthens or weakens factors contributing to peace offers an opportunity to 'join nine dots with four straight lines'. In other words, the book allows the reader to go beyond the limits and find peaceful strategies that could be more effective in restoring peace in the Congo. Such strategies include genuine security sector reform, judicial reform, national elections with integrity, reform of the administration, respect for traditional values and administration, and strong international relations. This book, which critically examines the weakest link and major stumbling block for peace in the DRC, allows me to conclude that there is no nation-state which can be peaceful without strong public institutions and good governance.

When reading this book, not only did I break into tears of pain at seeing the indisputable amount of suffering of my beloved country and my people, but also tears of joy for discovering a remedy to the crisis, like a cook in the kitchen who is cutting an onion, and while it pricks in his or her eye, cries for joy when he or she reaches the inner parts and instead of throwing the onion away, keeps it and shouts *Eureka!* Therefore, *Tolle Lege!* Pick up and read!

Preface

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The peacebuilding process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been ongoing for decades. Plagued by perpetual conflict and defined by multiple and repeated cycles of violence, instability and suffering, sustained peace and security seem to elude this resource-rich and well-endowed nation. Research has established that various internal and external factors and stakeholders continue to influence, shape and often hinder peacebuilding processes. While much has been written about the DRC, this book brings a much-needed focus to a crucial aspect of any peacebuilding effort: governance and government. It examines the application and role of public administration in the longstanding and evolving peacebuilding and conflict case study of the DRC. This work explores and emphasises the connections between public administration and peacebuilding in the short, medium and long term. While the role of the 'state' as a major contributor to violence and war in the country has been well documented, the role of governance structures and public administration entities in building peace remains largely understudied. This is where this book becomes a huge resource for policymakers, practitioners, the private sector and all other stakeholders working in and on the DRC.

The book successfully examines the coordination, implementation and execution of government policies and programmes through a peacebuilding lens. It is based on the fieldwork and engagement in the DRC, using empirical surveys conducted in the North Kivu province. Additionally, it incorporates the conflict transformation theory and peacebuilding practice to provide well-founded explanations that support analysis and discussions. The author recommends a model of public administration that merges reforms across government arms (like the judiciary and executive) and in sectors such as the economy and security, with principles like accountability, integrity, transparency, pluralism, subsidiarity, representation, equity, access, responsibility and legitimacy that will inform and propel these reforms to success. The lessons drawn from the narratives and experiences of the participants have provided clarity and insight into the challenges of public administration amid an evolving peace and conflict process. Over 11

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key chapters, this scholarly and rigorous work explores the violence in the DRC, various dimensions of peacebuilding and public administration, providing a deeper understanding of the political, socio-economic and security dimensions of the country.

Jean Chrysostome Kiyala is a seasoned political analyst with extensive experience in the DRC, which has an intricate political landscape and exceptional history. This book reflects his decades of research and analysis of the DRC. Kiyala's dedication to unravelling and understanding the complexities of the DRC makes him a trusted authority on the subject. This work, along with his other publications on the country, will continue to shape the conversation about the DRC and its future.

Acknowledgements

Putting this book together would not have been possible without the contribution of colleagues and experts in the field who were interested in producing a cutting-edge interdisciplinary scholarly work. This work harmoniously combines theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in public administration, peacebuilding, democracy and sustainable peace, utilising the DRC as a case study. It is only fitting to acknowledge the brains behind this achievement.

My foremost gratitude goes to the DUT, particularly the ICON team, the FMS Executive Dean, Prof. Fulufhelo Godfrey Netswera and Adjunct Prof. Geoff T Harris from FMS. I also wish to acknowledge the support of the DUT Research and Postgraduate Support Office and the DUT RADLA. Special thanks go to the late Emeritus Prof. Andries Van Aarde, DUT's Senior Research Fellow in Residence, Editor-in-Chief of *HTS Theological Studies* and Commissioning Editor of AOSIS scholarly books division, who recommended the publication of this book by AOSIS. He was the initiator of this project, which we are proud to present to our extended readership.

I am profoundly indebted to the communities of Bukavu for their cooperation, particularly the students from the Evangelical University in Africa (UEA), the Catholic University of Bukavu and the University of Bandundu in the DRC. These institutions served as vital fields for the collection of experimental data to build an insightful, condensed and distilled piece of work that we share with a diverse readership. The students' experiences of the challenges and the prospects of post-conflict recovery, peace, healing and reconciliation – to be shouldered mainly by public administrators – echo throughout this book. I also acknowledge the contribution of Mr Charles Mulimbalimba, a junior lecturer at UEA, for facilitating the collection of survey materials, documenting all research materials and managing their dispatch, scanning and packing for analysis.

It is essential to acknowledge the significant contribution of Dr Mulanda Jimmy Juma, a member of the Michael Sharp Global Peacemaker Award of the Central Committee and the Ambassador for Compassion International Switzerland. He wrote a remarkable and heartfelt foreword that reflects his own experiences of suffering, deprivation and success, which resonate with those of many people in the DRC. As my mentor, Dr Mulanda played a crucial role in introducing me to Prof. Geoff T Harris in 2012 – an encounter

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that profoundly shaped my future as an academic and researcher. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dorcas Ettang of ICON in the FMS for authoring a thought-provoking and inspiring preface that enhances our efforts and introduces the book to its diverse audience.

I am pleased to acknowledge the contributions of Mr Deepak Singh, a senior lecturer in the Department of Physics at DUT. He is actively engaged in statistical research across the fields of physics, process controls and health sciences. I appreciate his generous commitment to conducting rigorous statistical analyses of quantitative data for this book and previous publications.

I express my deepest gratitude to the colleagues who reviewed the manuscript and provided essential comments that enhanced its scientific value, and to Ms Elizabeth Norton-Amor, who guided this project through a meticulous language editing and proofreading process with patience and dedication. It is a shared honour to bring this project to fruition. Finally, I acknowledge the enormous support I received from the DUT's DVC Research, Innovation and Engagement office, for supporting this research and its publication. I express my profound gratitude to AOSIS's various departments that helped refine this book, notably the tremendous efforts produced by the reviewers and the copy-editor: You undoubtedly contributed to increasing the scientific standard of this scholarly work.

PART 1

**General perspectives on
the Democratic Republic
of the Congo**

Overview of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

■ Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), formerly called Zaïre, is the second-largest country in sub-Saharan Africa, with an area of some 2,344,858 square kilometres (905,355 sq mi) – after Algeria, the eleventh largest in the world. Its current population is estimated at 102,960,736 as of Saturday, 16 September 2023, according to the latest United Nations (UN) data on Worldometer (2023). The DRC achieved its independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960. It has changed its name several times, previously having been *État Indépendant du Congo* [Congo Free State] (EIC) (1885–1908), Congo Belge [Belgian Congo] (1908–1960), the Republic of the Congo (1960–1971), and the Republic of Zaïre (1971–1997). It is one of the world's richest countries with large reserves of natural and mineral resources, but is paradoxically characterised by extreme poverty. The DRC formerly consisted of 10 provinces, which have been restructured and broken down into 25 provinces, and Kinshasa, the capital, makes up 26 provinces.

The DRC is ranked the fifth-poorest country in the world (US\$1,474 gross domestic product [GDP] public-private partnerships [PPP]) according to Global Finance's November 2023 Report (Ventura 2023a). The *World Population Review* (2023) ranks the DRC the fourth-poorest country in the world, with a Gross National Income in Purchasing Power Parity (GNI PPP) of US\$1,110, and one of the fastest-growing in terms of its population, which

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is currently estimated at 102 million people with an annual population increase of 3.26%. This population increase has worsened the 'high rates of malnutrition, lack of modern healthcare, and poor education, in addition to facing political instability and conflict [and] has a poverty rate of 63.9%' (*World Population Review* 2023, n.p.). This precarious condition is incongruous with the incredible wealth of the DRC – the largest and richest natural space in the world for agriculture and natural gas, ranking 96th in the world and accounting for about 0.0005% of the world's total natural gas reserves of 6,923 Tcf (Worldometer 2017, n.p.). Despite its extensive hydrogeology, the DRC does not provide clean water and proper sanitation to its people, as noted by Earthwise (*British Geological Survey*) (2020):

With high rainfall and major perennial rivers, the DRC is a water-rich country, but water supply infrastructure is poor. Despite the abundance of surface waters, the vast majority of the population is dependent on groundwater for water supplies, especially from springs, which provide the main source of drinking water for up to 90% of the rural population. (n.p.)

Despite its human potential, some political elites were described as 'mediocre' by Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo, the archbishop of Kinshasa (La Libre Afrique 2018), during the period of uncertainty regarding general elections when President Joseph Kabila sought a third term beyond his constitutionally permitted period of office. The late Cardinal declared: '*Il est temps que les médiocres dégagent et que règnent la paix et la justice en RDC*' [It is time for the mediocre to leave], as reported by La Libre Afrique (2018, n.p.). He used to denounce the failure of the DRC's public administration to deliver services to the people, secure the country's porous borders, end all types of violence and maintain peace countrywide, including defending the territorial integrity of the DRC. He refused to remain above the fray; being vocal and prophetic gave him a high religious and political reputation as a prelate and statesman.

All the administrations that have governed the land of the DRC – from the EIC to Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo – have been accused of human rights violations and some of being authoritarian. The turmoil experienced by the DRC since its independence is acknowledged in the Constitution of 18 February 2006; it states:

Since its independence on 30 June 1960, the Democratic Republic of Congo has faced recurring political crises. One of the fundamental causes of this is the challenge to the legitimacy of institutions and their facilitators. This call into question took on a particular dimension with the wars that tore the country apart from 1996 to 2002. (DR Congo 2006, p. 1)

This prelude explains the ongoing institutional crisis, the ungovernability of the state, and the protracted conflicts and war waged against peaceful civilians by identified and non-identified armed groups. It should be noted that, to justify the perpetuation of wars, several armed factions have been

disguised as 'community defence' fighters who paradoxically terrorise, murder and abuse the local communities of eastern DRC. Different armed factions continue to operate with impunity in different parts of the country; justice is traded in peace processes. Figure 1.1 illustrates the reality of Kiwanja Town, which is affected by the invasion of armed groups, particularly the M23OF¹ and the Mai-Mai fighters (Kiyala 2018a).

Impunity for war-related conflicts is instrumentalised in forging peace. Impunity in peace processes (Goodman 2010) and impunity for human rights violations during electoral processes (Yonekawa 2012) have become intolerable; it is decried, and voices are rising for justice and redress (Hall & LaRocco 2012). As observed by Bergling et al. (2008), the juxtaposition of public administration and peacebuilding finds its deepest



Source: Photograph taken by the author, Kiwanja Town, Masisi district, North Kivu, June 2014. Reproduced and published with permission from the author. Copyright 2014 © JCK Kiyala.

FIGURE 1.1: War and conflict-affected Kiwanja Town, Masisi district, North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

1. The 23 March Movement, also known as the 23 March Insurrectionist Movement, was established in 2012 by Sultani Makenga, who previously led the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP) rebellion to protect the Tutsi ethnic group in the DRC during the mid-1990s and 2000s, amid the early phases of conflict in the Kivus. The CNDP soldiers mutinied against the DRC government and the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The movement is currently led by Bertrand Bisimwa.

repression in the rule of law, without which development becomes problematic. The rule of law, as opposed to the rule of arbitrariness, entails moral requirements. The link between public administration and the rule of law is evident. Point Loma Nazarene University (2023) underlines this point and shows the necessity of ensuring conformity and regulation of laws:

These officials establish regulations of laws and standards, such as business practices, environmental regulations, public health, and consumer protection. Public administrators make sure that there are fair, safe, and ethical practices in the private and public sectors. Overall, they're doing so to look out for community members, employees, and consumers. (n.p.)

While public administration has the obligation to fulfil or affect public policies crafted by the competent authorities, it is also concerned with the issues and powers of the structures and strategies of management involved in implementing the laws and policies mapped out by the policy-making agencies of government, as observed by Nwanisobi and Christopher (2020, p. 58): 'Public administration is the law in action. It is the executive side of a government'. The role of the three branches of government is crucial in carrying out the duties necessary to deliver public and popular services, secure the country's borders, end all types of violence, maintain peace and defend the territorial integrity of the country. Despite the separation of powers being the backbone of constitutional democracies, public administration is identified with the president (the executive) who shoulders the responsibility of successful national development projects and peacebuilding, especially in countries that are coming to terms with the legacy of large-scale violence and human rights violations. For this reason, we assess the effects of public administration by referring to the leader of each epoch, for the mere fact that each of them develops and effectuates governance policies, appoints the members of the judiciary and the executive, and influences the party politics that has some leverage on the election of public representatives. The overall administration receives the mandate to deliver public goods and pursue the constitutional rights of citizens. A synergic and harmonious discharge of constitutional duties by the three branches of the government is susceptible to ushering in good governance that could unleash development while seeking to maintain peace in post-conflict contexts. 'Governance' refers to all processes of governing by public institutions, including the processes and practices used to adequately implement the government's policies and programmes to deliver social and public goods.

Peace being one of the public goods, it is the obligation of any public administration to ensure that this vital good is delivered to citizens. However, the evidence of the DRC's situation of 'no war no peace' demonstrates one of the systemic failures of public administrations over

the decades to provide this to the DRC's people. Peace has further been undermined by the reality of ongoing violence carried out by the M23 that has maintained instability and caused displacements of many people in the DRC's eastern provinces, particularly North Kivu. There cannot be peace in a body whose parts are wounded. The North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces are in constant turmoil; people are displaced, and war is tearing the whole social fabric apart: a fabric understood as the web of interrelations, the typical connections between humans that tie them up with their communities (Abbas et al. 2022). The DRC's governments have generally failed to establish positive peace over the entire territory. They have often relied on regional forces such as those of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Eastern African Community Regional Forces (EACRF), as well as the European Union Force (EUFOR) and UN interventions such as its peacekeeping operation via the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The DRC's incapacity to protect its borders and secure its citizens is of utmost concern because the DRC has been plagued by violence and socio-political turmoil since its independence. This is a fact that is acknowledged in the Constitution of the DRC of 18 February 2006, alluded to earlier.

The country has become home to protracted conflicts and all kinds of warfare, specifically in the eastern provinces of the country. Because of the inability of various governments to protect civilians, armed groups have established themselves as community self-defence groups. However, they paradoxically terrorise, murder and abuse the local communities of the eastern DRC (Kiyala 2018a). The rule of law is non-existent. As observed by Bergling et al. (2008), the juxtaposition of public administration and peacebuilding finds its deepest expression in the rule of law, without which development becomes problematic.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding theory while seeking to determine the underlying causes of the violence that hampers economic growth. This book aims to develop a composite strategic framework for durable peace and sustainable development. To achieve these goals, I used the DRC as a case study and employed literary research methods and mixed methods approaches that employ sequential qualitative methods (interviews, focus group discussions and literary research) and quantitative methods based on surveys. These approaches are utilised in such a way that one feeds into the others to provide general, valid and reliable results. In this process, peacebuilding and development are the focal points of the inquiry, while public administration is explored and investigated as one of the seven catalysts of peacebuilding and development (Figure 1.2).



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 1.2: Complex interrelationships of peacebuilding and agents of development.

The seven agents show overlapping relationships, and they are linked to the central notions of peacebuilding and development that are fostered by the corresponding peripheral agents, namely public administration, civil society, private sectors, individual citizens, businesses, the community of nations and indigenous peoples' (IPs) wisdom.

Against this backdrop, this book aims to explore the trajectory of successive administrations in the DRC, tracing this back from the colonial period to the post-2023 general elections, and examine the role played by public administration during that period in informing, sustaining or altering peace. The findings I report here are based on a pluridisciplinary approach that encompasses a diversity of research designs and methods, and theoretical frameworks combined for the purpose of generating a more comprehensive picture of the nexus between public administration and peacebuilding and the extent to which this can foster sustainable development. It is largely designed as literary research that employs secondary sources from libraries and online sources, as well as empirical data gathered from the field in the DRC. I combined various data analysis techniques, including thematic analysis for interviews and focus group discussions, and statistical analysis via International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistics 22.0 to draw veracious trends in the responses of participants in a field inquiry conducted in the eastern DRC.

The DRC is perceived as a beleaguered country that is home to endless conflicts, civil war, intercommunity violence, armed struggles, etc. The human element is the final deciding factor in what the conflict should or should not become because of the decisions different persons and communities make to resolve different conflicts and their underlying causes. The country is home to multifaceted conflicts that stem from land disputes, arguments over control of large mineral reserves and conflicts in neighbouring countries (Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, South Sudan and the Central African Republic) spilling over into the DRC.

The book consists of four major parts and a general introductory chapter that maps out the overall content. This Introduction provides initial background on the DRC, offers a succinct description of the theoretical frameworks guiding the argument – namely, peacebuilding, public administration and development – and presents the outline of the book.

Part 1 provides general perspectives on the DRC; it comprises Chapters 1–5. Chapter 1 provides the background of the DRC that encompasses the various conflicts that often lead to violence; it further discusses the social, economic and political context; the problem of irredentism, the military status of the country, the attempts to forge local development and finally, it presents the book's structure. It sets out the complexities of successive administrations from the colonisation of the Congo to 2024 and also deals with land conflicts, conflicts related to mineral resources, various phases of conflicts, the paradox of a well-positioned African military power that yet relies on external interventions for its security and the concept of a 'failed state' applied to the country as one of its characteristics. It lays out the context of conflicts and the attempts to pursue sustainable development, examines the threats of irredentism and argues for the necessity to leave African countries' borders inherited from the independence period unaltered. Understanding the past and contemporary socio-political and economic context of the DRC is essential to this book, in which the DRC is utilised as a case study in grasping the nexus and interconnectedness of the trilogy of public administration, democracy and peacebuilding.

Chapter 2 overviews and critically analyses the main features of the successive administrations that have governed the country since the EIC in 1815 from the Congo Free State (1885) to the two terms of President Félix Tshisekedi (24 January 2019 to 20 January 2024 and 20 January 2024 to date (2025)). I refer to the key personalities whose lives have marked the country's history in a remarkable way, namely: Leopold II (1865–1909), Joseph Kasa-Vubu – alternatively Joseph Kasavubu (1915 to 24 March 1969), Joseph-Désiré Mobutu Sese Seko (14 October 1930 to 07 September 1997), Patrice Emery Lumumba (02 July 1925 to 17 January 1961), Pierre Mulele

(11 August 1929 to 03 or 09 October 1968), Laurent-Désiré Kabila (27 November 1939 to 16 January 2001), Joseph Kabila (04 June 1971–) and Félix Tshisekedi (13 June 1963–). A dialectical analysis of public administration's actions and operations is needed to evaluate its effects on social welfare and peace of a nation.

Chapter 3 explores the root causes of multifaceted violence experienced by the DRC and the extent to which these affect durable peace, and how public administration influences or does not influence this state of affairs.

Chapter 4 delves into peace processes and examines the potential of reconciliation inspired by faith-based organisations and the African social ethos and humanitarian philosophy to leverage social and political reconciliation in DRC's turbulent and volatile environment. It looks into various peace processes, attempts to achieve national reconciliation and the transitional justice mechanisms that include adjudicative and non-adjudicative approaches. It contends that the role that public administration plays in the peace process should always be examined, particularly in countries with a past legacy of violence and still grappling with structural violence.

Chapter 5 looks into the perspectives and prospects of transitional justice, its trajectory, hiccups and the potential of *Baraza* local jurisprudence to foster justice, reconciliation and peace, and also seeks to grasp how public administration intervenes in such intricate circumstances – to increase its sphere of influence and motivate adequate policies that aim to aid transitional justice mechanisms. It further overviews peace processes – going back to the time of the country's National Conference (NC), leading to the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. It also looks into reconciliation and its failed attempts in the post-Sun City period. Finally, this chapter examines the challenges of transitional justice in the DRC while offering *Baraza* jurisprudence as an alternative. Furthermore, it considers the adoption of a model of reconciliation inspired by the Judeo-Christian tradition as another option for the DRC's complex environment and the scale of atrocities which several communities have suffered.

Part 2 explores the concepts of public administration and democracy over time and comprises Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 examines public administration theory, more specifically its historical evolution, linkages with development, rule of law, governance systems, globalisation and democracy, and how Ubuntu-informed public administration can limit several abuses of human rights, human dignity and place humanitarian and philanthropic values at the centre of its policies and practices. In addition, it introduces the concept and practice of public administration while linking this with development, the rule of law, democracy in its various forms and the Ubuntu philosophy. Finally, it suggests how Ubuntu could help redress

the crisis of leadership on the continent and its ontological and epistemological implications in theorising and practising public administration in an African environment.

Chapter 7 involves an analytical review of the concept of democracy. It investigates the relations between public administration and democracy in the African context; it focuses on the failure of public administration to promote democratic processes that empower the three branches of government to deliver social services while remaining accountable to public scrutiny. It links the debate with Ancient Greece, the African notion of governance and polity, African diverse interpretations and practice of democracy and how the crises of leadership in the continent influence the wrongful interpretation and practice of democracy in many countries of the continent. In a final analysis, it contends that delivering democracy should be one of the essential agendas and policies of an efficient public administration.

Part 3 examines various peacebuilding theories and practices and introduces the novel theory that the book shares, namely the PBEST. It comprehends Chapters 8–11.

Chapter 8 focuses on the depth of peace, peacemaking and peacebuilding from various subsets of peace theories that are expected to be influenced by public administration. Again, the performance of public administration is tested by its ability to achieve peace through the various policies it forges and implements.

Chapter 9 analyses peace-related concepts, and the three approaches to peace (peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding). Moreover, it expands the debate on the ecology of peace and explains how the environment of interpersonal relationships influences peaceful behaviours and attitudes. Public administration shoulders the responsibility to ensure children grow in a loving, caring and harmonious environment so that they can develop peacemaking abilities. Thus, the interrelations between several actors in peacebuilding, particularly actors of conflict transformation, actors from civil society organisations (CSOs) (faith-based organisations and traditional leaders) and peacebuilding stemming from the theory of ecology of peace are critical to ensuring peacebuilders are present in all spheres and domains of life. Those actors find themselves as public administrators in different sectors of life.

Chapter 10 discusses the theory that I developed and described as PBEST. It further bridges the culture of peace, peace education and the various networks involved in fostering peace at various levels of society. Chapter 11 examines the interlink between civil society, democracy and peacebuilding, and there appear to be some connections between civil society, public administration and democracy.

Part 4 focuses on empirical studies on the DRC, linking the outcomes with the overall debate on public administration, democracy and peacebuilding in the country. It spans from Chapter 12 to Chapter 13.

Chapter 12 opens by outlining the methodological approach and ethical standards I observed for conducting empirical studies in public administration and peacebuilding in the DRC, for both the pilot study that paved the way for a full-scale inquiry on this topic and the full-scale inquiry. All the outcomes are tabled and discussed fully before I draw inferences regarding the relationship between peacebuilding and public administration in efforts to build peace and forge the path to durable development in the DRC. Empirical data were analysed by compounded methods that serve to establish the various levels and aspects of the interaction between public administration and peacebuilding in the DRC. This inquiry was utilised to back the overarching argument of this book, namely that the failure of public administration to administer democracy and public and social good leads to protracted conflicts and violence in the DRC.

Chapter 13, the final chapter, highlights the key findings of the empirical study on the DRC and suggests that effective public administration primarily delivers peacebuilding and democracy. Therefore, investigating the effectiveness of public administration in the DRC is crucial for addressing the longstanding legacy of violence and opening new pathways to peace.

■ **Complexified history and environment**

The history of the DRC is punctuated by an avalanche of dramas, brutalities, insecurity, egregious human rights violations, protracted conflicts and civil wars traced back to the legacy of colonisation and the successive political regimes since 1885. I write this book with the lingering puzzle in my mind of whether the country will ever recover from past despicable human atrocities, ongoing insurgencies and ongoing war that continue to ravage its eastern and northeastern regions. Adding to that, it is imperative to investigate the role of public administration in dealing with multidimensional conflicts, rebuilding the economy, safeguarding the country's territorial integrity, and putting it on the path of durable peace and sustainable development. A profound transformation is needed in the DRC, and that is unachievable without a deep diagnosis of the multifaceted ills that ruin the country and continue to metastasise.

■ **Land, identity and ethnicity conflicts**

Land, natural resources, identity and ethnicity, and power make up the majority of the sources of the many types of violence that have bedevilled the country, which remains prey to ongoing instability. One such conflict is

the identity crisis over the Banyamulenge² nationality, with land disputes and violence in Kwango and Mai-Ndombe on the part of the Yaka, who claim to own the land on which the Teke have settled for many generations (namely in the *Plateau de Bateke*, an area that extends to the current Mai-Ndombe province, Kwango and Kwilu provinces, and Maluku municipality of Kinshasa province). This took the form of intercommunal violence between June 2022 and March 2023, triggered by land disputes in which the Teke and the Yaka are still entangled in the DRC's western Kwamouth territory, causing the death of 300 people on both sides (Human Rights Watch [HRW] 2023c). These rivalries are known as the 'Mobondo' phenomenon, which started in late June 2023, when the Yaka community members organised themselves into groups, calling themselves 'Mobondo' and following mystical rituals and the use of amulets (HRW 2023c). The Yaka were armed 'with machetes, knives, spears, bows and arrows, hunting rifles, and some military assault rifles, they attacked and killed dozens of Teke villagers, witnesses said' (HRW 2023c, n.p.).

The conflict has worsened since mid-December 2023, when the Mobondo militia cut off various parts of the AR17 road between the towns of Mongata and Bandundu. All traffic from Kinshasa and Bandundu was halted. One passenger bus was burnt on Sunday, 31 December 2023, by the Mobondo militia in protest against military intervention to quell their revolt against land and taxes levied by local traditional authorities, killing an unknown number of soldiers and civilians on board. The militia is hostile to the security services, the police, the armed forces and the Teke ethnic group, whom they always confront with heavy machinery guns and whose bodies they mutilate. The Mobondo believe in the use of fetishes that confer invulnerability to bullets and enemy attacks.

On 30 December 2023, close to 100 people were taken hostage by the Mobondo at Kwamouth (Mai-Ndombe), including Fr Chrysostome Esamwala, the parish priest of Masiambio Catholic Parish and a few parishioners. The militiamen also cut off the road and blocked all traffic from Kinshasa to Bandundu. Mr David Kisaka, a politician from the area, reported that 'no vehicle [*moved*] across the roadblock'. Many vehicles, trucks and buses were stationed at Masiambio, where the *Forces Armées*

2. The Banyamulenge are the Zaïre communities of Rwandese descent, namely from the Tutsi ethnic group. Their ancestors are believed to have emigrated to Congo around the 19th century and occupied the mountains of Mulenge on the High Plateau of South Kivu. The name Banyamulenge refers to those mountains, and Banyamulenge subsequently describes the inhabitants of those areas. Earlier legislations of 1981 recognised the Banyamulenge's right to Zaïrean citizenship, the laws that followed limited citizenship to those who could prove that their ancestors lived in Zaïre before 1885. This identity crisis has caused conflicts and rebellions in the eastern DRC, namely by the Rally for Congolese Democracy-Goma (RCD-G), the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) and the M23 rebellion. These movements fight to protect their Congolese citizenship.

de la République Démocratique du Congo [Armed Forces of the DRC] (FARDC) troops were deployed. A few people went missing; four of the 10 soldiers sent to restore order between Maku and Mibe in the Mai-Ndombe province were killed. On 02 January 2024, Multimedia Congo (2024) warned that the Mobondo militia threatened the safety of traffic on the RN17 and that traffic could be suspended by the authorities of the Kwilu province – an event that could impact food security in Kinshasa, given that the Kwilu province, the Greater Bandundu and the Kongo-Central province, are the breadbaskets of the DRC's capital city. These provinces supply a diversity of agricultural products needed to feed the capital, and in return, provinces are furnished with manufactured goods from Kinshasa (Multimedia Congo 2024). The sprawling violence affected by the Mobondo phenomenon has receded, although its root causes have not been addressed; sporadic attacks by these militias continue, and instantaneous killings of innocents have not fully ended; only its scale has been reduced by the presence of the government army in the most affected areas.

Land, power, identity, ethnicity, mineral and natural resources, and land ownership are the main drivers of conflicts and violence that public administration must address to create a peaceful environment conducive to durable development. These are the five major factors that instigate violence when contentions about them are not properly regulated or addressed. These issues stem from land conflicts.

The question of nationality, citizenship and identity of the Kinyarwanda speakers is critical to lasting peace in the DRC; these are mainly the Banyarwanda populations in North Kivu and the Banyamulenge communities in South Kivu. Vlassenroot (2002, p. 507) points out how the leaders of the Groupe Milima and Ugeafi believed that the development of their respective communities depended largely on 'a ratification of their citizenship status and on full access to land' (p. 507). The Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge have been calling for the implementation of the 1981 law that recognised their Zaïrean citizenship and opposed its revocation when the Kinshasa government and local political leaders questioned their rights to Zaïreen/Congolese citizenship (Vlassenroot 2002, p. 507). It is important to note that the Banyamulenge interpreted the 1981 legislation as the instrument that recognised their full political rights for the following reasons:

They had settled in Zaire before 1885. Strangely enough, the nationality law of 1981 was also the starting point for their political opponents to demonstrate that the Banyamulenge could not claim any citizenship rights because in 1885 there was no ethnic community called 'Banyamulenge' living in Zaire. (Vlassenroot 2002, p. 507)

The crisis was exacerbated when Mobutu Sese Seko's government announced the democratisation process; several local politicians not only rejected their claims about citizenship but went as far as protesting against

their presence on the Zaïrean/Congolese soil (Vlassenroot 2002). The new regime in Rwanda, after the Rwandan genocide, started training the Tutsi from Zaïre and sent them back to defend the Banyamulenge (Vlassenroot 2002).

It is evident that persistent conflicts in the Kivus stem from both the contentious citizenship and identity of the Kinyarwanda speakers, mainly in South Kivu and international illicit exploitation and trade of mineral resources – and the crisis has been exacerbated by the Rwandan Genocide that caused an influx of both the Tutsi and Hutu populations in the Kivus. An extensive study conducted by Vlassenroot (2002) traced the ‘ethnogenesis of Banyamulenge’ back in the 19th century and expounds on the challenges that the formation of their identity has faced over the centuries. Vlassenroot (2002) observes:

It is essential to understand the complexities of this matter in order to pronounce a fair judgement regarding the Zaïrean/Congolese citizenship. Although their name never appears in the colonial archives, they are no pure invention but are the result of some of their leaders shifting the basis of their identity from the ethnic to the territorial. The attempts to prevent the Banyamulenge from gaining access to the political realm goes a long way to explain their marginalised position. (p. 507)

Thus the argument on the Banyamulenge Congolese citizenship based on the ‘non-existence of the Banyamulenge-tribe’ in the historical records of the colonial Congo Era should be cognisant of other historical facts such as ‘the existence of a culturally and linguistically distinct community of Tutsi pastoralists living on the Haut Plateau’ (Vlassenroot 2002, p. 507), because, he adds, ‘[...] it was never treated as such, either by the colonial administration or by the independent Zaïrean state’ (p. 507). The ‘ethnogenesis of the Banyamulenge’ should be understood in the context of the Rwandan origins of the majority of its people and the circumstances, the time and the reason for the Banyamulenge’s migration to South Kivu’ (p. 507). The *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* [Rally for Congolese Democracy] (RCD), the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) and the M23 insurrection underscore their struggle for their identity and citizenship recognition as a Congolese ‘ignored’ tribe.

Their military operations turned against Mobutu’s regime when they joined the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaïre (AFDL) of Laurent D Kabila, which toppled Mobutu in 1997 in the wake of the First African World War (1996–1997) fought in Congo. Since then, the contentious identity and citizenship conundrum of the Kinyarwanda speakers, mainly the Tutsi, has been haunting the DRC’s government despite the presence of the Banyamulenge in the DRC’s army and government. The Banyamulenge, with the backing of Rwanda, have grown their military capabilities to continue fighting until the full recognition of

their Congolese citizenship. Lasting peace in the DRC cannot be attained without addressing ethnicity-related issues of the Banyamulenge.

This is a further illustration of a much-needed inter-Congolese national debate that should provide a permanent solution to the critical issues driving and sustaining endemic armed conflicts in the DRC. Nonetheless, the illicit exploitation of natural resources must be tackled once and for all to prevent the recurrence of intercommunity and cross-border hostilities in the eastern DRC.

■ Mineral resources

Natural resources, particularly mineral deposits, have aroused envy and fuelled hostilities between local people in the areas concerned and cross-border illicit exploiters and traders of its mineral resources. The DRC ranks among the world's first producers of critical and strategic minerals, particularly those needed in information technology, namely the 3Ts (tin, tantalum and tungsten) and cobalt, which is essential in electric vehicles and aeronautic industries. They produced 170,000 metric tons (MT) of cobalt in 2023; it accounts for approximately 73% of world production – making it by far the largest producer of cobalt globally (Williams 2024). According to Pistilli (2024), the DRC is the world's biggest tantalum producer; it mass-produced 980 MT of the metal in total in 2023, which represents 41% of the world's supply, and much of it comes from coltan (which contains tantalum and niobium). The production of devices such as electric vehicles, digital devices, laptops, tablets and smartphones relies on cobalt, which is also used to manufacture gas turbine engines and aircraft engines. Unfortunately, the high demand for modern technologies jeopardises the peace of the DRC, a country already struggling with a failing state and a dysfunctional public administration.

Many African countries, particularly the DRC, suffer as a result of their 'curse minerals', coveted by their neighbours – particularly Rwanda and Uganda (Hanai 2021; Montague 2002). For instance, Hanai (2021) writes:

When resource stockpiles were looted and exhausted in the first 12 months, an 'illicit business' was formed to extract resources. In some mines, foreign soldiers, locals organized by Rwandan and Ugandan commanders, or manpower brought from Rwanda directly extracted minerals. (p. 4)

Besides plundering the DRC's minerals by its neighbours, rebel groups and multinationals are involved in unlawful exploitation and trade of the country's minerals. To illustrate this, the FDLR was involved in illegal activities in mineral-rich Walikale between 1997 and 2006; they used the income to fund their operations (Laudati 2013).

At the international level, the influence of foreign countries is discernible via the pressure that multinationals exert in the exploitation and commercialisation of the DRC's looted natural and mineral resources. Rapanyane (2022) notes how foreign influence sways efforts for development; he observes that most economically powerful countries rely significantly on mineral resources from Africa to feed their economies. He cites the case of China's SICOMINES, which plays a part in the mineral conflicts in the DRC's eastern provinces.

Arguing from a similar perspective, Diemel and Hilhorst (2019, p. 453) find that applying due diligence in reforms initiated by the DRC and the international community targeting the 'process in the artisanal mining sector to break the linkages between mineral extraction and violent conflict' was insufficient to bring about peace and provide livelihoods for the population in environments rich in mineral reserves. Their research analysed the following documents:

UN Group of Experts report, the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act*, the OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas, and the International Conference on the Great Lake Region (ICGLR) Regional Certification Mechanism (RCM). (p. 453)

Some of the conclusions their research reaches suggest the impacts of the reforms on conflict, governance and livelihoods habitually concentrate on a single aspect of the reforms, where (Diemel & Hilhorst 2019):

[A]ccepting the objectives of the policy at face value has become a goal in itself. This raises the question of whether giving buyers a clear conscience and developing a traceable and conflict-free product has received more attention than improving the situation of the Congolese population. (p. 453)

The correlation between mines and conflict in the DRC appears evident; it is supported by several studies (Bernarding, Guesnet & Müller-Koné 2015; Diemel & Hilhorst 2019; Rapanyane 2022). For instance, Bernarding et al. (2015) argue that conflicts in the eastern DRC would end if the minerals sector-induced conflicts were no longer financed. This refers to the 2010 US *Dodd-Frank Act* and European draft legislation that tried to minimise the financing of armed groups in areas affected by such conflicts and encouraged companies to monitor their supply chains diligently to prevent the purchase of 'conflict minerals' (p. 2). The arguments put forward by these authors suggest that regulation of conflict minerals is capable of contributing to solving conflicts in the eastern DRC – provided 'it becomes part of a wider approach to peacebuilding, which takes into account the complex reality of eastern DRC's conflict' (Bernarding et al. 2015, p. 2).

The persistence of conflict is a matter of policies that display the incapacity of public administration to engage all foreign partners and companies in refraining from instigating conflicts with the intention to

wreak havoc, initiate hostilities and destabilise the country while creating opportunities to smuggle and illicitly traffic the country's precious minerals. The failure of public administration in this context affects the livelihoods of the population, as well as peace, stability and development.

■ Various conflict phases

The DRC has undergone multifaceted socio-political and economic crises, coupled with armed conflicts and major wars in Africa. Arnold (2023) has written extensively on the various phases of conflicts from the Republic of Congo, the Republic of Zaïre, to the DRC. The main protracted conflicts in the country and their implications for peace, security and stability of Congo-Kinshasa and the Great Lakes Region comprise several periods are discussed here.

□ Post-independence phase (30 June to 11 July 1960)

The period that immediately started after the accession of Belgium-Congo to independence is remembered for the large-scale political turmoil characterised by a succession of coups and power struggles between the first democratically elected President Joseph Kasa-Vubu and prime ministers and political foes. The country was threatened by tribalistic and regionalist secession movements backed by ideological tendencies of autonomisation of the country along ethnic lines and interests. During this period, approximately 10,000 Belgian troops were deployed in the country from 08 July 1960 in the wake of the army mutiny against Mobutu's government; this operation aimed to protect Belgian life and property in the province of Katanga (Arnold 2023). The government reached out to the UN Secretary-General on 10 July 1960 and asked for military aid to save Mobutu's regime, while Moïse Tshombe proclaimed the secession of the Katanga province from Congo-Kinshasa on 11 July 1960 (Arnold 2023).

□ The phase leading to the demise of the *Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution* and the mono-party system: 29 July 1978 to 30 September 1996

This was one of the most consequential phases of the Zaïre crises, during which major looting occurred in Kinshasa over unpaid emoluments to the military; the NC was convened. It was marked by the birth of a multi-party system after President Mobutu resigned as the commander-in-chief of the *Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution* [Popular Movement of Revolution] (MPR) on 24 April 1990, the Sovereign National Conference (SNC) ran its course to become the *Haut Conseil de la République-Parlement de Transition* [High Council of the Republic-Parliament of Transition] (HCR-PT), and Zaïre

begun the painful experience of political pluralism and social, political and economic turmoil that led to the First Congo War (1996–1997).

Early in this period, in Brussels in November 1978, the Council for the Liberation of the Congo-Kinshasa [*Conseil pour la Liberation du Congo-Kinshasa*] (CLC) was born in opposition to the government of President Mobutu. Other salient events that occurred include:

- On 06 February 1979, the Belgian government deployed 250 troops to support Mobutu's rule.
- In October 1982, the Congolese Front for the Restoration of Democracy [*Front Congolais pour le Rétablissement de la Démocratie*] (FCRD) was created in Brussels; it opposed Mobutu's administration.
- A group of Zaïrean rebels attacked the Shaba province from Tanzania on 13 November 1984 but were defeated by the government armed forces (Arnold 2023).

Because of political violence and human rights abuses, Belgium and the US government imposed economic sanctions against Mobutu's rule in 1990 and 1991, respectively (Arnold 2023). On 07 August 1991, the NC was convened to revise the constitution and prepare a calendar for general elections. The NC chose to take a different approach, which consisted of an investigation into the past three decades of Mobutu's rule as far as the economy, human rights and political assassinations were concerned. This put the NC into bitter opposition to Mobutu. The NC was closed by Mobutu and reconvened on 06 April 1992, but President Mobutu ordered that it be indefinitely closed on 21 June 1992. The SNC elected Étienne Tshisekedi as Prime Minister on 15 August 1992, but President Mobutu dismissed his government on 01 December 1992 after the swearing-in ceremony when he refused to acknowledge the president's authority according to the Constitution of the Republic of Zaïre.

After the NC's closure by Mobutu, violence erupted across the country as various CSOs and political parties demanded that Mobutu allow the NC to reconvene. The protest that ensued was brutally suppressed by government troops on 18 December 1992, which led to the deaths of at least eight individuals (Arnold 2023). This period is remembered for the looting triggered by the government soldiers who mutinied and rioted in Kinshasa on 28–30 January 1993, causing several deaths, including that of the French Ambassador Philippe Bernard (Arnold 2023).

□ Rwanda-Democratic Republic of the Congo hostilities: 01 October 1996 to 26 December 2002

Arnold (2023) reports the following key events that marked this period: On 01 October 1996, pro-Tutsi AFDL, an alliance made up of Rwandan, Ugandan,

Burundian and Congolese dissidents and disenfranchised minority groups – mainly the Rwandese Tutsi known as Banyamulenge launched a military campaign inside the Zaïre. This led to the First Congo War, also described as Africa’s First World War, which was both a civil war and international military campaigns within the Republic of Zaïre (now DRC), between 24 October 1996 and 16 May 1997. According to *The Conversation Africa* (2023):

The Banyamulenge live in eastern DRC in South Kivu province. They are mostly seen as affiliated to the Tutsi of the African Great Lakes region, and they speak a language close to Kirundi (Burundi) and Kinyarwanda (Rwanda). The Banyamulenge settled in South Kivu between the 16th and 18th centuries, having come from what are today Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. They are largely cattle keepers [...] They mostly occupy the southern part of South Kivu province: the Fizi, Mwenga and Uvira territories. (n.p.)

The historian Joseph Mutambo estimates that the Banyamulenge population was approximately 400,000 in 1997, and this figure is only an estimate as the DRC has not had an appropriate census since 1984 (*The Conversation Africa* 2023). The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the UN (OHCHR) (2024) observes:

The term ‘Banyamulenge’ came into popular use in the late 1960s to distinguish ethnic Tutsis historically based in South Kivu, the Banyamulenge, from those arriving from the 1960s onwards as refugees or economic migrants. Banyamulenge means ‘people of Mulenge’ and takes its name from a city in the Uvira territory with a very large Tutsi population. Over time, however, the use of the term Banyamulenge has become increasingly more generalised and has been used to designate all Zairian/Congolese and occasionally Rwandan Tutsis. (n.p.)³

The OHCHR (2024) reported the harrowing genesis of the two African World Wars fought in Zaïre/Congo and continue impacting peace, stability, security and geopolitics in the Great Lakes Region. About 150 Banyamulenge armed units departed from Zaïre to receive military formation in Rwanda in July 1996. The *Armée Patriotique Rwandaise* [The Rwandan Patriotic Army] (APR) and trained Banyamulenge units began infiltrating the province of South Kivu, using the Burundi-DRC border, to destabilise North Kivu, and they simultaneously entered the DRC via Uganda. According to the same UN Mapping Report, the first confrontations between the *Forces Armées Zaïroises* [Zaïrian Armed Forces] (FAZ) and those forces that were flowing into the DRC from Rwanda via Uganda and Burundi were furious: The violent battle took place on 31 August 1996 in the South Kivu province near Uvira. The fight increased in intensity and amplitude when the AFDL joined the fight on 18 October 1996. The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation (ADFL) was

3. See footnote 150 of the report.

formed in Kigali, though its *raison d'être* shifted from protecting Kigali power under the threats of the FDLR and Interahamwe to seeking to topple President Mobutu. The supplies of troops, ammunitions, weapons and logistics came from Rwanda, while the APR, the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) and the *Forces Armées Burundaises* [Burundian Armed Forces] (FAB) entered Zaïre in massive numbers and began capturing the provinces of North and South Kivu and the Ituri district (OHCHR 2024).

On 12 October 1996, Rwandan troops were deployed in the DRC against Hutu refugees and their militarised groups based in eastern Congo. The Rwandan government feared these groups would attempt to return to power in Kigali. The RDF, along with the AFDL, launched attacks against the Kibumbarefugee camp on 25 October 1996, resulting in the displacement of over 200,000 individuals, then moved on to Goma. Rwandan contingents, along with the AFDL, seized Goma on 02 November 1996. Led by Laurent Désiré (LD) Kabila, the AFDL revolted against Mobutu's government; Kigali sent troops to back the AFDL rebels who invaded Lemera, Minembwe and Munyaka in South Kivu between 06 and 10 October 1996. This attack resulted in the killing of 150 individuals.

The revolution took a significant turn in the run-up to the final assault on Kinshasa in December 1996, when the Kinshasa Government tried to counter the offensive from Kisangani and Kindu where the coalition of the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe fought (OHCHR 2024). The FAZ under the ailing President Mobutu and the intervention of a handful of mercenaries deployed by the Kinshasa Government proved ineffective in halting the progress of the AFDL, who reached Kisangani in May 1997 after a fierce fight between 01 and 10 March when the AFDL's advance to Kisangani had been halted. Commanded by James Kabarebe, a retired Rwandan army officer, the AFDL fought the FAZ for the control of Kisangani in a battle that had casualties on both sides. Anti-Mobutu Katangese soldiers (the ex-'Tigers') who had been involved in the Angolan government army since the 1970s and had reinforced the AFDL-APR-UPDF coalition troops with child soldiers commonly known as the '*kadogo*' [Swahili: 'small ones'], seized Kisangani on 15 March 1997 and Mbuji Mayi and Lubumbashi in early April (OHCHR 2024).

The Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian-AFDL-backed military forces achieved an important victory after the fall of Kenge in the current Kwango province; this opened up the opportunity for the revolution to reach the gates of Kinshasa, the capital of Zaïre/Congo, threatening President Mobutu's position. Subsequently, the AFDL-APR troops entered Kinshasa on 17 May 1997, and on 25 May, Laurent-Désiré Kabila of the AFDL declared himself president of the Republic of Zaïre, which he renamed the DRC (OHCHR 2024). The AFDL was led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, André Kisase Ngandu, Anselme Masasu Nindaga and Déogratias Bugera. Their coalition

ousted Mobutu Sese Seko from power, and Laurent-Désiré Kabila became the self-proclaimed new president of Zaïre, thus marking the end of the First Congo War.

The end of LD Kabila was precipitated by what was perceived as authoritarian measures, the belief that he reneged on the contracts signed with a number of foreign companies, and his refusal to cooperate with the special team sent by the UN Secretary-General to investigate the massacre of refugees in the East of the DRC; this cost LD Kabila his international allies (OHCHR 2024).

▣ **Conflict settlement and the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2002–2022***

At the Sun City Global and Inclusive Peace Talks on 19 April 2002, the members of the DRC Government and those of the Congolese Rally for Democracy, also known as the RCD, and the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), signed a power-sharing agreement facilitated by Ketumile Masire, who represented the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Delegates agreed to sign the peace deal on the basis of power-sharing and forming a '1 + 4 system' of governance that consisted of one president, Joseph Kabila, and four vice-presidents coming from the four major rebel groups, namely Jean Pierre Bemba from the MLC, and Azarias Ruberwa from the RCD. Thereby:

[T]he creation of five presidential positions arose out of the competition between President Joseph Kabila and his two vice presidents, Jean Pierre Mbemba and Azarias Ruberwa. The three [*did*] not [*enjoy*] a smooth relationship, especially during the early stage of the transition. There [*was*] continuous tension between the President and the two former rebel leaders. (Kabemba 2005)

The agreement involved a power-sharing deal; it was ratified on 17 December 2002 in Pretoria, South Africa. Approximately 3.5 million individuals died, and more than 3 million individuals were displaced amid the conflict. These statistics have certainly increased the war in the Kivu provinces, which continue to account for the increasing death toll since the Great Lakes Region has become the theatre of fierce hostilities that stem from identity conflicts among various social groups that culminated in the 1994 Rwanda genocide that cost the lives of over 800,000 Tutsis and approximately 200,000 Hutus.

A resolution of identity conflicts and the establishment of a united and integrated society, where social, distributive, political and economic justice prevail over discrimination and injustices of all kinds, are essential for fostering social cohesion in the countries of the region. The presence of various similar ethnic groups in other countries in the region, namely Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and the DRC, are inherited from the partition of

Africa and appear to justify hostilities that are engendered by the lack of security and safety of these ethnic groups, particularly the Hutu and the Tutsi, who used to be one people, owning one land, but unfortunately, were prejudiced by the colonisers who sowed the seeds of division. This resulted in genocide in Rwanda and mass killings in the DRC during the two World Wars of Africa fought in the Congo, which showed the spillover of the conflicts (Karbo & Mutisi 2011). As explained by Nyerere (2023), ethnicity was misused and exploited by the Germans and the Belgians to develop the castes, whereby the Tutsi became 'superiors' to the Hutu. The Tutsi received better education and positions that deepened the cleavages and, coupled with land and economic injustices, forced the migration of the Tutsi minority towards Uganda.

The identity conflicts that have historically fueled presidential assassinations in Rwanda and Burundi, along with the fear of Kigali being attacked by the Hutu FDLR and Interahamwe from Congo. The same concerns for the safety and nationality of the minority Tutsi populations in the DRC became the apparent justifications for the coalition of AFDL, APR, UPDF and FAB launching attacks against Mobutu's Zaïre, as well as for the ongoing fighting between the M23 rebels and the FARDC. Sustained armed conflicts in the east of the DRC have created much speculation about irredentism and the balkanisation of the country, which I will discuss later in this book.

Hostilities and gruesome atrocities that ensued from souring relationships between Kinshasa and Kigali deeply marked this time, during which Kigali and Kampala became fraught with mistrust, bellicose rhetoric and suspicions of irredentism and balkanisation. This perception and characterisation of the ongoing war in the eastern DRC by several observers have gained momentum as the military campaigns by the M23 and the FARDC do not abate amid the besiege and occupation of swathes of land in Masisi and Rutshuru districts by the M23 and their allies. Heinous human atrocities orchestrated by General Bosco Ntaganda are part of the horrific legacy of the M23 and the CNDP in the eastern DRC. Bosco Ntaganda is a convicted Tutsi war criminal and the former leader and military chief of staff of the CNDP militia group, which operated in the North Kivu province of the DRC. He was a former member of the Rwandan Patriotic Army and allegedly the founder of the Congolese Revolutionary Army (March 23 Movement – M23), which he created on 04 April 2012. He was nicknamed 'The Terminator' for his murderous instinct and the human atrocities he and his militias perpetrated in the DRC. He was sentenced to 30 years of imprisonment on 07 November 2019 and now serves his jail time in the Belgian International Criminal Court (ICC)'s penitentiary facility. While his freedom is restrained, his M23 continues to wage war against the DRC's government forces. It is important to rethink what approaches and

strategies public administration should adopt to contain the M23 rebellion and the fear of the dismemberment and balkanisation of the DRC's territory.

Following 7 years of civil wars and instability in eastern DRC, the Government soldiers and the UN contingents coalesced as a united front that drove Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels out from the city of Beni in northeastern DRC on 17 January 2014 (Arnold 2023). Other major security developments that unfolded during this period encompass the following:

- On 05 February 2014, the DRC parliament adopted the amnesty law that exempted former rebels from criminal charges pertaining to genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- On 19 March 2022, 14 individuals were murdered in an attack involving members of the Cooperative for Development of the Congo (CODECO) militia on persons displaced because of armed conflicts who lived in a camp in the Ituri province.
- On 08 May 2022, militants launched attacks on a mining camp near the town of Mongwalu in the Ituri province, which caused the deaths of more than 30 individuals.
- On 10 May 2022, militants killed at least 14 individuals living in a displaced persons' camp near the town of Fataki in the Ituri province.
- During this same period, thousands of individuals have been killed, and more than 1.5 million individuals have forcibly moved from their homes as a result of violence since December 2013 (Arnold 2023).

I have tried to draw a limited picture of the different stages of crises induced by violent conflicts that stem from both the failure of the state and the lack of consistent and effective approaches to resolving conflicts, and the repercussions of regional conflicts, particularly the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, that continue to reverberate in the ongoing and protracted violent conflict in the eastern part of the DRC. Despite the signing of the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* on 02 April 2003, conflicts in the country continue to decimate human lives and metastasise as do armed groups that remain the vectors of those militarised conflicts.

▣ Post-transition conflicts: 2003 to date

Mathy (2013) remarked that Joseph K Kabila, who came to power after the mysterious assassination of his father, brought hope for the future of Congo. All eyes were on the young Kabila, who took the reins of the DRC without any prior political experience or governance background. Nevertheless, the efforts he made for national reconciliation were fruitless, and the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* that led to the political transition (2003–2006), the accord also remembered

for its formula known as the 1+4 scheme, as well as the holding of elections (2006 and 2011), the security situation in eastern Congo remains precarious. Moreover ‘this part of the country has remained a real hotbed of conflict. Joseph Kabila has hardly taken on the mantle of leader of a nation hit by armed conflicts’^{3F4} (Mathy 2013, n.p.). The country still suffers from the *warlordism* phenomenon: from Jules Mutebusi to Laurent Nkunda, Batware Mihigo, Bosco Ntaganda, Sultani Makenga and more recently the M23 led by Bertrand Bisimwa (Mathy 2013), and the creation of the *Alliance du Fleuve Congo* (AFC) [River Congo Alliance (RCA)] by Corneille Nangaa. The unabating tragedy of the Congolese Wars has seen many characters (political and warlords) succeed each other on stage and under the passive gaze of the Congolese authorities who appear powerless to restore peace and security on the territory (Mathy 2013), reconquer the sways of land fallen to the insurgents and self-proclaimed revolutionary fronts such as the RCA. Over two decades later after the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, rapes of women persist, in the east of the country, civilian populations continue to perish while thousands of war survivors are internally displaced, and thousands of peasants continue to leave their homes to flee the raging fighting; Zaïre has been liberated from a dictatorship, to be plunged into hell as noted by Mathy (2013). This reflects the ‘curse’ or the unfortunate prediction of Mobutu that is well known, namely ‘*Après moi le deluge*’ [After me the deluge]. I will expand further on this under the section dedicated to the Mobutu administration.

□ **Metastasising M23 and the *River Congo Alliance*: 2022 to date**

The M23 insurrection movement continues to grow its muscles; it is fighting the DRC’s forces and holding large parts of the North Kivu province and portions of the South Kivu province it has conquered. Along with the M23, the AFC – a politico-military platform created in Nairobi on 15 December 2023 is sustaining the administrative disintegration of the country because large portions of land occupied by these forces and allies are administered by these belligerents. The official launch statement of the AFC read at the Serena Hotel in Nairobi was entitled, ‘Call for National Unity for the Stability of the Democratic Republic of Congo’ by its Coordinator, Mr Corneille Nangaa Yobeluo, former President of the Independent National Electoral Commission of the DRC (CENI) and President of the political party ‘Action for the Dignity of Congo and its People’ (ADCP) (Alliance Fleuve Congo 2024). The Constitution, written by the AFC, and the minutes of its Council constitute the first founding acts of the organisation. It is important to analyse the specific terms of these founding documents, as the alliance

4. Texts translated from French: <<https://alliancefleuvecongo.org/rdc-analyse-quest-ce-que-laafc/>>.

continues to wage war against the DRC government. The objectives of the AFC suggest an inclusion of all vital political forces, and concern the entire Congolese nation; it advocates the return to constitutional order by annulling the non-credible results of the December 2023 elections, restoration of democratic normality with the organisation of reliable and fair elections, definitive and lasting resolution of the problem of insecurity in the border provinces in order to protect the Congolese populations in their diversity, without giving this or that region a position of unjustified domination, pacification of the country by the unification of the peoples that make it up by the restoration of civic and social stability, through a genuine process of national reconciliation (Alliance Fleuve Congo 2024). The AFC, with its main ally, the M23, continues to take swaths of land and controls Goma (the capital city of North Kivu) and Bukavu (the capital city of South Kivu) while vowing to overthrow President Félix Antoine Tshisekedi's regime.

Analysing armed conflicts in the DRC and the modus operandi of militias and insurrectionist movements, Kayembe and Kadony (2024) observe those militarised conflicts have their roots in colonisation and are expanded by various factors not limited to election, mediocre governance systems, poverty, illicit exploitation and natural resources, and also the bankruptcy and mismanagement of the state. In addition, insurrections and rebellions in the DRC are driven by frustrations, insecurity, unresolved identity and citizenship contentions, unresolved land disputes, power struggles and some exogenous causes such as economic ambitions of neighbouring countries and the multinationals to access the rich reserves of strategic minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, known as the 3TG, also described as Conflict Minerals. On the constitution of military alliances and armed conflicts and the prospects of ending those conflicts in the DRC, Emmanuel and Douceur (2024) argue:

Indeed, yesterday's allies are today's enemies and today's ally risks being tomorrow's enemy. On the other hand, the birth of the new rebellion led by the Congo River Alliance raises fears about the future of the DRC. The probable victory of the AFC would be the direct consequence of existing frustrations both in the political sphere of the regime and in the security environment. A negotiation between the Congolese government and the AFC would be the least costly and least problematic outcome for the restoration of peace. But in this case, it will be a reiteration of the history of the AFDL of LD. Kabila. (p. 1)

It is important to warn that alliances are built by armed groups and countries interested in the DRC's natural resources; however, such fronts based on the illegal exploitation and trade of the DRC's precious natural stones may be ephemeral. The DRC's public administration should also consider non-military approaches to halt spiralling, endemic and metastasising armed conflicts and armed factionalism.

■ Social context

An evaluation and monitoring report by the World Bank (2023) ranked the DRC 164 out of 174 countries on the 2020 Human Capital Index; this reflects its fragility and the development constraints induced by decades of conflict. In addition:

DRC's Human Capital Index is 0.37, which is below the SSA average of 0.4. This means that a Congolese child born today can expect to achieve only 37% of their potential, compared to what would have been possible if they had benefited from a full, quality schooling experience and optimal health conditions. (The World Bank 2023, n.p.)

Low child survival rates under age five, high child stunting and low quality of education contribute to the low score of the DRC's human capital index (The World Bank 2023). The country's stunting rate⁵ is rated at 42% of children under age five, the highest stunting rate in sub-Saharan Africa, and malnutrition is reported as the root cause of nearly half of child deaths for children below the age of five (The World Bank 2023). The prevalence of stunting in the DRC has not shown a downtrend tendency during the past 20 years, as has been the case with other African countries; on the contrary, because of the very high fertility rate in the country, the number of stunted children has gone up by 1.5 million (The World Bank 2023).

The DRC has experienced multiple forced displacements of IPs from their ancestral lands; besides this, the World Bank (2023) reports discrimination and the lack of access to basic services such as health care and education. Other social ills that affect the country are the unresolved identity crisis in the east over the Banyamulenge – the Tutsis of Rwandan descent who claim Congolese nationality (Court 2013; Stearns & Verweijen 2013) – and the land disputes between the Teke and the Yaka that have caused havoc in the Mai-Ndombe province, causing the blockade of roads between Kinshasa and Bandundu, the capital city of the Kwilu province (HRW 2023c). The DRC needs an appropriate system of governance and policies to tackle the underlying causes of identity-driven conflicts that have turned violent and continue to undermine durable peace and stability in the country. Good governance implies managing the drivers of discrimination, social marginalisation and deprivation of the rights and lands of IPs, resolving identity conflicts and creating an environment where peace prevails.

5. Stunting is 'the impaired growth and development that children experience from poor nutrition, repeated infection, and inadequate psychosocial stimulation. Children are defined as stunted if their height-for-age is more than two standard deviations below the WHO Child Growth Standards median'. See <<https://www.who.int/news/item/19-11-2015-stunting-in-a-nutshell>>.

The DRC's public administration can tap into the role that the array of IPs plays to preserve the country's cultural diversity and promote viable resource management practices, as pointed out by the World Bank (2023):

While efforts are being made to recognize and protect the rights of IPs, much more needs to be done to ensure their full participation in society and the protection of their traditional ways of life. (n.p.)

It is evident that the DRC has sufficient resources to build peace via various structures, including the IPs, civil society and public administration.

As far as access to education is concerned, over the past two decades, there has been some improvement in making education more accessible, particularly for girls at earlier ages; primary net enrolment increased by 50%, from 52% to 78%, between 2000 and 2017 (The World Bank 2023). Nonetheless, the school completion rate remains low at 75%, and the standard and quality of education are substantively poor, with approximately 97% of 10-year pupils not being able to read and understand a basic text – this is characterised as *learning poverty* (The World Bank 2023).

The Congolese youth is the most sacrificed social category, deprived of quality education, livelihoods and economic opportunities. They are excluded from reform processes in various sectors of life and left to themselves as far as their education is concerned, such as in paying education fees and learning in the most deplorable conditions – whether at the primary, secondary or higher learning levels. To support this argument, I refer to the report released by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) data, which states:

According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS data), the primary school completion rate was at 79 percent in 2021 for girls and 86 percent for boys. However, the completion rates for lower secondary education reveal a considerable drop-off, with only 51.4 percent of girls and 63.5 percent of boys. Gross enrollment rates for secondary education indicate a gender gap, with 44 percent of females enrolling compared to 70 percent of males. Low educational attainment especially for girls is due in part to relatively high levels of child marriage and early childbearing. Gross enrollment in tertiary education was at 5 percent for women in 2020 versus 8 percent for men. (UNESCO 2024, n.p.)

Unemployment rate indications show 8.0% in 2020 (The Global Economy 1991–2020; World Bank 2020). To substantiate this statement, we refer to the report by the Global Economy (1991–2020) on the DRC (youth unemployment, ages 15–24):

For that indicator, we [The Global Economy] provide data for Democratic Republic of the Congo from 1991 to 2020. The average value for Democratic Republic of the Congo during that period was 6.11 percent with a minimum of 4.69 percent in 1991 and a maximum of 8.43 percent in 2013. The latest value from 2020 is 8 percent. For comparison, the world average in 2020 based on 182 countries is 15.90 percent. This justifies the constant and rapid increase in their number at present. These take different forms including citizen movement, community dynamics, dynamic proximity, etc. (n.p.)

A report by Macrotrends (1991–2020) displays the following indicators regarding youth unemployment in the DRC (youth unemployment ‘refers to the share of the labour force ages 15–24 without work but available for and seeking employment’):

Congo, Dem. Rep. youth unemployment rate for 2019 was 7.98%, a 0.08% increase from 2018; Congo, Dem. Rep. youth unemployment rate for 2018 was 7.90%, a 0.15% decline from 2017; Congo, Dem. Rep. youth unemployment rate for 2017 was 8.05, a 0.16% decline from 2016; Congo, Dem. Rep. youth unemployment rate for 2016 was 8.21%, a 0.05% decline from 2015. (Macrotrends 1991–2020, n.p.)

Congolese youths are disenfranchised in a country where opportunities are taken based on clientelism and bribes. They become involved in activism for the rule of law, democratic processes and the promotion of global welfare. They are engaged in forging the path of well-being for all in a country afflicted with the fatigue of the last five decades of anarchy, dictatorship and pauperisation, in which most adults have become spectators and political retirees.

In the face of these democratic slippages that cause recurrent crises, alternative models are proving important. Models of direct democracy that go beyond the simple *national-populism* strategy (Zacharie 2013) would impose themselves as an alternative to empowering citizens’ participation in power and state governance by placing them at the centre of policymaking. While great progress has been made in making education available to more children, more efforts are needed to open economic opportunities to all, by empowering women specifically, especially in reducing high rates of gender-based violence (GBV) and discrimination as reported by the World Bank (2023). The same document also notes that only 16.8% of women in the DRC have successfully completed secondary school, which represents approximately half of the rate of men who reach the end of their secondary education (The World Bank 2023).

In terms of women’s labour force participation, participation is relatively high in the DRC at almost 62%, mostly in agriculture, but their earnings are considerably less than those of men; they own fewer assets than men. The 2021 DRC Gender Diagnostic Report singled out three main factors that contribute to persistent and important gender gaps, namely land control, voice and agency (The World Bank 2023).

The DRC’s health care systems have been seriously affected by protracted conflicts, as well as the continued complex humanitarian crises in the world (The World Bank 2023). The complexity of the social situation and its ramifications for the well-being of women and children demand compounded strategies that public administration should develop and implement to ensure there is social welfare and social security for all, and that social goods are equitably distributed among the population, without discrimination.

■ Economic context and pathways to development

The DRC is one of the wealthiest countries in the world in natural resources – if not the richest. The economy of the Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo was largely based on the extraction of and trade in rubber, sugar cane, copper and diamonds. The colonial administration of Leopold II milked the Congo Free State and illegally profited from the DRC's wealth to the benefit of Western countries. Naniuzeyi (1999, p. 674) avers: 'Leopold II's regime of outright robbery put a strong emphasis on the extraction of wealth for transfer to Belgium'. From the Congo Free State to the DRC, the land of Kongo, through several name changes, remained poor and underdeveloped. Nothing has changed since the colonial era. Naniuzeyi (1999) observes:

Indeed, the imposition of a legal system by the colonial administration and the establishment of the *Force Publique* [colonial army] resulted in the submission of the local population to the colonial authority. The presence of a coercive colonial administration coupled by European capitalists contributed to transform the Zairian economy by making it responsive to the needs of Belgium and other western countries. (p. 674)

By 1960, at independence, the majority of the economy was overseen and managed by foreign companies, including the Belgian *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga* (UMHK), which had assets worth about US\$430 million in 1965 (Economy of the DRC 2023). After his military coup in 1965, Mobutu made several policy blunders that triggered a downturn in the economy's path. Paradoxically, the expectation raised by the ascendancy of Mobutu to power – the new hope experienced by the Zaïrean masses who were fed up with the selfishness of the previous post-colonisation administration (Naniuzeyi 1999) – vanished with Mobutu's kleptocratic, insensitive and insufferable administration.

Firstly, Mobutu planned the nationalisation of the UMHK, which was the biggest source of Congolese governmental revenue and the largest source of the country's foreign exchange earnings; secondly, he initiated 'Zaïreanisation' (Economy of the DRC 2023). A compromise was found in 1967 amid the tension between the Zaïrean government and the UMHK over the nationalisation of this company; as a result, the UMHK operations were handed to the *Générale des Carrières et des Mines* (Gécamines), a newly created company, but its daily operations were managed by a private management company formed by the former UMHK (Economy of the DRC 2023). Then followed Zaïreanisation whereby expatriates' businesses were disposed of by Mobutu's administration and handed over to MPR members of Parliament. Mobutu acquired private economies via the Zaïreanisation:

[T]o amass a huge personal fortune and to create a vast patronage network. In the 1970s and 1980s, he also portioned out control over state enterprises to

shifting networks of associates whose loyalty he needed. (Economy of the DRC 2023, n.p.)

During his administration, 'the economy became an adjunct of Mobutu's political machine' (Economy of the DRC 2023).

The country has large reserves of mineral resources that constitute the backbone of its economy; these mineral deposits and the mining sector make up nearly nine-tenths of total exports (Economy of the DRC 2023). Mineral resources are scattered throughout the country in different provinces. In the former Katanga, the chief source of metallic tin, resources also include copper, cobalt, zinc, cassiterite, manganese, coal, silver, cadmium and germanium; other minerals are gold, palladium, uranium and platinum (Economy of the DRC 2023). The following minerals are found in the Lake Kivu provinces: Cassiterite, columbo-tantalite, wolframite (a source of tungsten), beryl, gold and monazite (a phosphate of the cerium metals and thorium), as well as methane, carbonic and nitrogen natural gases (Economy of the DRC 2023). In south-central Congo, we find deposits of iron ore and gem-quality diamonds; there are industrial diamonds in the central part of the country along with gold and coal; and there are prospective deposits of gold, monazite and diamonds in the northeast and the northwestern regions (Economy of the DRC 2023). The coastal Congo region is rich in bauxite, gold and offshore deposits of petroleum; the limestone deposits are considered to be the richest in Africa (Economy of the DRC 2023).

Despite its rare mineral resources, the DRC is portrayed as a geological scandal (De Wit, Guillocheau & De Wit 2015; Goosens 2009). What should be the source of economic growth and sustainable development – its wealth – has unfortunately become a curse: the 'curse of gold' (HRW 2005) or the 'curse of coltan' (Oboth 2011). This curse manifests through the suffering and misery inflicted on the Congolese, particularly in the east and northeast of the country, because of armed conflicts and the plundering of the DRC's rare minerals by proxies from neighbouring countries. According to a report on 'the rare minerals' of the DRC elaborated by the country's *Service Géologique* and the Ministry of Mines, gathered from archives and statistics of the UN Economic and Social Council and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (1968–2002): 'The resources of beryllium, rare earth (monazite, euxenite), niobium, tantalum (columbo-tantalite, pyrochlore), zirconium, titanium and germanium are successively reviewed' (n.p.). The DRC abounds in 'rare-earth metals [*which*] are crucial for the clean-energy transition' (The Editors 2023), and these have become the source of insecurity as damaging fights are ongoing over their control and exploitation (The Editors 2023). These minerals include nickel, cobalt, lithium, coltan and others that are wrecking lives, the people and their land, jeopardising the territorial integrity of the country.

Besides the mines, the DRC has forest reserves that cover more than half of the country and are considered among the largest in Africa (Economy of the DRC 2023). In addition, the country contains a wide variety of games that could yield a great deal of foreign currency through tourism. Unfortunately, the DRC is plagued by years of corruption, exacerbated by armed conflict and wars waged against it by neighbouring countries (Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi) because of its mineral and natural resources.

The manufacturing sector accounts for a small proportion of the country's GDP, and it has been restricted by several factors: difficulties in obtaining machinery and spare parts and struggling with an unreliable electricity supply (Economy of the DRC 2023). The manufacturing industries used to be divided into two main categories, the first being consumption industries for producing 'processed foods, beverages, cigarettes, cloth, printed material, hosiery, shoes and leather, metallic fabrics, and such chemical products as soap, paints, rubber, and plastics' (Economy of the DRC 2023). The second category was made up of supply and equipment industries that 'include spinning and weaving plants, chemical factories, and facilities to produce machinery, transport materials, nonmetallic minerals, and wood products' (Economy of the DRC 2023). The country still has an operational petroleum refinery near Moanda that was opened in 1968 (Economy of the DRC 2023).

The DRC has a dense hydrography consisting of 'rivers, lakes, swamps, and [an] ocean contain[ing] vast reserves of fish' (Economy of the DRC 2023). The country also has hydroelectric resources that constitute nearly one-eighth of the world capacity and probably half of Africa's potential capacity – a significant potential produced by the many rapids along the rivers of the Congo system, and the hydroelectric dam on the Congo River at Inga Falls, close to the town of Matadi (Economy of the DRC 2023). Inga Dam was completed in 1972; it provides the heaviest concentration of hydroelectric power consumed in Kinshasa and in the mining industries (Economy of the DRC 2023). Despite the DRC's powerful hydroelectric capacity and immense potential, the majority of Congolese do not have access to electricity and rely on firewood, power generators, solar power and battery-dependent lights. Most depend on firewood as a source of domestic fuel. The neighbouring Republic of the Congo has been linked to the country's power grid since the 1950s (Economy of the DRC 2023).

Finance and trade are regulated by the national central bank, the Bank of Congo, based in Kinshasa, along with other commercial, savings and development banks (Economy of the DRC 2023). Mineral resources remain important products in the country's total exports, with diamonds providing nearly one-half of trade revenue; crude petroleum, cobalt and copper represent the DRC's most precious exports; coffee used to be the country's

most significant agricultural export product (Economy of the DRC 2023). The DRC relies heavily on imported 'foodstuffs, consumer goods, machinery (largely mining and transport equipment), and fuel' (Economy of the DRC 2023), and the country faces an ever-growing negative balance of trade. The country's trade has been expanded beyond its traditional trade partner, Belgium, to include the European Union (EU), South Africa and China (Economy of the DRC 2023).

According to the World Bank (2023), the DRC's GDP peaked at 8.9% in 2022, and the GDP growth is expected to reach 6.8% in 2023; the main driver of growth, the mining sector, is projected to slow to 11.7 in 2023 (from 22.6 in 2022); the non-mining sectors (particularly services) could grow by 4.2% in 2023, from 2.7% in 2022; the rise in inflation is expected to be faster – to reach 20.7% (period average) in 2023, from 9.2% in 2022, and this inflation hike is projected to occur amid an increased cost of imports and a depreciating currency.

Other projections include the current account deficit, which could stand at a large 4.7 of GDP in 2023, in reaction to higher prices of imports, and never-ending deterioration in the terms of trade; there are expectations of inflows from external financing to drive the accumulation of international reserves, actually considered to reach 10 weeks of imports in 2023 (The World Bank 2023). The consistent unexpected spending on security and elections would take the fiscal deficit to 1.3 of GDP in 2023 amid a relief in revenue performance (about 0.3 percentage points lower than 2022) (The World Bank 2023) while medium-term growth prospects appear favourable, despite the persistence of 'considerable vulnerabilities related to commodity price shocks and supply chain disruptions [...] GDP growth is projected to decelerate to 6.2 by 2025 gradually' (The World Bank 2023, n.p.). Poverty and inequality are expected to be exacerbated by the ongoing economic repercussions of the Russia-Ukraine War, the global food cost rise, and higher oil prices; these could 'exert stronger pressure on fiscal deficit, inflation, and household consumption thus exacerbating poverty and inequality' (The World Bank 2023, n.p.). Furthermore, in a persistent environment marked by conflicts in the east, the country's immediate concern is the consolidation of security and seeking to establish political and macroeconomic stability while simultaneously scaling up necessary reforms that are underway to ensure sustainable growth (The World Bank 2023).

■ Political context

The World Bank (2023) reports that after over six decades of independence, the DRC never had an experience of peaceful transition of power – until January 2019, with the accession to power of Félix Tshisekedi in the wake of his win in the December 2018 presidential election. He succeeded Joseph

Kabila, who had ruled the country for 18 years. The first three decades after independence were marked by military coups, assassination of political rivals, secessions, coup plots and rebellions that culminated with the ousting of President Mobutu on 17 May 1997 and the assassination of LD Kabila on 16 January 2001. Mobutu consolidated his power by publicly hanging his political opponents in Léopoldville (presently Kinshasa) on Pentecost, 02 June 1966. The fallen heroes were former Prime Minister Évariste Kimba and three members of his cabinet: Jérôme Anany (Defence Minister), Emmanuel Bamba (Finance Minister) and Alexandre Mahamba (Minister of Mines and Energy).

Some progress seems to be made by the administration of Félix Tshisekedi: Some indications appear to define a new social contract between the state and its citizens, especially with the rollout of free primary education, apparent transparency and public sector reforms, efforts to provide universal health coverage, and steps being taken to resolve conflicts and bring stability in the east (The World Bank 2023). Notwithstanding the government's commitment towards conflict prevention and stabilisation, pockets of insecurity in the country still persist, and the eastern provinces are the most impacted (The World Bank 2023). After the successful polls conducted in December 2023, despite some negative incidents and allegations of election irregularities, the country remains united in its support of Félix Tshisekedi's administration and its commitment to booting out all rebels and salvaging the country's territorial integrity.

The fear of dramatic conflict resumption after the progressive withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC, known as MONUSCO, is no longer there because SADC troops have been deployed since 15 December 2023 to back the DRC government troops in their struggle to restore peace, stability and security in the war-torn and conflict-stricken eastern provinces, where armed conflicts, cross-border insurgencies and attacks by the M23 rebels are recurrent and ongoing. The UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC was forced out by popular pressure and disenchantment in the face of resurgent attacks by armed groups who continue to occupy some parts of the eastern territories with the backing of the Rwandan troops. The MONUSCO withdrawal takes place after being present in the DRC since 2005, with over 15,000 peacekeepers having operated in the vast country.

The joint military operation between the DRC and the SADC Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) gives hope that one day the DRC will experience lasting peace and find its way to stability, security and sustainable development. However, public administration must strive to be effective and initiate realistic and needed reforms aimed at delivering services and livelihoods for the majority of the Congolese people who continue to experience deprivations of all kinds.

■ Irredentism or balkanisation

Irredentism and balkanisation are two concepts that have often been associated with conflicts in the DRC, fuelling ethnic tension and have been one of the narratives sustained by the Congolese political class and its diaspora. The existing literature that links irredentism to the DRC's protracted instability presents different hypotheses. Danfulani (2015) uses irredentism as one of the characteristics of President Mobutu's rule and administration, along with 'predation, clientelism, repression, and suppression of citizens' fundamental human rights' (p. 275). Falode (2005) notes that the term 'irredentism' derives from the word 'irredenta', which alludes to the late-19th-century struggle led by Italian patriots in their attempts 'to redeem or reincorporate into Italy certain neighbouring territories having a predominantly Italian population' (p. 1). According to Walter S Jones' thoughts, laid out in *The Logic of International Relations* (c1991), irredentism occurs in the context of geographic demarcation when the boundaries do not take into consideration the natural lines of division between different peoples. Jones deduced that:

[P]olitical lines often are not congruent with ethnogeographic regions. Irredentism then is the struggle of such people for reunification, and *irredenta* is a territory where a portion of the nation resides that is regarded as lost or stolen. (cited in Falode 2005, p. 2)

Ambrosio (2024) defines irredentism thus:

Irredentism is the process by which a part of an existing state breaks away and merges with another, whereas in secession merging does not take place. The importance of irredentism in international relations is based on the intersection between nationalism and the causes of war; because such a movement invariably means taking land from another state, irredentist claims have been known to provoke ethnic conflicts and territorial aggression. The continued discord between countries and states means that the potential for irredentist wars remains serious. (n.p.)

There have been many allegations about the hidden reasons for the war waged against the DRC, particularly on the part of Rwanda and Uganda. Irredentism is relevant in international relations because it explains and justifies the existence of inter-state conflicts in Africa – and can be seen as a major catalyst of those conflicts; this concept can be understood as:

[A] situation whereby a sovereign State 'A' tries to extend its territorial reach into the territory of another sovereign state, which one can now take to be State 'B'. (Falode 2005, p. 2)

Irredentism can materialise when State 'A' attempts to integrate a part of State 'B' or its entirety into State 'A' (Falode 2005). Irredentism is not only an African occurrence but is common in history; it has affected Europe, Asia and the Middle East since the 17th century and Africa in the 20th century (Falode 2005). In Africa, this tendency has been observed in the

claims made by Nigeria and Cameroon regarding the Bakassi peninsula; in Eritrea and Ethiopia over the ownership of Badme, which has been the driver of the virulent Eritrean-Ethiopian conflict; in claims made by Ghana over the Togolese Ewe land which Ghana sought to reunite with the mainland; in the perception in Morocco regarding Mauritania and the Saharawi People's Democratic Republic (SADR) as being Moroccan soil; in Somalia claiming that Djibouti is Somaliland and part of the greater Somalia; and last but not least, in Senegal regarding Gambia as being a separatist state of Senegal (Falode 2005). Falode concludes, referring to Jones' assertion, that 'a latent irredentist feeling is a potent chemical reaction waiting for the right catalyst and is always, therefore, a potential cause of war' (Falode 2005, p. 9).

Furthermore, boundary disputes are common and ongoing in many African countries. The case of Kenya and Somalia is still remembered (Kromm 1967), and irredentism has been associated with ethnicity in central Africa, which has also inflamed conflict (Newbury 1997). Both ethnicities and identities are intertwined because the boundaries that separate people with the same cultural identity across different geographic spaces or countries are often disputed and called into question. Boundaries denote 'a soft definition – as culturally constructed and as historically fluid – as well as a hard definition – as a precise expression of legal differentiation' (Newbury 1997, pp. 218–219). Ethnic identities, on the other hand, can be understood as:

A 'soft' definition, as culturally defined identities, malleable over time and contextual in their meanings, or one can perceive ethnicity in a 'hard' form, in the model of biologically determined features, unchanging and unchangeable. (p. 219)

The dynamics of boundaries and ethnicities require careful consideration, as these categories are contentious and sensitive. They can trigger intractable conflicts, violence and war, similar to issues related to land and the control of valuable mineral and natural resources. This conglomeration of facts, fears and ambitions by different political leaders in Africa can be resolved via dialogue and diplomacy to prevent further escalation of conflicts and large-scale violence in the Great Lakes Region and other regions of Africa entangled in protracted conflicts and recurring violence.

The prevailing ethnic identity and border disputes that apparently justify the existence of the insurrectionist M23 in the DRC, as well as the narratives of irredentism and balkanisation, are critical and must be managed via a regional conference on the DRC. Newbury (1997) points out:

If one contends that a 1996 (or 1910) boundary is invalid because it was constructed and ephemeral and based on colonial force, then can one also claim that a 1600 boundary based on conquest and ephemeral state presence is somehow valid and supersedes that of today? No one claims that this area west

of the Rift Valley was central to Rwandan territory, only that it was conquered. (p. 219)

The argument he puts forward does not entail validation of the boundary as drawn in 1910; on the contrary, he throws open the questions over the historical claims made by the Rwandan state to this region – the claims apparently based on similar premises by which the 1910 boundary is refuted (Newbury 1997). Thus, the connotations of territorial and social identities and boundaries are dynamic and not strictly taken as a hard definition; to avoid another scramble for Africa, the term ‘frontiers’ may therefore be better than ‘boundaries’, as frontiers ‘contain within them connotations of both a contested past and a hopeful future’ (Newbury 1997, p. 219).

Because of historical ties between the same ethnic groups that have found themselves across two or multiple countries, the management of the identity, rights to the citizenry and privileges of those populations matter a great deal to their countries of origin. The case of Russophones living in Ukraine has been a contentious issue and one of the factors that triggered the Russia-Ukraine War, along with the geopolitical expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Similarly, the Congo-African War (1996–2003) was prompted by the citizenship denied to the Rwandophones established in the DRC. As argued by Newbury (1997), boundaries and ethnicities are essential in understanding irredentism; he notes:

[B]oundaries and ethnicities are constructed and fluid over time – in different ways and at different speeds, to be sure, but nevertheless as products of social perceptions as well as of external power. They are not totally malleable – at any given moment boundaries can be significant; so too, of course, can ethnic identities. (p. 218)

While identity, ethnicity, citizenship and countries’ boundaries were imposed in Africa either by the Berlin Conference or by historical conquests coupled with the fallouts of the World Wars, it is important not to underestimate the changing contemporary geopolitics and geoeconomics. The uneven distribution of wealth among states globally (whether this wealth is because of oil, agricultural advantages or mineral resources) is a multiplier factor driving conflicts and wars across the world. Several regions of Africa (the Horn of Africa, the Niger Delta region, the Sahel and the Great Lakes region) have not been spared from irredentist tendencies, nor from disputes triggered by economic interests.

Thus, it is critical to take a robust stance and develop realistic and vigorous strategies that aim to tackle any facets of irredentism to prevent the worst, namely conflagration (Falode 2005). Public administration in African countries should remain alert and take precautionary measures to prevent Africa from being set ablaze. Therefore, the DRC should develop policies that are backed by domestic legislation to prevent its balkanisation and deter irredentist feelings in its neighbours. Finally, Falode (2005) argues:

Such effort [counter-irredentist strategies] must include the formation of a boundary commission in each and every of the African states with the sole *raison d'être* of trying to provide a comprehensive structural, legal and accurate delineation of the different African States. (p. 13)

To back Falode's perspective, I would like to refer to three great thinkers, namely former Tanzanian President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Kambarage (Nyerere 2023), former President Thabo Mbeki (2023) and Professor Patrick Otieno Lumumba (2024). This will be followed by some peacebuilding perspectives to be considered by the DRC's public administration to prevent the partitioning of the country and ongoing identity-related violence and hostilities in the east of the DRC. Post-independence map of Africa after its invasion and colonisation by the seven Western European powers, namely the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Germany and Belgium, while Ethiopia and Liberia stood out during the era of 'New Imperialism' (1833–1914). During this period, nearly 90% of the African Continent was taken by the colonisers; this fate grew from the 1884 Berlin Conference, during which European colonisation and the slave trade were regulated.

The geographic frontiers inherited from that time should not be subjected to alterations. Each country should retain its full sovereignty and territorial integrity to avoid setting the continent ablaze because we find people with similar cultural features (language, morphology, identity and historical roots) in two or more African countries. A case in point is the Maasai or Wamasai – a Nilotic ethnic group living in northern, central and southern parts of Kenya and northern Tanzania. They share the same features with other Nilotic groups, including the Nilotic language family. The Dinka, Kalenjin and Nuer are some of those groups with the same languages. In addition to that, the Kongo people or Bisi Kongo inhabited the Kingdom of Kongo in the pre-colonisation era. They belong to the Bantu ethnic group who live along the Atlantic coast of Central Africa that covers parts of the western and northern DRC, southwestern Republic of the Congo, eastern Angola and southwest Gabon. The Kingdom of Kongo was well-organised and administered in the 15th century. All these ethnic groups owned the land they inhabited and shared the same identity. After the scramble for Africa, those people found themselves in partitioned countries where they live today. Irredentism should not even be envisioned by any administrations across the continent, nor be pursued without triggering large-scale violence and unsustainable instability. Discussing the crisis of the eastern DRC, Nyerere (2023) insisted that all the borders inherited from the post-colonial era must be respected to avoid setting Africa ablaze.

After Germany was defeated in the WWII, the DRC retained its integrity, while Rwanda and Burundi were subjected to territorial reconfiguration. This period anticipated the independence of many African countries as the

European colonial hegemony crumbled during the Cold War, but the legacy of the Scramble for Africa remained at the heart of the geopolitics, geostrategy and economies of African countries. The legacy of the invasion of Africa left identity crises as various ethnic groups found themselves unnaturally divided (and remain so today).

The respect for borders and the people living within them after decolonisation and independence is essential to the durable stability of the continent. Nyerere also raised the issue of the Banyamulenge, which is contentious and at times used to justify the insurrection by the M23 over their Congolese/Zairean identity. Former South African president Thabo Mbeki joined the narratives of Julius Nyerere, contending that the refusal by President Mobutu to allow Zairean citizenship to the Banyamulenge has not eased the tensions between the Rwandophone communities that have settled in the DRC and local communities (Mbeki 2023). Professor PO Lumumba agreed with Mbeki and Nyerere on the artificial nature of African countries' post-independence borders by acknowledging the Banyamulenge as a Congolese population, because they believed they had been established in Congo, particularly – as argued by Nyerere (2023) – as part of the Kingdom of Rwanda that was divided and shared between Belgium and the Germans after WWII.

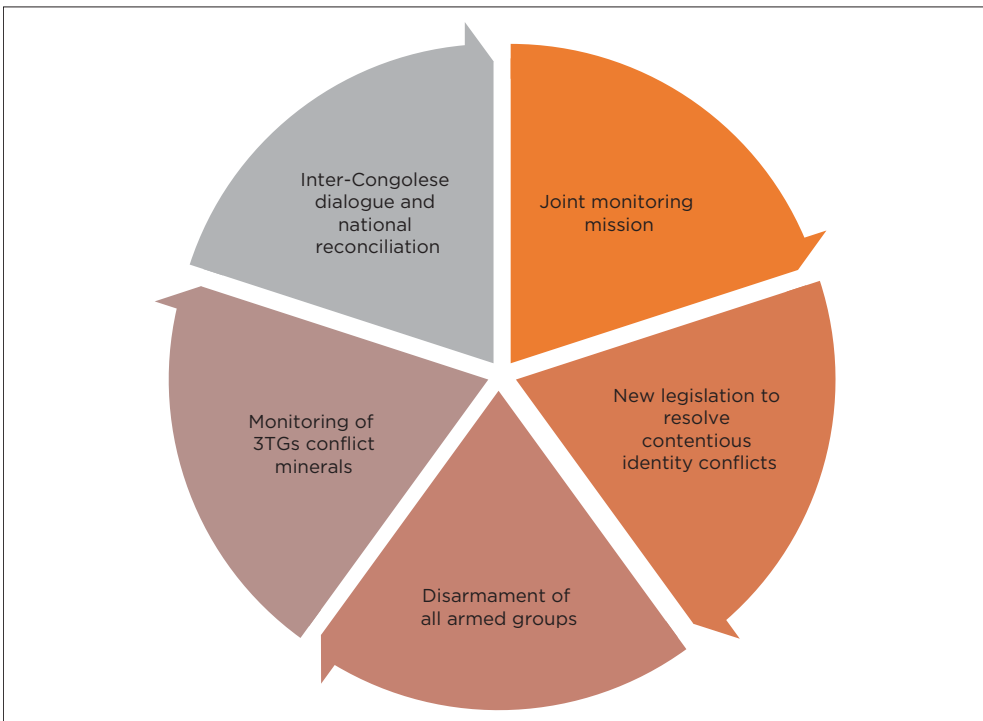
These leaders and scholars advocate unconditional and absolute recognition of the Congolese citizenship of the Rwandophone populations, particularly the Banyamulenge, as part of the solution to the identity-driven conflicts in the eastern DRC. For instance, Lumumba suggests the following actions as ways of bringing peace and stability to the war-torn Kivu provinces:

1. Disarm all fighting forces (M23 and others) and integrate them into the FARDC or the police services.
2. Create a joint monitoring commission to monitor the process and ensure that warring factions stop their rebellion.
3. Recognise the citizenship of the Banyamulenge.

Mbeki (2023) advocates for the strengthening of the government so that its imprints are visible in the east and in other parts of the country that have been taken over by the M23 and other rebel groups. He further encourages the central government of the DRC to revitalise the process of reintegrating the M23 into the DRC's regular forces (after a previous attempt collapsed), and he urges the DRC Government to improve its capacity to govern the east and to negotiate an agreement to repatriate the forces involved in the commission of the 1994 genocide. Mbeki refers to the presence of Azarias Ruberwa at the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* where he represented the Banyamulenge community.

Ongoing conflict involving the M23 insurrectionists is justified by the issue of nationality. Buzard (2021) studied the prevailing nationality contention of the Banyamulenge that triggered the great Congo Wars (1996–2003) and suggested legislation that will recognise the Banyamulenge Congolese nationality that has been granted, withdrawn and reinstated (Buzard 2021; Jackson 2007). It is a great responsibility of the DRC's public administration to critically examine this matter from the perspective of both human rights law and international and domestic legislation to settle this question once and for all (refer to Figure 1.3).

Reflecting on the question of identity evoked by Nyerere, Mbeki and Lumumba as a contentious matter that fuels conflicts should not undermine the other truth pertaining to the exploitation of precious strategic minerals that have been exploited and illicitly smuggled from the country with the complicity of some Congolese and multinationals via Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania. It is evident that protracted conflict in the DRC is a complex issue that does not stem solely from an identity crisis. It also involves economic motivations, as reported by the US House of Representatives (2010), Bafilemba, Mueller and Lezhnev (2014) and Garrett (2014), and suggests the need to consider the approach to 'conflict minerals' (Radley & Vogel 2015).



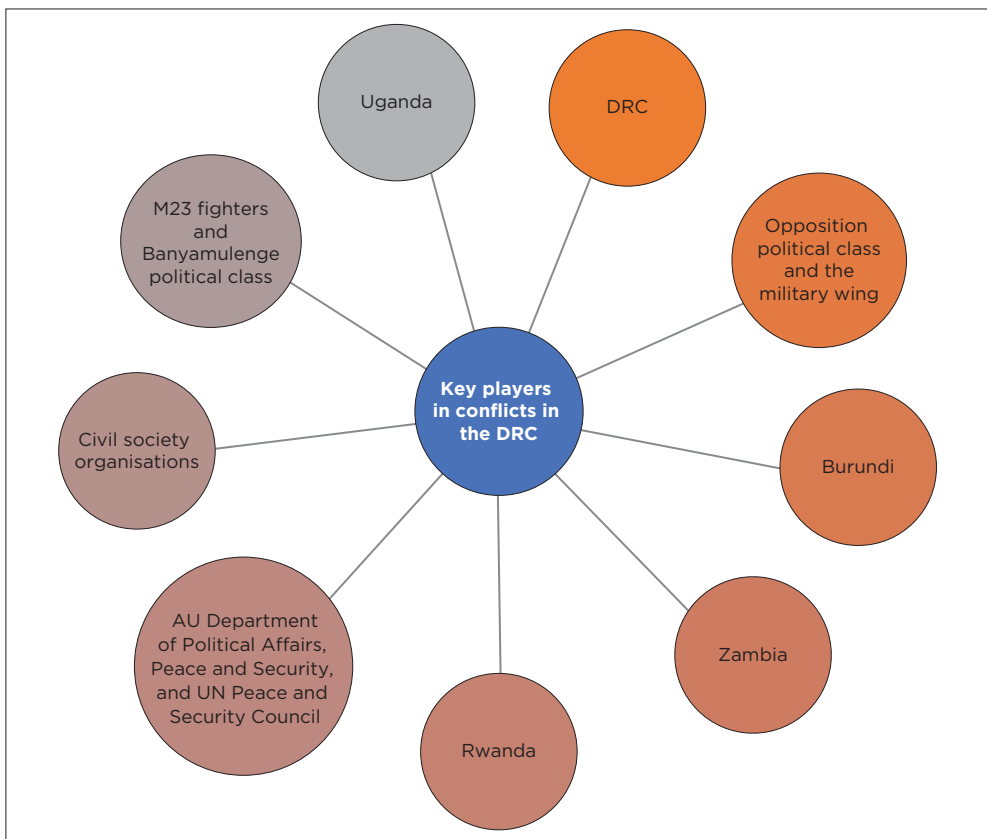
Source: Author's own work.

Key: 3TG, tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold.

FIGURE 1.3: Cycle for prospective solutions to conflict resolution and instability.

It is necessary and imperative to convene an international conference on the DRC involving the DRC's neighbours accused of being involved in the theft of mineral resources, multinationals and human rights institutions (Figure 1.4). There should be an investigation by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the sanctions to be imposed on any party found guilty of financial crimes in the DRC – as Uganda was (Ventura 2023) – because the plundering of the mineral resources of a country during a war is considered a war crime (Lundberg 2007). An international conference on the DRC is imperative to stop the haemorrhage of the plundered resources of the DRC, which is ongoing (Sreenivas & Jain 2022).

Pathways to sustainable peace that I envision alongside the considerations given to the burning questions of ethnicity, nationality and economy of the DRC require a comprehensive strategy that deals primarily with the contours of the conflict, as depicted in Figure 1.4. These pathways would require pursuing a second, needed, inter-Congolese dialogue and national



Source: Author's own work.

Key: DRC, Democratic Republic of the Congo; UN, United Nations; AU, African Union.

FIGURE 1.4: Configuration of major actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's protracted conflicts.

reconciliation, putting in place a joint monitoring mission, envisaging and implementing new legislation to resolve contentious identity conflicts based on Congolese–Rwandophone nationality, proceeding to the disarmament of all armed groups and belligerent factions in the DRC and its neighbours, and strengthening monitoring mechanisms of 3TG conflicts as per the *Dodd-Frank Act*'s Section 1502. It is essential to involve all ten key players and their proxies in the conflicts at an international conference on the DRC (Figure 1.4).

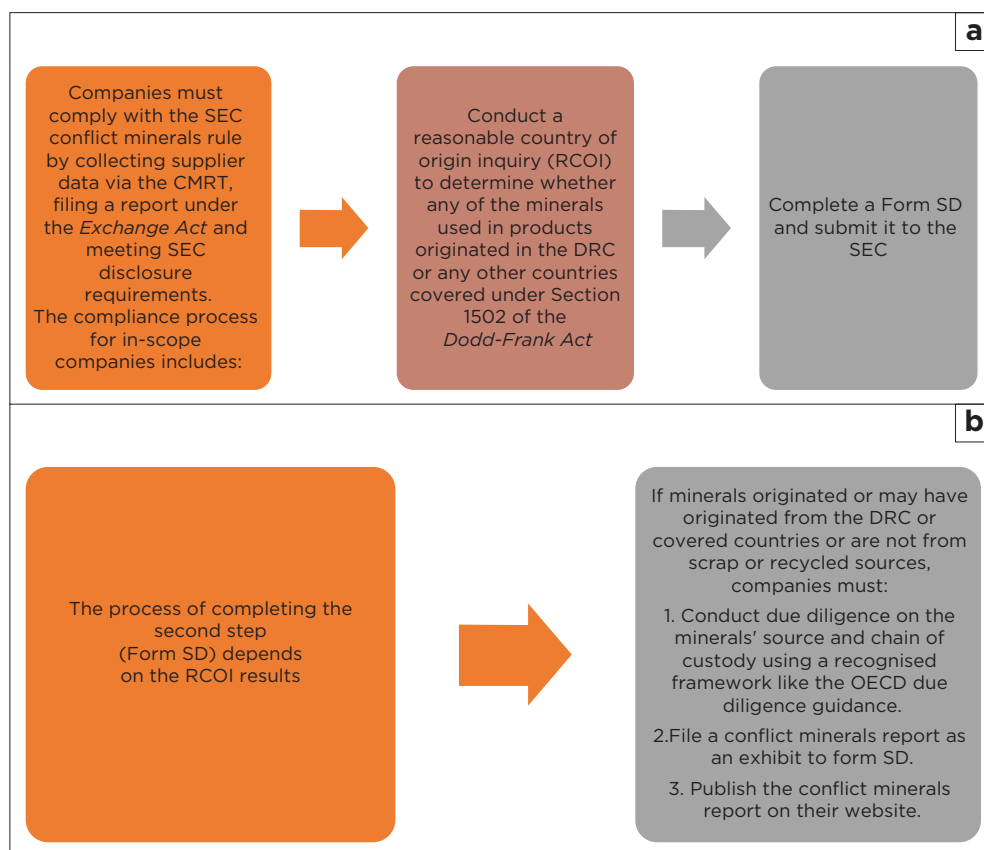
The conundrum of Congolese–Rwandophone citizenship for the populations of Rwandan and Burundian descent established in the DRC, and the illegal exploitation and trafficking of conflict minerals, demand regional and international interventions that can ensure there is lasting peace, stability and prosperity in the DRC, and healthy socio-political and business relations among the countries of the Great Lakes Region, particularly Rwanda, the DRC, Burundi and Uganda. Transparent and honest international and regional diplomatic undertakings are essential to the success of the peace process. Because of external forces implicated in the conflicts, and the economic, social and geopolitical factors and cross-border spillovers of instability and insurgencies from the neighbouring countries (mainly Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda), an international conference on the DRC would further be an opportunity for frank dialogue – which is difficult without wide interaction and mediation. Falode (2005) articulates so well the influence of the DRC's neighbours in its internal affairs and politics:

Its neighbors i.e. Burundi, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Zambia and Angola then used the pretext of trying to stabilize Congo in interfering in Congolese politics and at the same time quartering some of the natural resource-rich provinces within the Congo as being an appendage of the 'stabilizer' country(s). (p. 9)

This is so because economic alliances between the DRC's neighbours and their international backers, military and economic partners, and multinationals are growing and causing fear that the country could be balkanised. The DRC's conflict-related death toll is a forgotten crisis, and those directly implicated in the conflict minerals concerned in the *Dodd-Frank Act*⁶ (Bafilemba et al. 2014; Seay 2015; US House of Representatives 2010) continue to enjoy impunity and build new alliances to plunder the DRC's rare and precious resources. For instance, China is allegedly involved in mineral conflicts in the DRC, as pointed out by Rapanyane (2022), and China is one

6. Section 1502 of the United States *Dodd-Frank Act* requires certain companies to disclose their use of 3TG conflict minerals (tantalum, tin, tungsten and gold) where any 3TG conflict minerals are considered 'necessary to the functionality or production' of their products, viewed 24 May 2024, <<https://blog.sourceintelligence.com/blog/what-is-section-1502-of-the-us-dodd-frank-act>>.

of the international actors that has influence over the resources curse and conflict in the DRC via its Sicomines deal secured with the DRC. Compliance with Section 1502 of the *Dodd-Frank Act* is necessary to imagine a prospect of regional peace. Figure 1.5 illustrates the process of compliance for all the parties intending to trade in the DRC's conflict minerals.



Source: Adapted from Source Intelligence (2023).

Note: Filing a Conflict Minerals Report requires companies to determine which of the following three categories their products fall into: DRC Conflict Free, Not Found to Be DRC Conflict Free and DRC Conflict Undeterminable. Each category has additional reporting requirements, such as audits, certifications and detailed plans to mitigate risk.

Key: SEC, Securities and Exchange Commission; OECD, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; CMRT, Conflict Minerals Reporting Template; SD, Specialized Disclosure Report; DRC, The Democratic Republic of the Congo.

FIGURE 1.5: (a) and (b) Compliance process with Section 1502 of the *Dodd-Frank Act*.⁷

The *Dodd-Frank Act* requires the tracing of the 3TG minerals (tantalum, tin, tungsten and gold) and interdicting their trafficking by armed groups involved in the conflicts in the DRC, including the DRC's neighbouring countries, because these minerals are the drivers of regional conflicts,

7. Integral text taken in-extenso and italicised, viewed 24 May 2024, <<https://blog.sourceintelligence.com/blog/what-is-section-1502-of-the-us-dodd-frank-act>>.

instability, gross human rights violations and wars. However, since its inception and enactment in 2010, the *Dodd-Frank Act* and its Section 1502 have been repeatedly violated with impunity, and armed conflicts fuelled by these minerals (including coltan, cobalt, gold and others) go on unabated. Countries and multinationals do not comply with Section 1502 of the Act, which sets the criteria included in Figure 1.5.

■ Military strength and peacekeeping

The DRC's military firepower, on paper, using statistics provided by global military research institutions, is ranked eighth in Africa (Global Fire Power 2023; Paul 2023) and fifth in sub-Saharan Africa (Krippahl 2022). The country has a long military tradition of relying on mercenaries, UN Peacekeeping troops and, recently, regional blocs, such as SADC – especially in post-conflict contexts. Thereby:

[T]he new mission has been [authorised] to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate relating, among other things, to the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence, and [supporting] the government of the DRC in its [stabilisation] and peace consolidation efforts. (UN n.d.)

The DRC army suffers from the same ills that plague most African armies: ill-discipline, brutality, human rights violations, etc. It relies on foreign contingents such as SADC troops, the EACRF's military might, EUFOR and MONUSCO. Krippahl (2022, n.p.) observes that despite the fact that the DRC is ranked the fifth military power in sub-Saharan Africa according to the Global Fire Power Index (Krippahl 2022) and the eighth in Africa (Global Fire Power 2023; Paul 2023), its security and peacekeeping efforts rely on foreign troops, the UN peacekeeping mission, SADC and the EACRF. For instance, the need to protect civilians and consolidate peace in the DRC prompted the UN Security Council to approve UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in 2010, which became MONUSCO. As of February 2023, the mission had deployed 17,751 personnel – operating on an exorbitant approved budget of US\$1,123,346,000 (July 2021–June 2022) (A/RES/75/300; United Nations Peacekeeping 2023). The UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC's contribution included 14,000 military personnel.

The actual condition of the DRC's Armed Forces is explained by the extended arms embargo imposed on the DRC; it was intended to maintain 'territorial security and civilian protection' (Wanki 2011, p. 217). This restriction on the armament of the DRC also weakened its ability to self-defence made the country vulnerable to aggression by its neighbours, and debilitated the armed forces' capacity to fight and stop ongoing insurrection, particularly the M23. Public administration in the DRC should consider

adequate reforms of the security services, the police and the army and procure modern military hardware susceptible to protecting civilians and the country's territorial integrity. More military personnel, resources and motivations are required to make the DRC military self-reliant and dissuasive against adversarial forces that eye the country's rich minerals.

■ **Local Development Programme of 145 Territories**

Post-election peace and stability across the country and ending ongoing hostilities between the M23 rebels and the DRC's army could take the country back to the path of economic recovery that has been launched by President Félix Tshisekedi via the project to develop 145 territories; it was worth US\$1.66 billion which will be spent to improve the lives of rural populations (MONUSCO Radio Okapi 2024; Tshiamala 2022). There is still hope that life could improve in the country if the needed political, legislative and judicial reforms are carried out and backed by good governance. The 145 Territories Programme, to which the government and its partners plan to allocate US\$1.6 billion (Tshiamala 2022), is supposed to lift 25 million Congolese out of poverty; the funds are meant for road repairs, agricultural services, the construction of administrative buildings, schools, health centres and small solar power plants allowing the electrification of many villages (Tshiamala 2022). On average, nearly US\$10 million will be injected into each of the DRC's 145 territories, according to the DRC's Prime Minister (Tshiamala 2022).

■ ***Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires'* aims and objectives⁸**

According to the Implementation Monitoring Report of the *Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires* [Local Development Programme of 145 Territories] (PDL-145T) as of the end of December 2022:

The PDL-145T is intended for rural areas and aims to reduce spatial inequalities and transform the living conditions and environments of populations living in rural areas that have hitherto been poorly served by basic social infrastructure and services. It is part of the ongoing efforts made by the Government of the Republic to significantly reduce poverty,

8. This section is based on the following published material: Jumelages and Partenariats (2022); a republication from <<https://www.radiookapi.net/2022/02/08/actualite/economie/projet-de-developpement-de-145-territoires-166-milliards-usd-pour>>.

combat territorial inequalities and promote development from the 145 territories of the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁹ (DRC 2023, p. 2)

This project is undertaken by the DRC government; it aims to promote the local development of 145 administrative entities all over the country. The *Programme de Développement Local* [Local Development Programme] (PDL) aims to improve the living conditions and conditions of rural populations. The overall indicative cost of the programme amounts to US\$1.665 billion, comprising: (1) US\$1.465 billion, that is 88.0%, for the costs of the works; (2) US\$75 million, or 4.5%, for the costs of preliminary studies, supervision and control of the works; (3) US\$108 million, or 6.5%, for the management fees of the executing agencies; and (4) US\$17 million, or 1.0%, for programme coordination expenses (DRC 2023, p. 3). These costs have been calculated on the basis of unit prices for recent projects carried out by the government. Its total cost is to be financed mainly from the resources of the DRC government, which will also seek the contribution of development partners to accelerate its implementation for the benefit of the DRC's population (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024). This total cost also considered the cross-cutting components, in particular coordination and management costs, executing agency fees and a 5% provision for preliminary studies and contingencies, and it was based on the principle of territorial equity – each territory was to benefit from a priority investment package valued at an average of US\$10 million (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024). This funding was spread over three fiscal years in the amount of US\$300 million for 2021, US\$700 million for 2022 and US\$660.1 million for 2023 (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024). The operational activities of the Local Development Programme (LDP) will be implemented in four components:

- Development of basic socio-economic infrastructure
- Revitalisation of local and rural economies
- Strengthening local governance
- Development of a geo-referenced information system for monitoring the LDP of 145 territories and other programmes in the country.

To illustrate this, as far as improving the access of populations in rural areas to basic socio-economic infrastructure and services is concerned, the PDL seeks to construct basic socio-economic infrastructure (agricultural feeder roads, photovoltaic micro-power plants and solar street lights) (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024). Scheduled activities to be achieved by the PDL include drilling boreholes and supplying mini-grids to local communities, building schools, health care centres, markets, administrative buildings for local municipalities and districts, and housing for the territory's management

9. Translated by the author from the original document published in French.

staff, opening up the territories and contributing to the improvement of the living and educational conditions of the population (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024).

■ **Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires' rural and local economies development components¹⁰**

The component relating to the promotion of basic socio-economic infrastructure focuses on supporting the development and service activities in the territories with a view to putting in place the necessary conditions to revive rural and local economies. Through the PDL, the government aims to achieve the following (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024):

- Rehabilitation of agricultural feeder roads (8,844 km)
- Maintenance of agricultural feeder roads (30091.5 km)
- Construction of 444 engineering structures (bridges, ferries and culverts)
- Construction of 418 micro solar mini power plants
- Street lighting with solar system street lamps (1-3 km; 471 km in total)
- Construction of boreholes of more or less 150 m with integrated pump (3,071 boreholes)
- Development of water sources (447)
- Construction of modern markets with living space (238 markets)
- Construction of an administrative building in each territorial capital (145 buildings)
- Construction of an administrative building in each sector capital (636 buildings)
- Construction of housing for the territory's management staff (1,450 housing units)
- Construction, rehabilitation and equipment of health centres (788 health centres)
- Construction, rehabilitation and equipment of schools (1,210 schools)
- Structuring and professionalisation of local producers in promising agricultural sectors (500,000 households)
- Surface area developed and equipped for four sectors in each territory (75 ha × 4 sectors × 145 territories)

10. This section is based on the following published material: Jumelages & Partenariats 2022, 'DRC/ Development project for 145 territories: USD 1.66 billion to improve the lives of rural populations', Jumelages & Partenariats, 09 February, https://jumelages-partenariats.com/en/actualites.php?art=DRC%2FDevelopment_project_for_145_territoires%3A_USD_1.66_billion_to_improve_the_lives_of_rural_populations_&n=14761, a republication from <https://www.radiookapi.net/2022/02/08/actualite/economie/projet-de-developpement-de-145-territoires-166-milliards-usd-pour>.

- Supply of inputs and seeds to local producers (500,000 tonnes)
- Acquisition of production, processing and processing equipment (4,340 pieces of equipment).

According to the government, despite the control of the macroeconomic framework and growth recorded over the past decade and the regained political stability, poverty is high (64.5%) in the DRC. The spatial distribution of the fruits of this economic growth over the last 10 years has been inequitable between cities and territories. In addition, nearly 20 of the country's 26 provinces, mostly rural, have poverty levels above the national average (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024). The National Institute of Statistics noted in 2020:

The combination of this unequal distribution of growth gains and this lack of economic opportunities has plunged territories into the trap of multidimensional poverty. To date, rural populations remain hard hit by poverty, with nearly 69% of the population living below the income poverty line of \$1.25 per day compared to 53% in urban areas. (n.p.)

As far as electrification is concerned, it is almost non-existent in the 145 territories. The level of access to drinking water remains very low in rural areas (14%) compared to urban areas (38%). Regarding agricultural productivity and the development of value chains, the populations of the territories are confronted with structural food insecurity and a low valuation of territorial resources in all 26 provinces.

The marketing of products from rural agricultural sectors is subject to enormous constraints, the main ones being the non-existence of storage capacities, administrative and police difficulties and the multiplicity of taxes, the deterioration of the road network leading to an increase in transport costs, the low level of investment by the state and private actors, and the virtual absence of adequate financing mechanisms for production activities in rural areas.

■ **Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires' expected outcomes¹¹**

The DRC's government expects the PDL to yield the following outcomes:

- Revive the country's economy from local growth poles.

11. This section is based on the following published material: Jumelages & Partenariats 2022, 'DRC/ Development project for 145 territories: USD 1.66 billion to improve the lives of rural populations', Jumelages & Partenariats, 09 February. <https://jumelages-partenariats.com/en/actualites.php?art=DRC%2FDevelopment_project_for_145_territories%3A_USD_1.66_billion_to_improve_the_lives_of_rural_populations_&n=14761>, a republication from <<https://www.radiookapi.net/2022/02/08/actualite/economie/projet-de-developpement-de-145-territoires-166-milliards-usd-pour>>.

- Reduce dependence on imports of intermediate goods and basic food products by supporting domestic production of everyday consumer goods to guarantee food sovereignty.
- Strengthen resilience to exogenous shocks and diversify sources of growth.

This will allow for the correction of disparities in sustainable human development between urban and rural areas, the reduction of poverty and growing inequalities, and the transformation of the population's living conditions by significantly improving the public provision of basic socio-economic services in all rural territories of the DRC (MONUSCO *Radio Okapi* 2024).

■ **Challenges in *Programme de Développement Local de 145 Territoires*' implementation**

The PDL-145T Implementation Monitoring Report as of the end of December 2022 showed that the implementation of the programme faces the following main constraints and challenges:

- *The difficult accessibility of the sites because of a lack of infrastructure:* The landlocked nature of the national territory and the very advanced state of disrepair of the road network make it very difficult to access the various rural sites where the structures are built. The persistence of this situation would disrupt the deployment plan of the service providers as well as the transport of equipment and construction materials, thus causing delays in the delivery deadlines of the expected works of the PDL-145T.¹²
- *The constraint of compliance with regulatory deadlines and procedures for the approval of construction contracts:* The supervision and control of works by the competent approval authorities, namely the *Direction Générale du Contrôle des Marchés Publics* [General Directorate of Public Procurement Control] (DGCMP), the Minister of Budget and the Prime Minister, has been a challenge because the thresholds of some contracts require an *a priori* review, which lengthens the approval times and consequently delays the implementation of the programme.¹³
- The aggression of the Rwandan-backed M23 in the eastern part of the country, as well as the persistence of intercommunal conflicts in some territories, constitutes a significant problem for the deployment of teams, from service providers to the delivery of equipment and materials to the implementation of the PDL-145T in these provinces.¹⁴

12. PDL-145T Implementation Monitoring Report as of the end of December 2022 #45.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

- *The absence of banking institutions in some jurisdictions*: Some territories do not have banks and experience a lack of liquidity where windows exist, which does not facilitate the transfers and financial transactions necessary for the implementation of the programme.¹⁵
- *Network unavailability*: Nine provinces, despite being covered by some telephone operators, experience incessant network disruptions; the territories of Bas-Uele, Mongala, and Tshuapa have particular problems with the telephone network, regardless of the operator.¹⁶
- *Lack of sufficient knowledge of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) procedures by contractors*: The contractors contracted by the UNDP to execute works and services do not have sufficient knowledge of the technical and financial management procedures of the projects financed, which creates the risk of resource loss and lengthens the processing time of files and payments.¹⁷
- *Difficulty in accessing bank guarantees by the petites et moyennes entreprises [small and medium-sized enterprises] (SMEs)*: The weak capacity of the national financial sector to guarantee the volumes of contracts for works on terms that are affordable to SMEs lengthens the time it takes to obtain guarantees from banks, thus delaying deployment on the ground.¹⁸

■ Perspectives and recommendations for 2023

The PDL-145T Implementation Monitoring Report as of the end of December 2022 envisaged ramping up the implementation of the PDL-145T in 2023 to deliver the first works for the benefit of the territories and populations. To this end, the government intends to speed up the construction of structures (schools, health centres and administrative buildings), the rehabilitation of rural roads, the start of electrification and water supply works, as well as the development of agricultural value chains.¹⁹ Thus, in order to accelerate the pace of implementation of PDL-145T, the following are recommended²⁰:

- Expedite the process of selecting and commissioning contractors for the construction of the works by the UNDP so that the infrastructure can be delivered on time.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. PDL-145T Implementation Monitoring Report as of the end of December 2022 no. 46.

20. Ibid.

- Operationalise the PDL-145T steering and monitoring structures (the steering bodies, the monitoring unit, and the provincial and territorial committees) following the promulgation of the related presidential order.
- Strengthen the harmonisation of intervention approaches and monitoring tools of the executing agencies, including the procedures for execution and reporting to the government.
- Expedite feasibility studies for Component 2 by the implementing agencies (UNDP) and the *Bureau Central de Coordination* (BCeCo) [Central Coordination Bureau] of the PDL, and disburse all resources dedicated to feasibility studies for the other components of PDL-145T.
- Disburse resources for the start-up of the third phase of the Programme's work on rural electrification and drinking water supply.

The political environment of the DRC, government policies regarding large-scale projects, insecurity and the lack of peace make any development and economic growth programmes difficult at a practical level. This situation will continue as long as many parts of the country are plagued by violent conflicts such as the M23-DRC Army hostilities, brutal intercommunity violence between the Teke and the Yaka conflicts known as the Mobondo phenomenon (Chief Bisong Etahoben 2022; HRW 2023c). While Félix Tshisekedi administration has attempted to develop a few education, health, business and road infrastructure initiatives under his Programme of 145 Territories in his bid to win re-election in December 2023 (Tshiamala 2022), the overall situation is precarious. The eastern and north-eastern provinces of the DRC are repeatedly being aggressed by armed groups, particularly the M23 rebels backed by the Kigali Government. The prospects of durable peace in the DRC will remain a distant dream if there is no political will to make all the branches of government function effectively.

■ Conclusion

The DRC is a vast, rich country that unfortunately faces enormous challenges in building a strong economy and delivering the necessary services to its population. This chapter shows the extent and severity of land conflicts and how the desire to plunder critical minerals fuels and sustains armed conflicts and continues to fuel violence. The history of the country has been punctuated by multifaceted phases of conflict since its independence from Belgium in 1960. The social context is characterised by precarious life conditions; most of the country has no electricity or clean water and lacks essential infrastructure for basic health care, education and means of transportation. Unemployment is high, and job creation strategies are low: There is no evidence that people are employed in the private sector. Despite occupying a favourable position in sub-Saharan Africa's military strength

ranking, the DRC struggles to secure its borders, thus making it vulnerable to cross-border incursions by rebel forces from Rwanda and Uganda. To remedy this critical situation, the DRC needs strong political institutions, an adequate public administration and ethical public administrators capable of ensuring that the population is secure and protected and that it receives adequate services and enjoys a peaceful environment. The DRC needs robust institutions that respect national and international frameworks of development, exploitation and commercialisation of its mineral and natural resources.

The Banyamulenge conflict has become the apparent sustaining cause of war and ongoing battles fought by the M23 insurrectionists, backed by Rwanda (Al Jazeera 2023a; HRW 2023b; ReliefWeb 2023). However, human rights organisations and independent analysts attribute the root causes of wars in the DRC to its rare mineral resources that have become a curse for the country (Grossman 2018; Rapanyane 2022). The DRC's wealth is envied and looted by its neighbours with the complicity of the most powerful economic countries and their multinationals (Montague 2002). A response to the violence driven by illegal exploitation and trafficking of conflict minerals requires strong and effective policies that would protect the DRC's people and wealth and end the looting of the minerals that are used to fuel violence (Parker & Vadheim 2017; US House of Representatives 2010).

Peacebuilding and public administration are mutually inclusive because the failure of either can contort peace and lead to dysfunctional management of policies. In contrast, an effective public administration can become the driver of peace and ensure both durable peace and sustainable development. The two are vitally intertwined and indispensable for societal, individual and communal welfare. The DRC's future lies in the pursuit of consistent lasting peace and an adequate public administration that is efficient at the national level, the provincial level and the local entities level (such as districts and territories, in both rural and urban settings). A well-framed administration policy, good governance and political will are essential to leverage a decent life and allow the people of the DRC to enjoy its potential. These are the prerequisites for successful development, including the implementation of the PDL-145 by the DRC's government.

Successive administrations (1885–2023)

■ Introduction

From the colonial era to the present, the DRC has experienced five successive administrations, which are remembered for a legacy of systemic failure to develop the largest country in Central Africa, to provide a decent life and livelihoods, and to ensure individual rights and civil liberties are upheld. I will overview the main features of these administrations inasmuch as peace, the rule of law and development are concerned. The starting point will be colonisation because, as asserted by Tshombe (2017, p. 30), public administration began to be implemented by the Belgian colonisers when they arrived in the DRC. However, it is worth noting that the Kingdom of Kongo, before colonisation, was also well-administered, despite the fact that the Western concept and mechanisms of public administration were a novelty (Tshombe 2017). I will provide an overview of different administrations between 1885 and 2023 and discuss the extent to which they show consistent patterns of problematic and dysfunctional public administration.

The colonisation of the Kongo Kingdom by Belgium began in 1885 when King Leopold II conquered the region and ruled it before subjugating the entire territory with all its kingdoms and empires that existed pre-colonially. This entire land became the EIC. The administration of the Congo Free State is known as the ‘the terror of the rubber regime’ (Roes 2010). The extreme brutalities that the people of the DRC underwent during the

How to cite: Kiyala, JCK 2025, ‘Successive administrations (1885–2023)’, *Public administration, democracy and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, AOSIS Books, Cape Town, pp. 53–71. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2025.BK457.02>

Belgian colonisation were epitomised by the atrocious exploitation and labour in the rubber plantations, as observed by Roes (2010):

The terror of the rubber regime was only part of a much wider wave of violence and dislocation affecting Congolese societies over a period which exceeded the lifespan of Leopold's African empire. (p. 10)

Such terror compounded the mutilation and cruel beating of the so-called plantation workers on Leopold II's 'farm' (the entire territory of the DRC). King Leopold II's administration was brutal and inhumane. Radowicz (2022, p. 60) points out that 'Leopold's time in power is rated as one of the most cruel and ruthless'. Adam Hochschild comments on the history of the Congo during the reign of King Leopold II in the following words:

The more I delved into it, the clearer, the more we realised that a century ago the Congo had indeed experienced a crime whose scale was comparable to the Holocaust. (Hochschild 2012, p. 12, cited in Radowicz 2022, p. 6)

Successive administrations between 1885 and 2023, except that of the first post-colonial democratically elected president, Joseph Kasa-Vubu (30 June 1960–24 November 1965), are remembered for their failure to uphold the principles of public administration and good governance. They adopted a system of governance grounded in terror, starvation, meagre wages (or years of unpaid wages) for public servants, human rights violations and deprivation of basic needs such as education, health, water, electricity and social security; they were repressive, and used obscurantism and pseudo-polls as means of staying in power longer, while constantly evoking spurious patriotism as their ultimate motivation to hold on to power.

Mobutu, who mapped out over three decades in power by being inspired by Machiavelli, is an illustration of this (Wrong 2000). His governance system plunged the country into despicable poverty and despotism. Laurent Désiré Kabila was no better, as he sought to establish another authoritarian rule (Pashi 2013), and his life ended in his brutal murder in 2001. His son, Joseph Kabila, entrenched his power following the 2006 presidential election, having campaigned with the slogan: 'We Will Crush You'. The atrocities committed in the run-up to the election are detailed in 'We Will Crush You: The restriction of political space in the Democratic Republic of Congo', a 96-page report by HRW (2008).

Against this backdrop, this study investigates the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding theory while seeking to determine the underlying causes of the violence that hampers economic growth. It aims to develop a composite strategic framework for durable peace and sustainable development. To achieve these goals, I used the DRC as a case study. I employed literary research methods and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis, as well as three interconnected theories: development theory, peacebuilding, public administration and theories of change.

The inquiry was conducted under the assumption that the DRC is home to protracted violence and insecurity which stem from an inefficient and dysfunctional public administration, which has subsequently become an impediment to building positive peace and sustainable development. A redress of these obstacles to peace and development would require good governance to move from the DRC's actual status of 'failed state' to one of 'enduring state'. 'Enduring state' is used in the way it was conceptualised by the London School of Economics and Political Science (2006). According to the OHCHR (1996–2025, n.p.), 'Governance refers to all processes of governing, the institutions, processes and practices through which issues of common concern are decided upon and regulated'. It appears that there are linkages between good governance and human rights; these support the pillars of democratic institutions which promote public participation in policymaking processes and enable public service delivery by improving the state's capacity to fulfil its obligation of delivering public goods and other critical rights such as education, health and food. The rule of law is encouraged by improving the mechanisms of accountability and transparency and providing culturally sensitive policy tools to ensure that services are accessible and acceptable to all, and the rule of law is further strengthened by developing 'human rights-sensitive good governance initiatives' (OHCHR 1996–2025, n.p.). Reforming legislation and ensuring better implementation, along with assisting institutions in judicial reforms for penal systems through courts and parliament, is necessary (OHCHR 1996–2025). An anti-corruption policy that emphasises accountability, transparency and participation is equally important (OHCHR 1996–2025). Upholding these pillars of good governance is problematic in the DRC because of the propensity of higher political leaders to operate a repressive style as a means of affirming and imposing their authority.

■ Public administration in African kingdoms and empires

African countries experienced a slew of civil wars in the struggle to embrace democratic principles while transitioning from the traditional public administration models that governed empires and kingdoms before the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 to a post-colonial Western configuration of public administration. The Berlin Conference, commonly known as the Congo Conference or the West Africa Conference, sealed the scramble for Africa by the signing of its final *General Act* on 26 February 1885 – the date that marks the birthday of the Free State of Congo and that of many West African countries. The Act was set to regulate European colonisation and trade in Africa during the era of imperialism.

Long before the arrival of Europeans in Africa, great kingdoms and empires existed in many parts of the continent. Kings and emperors worked

for the development, peace and stability of their lands. It is observed that ‘they presided over magnificent courts where art, music and dance flourished. Their merchants traded in gold, salt, and other goods with faraway countries’ (African Kingdoms and Empires 2023, n.p.). The earliest kingdom in Africa was ancient Egypt, also known as one of the first civilisations in all of human history, established about 3000 BC in the valley of the Nile River. It was ruled by remarkable and orderly governments, and ‘they built great pyramids, temples, and other stone structures. And, most important of all, they invented a writing system’ (African Kingdoms and Empires 2023, n.p.). Other kingdoms included the Aksumite Empire, also known as the Kingdom of Aksum (or Axum), which spread across what is today Ethiopia and Eritrea, the Kingdom of Ghana, the Mali Empire, the Songhai Empire, the Kingdom of Zimbabwe, the African Kingdom of Mutapa, the Ethiopian Empire, the African Kingdom of Kongo and the Benin Empire (Toit 2023). These entities had various systems of administration to ensure the development and the well-being of their respective peoples. Most empires and kingdoms lived harmoniously in their neighbourhood, and the concept of peacebuilding was not in vogue between 100 CE and 1897 CE. Peace and social justice were pursued by the royal councils and courts. Peace and societal welfare emanated from metaphysical and spiritual tenets that pervaded the systems of governance and informed public administration.

The ancient Egyptians’ sense of geometric order, social justice, peace, love and happiness (shown in the achievements of their art, architecture and government) reflects the intellectual, scientific and spiritual heights reached thanks to the philosophy of *Maat*. Obenga (2004) explains:

Maat basically means ‘the real’, ‘reality’, that is, that which is genuine and authentic as opposed to artificial or spurious. Maat is reality as a whole, that is, the totality of all things possessing actuality, existence, or essence. Maat is that which exists objectively. (p. 49)

So *Maat* is the guiding principle of good action; a person who conducts himself/herself in a rightful way manifests the *Maat*, which conveys other meanings, as observed by Obenga (2004):

Hence, these other meanings of Maat are ‘truth’, ‘justice’, ‘righteousness’, and ‘rightness’. Maat is the highest conception of physical and moral law known to the ancient Egyptians. Thus it is that the goddess Maat was the personification of law, order, rule, truth, right, righteousness, canon, justice, straightforwardness, integrity, uprightness, conscientiousness, and perfection. (p. 47)

The tenets of *Maat* denote the underlying principles and goals of effective public administration; these rest on developing and implementing policies that promote human rights, justice and the rule of law. Public administrators are required to embody qualities such as integrity, transparency, righteousness, truth, trustworthiness and conscientiousness in managing

public affairs, along with a commitment to excellence in executing all administrative tasks. These pillars sustained most ancient African empires and kingdoms. It is worth acknowledging that the foundations of the authority held by rulers at that time were both secular and spiritual: kings and emperors were believed to have derived their power from metaphysical and transcendental roots. This suggests that the search for and achievement of peace relied upon a complex interaction of factors that promote justice, which also emanate from the Judeo-Christian and Islamic religious traditions, among others, and are adopted by science. To illustrate this point, peacemaking via restorative justice is associated with the righteousness of interpersonal relations and person-community relationships conveyed by 'shalom' (Noll 2003; Zehr 2002). Such a connotation of peace heads out of the conventional peacebuilding approach supported by the contemporary liberal democratic system. Similarly, the Akan culture of Ghana is based on humanism, which entails kindness [generosity: *ayamyie*], faithfulness [honesty, truthfulness: *ahohoye*, *adoe*] and elements that promote peace, happiness, dignity and respect [*'nea ede asomdwee, ahomeka, anuonyam ne obuo ba'*] (Gyekye 1995, p. 132 cited in Hallen 2004, p. 112). This value is close to the Ubuntu philosophy in the context of South Africa.

The African Kingdom of Kongo is the one with which this book is most concerned. It spread across parts of present-day Angola, the DRC, the Republic of the Congo and Gabon, and was established between 1390 CE and 1914 CE (Toit 2023). Before the Scramble for Africa, the DRC, in its current configuration, was a constitutive part of the Kingdom of Kongo. It had a quasi-feudal society with an economy based on the trade of textiles and pottery as well as the exploitation of copper and ivory (Toit 2023).

■ Leopold II administration

The colonisation of the Kongo Kingdom by Belgium began in 1885 when King Leopold II subjugated the entire territory, including the kingdoms and empires that existed in pre-colonial times. This entire land became the EIC at the end of the Berlin Conference on 26 February 1885, after the 14 countries gathered at this conference signed the final document of the Scramble for Africa. The Congo Free State was owned by King Leopold II of Belgium as his private concession between 1885 and 1908. 'King Leopold II became interested in the region during Sir Henry Morton Stanley's exploration of the Congo River between 1874 and 1877' (Momodu 2023, n.p.). Leopold claimed the extensive territory of the Congo, approximately one-third of the size of the United States of America (USA), and this 'was established in the 1880s as the private holding of a group of European investors headed by the king' (Momodu 2023, n.p.). Leopold was the only European to whom any African territory was granted as its sole owner;

he promised to bring civilisation to the occupants of the land, as his major objective (Momodu 2023). Unfortunately, his administration was extremely barbaric. By the early 1890s, under Leopold's rule, the Congo Free State would become notorious for its cruel treatment of the Congolese people.

The Congo Free State administration is known as 'the terror of the rubber regime' (Roes 2010). The extreme brutalities that the people of the DRC suffered under the Belgian colonisation are exemplified in the atrocious exploitation and labour in the rubber plantations, as observed by Roes (2010):

The terror of the rubber regime was only part of a much wider wave of violence and dislocation affecting Congolese societies over a period which exceeded the lifespan of Leopold's African empire. (p. 10)

Such terror involved mutilation and cruel beating of the so-called plantation workers on Leopold II's 'farm' (the entire territory of the DRC). King Leopold II's administration was brutal and inhumane. Radowicz (2022, p. 60) points out that 'Leopold's time in power is rated as one of the most cruel and ruthless'. Adam Hochschild comments on the history of the Congo during the reign of King Leopold II in the following words:

The more I delved into it, the clearer, the more I realised that a century ago the Congo had indeed experienced a crime whose scale was comparable to the Holocaust. (Hochschild 2012, p. 12, cited in Radowicz 2022, p. 6)

In the same vein, Momodu (2023) avers that by the early 1890s, Leopold's rule over the Congo Free State would gain fame for its brutalities towards the Congolese. Its atrocities encompassed 'forced labo[u]r to harvest rubber, palm oil, and ivory' (n.p.), and punishment methods, not limited to beatings and lashings, were used to force the meeting of harvest-gathering quotas.

Another form of punishment that was used by the *Force Publique* (African soldiers led by European officers in the employ of Leopold) was the amputation of the hands of Congolese men, women, and even children if their rubber quotas were not met. (Momodu 2023, n.p.)

The people of Congo were exploited for cheap labour on coffee, rubber, palm oil, sugar cane and cacao plantations; they were starved, mutilated and humiliated by being exposed in a human 'zoo', where 267 Congolese people were kept in Leopold II's Museum of Africa building in Tervuren (Rannard & Webster 2020 cited in Radowicz 2022, p. 60). The Belgians severely restricted the education of the people of Congo for fear that they would emancipate and form a liberation movement; as a consequence, they quickly declared the independence of Congo without preparing a sufficient elite ready to administer the country (Radowicz 2022). This hastily granted independence contributed to the post-independence instability of the country and the ethno-politicised movements for regional secessions and rebellions.

During the early years of independence, Congo-Kinshasa faced rebellions on multiple fronts, which brought the country to the brink of collapse and secession in the 1960s. United Nations troops assisted in quelling Moïse Tshombé's uprising and his ambition to secede from Congo-Kinshasa and form the Katanga Republic. President Joseph Kasa-Vubu made efforts to find a compromise with political leaders and consolidated his power in 1961; he united the leaders of the rebellious provinces and reorganised the army (Radowicz 2022). Nonetheless, the country remained unstable, and Colonel Joseph Mobutu, then Chief of Staff of the Congolese Armed Forces, decided to seize power on 24 November 1965 and overthrew the first post-independence democratically elected government of President Kasa-Vubu and Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba.

■ Administration of Joseph Kasa-Vubu: 30 June 1960 to 24 November 1965

We must not forget that it is ours now to take over and bring people together [with] the materials of our national unity, to build our nation in union and in solidarity. (Joseph Kasa-Vubu, speech of 30 June 1960)

Joseph Kasa-Vubu was the first president of the post-independence Congo Republic. The DRC's President's Office (n.d.) describes him as an honest and transparent leader who left the seminary where he had intended to pursue a career as a Catholic priest. Divided between his status as a colonial teacher and that of an accountant in the finance department of the colonial government in Leopoldville, he ended up discovering his own way in the midst of the dynamics of the decolonisation of Africa (The DRC's President's Office n.d.). As president of the *Association des Bakongo* [Bakongo Association] (ABAKO), Joseph Kasa-Vubu and his people were the first to demand immediate and unconditional independence in reaction to the Van Bilsen Plan, which suggested that the country needed 30 years to prepare the Congolese elite before independence could be considered. The same report by The DRC's President's Office (n.d.) points out that a protest led by ABAKO in 1959, taking aim at the Belgian interests in Leopoldville, turned violent. This led to the Brussels Round Table and triggered the national sovereignty of Congo on 30 June 1960. Joseph Kasa-Vubu was elected by a wide margin as the first President of Congo/Léopoldville by the first Congolese Parliament, with Patrice Emery Lumumba as Prime Minister. He took the reins of the country in a tumultuous context marked by political crises, rebellions and attempts at secession in Katanga. He was then ousted from power by General Joseph Desiré Mobutu in a military coup in November 1965 (The DRC's President's Office n.d.).

Joseph Kasa-Vubu began the independence era amid conflict. Following the arrest of Lumumba, his escape, and subsequent re-imprisonment,

Kasa-Vubu was reinstated. With the assistance of General Mobutu and his ministers, he achieved a temporary reconciliation with Moïse Tshombé, the leader of the Katanga secessionists (Vos 1969). Lumumba was assassinated on his arrival in Elisabethville on 18 January 1961 with the complicity of Belgium and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Since then, the DRC has not regained its calm (Vos 1969). Tshombé went into exile in Spain but was recalled to Léopoldville by Kasa-Vubu, who made him his Prime Minister (Vos 1969). A few months later, on 25 November 1965, General Mobutu staged a new coup; he dismissed both the President of the Republic, Kasa-Vubu, and the Prime Minister, Tshombé, who was sentenced to death in absentia; Kasa-Vubu was allowed to retire to Kongo Central, formerly Bas-Congo, where he gradually resumed tribal life and died there in total indifference – forgotten.

Joseph Kasa-Vubu's administration was short-lived, and his rule was punctuated by turmoil, political instability, the secessionist war in Katanga and tribalist tendencies to partition the country into tribal entities or autonomous regions along tribal lines. This state of affairs led Mobutu to expand his power and seek foreign help from Belgium to quell all the rebellions and impose his authority. This was the start of his authoritarian rule, which became kleptocratic and oppressive.

■ Mobutu administration

On 24 November 1965, Colonel Joseph Mobutu, then Chief of Staff of the Congolese Armed Forces, decided to seize power and overthrew the first post-independence democratically elected government of President Joseph Kasa-Vubu and Prime Minister Patrice Emery Lumumba. He renamed the country Zaïre (1965–1997). Mobutu took full control of power and expanded his rule throughout the country with the economic and military support of Western powers, mainly Belgium and the USA, during the Cold War. He suppressed the insurgencies and rebellions that plagued the country. He succeeded in re-unifying the war-torn country and abolished the multiparty system, concentrating all power under the Mobutism mono-party system called the MPR. Mobutu's ideology was instilled in all Congolese – from conception to birth. They were sung political chants: *ozala na limumu*, *ozali na MPR* [even in the mother's womb, one belongs to MPR]. Mobutism entailed Mobutu's thinking, political philosophy and actions. However, his rule was one of the most terrorising, corrupt, kleptocratic, dictatorial and blood-thirsty administrations. On a positive note, Mobutu is remembered for unifying Zaïre, maintaining its territorial integrity and defeating all post-colonial rebellions and breakaway provinces such as Katanga and Bas-Congo. During his rule, democracy was a ceremonial event, and all the Zaïreans 'voted green', that is, for one party.

There was no opposition, and political contest was prohibited under the MPR. With his politico-ideological doctrine, called *Recours à l'authenticité* [recourse to authenticity], proclaimed on 27 October 1971, he changed his name from Joseph Desiré Mobutu to Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga [the warrior who knows no defeat because of his endurance and inflexible will and is all-powerful, leaving fire in his wake as he goes from conquest to conquest].²¹ The Recourse to Authenticity comprised a series of measures aimed at detaching Zaïre from anything reminiscent of the West and its domination; these included banning all Christian-given names. The country's name changed from Belgian Congo (1808-1960) to the Republic of the Congo (1960), and the DRC (1964) to the Republic of Zaïre (1971-1997), as renamed by Mobutu. He also developed his political philosophy, which he named *Mobutisme* [Mobutism], to convey his thoughts, ideas and actions.

The Mobutu administration was shambolic, and the working people were deprived of salaries for several months (and years in some cases); social and economic structures and infrastructure collapsed, and government employees could not enjoy the fruit of their labour. Naniuzeyi (1999, p. 669) avers: 'Public employees were not receiving their salaries for months or even years, and the army and police that were supposed to protect citizens became, on the contrary, citizens' nightmares'. The government became incapable of delivering basic services to its citizens in the health care and education sectors. Naniuzeyi (1999) further remarks:

Hospitals were in bad shape, roads were full of holes, public schools were out most of the time because teachers were never paid on a regular basis, and public services were almost non-existent. (p. 669)

The collapse of the government system was attributed to the impunity that the regime's cronies enjoyed under a system of *protegéisme* – an institutional structure that protected the crimes and mismanagement of the ruling class and political and business actors close to Mobutu's regime. The entire political establishment under Mobutu's administration was corrupt, kleptocratic and wasteful of public resources; these attitudes and conduct reveal the mediocre nature of leadership under his rule. Human rights violations and summary executions of innocent people and political adversaries of the regime under the MPR party were not prosecuted by the corrupt, dysfunctional justice apparatus, based on favouritism, that Mobutu put in place.

I concur with the thesis put across by Naniuzeyi (1999); it recognises the material structure of the state more as political than administrative because of how political institutions influence government actions. Thus, the

21. Translated in NewAfrica (n.d.) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlJwDXeIMcM>>

underlying causes of the ills that the DRC was confronted with under Mobutu stemmed from the political, ideological and moral standards of the elites at that time that led to the miserable life conditions the Zaïrians were subjected to. Thus, public administration needs to refrain from embracing ideologies and political establishment frameworks as references to achieve its goals and prevent class struggle. Naniuzeyi (1999, p. 673) comments on this perspective; he observes: 'The state is more than political and administrative institutions. It reflects the various contradictions that generate social conflicts which can pave the way to class struggle'.

On the positive side, the first years of Mobutu's rule attracted the admiration of his foreign partners such as Richard Nixon, the former US president; he unified the country that was at the brink of total disintegration by the secessionist movements, he consolidated the country's currency, he stabilised the national debt in the 1970s, and made Zaïre an attractive destination of foreign investors and developed the country's economy with the injection of foreign currencies earned from the trade of copper and other minerals (*NewAfrica* 2024).

Unfortunately, Mobutu descended as one of the mediocre leaders of Zaïre as it is the quintessential dictatorial nature to abuse power, to limit the democratic foundation of checks and balances:

[7]he system that allows each branch of a government to amend, override, or veto acts of another branch so as to prevent any one branch from exerting too much power or power beyond its authority.²²

Mobutu embezzled the state public treasury, impoverished Zaïre, built his fortune worth twice the national debt of the country and acquired luxurious overseas properties, leaving behind a 'flood' – his famous description of the chaos, tohubohu he predicted as post-Mobutu Zaïre's condition. Mobutu was an admirer of Niccolò Machiavelli (Mathy 2013; *NewAfrica* 2024). Mathy (2013) frames Mobutu's 'Flood statement' as follows:

At the time, Mobutu, a fervent admirer of Niccolò Machiavelli, is said to have said: 'After me, it's the deluge'. An expression attributed to Louis XV who wanted to let his supporters know that he did not care what his Dauphin Louis XVI could do. (n.p.)

Furthermore, Mathy (2013), like others, observed that 16 years after the end of the reign of Marshal Mobutu, who ruled Zaïre between 1965 and 1997, the DRC continues to grapple with ridding of 'its old political demons: political instability, conspiracy, managed democracy, dictatorship',²³ and the war continues to ravage the east of the country, claiming millions of victims.

22. *Merriam-Webster* (n.d.), 'Checks and balances'. <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/checks%20and%20balances>>.

23. Text translated from French: Jambonews 2013, 'RDC: Mobutu – Après moi, le déluge', *Jambonews*, 01 June. <<https://www.jambonews.net/actualites/20130601-rdc-mobutu-apres-moile-deluge/>>.

■ Patrice Emery Lumumba

During this dark period marked by confusion and uncertainties, Patrice Lumumba (*1925–†2019) sought the help of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or the Soviet Union (today's Russian Federation). He needed an alliance to deal with Tshombe's secession plan; his proximity to Moscow and disagreements with the UN deepened hostilities with Colonel Mobutu. Assisted by the former colonisers, the Belgians, as well as the UN and with the backing of the CIA, Mobutu succeeded in having Lumumba assassinated after he had been apprehended by the UN contingents in his attempt to reach Stanleyville (Kisangani), where his movement for the liberation of Congo was entrenched and operating. On 17 January 1961, Lumumba, with two of his revolutionary companions, namely Maurice Mpolo and Joseph Okito, was transferred to Katanga, the home of his enemy Moïse Tshombe, where the three were assassinated, and their dismembered bodies dissolved in a drum of acid (Peet 2023). He established a dictatorial regime that is remembered for human rights violations. In Stanleyville (today, Kisangani), where they had established a base with Antoine Gizenga to fight neo-colonialism, Lumumba was arrested by Mobutu's troops in Kasai and then transferred to Katanga where he was murdered with his two companions, Mpolo and Okito (Peet 2023). Some light on the circumstances of Lumumba's assassination has been shed by De Witte (2002), a Belgian historian whose works have dissipated some of the speculations surrounding Lumumba's cruel and tragic death.

Lumumba was the first casualty of the regime that was being established by Mobutu in the political confusion he had created by overthrowing President Joseph Kasa-Vubu. Lumumba was suspected of leading a pro-communist ideological war against Western imperialism and of planning to launch a revolution against Mobutu's rule (Van Lierde 1963). Circumstances surrounding Lumumba's assassination and the role of foreign powers continue to be under scrutiny (Verbeeck 2024), particularly the CIA (De Witte). Following this tragedy, from Cairo, Pierre Mulele, a political companion of Lumumba, officially vowed to continue to fight for his legacy.

■ Pierre Mulele and the Pentecost Martyrs

Despite the amnesty granted to rebel leaders by Mobutu, Pierre Mulele (*1929–1968†) was arrested on 13 September 1968 in Congo-Brazzaville during President Marien Ngouabi's rule, and was extradited to Congo-Leopoldville (Kinshasa). On his arrival, he met a few Lumumbists (followers of Lumumba's ideology), and later on, he was transferred to the Kokolo military barracks jail in the capital city of the DRC. On the night of 02 October 1968, Mulele was mutilated. His ears and nose were

cut off, his eyes were removed, and his eye sockets were shot. His genitals were cut (Kalema 2021). While he was still alive, his hands and legs were amputated. The rest of his body was put in a sack filled with stones and dumped in the Congo River (Sonji & Mayengo 2003). Theodore Bengila, his companion, was also murdered in the same brutal fashion. Then came the tragedy of the Lukamba Village, which was situated in the Bandundu province. There emerged a prophet called Martin Kasongo Mimpiepe, who declared that he was Mulele's reincarnation. The Congolese National Army went to the village and massacred 2,000 innocent peasants, among whom were Ntoma, a young brother to Mulele – Kingoma, the chief of Lukamba Village – and a man called Francois Mbawalanga – killed because he refused to give information on Mulele's mother's whereabouts (Sonji & Mayengo 2003).

When Mulele's mother was at last arrested, she was brought before the public of Lukamba Village. A testimony written by Lukamba villagers describes the circumstances under which she was brutally murdered. It is reported that the military tied her up with a rope in the shape of a cross. Before bullets were fired at her, she asked this question to the military: 'When your mothers brought you to this world, did they know that one day you would become soldiers? Why should I deserve such treatment?' Then the soldiers fired many bullets at her, but no bullet touched her [*sic*]. Therefore, they decided to cut her into small pieces and each piece was buried separately (Sonji & Mayengo 2003).

Mobutu suppressed all the rebellions and built a strong army that became the *Forces Armées Zairoises* [Zaïrian Armed Forces]. Contradicting his own promises to restore democracy and give power back to civilians within 5 years, Mobutu gradually established a dictatorial regime after eliminating many of his allies among the politicians and the military. Mobutu acted as the king and sole owner of the Congo, which he renamed Zaïre. Like King Leopold II, he put in place a predatory regime that was maintained by brutal force and a one-party state, and that relied on foreign powers for its defence against external threats (Kodi 2008). His rule was characterised by arbitrary extra-judicial executions of political activists, oppression, kidnapping, suppression of human rights, kleptomaniac behaviour and terror. President Mobutu initiated a series of reforms to reclaim the Zaïrian identity. On 21 October 1971, he announced the 'recourse to authenticity', which consisted of a series of measures to detach oneself from anything that was reminiscent of the West and its cultural domination. It envisioned a returning to an African 'authenticity' of toponyms and surnames, by removing everything that had a Western sound. He banned the Christian heritage (names, devotional objects, etc.), and Western suits under the slogan '*a-bas-cos*' [down with suits]. In 1974, he launched economic reforms aimed at empowering local people by

handing over to the members of parliament, known as *les députés*, all the businesses of expatriates (Portuguese and others). *La zaïrianisation/zaïrisation* was a disastrous reform that caused the economy of Zaïre to plummet; this prompted Mobutu to reverse course and announce the retrocession, by which he called back expatriates to reassume responsibility for their investments.

The following examples illustrate how the 32 years of Mobutu's dictatorship plunged the DRC into obscurantism, why reconciliation was advocated at different stages of its history, and why a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) was seen as the first step in any effort to advance a sustainable justice system and to bring national reconciliation and healing. Impunity and the cycle of violent conflicts in the DRC were perceived as a consequence of the failure to pursue the agenda of national reconciliation.

Mobutu treated the public treasury as his private funds; he embezzled public funds with his cronies while impoverishing his people, and destroying the economy, which was characterised by the operation *planche à billets*²⁴ – by which bank notes swamped the market amid galloping inflation. Radowicz (2022) notes:

The policies pursued by Mobutu made it very difficult for ordinary people to survive in Zaïre in the 1980s. Government officials were corrupt and focused their attention on getting rich instead of saving the country's ailing economy. (p. 65)

Impunity and clientelism, human rights violations and the irretrievable breakdown of the entire public administration under Mobutism led all strata of Zaïre to lose trust in Mobutu's rule. Such disenchantment became manifest in the *pillage* [looting] in 1991, allegedly triggered by the military because of unpaid wages. These actions crippled the economy before the powerless dictator Mobutu. Further ramifications of these incidents were observed when the Zaïrian civil society and a handful of political leaders led by Étienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumbu (the father of future President Félix Tshisekedi) awakened from socio-political slumber and callousness to challenge Mobutu's three decades of unshared and despotic rule. The end result of these popular campaigns was that Mobutu was prompted to relent and open the process of multi-party democracy.

24. The expression 'printing money' is commonly used pejoratively to refer to the creation of money. This expression means that the state, more precisely the central bank, creates a lot of money and injects it into the economy. This created currency is not necessarily created in the form of physical currency. Once the hyperinflationary spiral begins, it is very difficult to stop it. When all economic agents anticipate a rise in prices, they adjust their behaviour accordingly, and prices continue to rise. See *Or En Cash Magazine*: <https://www.orencash.fr/blog/la-planche-a-billets-quest-ce-que-cest/>.

In 1990, Mobutu announced the process of multi-party democracy, a time remembered by the famous expression he used to convey his deepest emotion over renouncing the MPR's leadership. Loffman (2017) describes the event as follows:

He [Mobutu] announced this policy during a tear-strewn address at which he told the audience to 'comprenez mon émotion' [understand my emotion]. However, the details of this new policy were delayed, and the army used this power vacuum to go on a looting spree in September 1991. (n.p.)

Following the consultations with all the strata of Zaïre, and pressed by the popular call for change, in 1992, Mobutu agreed to open an SNC, which was convened to examine and approve a new multi-party system that would be fit for the DRC (Loffman 2017) and organise democratic elections. Rather than furthering the SNC's work, Mobutu successfully shut down the SNC-Parliament of Transition (SNC-PT) headed by Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya. Both the SNC and SNC-PT were at loggerheads with Mobutu, who decided to close the parliament. In haste, the SNC-PT voted in a federal constitution that was abolished when LD Kabila took power after deposing Mobutu in 1997. The contentious issue that made Mobutu uncomfortable with the SNC and SNC-PT was the step that both forums undertook to scrutinise the three decades of Mobutu's rule – examining issues ranging from human rights violations, extrajudicial executions, and disappearance of his political foes, to embezzlement of public funds, and other aspects of his authoritarian and kleptocratic rule.

Among other revolutionary leaders who were assassinated during the early stage of Mobutu's rule were Alexandre Mahamba, Kimba Evarist, Anany and Kudiakubanza. Independent reports affirm that many political activists were abducted by and disappeared when in the custody of Mobutu's secret police, namely the Special Presidential Division (DSP) and others (quoted in UN Economic and Social Council 1996). Torture of political activist detainees was carried out by Mobutu's security agents and later on by those of LD Kabila (reported by the UN Economic and Social Council 1996). Those crimes were made public for the first time during the SNC.

■ Laurent-Désiré Kabila administration

Following the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, the threats posed by the Interahamwe and the FDLR prompted Kigali to invade parts of the eastern Congo to dismantle what it feared was a network of the Hutu-dominated armed forces seeking to retake governance control of Rwanda. Kigali found a former foe of Mobutu, in the person of LD Kabila, to legitimise the revolution, which would benefit both Kigali and Kabila. Kigali successfully curtailed the threats of a Hutu return to power, while Kabila chased Mobutu from power

and became the self-proclaimed President of Zaïre, which he renamed the DRC in 1997. Loffman (2017, n.p.) writes:

Kagame used Mobutu's long-time opponent, LD Kabila, to front a movement called the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Zaïre* (ADFL-Z) that would dethrone the self-styled 'Great Helmsman'. On 24 October 1996, the ADFL-Z's campaign began. On 19 April, they captured Lubumbashi. It was only a matter of time until Kinshasa fell. (n.p.)

The short rule of LD Kabila (1997–2001) was no better than those of his predecessor, nor those of successive presidents. Laurent Désiré Kabila's regime was marked by heinous human rights violations, kleptocracy, tyranny and despotism, which undermined all basic human rights and civil liberties (Radowicz 2022, p. 65). After toppling Mobutu, the AFDL quashed the legacy of the SNC, and embarked on large-scale human rights violations, according to Berrih (2020). The same report points out that these unlawful practices were similar to those that had characterised Mobutu's oppressive and barbaric rule. People were detained and never stood trial, and many just disappeared. Private properties were seized without court orders; it was another dictatorship. Radowicz (2022, p. 66) remarks: 'The continuity of Mobutu's regime was evident in Kabila's policies'. This is evident in what has been aforementioned.

The AFDL regime ended in a dramatic way. Laurent Désiré Kabila was assassinated on 18 January 2001, allegedly by one of his bodyguards. Who instigated this murder and why? No truth is known about this act of barbarism. Colonel Eddy Kapend was sentenced to death after killing Rashidi Kasereka, who allegedly assassinated President LD Kabila. Eddy Kapend benefited from a presidential pardon and remittance of his death sentence in 2021, along with 22 other men convicted for the same purported crime. In November 2023, Eddy Kapend was promoted to the rank of general and appointed head of the 22nd military region in Katanga, in the southeast of the DRC. A dark cloud hangs over the truth about the real circumstances of President LD Kabila's death.

Subsequent to LD Kabila's brutal murder, his son Joseph Kabila was designated as his successor; he was sworn in on 26 January 2001 and ruled the DRC for 18 years on the basis of controversial and contested election results.

Laurent Désiré Kabila's administration was brutal and authoritarian; it lacked regard for human rights. Subsequent to LD Kabila's brutal murder, his son Joseph Kabila, aged 29, was designated as his successor, allegedly by his inner circle. Joseph Kabila was sworn in on 26 January 2001 and ruled the DRC for 18 years, despite controversial and contested election results. The regime that was established after the fall of Mobutu was characterised by a series of human rights violations. The United States of America Department of State released reports in 2001 and 2002 on human

rights violations committed by LD Kabila's militia and intelligence services (US Department of State 2001). His initial economic and political reforms, coupled with his revolution that toppled Mobutu and his mysterious assassination, earned LD Kabila recognition as a national hero.

■ Joseph Kabila administration

The tragic assassination of LD Kabila opened the era of Joseph Kabila, who imposed his rule for 18 years. He won his first election in 2006 in a very contested and controversial election, while Jean Pierre Bemba claimed to be the self-proclaimed winner after a run-off. Among the 35 candidates who ran in the first democratic election since the DRC had gained its independence from Belgium, Kabila obtained 45% of the votes, while Bemba had 25% (Mercado 2006). After the second round, Kabila was declared the final winner after obtaining 58.05% of the votes against 41.95% for Bemba (*Independent Online* [IOL] 2006). Despite the distrust of the voters in the polls' results and allegations of vote-rigging, Boshoff and Yav (2006) observe:

The elections were peaceful, transparent, credible and well managed, according to the overall impression from observation teams, including those from the Carter Center, the European Union, South Africa and the international community. (n.p.)

But a military confrontation ensued between Kabila's forces and Bemba's militias. In 2 years, over 500 people were killed, 1,000 were detained, and many more were tortured, as reported by HRW (2008) in a 96-page report called "'We Will Crush You': The restriction of political space in the Democratic Republic of Congo'. It documents the use of violence and intimidation by Joseph Kabila's government to eliminate political opponents while Kabila himself set the tone, directed and gave orders to 'crush' or 'neutralise' protesters he described as 'enemies of democracy' (HRW 2008). His rule was characterised by heinous human rights violations and repressions of actions sparked off by his political opponents and human rights activists. Joseph Kabila's regime used state security forces, the paramilitary Republic Guards, secret services, the special battalion of the police and intelligence services to systematically crack down on those who were perceived as adversaries to the political establishment (HRW 2008). Joseph Kabila led a rogue administration to remain in power, while social and economic life remained precarious, and the DRC remained plagued by several armed groups and the plundering of its natural resources.

Joseph Kabila's henchmen engaged in reprehensible acts that can be described as state terrorism. For instance, the police, security services and other state agents targeted individuals from the Equateur province who supported Jean-Pierre Bemba, and the adherents of Bundu dia Kongo

(BDK) – a politico-religious movement from the Bas-Congo province that promotes the ideology of greater provincial autonomy of that province (HRW 2008). Human rights violations were endemic and displayed in the horrific treatment of political detainees in the DRC's prisons; many of them suffered extrajudicial killings, including 500 perceived opponents of the government who were reportedly eliminated by the security services who conducted secret burials. These crimes were revealed by former detainees who further noted that they were subjected to:

[7]he use of electric batons on their genitals and other parts of their bodies. Some were kept chained for days or weeks and many were forced to sign confessions saying they had been involved in coup plots against Kabila. (HRW 2008)

Joseph Kabila's rule ended after 18 years, despite his attempts to manipulate the constitution for the purpose of staying in power, when the Saint Sylvestre Peace Accord was signed, forcing him to step down. In a letter dated 07 March 2018, written to Christopher Smith (Chairman, House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organizations, United States House of Representatives), the Most Reverend Timothy P Broglio, Committee Chair on International Justice and Peace, wrote:

As Chair of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I encourage you to pass a House resolution that would strongly encourage the Administration to pressure the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to implement the Saint Sylvestre [*sic*] agreement fully and to respect the spirit and the letter of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2348. It is my understanding that your Subcommittee is currently reviewing a draft of such a bill that originated in the Senate. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2023, n.p.)

The electoral impasse of 2016, marked by protests against a third term of Joseph Kabila in power, ended with the signing of the Saint Sylvestre Peace Accord, a deal that was secured by the Catholic bishops of the Congolese National Episcopal Conference (CENCO). This historical political accord was agreed on 31 December 2016; it helped avert the total collapse of the country and a plunge into instability (*Africanews* 2019). The DRC political headquarters and civil society were satisfied that the Saint Sylvestre Peace Accord sealed the non-return of Joseph Kabila to power and prevented a constitutional crisis.

Joseph Kabila is remembered for leading the country to a peaceful transition and power transfer after losing elections to President Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo and ending the Congo Wars. However, Kabila left power while armed groups remained active and continued mushrooming, causing people to worry about the future of the country's territorial integrity. Now, Kabila is wanted for prosecution after the DRC's senate

voted overwhelmingly in support of lifting his immunity on 22 May 2025, for trial over allegations of perceived links with the insurrectionist M23 and River Congo Alliance (AFC) in the ongoing war in the east of the country. Alleged charges levelled against him include war crimes, crimes against humanity, support to the insurgency in the east that has caused displacements of people and his role in the massacre of civilians.

■ Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo administration

The Kabila dynasty ended after 18 years of Joseph Kabila's autocratic rule, despite his attempts to manipulate the constitution and seek re-election for a third term (against the prescribed constitutional presidential term of office). A political agreement known as the Saint Sylvestre Peace Accord was signed on 31 December 2016 with the mediation of the Catholic bishops of the CENCO, thus forcing Kabila to step down and averting instability and the total collapse of the country (*Africanews* 2019). General elections were finally held in April 2018 as announced by the CENI in 2016. After disputed polls and several controversies, the constitutional court upheld the outcomes of the polls and proclaimed Félix Tshisekedi the winner of the 2018 presidential election, and he took office the same year. However, his administration has come under scrutiny, and it is accused of corruption, human rights violations and brutal repressions of protesters to his rule (Kasongo & Rolley 2023). Human Rights Watch (2022) reported that freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and the media have been constrained by the government; civilians are often attacked by armed groups and government forces; justice and accountability systems are too weak to successfully prosecute political criminal trials; and crimes against the environment and abuses of human rights are overlooked. The eastern and north-eastern provinces of the DRC continue to fall prey to armed groups, particularly the M23. This tragic and prevailing turmoil is extensively documented. For instance, HRW (2023a) reports:

The human rights situation across the DRC remains dire, with internal conflicts and poor governance contributing to a severe food crisis and the internal displacement of 5.8 million people, more than anywhere else in Africa. Over 100 armed groups are active in eastern Congo, and the imposition of martial law in North Kivu and Ituri provinces has facilitated abuses by government security forces. Armed groups and often abusive security forces continue to carry out massacres, abductions, rape and sexual violence, recruitment of children, and other attacks on civilians with near total impunity. The rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and the media are frequently under attack. President Félix Tshisekedi's administration has yet to demonstrate that it can bring about systemic reforms and human rights improvements ahead of the 2023 elections. (n.p.)

According to a ReliefWeb report, more than 1 million people have been internally displaced in the DRC since January 2022, making the total number of people displaced as a result of armed conflicts and violence in Ituri and North Kivu close to 5.53 million – of whom most are women (ReliefWeb 2022).

The prospects of durable peace in the DRC will remain a distant dream if there is no political will to make all the branches of government function effectively.

■ Conclusion

The political turmoil and apparently unending instability in the DRC, marked by civil wars and an unstable public administration, is be traced back to the post-independence era discussed in this chapter. This period is often regarded as a dark chapter in the country's history. President Mobutu and his successors failed to grasp the essential role that public administrators should play in delivering democracy and social services and improving the livelihoods of the population. Political hostilities among leaders, along with tribalism and regionalism, further weakened the country's unity. The ongoing war in the east can be attributed to the same ills, coupled with the whimsical ambitions of the neighbouring countries as well as foreign countries with powerful economies who wish to control the rich mineral reserves of the DRC and orchestrate organised looting under the anarchy intentionally created by rebellions supported by cross-border armed groups and terrorists. Peace, stability and development will commence when the elite develops a national consciousness that envisions the role of public administrators and servants of the people to whom they should be accountable, especially in a representative democracy such as the DRC. A strong and effective public administration is the starting point for recovery and peacebuilding in the DRC.

Violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

■ Introduction

Violence in the DRC is persistent and takes multiple forms, including, but not limited to, sexual violence, civil war, violence against civilians, abuse and massacres (Mortensen 2013). This violence is structural and chronic and is evident in insecurity and the practice of child soldiering; it erodes peace. Chronic violence is embodied in the use of undemocratic means to obtain or share power, the illegal trade in minerals, the illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and foreign involvement in local alliances of armed factions, blatantly exposing children to violence. These multifaceted dimensions of violence affect peace because violence is inherently the negation of peace, and the two concepts are interrelated. Galtung suggests linking the terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ to each other in a way that ‘peace’ can be regarded as ‘absence of violence’ (Galtung 1969, p. 168). While there is no large-scale war or violence across the country, the reality of life is undoubtedly that of wartime.

Another critical manifestation of chronic violence in the DRC is the phenomenon of child soldiering, which first emerged during the Mulele Rebellion in the 1960s (Kiyala 2018b) and reoccurred in 1996 during the revolutionary war led by LD Kabila (Kiyala 2015). Ever since, many innocent children have been abducted and used by armed groups and militias, particularly in the war-torn parts of the DRC, where such groups

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continue to be relentlessly recruited. The use of child soldiers was exacerbated during the two wars already mentioned, and during 'the first and second world wars of Africa': 1996–1997 and 1998–2002 (Kiyala 2018a). The persistence of this practice shows the systematic failure of successive administrations to protect civilians and secure the country's porous borders against cross-border insurgent groups such as the Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU), FDLR and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). These militias are active and continue to destabilise the country with recurring attacks on civilians (Ngoto 2018). For instance, the M23 is accused of horrific atrocities and war crimes; these are well-documented (HRW 2023b; Kiyala 2018a). The perpetuation of violence against children via the use of child soldiers is attributed to the failure of the state to protect children and ensure their welfare, and to ensure that there is a functional justice system, the rule of law and a fight against impunity (Kiyala 2015). All these ills require a compounded strategy of good governance and effective public administration.

Because of these ills, the DRC is portrayed as a 'failed state' (Kiyala 2018a), or a 'dying but not dead' state (Trefon 2009). The concept of 'failed state' features in the international discourse as affirmed by Aman and Aman (2015, p. 95): 'Fragile and feeble statehood is a permanent feature of the international state system'. This notion stems from the context of the post-1945 era, during which a number of emerging states that became members of the international state system were engendered with several 'features of weak empirical statehood' (Aman & Aman 2015, p. 95). Such states were characterised by ineffective strategies against violence, deficiency in delivery of state services, and, in some instances: 'war and conflict characterized these new states'. Such persistence of statehood was not, however, seen as a major threat to international peace and stability in the Cold War period (Aman & Aman 2015, p. 95). The failure of a state such as the DRC is perceptible in its inability to control its border, and provide livelihoods, security or public services to its citizens and its lack of basic services, namely water, sanitation, electricity, health care, economic infrastructure, health and school infrastructure, and sustainable development.

Hesselbein (2007) analysed the collapse of the Congo state and based his analysis on the following: the kleptocratic political or state class, the resource curse argument, 'patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism', '[t]he unfinished transformation and its repercussions' and 'institutional multiplicity'. His analysis consists of two main parts, namely (1) the causes of state collapse and an overview from the post-independence DRC to the fourth republic inaugurated in 2006 after post-war general elections, and (2) an elucidation of the various contexts and circumstances of the rise and fall of the Congolese state; he describes 'the cycle of state building and state collapse'. These two periods are significant in tracing the deep causes

and events that precipitated the decline of the Congo state, and understanding the potential and resiliency of the state to appreciate the promises and efforts to rise again. The political, rational and administrative structures inherited from the Belgian Congo in 1960 vanished amid a political minority elite that received the state from Belgian colonisers at independence. Military and political rivalries resulting from the lack of preparation of the state class by the colonisers became a real stumbling block to the future of the newly independent republic. It plunged it into post-independence chaos marked by successive coups, rebellions and secessionist attempts to divide the country into autonomous countries (namely Katanga and Kasai), while regionalism also prevailed with narrowminded politicians who attempted to pursue the interests of their own provinces or ethnic groups. Some of their tendencies were disguised as intent for a federalist state (Hesselbein 2007).

In the Bas-Congo province, structured as *Congo-Centre* [Central Congo], Joseph Kasa-Vubu created the ABAKO, which he led before becoming the first president of post-independence Congo. The *Movement National Congolais* (MNC) of Patrice Lumumba denoted nationalism as contrary to federalism; thus, bitter rivalries sprang forth between Joseph Kasa-Vubu and Patrice Lumumba, and this was exacerbated by their political ambitions to rule the DRC. Lumumba's ideology was close to the Pan-Africanist Movement, born in the diaspora in the USA under the influence of William Edward Burghardt du Bois, who spent the last year of his life in Ghana. Kwame Nkrumah embraced and further developed the ideal of Pan-Africanism that prompted the creation of the OAU to fight for the independence of Africa. At the national level, Lumumba, like other African nationalists, sought the immediate independence of Congo and promoted a regional identity; he pursued a radicalistic ideology.

The waves of tribalistic, ethno-nationalistic alliances spread throughout the country; the Bakongo, preoccupied with ruling the independent post-colonial state, the *Confédération des Associations Tribales du Katanga* [Confederation of Tribal Associations of Katanga] (CONAKAT) led by Moïse Tshombe, advocated federalism, which was inherited by another son of Katanga, namely Jean Nguza Karl-i-Bond who founded the Union of Federalists and Independent Republicans (French: *Union des Fédéralistes et des Républicains Indépendants*) (UFERI). Many smaller parties followed suit by creating their own alliances, such as the *Parti Solidaire Africain* [African Solidarity Party] (PSA) and the *Alliance des Bayanzi* [the Bayanzi Alliance] (ABAZI). Despite being the largest of the African nationalist parties, the MNC in particular was confronted with factionist leaders who split it into radical groups (led by Joseph Iléo and Albert Kalonji) and a moderate faction; the masses followed MNC-Lumumba (MNC-L). This ethno-tribalist trend, coupled with a factionist, regionalist, tendentious and opportunist political

class, weakened national unity until Joseph Mobutu reunified the country, forcing every Congolese – and the unborn – to belong to the MPR. Even the naming and renaming of the country, from the Free Congo State to the Belgian Congo, succeeded by the first Republic (of Congo) in 1960, which became the DRC in 1964, and the Republic of Zaïre in 1971, and back to the DRC in 1997, could reverse the downward trend towards state collapse. However, in the final analysis, Hesselbein (2007) argues:

While reconstruction is partly underway, fundamental aspects of the monopoly of power, the means of 'broadcasting' power over the whole territory and the political consensus at the heart of the state remain unsolved. (p. 1)

Mobutu's controversial strategy to build the country was supported by clientelism, impunity for his cronies, obscurantist and kleptocratic practices, state terrorism, authoritarianism and oppression tolerated by foreign powers that often intervened to keep him in power (mainly Belgium and the USA). Mobutu's rule was broken by the people's resolve to see his regime collapse while they supported the pseudo-revolution of the AFDL, headed by LD Kabila. The first cracks in Mobutu's power started appearing in 1991 after he announced a multi-party system of governance and a democratisation process. This happened in the post-Cold War era after he was abandoned by the Western powers, as Zaïre was no longer strategically important after the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Perestroika event.

While the kind of consensus Mobutu managed to develop with the political class helped to maintain nation-building, it eventually became unsustainable, then began to disintegrate and crumble, pressurised by serious economic constraints and outside intervention – prompting a gradual erosion of state power, and leaving behind a host of contentious and unresolved issues such as 'citizenship and land entitlements fuelled [by] outside intervention, which eventually crushed the Congolese state altogether' (Hesselbein 2007, p. 1).

The overall state crisis requires redress, which is not possible without positive and durable peace if the DRC is to regain its post-independence prosperity of the 1960s. Because prosperity cannot be achieved without peace, it is imperative to investigate what hinders peace, what kind of peace is needed to sustain development and what the responsibility of public administration is in this process. The 'Structural violence' section examines peace by contrasting this concept with that of violence, which better describes the daily reality of the Congolese people.

■ Structural violence

Structural violence is embedded in socio-economic and political structures. It is a collateral destruction of basic human needs as a result of processes

of social stratification refers to the categorisation of people in a society into rankings, and that is hinged on various factors, including their wealth, income, education status, power, pedigree and family background (Conerly 2021). In addition, '[s]ocial stratification refers to a system in which groups of people experience unequal access to basic, yet highly valuable, social resources' (Conerly 2021, p. 244). Such a stratification damages the well-being, identity and freedom among and disenfranchises people, among other things. It is also considered a form of indirect and sometimes even unintentional violence because it occurs as a result of actions that cause harm without being primarily and deliberately designed to cause harm. It is a form of consequential suffering caused by socio-political systems and market policies that perpetuate an unfair distribution of wealth and foster social and economic inequalities. For instance, the harm inflicted by the capitalist economy, which leads to hunger and the unjust distribution of wealth, can be categorised as structural violence. To prevent structural violence, public administration must extend its interventions beyond bureaucratic and public sector management, ensuring that each country develops a robust economy that serves the well-being of all. Point Loma Nazarene University (2023) observes:

Public administrators in economic planning and development agencies formulate policies that foster economic growth, attract investments, and create employment opportunities. For example, these policies may focus on areas such as monetary and fiscal policies, investment promotion, and industry regulation. (n.p.)

Galtung (1969) observes that the causes of direct violence are often linked to structural violence and explained by cultural violence. This implies that the situations present themselves as abuses of power that harm the oppressed group. It could also be a social injustice characterised by a scarcity of shared resources, significant inequality of personal incomes or limited access to social services when supported by narratives that justify them. I must note that violence is the deliberate use of force or power, quite often disproportionately, with the intention of causing physical or psychological injury or harm to an individual or group of people. It is an intentional and premeditated act. It can be a threat of or a real use of means or resources against a person or a nation and their interests (e.g. bombing of the USA embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, or setting fire to a newspaper printing press).

For Schirch (2004), structural violence consists of 'disabilities, disparities and even deaths that occur when an institutional system or policies attempt to meet the needs of people and their rights, to the detriment of others' (p. 22). This type of violence is manifest in material deprivation, such as basic needs (electricity, schools, health facilities, clean drinking water and minimum infrastructure) not being met, insecurity, social and economic

inequalities, a dysfunctional justice system, abuse of human rights, etc. This reflects the daily condition of life in the DRC. Besides hindering economic growth, the structural and chronic violence shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 are some of the basic factors that sustain violence, insecurity and the practice of child soldiers.

The absence of good roads (see Figure 3.2), clean water, sanitation and decent living conditions undermine human rights and demonstrate the inadequacies of public administration, which is supposed to determine and implement government policies and programmes (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 2023c).

The multifaceted manifestations of violence in the DRC are a clear representation of Schirch's (2004) argument that all forms of violence are intertwined. She defines structural violence as the type that is characteristic of failed states, and governments that have become dysfunctional. As a result, these states and governments are unable to meet people's basic needs and, to some extent, exclude them and prevent them from participating in decision-making and public life. This structural violence



Source: Photograph taken by the author of the outskirts of Coltan mines of Rubaya, 2014. Reproduced and published with permission from the author. Copyright 2014 © JCK Kiyala.

FIGURE 3.1: Housing on the outskirts of the Coltan mines of Rubaya, Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Source: Photograph taken by the author in Masisi, December 2014. Reproduced and published with permission from the author. Copyright 2014 © JCK Kiyala.

FIGURE 3.2: Road condition in Masisi from Goma to Kitchanga Township, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

engenders secondary violence, which manifests itself in ‘civil wars, crime, domestic violence, drug addiction, and suicide’ (Schirch 2004, p. 23). This violence stems from social, cultural and economic disparities, these inequalities being perceptible in an unequal distribution of wealth, as well as wage gaps between rich and poor (Schirch 2004). It is a structural violence that, for Bourgois (2001, p. 3), ‘refers to the politico-economic organization of society that imposes conditions of physical and emotional distress, high morbidity and mortality rates on poverty and abusive working conditions’.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the condition of non-existent or inoperable roads in the DRC, where basic infrastructures are absent, which poses a great obstacle to sustainable development, while Figure 3.1 depicts the landscape of Rubaya Township that is surrounded by rich reserves of coltan mineral. Over the years and through successive administrations of the DRC, the people of the resource-rich North Kivu province have remained paradoxically poor and living under underserved and unutterable deprivations. Such scandal is not unique to Rubaya and Masisi, but the reality of the entire country; it is beyond words.

According to WorldData.info (2021), which compared the types of transport infrastructure of the DRC with the average of all countries in

Africa, it appears that the traffic routes display significant deficiencies in many areas and are not in good condition. The report notes:

In terms of the length of its rail network, the DRC ranks 49th in the world with only 4.0 centimeters per capita. In total, the rail network is 4,007 kilometers long. Freight traffic on the rails most recently totaled 192.00 million tons and kilometers traveled. Passenger traffic reached 7.25 million passenger-kilometers in 2021. (n.p.)

Furthermore, the country has a total length of 152,373 km network of roads and highways, and ‘for each of the country’s 99.01 million inhabitants, this corresponds to zero meters. This puts the DRC in 37th place in the global ranking’ (WorldData.info 2021, n.p.). Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge, as observed by WorldData.info (2021, n.p.), that the DRC’s population density is significantly low at around 42 inhabitants per km². Thus, to reach the remote parts of the country, long distances are generally and disproportionately to be covered, and this adds to the unsafe and dangerous road traffic condition that accounts for:

[A]n average of 28,788 traffic fatalities per year (2013–2019). This corresponds to 33.7 accident fatalities per 100,000 inhabitants per year. By comparison, this figure is 12.3 in the USA and 17.0 worldwide. (WorldData.info 2021, n.p.)

Poor road quality is a critical aspect of road insecurity as well. To expand this point, for instance, a report by World Food Programme (WFP) Logistics Cluster (2022, n.p.) points out that the DRC’s territory is in part enclosed, provincial capitals can only be reached by air, and ‘the national network is approximately 152,400 km long – only 2% of which is sealed – [and] is in a state of disrepair’.

In fact, to correct this report, the capitals of most provinces can only be reached by air from other capital cities, except for a few that are linked by the road network. Additionally, the priority roads cover only 30,786 km, of which 25% are in reasonably good shape, while 16% are in a fair state and almost 59% are in a precarious condition (WFP Logistics Cluster 2022, n.p.). This reality has persisted for decades. Foster and Benitez (2010) assert that the DRC is confronted with the most ominous infrastructure challenge on the African continent and that conflicts have destroyed most infrastructure networks. Adding to the precarious security issues faced by DRC, its development is complexified by the huge size of its territory, its vast geography, the low population density and its extensive forestlands, as well as crisscrossing rivers. All of these complicate the development of new networks despite the progress that has been achieved since the return of peace in 2003 (Foster & Benitez 2010).

In the DRC, structural violence pervades all the domains of life: social, economic, cultural and political. It becomes manifest in poor investment in education and health sectors; the lack of decent housing, an inadequate road network, insecurity, unemployment and the lack of economic

opportunities (particularly in rural areas) – all illustrate structural violence and the reality in the majority of DRC towns. Finally, structural violence is a multiplier driver of other factors that engender violence and undermine peace. As a result, we have displacement of people, a rural exodus, anarchical construction and uncontrolled urbanisation that threaten peace and further increase the vulnerability of the DRC's population and its exposure to perpetual violence. Structural violence is not sporadic but rather rooted in social, economic and political structures. Its manifestations are ethnic violence, land ownership-induced violence, poverty, non-existent infrastructure, deprivation of civil liberties and dysfunctional public administration, failed and compromised democratic processes and the flouting of the rule of law. These reflect the DRC's situation over several decades, and it imperatively requires redress.

■ Congo Wars

The Congo Wars started with the influx of millions of Rwandan refugees who were fleeing the advancing Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR) who were intervening in Rwanda from Uganda following the 1994 Rwandan genocide that caused the death of about 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus; the DRC was one of the countries of refuge. In the wake of this genocide, the Rwandan refugees who fled to the DRC comprised the Interahamwe and former Rwandan forces before the establishment of a new Tutsi government in Kigali. Among over 2 million Hutus who found refuge in eastern Congo, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 7% were perpetrators of the genocide, particularly the members of the Hutu Interahamwe militia and the Hutu rebel group known as the FDLR, who were feared by the Tutsi-dominated government in Kigali.

In 1996, the First Congo War was launched from the east by LD Kabila, a long-time political foe of Mobutu. He was propelled and backed by Uganda and Rwanda; they invaded Zaïre while the dictator, Mobutu, was weakened by prostate cancer. The revolution spearheaded by LD Kabila swept across the country. It gained ground and speedily reached Kinshasa and forced Mobutu to flee, giving the way to LD Kabila to proclaim himself President of Zaïre, which he renamed the DRC in 1997. Because of a breakdown in the relations between Kinshasa and Kigali in 1998, LD Kabila ordered Rwandan and Ugandan forces to leave the DRC. The action by the Congolese triggered the Second Congo War (also known as Africa's World War, the Great War of Africa or the Great African War), which began in August 1998 and involved nine countries fighting within the DRC. The war ended with the signing of the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* in July 2002 in Pretoria, South Africa. This peace agreement was settled between Rwanda and

Congo, and the *Luanda Agreement* was signed by Uganda and Congo; they marked an official end to the war and inaugurated the transitional period during which the country was governed by a '1+4' power-sharing formula (one president and four prime ministers). The Transitional Government took office in July 2003. This interim period ended in 2006 after Joseph Kabila won the presidential elections and became the first democratically elected president in the post-Mobutu era.

While the polls apparently yielded positive results to ensure the end of the tumultuous decades of autocratic rule, anarchy, instability and insecurity, conflicts were entrenched – especially in the east, where sporadic attacks by armed groups became endemic until full-blown hostilities broke out between the M23 rebels (backed by Rwanda) and the DRC government's armed forces. Faced with the advance of the M23 and the threat of Goma falling under the assault of the rebels, the DRC government sought military contingents from the East African Community (EAC) to stabilise the East amid the inability of MONUSCO to achieve its goals. The EAC deployed troops, who failed to stop the M23 rebels advancing towards Goma. Thus, the SADC's troops were redeployed in the east to counter the offensive of the M23 rebels and Rwandan troops that supported them.

It is evident that the DRC's army is confronted with serious challenges in securing its citizens and providing and maintaining peace and stability. Public administration needs to make significant efforts to keep the country secure, build peace, deliver services and provide public goods to its citizens, who already live in precarious conditions.

■ March 23 insurgency and insecurity in the East

The March 23 Rebellion originates from a peace agreement signed between the Congolese government and a pro-Tutsi militia that emerged from a mutiny by former rebels of the CNDP. Bosco Ntaganda, the founder of the CNDP (nicknamed 'The Terminator'), has been convicted of war crimes by the ICC in The Hague, where he is currently responding to the charges levelled against him. The former Deputy Chief of Staff and Commander of Operations for the *Forces Patriotiques pour la Libération du Congo* (FPLC) was served with warrants for arrest on 22 August 2006. A second warrant was served on 03 July 2012; Ntaganda was charged with 13 counts of war crimes and five counts of crimes against humanity, purportedly perpetrated between 2002 and 2003 in the district of Ituri in the DRC (ICC 2023). He was declared guilty on 08 July 2019 (ICC 2023). The court pronounced:

On 8 July 2019, ICC Trial Chamber VI found Bosco Ntaganda guilty, beyond reasonable doubt, of 18 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, committed in Ituri, DRC, in 2002–2003. On 7 November 2019, Bosco Ntaganda

was sentenced to a total of 30 years of imprisonment. The time he spent in ICC detention – from 22 March 2013 to 7 November 2019 – will be deducted from this sentence. (n.p.)

On 14 December 2022, the convicted Ntaganda was transferred to the Kingdom of Belgium, where he is serving his sentence of imprisonment at the Leuze-en-Hainaut Prison (ICC 2023). However, Colonel Sultani Emmanuel Makenga, the military chief of the M23, who fought for the FPR during the Rwandan Civil War, continues to enjoy impunity and continues to freely commit war crimes and crimes against humanity – allegedly seeking to protect his fellow Tutsis in eastern DRC, where his militia is extremely active. Sultani Makenga is considered as *l'éternel rebelle* [the eternal rebel] (Pierret 2023). The M23 accuse the DRC Government of failing to keep to the terms of their demands, such as their reintegration into the police and government armed forces. They first occupied Goma between November and December 2012 and retreated after being defeated and driven out of the territories they occupied in December 2013. They then established their bases in Uganda. The operation to free Goma was led by a coalition of the FARDC and MONUSCO contingents. The M23 fighters have wreaked havoc in the territories they occupy. They resumed their offensives in 2017; they attacked Rutshuru in 2021 and invaded Masisi and launched a full-blown military campaign in 2022. They conduct sophisticated military operations with the backing of Rwanda, according to several human rights reports (*Africanews* 2023; HRW 2023b; ReliefWeb 2023). Recent inquiries conducted by the UN Group of Experts on Congo, HRW and others provide reliable pictorial evidence of Rwanda backing the M23, not only limited to logistical support: Rwanda deploys troops to reinforce the M23 fighters inside the DRC, despite the denial of these facts by Kigali (ReliefWeb 2023). US Secretary of State Antony Blinken acknowledged the influence of Kigali on the M23 rebels; he stated during a press conference:

Now, a big part of that is M23 genuinely pulling back, and there, we are looking to Rwanda to use its influence with M23 to encourage that and to move that forward. At the same time, any militarized nongovernmental group needs to stand down, and that includes groups like the FDLR, and we are looking for all sides to use their influence to ensure that that happens. Rwandan forces need to pull back. (US State Department 2022, n.p)

Rwanda-backed M23 fighters have committed summary executions and coerced civilians in the eastern DRC to fight in their ranks. The warring parties both use ethnicity as a strategy to sustain loyalty and recruit more fighters, thus putting the lives of many civilians in peril (ReliefWeb 2023). For instance:

On November 21, M23 rebels went through Butare where they forced 10 men to transport goods for them while on their way to Bambo, near Kishishe. The bodies of seven of them were found together in Mburamazi, just outside

Bambo, the following day. The brother of one victim said, 'I went with family members of four other victims to retrieve their bodies. We buried three on the spot'. Three more bodies were found three days later, according to local groups. (n.p.)

The same document observes that four men between the ages of 22 and 26 revealed how M23 fighters forced them to perform military duties (carrying supplies and ammunition, doing chores at their military camps and directly participating in fighting), along with many other young people who had also been forcibly recruited in both the DRC and Rwanda. They report their ordeals in the following terms: 'They would whip us and order us to scout for [*Congolese military*] positions', a 25-year-old said (ReliefWeb 2023, n.p.). 'We had no shoes. They would beat us and leave us in the rain. I was taken for two months', reported one young man who 'escaped at night while on the lookout for government troops' (ReliefWeb 2023, n.p.). A 26-year-old averred:

After one month, they took us to Chanzu [near the borders of Rwanda and Uganda]. It must have been like a headquarters as this is where they organized the fighting and there were so many fighters: it was an impressive camp. All fighters come through there, new recruits are trained there before they are sent to the front line. A group of about 50 youth arrived from Rwanda [when I was there]; they had come through the forest. After a week of training, they were given weapons and sent to fight. (n.p.)

The list of M23 atrocities is inexhaustible; it includes rape crimes (*Al Jazeera* 2013; HRW 2023b). M23 continue to perpetrate heinous war crimes and crimes against humanity as the fight rages on all fronts from Rutshuru to Masisi, despite the complaints brought by the DRC Government to the ICC (*Al Jazeera* 2023a). The DRC case is one of the most forgotten conflicts in the world, indicating the double-standard politics of the ICC, which focuses on the Russia-Ukraine War and the war in Gaza while ignoring the human tragedy that has been occurring in the Congo for over three decades. Grenzow (2020) reminds the ICC of its objectives to prevent human atrocities across the world. While there have been ICCs or tribunals for Rwanda (Robinson and Ghahraman 2008; UN Security Council 2007) and Sierra Leone (Special Court for Sierra Leone [SCSL] 2000; Special Court for Sierra Leone and Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone 2017) and an international tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (O'Brien 1993; Rubin 1994), egregious human rights violations, war crimes and crimes of genocidal proportions in the DRC (Kovras 2011; Okosun & Kibiswa 2013) are forgotten by the international community. The inertia of the ICC and the international community regarding the DRC tragedy reveals further injustice that cannot be addressed by local public administration, particularly because of the geopolitics of the conflicts and their underlying causes, which are economic (looting and illegal traffic in minerals in a chaotic environment) – but disguised as identity and ethnicity disputes. The international community

is an accomplice to the massacre of the population of the DRC; this is discernible in the economic cooperation accord between the European Commission and Kigali and the military cooperation between Poland and Rwanda, in disregard of Rwanda's link to the atrocities perpetrated by the M23 rebels. A report of five UN investigators claims to have found substantial evidence of:

[7]he direct intervention of the Rwandan defence forces on the territory of the DRC, either to reinforce the March 23 Movement – Revolutionary Army of Congo [the M23, a rebel group at war with Kinshasa] or to carry out military operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda established in the DRC, of Rwandan origin and opposed to the Kigali regime²⁵ (Châtelot 2022, n.p)

The world's most powerful countries and multinationals are complicit in subjecting the DRC to imperialist control while keeping the civilians in agonising conditions of daily bombing, starvation, deprivation, internal displacements, summary execution of innocents, rape and looting of shops. This situation is exacerbated by the DRC's perceived condition of a failed state – its inability to protect its citizens and quell rebellions and other pockets of insecurity in Mai-Ndombe and the eastern provinces. Security services reforms, robust strategies and building a strong army and police service with peacebuilding via regional and international diplomacy should be considered by the public administration to ensure there is lasting peace and development in the DRC.

■ Rebellions and violence

The DRC has been plagued by insurrections and cross-border terrorist groups that have revealed the brokenness of the security system and its failure to control the country's porous borders. Since 1996, several armed groups, militias and battles between the DRC's national army and the rebel group M23 have displaced thousands of people in the eastern border city of Goma.

Formed 10 years ago, the Rwanda-backed *Mouvement du 23 Mars* (M23) besieged Goma, the capital city of North Kivu. African-led mediation resulted in a ceasefire and M23's demobilisation – until the resumption of hostilities in 2021. These terrorists, known as the ADF – the Islamist rebel group operating in Uganda and the DRC – are allegedly responsible for the killing, maiming, mutilation, war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated in the east and northeast of the DRC. For several reasons, the DRC is weak and incapable of securing its citizens by itself.

25. Translated by the author from the French text.

■ State terrorism

Violence is persistent in the DRC; it takes multiple forms that include, but are not limited to, sexual violence, civil war, violence against civilians, abuses and massacres (Mortensen 2013). Chronic violence is embodied by the use of undemocratic means to obtain or share power, the illegal trade in minerals and illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons and foreign involvement in local alliances of armed factions, blatantly exposing children to violence. Drawing from Clausewitz (2007, p. 100, cited in Mortensen 2013, p. 2), 'politics, moreover, is the womb in which war develops – where its outlines already exist in their hidden rudimentary form, like the characteristics of living creatures in their embryos', I note further that a political system embodied in public administration plays a significant part in violence and even in nurturing warfare. State terrorism exemplifies how a state can misuse its public administration potential to exert violent actions that, according to Michael Stohl (1984, cited in Jarvis & Lister 2014), comprise three wide categories:

[O]vert engagements in coercive diplomacy; covert participation in assassinations, coups, bombing campaigns and the like; and, surrogate activities, in which assistance is offered to a secondary state or insurgent organisation for the conduct of terrorism. (p. 45)

A government can deploy violence that targets its own citizens and political opponents to intimidate, silence and coerce them to adopt, unwillingly, its unfair policies and encourage fear among the population. Such acts aim to terrorise and maintain political pressure and fear, either psychologically or physically, by means of repression, extrajudicial killings of protesters and political rivals, deprivation of human rights, maladministration of justice and trampling of human dignity. In this condition, impunity, political protectionism and obscurantism become the embodiment of structural violence that impedes the emergence and prevalence of positive peace.

Criminal activities are prevalent among people living in abject poverty, deprived of basic needs, education and job opportunities. Those who have been subjected to humiliation and inhumane conditions may resort to becoming violent in order to demand justice and their rights.

■ Failed state

Kabamba (2010), reflecting on the concept of a 'failed state' and its relation to the problem of governance, contends that the state still exists, but fails to provide its 'traditional roles such as the provision of education, infrastructure, and security [*which*] have been taken over by subordinate groups, mostly mobilized along ethnic lines' (p. 265). The narrative of a 'failed state' is sustained by an empirical study published in one of my

earlier works, where civil protection, rule of law and accountability are shown to have been impeded by protectionism and impunity, with ongoing hostilities, population displacements and the rise of insurrectionist and terrorist groups (such as the CODECO and ADF-NALU) as results. A 'failed state' condition is discernible in the inability of public powers to secure and protect a country's citizens and address socio-political crises that confront a government. Grossman (2018, p. 1) affirms: 'These problems include weak democratic traditions and political representation, poor infrastructure, low standards of living, rampant corruption, and the famed resource curse'.

For Cardinal Monsengwo and CSOs, public powers or public administration have failed in their mission. This allegation reflects the portrayal of the DRC as a failed state. According to the London School of Economics and Political Science (2006), a 'failed [s]tate' represents the condition of 'state collapse' – for example, a state that can no longer perform its basic security and development functions and that has no effective control over its territory and borders' (n.p.). This definition fits the current situation of the DRC, which has prevailed since 1996, and describes its porous borders well, creating high vulnerability for the country. While the characterisation of a state as 'poorly performing' or 'failed' is controversial and has been rejected by the policy community (London School of Economics and Political Science 2006), a 'failed state' is understood as 'one that can no longer reproduce the conditions for its own existence' (London School of Economics and Political Science 2006) befits the condition in which the DRC finds itself.

The concept of 'failed state' features in the international discourse, as affirmed by Aman and Aman (2015, p. 95): 'Fragile and feeble statehood is a permanent feature of the international state system'. This notion stems from the context of the post-1945 era, during which a number of emerging states which became members of the international state system were engendered with several 'features of weak empirical statehood' (Aman & Aman 2015). Such states were characterised by:

Ineffectual governmental over violence, weak delivery of state services, and, in some cases, war and conflict [...] Such persistence of statehood, was not, however, seen as a major threat risk to international peace and stability in the Cold War period. (Aman & Aman 2015, p. 95)

The London School of Economics and Political Science (2006) argues that the term 'failed state' was utilised 'in very contradictory ways' that had not been approved by the policy community, as I noted earlier. However, the failure of a state such as the DRC epitomises an inability to control its border, provide security to its people and provide basic needs to its population (namely, water, sanitation, electricity, health care, economic infrastructure, health and school infrastructure, and sustainable development). The notion

of a failed state is also tied to development, as asserted by Aman and Aman (2015):

Ever since the first time usage by Heiman and Ratner almost two decades ago, and in the wake of the rise of the post-Cold War international system, the term 'failed states' has become the buzz word for the international development community. (p. 99)

The manifestations of a 'failed state' in the DRC cut across several sectors and processes, including the conduct of general elections, peace processes, the country's security and stability, and the livelihoods and welfare of the masses. Despite the first three trials of democratic processes culminating in general elections (2006, 2011 and 2018), many observers feel these were of questionable integrity. Since 2006, the situation in the east of the DRC has been volatile; peace has been fragile or non-existent in several parts of the DRC. Even the presence of MONUC authorised after the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement in Lusaka in July 1999 between the belligerents and five regional countries, has not ended the war. Furthermore, the *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1925 of 28 May 2010* created MONUSCO to replace MONUC, which had limited effects in providing peace. Both missions have been criticised, especially in the light of the recent anti-UN Peacekeeper campaign during which protesters stormed MONUSCO's bases in Goma in 2023, leaving a total of 32 civilians and four peacekeepers dead in four eastern towns (*Reuters* 2023), and where MONUSCO's vehicles were set alight in Kinshasa in February 2024 (*Reuters* 2024). One of the clauses of *Resolution 1925* states that the Security Council should have the mandate to protect civilians:

Ensure the effective protection of civilians, including humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders, under imminent threat of physical violence, in particular violence emanating from any of the parties engaged in the conflict. (United Nations 2010b, p. 4)

Under Article 11 of the *Resolution 1925*, emphasis is put on the protection of civilians, set as a priority in any decisions regarding the use of available means, and authorisation is given to MONUSCO to use all necessary and available resources, within the limits of its capacity to protect civilians, humanitarian personnel and defenders of human rights when they come under imminent threat of physical violence, and finally provide support to the government of the DRC in efforts for stabilisation and peace consolidation (United Nations 2010b). Unfortunately, the MONUSCO has not been effective in building and maintaining peace and stabilising the east of the DRC and other parts of the country which have become prone to rampant insecurity and violence that are characteristics of state maladministration, also known as indicators of a failed state.

Later in this study, I will show how the failure of the DRC state is discernible in its broken system of governance, hinders the consolidation of

peace and maintains its people under sustained vulnerability via economic, human rights and development deprivations. The London School of Economics and Political Science (2006) explains the opposite of a 'failed state' as an 'enduring state', and notes that:

[T]he absolute dividing line between these two conditions is difficult to ascertain at the margins. Even in a failed state, some elements of the state, such as local state organisations, might continue to exist. (n.p.)

Amid political quarrels, many Zaïrians and Congolese continue to lose their lives to internal violence with a death toll in genocidal proportions (Okosun & Kibiswa 2013). In 2008, Moszynski (2008) reported that 5.4 million people had died in the DRC since 1998 as a result of conflict. Similarly, Coghlan et al. (2006) reported the same mortality rate in the DRC. From an article originally published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Stroehlein (2015) of the International Crisis Group observed that 1,000 people die daily in the DRC, an estimation made in 2015. Twelve years later, in 2018, the DRC's death toll continued to increase and it is conjectured to have reached 12 million; these casualties are attributed to the war that started in Rwanda in 1994, and its consequences for the DRC during the First (1996) and the Second (1998) Wars, coupled with the desires of neighbouring countries to plunder the DRC's mineral resources (Aid to the Church in Need [ACN] 2018). The crimes of the DRC have been ignored despite the fact that several studies have described the DRC's mortality rate relating to armed conflicts as the deadliest since WWII (Coghlan et al. 2008). The geopolitical wars have cost the lives of more than 12 million people in the country. According to the WFP, the DRC is responsible for half of the rise in hunger in sub-Saharan Africa (Lappé et al. 2013).

Regarding mortality, the statistics presented are constantly increasing, while internationally and domestically, officials have remained silent as far as holding perpetrators accountable is concerned. Recently, the Congolese Nobel Laureate Dr Denis Mukwege has been raising his voice, calling for the implementation of the UN Mapping Report (United Nations 2010b). In several press releases, such as AP News (Petesch 2020), and in an interview on 09 November 2020 following general consultations called by the DRC's President Félix Tshisekedi Tshilombo, Dr Mukwege contended that there should be accountability for all the crimes committed in the DRC. In addition, he advocated that the recommendations of the 2010 UN Mapping Report be implemented to curb endemic impunity that contributes to systemic insecurity and recurring human rights violations and that there should be transitional justice mechanisms and reparations for the female victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity.²⁶ Furthermore,

26. Interview conducted with Dr Denis Mukwege in Kinshasa on 09 November 2020 by *Congo Buzz TV News*.

Dr Mukwege suggested that a second cartography of ongoing human rights violations in the DRC should be pursued, along with setting an ICC for the DRC that will investigate and indict all perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide in the DRC.²⁷ In this context of settled fear in the eastern DRC (Vinck et al. 2008), because of ongoing interethnic, community and regional conflict, as well as conflict related to the exploitation of rich mineral reserves, thousands of people in the DRC live with recurrent internal displacements or become refugees in neighbouring countries. Many others have lost their homes, land, natural sources of income, etc.

It is within the context of the tumultuous aforementioned experience that the *DRC Constitution of 18 February 2006* (DR Congo 2006) wisely noted in its statement of reasons:

Since its independence on 30 June 1960, the DRC has faced recurring political crises. One of the fundamental causes of this is the challenge to the legitimacy of institutions and their facilitators. This call into question took on a particular dimension with the wars that tore the country apart from 1996 to 2002. (p. 1)

This prelude explains the ongoing institutional crisis, the ungovernability of the State, the protracted conflicts and the war waged against peaceful civilians by identified and non-identified armed groups. It should be noted that, to justify the perpetuation of wars, several armed factions have been disguised as community defence fighters who paradoxically terrorise, murder and abuse the local communities of the eastern DRC. Various armed factions continue to operate with impunity in different parts of the country; justice is traded in peace processes. Impunity for war-related conflicts is instrumentalised in forging peace. Impunity in peace processes (Goodman 2010) and impunity for human rights violations during electoral processes (Yonekawa 2012) have become intolerable; it is decried and voices are rising for justice and redress (Hall & LaRocco 2012).

Since the start of the revolution led by the late President LD Kabila, who overthrew President Mobutu in 1997, the DRC has been theatre of violence and unrest, resulting from insurgencies, armed conflicts, civil wars (Kiyala 2018a) and ongoing massacres by the CODECO – militia groups operating within the DRC and the Islamic Alliance of Democratic Forces (ADF-NALU). It is important to understand the nature of insurrectionist and terrorist groups, as their identities and objectives are often misconstrued and misrepresented. Credible scholarly sources depict them as terrorist rebels operating in the DRC (Neethling 2014; Oxford Analytica 2022). They are recognised as the ‘drivers of chaos’ in DRC warfare (Man-Byemba 2022) and are considered peace process spoilers according to peacebuilding

27. Ibid.

theory (Newman & Richmond 2006). These groups are entrenched in the remote areas of the DRC, particularly along the DRC-Rwanda and DRC-Uganda borders, contributing to instability, human rights abuses, war crimes and crimes against humanity (Broache 2014; Van Wyk 2013).

As a result, people's displacements from insecure rural areas towards major towns such as Goma, Bukavu, etc., have generated numerous incidents of violence, criminality and overcrowding of major cities where displaced populations hope to find protection. Thill (2019) outlines and underscores the historical perspectives of insecurity, violence and crime in Bukavu, which will be further studied and reported in this. Of particular concern is the failure of public powers to address insecurity, which is the main driver of displacement, and the lack of structures to protect civilians when they reach host centres like Bukavu. Here the competition to conquer the limited space along and beyond Lake Kivu is high because of the demographic explosion and the influx of the masses of people who fled Rwanda in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, the civil war in Burundi and the ongoing violence and insecurity in the Ruzizi Valley in the South Kivu province (along the border with Rwanda and Burundi). The Ruzizi Plain has been a theatre of violence which has driven many to migrate towards Bukavu.

■ Conclusion

The DRC is an oxymoron of peace and war and a paradoxical case of wealth and poverty, where ongoing hostilities have resulted in such significant loss of life that some researchers describe it as genocide. Violence and armed conflict continue unabated. Structural violence is characterised by a lack of livelihoods, infrastructure, health care facilities, reliable transportation, well-paying jobs, educational opportunities, service delivery and basic public goods. Institutional violence, often referred to as state terrorism, has been identified as a key factor contributing to the country's status as a failed state. This situation presents a major obstacle to achieving positive peace. The ongoing war in the east, along with successive deployments and replacements of foreign contingents aimed at restoring stability and peace, highlights the failures of public administration.

The prospect of lasting peace in the DRC is nurtured by the peaceful self-succession of Félix Tshisekedi's administration. The Congolese can still hope that the years ahead will be prosperous after the war has ended in the east, intercommunity violence has died out in the Mai-Ndombe province, and public administrators abide by their patriotic obligations to serve the people and prioritise their well-being instead of their own selfish interests. The international community and the ICC must play a significant role in peacebuilding in the DRC, where international actors (the most economically

powerful countries and multinationals) pursue their interests and make excessive profits out of 'curse mineral' exploitation, illicit trafficking and export via neighbouring countries.

Public administration must be resolute and more effective if it is to transform the portrayal and reality of the DRC from a 'collapsed', 'failed', 'fragile' state to an 'enduring state' that is resilient and capable of providing public goods, delivering social services, keeping its borders secure, fighting against state terrorism, ensuring the rule of law is upheld, reducing structural violence and building positive peace that will pave the way to durable peace and sustainable development.

Peace processes and reconciliation

■ Introduction

Peace processes in the DRC have a long and complex trajectory. The first such attempt emerged in the 1990s when Mobutu's dictatorial regime began to crumble, and a wave of democratisation swept across Africa. This era of NCs and constituent assemblies became a kind of post-post-Cold War revolution in Africa. The DRC followed suit, and the process led to the SNC. It is important to note that the dawn of these institutions marked a new development in different administrations being held accountable to the masses and to elected representatives who regarded themselves as the political opposition. Civil society organisations joined in the movement to bring political transformation and to change institutions and the constitutions of concerned countries from within, sometimes with expertise from the diaspora. The SNC faced a challenging journey that ultimately culminated in the fall of Mobutu. The second phase of the road to peace started as a result of the Congo World War and ended with the transitional period designed at Sun City in 2003. One of the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* resolutions was the institution of a TRC, which was suddenly aborted without yielding any tangible outcomes.

The tragic end of LD Kabila opened the way for bitter rivalries among armed groups in the east. The *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* gave much hope that

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the DRC would experience peace. This is not the case because of fierce fighting going on in the east, where the M23 rebels control swathes of territory in the Masisi and Rutshuru districts. The complexities and root causes of the conflicts are obscure. The geopolitical dimension and the array of visible and invisible actors further complicate any prospects for national reconciliation.

This chapter provides an overview of the challenging path that peace processes have taken in the country and introduces the various definitions and approaches to reconciliation that have emerged. To offer a comprehensive response to the quest for peace through reconciliation, I juxtapose reconciliation within the African social ethos and philosophy with its faith-based interpretation. This comparison seeks to demonstrate how public administration can draw on local wisdom, traditional African values and religion to build sustainable peace and societal harmony. I will start by discussing the various definitions of reconciliation and their application in the case of the DRC; then I shall move to debating transitional justice and its application to the DRC's context. Finally, drawing from the arguments that will unfold, I will define the pathways to be undertaken by public administration and its surrogates to resume reconciliation and justice programmes in order to attain lasting peace in the DRC.

■ Sovereign National Conference

The NC was convened by the *Constitutive Act 91-097 of 11 April 1991* on the establishment and composition of the NC, and its trajectory was followed by several frameworks, according to Digithèque-Jean-Pierre Maury (2011): The *Fundamental Act Proclaiming the Sovereignty of the National Conference* was proclaimed on 05 May 1992; the *Constitutive Act of the Comprehensive Political Compromise of the Transition* followed on 31 July 1992 and the *Constitution of the Special Arrangement for the Equitable and Balanced Sharing of Power* during the transitional period was signed on 16 June 1994. The Second Republic, established by the *Constitution of 24 June 1967* and its revisions in 1970 and 1974, created a one-party regime that ultimately led to the dictatorship of Mobutu. This regime maintained its repressive apparatus until the protest movement of the 1990s, which initiated a prolonged transition period officially inaugurated by President Mobutu's speech on 24 April 1990 (Digithèque-Jean-Pierre Maury 2011). The constitutional revision law of 25 November 1990 established a multiparty system, and the convening of an NC on 11 April 1991 legally ended the mono-party system. The NC proclaimed itself sovereign, then adopted the *Global Political Compromise* of the following 31 July and a constitutional act that withdrew most of the prerogatives of the President of the Republic; unfortunately, the NC rejected the legal text drafted by President Mobutu and promulgated a text opposing that of Mobutu.

The later legal framework was drafted by the National Assembly, which was, in principle, dissolved (Digithèque-Jean-Pierre Maury 2011). Article 2 of the *Constitutive Act* of the NC states²⁸: The NC's responsibilities include:

- Discuss all issues of national interest with a view to the democratisation of the fundamental options of the Third Republic.
- Draw up a draft constitution to be submitted to a popular referendum.
- Determine the content of the electoral law and develop an electoral calendar.

The Conference shall decide sovereignly on all the aforementioned points. It aimed to lead the Zaïrean people to reconcile with themselves in a comprehensive manner and prevent the conference from being unnecessarily transformed into a people's tribunal or a court of reckoning (Digithèque-Jean-Pierre Maury 2011).

In many African countries, NCs promoted the African tradition of palaver in conflict resolution by examining what went wrong in the past and establishing a new economic, political and social order. These NCs were also seen as instruments of democratisation and national reconstruction (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006).

This also applies to the SNC in the DRC. A number of factors contributed to the birth of the SNC. Some of them are the following:

- Internal political pressure from a strong united opposition, notably the Sacred Union of Radical Opposition (USOR).
- External pressure from the Troika nations (France, Belgium and the USA), who supported the DRC's political transformation.
- *Perestroika* (a series of political and economic reforms initiated by President Mikhail Gorbachev to revitalise the Soviet Union's economy), the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War had far-reaching political implications, such as the reunification of Germany. Thus, Mobutu was no longer needed for the expansion of Western imperialism.
- A series of consultations with all the strata of the Congolese population and the memoranda sent to President Mobutu by the Congolese National Conference of Catholic Bishops and other interest groups said 'No' to the MPR and the one-party system.

The SNC went beyond its initial prerogatives to include investigations on political and economic crimes perpetrated during Mobutu's Zaïre administration. It sought to recreate the nation from the ashes of a decadent regime. The SNC evolved as a model for holding the political establishment accountable for failed administrations that led to egregious human rights violations. It drew inspiration from countries such as Benin, Togo and

28. Texts translated from French, <<https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/cd1991.htm>>.

Congo-Brazzaville, where NCs were held to promote democratisation processes (Kiyala 2018a). It started as a NC or constituent assembly convened by Mobutu to examine the state of the nation, revise the constitution and elaborate a calendar for general elections. This was a move that many countries took, as Lund and Santiso (1998, p. 252) explain: 'National conferences and constituent assemblies have been a widely used mechanism for bringing together political groups to discuss and plan key aspects of a country's future development'. These institutions emerged as an explosion of the disenchantment (both silent and vocal) of the masses in Africa with post-colonial and post-independence Africa's leadership styles, embodied by their public administrations. Such leadership sparked a great deal of criticism from citizens and political dissidents. Lund and Santiso (1998, p. 252) explain the significance of national assemblies, stating: 'They are a particularly useful means for reaching consensus on the political and institutional shape of a post-colonial or post-conflict state'. This model of an open and participatory approach to shape the future of a nation is critical to decision-making and designing public policies that are relevant and accepted by various political affiliations, businesses and civil society, which with the state, make a nation – although the central government remains in control of all these mechanisms (Lund & Santiso 1998).

An NC is also referred to as a national debate in some countries and defined by Lund and Santiso (1998) as:

[A] public forum, held over an extended period, at which representatives from key political and civic groups are invited to discuss and develop a plan for the country's political future, preferably on a consensus basis. (p. 253)

National conferences served to put in place new institutions in Zaïre/the DRC, namely the HCR-PT, a new constitution, a prime minister and a cabinet of transition. Unfortunately, because of disagreement between the central government of Mobutu, the transitional parliament and Prime Minister E Tshisekedi wa Mulumba, Mobutu shut down the SNC, and its agenda was obliterated by LD Kabila after he deposed Mobutu. Although the primary objectives of the SNC were not reconciliation, this kind of assembly, if led with the intention to pave the way for a better future for the country and the end of an oppressive regime, could become a national catalyst for forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and democratisation.

The SNC uncovered many truths regarding the economic and political crimes committed by the dictatorial Mobutian regime. Mobutu's lack of humility in acknowledging the horrendous misdeeds and kleptocratic practices of his rule deepened his frustrations, leading him to terminate the mandate of the SNC, despite the assembly's sovereign legal constitution. The SNC could have served as a valuable instrument for reforming public administration and facilitating the country's transition from an autocratic

to a democratic system of governance. Its adoption, along with a federal state constitution, signalled a new political dawn and instilled hope for a better Zaïre/DRC. The National Sovereign Conference (NSC) in Zaïre and the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) through the lens of Claude Lefort's theory of democracy, Nsundi Mbambi (2008) ascertains:

The history of CODESA, like that of the CNS in Zaïre, marks the foundation of South African democracy. It marks the passage of the old to the new, from the apartheid regime to multicultural and multiracial democracy. (p. 68)

Both of these forums took place in the context of post-oppressive rule – apartheid in South Africa and a dictatorial regime in Zaïre. Amid the rivalries and hostilities that ensued from the injustices and human rights violations of the apartheid regime, South Africans put their bitter opposition aside and transcended it to seek a way for a better future for the country, as noted by Nsundi Mbambi (2008):

Right across all social sectors, South Africans were caught up in the drama of the protracted negotiations during which opposing conceptions of South African society were brought into interaction with one another. (p. 89)

Political adversaries and social cleavages that divided people along racial lines were overcome by Nelson Mandela and FW de Klerk. Hostilities subsided when, as argued by Nsundi Mbambi (2008, p. 89), 'Arguments and values were exposed to adversarial pressure with significant effects for the forging of a national bond able to accommodate the strains of democratic pluralism'. Thus, CODESA was the cornerstone of the democracy and reconciliation that unfolded after the first democratic general elections.

On the other hand, the Zaïrian SNC met several hurdles that hampered its success, namely Mobutu's hostility to it, fear of prosecution in the minds of political officials of the time who were close to the regime, and finally, Mobutu's refusal to respect the sovereignty of the forum. He dissolved the SNC in 1991 after the capital city was looted by two of his undisciplined private militias: the DSP and the Civil Guard (GC). In response, opposition parties, religious groups, and civil society organised a large protest called *Marche d'Espoir* [March of Hope] to demand the resumption of SNC activities. The SNC was a missed opportunity for the renaissance of Zaïre, and subsequently the DRC, because of the logic of non-accountability by Mobutu and his cronies. Public administrators should not avoid or escape accountability for their actions. Nsundi Mbambi (2008) puts it clearly in the following words:

The executive is accountable to the legislative, and the legislative to the judiciary, and vice versa. But more importantly, all of them are ultimately accountable to the citizenry as a whole, the people. (p. 89)

When a system of governance places a high priority on accountability, Bertelli and Schwartz (2022, p. 2) argue that 'the design of governance structures should also privilege that value'. So, elected representatives and

administrators of public organisations must be cognisant of accountability as an intrinsic dimension of their office (Bertelli & Schwartz 2022; Box 2015), despite the varied structures and mechanisms in place to ensure that public administrators are accountable. This was not the case with the Mobutu Zaïre administration. Nonetheless, the churches and civil society mounted pressure on the decadent dictatorial regime to allow the SNC to run its course. One of the instruments utilised by the churches was non-violent civil protest, particularly the March of Hope, which is discussed in the '*Marche d'Espoir*' section.

■ ***Marche d'Espoir* [March of Hope]**

The Catholic Church initiated *Marche d'Espoir* [March of Hope] protest, and other denominations followed. All demanded the reopening of the SNC and the departure of Mobutu from office. On Sunday, 16 February 1992, 110 parishes were involved in this March; a million people went onto the streets of Kinshasa and many other cities, protesting against the suppression of the SNC and demanding its immediate re-opening. About 33 people were killed, and the army wounded many. This protest ended in a bloodbath nobody would have expected from a peaceful demonstration. Nuns and expatriate missionaries were arrested and tortured, and some were deported.

In February 1992, a peaceful Christian demonstration in favour of reopening the Conference was violently suppressed by the Israeli-trained DSP and the German-Egyptian-trained GC. More than three people were killed, with Bibles and candles in hand; they became 'the martyrs of democracy', entitled to the same heroic status as the martyrs of independence who fell in January 1959 in Kinshasa, during the insurrection against Belgium (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006).

After this protest, the SNC resumed, but only for a short while. Then Mobutu ordered it to close, and it never reopened again. Therefore, this forum did not succeed in bringing about a new political order, good governance, democracy, the rule of law and national reconciliation.

■ ***Lusaka Peace Accord***

The *Lusaka Peace Accord* was signed on 10 July 1999 in the capital city of Zambia between the DRC government and rebel factions supported by Uganda and Rwanda. One of the resolutions consisted of an immediate withdrawal of foreign troops fighting alongside the rebels (Kakuru 2008). At the UN Security Council meeting held on 24 January 2000, President LD Kabila requested that a ceasefire and the Peace Accord be observed. On their side, countries involved in fighting in the Congo called for a

Congolese reconciliation and neutralisation of all negative and criminal forces operating in the warring territories (Kakuru 2008). This alluded to the Hutu rebels fighting the government in Kigali, the rebels known as the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) fighting against the Muslim Arab government in Khartoum, and the LRA, a fundamentalist Christian guerrilla group (supported and financed by the Sudanese) government fighting the Ugandan government in Kampala.

The peace accord signed in Lusaka did not achieve reconciliation. A truce was unacceptable to the rebels, who found that a ceasefire agreement was imposed on them while the military and political situation on the ground was confusing. Each rebel group claimed victory over other fighting forces (Kakuru 2008).

The crisis in the DRC was deepened by the murder of President LD Kabila, the collapse of the institutions of the Republic and renewed attacks by Rwanda and Uganda on the Congolese territories (Kakuru 2008). A dialogue with all the belligerents was the only way to silence the guns and salvage the DRC. After many negotiations, finally, all parties involved in the war agreed to meet at Sun City, near Pretoria in South Africa.

■ Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue

On 25 February 2002, the mediator of the Congolese crisis, former Botswana president, Sir Ketumile Masire, successfully opened the inter-Congolese dialogue at Sun City. Three hundred and fifty-nine officials participated in this dialogue that finally secured a truce after years of civil war and political and social unrest. The cease-fire produced a power-sharing agreement between the government, political opposition, civil society and rebel factions (Kakuru 2008). This was the first ever large political agreement signed between Congolese politicians in the wake of the fall of the Mobutu administration, and the death of President LD Kabila. It paved the way for a transitional government under the '1+4' arrangement, whereby President Joseph Kabila remained the president, assisted by four vice-presidents. This power-sharing deal involved the opposition, commanders of armed groups who were involved in hostilities and the opposition. The protagonists of the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* under the 1+4 government were the President of the Republic and four vice-presidents, namely Joseph Kabila, President of the Republic, from the People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD); Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi, Vice-President (PPRD); Azarias Ruberwa, Vice-President, from the RCD; Jean-Pierre Bemba, Vice-President, from the MLC; and Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma, Vice-President, from Forces of the Future. These parties shared the various ministerial positions with the other numerous political factions

resulting from the conflict. Étienne Tshisekedi, the emblematic opponent known for his radical opposition to Mobutu's administration and to that of Kabila, refused to participate in the 1+4 government as vice-president on behalf of the unarmed opposition, the *Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social* [Union for Democracy and Social Progress] (UDPS).

There were many negotiations that aimed at setting the framework for inter-Congolese dialogue. The peace accord reached at Sun City in December 2002 included a resolution to create four commissions, namely a commission for humanitarian, social and cultural affairs, a commission for economic and financial affairs, a commission for peace and reconciliation, and a commission for defence and security (Kakuru 2008). A TRC was instituted but was undermined by the transitional government, even though it was one of the main goals set in the peace deal. The TRC was paralysed by political interests and mismanagement, while talks on an international tribunal have stalled. The feeling in Kinshasa is that no one is interested in looking into the past – but it is crucial to revive a discussion of justice, reconciliation and accountability during the electoral period (reported by The Crisis Group's International Advisory Council (2006). In a similar vein, Rogier (2004) observes that outsiders influenced the agenda of Sun City, particularly Rwanda, that envisaged 'short-term benefits from resource exploitation and long-term objectives of creating a zone of influence in eastern Congo' (p. 32); these were inconsistent with the restoration of the DRC's unity, which could have been heralded by an all-inclusive agreement (Rogier 2004). The interests of Rwanda remain perceptible in the ongoing conflict in the DRC, as reported by human rights organisations, particularly in hostilities between the M23 rebels and the DRC armed forces (HRW 2023b). The disputed aspirations of Rwanda conveyed in the narrative of the DRC's balkanisation need serious consideration in the face of what the DRC's population see as the impotency of the country's government to secure its borders and preserve its sovereignty (Mathys 2017). The critical analysis of Mathys (2017) is worth considering in the search for a balanced understanding and interpretation of historical events that are critical for shaping the future of public administration, both in Kinshasa and Kigali.

The Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue could have served as an adequate conflict resolution instrument that would have dealt with the factors and circumstances of the Congo war (particularly the failure of Mobutu's Zaïre administration and the greedy motives of most belligerents in waging war against Zaïre) by building a wider and appropriate consensus for a better future of the DRC, as argued by Rogier (2004):

While bad governance and democratic deficit had characterised the Mobutist state and eventually caused its collapse, the launching of a nation-wide dialogue open to non-belligerents seemed a first step towards establishing a new political order based on popular consent and inclusive participation. (p. 38; Furley & May 2006)

It is evident that national dialogue stands as an imperative pathway to reconciliation and peacebuilding in the country.

■ Reconciliation

In the wake of large-scale human atrocities perpetrated by public powers or rival actors who purportedly lead the struggle to 'liberate the people', voices arise calling for reconciliation, healing and nation-building; these processes are believed to be undertaken by public authorities. The experience of post-colonial Africa, marked by the legacy of dictatorial rules and traumatic memories of absolutist power, has proved that public administration cannot be entrusted with reconciliation, healing, peacebuilding and post-violence nation-reconstruction. Even scholars believe that TRCs will not operate freely and achieve their goals if there is no alternative government. The distrust towards public institutions reverberates in many African communities where efforts for TRCs have seen the real light only after the demise of those regimes that carried out atrocities against their own people. Reconciliation is a complex process that requires strategies, compromise, commitment and willingness from the different parties involved. It takes place in political, social and religious spheres. As a process, reconciliation is a pragmatic and dynamic reality.

■ Theological perspectives of reconciliation

The word 'reconciliation', from *reconciliatio* in the Vulgate Latin translation, was St. Paul's choice to express God's saving work in Jesus. This concept was used in Church terminology to express 'peace with God and one another' (De Gruchy 2002, p. 24). Phan (2006) argues that total reconciliation and perfect peace are not achieved by human efforts because of the 'human propensity to violence and domination' (p. 2). He sees genuine peace and reconciliation as an eschatological gift from God, which human communities should hope and pray for. Human communities cooperate to make this heavenly blessing become a reality. De Gruchy (2002) shares Phan's (2006) view that social reconciliation is a participation in divine reconciliation, which is understood as an eschatological reality. He affirms the following:

If reconciliation must be understood sequentially when we speak of it within the context of interpersonal, social and political struggles for healing, then from the perspective of the New Testament and Paul's theology, we need to understand it eschatologically. [...] Complete reconciliation is a future hope that shapes the way in which we live our lives. (De Gruchy 2002, p. 56)

Reconciliation is both a spiritual and a secular concept. De Gruchy affirms that reconciliation is a reality we create through faith. The final destiny of

humanity is reconciliation with God in Christ. We engage in this process, and we anticipate its ultimate fulfilment at the end of time. He notes: 'theologically it is appropriate to speak about reconciliation as a God-given reality that can be appropriated and claimed that, in the end, God will reconcile all things to himself' (De Gruchy 2002, p. 18).

Reconciliation consists of both visible and invisible components, which Dietrich Ritschl (1998, p. 127, cited in De Gruchy 2002, p. 18) describes as two levels of expression. He notes that the primary level of reconciliation is invisible and indemonstrable. At this primary level, reconciliation is expressed in a language of hope, although the discourse surrounding it may still lack inspiration. In contrast, the secondary level is articulated by believers who establish explanatory signs and words that are perceptible in the social, political and judicial spheres, even though these words and signs originate from a non-empirical reality.

In order to make this second level more comprehensible, Ritschl (1998, p. 18, cited in De Gruchy 2002, p. 19) attributes to it certain values such as acts of love, exigency to set the oppressed free, healing the sorrowful and the sick, reconciliation with enemies and promoting justice in hope for the kingdom of God. He holds that all rational and responsible human beings have access to these signs of reconciliation. These two levels are not static, but rather dynamic, and can be observed in the different forms that reconciliation takes to become an embodied reality. The functional motion of this process of reconciliation is facilitated by forces such as forgiveness, repentance, truth and justice. These four elements make reconciliation part of existential experience, a reality of human life. Some elements of this dynamic expression of reconciliation are close to the second level of reconciliation that I have just mentioned.

While a language of reconciliation sounds unrealistic, especially in the context of bloody conflicts and inhumanities that have affected relationships and communities, the history of South Africa shows that reconciliation is possible. It does not mean that distorted relations are made perfect. But the *re-concilium* [meeting again] is possible between the oppressed and the oppressors who have been estranged; victims and perpetrators can inter-relate again. Reconciliation is not a utopian discourse; it is a reality with deep theological roots.

De Gruchy (2002) defines reconciliation as:

[A]n action, praxis and movement before it becomes a theory or a dogma, something celebrated before it is explained. Understood only or primarily as political theory or theological doctrine reduces it to an historical idea that can be debated at length and in the abstract. (p. 21)

Truth-telling, a face-to-face encounter between the perpetrators of evil acts and their victims, can create an environment whereby justice can

emerge as the process of acknowledging guilt and offering forgiveness unfolds. Such an interface enhances healing because both perpetrators and victims are transformed by the act of forgiveness, and they are at peace with each other. In recognising the mutuality of guilt, forgiveness thus becomes a creative act, restoring humanity and making the restoration of community possible. What becomes apparent in this process is that through forgiveness the status of both victim and perpetrator changes: They become different people, at peace both with themselves and with each other (De Gruchy 2002).

The praxis of reconciliation can be extended to Nelson Mandela, who stands as an icon of freedom and reconciliation. His 1994 biography *Long Walk to Freedom* (Mandela 2008) is an account of a dramatic experience of loneliness, anger, love, forgiveness and reconciliation. De Gruchy (2002) asserts:

What is so remarkable about the example of Mandela is that he not only recognized this connection between justice and reconciliation, but he also saw the need to take the first step towards reconciliation, the step of forgiveness becomes a restoring justice. (p. 179)

South Africa, as a nation, is built upon the principled symbol of peaceful racial co-existence and societal harmony in a 'rainbow' multiracial land. Reconciliation, forgiveness and love for enemies have overcome bitterness and have regenerated a nation where perpetrators of past atrocities can live with their victims. Reconciliation here is a perceptible mutual acceptance, a progressive movement towards societal harmony and hope that sustains the reconstruction of a just society. The foundation for such reconciliation lies upon a common understanding and aspiration for the future. However, this aspiration can be impeded by many challenges that are inherent in the erroneous interpretation of reconciliation.

One dimension of reconciliation is restitution – an important step towards reconciliation and a concrete form of justice for victims. Bhargava (2000) emphasises the importance of restitution, saying that in transitional situations that are extremely complex, the risk of not employing restitution is evident because victims may remain in a perpetual state of victimhood, and their society would likely remain forever barbaric. This tendency characterised the history of the DRC. After more than three decades of dictatorial rule and years of civil war and bloody ethnic violence, no government in the DRC bothered to investigate past human rights violations and hold perpetrators accountable. Even during the SNC, those who were in the government did not see the necessity of addressing past human rights abuses.

■ Reconciliation as 'peaceful coexistence'

The concept of 'peaceful coexistence' is applied in the context of ethnic conflicts. This approach considers deep-seated conflicts as intractable,

suggesting that efforts to eradicate them may be futile and could potentially exacerbate the situation (Schreiter 1998, cited in Phan 2006, p. 2). For instance, ethnic conflicts in the DRC involving the Lendu and the Hema, the discrimination against the Banyamulenge, people of Rwandese origin (Tutsi, Hutu or Twa), and the conflicts between the Banyamulenge, the Hunde and the Nyanga in North Kivu have never been addressed. The Mai-Mai insurrections against foreign tribes of Rwandese origins and the massacre of the Luba by the Katangans in the Katanga province have been ignored. Many human tragedies have happened, but nobody has assessed their magnitude. All these populations have been in conflict for years, and their disputes have never been resolved, yet these antagonistic tribes continue to live together. This is an illustration of 'peaceful co-existence'. There is a latent danger of the recurrence of violence among those populations, as we see it happening today, because the deep causes of animosity among those populations have not been addressed, and there has been no reconciliation.

These four conceptions of reconciliation have some lacunae. A comprehensive understanding of reconciliation should take into consideration its transcendental dimension, which goes beyond the limits of human rationality, knowledge and experience. Schreiter perceives reconciliation from a theological perspective and describes it as a spiritual reality, which cannot be completely explained by the merely 'technical rationality' that is favoured by many nations. In his opinion, reconciliation is not an invented means that technology can put at our disposal, a tool derived from technical rationality or a mere human achievement (Schreiter 1998, cited in Phan 2006, p. 3). Reconciliation is not just a matter of strategies, but rather of spirituality, as expressed in the following lines:

While conflict resolution is a helpful and necessary process, it is not reconciliation insofar as it is essentially a tool of technical rationality, commonly favoured by countries with a plethora of technological means at their disposal, such as the United States. Moreover, it is not reconciliation because it is basically a human achievement and ultimately not a gift from above, as genuine reconciliation is. In theological terms, as Schreiter puts it, reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy. (Phan 2006, p. 2)

The four expressions I mentioned do not exhaust what many people understand by reconciliation. There is a popular understanding of reconciliation which does not even involve a process. It seems easy to say it, but it is challenging to put it into practice. This type of reconciliation is termed 'forgive and forget'. This tendency is often heard when people are confronted with huge injustices or suffer exploitation, oppression or even minor breakdowns in relationships. It emerges as a result of incapacity and powerlessness in addressing conflicts. It is a cheap definition of reconciliation that cannot prevent a recurrence of injustices and abuses because memories cannot be dumped or deleted. A person is a complex being. He or she has

emotions and reason. Memories need to be redeemed, not erased, dealt with, not abandoned. This can be done through different processes that I will mention later in this work.

I have tried to show that the concept of reconciliation can face some challenges. It needs certain mechanisms that can allow a real transformation to take place in interpersonal relationships. Christians explain it from the perspective of God's plan of salvation. This will be developed later in this study when I discuss reconciliation in the Judeo-Christian tradition in order to apply it to the DRC situation. I will begin by retracing the steps through which this process went from the time when President Mobutu announced a multi-party system in 1990, thus putting an end to single party rule. A series of events followed that indicated the rising need for national reconciliation.

■ Reconciliation in the African worldview and ethos

The DRC is a country where various religions coexist, including followers of traditional religions, Catholics and other denominations. To make this study more inclusive, it is essential to explore the meaning of reconciliation as understood within the Judeo-Christian tradition and the African worldview and ethos. The African worldview consists of a set of beliefs and practices that are carried out through myths, songs, symbols, artistic objects, proverbs and actions that explain and justify representational patterns of behaviour among African people. I call it representational because there is no single African worldview, although some beliefs and rituals are common and practised among many African people. People from one culture identify themselves with those of another culture within Africa because of a common understanding of the concepts of life and human beings, and God. These systems of belief can be shared by many people – even the concept of reconciliation and respect for life.

From an African worldview, reconciliation is considered as a transcendental value that is expressed in songs, rituals and symbols. For instance, animal sacrifice and foodstuffs are offered to divinities, to spirits and to ancestors (Mbiti 1990). Among many other reasons I do not enumerate here, these practices also aim at bringing reconciliation between the living and the ancestors whenever customs are transgressed. Ritual sacrifices are meant to cool the wrath of ancestors and spirits.

De Gruchy (2002) affirms that the role of traditional African practices of animal sacrifice and the cult of the ancestors has some relevance in social and political reconciliation. Reconciliation from an African perspective includes both the living and the dead. The role of sacrifice is important in

restoring relationships between the living and the departed members of the community. He asserts:

The traditional African practices of animal sacrifice and the veneration of the ancestors undoubtedly influences the way in which many African Christians today understand the biblical story of redemption just as it may play a role in social and political reconciliation. (De Gruchy 2002, p. 65)

For instance, the sacrifice of the mass is perceived as the celebration of love, peace and reconciliation. This is expressed in one of the African liturgical songs composed by a theologian-liturgist from Sumbwanga in Tanzania: 'Your table brings peace. Your table is a table of reconciliation' (Healey & Sybertz 1996, p. 271). The song applies African values of reconciliation to Jesus Christ's eucharistic table. At the table of the Lord, the whole person is involved: 'body and soul'.

The Eucharist²⁹ has an eschatological dimension as it foreshadows the final banquet that the Lord will offer at the end of time. Whenever Christians engage in reconciliation, they celebrate God's love and presence on their journey towards their ultimate destiny: God. This requires that humanity, as a pilgrim community, moves towards God in reconciliation.

I have mostly discussed reconciliation from the perspective of Judeo-Christian tradition. It is important to note, however, that in Africa reconciliation is a value that stands beyond the boundaries of religion. In the case of the DRC, which shares the same African understanding of community life, reconciliation becomes an imperative. This conception is anchored in the communitarian nature of life in Africa. This view is supported by African communitarianism, and the philosophies of *Bisoïté*, Ubuntu and *Ujamaa*.

■ Philosophy of *Bisoïté*

This philosophical tendency affirms what Gyekye (1998) understands of a human person: A being who depends on the community for his or her existence. The *Bisoïté* philosophy of Professor Tshiamalenga Ntumba presents a human person in a 'cosmic unity' such that the one becomes many. He calls it *l'unité de nous englobant et processual* [the unity of the 'us' which is inclusive and processing from the 'one']. He calls it cosmic unity because it encompasses the divine, the cosmic and the human. Tshiamalenga (2005, cited in Ngoyi 2006, p. 167) argues that this universal unity is in contrast to the mentalist solipsism of René Descartes and Edmund Husserl. Ngoyi (2006) articulates this reasoning in these terms:

[The] African metaphysical '*community we*' expresses a whole and a unity that reconciles all forms of dualism: God-man, soul-body, elite-people, etc.

29. Mass in the Catholic Church.

[*Tshiamalenga*] makes use of various domains. An example is the concept of environment, which ordinarily places man at the centre, whereas man is a microcosm, and he is the very environment: air, water and minerals are constituent parts of the human person. (p. 167)

A person depends on others and their environment. Therefore, reconciliation is intrinsic to community life. A person who cannot be reconciled with others, with his or her physical environment and with God, cuts himself or herself off from the substance that sustains his or her life. It appears that this understanding of a person in the DRC provides ample ground for reconciliation and is close to the Judeo-Christian wisdom about the human person, others and God. It is also related to the philosophy of Ubuntu.

■ Ethics of *Ujamaa*

Unlike other principles and doctrines that define human nature and the person from a philosophical or political point of view, *Ujamaa* is not a concept coined in order to shape life in a given community. *Ujamaa* is rooted in the African ethos, like Ubuntu. Swahili in origin, it means 'togetherness', 'familyhood' and 'brotherhood and sisterhood'. This pattern of social relationships is characterised by the equality of all peoples. Some features of *Ujamaa* are equal distribution of wealth and a classless and non-discriminatory society based on the model of relationships that binds members of one family, namely father, mother and children. Also, *Ujamaa* is not conceptually confined within the limits of family interrelations but includes the whole of humankind (Onwubiko 2001).

It follows, then, that *Ujamaa* is identified with a large brotherhood, with all people sharing a common humanity. This implies that societal harmony remains the essence of community life, and reconciliation becomes one of the pillars of brotherhood or sisterhood. This prevents instances of racism, tribal or gender discrimination, or injustice because every person should be considered as a brother or a sister to the other, enjoying the same privileges and rights. The analysis of other perspectives of reconciliation shows that there are common elements that are shared between *Ujamaa* and the Judeo-Christian tradition. The African ethos situates reconciliation in the very being of a human person, described as a communal being. Reconciliation is a necessity and the essence of being with other beings.

■ Intercommunity reconciliation

Intercommunity (Banyamulenge-local ethnic groups) conflicts are widely studied. Vlassenroot (2002) notes:

Clashing social identities and incompatible life-styles would thus eventually result in open conflict; from the start they impeded peaceful coexistence between the Banyamulenge and their Bavira, Babembe and Bafulero neighbours. (p. 502)

There have been casualties on the side of Kinyarwanda speakers as well as on the local people where the Rwandese have emigrated. Violent actions targeting either side are common in the Kivus, especially with the constitution of auto-defence militias who arm themselves to protect their respective communities, and the emergence of community auto-defence such as the Mai-Mai (Vlassenroot 2001, 2013), the Coalition of Congolese Resistant Patriots (PARECO) and others (Kiyala 2018a). The long-standing rivalries between the CNDP, the Mai-Mai and PARECO account for important losses of life. Reconciliation is imperative for peace, social cohesion and harmonious coexistence of those rival communities. This can materialise through an inter-Congolese dialogue aimed at preventing and ending the recurrence of infernal intercommunity violence. The issue of the Banyamulenge is key to the success of such a reconciliation initiative that should be integrated into the revised version of the Congo's TRC. Reconciliation efforts in the DRC must seek to repair the relationships between the Banyamulenge and local communities with whom they have been entangled in hostilities. The principles of African social ethos, such as Ubuntu, *Ujamaa* and *Bisoité*, underlie the essence of reconciliation in this context. The role of local and administrative and official leaders is essential to achieve this process, which must be part of the DRC's public administration.

■ Faith-based approach to reconciliation

In the DRC, where various beliefs coexist, looking into common elements that sustain these beliefs (such as respect for human dignity, repentance, justice and aspiration to eternal harmony) shows that the Judeo-Christian tradition of reconciliation is not incompatible with African communitarian values. Thus, reconciliation from this African worldview can be put forward to enhance reconciliation in the DRC and prevent the recurrence of human rights violations.

The Catholic Church in the DRC has been involved in reconciliation. The role played by Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, both as Chairperson of the SNC and President of the HCR-PT (Amnesty International 2004), was an indication that the Church was committed to the cause of peace, justice and reconciliation. Several declarations made by the CENCO have conveyed the message of peace and reconciliation, encouraging the faithful to embark on the process of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Catholic Church hierarchy, with its clergy in Kinshasa, mobilised thousands of protesters onto the streets to demand the reopening of the SNC in 1992. This action was fruitful, although many people lost their lives

and became martyrs for democracy and reconciliation. The Roman Catholic Church was a driving force behind the new consciousness that woke people up to the dictatorial machinery of Mobutu's regime. The same impetus which was used to mobilise the masses against the autocratic rule of Mobutu is expected to drive the Congolese people to move towards national reconciliation. The Catholic Church has this authority and can utilise it as it has done it before.

When the SNC was suspended for the second time, Archbishop Monsengwo, in a lamenting tone, expressed his regrets and denounced the arbitrary means used by Mobutu's regime in dealing with the HCR-PT, which was the highest institution in the country. All the efforts and goodwill in bringing the Congolese to reconciliation dissipated. Monsengwo disapproved of the ill-intentioned tactics used by Mobutu to block the progress of the SNC. Several times, Archbishop Monsengwo travelled to the jungle of the equatorial forest to meet Mobutu in his fortress of Gbadolite. His mission was to convince president Mobutu to subscribe to the logic of social and political transformation that the SNC was expected to generate – and, above all, national reconciliation.

■ **Was the Sovereign National Conference a step towards peacebuilding?**

The process of reconciliation in the DRC could have started with the NC that was convened by President Mobutu in 1991 after he abolished, on 24 April 1990, the one-party system that he created in 1967 and that had ruled the country for three decades. In an attempt to put an end to the imbroglio resulting from the existence of two texts, a third *Constitutional Act* was promulgated on 09 April 1994, allowing the President of the Republic to recover important prerogatives, and a Special Arrangement was concluded on 16 June 1994 between the Presidency and the opposition. The situation remained unclear until the collapse of the regime and Mobutu's flight on 16 May 1997 in the face of LD Kabila's advancing forces, which were supported by Rwanda and Uganda. LD Kabila imposed his authority and established a new regime, which was accused of perpetrating human rights violations like those of Mobutu. The NC was tasked with two political objectives:

1. Establish a constitutional framework to sustain the political reform and democratic process initiated by President Mobutu.
2. Set a timetable for general democratic elections.

The NC later on became a SNC, giving itself a broader mandate and power to appraise all the crimes committed under President Mobutu's regime. These crimes included political assassinations and economic malversations ('improper and corrupt behaviour in public office'). The SNC was welcomed as a new political dawn that would inaugurate a multi-party system. Two

thousand eight hundred and forty-two delegates from civil society, political parties and the Congolese diaspora communities took part in the SNC, representing all the strata of the Congolese population. The SNC was designed to bring about national reconciliation. Professor Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja situates the SNC in the context of other NCs that took place in some African countries in the 1990s.

These NCs were conceived as a combination of a TRC and a constitutional commission: They provided a forum for national catharsis in the African tradition of conflict resolution through the *palaver*, whose decisions are binding on all parties and groups; and they also represented a modern rule of law mechanism for restoring multiparty democracy (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006). It is important to emphasise that the SNC was a sovereign institution, meaning that its decisions were indisputable and unopposable. Unfortunately, the dictatorial regime of the time undermined this sovereignty. As a consequence of this state of affairs, the political crisis deepened and the country was partitioned by rebel factions, namely the RCD, the MLC and other fighting groups that were supported by foreign troops. The international community had to intervene to bring together all the different belligerents and warlords. This was the beginning of a series of negotiations that secured a ceasefire and opened the road to peace and reconciliation debates. A series of talks went on fruitlessly, and this exacerbated the crisis because each rebel group wanted to consolidate its position on the fighting ground so that, at the negotiations, their military victories would put them in a favourable situation.

Because of increasing ethnic violence, civil war and human tragedy caused by renewed military hostilities, reconciliation was neglected. In 2006, a report by the International Crisis Group suggested that politicians and community leaders should engage in a 'frank national dialogue on ethnic reconciliation'. However, the transitional government in Kinshasa neglected reconciliation, which was one of the main objectives of the *Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* signed at Sun City (Crisis Group's International Advisory Council 2006). My personal observation is that the failure of the government to embark on a reconciliation process continues to raise serious concerns about justice for the victims of past atrocities and the assurance of lasting political and social stability.

A TRC has been strongly recommended to curb the risk of instability during the transitional period leading to general elections. This move was crucial for social transformation and a necessary step to move the country forward. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2006) remarks:

In addition to traditional institutions of the state sovereignty – government and a bicameral parliament, courts and tribunals – five democracy-supporting institutions were established, as follows: the independent electoral commission,

the high authority of the media; the national observatory of human rights; and the truth and reconciliation commission; and the commission on ethics and the fight against corruption. (p. 8)

After several attempts to achieve reconciliation, and hinder the recurrence of absolutism and military conflicts, a TRC was finally launched under the name of *Commission Vérité et Réconciliation* (CVR). But such an attempt failed to yield the expected results. A revised DRC TRC with a new mandate should amend the period of human rights violations to be covered, and there should also be some guardrails, such as its constitutional mandate or a legal framework under which it should operate.

While admitting the achievement of the South African TRC and suggesting a TRC for the DRC, I must, however, note that a TRC cannot be the *only* way to bring reconciliation and healing. Earlier I pointed out the reasons for the failure of the CVR. The actual context of the DRC is not conducive to running a TRC. What can be seen as a realistic approach is to use the Judeo-Christian wisdom and African ethos as a means of promoting national reconciliation.

■ Conclusion

Peace processes and national reconciliation in the DRC have travelled a steep road and remain unfinished items on the agenda of post-conflict peacebuilding and nation rebuilding. The first attempts to seek negotiated peace via institutional reforms and a transition from authoritarian rule to a democratic governance system were short-lived because Mobutu hung onto his decadent and despised regime, which is remembered for heinous human rights violations, summary executions of his political foes, and kleptocratic and obscurantist practices that defined his three decades in power. The democratisation process Mobutu initiated at the end of the SNC was a sham – it lacked transparency and the political will to develop it to its full potential of a system imbued with real democratic values. The demise of the supposed transition from dictatorial rule to democracy under Mobutu was sealed by LD Kabila, who became another dictator with a rule founded on mere democratic slogans. Reconciliation in the Judeo-Christian tradition could be juxtaposed with reconciliation fundamentals in the African social ethos and philosophy that are fostered by the notion of Ubuntu, *Bisoité* and *Ujamaa*. These concepts carry the values of forgiveness and non-retaliatory attitudes in the face of injustice suffered individually or collectively; they encourage individuals and communities to embrace African humanist values of forgiveness, reconciliation and societal harmony that can become a catharsis resulting in national reconciliation and welfare. The responsibility of public administration is to develop a statutory framework within which such reconciliation can be experienced. This needs

to be tested via experimental studies to establish what the challenges could be to achieving such reconciliation and how public administrators would ensure its success.

National reconciliation in the DRC remains a complex and long-term dream, as the country is plagued by armed conflict, and the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's* recommendation for a TRC never materialised. Nonetheless, there should be hope for the completion of the TRC because an alternative regime emerged after those of Mobutu, LD Kabila and Joseph Kabila. Félix Tshisekedi and his successors should consider reconciliation and accountability as determining factors for lasting peace in the country.

Violence, recurring human rights violations, impunity, lack of justice, corruption and what Pope Francis has described as the 'gangrene of people'³⁰ are significant issues deeply affecting the DRC and its citizens. These challenges have a detrimental impact on the TRC and the processes of transitional justice. It should run its course and be supported by the constitution and the existing judicial system. Additionally, it must meet the criteria for international credibility and legitimacy recognised for a TRC. This will be acceptable as long as it advances the cause of truth and reconciliation. Such a commission is necessary because the 2006 general elections failed to resolve the deep-seated conflicts, bitterness, hatred and animosity that have resulted from years of fighting, inter-ethnic violence and oppression in the DRC. Under these circumstances, a TRC is deemed vital.

30. Pope Francis lamented corruption he depicted as the 'gangrene of people', <<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/pope-francis-laments-corruption-as-gangrene-of-a-people-780517>>.

Transitional justice

■ Introduction

Transitional justice has emerged as a complex and multifaceted approach for dealing with the legacy of large-scale human rights violations and injustices involving numerous victims and perpetrators. Its purpose is to prevent the recurrence of such violations and to create conditions for the affected community to thrive. Mihr (2020) avers that transitional proceedings aim to respond to past injustices and atrocities in order to delegitimise the political leadership responsible for such inhumanities; simultaneously, these measures seek to re-establish and give legitimacy to an emerging political structure and leaders who will be different from the previous regime. It follows that transitional justice procedures range from acknowledgement by political actors of past wrongdoings via truth commissions and apologies to setting up of memorials, forging socio-economic reforms and strengthening democracy; the sum of these could bring about societal transformation (Mihr 2020). Transitional justice further underlines the significance of restoring relations between perpetrators and victims, or between former enemies after violence and unfair deprivation of human rights; it aims at all forms of justice, namely distributive, restorative, prosecutorial and social justice. Villa-Vicencio (2008) notes that, in transitional justice, the emphasis is placed on:

[T]he coexistence and restoration of relationships between former enemies as a basis for the prevention of the recurrence of human rights abuses and the restoration of the dignity and material well-being of victims. (p. 388)

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This chapter gives an overview of the intricacies of achieving national reconciliation and bringing justice to the victims of the decades of brutalities and human rights violations perpetrated by the different DRC administrations, as well as those involving the DRC's neighbours and individuals reported by the UN Mapping Report DRC 1993–2003 (United Nations 2010b) and other human rights organisation (HRW 2023b). The pursuit of reconciliation and justice is one of the most important goals of public administration, and it is consistent with what the rule of law exists for. This chapter examines transitional approaches that are capable of building peace and the ways in which public administration should intervene in such processes.

■ Transitional justice approach

Several mechanisms are utilised in attempts to achieve transitional justice; these include judicial and non-judicial models. Non-judicial mechanisms cover both locally based restorative justice approaches and truth commissions, while judicial approaches include international criminal tribunals and courts. Non-prosecutorial approaches tap into local wisdom and traditions of conflict resolution, accountability, reconciliation and peacebuilding, which can be found in *Gacaca* in Rwanda (Hola & Nyseth Brehm 2016; Kiyala 2022b), *Fambul Tok* in Sierra Leone (Graybill 2010; Kiyala 2022b), *Mato Oput* in Uganda (Baguma 2012; Bangura 2008; Kiyala 2022b) and *Baraza* in the DRC (Kiyala 2016, 2021, 2022b).

Attempts to put transitional justice mechanisms in place in the DRC started with the NC (1991–1992) and the TRC (2003–2007) (Kiyala 2018a). The NC was the first initiative to scrutinise the three decades of Mobutu's administration; Mobutu was compelled by the masses and CSOs to convene a Constitutional Conference in August 1991. This forum evolved into an SNC that brought together delegates from different strata of society and from the diaspora, CSOs, faith-based organisations, academia, political parties, traditional leaders, etc. After investigating and scrutinising over two decades of Mobutu's rule, the SNC sought to map out a constitutional framework that would pave the way for the democratisation process and, eventually, set up a timeframe for a general election. Against all expectations that Mobutu would keep the upper hand over the SNC and subjugate it to his dictatorial authority, this institution showed itself to be sovereign and laid bare all the crimes committed under Mobutu by his security services. Mobutu and the SNC were at loggerheads for the entire period of its activities, and Mobutu decided to shut it down in December 1992. However, pressed by a massive mobilisation of the entire nation, he rescinded his abrupt decision. After it reconvened, the SNC established the HCR-PT – a transitional institution that replaced both houses of Parliament and elected

Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya as its president. The HCR-PT served as the legislative organ of the state under the *Constitutional Act of Transition* promulgated by President Mobutu on 09 April 1994. The HCR-PT drafted and voted for the Constitution of the country before it was closed down by Mobutu, and totally dissolved in May 1997 by LD Kabila after he overthrew Mobutu.

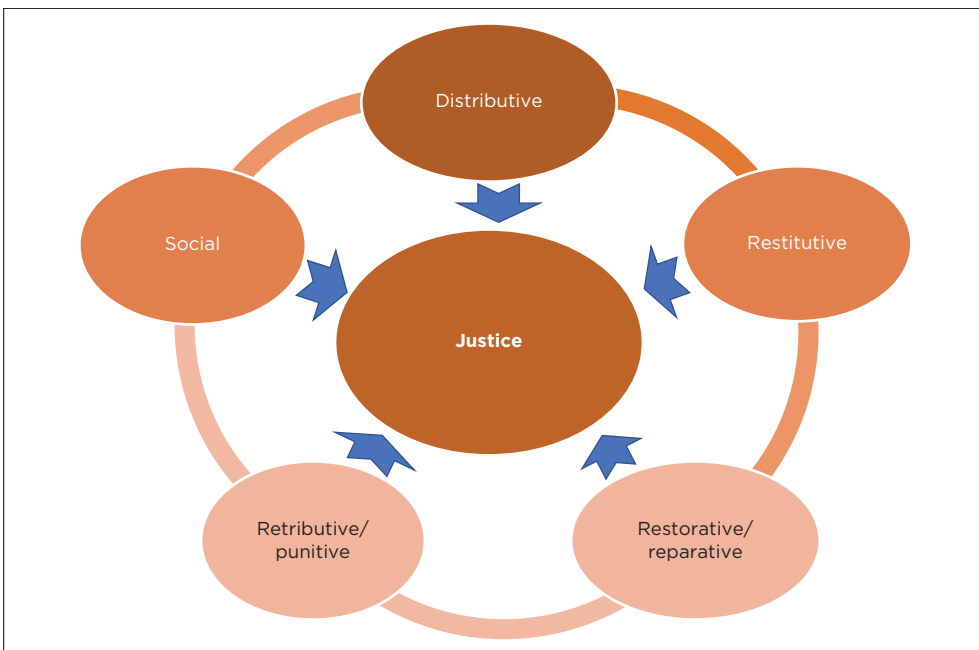
The demise of the HCR-PT can be explained by the lack of an alternative administration to all the post-colonial governments that were all accused of egregious human rights violations and the prospect of transitional justice measures being put in place by administrations that are remembered for committing atrocities. Based on existing literature on transitional justice, transitional justice mechanisms set in the aftermath of gross human rights violations work better if there is a successor regime that is interested in holding perpetrators of past human rights violations accountable (Orentlicher 1991). Furthermore, the obligations of international law and customary and conventional law are generally impeded by the preservation of the *status quo* by a successor government that could have close ties with the officials of a prior government (Orentlicher 1991). The DRC case epitomises such an environment, especially where elections are traded, and the polls are decided by post-election deals whereby the successor administration undertakes to protect the interests and ignore the crimes of a prior administration. Much earlier, before the two Congolese Wars, President Mobutu ruled Zaïre as a monarch, and there was no accountability and no system of checks and balances.

For over three decades, one Mobutu administration succeeded another, and in such an environment, transitional justice was illusory. All attempts to unearth the truth and to hold perpetrators accountable were shattered, and protests against Mobutu's administration were barbarically repressed by his reprisal machinery, as happened during the NC's closure (1992–1994). History repeated itself after the 2002 *Global and Inclusive Peace Agreement* transition, during which Joseph Kabila retained power and ruled the country for 18 years (2001–2019). As a result, transitional administrations that were not an alternate government or were their own successors, such as Mobutu's administration and Joseph Kabila's rule, were anchored in a system of muting truth-telling processes and threatening and causing the disappearance of political opponents. This is the obvious reason why the CVR (DRC's TRC) was aborted.

The post-2018 polls that brought Félix Tshisekedi to power are alleged to have been concluded by a political deal. This claim has been denied and bluntly rejected by the political class close to President Tshisekedi, while Martin Fayulu, his rival who claimed to be the winner of the 2018 presidential election, continued seeking the *vérité des*

urnes [truth of the ballot boxes] until the end of 2023 after Tshisekedi won his second term for the highest office and Fayulu lost his second bid to become the DRC's president.

Post-election turbulence ended. But the reality of unfinished transitional justice and the lack of a TRC remain a predicament to lasting peace as armed groups, the Mobondo and the M23, do not halt their assaults on innocent people. There must be a TRC for all the crimes perpetrated in the DRC by successive post-independence administrations. The Belgian government must consider the path of justice that is beneficial to the DRC for the crimes committed during colonisation by the administrators of the Congo Free State and the Belgian Congo. Justice is also needed for the crimes carried out during the two Congo Wars and the ongoing massacres by the M23. Justice must be done to the victims of the inter-ethnic violence and massacre in Mai-Ndombe – the violence known as the ‘Mobondo massacre’ that affected the Teke and the Yaka over land ownership. The nature of justice in the context of the DRC cannot be restricted to one approach; it should consider an all-inclusive method that should include domestic legislation and international justice systems. Figure 5.1 elucidates the various types of accountability processes for the crimes committed in the country.



Source: Author's own work

FIGURE 5.1: Composite justice structure.

The complexity of the needs created by past injustices and atrocities demands a holistic justice approach that compounds distributive, restitutive, restorative, social and retributive justice. Each of the five categories of justice is concerned with a corresponding injustice that prevailed before violence or that is deemed indispensable to repairing the harm that has called for transitional justice. The ICC has mostly applied retributive justice in the case of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, the SCSL and the International Special Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), while most African countries have predominantly used restorative justice, such as *Mato Oput* (Bangura 2008), *Fambul Tok* (Graybill 2010), *Ka Pahl* (Honwana 1997) and *Baraza* (Kiyala 2016, 2021). The different models conveyed by Figure 5.1 are reminders of the contextualisation of transitional justice; it is context-based and case-specific. Arguing on the dilemmas of the nexus between transitional justice and development, Mani (2008, p. 254) avers that these dilemmas ‘have no neat answers, no formulaic solutions; each must be addressed through authentic efforts to unravel them in practice in the rough terrain of post-conflict/traumatized societies’. Transitional justice processes should unravel the social injustices and structural violence that take the form of social discrimination, social exclusion and marginalisation based on ‘ethnicity, race, class, caste, gender, religion or other perceived differences’ (Mani 2008, p. 254).

Transitional justice denotes confronting the ‘wicked problems’ with crucial ethical dilemmas that present themselves in the process of pursuing justice, holding perpetrators accountable, ensuring the victims’ rights are upheld and forging pathways to peace (Choi-Fitzpatrick, Irvin-Erickson & Verdeja 2022). The complexities of the needs engendered by violence require adequate responses that meet ethical obligations, regardless of the platforms put in place to address the well-being of all parties that have been subjugated or subjected to inhumanities and human rights violations. The ethical dilemmas of processes intended to bring peace need particular consideration by the various stakeholders involved in conflict mediation, whether they come from international peacekeeping organisations or are social justice activists (Choi-Fitzpatrick et al. 2022). The fundamentals of ethics demand that transitional justice be imbued with the principles of ‘do no harm’ and nonviolence, whether domestic or international approaches are adopted. A clear understanding of how violence plays out in conflict; conflict and violence prevention; conflict resolution; the adoption of humanitarian principles and advocacy for respect for human rights; the necessity of political reconciliation; peace education and pedagogy; and transitional justice processes and their ethical ramification are worth being considered to ensure the stability and durability of peace that could be fostered by transitional justice.

It follows that public administration has a significant role to play in peacebuilding; this is twofold: (1) in preparing peace practitioners and equipping them with appropriate skills in conflict transformation that can induce positive peace (Rissler & Shields 2019; Shields & Rissler 2016) and (2) in developing structures that reinforce the rule of law (Bergling et al. 2008). Unfortunately, little is known about the nexus between the rule of law and 'Public Administration Reform and Justice Sector Reform' (Bergling et al. 2008, p. 9) in peacebuilding contexts or environments and the effects of 'the rule of law deficit (particularly on weak and vulnerable groups) or how to raise and better integrate rule of law dimensions in future efforts at Public Administration Reform' (Bergling et al. 2008, p. 9). Transitional societies and such environments where the rule of law needs to be established require effective public administration to ensure that past legacies of collective abuses of rights by either an authoritarian rule or oppressive rules do not recur. As pointed out by Murithi (2022), transitional justice is best conceptualised as a 'wicked problem' because it helps post-violence societies to head out of authoritarianism or armed conflict towards peace and democratic regimes, moving away from legacies of past violence and impunity. Attempts at such societal transformation encompass the necessity to balance the demands for accountability and economic redistribution that often divide society with the aspirations and calls to pursue societal reconciliation, which may occur at the expense of possible victims and historically marginalised groups (Murithi 2022). These dilemmas are discernible and can become severe when successor political leaders are limited in their ability to reckon and deal with the past; a failure to look back hinders the use of institutions such as TRCs in addressing past injustices, responding to traumatic experiences and attaining reconciliation (Murithi 2022). The well-being of environments that have experienced large-scale atrocities and abuses relies extensively on the recognition of the dilemmas involved in transitional justice and taking such societies to the path of sustainable peace, development, post-conflict recovery, healing and reconciliation. These perspectives cannot be achieved without adequate public administration.

Justice in post-Civil War Mozambique has involved cleansing rituals aimed at restoring the wholeness of individuals whose lives were tainted by the horrors of war. Without this restoration, many former soldiers and civilians remained vulnerable to the spirits of the dead, leading to restlessness and ongoing disruptions of both individual and communal peace and wellness. In post-genocide Rwanda, a trilogy of justice structures was pursued, namely: The Gacaca people's courts (*Ministère de la Justice* [Justice Ministry] 2004), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (UN Security Council 2007) and the establishment of a National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) (Clark 2010). The variety of transitional justice philosophies and

organisations on the African continent and around the world indicates the diversity of needs that arise in the aftermath of large-scale violence. As noted by Lambourne (2004, p. 8): 'Justice is a complex concept which has substantive and symbolic, economic and social, legal and psychological meanings. It may be retributive, restitutive or restorative'. Thus, healing can also be perceived as a dimension of justice, as can truth-telling, as Rigby (2001) has argued. In Uganda, former soldiers of the LRA who perpetrated war atrocities were led to drink a bitter roots concoction [*mato oput*], and were ordered to pay a certain amount of cash to the victims or their families (Negara 2012). In the DRC, former child soldiers who participated in the *Baraza* apologised to the Bweremana community for their offences and harmful actions when fighting in the militia and armed groups (Kiyala 2021). It appears that Rwanda had formal justice mechanisms in place that are seen as inducing development in an apparently peaceful environment. It is imperative to acknowledge the efforts of public administration in Rwanda in pursuing the agenda of peacebuilding. Unlike Rwanda, the DRC's experience of post-violence peacebuilding is still illusory.

I put forward prosecutorial justice, restorative justice and the revival of the DRC's TRC as transitional justice measures.

■ Prosecutorial measures

In my earlier work, I proposed a threefold model of conventional justice to address the judicial gaps that have remained unaddressed both before and after the Congo Wars (1996–2008). These encompass:

- The creation of an International Criminal Tribunal for Congo will be tasked with the mandate to prosecute gross international human rights violations and international humanitarian crimes perpetrated in the DRC during the Congo Wars (1996–2002) (Kiyala 2018a). The period to be covered by criminal investigation could be extended to 2023 (as the M23-Rwanda-backed rebels continue to wage war on civilians, causing enormous fatalities), especially for war crimes carried out by non-state perpetrators, cross-border proxies and their commanders.
- Establishing a Special Domestic Criminal Court for the DRC (SDCC-DRC) that should be decreed as an organic law and that should have jurisdiction over all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed between 1996 and the post-Second Congo War (1998–2002) period. This court should be established where horrendous atrocities have been committed, in places such as Beni, Kitchanga, Minova, Kiwanja, etc.
- The last model should consist of local referral restorative transitional justice structures that should be set up in the worst-affected districts, and prosecutions should be undertaken by local judges.

The complexities and the amplitude of human rights violations and crimes committed by rival armed factions in the DRC require a compounded strategy to ensure that justice is served to the innumerable victims and, at the same time, that impunity is no longer a refuge for public administrators and military officials seeking to escape accountability.

Establishing transitional justice measures for the DRC was one of the key recommendations from my study on child soldiers and transitional justice, aimed at addressing the individuals or groups most responsible for the ongoing atrocities in the country (Kiyala 2018a).

■ Transition without justice

Justice, truth-telling, reconciliation and addressing the needs of societies fragmented by violence have been identified as useful processes that could galvanise peace (Lambourne 2004; Rigby 2001). For instance, Rigby (2001) points out that not allowing people to know what happened to their relatives or acknowledging their history is a fundamental injustice, and he argues:

[...]Justice is another value that needs to be woven into the reconciliation process; in the quest to lay bare aspects of the painful past, a kind of justice can be approached by identifying the perpetrators deemed responsible for abuses and violations. (p. 187)

He affirms that by naming perpetrators, they will be ashamed and will serve some sort of penalty for past actions (Rigby 2001). Real societal transformation can occur when institutions that symbolised and carried out the divisions of the past no longer exist as a reminder of the people's grievances and suffering to extend to arousing the impulse of revenge; thus, the way forward would be: 'forgive the past, if you like – and begin to anticipate a shared future' (Rigby 2001, p. 188). Justice is also perceived as a value across religions, particularly the Judeo-Christian tradition, and this becomes a 'moral imperative and the centre of the right behaviour concept' (Rigby 2001). This theological understanding of justice is an ethical foundation of societies who intend to capitalise on hopes for the future rather than resting their future on a fear of the past: 'They must be able to experience significant movement to counter the inequalities and injustices that fuelled the old divisions' (Rigby 2001, p. 191).

Justice for victims of war and other gross human rights violations is perceived as the route that societies affected by large-scale violence should adopt in order to heal the wounds of the past, seek reconciliation and build peace; without justice, post-conflict nation reconstruction is impossible. The DRC is one of the many countries around the globe that has never experienced justice in the aftermath of generalised violence, human atrocities and other forms of injustice. An impunity culture has been

so ingrained in all post-colonial successor governments that even the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's* ordinance to create and implement the TRC has fallen into oblivion. No efforts intending to revive the commitment to justice have been displayed by warring factions and non-military stakeholders in the Sun City Inter-Congolese Political Negotiations.

Stakeholders at the Sun City Dialogue comprised the DRC Government, represented by Léonard She Okitundu; the RCD of Adolphe Onusumba Yemba; the MLC of Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo; the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Movement for Liberation (RCD-ML) represented by Koloso Sumaili, Tibasima Mbongemu Ateenyi and Wamba Dia Wamba; the RCD-National of Roger Lumbala; the Mai-Mai fighters, represented by Anselme Enerunga; the *Forces Vives* of the Nation, represented by Dr Rev. Jean Luc Kuye Ndondo wa Mulemera, Philippe Dinzolele Nzambi, Pierre Anatole Matusila, Bahati Lukwebo and Gertrude Biyaya Ndaya Kazadi (Uppsala Universitet 2002). Other participants in the dialogue comprised the Unarmed Political Opposition (Uppsala Universitet 2002) and the External Political Opposition, represented by Gerard Kamanda wa Kamanda, Alafuele Kalala, Francois Tshipamba Mpuila, W'Otete Otete Omanga and Osée Muyima. The witnesses to the dialogue were the Facilitator, Sir Ketumile Masire (Former President of Botswana); H.E. Mr Thabo Mbeki (Chairman of the African Union) and H.E. Moustapha Niasse (the UN Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Inter-Congolese Dialogue) (Uppsala Universitet 2002).

The ineffectiveness of the post-Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue administrations clearly indicates a dysfunctional public administration. Politicians have shown no interest in addressing the human rights violations and crimes that continue to be perpetrated by various fighting groups that perpetuate insecurity. The communities of the eastern and north-eastern DRC remain vulnerable to abuses by armed factions; they are constantly displaced and killed while the perpetrators of odious crimes and war-related crimes of genocidal proportions continue to enjoy impunity (Okosun & Kibiswa 2013; Prunier 2008). Impunity has been endemic in the DRC for many decades, and there appears to be no credible strategy put in place by any of the transition governments to deal with it (Balemba 2004; Hall & LaRocco 2012). The remarks by Balemba (2004), according to whom impunity was leading to catastrophe, explain the current environment where the rule of law is non-existent and the DRC has become a 'non-state' where lawlessness prevails without any remedy. Impunity won throughout the transitional period, and even persons involved in the war crimes during and after the Congolese Wars were granted ministerial portfolios. The political will to pursue the agenda of justice suggested by the Sun City Dialogue has been lacking throughout post-colonial administrations.

The neglect of 'the Final Act and Transition' by post-Sun City governments constitutes a serious peace predicament, as long as:

[T]he staggering human toll of the conflict; the lack of political will among the negotiating parties; the weakness of the central state; and the lack of international community interest to implement the resolution continues. (Goodman 2010, p. 14)

The culture of impunity is antithetical to justice, and it perpetuates violence and protracted conflicts. This characteristic state of affairs of failed and broken public administration reveals the extent to which public administrators include persons accused of fuelling conflicts, along with army officers and the security services, who are responsible for the state's collapse. A *status quo* is synonymous with resignation with regard to tackling impunity and the drivers of insecurity and protracted conflicts, massive displacement of people, human rights violations and war atrocities (Goodman 2010).

The Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue symbolises a justice trade-off that was legitimised by the '1+4 Formula' of governance, whereby power was shared between President Joseph Kabila and four vice-presidents. All of them enjoyed immunity for the crimes they purportedly oversaw during the Congolese Wars. Thierry Kambere, a Global Rights Programme Officer based in Kinshasa, felt that the '1+4 Formula' meant 'the price for peace' (Goodman 2010, p. 11). In a similar vein, Moffett (2009, p. 16) points out how the US State Department was concerned with 'inefficient and ineffective' policy but did not seek to deter impunity. Nonetheless, the end result showed how the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* was necessary to give security guarantees to different protagonists of the peace agreement so that the fragile peace was preserved and general elections could be held across the country. All of the protagonists escaped justice; however, this did not signal the demise of accountability and justice for the post-Congolese War period. It is time to revive the Sun City recommendations and implement them fully to prevent ongoing atrocities and human rights violations in the DRC.

The neglect of justice in transitional societies could impede the prospects of durable peace because justice and reconciliation are perceived as catalysts of peace, and from this perspective, peacebuilding would thus embody 'conflict transformation, restorative justice and socio-economic development' (Lambourne 2004, p. 7). Reconciliation and peacebuilding require three categories of justice, namely 'legal justice, rectifying justice and social justice' (Mani 1998, cited in Lambourne 2004, p. 7). Transitional justice in the DRC has been confronted by several challenges that include, but are not limited to, the lack of political will, the lack of an alternative administration that is interested in galvanising peace by addressing past injustices and human rights violations and post-election political transitions

that are often fragile and, it is feared, will cause resumption of violence if broken. The notion of 'African exceptionalism' and the lack of solid institutions and effective public administration to hold perpetrators of heinous human rights violence accountable are also significant factors. The administration of justice via *Baraza* seeks a fair hearing of both victims and perpetrators, it promotes reconciliation and peace, and it has the potential to generate empathy, foster forgiveness and create opportunities for mutual forgiveness and reconciliation among different stakeholders.

■ Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Setting up a TRC was part of the *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* signed on 02 April 2003 by warring factions that included delegates from the DRC Government, members of the RCD, the Movement for the Liberation of Congo, the Mai-Mai and major political parties, representatives of the *forces vives* all of whom were parties to the peace (*UN Peacemaker* 2003). The CVR was a non-judicial institution constituted under Article 160, Chapter 5 of the Transitional Constitution of April 2003 – a law passed by Parliament and promulgated by the head of state, Joseph Kabila (Amnesty International 2004; United States Institute of Peace 2007). It operated from July 2003 to February 2007 (United States Institute of Peace 2007). On the Institution of the CVR, pursuant to Resolution No. 33 (No.: DIC/COR/04) *On the Institution of A 'Truth and Reconciliation' Commission*, paragraph 1, the Acts resolved the setting-up of an independent commission to be called the 'National Truth and Reconciliation Commission' to be tasked with the responsibility of re-establishing the truth and promoting peace, justice, forgiveness and national reconciliation (*UN Peacemaker* 2003, n.p.). Article 11 of the functioning of the CVR states:

The jurisdiction of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission extends to the Congolese State and to all Congolese, notwithstanding the official qualities, immunities or the benefit of the special rules of procedure [on] which certain persons, including the military, police, security agents, civil servants and politicians, may rely. (DR Congo 2004a, n.p., n.d.)

The CVR bureau consisted of 21 members, among whom eight members were selected to represent each party that was involved in the Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue. The Commission was presided over by Bishop Jean-Luc Kuye Ndondo wa Mulemera (United States Institute of Peace 2007). Ellemers (2024) notes:

The mandate states that political crimes, massive violations of human rights, and events which disrupt peace and justice within the DRC are to be examined by the commission, whether committed by Congolese nationals or foreigners. (n.p.)

In February 2007, the CVR presented a report to Parliament and made some recommendations, such as seeking financial support from the

international community to enhance transitional justice and suggesting a public awareness campaign to support a successor truth commission. This idea was put forward because victims, perpetrators and witnesses to crimes carried out in the past were not involved in the works of the initial CVR till a report was submitted to the parliament (United States Institute of Peace 2007). Moreover:

Further massacres, war crimes and crimes against humanity were then committed during the insurrectional Movement of 23 March 2009. Sporadic military confrontations have become endemic in the east and north of the DRC. The populations in these war-torn regions live in constant fear of violence, and children continue to be used as soldiers. There is a serious concern [*for investigating*] the past in view of moving forward, [*so as*] to prevent a recurrence of the human rights violations. This is possible by addressing the legacies of mass atrocities. (Davis & Hayner 2009)

On the occasion of a workshop based on a national consultation initiated by MONUC, the High Office of the UN Commissioner for Human Rights and other national and international partners look at the role of the truth and reconciliation in transitional justice in the DRC (United Nations 2025). The consultation report states:

Article 160 of the Transitional Constitution stipulates that an organic law will define the organization, terms of reference and the functioning of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. At the moment, a bill is being considered by Parliament. It would be necessary that the adopted law be able to generate a solid foundation to the CVR and that the Congolese people be on one hand sensitized on the mandate and the functions of the CVR and on the other hand, be consulted prior to adoption of the law. Furthermore, it is important that the law complies with human rights principles, as a democratic institution for the Congolese people (United Nations 2025, n.p.).

The workshop was organised in Kinshasa on 25 February 2004; it discussed the need to account for past human rights violations and the obligation for justice (United Nations 2025). The TRC was recognised as one of the supporting institutions of democracy emanating from the resolution adopted by the Peace and Reconciliation Commission during the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in April 2002 at Sun City and ratified by the agreement for a global and inclusive transition in the DRC concluded in Pretoria on 17 December 2002. This section is limited to showing how the attempt to pursue national reconciliation failed – most probably because the political context and the judicial system put in place by the post-Sun City transitional government led by Joseph Kabila did not give a guarantee of the safety of those who could eventually testify at the Commission. It was possible that the CVR would not operate in transparency and would not bring the expected result. Some argue that the CVR was prematurely established.

Considering the conditions, the envisaged truth commission process has been presented as beginning, and heading nowhere. Grassroots

activists and international observers have asked whether a truth commission is viable at this time. The country is still at war with itself, and it is questionable whether victims will feel free to give testimony and whether sufficient security can be provided to perpetrators who appear before the Commission. The CVR did not meet the standard to be recognised as a TRC with international legitimacy. To illustrate this point, I will briefly mention the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC), which is seen as the paradigm for TRCs.

Firstly, the SATRC was established by President Nelson Mandela and led by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It was not managed by individuals involved in politically motivated crimes during the apartheid regime. People from all strata of South African society, regardless of skin colour or position, were called upon to give testimonies about past crimes that had traumatised individuals and communities, causing anger, bitterness and animosity among the oppressed and the oppressors on the basis of racial discrimination. The SATRC did not seek punitive justice that would have required appropriate punishment for the perpetrators of past human rights violations.

Secondly, it was successful partly because of the amnesty granted, although some critics of the SATRC believe that this was a denial of justice. For instance, Greenawalt (cited in Rotberg 2000) argues that murderers and torturers should not be granted amnesty. It is immoral to do so. On the other hand, political stability and a multi-racial South Africa appear to have been built on the foundation laid by the SATRC. De Gruchy (2002) supports this view by arguing that '[t]he TRC was successful both as an agent of healing and as a catalyst for promoting a more just society' (p. 147). It allowed both victims and perpetrators to testify in public about what happened to the victims and who instigated the actions. Tears of bitterness and tears of guilt transformed both the aggressors and the aggrieved, and they could accept each other as brothers and sisters again. Forgiveness was offered, and the basis for societal harmony was laid for the future.

Thirdly, the SATRC concluded by making recommendations for restitution. This was a way of restoring justice, honouring victims and restoring to them their dignity. There were some criticisms that reparations and compensation for victims were not sufficient. However, the spirit and the will to do it were undeniable. The SATRC ended with some symbolic rituals, such as visiting places where heinous human rights violations had taken place. By showing how the SATRC arguably succeeded in developing the 'rainbow nation' in the aftermath of apartheid, I intend to emphasise that such an achievement was possible because of an alternative and successor government that took over from the previous oppressive rule. Witnesses who testified before the commission were assured of their protection by the constitution.

The government also put in place mechanisms for reaching out to the victims. In the DRC, however, there was no alternative government. Commissioners in the CVR Bureau belonged to political groups that were involved in past human rights violations. The CVR was not created to work transparently with the participation of all citizens to ensure that it had popular legitimacy and the power to enhance reparations to victims. There was a lack of citizen involvement in the process of creating the CVR Bureau and in its proceedings. Other critics regretted that the commissioners sitting at the CVR were from organisations that had been previously or recently involved in the conflict. Many political actors were displeased with the CVR. They were sceptical about the first report submitted to Parliament in February 2007, and they concluded that the CVR could not achieve the long-awaited national reconciliation and healing.

The current organic law governing the organisation, its attributions and the functioning of the Commission states in Article 6 of its second chapter that the Commission will address crimes and human rights violations occurring from June 1960 until the end of the transition (DR Congo 2004b). This period is divided into two parts: The first, from 1960 to 1992, focuses on updating the files of the SNC and any individual requests from victims; the second, from 1993 to the end of the Commission's mandate, addresses any events, crimes or violations that the Commission undertakes or becomes aware of. MONUC was concerned that the Commission's mandate regarding the investigation into offences committed during this long period was impossible to execute, insofar as it involves a provisional institution with a maximum lifespan subordinate to that of the transition; the transition should have been completed, in principle, in 2005, and would have been sanctioned by the first truly democratic elections in the country (United Nations 2025).

The inadequacy of the CVR has set a negative precedent for its credibility, impartiality and success unless the whole process of electing its members (commissioners) and other criteria pertaining to international recognition of a TRC indicated are respected. In the DRC, the same regime and the same leaders who were involved in the past human rights violations continue to rule. I support that pursuing a CVR in the current context is illusory. The evidence of failure by the 2003 CVR suggests that even if another one is launched, under present circumstances, it will still be fruitless for the reasons aforementioned.

I did not intend to engage in a debate about the legitimacy and credibility of the CVR, but by mentioning these aspects, which are part of its challenges, I wanted to consolidate the arguments that reparation and accountability are crucial in the process of reconciliation and that national healing should be preceded by truth-telling. The credibility of the CVR is crucial if true reconciliation and healing are to be achieved. But a CVR

today can, instead of bringing reconciliation, generate more confrontations. So this is not the route to be taken by the DRC today.

Post-conflict peacebuilding is a critical need in transitional societies where heinous human rights violations have occurred, and the community is attempting to put behind them the past legacy of atrocities and embark on a path of peace, justice and reconciliation. Justice and reconciliation are perceived as intrinsically connected to each other and to peacebuilding (Lambourne 2004). They feature in the agendas for prospective recovery, as was the case with South Africa's TRC, and were embodied in the DRC's aborted CVR (Amnesty International 2004), the ICTR (UN Security Council 2007) and the SCSL (2000), among others.

■ **Establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

After looking into the scale of violence and the recurrence of human rights violations in the DRC, which I have exhaustively discussed in the course of this chapter, I suggest that a TRC be set up. It should run its course and be supported by the constitution and the judicial system in place. It should also respond to the criteria of international credibility and legitimacy recognised for a TRC. This will be acceptable as long as it advances the cause of truth and reconciliation. It is needed because the 2006 general elections did not solve the deep-seated conflicts, bitterness, hatred and animosity that have resulted in years of fighting, inter-ethnic violence and oppression in the DRC. Under these circumstances, a TRC is deemed vital.

While admitting the achievements of the South African TRC and suggesting a TRC for the DRC, I should, however, note that a TRC cannot be the only way to bring reconciliation and healing. Earlier, I pointed out the reasons for the failure of the CVR. The actual context of the DRC is not conducive to running a TRC. What can be seen as a realistic approach is to use Judeo-Christian wisdom and the African ethos as a means of promoting national reconciliation.

■ **Making reparation and restoring justice**

The mission of the Church is to proclaim the gospel of justice, love, peace and reconciliation and, at the same time, to announce the eschatological hope that God will restore his covenant and recreate the whole world. This hope is prefigured by the way human communities practise justice. Justice is done by making reparations for offences committed against others. This can be manifested by restitution (or acknowledgement in cases where restitution is no longer possible). So, restitution is one way of rendering

justice. When possible, this should be done by also restoring the dignity of the victims. It is an exigency of the gospel. It applies to political, social and economic domains where people have been treated unjustly.

A good example of restitution is given by the story of Zacchaeus in Luke's gospel. As head of the publicans in Jericho, he was a member of a corrupt system that oppressed people and exploited them. His encounter with Jesus transformed him. He became aware of the need to restore his friendship with Jesus. He even went beyond what was required by the Jewish law concerning restitution, which required twofold restitution for stolen property that was given for safekeeping: 'When someone delivers to a neighbor money or goods for safekeeping, and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, then the thief, if caught, shall pay double' (Ex 22:6). He offers not only to restore what he might have taken from the people, but to give half of his wealth to the poor, and if he defrauded anyone he offers to pay back four times the amount. He will be justified and brought close to salvation because he acknowledged exploiting others, as reported in this encounter with Jesus:

Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much'. Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost'. (Lk 19:8-10)

The story of Zacchaeus depicts the injustices, exploitation and oppression of the society in which he lived. The same kind of moral degradation has been seen in the DRC over the last three decades. The establishment of a just social order demands that the exploited and the oppressed have their dignity restored, and the requirement of Christian Ethics is that expropriated properties be returned to their owners. This does not mean that reconciliation must be contingent upon restitution or that restitution becomes a condition for forgiveness. It is important to make reparations when possible so that reconciliation may be laid on solid ground. In cases where reparation cannot be made, reconciliation should use its other components so that resolution may really take place. That is where forgiveness comes in as a gospel imperative.

■ Telling stories and healing memories

Telling stories and healing memories are essential steps for reconciliation. When true stories are told about past painful experiences of injustice and oppression, victims get a sense of recognition. Such an approach enhances healing because victims are made aware of what happened to them, and why and who instigated this. Healey and Sybertz (1996, p. 324) observe that African stories 'probe deeply into the human heart, the mystery of

being, and human beings' relationship with God and each other'. They contend that these stories are connected to sorrow, contrition, restoration, reconciliation, wholeness, forgiveness, amendment, physical well-being, peace, harmony, pardon, mercy, return, union, etc. The argument that they put forward is that telling stories has healing power and is capable of bringing wholeness. These many stories of healing, forgiveness and reconciliation also show that in the telling of the story itself – the narration, the communication and the passing on of the experience – there is a unique healing power. Telling stories frees, reveals, opens up and empowers, both in relation to the narrator and to the hearers. There is a journey of self-understanding and self-discovery and a healing of memories. There is the power of an individual who lets out his or her deep feelings and emotions and shares them in a large support group. Often there is affirmation and support in telling the story in a community setting. In fact, the whole community is strengthened as wounded healers journey together. One hand washes the other (Healey & Sybertz 1996, p. 325).

This reference supports what I am recommending, namely that individuals and communities who have been wounded in whatever way, for politically motivated reasons or as a consequence of unjust structures in the DRC, must be afforded the opportunity to express themselves in a free manner so that they can be listened to and enter into the healing process. This process can be organised in small communities where people meet and tell their stories as they share the same pains, with or without perpetrators, so that they can become healers to each other. In so doing, memories are redeemed, and remembering the past does not revolt or cause revenge or retaliation, but may become a transforming power. The wounded person is enabled to look at their life with a new meaning and find space to accept the past and move forward.

I have emphasised that healing is a component of the reconciliation process. It comes about by redeeming past painful memories. Healing memories begin with personal healing and reach interpersonal relationships. Unpleasant memories need to be healed if we want to advance in the love of God and neighbour. Three things are conducive to this: Inner prayer asking the Lord for the grace to face reality and heal our memories; a laying bare of our heart before another, preferably a minister of Christ who becomes the sacrament of His healing presence and power and the support of the Christian community (Lobo 1981, pp. 93–94).

Healing cannot be a mere human effort. It needs prayer and divine intervention when a person feels powerless to heal him or herself or be healed by others. The process of approaching a minister may become necessary to achieve healing when the grief of victims cannot be overcome by mere talk and other available gestures. At the end of all, reconciliation will need to take place in order for healing to happen.

■ Promoting reconciliation through the Catholic Church

The Church in the DRC should play its prophetic role in promoting the message of reconciliation, which has been echoed in several pastoral letters issued by the CENCO. People should be encouraged to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation and participate in interpersonal reconciliation as a process that will lead to national reconciliation. This preparatory step can be achieved by issuing pastoral letters and providing Christian communities with a guideline that spells out the commitment of the Church to reconciliation and the role that each Christian and every Christian community should play towards achieving national reconciliation.

During the March of Hope that I mentioned earlier, the Catholic Church and other denominations succeeded in mobilising masses to participate in the nationwide protest against Mobutu's regime, and this was successful. Another action of this kind should be envisaged for the sake of reconciliation and is likely to be successful.

Small Christian communities (SCCs) were often used to bring awareness among the people that the *status quo* of Mobutu's rule needed to be subverted. The SCCs were used as agents of evangelisation against oppression, against the xenophobia that was being bred against the Luba people of Kasaian origin in the 1990s and against social injustices. The SCCs can be utilised to channel the message of reconciliation by emphasising the responsibility of each baptised person to participate in God's initiative and gift of reconciliation. This is CENCO's responsibility in collaboration with other denominations. Such a commitment will contribute to moving the process of reconciliation forward. A series of spiritual activities should be encouraged as well. Retreats, healing services, prayer services and conferences could begin at a grassroots level and be extended to the general public and finally to the national level.

The SCCs' experience in Moshi, Tanzania, of reconciling families and local communities can also inspire the Church in the DRC (Healey & Sybertz 1996, p. 317). They were instrumental in bringing reconciliation among themselves. The Church in the DRC should stand firm against injustice and oppose hatred and xenophobic messages that could lead to more destruction of life at all levels of society; SCCs in the DRC could play an important role in this process.

■ Healing locations and communities

It is important to acknowledge that when a community is wounded, the land where it is located is not left unaffected. Russ Parker, in his book

entitled *Healing Wounded History: Reconciling peoples and healing places* (Pilgrim Press 2001), develops this aspect of reconciliation and healing that relates a human community to its location. He remarks:

Through the Scripture we are taught that there is a direct connection between human story and the land or ground on which this story occurs. I am challenging the people of God to seek forgiveness and healing for their shared sins, God promises to forgive those sins and much more, to heal their land. (p. 8)

Scriptural sources reveal that the sins of communities affect the land (2 Chr 6:26–7). The consequences of sin on the land are drought and the expulsion of the people from their land. There is a certain intimacy between the people and their soil. But the healing of the land, observes Parker, does not imply a geographical location; on the contrary, it entails the whole web of interrelations that exist between the people, the community and their environment. The act of repentance redeems all that exists in a particular situation and brings wholeness to life therein (Parker 2001, pp. 7–8). Parker argues that creation and humanity share intimacy with God; they share the consequences of the fall, the need for redemption and the partnership of stewardship (Parker 2001, pp. 30–35).

For reconciliation to be all-embracing, I recommend the ritual cleansing of places like forests and specific sites where the destruction of life and land has happened. Massacres took place in different locations: in schools, in universities, in forests and in the River Congo, where, it is alleged, opponents and abducted political activists were drowned under Mobutu's dictatorship. I suggest that prayer services, sprinkling of holy water and incensing be conducted in all identified areas where atrocities have been committed.

The places that need to be visited and where monuments should be erected are the following:

- Lukamba Village, where the mother of Mulele and others were murdered.
- The Kokolo detention camp and the Circo military jail should be closed and transformed into a museum.
- The University of Lubumbashi, where a monument should be erected in commemoration of the students, who were massacred there by an unknown commando.
- The site in Lubumbashi, where Patrice Emery Lumumba and his companions were murdered. This should be disclosed and a monument should be erected there in memory of him and of his friends.

At the end of the TRC that should be established, more truth will be told about the past, and many more sites will be mentioned. Monuments should then be built in memory of the victims.

■ Using symbols and rituals

I recommend that communities use the Sacrament of Penance, which embodies the mysterious encounter between the penitent and God, who imparts healing and restores wholeness to him or her. The enactment of reconciliation by other means, such as spoken words, symbols and rituals, is appropriate in the DRC, where rituals of reconciliation are common among many ethnic groups and even incorporated into the Roman Missal approved for the Catholic dioceses of Zaïre [*Rite Zairois* – Zaïrean rite]. This rite acknowledges the mysterious divine action that takes place when people are gathered and the invisible presence of Christ that becomes manifest in the vicarious love of the community that engages itself to celebrate reconciliation.

Various communities in the DRC should entrust themselves to the invisible presence of God by performing rituals such as sprinkling holy water, reading the word of God, invoking God's mercy for the community of the living and asking for God's forgiveness on behalf of the deceased who ill-treated members of their respective communities while they were still on Earth. By so doing, the community will experience God's forgiving action that passes through them and reaches the whole nation. Public spaces such as stadiums, schools, universities and churches could also be used for this ceremonial reconciliation – not only with one another but with the God we have offended by destroying the lives of our brothers and sisters. These rituals would be a testimony that Christian communities are agents of reconciliation.

When reconciliation is celebrated as a sacrament, private confession is most encouraged, but if the penitents are numerous and a successful individual confession is not possible, a general absolution would be a viable option.

■ Taking vicarious responsibility

While I support the setting up of a TRC, I feel that reconciliation in the complex situation of the DRC cannot be completed only by using the TRC's mechanisms. A model of reconciliation rooted in Christian tradition that promotes unconditional forgiveness would make reconciliation in the DRC a success. This approach does not preclude making reparations for past crimes and atrocities suffered by people. This is a means of restoring their dignity.

Reconciliation is God's initiative and a transcendental gift. God chose the vicarious suffering of his Son to bring reconciliation between himself and the whole creation. Approaching reconciliation in the DRC from the perspective of Christian faith means that Christian communities and the CENCO should take vicarious responsibility for the sins and crimes of their daughters and

sons, which have never been confessed. This has happened in the Church also, where the hierarchy apologises for the misdeeds committed by Catholics. For instance, in 1992, Pope John Paul II visited Goree Island and 'apologised to Africans for Catholic missionaries who engaged and benefited from the slavery of Africans' (Dionne 1985; Diop 1992). This is an example that the CENCO could follow by apologising for all Catholics who had taken part in atrocities committed against many Congolese people.

This action taken by the Holy Father is rooted in the Church tradition and is found in the Lord's Prayer, which is 'an exhortation to reconciliation between wounded groups who will otherwise go on repeating the damaged story and its consequences which bind them together' (Parker 2001, p. 115). When Catholics ask for forgiveness, it implies that they want to be healed themselves and engage their transgressors in the process of healing (Mt 6:9-15). Parker calls this procedure, which began with Jesus, a 'representational prayer', and he portrays Jesus himself as the representational confessor (Parker 2001, p. 115). He alludes to the incident of cleansing the temple and states that Jesus:

[W]as calling the nation back to its role of intercessory prayer and healing for other tribes, for its actions, to a great degree, depended on the welfare of the Gentile people. (Parker 2001, p. 116)

The Church has to take this vicarious responsibility and preach and practise forgiveness as a means of bringing healing. To stress this point, Parker writes that the mandate of the Christ's Church is to be a 'resource and channel for the healing of our nation's story and the wounded relationships such stories have built up over generations with other nations' (Parker 2001, p. 192).

■ Planning a Day of Atonement in Christian communities

I propose that a Day of Atonement should be observed in all Christian communities. This could be organised in the form of a prayer service and fasting to atone for sins, destruction of life and the atrocious acts committed where the Church was silent or an accomplice to the past suffering of the people. By siding with unjust political establishments of the past, the Church did not play its prophetic role. The Church should atone on behalf of its sons and daughters who have been involved in any kind of human rights violation. The Day of Atonement should be decided by the CENCO.

■ Using an African worldview and ethos

I have explored the African worldview of reconciliation and its compatibility with the Judeo-Christian tradition. African communitarianism, the ethics of

Ubuntu and *Ujamaa*, and the philosophy of *Bisoïté* are conceived as socio-ethical thought whereby the human person is defined as an intrinsically communal being, living in interdependency *vis-à-vis* others, thus precluding the idea of a person as an isolated being. This understanding of a person indicates that reconciliation is a constant endeavour wherever people live.

A campaign needs to be launched in communities to raise awareness of the brotherhood and sisterhood that the Congolese people share. This makes reconciliation an obligation because it is inherent in the intrinsic nature of community life. Each person exists because of others, and the substance that vivifies the community is love. Reconciliation is an exigency of this love. The same should apply to the DRC situation to Christians and non-believers in the DRC, and those who cannot identify themselves with the Judeo-Christian tradition can still find the meaning of reconciliation in the African ethical dimension of a person and his or her rapport with others, the world and God.

■ Truth and Reconciliation Commission v. the Judeo-Christian reconciliation model

In my earlier works (Kiyala 2010), I investigated the probability of achieving reconciliation in the DRC by using the mechanism of a TRC. I analysed reconciliation in the Judeo-Christian tradition and its potential to bring about reconciliation in the DRC and finally explored reconciliation from an African perspective (worldview) by searching for elements that are compatible with the Judeo-Christian tradition that can be used to advance reconciliation in the DRC. That study was guided by the following question: What approach could be sustainable and realistic for a successful reconciliation in the DRC?

The research was conducted on the assumption that a combination of TRC mechanisms, African social ethics and wisdom inspired by the Judeo-Christian tradition (namely, confession of guilt, contrition and possibly making reparations for offences or crimes committed, and offering and accepting unconditional forgiveness) could enhance and help achieve reconciliation in the DRC. The important aspect of studies in early reconciliation processes around the world is to show that reconciliation is achievable and has yielded desired social changes where it has been well conducted. This encouraged me to adopt it for the DRC. The Judeo-Christian tradition model of reconciliation has never been explicitly applied in the social and political arena to tackle past atrocities. The impasse in reconciliation in the DRC demands a more realistic approach that may combine the Ubuntu perspective of justice and peacebuilding with a faith-based model.

My argument was based on the theological theory underlying Catholic social teaching (CST) or Catholic social doctrine (CSD). This encompasses

vicarial responsibility for the admission of guilt that should be taken by the Church and love and mutual forgiveness as the path to reconciliation, healing and societal harmony. Here I refer to the theological theory, which was developed in the Middle Ages following the decline of interest in rationalism and scientific knowledge. This theory evolved from scholasticism, and Thomas Aquinas is considered the one who steered this movement. He was concerned with the role of faith in rational methods and influenced modern intellectual history and his 'desire to synthesize reason and faith although his own equation substituted Plato for Aristotle and attributed far greater powers to unaided human reason' (Colish 1975, p. 439). A faith-based approach to reconciliation is seen as an alternative where a normal process seems illusory.

Pope Benedict XVI describes the purpose of CST in the dynamic relation existing between faith and politics, whereby faith helps to purify reason and enlighten politics and direct it towards its aim and goal, which is the achievement of a just order in which the human person is respected in his rights and dignity (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops 2023). Politics cannot achieve this purpose alone; neither can practical reason without undergoing constant purification so that it can generate an ethical order:

The problem is one of practical reason; but if reason is to be exercised properly, it must undergo constant purification, since it can never be completely free of the danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests. (DCE [*Deus caritas est* (God is love)] No. 27)

Pope Benedict XVI (2006) defines CST on the grounds that the relationship between faith and politics in CST makes statements and provides facts in support of or against occurrences in society, basing its argument on reason and natural law, considering what is sensitive and desirable for the nature every human person. Catholic social teaching recognises the role of the Church in assisting with the formation of conscience in the political sphere in such a way that promotes and encourages attitudes that respond to the requirements of justice. In this process, the Church stands ready to meet the challenges arising from antagonism between witnessing to justice and situations of personal interest. The Church strives to build 'a just order and civil order, wherein each person receives what is his or her due, is an essential task which every generation must take up anew' (DCE 27).

In the context of this research, a theological framework is deemed necessary for reconciliation, which is a social need created by injustices that take form in acts of violence and other atrocities directed against innocent populations. This approach is relevant for an interpretation of the existential experience of the DRC, on the basis of the Scriptures and CST. The use of dogmatic pronouncements and scriptural sources features prominently in

this research to sustain my argument that reconciliation based on the Judeo-Christian tradition could be relevant to the complex context of the DRC.

Based on literary research methods and praxis, I noted that failed attempts to pursue a reconciliation agenda were mainly because of the broken governance system, which lacked the political will to develop adequate policies and programmes of reconciliation that could yield tangible results. More research was needed to explore better alternatives because reconciliation is vital to human communities and their social and economic development. This outlook on the problem stimulated this research.

A number of monographs, ranging from the foundations of the South African TRC to reconciliation in its various dimensions, were reviewed. These documentary sources discuss relevant issues pertaining to the TRC, which has a significant bearing on this research. Exploring the philosophical assumptions that underpin TRC processes, the pragmatic grounds on which they can be processed, and the limitations inherent to their success helped to mould and frame a reconciliation model that is suitable for the DRC. The important aspect of studies in early reconciliation processes around the world is that reconciliation is achievable and, where it has been well conducted, has yielded the desired social changes. This encouraged me to adopt the approach for the DRC.

An exploration of early studies revealed that the model of reconciliation in the Judeo-Christian tradition had never been explicitly applied in the social and political arena to tackle past atrocities. I was very much interested in using a theological framework to critically understand what is considered to be a social and political issue, namely reconciliation. Reconciliation in the DRC has gone through a long process since 1990. I did not attempt to give a historical account of political debates in the transitional period of 16 years. I was, rather, interested in showing that reconciliation had never been achieved in the DRC in spite of several attempts that were made.

Having examined the unfinished process of reconciliation in the DRC, I will make some recommendations that encompass the African ethos and the Judeo-Christian tradition to bring this process to a successful completion:

- Establishing a TRC
- Making reparations and restoring justice
- Telling stories and healing memories
- Promoting reconciliation through the Catholic Church
- Healing locations and communities
- Using symbols and rituals
- Taking vicarious responsibility
- Planning a Day of Atonement in Christian communities

- Using an African worldview and ethos
- Setting up a Commemoration Day of National Reconciliation.

The work achieved by the SATRC and its legacy was acknowledged as a means of social transformation and reconciliation. I noted that the SATRC was partly fruitful because of a successor government that represented those who had been oppressed and were victims of past human rights violations. The context of the DRC is totally different. A campaign that could lead to truth-telling and reconciliation appears to be illusory today. The TRC in South Africa was necessary and was made possible by means provided by the government, and was supported by the constitution and the judicial system, thereby creating an environment in which the victims of Apartheid were protected, and witnesses called upon to testify could do so without fear of being victimised. This process, though difficult and painful, was transformative and brought about healing and reconciliation in South Africa.

In the DRC, under the *Commission Vérité Réconciliation*, insecurity, the inadequacy of the judicial system, the lack of an alternative successor government in a post-conflict era and the lack of funding to sustain the CVR were admitted as clear evidence that a TRC could not successfully be run and lead the DRC to an immediate reconciliation under the prevailing circumstances.

Forgiveness was also discussed as an important element of reconciliation. This was shown in the case of the Heidelberg massacre, where the SATRC became a catalyst for reconciliation, healing and forgiveness. I am convinced that a society seeking justice should subscribe to the logic of making reparations for past dehumanising acts, and in doing so, it will be bound to set up a TRC. Unfortunately, in the DRC, the political and judicial structures are not yet viable to sustain a successful truth-telling process. The country can only rely on the ICC, which could use its power to convict and prosecute people who were involved in past atrocities committed on individuals and communities. Another serious challenge for a TRC would be the lack of available funds to compensate the millions of Congolese people who were victims of all sorts of past crimes and abuses. Therefore, it would be quite misleading to argue that a TRC is the ultimate way to reconciliation in the DRC today.

After exploring various doctrinal and theological understandings of reconciliation, I believe that the Judeo-Christian tradition of reconciliation can stand as an effective way to bring about national reconciliation and healing in the DRC. This is based on the fact that the Church has been an agent of reconciliation and has the capacity to mobilise people for the cause of justice, peace and reconciliation. I looked into the Sacrament of Reconciliation and its impact on interpersonal relations, as well as the

whole conception of reconciliation as God's initiative and a transcendental gift that aims at the salvation of humanity. This implied that churches in the DRC participate in God's gift of reconciliation. All Christians ought to embrace the process of reconciliation as a gospel imperative by offering and accepting forgiveness. In a context where reparations and restitutions are possible, this should be practised as Zacchaeus did (Lk 19:8-10), but where circumstances do not allow reparations and restitution, reconciliation and healing can still be achieved through unconditional forgiveness. This aspect of reconciliation is fundamental for healing.

Finally, setting a Commemoration Day of National Reconciliation should be envisaged by the DRC government to remember the victims of past human rights violations. This would be a way of doing justice to them. Their names should be written in the historical annals of the country and be safeguarded wherever monuments could be erected to commemorate their lives.

■ ***Baraza* jurisprudence and transitional justice**

The *Baraza* is one of the indigenous forms of jurisprudence in the DRC that is gaining interest in social research platforms (Clark 2008; Kamwimbi 2008; Kiyala 2016, 2018a, 2021, 2022b). The increasing interest in *Baraza* has been prompted by the failure of public administration to implement adequate policies that would prevent violence and build positive peace.

The word *Baraza* originates from Kiswahili and refers to a veranda. It used to be a place where the elders in the village sat to share and discuss various events, incidents and daily life experiences in a particular community or village. The local *Baraza* functioned as a council of elders made up of the notables and/or the *Mwami* (Paramount Chief or King or local ethnic group leader). The inter-community *Baraza* gathers local leaders from different communities, particularly in the east of the DRC, where inter-community conflicts and violence are endemic. The *Baraza* also refers to local mechanisms of dispute resolution or local jurisprudence where civil suits are dealt with (Kiyala 2016, 2021). As a community-based approach to justice, the *Baraza* seeks reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, such as former child soldiers and their respective communities (Kiyala 2021). At the community and inter-community level, the *Baraza* remains largely an informal model of conflict prevention and peacebuilding (Clark 2008; Kiyala 2016) and is one of the African indigenous approaches to conflict resolution and peacebuilding after large-scale violence, along with *Gacaca* in Rwanda, *Bushingantahe* in Burundi, *Fambul Tok* in Sierra Leone, *Ka Pahla* in Mozambique and *Mato Oput* in Uganda (Kiyala 2022b). To sustain peace and societal harmony, the *Baraza* administration serves as an

instrument of violence prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding; these actions are rooted in local wisdom that prioritises dialogue and peace.

The *Baraza* has long existed as a jurisprudence for both civil and criminal matters in cities and districts of the DRC, and as a platform for the settlement of family disputes, marriage and divorce cases, land disputes, inheritance, robberies, theft and murder (Kiyala 2021). An earlier study I conducted on the *Baraza* explored the potential of this traditional jurisprudence and conflict management structure to ease the social reintegration of children formerly used as soldiers. The findings supported the viability of the *Baraza* to foster social cohesion and harmony among child soldiers, members of communities affected by hostilities, local traditional leaders, students, members of non-government organisations (NGOs) and the notables in the communities in warring zones (Kiyala 2018a). This locally moulded jurisprudence was used to facilitate accountability and thereby the re-insertion of former child soldiers into their respective communities affected by armed conflicts and civil wars (Kiyala 2016). The strength of the *Baraza* rests on its multiple restorative potentials, participatory nature, non-adjudicative approach and community or intercommunity nature, and its long-standing effective structure.

Although the *Baraza* structure reflects the *modus operandi* of the traditional or tribal authority, it is important to note that it bears a dimension of public administration, because it uses and applies customs to pursue the welfare of the community, as I pointed out:

While *Baraza* seeks peaceful resolution of conflicts, it is also interested in justice between people entangled in a conflict, and pursues accountability by seeking reparation of harm and reintegration of offenders into society. It fosters healing and reconciliation through cleansing rituals that restore the dignity of both the offender and the victim. (Kiyala 2016, p. 37)

The *Baraza* Council dealt with both civil and criminal lawsuits in the community. However, as a result of the reform of the justice system that introduced the *Tribunaux de Paix* [peace courts or high courts], this customary justice structure's power has waned (Kiyala 2021).

Serious crimes perpetrated in the community:

[R]equired cleansing rituals and were accompanied by reparations. For example, in the case of a girl being murdered, reparation of between 12 and 24 goats were paid to the victim's family. (Kiyala 2016, p. 37)

In these instances, peacebuilding involves justice and reconciliation (Lambourne 2004). Unfortunately, the conventional criminal justice system is limited in delivering both justice and reconciliation. Court proceedings end up leaving stakeholders in a dispute, enemies and unreconciled, whereas participants in restorative justice and several indigenous

approaches to accountability have been able to reconcile and reintegrate into the same communities as post-conflict nation-builders. This was the case in post-apartheid South Africa, where the spirit of Ubuntu pervaded the administration of justice during the TRC, and the spirit of Ubuntu infused the Constitution of the democratic South Africa with consideration for restorative justice (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development 2023; Republic of South Africa 2011). In the DRC, former child soldiers were reconciled with their communities via the use of *Baraza* local jurisprudence (Kiyala 2021), and peace was built by local community leaders in the east of the country via the inter-community *Baraza* (Kiyala 2016). In Mozambique, healing was brought to the wounded community that had suffered the brutalities of civil war via the indigenous healing ritual *Ka Pahl*a (Honwana 1997). In post-civil war Sierra Leone, local leaders managed to foster reconciliation and peace between former belligerents and their communities by employing *Fambul Tok* [a family talk, dialogue or conversation model of engagement in times of conflict] (Graybill 2010). Similarly, in Uganda, local leaders promoted *Mato Oput* rituals [consumption of a bitter root] and preferred it to the criminal justice procedures for reintegrating former belligerents of the LRA, who were, in the majority of cases, abducted children (Baguma 2012; Bangura 2008; Negara 2012). These experiments have shown their efficiency in dealing with the aftermath of large-scale violence, and their potential to heal, reconcile enemies and build peace. Public administration in any country could tap into these indigenous resources to foster their paths of peacebuilding and post-conflict nation reconstruction. Their outcomes contrast with the ends of criminal justice.

While exploring the potential of the *Baraza* to enhance intercommunity peace, it is necessary to acknowledge that this structure is gaining ground in the eastern DRC because of the failure of the government to build durable peace in a community affected by intercommunity violence. The *Baraza* jurisprudence, conflict resolution and peacebuilding instrument is a substitute for public administration where the state's influence is not seen to improve social cohesion and address intercommunity violence and epistemic injustice against child soldiers, or foster social cohesion in a community torn apart by violence.

However, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of the *Baraza*, which are because of its lack of statutory recognition by the legal texts that are the force of law. A local *Baraza* operates as an unconventional and informal institution, while the intercommunity *Baraza* functions as a non-profit cultural structure (though it benefits from the DRC government's financial backing). The *Baraza* may be favoured because respect for human dignity, individual liberties and human rights are observed during its deliberation and decision-making processes.

■ Conclusion

The persistence of hostilities in the DRC could be attributed to the failed reconciliation that was expected to be achieved by the TRC, which was sadly aborted at its inception. This chapter tried to answer the following question: What could be a realistic approach to transitional justice that could lead to reconciliation, justice, accountability for perpetrators of egregious human atrocities and post-conflict national reconstruction and durable peace? Three assumptions were set out, namely: (1) using the conventional prosecutorial justice approach; (2) adopting the *Baraza* model of violence prevention, conflict resolution, justice and peacebuilding and finally, (3) pursuing a multidimensional model of TRC mechanisms that seek to achieve reconciliation by applying wisdom of the Judeo-Christian tradition or using an African worldview, with the conventional approach of a TRC, for those who cannot identify themselves with the Judeo-Christian tradition of reconciliation.

I explored the relations between various approaches to transitional justice and the challenges they face in fulfilling their agendas. Then I moved to discuss the *Baraza* structure to demonstrate the extent to which this platform seeks to achieve several goals, notably not only to prevent violence but also to resolve interpersonal and intercommunity conflicts in a constructive way. This forum also helps to call offenders to account for their antisocial actions; it brings community leaders together to address conflicts and violence and pursue intercommunity peacebuilding for societal harmony. Furthermore, various understandings of reconciliation were explored, as well as its mechanisms and challenges. I showed that reconciliation could be misinterpreted by making it a political strategy that would aim at settling conflicts, making 'hasty peace' and promoting peaceful co-existence instead of getting parties involved in conflicts reconciled and healing the wounds of the past.

The doctrine of atonement and the role of vicarious responsibility were highlighted and do carry the potential for healing and enhancing reconciliation. The use of symbols was also encouraged because symbols have a significant social impact on the lives of communities. These symbols range from sacramental confession to building memorial monuments. Past painful memories that continue to haunt many communities and individuals in the DRC could also be redeemed by erecting monuments, organising prayer services and performing rituals to cleanse sites where heinous human rights violations took place. This would be a way of transforming the past and honouring victims.

The findings about an African ethos contained in the philosophies of *Bisoïté*, Ubuntu, *Ujamaa* and the African communitarian trend lead to the conclusion that the African worldview is not incompatible with the Judeo-

Christian tradition. Reconciliation promotes respect for human dignity. This is expressed in the proverb: '*Nnipa nyimaa ye Onyame mma; obiara nnye asase ba*' [all persons are children of God; no one is a child of the Earth] (Gyekye 1998, p. 328). I trust that even non-believers in the DRC would see the relevance of the Judeo-Christian approach to reconciliation and be encouraged to promote it with a view to making reconciliation a success because reconciliation is imperative in the African worldview. It is rooted in the DRC's culture as well. Assuming that no nation, race, or community has shown hostility to reconciliation, I argue that reconciliation is willed, wished, desired and possible in the DRC.

At the end of this chapter, I wish to state that the Judeo-Christian tradition of reconciliation can be applied successfully to the DRC context. Reconciliation, wherever it begins, is an embodied process and remains a lifelong journey. It is illusory to conceive of a perfect reconciliation in the DRC in the aftermath of social and political unrest and to limit this process within a given time. The factor of time needs to be considered because it allows events and emotions to dissipate while social transformation takes place, when there is recognition of victims and some gestures of sympathy are shown to support victims.

To sum up, perfect reconciliation can only be envisaged as an eschatological aspiration that will be fulfilled when humanity is reunited with its creator at the end of time. Reconciliation in the DRC would never end as a successful human strategy. It will always remain a process, a painful journey that goes beyond the actual shaking of hands between political enemies – as experienced at Sun City for the sake of deciding that they would go to the polls and lead the country to general elections. Reconciliation will remain an aspiration of the whole Congolese population. When the time comes and the hurdles lying in the way of its success are removed, there will begin a journey of hope for a new DRC.

The literature on the potential and relevance of reconciliation in the Judaeo-Christian tradition to pave the way to national reconciliation shows some strengths of a religion-based model of reconciliation that would inspire and foster national reconciliation. The fact that civil society, under the leadership of prominent religious leaders, has contributed to building societies in the aftermath of ruthless rules. The South African TRC under the leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu is a case of such a reconciliation approach that tapes into indigenous customs and religion to develop and vulgarise nation-building and peace-building grounded in forgiveness and Ubuntu philosophy (Tutu 1999). When a collective and individual admission of guilt is offered by the most implicated perpetrators and those with the highest responsibility in past crimes in transitional society; when individuals also take vicarious responsibility for individual and community crimes, and

vicarious responsibility for making symbolic reparations, reconciliation in complex socio-political environments such as the DRC can become possible. This model is far from satisfying the goals of a TRC, particularly the provision for adjudicative mechanisms of transitional justice. However, it can alleviate the burdening fear of an untimely resumption of hostilities and an increased death toll in warring areas.

PART 2

**Public administration and
democracy**

Public administration

■ Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the historical development of public administration, tracing its evolution from traditional theories developed by W Wilson, Max Weber and Fredric Taylor to its modern theory and praxis. In order to provide a precise framework that guides the discussion on the nexus between public administration and peacebuilding, and how democracy can strengthen both theories to pursue and achieve lasting peace and sustainable development, I will discuss the concept of public administration. Then, a debate on the linkages between public administration and development, democracy, and the rule of law will follow before I expand the analysis to the sources of authority in traditional African society. This is necessary to diagnose the root causes of public sector mismanagement in the context of Africa in general, and the DRC in particular. I examine the notion of consensus democracy and its implications for public administration, assessing the effects of non-party polity and the influence of globalisation on public administration and a non-polity system of governance. To conclude the discussion, I introduce the concept of an Ubuntu-informed public administration, rooted in a sub-Saharan African worldview of the relationship between power and the human person. This is a significant contribution to knowledge because the erosion of African values among its elites requires returning to the moral principles that bind individuals together and shape interpersonal relationships within the community. Ubuntu-informed public

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administration inspires a humanist model of public administration that puts the human person at the centre of its goals: Achieving the well-being of humanity becomes the focal point and primary goal of any public administration. Ubuntu is a recognition of the personhood of the other that translates into pragmatic actions imbued with humanism, such as tolerance, respect of the dignity of the human person, acceptance of the other, care, compassion, adopting altruistic attitudes *vis-à-vis* the other, and seeking harmony and 'alrightness' of interpersonal relationships. Any research on public administration in the African environment would remain unfinished if it left out a critical reflection on Ubuntu and its implication for peacebuilding, development, leadership and public administration. It is imperative this book covers this aspect of public administration. The implications of these patterns of conduct for public administrators are that they are to manage world affairs by recognising the well-being of every human person and the welfare of the entire human family as the ultimate goals of power/authority owned by and entrusted to individuals. Any deviation from these objectives will call for an accountability process to rectify any wrongs.

■ Evolution of public administration

Like all fields, public administration has grown and evolved throughout its history, the roots of which reach back to ancient societies such as Rome and Egypt. Its contemporary development and some of its primary iterations may go back as far as 17th- and 18th-century Prussia, during the time when the Prussian government started to appoint and regulate civil servants (National University 2023). The origin of public administration coincided with the inception of the civil service concept that emerged in France during the French Revolution and changed the way civil servants were perceived in France, while in the United Kingdom, the formation of the East India Company galvanised the development of civil service legislation (National University 2023). Similarly, the need for public service in the USA underscored the dramatic economic and social changes in the wake of the Civil War, generating the US Civil Service Commission in 1883 as part of the federal government that established it (National University 2023). Furthermore, in the aftermath of another large-scale conflict, WWII, policy-making became a wider component of public administration. In the course of the social upheaval of the 1960s, innovative pieces of legislation like the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* continued to broaden the roles and responsibilities of public administrators (National University 2023). It becomes evident that public administration has evolved as nations have strengthened relationships between governments and their respective people (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023). To illustrate this point, it is worth noting that 'the Romans created distinct administrative hierarchies for military affairs, justice, finance and taxation, and foreign affairs, each

operated by its own principal officer of the state' (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023). The multisectoral dimension of public administration is a demonstration of the extent to which policy-making should be holistic so as to touch the various aspects of people's lives.

Point Loma Nazarene University (2023) states:

Public administration refers to implementing and managing policies, programs, and services by governmental organizations at various levels. It plays a significant role in influencing and shaping various aspects of society, including the lives of individuals. (n.p.)

Several models of public administration have surfaced throughout the complex historical evolution of this field of knowledge and practice, 'including classical public administration, new public management, and finally, postmodern public administration' (National University 2023, n.p.). Public administration comprises 'various administrative services that help strengthen and support societies through nonprofit, local, state, and federal governmental roles' (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023, n.p.). It covers labour relations and ethics, legislative relations, public policy management, financial management and public budgetary processes.

According to the *Union pour la Nation Congolaise* (UNC) School of Government (2023), public administration represents:

[A] field in which leaders serve communities to advance the common good and effect positive change. Public administration professionals are equipped with skills to manage at all levels of government (local, state, and federal) as well as nonprofit organizations. (n.p.)

Public administration evolved from being a theory studied in parallel with government. M Weber, W Wilson and F Taylor pioneered the classical public administration of the 20th century; the traditional public administration was conceived as an approach:

[T]o run a state in a stable and predictable way in a relatively static environment and therefore, public administration was not prepared to meet new challenges and was resistant to change. (Katsamunski 2012, p. 74)

It was rewarding, as observed by Guy Peters; in his terms: 'it fought several wars, produced and administered a massive expansion of social programs, instituted large-scale economic management for the public sector, and did a host of other remarkable things' (Peters 2001, p. 13, cited in Katsamunski 2012, p. 78). The fact that public administration has withstood the test of time and continued to evolve demonstrates its enduring relevance and significant impact on governance and the implementation of policies aimed at enhancing the performance and delivery of social and public services by governments across the world. As a result of the changing environment and reforms conducted in the public sector, public administration has had to attune to the times in the transformations of the last decades, 'directed

at ensuring good governance in terms of effective, ethical, accountable and transparent administration' (Katsamunska 2012, p. 74).

Public administration evolved from three theories, namely the classical public administration theory (CPAT), the new public management theory (NPMT) and the postmodern public administration theory (PPAT) (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023). Classical public administration theory agrees with Woodrow Wilson's public administration ideals; it emphasises:

[E]fficiency in organizational work, professionalization, a pragmatic approach to bureaucracy, and merit-based promotions [;] the classical system includes a strict definition of responsibilities and objectives and control over all involved functions. (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023, n.p.)

Classical public administration theory has been disapproved of by governments since the 1980s, who have preferred 'a market-based model of public organization' (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023). The NPMT was initiated in the 1980s to make the civil service more efficient by using private-sector management models, which entail providing local agencies with more freedom to organise the way they deliver services to citizens; this model utilised decentralised service delivery approaches as experiments (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023). Proponents of the NPMT sought to use a more 'businesslike' model as a substitute for 'the disciplinary, academic, or moral emphasis of traditional public administration' (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023). The final theory, known as the PPAT, pertains to 'the inner workings of every government entity, as it's linked to the capitalist model of the late 20th and 21st centuries' (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023). The new challenges and changing context and environment of the contemporary world demand that:

[*Public administration*] adjust and accommodate to a rapidly, at times unpredictably, changing environment. Over the last few decades the efforts across the world to conduct substantial reforms in the public sector were directed at ensuring good governance in terms of effective, ethical, accountable and transparent administration. (Katsamunska 2012, p. 74)

With regard to modern managerial approaches to public administration (MMAPA), as new reforms emerged from the traditional theory, various concepts were born to descript MMAPA; these include 'managerialism, new public management, market-based public administration, post-bureaucratic paradigm, [*and*] entrepreneurial government' (Katsamunska 2012, p. 78). This colleague further notes that the novel perspective of public management is results-oriented. It concentrates on clients, outputs and outcomes with a focus on objectives and performance management. This approach utilises the market and market-type systems 'in the place of centralized command and control style of regulation, competition and choice, and devolution with a better matching of authority, responsibility and accountability' (Katsamunska 2012, p. 78).

This entails that public administrators should hold high ethical standards, not escape accountability and conduct themselves in a transparent manner. It excludes 'African exceptionalism' and 'elite protectionism'. 'The two concepts of African exceptionalism and elite protectionism characterise the way African leaders conduct themselves when accountability is needed' (Kiyala 2018a, p. 39). It is worth noting that the concept of African exceptionalism is utilised by Orentlicher (2007, p. 21) here meaning the common trend among the continent's leaders to avoid accountability in matters pertaining to human rights violations. I express the concept as follows:

I define African elite protectionism as a set of attitudes, tactics and machinations that a government or the elite utilises to rally supporters behind itself to ensure its protection and prevention from being prosecuted for crimes. (Kiyala 2018a, pp. 39–40)

Both strategies constitute an affront to the rule of law, which is one of the key pillars of classical public administration. Undermining accountability for the misconduct and offences of the elite and other public administrators violates the principles of effective public administration and impedes the administration of justice as a public good:

This attitude hinders the administration of international justice when some leaders display a lack of cooperation by refusing to arrest and surrender high-profile leaders allegedly responsible for violations of human rights laws. Such leaders also undermine indictments of their peers and obstruct the proceedings of the international criminal justice body for alleged crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. (Kiyala 2018a, p. 40)

I use the DRC as an illustration of deviations by public administrators from their essential responsibility to pursue the well-being of their fellow citizens and the welfare of their respective communities, societies, countries and by implication, of the entire human family – because whoever lives in a particular society, regardless of his or her native roots, is part of the single human family bound together by the spirit of Ubuntu. This makes public administration all the more important, for its existence is not an end in itself but rather the pursuit of humanity's well-being.

Against this backdrop, I see it as fitting to discuss the concept and praxis of public administration before expounding on its linkage to various systems of governance. I dedicate a full argument to the nexus between public administration and governance, development, the rule of law, globalisation, democracy and Ubuntu. Let me begin with a theoretical examination of the 'public administration' concept.

■ Conceptual analysis

Public administration is a vast notion that proves difficult to define in one way that conveys all its meaning (Shafritz et al. 2016). In an elementary

sense, 'it is government in action – the management of public affairs or the implementation of public policies' (Shafritz et al. 2016, p. 6). This definition focuses on the political nature of the concept (Shafritz et al. 2016). Thornhill and Van Dijk (2010) further define public administration as a study of human beings involved in 'administrative and managerial duties in organs of state' (p. 95). Therefore, 'any study should consider the behaviour and actions of human beings in an organisational setting operating in a political environment' (p. 95). Public administration is also conceived as the administrative activity through which the exercise of public powers is shaped, formalised and executed. The online Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines public administration as 'a branch of political science dealing primarily with the structure and workings of agencies charged with the administration of governmental functions'.³¹

For Johnston (2015), '[p]ublic administration is the term traditionally used to define the formal arrangements under which public organizations serve a government, ostensibly in the public interest' (n.p.). The same view is held by Shafritz et al. (2016, p. 9), who observe, '[p]ublic interest is the universal label in which political actors wrap the policies and programs that they advocate'. This definition suggests that the goal of public administration is the common good, encompassing the welfare and well-being of both the public and the entire nation, and that this focus on the common good legitimises power.

Amid a host of definitions of the concept of public administration (Nwanisobi & Christopher 2020), the one articulated by ME Dimock is close to the definition and interpretation of the public administration concept adopted in this inquiry:

Public Administration is the fulfilment or enforcement of public policy as declared by the competent authorities. It deals with the problems and powers of the organization and techniques of management involved in carrying out the laws and policies formulated by the policy-making agencies of government. Public administration is the law in action. It is the executive side of a government. (p. 58)

The description and nuances of public administration in the preceding statement embrace several powers that aim at the administration of the state, and that include the executive, the judicial and the legislative authority entrusted to public administrators by the people to manage the affairs of the state. Public administration has a political bearing because it studies human beings as they engage in administrative and managerial responsibilities in organs of state; therefore, it is important that any study be cognisant of human behaviour and actions in 'an

31. Source viewed on 20 June 2024, <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/public%20administration>>.

organisational setting operating in a political environment' (Thornhill & Van Dijk 2010, p. 95).

Public administration investigates social phenomena as subject to continuous transformation, and that results in the generation of 'societal values and political changes' (Thornhill & Van Dijk 2010, p. 95). So, an inquiry about social phenomena requires adopting theories that provide for 'universal truths but accommodating the new domain of study, e.g. the development of public-private partnerships and the evolution of the developmental state' (Thornhill & Van Dijk 2010, p. 95). The development of states should take into consideration the effects of social stratification because these can inform peace or disrupt it. With this comes the responsibility of public administration to manage the political ecology and deal with threats to societal peace by tackling the root causes of structural violence in view of building positive peace.

It is quite hard to separate the social and political ideas expressed in our culture from our perceptions of public administration; thus, public administration has to be understood as the nexus of law, democracy, governance, public management and the constitution. However, these concepts and ideas are far from neutral in a scientific sense (Spicer 2004). The reinventors of the government movement note that public administration works better 'when administrators are allowed the freedom of action to devote their entire attention, resources, and energies to working toward some single well-defined government mission' (Spicer 2004, p. 358). This characterisation of public administration embraces the 'teleocratic governance and administration' vision, which demands consistency from political leaders in encouraging public administrators to pursue ends that are in harmony with each other (Spicer 2004). Thus, public administration aims to pursue a mission of public interest, not individual egoistic benefits. The challenge of public administration is not only confronting public interest and conflict of interest but conflict in general as well.

In this study, public administration refers to the administrative responsibility of the three branches of government in constitutional democracies: the executive, the judiciary and the legislative. These branches work together to pursue the common good and establish governmental policies that promote national development and welfare. The role of public administration, along with its political dimension, is to uphold a judiciary that enforces the rule of law and an executive that implements policies aimed at fostering peace, security and stability, which can, in turn, attract investors. Additionally, public administration is concerned with the management of the legislative apparatus of the state. Bergling et al. (2008) argue: '[t]he international community has recognized that the rule of law is a vital foundation on which to build peace and recovery in post-conflict states' (p. xi).

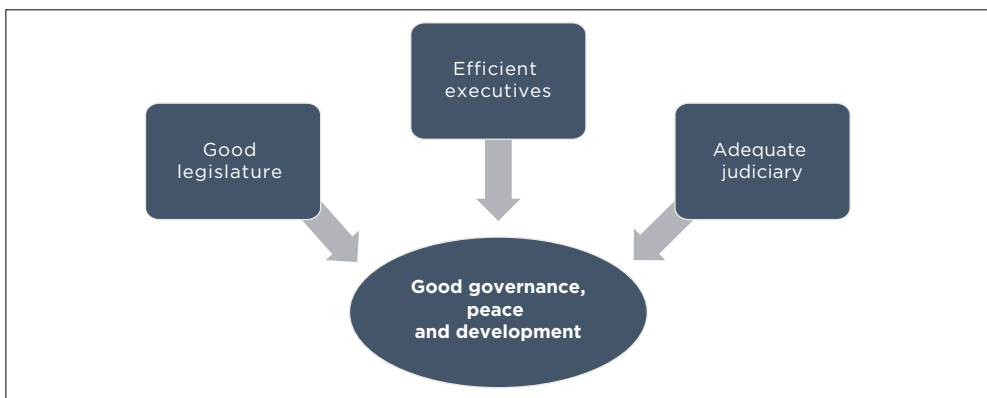
In democracies, the three branches of government operate within a system of checks and balances, which is based on the separation of powers to ensure the health of the nation. Peace, justice and the security of a nation rely significantly upon a harmonious interaction between the executive, the judiciary and the legislative authority. Good governance and sound developmental policies are equally instrumental in the pursuit and attainment of social welfare. Without the accountability of public administrators and the capacity of the three branches of government to fulfil their expected responsibilities ethically, justice, peace, stability and development remain elusive. Thus, the three branches of the state create a safe environment for individual and collective development and well-being. They use their administrative authority in various functions and capacities to maintain peace and ensure development. These branches are essential for national growth and participation in international progress. It is important to examine the extent to which public powers contribute to, or fail to resolve, conflicts and build lasting peace.

Besides the routine functions carried out by public administrators, Lan (1997) notes that public administrators have to deal with conflicts. Unfortunately, many public administrators have not been exposed to the rationales of conflicts and the skills required to tackle conflict (conflict resolution), though acquiring such skills and being informed about the ramifications of conflict, the diverse nature of conflict, the various players in the conflict and eventual strategies for conflict resolution can prove very useful to people called to hold administrative positions in society. The study of conflict resolution can be useful to public administrators as this discipline can foster a better understanding of the nature of public administrators' work 'as well as their roles as conflict resolvers, conflict observers, or parties to conflict' (Lan 1997, p. 27); thus, the field of public administration could benefit immensely by incorporating the conflict resolution perspective into its teaching, research and practice (Lan 1997). Because of the linkages between the concepts of conflict and peace, the theory of peacebuilding needs to be explored and understood in order to substantiate the interconnectedness of these two thoughts and, later, link them to public administration.

As a constitutional democracy, the government system rests on three branches, namely the executive, the judiciary and the legislature. The DRC's legal system is based on a civil law system, which is essentially based on Belgian law, but also on customary and tribal law (Garcia 2020). The chief of the executive branch is the President of the Republic; the head of government is the Prime Minister, often accompanied by vice-prime ministers to whom key departments are allocated; government portfolios are headed by ministers and vice-ministers. The President is directly elected by simple majority vote for a 5-year term (and is eligible for a second term); other government members are appointed by the president (Garcia 2020).

The legislative branch is made up of a bicameral Parliament consisting of a Senate (108 seats; members indirectly elected by provincial assemblies by a proportional representation vote; members serve 5-year terms) and a National Assembly (500 seats; 439 members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by a proportional representation vote and 61 directly elected in single-seat constituencies by a simple majority vote; members serve 5-year terms). The judicial branch consists of the highest courts, which are comprised of the Constitutional Court (nine judges) – the highest court on the land; the Court of Cassation or *Cour de Cassation* (comprising 26 justices and is organised into legislative and judicial sections) and subordinate courts that consist of the State Security Court, the Court of Appeals (organised into administrative and judicial sections); the *Tribunal de Grande*, magistrates' courts and customary courts (Garcia 2020); finally, there are also the *Tribunaux de Paix* [peace courts].

A synergic and harmonious discharge of constitutional duties by the three branches of the government is susceptible to ushering in good governance that would understand that governance refers to all processes of governing: The institutions, processes and practices through which issues of common concern are decided upon and regulated. A diagnosis of post-colonial and post-independence governments and institutions since the Congo Free State (Belgian Congo, Zaïre, the DRC) reveals that apparently all the administrations have failed the test of accountability, management of state affairs, management of the country's wealth, respect for human rights, delivery of services and the praxis of democracy. There has been no good governance that is prompted by the separation of power among the three organs of state (executive, judiciary and legislative) as represented by Figure 6.1 – a system reinforced by the three branches of the government in a representative and constitutional democracy – which the DRC is supposed to be.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 6.1: Interrelation of factors that lead to peace and development.

The problematic context of the DRC reflects the overall challenges and deficiencies of statehood and public administration in Africa. While public administration can be contextualised, the shared post-colonial history and the opportunities offered by globalisation have created references in terms of the management, organisation and structure of the centres of power that stand as the prerequisites of good governance. Such principles encompass transparency, legitimacy, pluralism, responsibility, integrity, subsidiarity, accountability, representation, equity and access to services (Kano Consultants [Pty] Ltd 2023). These tenets of public administration overlap with the key attributes of good governance, which, according to the UN's Human Rights Council, encompass 'transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation, [and] responsiveness (to the needs of the people)' (OHCHR 1996–2025, n.p.). It is evident that there are connections between good governance and human rights; this underscores the need for pillars of democratic institutions, which promote public participation in policymaking processes and public service delivery by:

- Improving the state's capacity to fulfil its obligation of delivering public goods and other critical rights such as education, health and food.
- Improving the mechanisms of accountability and transparency and culturally sensitive policy tools to ensure that services are accessible and acceptable to all.
- Developing 'human rights-sensitive good governance initiatives' (OHCHR 1996–2025, n.p.).
- Reforming the legislation and helping institutions in terms of judicial reforms from penal systems to courts and parliaments and their better implementation.
- Putting anti-corruption measures in place that also rely on accountability, transparency and participation (OHCHR 1996–2025).

Upholding these pillars of good governance is problematic in the DRC, because of the propensity for higher political leaders to utilise a repressive style to affirm and impose their authority. Such conduct by public servants violates Article 4 ('Respect for Human Rights and Legality') of the *African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration*. It states: '1. The Public Service and Administration and its agents shall respect the human rights, dignity and integrity of all users' (African Union [AU] 2011, p. 11).

In light of the information presented in this section, the DRC has the opportunity to rethink its public administration approach and practices. By embracing values that strengthen its resolve, the DRC can move away from the realm of failed states and help the Congolese people realise their hopes for a better nation, a prosperous country and improved living standards.

■ Public administration and development

Since the inception of the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) – set in 2015 by the UN General Assembly, which envisaged the achievement of the 17 goals by the year 2030 – development discourse is no longer occurring in a vacuum. Specialised services of the UN have defined the metrics for monitoring individual countries' progress made towards attaining these goals, namely: (1) No poverty, (2) zero hunger, (3) good health and well-being, (4) quality education, (5) gender equality, (6) clean water and sanitation, (7) affordable and clean energy, (8) decent work and economic growth, (9) industry, (10) innovation and infrastructure, (11) reducing inequality, (12) sustainable cities and communities, (13) responsible consumption and production, (14) climate action, (15) life below water, (16) life on land, (17) peace, justice and strong institutions and (18) partnerships for the goals (United Nations 2015). The SDGs replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and:

[T]hey apply to all countries and represent universal goals and targets that articulate the need and opportunity for the global community to build a sustainable and desirable future in an increasingly interconnected world. (Costanza et al. 2016, n.p.)

As part of policy-monitoring efforts, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) marshals its global network of experts yearly to follow through on public statements made by governments, and also the public practices used in support of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Report 2023). Since 2018, the SDSN has conducted surveys on national coordination and implementation strategies at each central or federal level of government and disseminates data gathered and its findings (Sustainable Development Report 2023). According to the Sustainable Development Report (formerly the SDG Index & Dashboards), which is an international evaluation of countries' progress towards achieving the SDGs, the 2023 results for the DRC show no significant progress made in achieving the 17 SDGs. The DRC shows an overall score of 48.58/100,³² and ranks 159/166; the Spillover score: 99.46/100³³; the Spillover rank: 7/166; the Population: 97413858; GDP 2021 (PPP): \$113.1 Billion; GDP per capita 2021 (PPP): US\$1,179; the Government Efforts [and] Commitments for the SDG: moderate (Sustainable Development Report 2023).

32. 'The overall score measures the total progress towards achieving all 17 SDGs. The score can be interpreted as a percentage of SDG achievement. A score of 100 indicates that all SDGs have been achieved'. Sustainable Development Report (2023).

33. 'Each country's actions can have positive or negative effects on other countries' abilities to achieve the SDGs. The Spillover Index assesses such spillovers along three dimensions: environmental & social impacts embodied into trade, economy & finance, and security. A higher score means that a country causes more positive and fewer negative spillover effects'. Ibid.

■ Public administration and the rule of law

Post-conflict societies often grapple with complex issues resulting from the destruction of life-supporting state systems such as political institutions, infrastructure, the justice system and even the tribal authorities in the event that the leading figures of these institutions and structures have been killed (Kiyala 2018a).

■ Public administration and governance systems

Several studies have contended that there is a close link between public administration and democracy (Burke & Cleary 1989; Kirlin 1996). However, Ventriss et al. (2019) note that there is an apparent growing mistrust of public institutions, and populism and political polarisation are increasing, particularly in the USA. Africa is no exception, in the light of recent military coups that have subverted democratically established public powers (mostly executive and legislative) in West and Central Africa, in Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Gabon. Sudan remains unstable after the overthrow of democratically established institutions. The struggle between public administration and the disenchantment expressed by the military continues to nourish fear of future institutional destabilisation in Africa. All this leads one to question the sustainability of the relationship between public administration and democracy amid the incapacity of public powers to safeguard democracy and thus protect the democratic system from which their authority emanates.

The polarisation of politics in the USA has contributed to a downtrend in the:

[S]ense of publicness in public administration, including an erosion of public values and political legitimacy and an increasingly cynical view of the value, role, and purpose of public service in the modern polity. (Ventriss et al. 2019, p. 275)

These scholars argue, therefore, that public administration must respond in an active way to this political context of estrangement while simultaneously seeking 'to repair and strengthen the links between democracy, public administration, and public values through scholarship, connections to practice and the public, and education' (p. 275).

Against the backdrop of this challenge, it is plausible to explore the viability and practicality of non-party polity in contemporary Africa, particularly in the DRC. This is based on a critical appraisal of Kwasi Wiredu's advocacy for non-party polity as an alternative form of democracy in Africa. How can public administration respond to this innovative political perspective, and to what extent could this minimise

the risks of destabilisation of public authority because of insurgencies and military coups against democratically elected public servants? The tendency for military coups is reminiscent of the dark parts of African post-colonial tragedies: Civil wars, interethnic clashes and gross human rights violations because of ideologies and a lack of political compromise to resolve differences and disputes over who should rule in different communities.

Will the continent see more dictatorial rules, such as those of the past, with their barbaric characteristics? How does tyranny prevail over public administration? African Vault (2015) points out that Africa has been plagued by *coups d'état*, which African leaders use as a means of accessing power, using excessive violence and dictatorship; in the wake of colonialism, dictatorship is ongoing and persists in many parts of Africa, and some scholars have even contended that 'democracy is not an African ideology. Historically, leadership in Africa was based on conquest and monarchy and then colonialism' (African Vault 2015, n.p.). Africans have had their highs and lows. The heights encompass putting their countries on the path to economic prosperity, demonstrating good governance, combating colonialism, ending civil wars and developing exemplary agricultural development that allows their nations to thrive. Some leaders overthrew previous dictators only to establish new totalitarian regimes, while others focused on creating peace and stability, developing viable national education programmes, achieving massive economic growth, and ensuring a fair distribution of national revenues (African Vault 2015). While a few of them worked and still work positively to ensure their countries thrive and enjoy peace, stability and economic growth, each of them had one or a combination of the following ills for which there are and will be remembered: their totalitarian mind or despotic nature of rule.

The worst side of such dictatorial rules is discernible in human rights abuses, oppression of political opponents and the press, embezzlement and misuse of public funds, suppression of political opponents, impoverishment and starvation of the population, regular torture and murder of political opponents, corruption in both civilian and military dictatorial rule, heinous and brutal crimes recorded (including, but not limited to, terrorism, unlawful, extrajudicial killings, 'government-sanctioned kidnappings', torture of prisoners by security forces and allegations of cannibalism), diversion of public funds to safe haven for personal use and benefit, political oppression, massive and galloping hyperinflation, murder of entire families and villages, accusations of genocide, war crimes, rape and other crimes against humanity, massive looting of the public treasury, horrific human rights abuses, political repression and gross economic mismanagement (African Vault 2015).

The alienating political environment built by and around dictators suggests that such rulers cling to power to die there, and suggestions of political change become a crime should any person attempt to make dictators and their communities look at an alternative system. The basic everyday services of care and welfare that define public administration vanish in most totalitarian regimes. If public administration does not meet the daily needs of the nation, it should be replaced by an alternative rule, by democratic processes, to prevent the perpetuation of people's misery. These needs of the nation include: providing security, policing services, service delivery, building critical infrastructure (roads, health care facilities, schools, etc.), attending to citizens' social welfare, feeding the population, providing decent salaries to workers, upholding the rule of law, and pursuing social and economic justice.

The paralysis of public administration in the face of dictatorial regimes cannot be underestimated. The incapacity of public powers represented by African dictators begs questions as to the sustainability of peace, welfare and positive peace in the countries still being ruled by tyrants. It is thus necessary to explore democracy and non-party polity and the extent to which public administrators in either of the systems of governance would foster peace and advance their citizens' well-being. The people must take charge and decide who should govern them. Unfortunately, where 'multipartyism' has not matured, politicians and activists engage in adversarial politics that polarise and divide societies, sometimes in a dangerous fashion. Political parties' divergent ideologies and governance policies (that should aim at improving the life of citizens of a country) can become the drivers of undesirable conflicts and military rivalries that, in the end, cause the loss of lives and unsurmountable damage. Cognisant of the above-mentioned reality of a public administration model incarnated by a tyrant, let us turn to explore democracy.

Can the public be administered without a policy? To better understand the impact of public administration and peacebuilding, I suggest looking at the past and examining different systems of governance that have prevailed on the African continent. Public administration cannot be effective if it lacks the power and initiative to make policies and implement them. Rightly so, for the reason that public administration is recognised as a phase in the public policy cycle, as noted by Shafritz et al. (2016):

[P]ublic policy and public administration are two sides of the same coin. One decides, the other does. They cannot be separate because one side cannot exist without the other. But because policymaking is a continuous process, it cannot end with implementation. (p. 9)

Because public administration has evolved from a political concept tied to bureaucracy to embrace the notion of governance, it is 'extremely convoluted as well' (Shafritz et al. 2016, p. 8). This has been a longstanding

understanding and practice associated with public administration performance.

■ Public administration and globalisation

The modern world has become a global village. Systems of governance are determined by the principles controlling the trend towards integration and globalisation. This tendency is described as follows:

Globalization, integration and democratization of the world's culture, economy, and infrastructure through transnational investment, rapid proliferation of communication and information technologies, and the impacts of free-market forces on local, regional and national economies. (Microsoft Corporation 2003, n.p.)

In this context, international commerce is monitored by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the North American Free Trade Agreement, among others. The world is embracing a global culture, with health matters addressed at the international level by the World Health Organization (WHO). Poverty and food issues are addressed internationally by the World Food Supply. International organisations are lobbying for debt cancellation. Arms trade is monitored by ad hoc international organisations and institutes such as the United States Armed Forces Institute for National Security Studies (King 1999) and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (2023), namely Arms Control and Defence Planning after the Cold War. Globalisation has been spurred on by technology, and the world is in the age of 'the Internet, Television, Global Positioning Systems, Communications Satellites, Electronic Funds Transfer, and [*the*] World Wide Web' (Microsoft Corporation 2003). Modern Africa cannot eschew the complex phenomenon of economic, political, and financial globalisation and regional integration mechanisms are determined by organisations such as the SADC and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). In this context, democracy seems the most viable system to achieve this Pan-Africanism. Nations are no longer isolated entities where internal consensus can be attained and decisions taken while disregarding the international community. Societies which do not dance according to the tune of modern world politics and economics are ostracised. Thus, democracy has become the political system that any human community must adopt to be considered internationally credible and favoured by the aforementioned international institutions. Opting for a non-party polity means moving against the current global politics.

The new world political landscape is open to pluralism, which gives various parties equal opportunities to offer various alternative policies and social contracts so that the people can freely confer power on those who qualify. The people still retain the power to hold those representatives

accountable and remove them from governing office if they betray their trust.

Multi-party democracy is set as the viable system for modern nations: The non-party polity does not hold. International funding institutions give aid upon the condition that democracy and good governance are exercised in a tangible way. The multifaceted nature of modern republics, with the integration of various ethnic groups and cultures and the development of political ideologies, demands that pluralist democracy be adopted to respond to the aspirations of people from different races, tribes and cultures that constitute our nations today.

The first part of this section's arguments has demonstrated why a non-party polity is not viable in the present circumstances and in Africa's new geopolitics. The second part of this argument presents multi-party democracy as a plausible system of government in contemporary Africa. The reasoning here is theological and political and based on the Catholic Church's social teaching.

■ Public administration and democracy

The preamble to the *African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration* (AU 2011) states that the member states of the AU:

Reiterating their political commitment to strengthen professionalism and ethics in public service in Africa; *Determined* to promote the values and principles of democracy, good governance, human rights and the right to development. (p. 2)

The following definition of administration was agreed to: 'Any institution or organisation at the continental, regional, national and subnational levels that apply the public policies or undertakes public service duties' (AU 2011, p. 3). Furthermore, in Article 1, the Charter defines public service as '[a]ny service or public interest activity that is under the authority of the administration' (p. 3) and a public service agent as:

Any worker or employee of the state or of its institutions, including those who were selected, appointed or elected to carry out activities in the name or on behalf of the State, at all levels of its structures. (p. 3)

Finally, the Charter describes public service ethics as '[a]ccountability standards by which the work, behaviour and actions of Public Service Agents are scrutinized' (p. 3). It is the recognised duty of public administration to turn policy into reality, as remarked by Point Loma Nazarene University (2023, n.p.): 'Public administrators are involved in all stages of the policy cycle to make sure that policies are efficiently implemented. These stages include planning, developing, executing, and monitoring'. As a policy-generator and decision-making body, AU member

states should have efficient public administrations to ensure policies are implemented that aim to uplift the lives of the masses in their respective countries and attain their general welfare.

It is important to recognise the value that the AU attaches to democratic principles, which it associates with the practice of good governance. Although only a few countries on the continent can be lauded for upholding democratic tenets and showcasing good governance, the majority of the AU member states are renowned for human rights abuses and rigging elections.

Similarly, in American democracy, public administration is a core concept; it is associated with delivering democracy and providing public services (Box 2015). In an environment of an increasing lack of trust in public institutions and public agents and the growing political polarisation and populism that prevails in several countries, particularly the USA, Ventriss et al. (2019) argue that the factors listed have contributed to a reduced:

[S]ense of publicness in public administration, including an erosion of public values and political legitimacy, and an increasingly cynical view of the value, role, and purpose of public service in the modern polity. (p. 275)

They strongly advocate that public administration must address this environment of estrangement and make efforts to repair and consolidate the bonds ‘between democracy, public administration, and public values through scholarship, connections to practice and the public, and education’ (p. 275). In a similar vein, Bertelli and Schwartz (2022, p. 2) contend: ‘[*Public administrators*] have an obligation to reinforce the democratic values of the system they serve as long as they do not act beyond their authority. [...] In this way, public administration can ‘administer democracy’.

The links between public administration and democracy are non-negotiable and must be reinforced to guarantee good governance and ensure the efficient operation of public institutions, accountability and the sustenance of democratic values. This works under the ‘principle of complementarity’ fostered by a system of public representation or representative government whereby public administration reinforces democratic values, as noted by Bertelli and Schwartz (2022). The juxtaposition of public administration and democracy constitutes a permanent discourse in the system of representative democracy because public administrators have the obligation to deliver and administer democracy, and this is an inalienable responsibility. Bertelli and Schwartz (2022, p. 2) point out that ‘public administrators have an obligation to reinforce the democratic values of the system they serve as long as they do not act beyond their authority’. In this way, public administration can ‘administer democracy’. Unfortunately, the lack of an ethical stance among

public administrators is increasingly discrediting representative democracy systems, especially where there are accusations of election fraud, conspiracies and attempts to defraud voters; such actions question the very essence and viability of democracy and lead to post-election violence. As a result, electorates across countries in Africa and in the USA frequently come under the spotlight when democratic values are put to the test.

In Africa, the estrangement of the political elite and public administration becomes manifest in the disenchantment of the public, who support juntas taking power from elected representatives accused of embezzling the treasury and of mediocre governance; these leaders are then overthrown by military coups. We see a shift among the public: Military leaders become the saviours of a broken democratic system characterised by the incapacity of public administrators to deliver the necessary services to their populations. Is there a need to redefine or reconceptualise the system of governance and establish which one suits Africa – and other countries similarly confronted with the erosion of democratic values and good governance?

It is important that democracy in contemporary Africa be reassessed with regard to what citizenship entails and what rights it gives to be part of and a member of a state. This would mean the notion of rights being broadened by granting rights to citizenship by both residence and birth, because Africa is a continent of labour migrants. This has not been the case in several countries in Africa. For instance, the Banyamulenge population living in the DRC, who are Hutu of Rwandese origin, were ostracised and refused voting rights. This incident sparked civil war in the eastern DRC and would require a response by the DRC public administrators to develop fair policies that would prevent any violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws pertaining to refugees and migrants' rights. On the national level, there should be a domestic legal framework that addresses this thorny question to prevent the recurrence of ongoing conflicts related to citizenship, nationality and social identity.

■ Ubuntu-informed public administration

Ubuntu philosophy has become a key feature of contemporary political discourse and pervades a vast array of fields to the extent of becoming a multidisciplinary standard. Ubuntu is used as an approach in post-conflict resolution, reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts (Aydin 2022; Nabudere 2005; Udo 2020); it is associated with restorative justice (Letseka 2014; Louw 2008); it is embodied in leadership literature (Ncube 2010); it has traversed a long road from theology (Battle 2000) and philosophy to business and management (Lutz 2009; Newenham-Kahindi 2009) and ethics (Dolamo 2013); and it is used as a paradigm for education

(Waghid et al. 2023) and public administration (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah 2019; Tshishonga 2014). A research and scholarly book on public administration, especially in the context of Africa, would be incomplete without a discussion of Ubuntu and its implications for leadership and public administration. These are the salient issues this chapter deals with.

■ Understanding Ubuntu philosophy

The word '*Ubuntu*' derives from the IsiZulu and IsiXhosa languages of South Africa. It conveys the metaphysical and ontological essence of the human person. It refers to the 'humanness' characteristic of the human person that became prominent during the SATRC and was made popular by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (More 2004b). Ubuntu entails an interactive relationship that ontologically binds the human person to the community, and the existence of the two is inseparable. The saying *Umuntu ungu muntu ngabantu* [a person is a person only with other people] is the essence of this relationship. More (2004b) asserts:

'Motho ke motho ka batho ba bang' (Sotho) or 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' (Xhosa, Zulu) [*means*], respectively, 'a person is a person through other persons', 'I am, because we are'. While the term Ubuntu is of South African origin, the phenomenon contains a wider African reality enshrined in African humanism, communalism, and what Nkrumah calls 'consciencism'. (p. 157)

Ubuntu forms the basis for a moral philosophy (More 2004b) that is anchored in African indigenous wisdom. Its implications are such that there should be no retaliation or revenge, but rather forgiveness and reconciliation among people who have experienced harm. Duvenage (2005, p. 514) points out: 'It should be clear that the TRC was established by the South African Parliament in an atmosphere yearning for understanding not vengeance, reparation not retaliation, Ubuntu (humanness), not victimization'. Ramose (2002, p. 224) explains the concept of Ubuntu as the foundational tenet that underscores human moral behaviour because it interweaves the words *muntu* [person] or *Bantu* [people] and *kintu* [thing].

The Ubuntu philosophy is also known as African humanism, which is defined as 'the philosophy which naturally enables the coexistence of all humans, irrespective of their creed, culture, tribe, nation or race' (Edeh 2015, p. 205). Furthermore, More (2004a, p. 156) describes Ubuntu as 'African communalism or African humanism'; this concept is associated with values such as 'caring, sharing, hospitality, forgiveness, compassion, empathy, honesty, humility. [...] [/]t is a demand for respect for persons no matter what their circumstances' (p. 157). In addition, its extended definition and meanings include African social and ethical philosophy, African jurisprudence, African restorative justice, deontological ethics, etc.

Ubuntu is the basis of the African anthropological philosophy and the African social ethos (Kiyala 2022c); it constitutes the basis for moral philosophy (More 2004a), which is rooted in African indigenous wisdom. Ubuntu implies no retaliation or revenge but rather forgiveness and reconciliation among people who have experienced harm. Ubuntu foregrounds human moral behaviour; it combines the category *muntu* [person] or *Bantu* [people] with *kintu* [thing]; it maps interpersonal and person-community or person-community-environment relationships – a web of inter-relations that underscore respect, dignity and refraining from harm (Kiyala 2022c; Ramose 2002).

As African humanism, Ubuntu philosophy ‘naturally enables the coexistence of all humans, irrespective of their creed, culture, tribe, nation or race’ (Edeh 2015, p. 205), and as ‘African communalism or African humanism’, it connects with values such as ‘caring, sharing, hospitality, forgiveness, compassion, empathy, honesty, humility [...] it is a demand for respect for persons no matter what their circumstances’ (More 2004a, p. 156). On a similar note, Skelton (2013, p. 173) asserts: ‘Dignity and respect are viewed as central values, and this links closely to the African concept of Ubuntu’. These values are the pillars of a community conceived as a family. Ubuntu’s ethos is anchored in the family model and interaction and can make the world a universal family where mutual love and care are practised and experienced (Ramose 2002). Adding to this, More (2004b) notes:

Ubuntu in this sense expresses an understanding – a societal bond – and forms the basis for consensus. Fundamental to African political philosophy and ontology is the view that an individual is not a human being except as he or she constitutes part of a social order. (p. 157)

From a politico-ideological perspective, More (2004b) notes that Ubuntu:

[/]s a principle for all forms of social or political relationships. It enjoins and makes for peace and social harmony by encouraging the practice of sharing in all forms of communal existence. (p. 157)

This statement has significant implications for peace that requires both individual and collective commitment. Ubuntu’s social ethos opens up society to individual and collective reparation of any harm caused by any individual person’s action or inhumane acts carried out collectively in the way that has destroyed societal harmony is not destroyed the social fabric and communal harmony. Public administration imbued with the spirit of Ubuntu should be concerned with both the welfare of the community (or society) and individual well-being and strive to rebuild societies that have experienced human atrocities. Such a responsibility demands that public administration put in place the needful and effective mechanisms for violence prevention, reconciliation and sustainable peace-building. The philosophy of Ubuntu in peacebuilding is evident (Aydın 2022; Ramose 2002), as are the ethics of *Ujamaa* (Ibhawoh & Dibia 2003; Nyerere 1962;

Stöger-Eising 2000) and the *Palaver* tradition (Africa Coaching for the World 2021; Ingiyimbere 2022). Ubuntu, *Ujamaa* and the *Palaver* have become synonymous with peace, justice and reconciliation, and they can be catalysts for new policies of governance, justice and development.

■ Ubuntu, nonviolence and peacebuilding

Ubuntu can be practised in several forums, including the *indaba*, the *imbizo* and the *kgotla*. One method used to convey Ubuntu is the African *Palaver*. Oborji (2020) found a link between the South African TRC's pattern of reconciliation and the African *Palaver* – an institution rooted in the culture and tradition of societies on the African continent. In a similar vein, Scheid (2011) avers that the *Palaver*-based engagement entails a commitment triad that pursues post-conflict reconciliation, principally 'a commitment to open communication, especially truth-telling; a commitment to memory or developing a shared sense of the past; and a commitment to reconciliation at the communal level' (p. 18). In the context of Africa, where many communities are torn apart by ethnically induced and politically motivated conflicts and violence, the *Palaver* tree is still one of the most valued models of peacebuilding on the continent.

Conflict resolution and peacebuilding in sub-Saharan Africa can still rely on the diversity of institutions that use the *Palaver* paradigm to attain durable peace because of the complete symbolism of this forum, whether it is treated as a political forum (Ingiyimbere 2022) or a purely truth-telling and reconciliation platform (Oborji 2020; Scheid 2011). Undermining the importance and role of the African *Palaver* tree in peacebuilding will significantly diminish the meaning, extent and parameters of processes that are desirable and susceptible to paving the way for durable peace in the aftermath of violent conflicts. While the *Palaver* deals with post-conflict circumstances, there is an equally valuable tool of conflict prevention and peace consolidation that is known as *Ujamaa*.

In post-violence environments, Ubuntu reminds the community that retaliation is inimical to Ubuntu humanism. Archbishop Tutu explains the embodiment of the other in Ubuntu by noting that 'a person with Ubuntu' does not describe the possession, but rather the being of that person, and such people as expressed by Archbishop Tutu 'are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate' (Tutu 1999, p. 34). Archbishop Tutu articulates Ubuntu in the following terms:

We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'a person is a person through other people'. It is not 'I think therefore I am'. It says rather: 'I am human because I belong'. 'I participate, I share'. (p. 35)

This affirmation sounds hard to swallow in a world where the logic of conflict resolution, confrontation and retaliation are predominant, where

forgiveness is regarded as naivety and weakness, and where the use of force and violence is considered the best alternative to deal with issues. Martin King Jr opposed violence and affirmed:

Violence begets violence; hate begets hate; and toughness begets a greater toughness. It is all a descending spiral, and the end is destruction – for everybody. Along the way of life, someone must have enough sense and morality to cut off the chain of hate. (Arizona University 2011, n.p.)

Violence would not have been a realistic tool for peacebuilding in post-Apartheid South Africa. Instead, the Ubuntu spirit became part of the language and practice of public administration, and it was included in the preamble to the South African Constitution. Ubuntu is nonviolence, and it resonates with the spirit of Martin Luther King. Attempting to lead the struggle for racial equality via a non-violent campaign, Martin Luther King Jr (n.d.) averred:

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate [...] Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.(n.p.)

Luther's statement and stance pervade the existing literature, practice and theoretical frameworks of nonviolence. This reverberates through the various mechanisms of conflict resolution rooted in cultural, customary and traditional knowledge or worldviews that inform peacebuilding processes. Ubuntu peacebuilding stems from the nonviolent principle that sustained the struggles of Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. These advocates of nonviolence had a profound understanding of the dignity of the human person, and their nonviolent campaigns had humanistic, philanthropic and altruistic roots that were not based on political impetus. However, the end of their philosophy was political – achieving the well-being of the human person and the welfare of the global human family. A public administration that taps into this ontological dimension of nonviolence and peacebuilding ought to be successful and transformative.

Retaliation is antithetical to humanism. Ubuntu denotes a relational, interactive or dialogic category, for it points to the other and to a community. Archbishop Tutu explains the embodiment of the other in Ubuntu via the expression 'a person with Ubuntu', which does not describe the possession but rather the being of that person and such people as, as Tutu expressed: 'They are generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate' (Tutu 1999, p. 34).

■ Ubuntu-informed leadership and public administration

In the context of the contested performance of public sector institutions, Mthuli, Singh and Reddy (2023) state that government systems exist to provide collective goods. Currently marked by strong and increasing political competitiveness, Mthuli and colleagues examined how Ubuntu or humanism could be utilised to improve public sector performance management in South Africa. Basis on an analysis of the *Batho Pele* ('people first') principles and Ubuntu, and qualitatively analysing the essence and efficiency of public administration 'in delivering political goods and managing the performance of bureaucracies and the political leadership therein' (Mthuli et al. 2023, p. 27), the authors contend that 'the performance of public administrations remains a "wicked" problem in South Africa as political populism is on the rise in the country' (Mthuli et al. 2023, p. 27). Nonetheless, they also emphasise the importance of good political leadership as a catalyst of transformation – a leadership in which, if it is founded on the philosophical tenets of Ubuntu, 'which understands and mobilizes statecraft – great strides can be made beyond the current rhetoric' (Mthuli et al. 2023, p. 27). The case of South Africa epitomises the overall state of leadership on the continent, and the DRC is no exception.

The crisis of public administration in Africa is, first and foremost, a crisis of leadership and the manifestation of an erosion of African traditional values and meanings of life, the human person and the community. Thus, the spirit of Ubuntu inspires dialogue in leadership and respect for human rights and individual liberties. Ubuntu is peace, and peace is not an option, but rather a moral obligation – regardless of the extent of injustices and inhumanities a person or a social group has been subjected to.

Tshishonga (2014, p. 312) examined a leadership oriented and centred on Ubuntu as a means of transforming public administration to deliver service to the people. He contends that Ubuntu-centred leadership is an approach that is driven by collective action imbued with solidarity and good governance, showing compassion and respect to the human person. This is critical in indigenising public administration and allowing Ubuntu-informed leadership to prevail over top-down authoritarian leadership that stifles public organisation transformation. This model of leadership, beyond producing services, could increase services and empower and enable future leaders who are ethical (Tshishonga 2014). From a similar perspective, Asamoah and Yeboah-Assiamah (2019) ascertain that leadership and governance are all concerned with 'people' and the 'common welfare'. They further observe:

Africans have an Ubuntu philosophy which culturally calls on individuals to promote the welfare of collective society. It is therefore paradoxical to note

how African leaders and governance regimes perform poorly when it comes to the usage of public resources to create conditions for collective human welfare. (p. 307)

Paradoxically, African leaders feed their selfish interests in lieu of pursuing communal welfare. This moral deviation could be attributed to the erosion of traditional African values of solidarity, shared welfare and the African socialism designated by the *Ujamaa* of Julius Nyerere (1987; Kiyala 2022c). *Ujamaa* denotes an attitude of mind that inspires people to care about shared and communal welfare, security, hospitality, solidarity and shared responsibility in the production of social goods. The community is the locus of mutual caring and sharing, and the selfishness of leaders and any other community member is antithetical to the ethos of *Ujamaa*. Communal wealth and prosperity are generated by selfless works and in an unselfish and non-exploitative way, and society is constructed in the family model that is extended to the whole of humanity, beyond the individual persons' tribe, region or continent (Kiyala 2022c). These thoughts, inspired by *Ujamaa* (Nyerere 1987), should make up the pillars of an indigenised public administration that will be relevant to the African context, where we observe the decadence of governance and public administration, as Asamoah and Yeboah-Assiamah (2019) point out:

[T]he preponderance of corruption and poor leadership in Africa is anti-cultural, anti-human, anti-ethical and anti-African; hence, those individuals who indulge or encourage leadership paralysis are not 'true Africans' by deeds but merely profess to be. Linking the African Ubuntu philosophy to public leadership ... the hallmark of public leadership and governance is to develop the skills of all and caring for the society. (p. 307)

Ubuntu conveys several meanings: It represents social and ethical philosophy, jurisprudence, restorative justice and deontological ethics, among others. As a model of leadership, Ubuntu is grounded in fairness and respect; it is embodied in the African *Palaver*, a dialogical forum where serious matters are discussed by the elders or the community in order to preserve societal harmony, interpersonal relationships and co-existence of different social groups and cultures, thereby maintaining social cohesion. An Ubuntu-informed public administration rests on fairness and respect for human dignity; it embodies the African *Palaver*, where solutions are found in a collaborative and participative manner. Interpersonal relationships, the coexistence of different social groups and cultures, and maintaining social cohesion must be considered by public administration to avert social exclusion, marginalisation, favouritism, discrimination, and all forms of social injustices and ills. Thus, the spirit of Ubuntu has the potential to influence public policies that promote the well-being of the person and the community.

This last mentioned aspect is the most significant part of this work because it diagnoses the root causes of the leadership crisis on the

continent, which are found in the erosion of traditional African value systems, namely solidarity, sanctity of life and respect of the human person's dignity, shared wealth and prosperity, collective production of social goods, mutual care, Ubuntu-oriented management of community resources and Ubuntu-driven approaches of dispute settlement via the use of *Palaver*.

While globalisation has exposed Africa to democracy as a preferred system of governance after the dismantling of powerful kingdoms and empires in the post-colonial and post-independence eras, it has had incongruous effects. It has changed the mentality of leaders who discovered wealth and how to enrich themselves at the expense of their impoverished fellow citizens. The notions of *Ujamaa* and Ubuntu should be revived to stimulate the kind of transformation that African people wish in the wake of their disenchantment with sham elections or *electionism* that consecrate and characterise many autocratic and kleptocratic political regimes on the continent. Leaders escape accountability for heinous human rights violations and mismanagement of public resources. Positions in public sectors and the administration of many African countries have been given over to clientelism, obscurantism, nepotism and the advent of dynasties such as in the DRC with the Kabila regimes and in Togo with the Bongos. Who is next? The future will tell.

■ Conclusion

This chapter discussed an overview of public administration, including its evolution, conceptual and theoretical background, connections between public administration and democracy, non-party polity and the rule of law. It also examined the implications of these relationships for various systems of governance in Africa, the effects of globalisation on public administration, and – most importantly – the relationship between public administration and Ubuntu. The chapter concluded by exploring how Ubuntu could contribute to an indigenised public administration that may transform leadership and the management of public sectors.

A renaissance of public administration based on the Ubuntu humanist and philanthropic philosophy, along with *Ujamaa* (African socialism) is critical and remains the imperative of an African renaissance. An Ubuntu-oriented public administration is essential to bring about societal transformation, continental welfare and the well-being of the citizens of each African nation. This is the challenge we need to confront for the betterment of future generations. The DRC, as a case study of failed public administration over several decades, ought to undergo a similar process of transformation. Therefore, Ubuntu leadership is built on humanistic values that should prevail in interactions between the leader and their subjects, as

well as in interpersonal and intercommunity relationships. It requires fairness, forgiveness and care for the people entrusted to leaders. Ubuntu leadership promotes dialogue in the resolution of conflicts and in the management of critical issues that affect society. The well-being of the individuals is at the heart of the Ubuntu decision-making process. Ubuntu, as African humanism applied to leadership, informs the need for tolerance, mutual acceptance, care, refraining from retaliation, reconciliation, healing, compassion, empathy, etc. These are the qualities required for leadership today and for informed leadership in wounded and traumatised societies.

Ubuntu-informed Congo public administration requires that public administrators are provided with adequate professional training and that the government should formulate and implement policies aimed at the welfare of the people. Public administrators should display skills and competence in delivering social and public good in various sectors of the life of the nation and its people via state departments such as education, health, emergency management, disaster management, housing, public works, human settlement, social development, social welfare and security, transportation, community and economic development, tourism, justice, police and law enforcement, and defence. This should be conducted with humanity, care and respect for the dignity of the human person.

Democracy

■ Introduction

A debate on the concept of democracy and all it entails invites us to engage in a demanding critical investigation. This enterprise cannot be well achieved without an intelligible prior conceptualisation of democracy, as defined in its etymological sense and political and philosophical thought. In order to grasp what we are going to examine, we need to clarify right from the beginning what democracy means and how it is expounded by various schools of thought and in different contexts. In my endeavour to assess democracy in Africa, I shall concentrate on the practical aspects of its way of functioning, leading us to ascertain the conditions and possibilities for democratic practice in African countries. I shall begin my assessment with a conceptual overview of democracy. Some historical considerations will be presented, and then stances taken by some African thinkers will unfold from different perspectives of democracy in its relation to the state. A glance at the nature and essence of democracy and its *modus operandi* will close this first part of my investigation. In the second part, I shall tackle democratic practices in Africa by illustrating the trajectory of this process in a few countries. This will open up a discussion of the challenges that democracy faces in its interpretations, management and popularisation. As challenges arise from insufficiencies that need to be addressed, my evaluation will focus on the weaknesses associated with democracy in Africa.

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Any critical appraisal of the concept of democracy will bring a new understanding that could pave the way to successful democratic processes on the African continent. It is honest to acknowledge that an assessment of democracy in the DRC is essential in the diagnosis of the country's current peace and development status. Thus, this chapter provides insights on the democratisation of process – the political regime shift from a mono-party to a multi-party system, its trials and challenges, and the current state of affairs – before envisaging how to ensure democracy is strengthened and its values are upheld. If this step is made successfully, other issues related to the protracted conflicts ruining the country's prosperity and stability can be dealt with progressively.

■ Conceptual overview

The concept of democracy is complex and controversial. Its interpretations, applications and way of functioning suggest that democracy has many models. Amy Gutmann has dealt exhaustively with different forms of democracy, namely Schumpeterian, populist, liberal, participatory, social and deliberative democracy (Gutmann & Thompson 2000, p. 119). I am not concerned with all these types of democracy, but rather, I shall look into some aspects of democracy, including its aims and limitations, before analysing consensual democracy. Because democracy is not an African notion, it is necessary to start by conceptualising what it entails before looking into how it can operate in a consensual format.

Democracy originates from the Greek *dēmokratia* 'popular government', from *dēmos* 'common people', originally 'district' (see demotic), and *kratos* 'rule, strength' (see -cracy)' (Harper 2001–2025). It is ruled by the people. By etymology, democracy does not mean exclusively a single political configuration but rather suggests a variety of models of governance. Many African countries use direct suffrage, where people choose their representatives in the parliament and in local governments and vote for the supreme authority. Direct suffrage can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome, where people ruled themselves. All citizens participated directly in running the *polis* (city) or the *res publica* (the public thing). The polis in Greece was like an estate with a small population, whereby interaction was possible, and every citizen engaged in the affairs of the city. Among the political regimes that would exist in a polis, Aristotle distinguished tyranny, oligarchy, kingship and democracy from polity. Cherry (2009) argues that polity represents the best form of political organisation that was favoured by Aristotle:

[P]olity is the best regime generally possible because it is the regime that represents the fullest development of political life that statesmen can bring into being without the material conditions for which we would pray. (p. 1420)

Polity is further classified as the second-best form of the regime after aristocracy, which entails that the minority – the wealthy and the virtuous – as well as the majority, are entitled to hold office. However, Aristotle's critique of democracy compels one to wonder why the majority should be given entitlement to any authority (Swanson 2019, n.p.).

Aristotle conceived polity as:

[T]he highest species within the genus of regimes, it is essential to understand what a regime is, i.e. a political community, and how polity exemplifies these traits more than any other species. Aristotle's account of the development of political communities illuminates how regimes ought to be self-sufficient communities of free and (relatively) equal citizens of a sufficient level of virtue to share in ruling in turn with a view toward the common end of living well. (Cherry 2009, p. 1411)

This conception of polity embodies the notion of common good, rule of law, development, sustainability, a fair share for members of the community and participation in the management of state affairs. Bertelli and Schwartz (2022) explain the criterion of public servants' engagement and commitment, which precludes acting beyond the constraints of:

[W]hat a public servant is validly authorized to do. This criterion highlights and follows from another important feature of the very idea of government. Call this the rule of law component of responsibility. (p. 28)

It is a fact that in a democracy, the people select the options that improve their lives, not the policy workers. The rule of representative democracy is clear about 'what a person – whether a citizen, a noncitizen community member, a public servant, or otherwise – may or may not do, full stop' (Bertelli & Schwartz 2022, p. 49). This statement refers to the accountability of representative policy works and echoes what President Eisenhower said about representative democracy: It is not necessary for the President 'to rule as a king, and that all policy workers are duty-bound to execute his vision' (Bertelli & Schwartz 2022, p. 31). This was a stern warning to future presidents that they should uphold the separation of powers and the checks and balances:

[A] system in which the different parts of an organization (such as a government) have powers that affect and control the other parts so that no part can become too powerful. (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 2024a, n.p.)

Good legislation infuses good governance.

Aristotle contends: 'Bad laws develop bad habits, such as the excessive valuation of wealth, which leads to tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy rather than polity' (Cherry 2009, p. 1414). For him, polity not only incorporates individuals but also benefits from the presence of some individuals in the city whose virtue exceeds, albeit not excessively, that of the multitude. Aristotle calls the rule of either part – the few or the many – incomplete and imperfect (Cherry 2009, p. 1416). It would appear from

Cherry (2009) that Aristotle despised democracy. But scholars like Winthrop (1978) disagree with this view and note that Aristotle lived in a democracy where a citizen was defined as ‘one who has the right (power) to share in the office of deliberating and judging with skill’³⁴ (Winthrop 1978, p. 154). It follows that the first attempt at defining democracy stems from the notion of a citizen as ‘one who participates in judging and ruling’³⁵ (1257a23) (Winthrop 1978, p. 154). That this citizen has a fair share ‘in the benefits of economic prosperity is not the same as participating politically’ (Winthrop 1978, p. 154). After her argument on the implications of what it means to be a citizen and to close the debates on Aristotle’s agreement with participatory democracy, Winthrop (1978) avers:

Democracy is demanded not for the sake of a right to do my own thing but because of an obligation to live as a man ought. If the democratic partisan’s conclusion – equal political participation – follows from the premise that being a man means engaging in the activity of freedom, then the case for participatory democracy seems to rest on compelling grounds. (pp. 155–156)

Thus, Aristotle appreciated democracy as a regime in which citizens enjoy the rights and freedom to participate in the administration of the city; he ‘judged democracy the least bad of defective regimes, inferior to some rare types and superior to the likely alternatives of oligarchy and tyranny’ (Winthrop 1978, p. 154). The tenet of democracy is ‘equal political participation’ (Winthrop 1978, p. 155). On the justness of democracy, Aristotle argues that ‘democracy is by nature right because a human city is properly modelled on a nature composed of bodies, each of which is a “one” and an equal’ (Winthrop 1978, p. 168). Democracy is classified as ‘the most moderate of the bad constitutions’ and ‘the most preferred kind [of *constitution*], which gets its name from equality’ (Winthrop 1978, p. 118). As the preferred type of constitution, democracy is thought to maintain ‘the balance between rich and poor so that neither rules the other’ (Winthrop 1978, p. 119). It follows that citizens have equal rights to participate in democracy, and citizenship comes with the obligation to be involved in state affairs. However, this commitment requires practical wisdom, a virtue needed for public administration responsibilities (Hart 1984), which is often neglected, as is public administration itself, ‘both as a discipline and as a profession’ (p. 111). Hart is concerned because the meaning of ‘public’ has been watered down, and the neglect of public administration and its *raison d’être* as ‘a necessary and unique part of democracy is also widely and wrongly held in low [*esteem*]’ (Hart 1984, p. 112). The citizens make the ‘public’, and their role and importance in the city should not be undermined.

34. Aristotle, *Book III*, 1257b18–19.

35. Aristotle, *Book III*, 1257a23.

Recognising this truth leads to understanding democracy and a public exercise that has the city as its locus.

Like any system, democracy in ancient Greece and Rome had some problems because not all citizens had political rights. Women and slaves were excluded from participating in politics. This form of social inequality was contrary to the Roman Stoic philosophy, which was attuned to the idea of human dignity and the equality of the entire human race as originating from a divine principle, which is one of the tenets of contemporary democracies.

When debating the concept of democracy, it is not just a speculation. However, it is simultaneously a process and an instrument that shapes a concrete body called a state, a *res publica* or a *polis*. Thus, it is imperative to glance at what 'state' is meant to be before discussing the 'rule by the people'. Democracy is conceived as a 'government by the people, system of government in which the sovereign power is vested in the people as a whole exercising power directly or by elected officials; a state so governed' (Harper 2001–2002, n.p.). It is the power of the people, exercised by the people, a system of governance in which power is conferred to the majority, who act as a whole or by elected representatives of the citizens. Democracy intends to bind divisions and consider everybody's interests. It is based on equality and rights that safeguard these interests. It is also conceived of as a means of minimising abuses of power and promoting equal shares of political prerogatives. It tries to attain autonomy and self-determination of individuals over matters of collective interest. Some argue that democracy is a means of human development and motivates people to take responsibility for their political destiny.

Proponents of democracy contend that it represents the terms of a social contract, and they also believe in its promises and ideals (Gutmann & Thompson 2000). Some tendencies equate democracy with the human good. However, it has its shortcomings. For instance, individuals without expertise or adequate knowledge may make decisions on complex issues that require the attention of specialists. Additionally, the will of the minority is often constrained by the majoritarian principle that governs society (Gutmann & Thompson 2000).

In his memorial speech delivered in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 19 November 1863, remembering the dead of the American war, President Abraham Lincoln (1863) remarked:

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. (abrahamlincolnonline.org n.p.)

The last sentence of Lincoln's speech has become a key definition of democracy. The governance of the people, by the people and for the people, is the essence of democracy enshrined in the principle of separation of powers for checks and balances, accountability and the rule of law. While the dead American soldiers and survivors of the war evoked by Lincoln may not be remembered daily, the struggle for democracy remains very much alive in the face of new threats levelled by contemporary populism, military coups and attempts to subvert the core values of democracy. Bertelli and Schwartz (2022) note:

Democracy is a collaborative exercise in self-governance among the members of society who are guided by the rule of law, each of whom is entitled to voice his or her own preferences, to have an equal say in matters of public concern, and each of whom is entitled to enact his or her own conception of the good within reason, where within reason means that the exercise of one's own conception of the good does not fundamentally interfere with (i.e. does not wholesale impede and does not depend on significantly impeding) anyone else's exercise of the same. (p. 16)

Lintott (1992) remarks that Aristotle showed hostility towards the 'extreme' democracy that featured in Athens during the Ephialtes³⁶ Epoch; this is noticeable at several stages beginning with his initial classification of constitutions. Yet it appears a coincidence between a significant principle of this democracy, conceived as: 'ruling and being ruled in turn' (6.1317b2) and Aristotle's own belief that a city should involve the participation of all its citizens in government (2.1261a22-1261b6, cf. 3.1275a22-1275b21 - the argument used in reverse to define the nature of the citizen)' (Lintott 1992, p. 115). However, Aristotle favours the notion of polity in his political theory founded on his division of political regimes by establishing whether:

[T]hey pursue the common good and by the number of rulers: one, few or many refers to the regime in which 'the multitude governs for the common advantage' as *politeia* [politeia], [or] as it is usually translated, polity (1279a37-39). (Cherry 2009, p. 1406)

Democracy refers to the participation of elected representatives in the administration of public affairs, where they manage the state and are held accountable. Upholding the rule of law is essential for maintaining checks and balances, not only for elected representatives but for all citizens of a country. These norms are often under threat in so-called African democracies. This is possible because the conception of power and democracy in Africa is often framed through the lens of the African traditional authority, from a time when the continent was a constellation of kingdoms and empires wherein the kings and emperors' authority remained

36. Ephialtes [Ancient Greek: Ἐφιάλτης/Ephialtēs] was a politician and pioneer of the Athenian democratic movement. He is not to be confused with the character who betrayed Leonidas at Thermopylae.

unshared and unchallenged. Although African elites embraced the imported post-colonial democratic system of government, their nostalgia for traditional or tribal authority was never altered by this novel governance structure. Among the factors that made the elites and scholars of the post-independence era question the relevance of political pluralism and democracy for the continent was the fact that the concept of 'democracy was alien to Africa' (Monyani 2018, p. 1).

Another factor is ethnicity, along which lines political parties and political affiliations are developed, supported and sustained – a phenomenon also associated with the regionalist pluralism or ethnic pluralism that shapes *electionism*. For example, the role of ethnicity in the formation of political parties is well-debated by Elischer (2008) in the context of Kenya. Even when people of a particular region or tribe vote for the party or the leaders of their own region or tribe, it is still the people who hold power and mandate people of their choice, though ethnic tendencies skew their choices. In some circumstances, a mono-party system is imposed, like in Mobutu's Zaïre, where everybody belonged to the MPR. A new form of democracy emerged in post-independence African nations, where democratic elections were, in some countries, a 'choice' of a single candidate, such as in the case of Mobutu in Zaïre; this was described as a mono-party democratic system.

After looking into what democracy is and what it entails, I now consider what the source of authority was in traditional African society. This understanding will help in assessing whether consensus could be a form of democracy.

■ The republic as locus of democracy practice

The Latin concept *res publica* is literally translated as 'the public thing'. The notion of a republic has undergone distortion and corruption in such a way that even a precise definition of the *res publica* has become difficult. According to Munro (2024):

Republic, form of government in which a state is ruled by representatives of the citizen body. Modern republics are founded on the idea that sovereignty rests with the people, though who is included and excluded from the category of the people has varied across history. Because citizens do not govern the state themselves but through representatives, republics may be distinguished from direct democracy, though modern representative democracies are by and large republics. (n.p.)

In a republic, public administration agencies must provide support to businesses, give incentives, 'and streamlin[e] investment procedures. They also facilitate international trade by promoting exports, reducing trade

barriers, and negotiating trade agreements' (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023, n.p.). Economic backing does not end there; it rather extends to intensifying PPPs with the public and private sectors, bolstering collaboration to maintain the relevance of public administrators as 'essentially the "middleman" in these partnerships. They leverage private sector resources and expertise and ensure public sector accountability and oversight' (Point Loma Nazarene University 2023, n.p.). The linkages between public administration and private sectors are evident because policy-making undertakings by the former impact the latter, and the regulatory role of public administration affects the running of trade, commerce and the functioning of various sectors of national life. Going back to Ancient Greece, the administration of the 'republic' involved ruling and rules, which refer to governance systems.

Aristotle contributed to the understanding of the term 'republic' by using categories to define a government based on 'Who rules? The one, the few or the many?' He contrasted good and perverted forms of governance in the following categories: monarchy versus tyranny and aristocracy versus oligarchy. In these distinctions, his focus was to examine the extent to which leaders govern in a way that prioritises their individual interests or common and public interests.

A new era of contemporary republicanism evolved in the wake of the Renaissance and humanism. The notion of rights and freedom also evolved from Roman legislation, which inspired the judicial apparatus in many states. Other factors that contributed to the establishment of republics were revolutions, such as the French Revolution in 1789 based on the trilogy of *égalité* [equality], *liberté* [liberty] and *fraternité* [fraternity], and the American Revolution of 1775, followed by the Declaration of Independence in 1776, with the efforts of political philosophers such as Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and American statesmen Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Revolutionary movements of that time resulted in the formation of democratic governments.

The 19th century was seen as the era of the establishment of republics outside Europe, in Latin America and Africa, with the South African Republic (1852). Many African tribes regrouped and formed nations after WWII. We observe that many republics born in the context of revolution, such as the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the African liberation movements that turned into political parties, showed little democratic spirit. The debate about democracy has been kept alive.

It is important to note that public administration moulds representative government through the various actions that public administrators take to further policies that public representatives resolve to undertake and pursue through legislation and organisational structures (Bertelli & Schwartz

2022). There is an apparent complementarity between democracy and public administration; Bertelli and Schwartz (2022, p. 6) aver: 'The values of a representative democracy should be reinforced by the practices of its elected representatives and its public administrators'. The performance of a government is tested by its ability to vote in policies that advance the well-being of its citizens and the common welfare. Thus, the contribution of public administration to delivering democracy and social and public goods is inalienable in democracies and any other system of governance. 'Both representatives and public administrators under representative democratic regimes are public servants – they carry out the popularly elected policy agenda' (Bertelli & Schwartz 2022, p. 6). In a similar vein, the values of liberalism in a liberal democracy (excluding those of democracy more generally) represent 'those that ought to guide the administration of public goods and services because liberal values more comprehensively capture the values of the system' (Heath 2020, cited in Bertelli & Schwartz 2022, p. 20). The interaction between elected representatives and the legislation of policies are intrinsically tied up, and the awareness of this fact should inspire more collaboration among public administrators to implement government policies that have been carried out in parliament.

■ Democracy and a principled governance system

Earlier on, I indicated that democracy and *res publica* are interlinked. Both concepts convey the idea of rule by the people. The conceptual democracy-state partnership induces us to appreciate the worth of democracy as a system because it is based on divine principles that should be manifest in its application in *the res publica*.

Far from being just a process of electing representatives or people determining who should rule, democracy deals with critical matters of human life, such as rights, freedom, equality and societal harmony. Unfortunately, African democracies do not bear the marks of morality. Most of the so-called democratic nations are characterised by low human rights records, oppression, corruption, etc. In these cases, one may question the existence of a state, the *res publica*, as the Romans conceived it. Masolo argues that democracy constitutes simultaneously an attitude and a value. As attitude it is concerned with our *modus vivendi* and *executandi* in our interrelations, the way we assess ourselves and how we engage with others. Moreover, as a value, democracy determines a political system whose essence is ethical. Masolo sustains that democracy is the ideal of governance. It implies the recognition of people's dignity and rights, and that governments will accept being judged through their actions. Therefore, democracy should be based on equality and the distribution of wealth and opportunities (Sachikonye 1995).

■ ***Modus operandi* of African democratic system**

In Africa, there is incoherence between how African governments operate and their utterances about democracy. Democracy is not always recommended. This was also the case in feudal Europe, where democratic movements were prohibited. People were apprehensive that democracy was subversive and interfering with those who were believed to be God's vicars and representatives. Ruling aristocratic and absolutist monarchies were thought to derive their rights to rule from the divinity (Sachikonye 1995, p. 10).

We notice the same mentality and belief in African leaders who portrayed themselves as God's vicars. The late president Mobutu of Zaïre considered himself *Mulopwe*, the paramount chief. He enjoyed all the privileges that the traditional chief of the Baluba took delight in. At one stage, Mobutu was considered as the Messiah and his mother, Mama Yemo, was Mary, the mother of Jesus. These aberrations were intended to confirm Mobutu's everlasting despotic rule. People abided by his authority because, in African tradition, authority originates from the ancestors, is sacred and has a divine character. This is how Mobutu manipulated the concept of authority. The same trend recently resurfaced in Zimbabwe, where President Robert Mugabe considered himself to be appointed by his God to rule Zimbabwe and stated that it was only God who was going to remove him from power. What are African leaders making of democracy? Let us consider the criteria set to measure the democratic performance of a government, such as accountability, equality, freedom, human rights, fairness and goals set towards a common good. We may find it impossible to say that there is democracy in Africa. No government may qualify to be described as democratic.

Democracy is not a speculative notion. It is appreciated and evaluated in a given society and culture. The *modus operandi* of contemporary rulers in African states indicates that democracy is fragile. Sachikonye sustains this view: 'Democracy is weak in most African countries because we have not properly and adequately interpreted it as a necessary political value in our social system' (Magesa & Nthamburi 1999, p. 10). African heads of state abhor democracy, and they try to avoid its norms and principles. They fear losing power and control over wealth and other resources. In order to maintain themselves in power, they first plan to change constitutions and shape democracy in a way that will not challenge their regime and thus keep them in power. Several African countries have no credentials to be called democratic, or even republican in the original sense, the *res publica* – the 'public thing'. This can be illustrated by a few examples that follow in the section, perspectives on democracy in Africa.

Magesa presents the African clan as a paradigm of democracy because of its nature and spirituality, consisting of participation-sharing. Magesa (1999) writes:

Participation-sharing is the central principle for human existence, the mark of true humanity. This principle provides a person with the rights to be listened to and respected as a member of the community. (p. 124)

The role of the clan leader was to protect and prolong the life of the community by following the spirit established by the ancestors, which was passed on by tradition. The chief who derives his authority from the ancestors had to refrain from attitudes contrary to the will of the departed ancestors. Leadership was so valued because the whole life and destiny of the community was contingent upon leaders' responsibility *vis-à-vis* their subjects and their ancestors. Magesa (1999) states:

The leader's authority, respect and, indeed, very justification depends on how such a leader executes the responsibility entrusted to him/her. Authority is authority – for life, for reconciliation and unity. Abusive power is, in the end, void and null. (p. 125)

The concept of a person in African thought entailed sociability. The philosophy of Ubuntu and *Ujamaa* placed the person and community at the centre of all political and economic aspirations. A system cannot be conceived to be democratic if it bypasses the person who is at the centre of all political concerns. It is the person's health, social welfare, security, peace, environment, rights, dignity and well-being that conditions democracy. A person is not an island, but a person because other people are around them. In a democracy, both a person in an office of leadership and an ordinary citizen engage with others they ought to treat with respect and dignity. This morality is anchored in African communitarianism.

■ Authority in traditional African society

Authority in some traditional African societies was conferred by inheritance or by consensus. When conferred by inheritance, authority in a village community was passed on to descending generations belonging to the same clan, according to the custom and dispositions left by the ancestors. There was no consensus among the clans in a particular village about who had to ascend to power. The rules of inheritance determined who was to become the king or the chief. With conferral by consensus, many lineages constitutive of the village selected their representatives in the council of the village. This was another mode of determining who ruled. Wiredu (1995) describes this system of politics, alluding to the Ashanti traditional society. In this community, the lineage was the basic political unit made of all people in a town with a common female ancestor. It was quite a considerable body of persons. Its head represented the Town Council.

Some criteria were set for one to qualify as a leader: seniority in age, wisdom, a sense of civic responsibility and logical persuasiveness. An election could only be envisaged as a routine activity in cases where discussions and consultations failed to produce the type of leader with credentials to lead (Wiredu 1995).

In modern Ashanti politics, democracy is indirect in the sense that representatives of the lineage elect the leader of the council. There is no formal word for voting; even the word vote does not exist in the Ashanti language. The process of conferring authority is called *aba to* [imposition]. However, this procedure is consensual, as Wiredu (1995) expresses it:

The point, then, at which the head of a lineage is elected, is the point at which consensus first makes itself felt in the Ashanti political process. This office, when conferred on a person, is for life unless moral, intellectual, or physical degeneration sets in. (p. 475)

The office of the king or the chief is sacred, whether inherited or conferred by consensus. The chief rules with the ancestral mandate and uses their authority to bind the community together, protect its members and guarantee its longevity. The sacredness of this office is sustained by the belief that the chief is a symbol of unity between the living population and the departed ancestors who exert their influence on the living from the hereafter (Wiredu 1995).

■ Polity in traditional and modern African states

In traditional African societies, politics was handled by homogeneous councils made up of clans or lineages from the same village. These councils shared the same culture, language and etiquette. Despite sporadic conflicts among them, cohesion and societal harmony existed. This was sustained by reverence for the departed ancestors who established authority. The two main components of power were the chief, or the king or queen and his or her intelligentsia, the councillors. Councillors represented different constituencies at the village level and in the National Assembly. Matters in the life of each community were discussed, and shared interests prevailed in any decision that needed to be made.

However, the actual political configuration of Africa is substantially different from the past experience of traditional rule, councils and national assemblies. This is because some events changed the conception of authority and the nature of a political entity. The Berlin Conference, during which Africa was divided and shared among representatives of 14 European countries and the USA between 1884 and 1885, was one of these events. Africa, which had been known as a land of tribes, was transformed into a continent of states and monarchies. New African states underwent an

osmotic transformation process that absorbed the traditional polity by setting up urban towns and metropolitan cities that were heterogeneous in terms of ethnic, cultural and lingual origins. This is the new geopolitics that characterises contemporary African countries. The emergence of social movements and revolutionary parties featured in the new political environment of Africa. These parties and social movements aimed to subvert the *status quo*, defeat unjust and oppressive rules, take control of politics, and influence and change policies.

At this juncture, consensus was effaced as a means of conflict resolution or ascendancy to power. The polarisation of political opinions and the diversification of ideologies gave a monstrous shape to African politics, which resorted to the marginalisation of minorities, tribalism, nepotism and other vices that made systems of governance collapse.

The question remains: How can a non-party polity that gave vitality to traditional society survive in this turbulent political environment of Africa? Another difficulty is the impact of republicanism. How can states accommodate the non-party polity that previously existed in Africa?

■ Perspectives on democracy in Africa

The question has been raised whether the non-party polity that was a feature of traditional African politics could be an alternative system of governance. Wiredu has expounded on the mechanisms of consensus and made a plea for considering non-party polity as an alternative to ease political tensions and divisions that have torn many countries apart. In this reflection, I shall first deal with what can be understood by consensual democracy. The foundation of authority in traditional African society and the notion of consensus will open the debate on the relationship between democracy and consensus.

A critical appraisal of non-party polity will be made in the second part of this section. The argument to be put forward will show the discrepancies between the traditional political system and the model of governance in modern Africa. This incongruence and the effects of globalisation will demonstrate the difficulties in applying a non-party polity as an alternative for Africa. While refuting the non-party polity, the third part will present the argument advocating for multi-party democracy in Africa. It is important to acknowledge that democracy is a contested concept, as is consensus. Our efforts will be limited to Wiredu's (1995) reasoning and to broadening the debate to other notions related to democracy, such as the republic and the relevance of good leadership, which is considered an outstanding factor in a successful rule, whether by consensus or by democratic polling means.

The public administration concept seems a novelty in Africa, but its essence and functionality were evident in precolonial Africa in many

empires and kingdoms where rulers administered their entities well and demonstrated their ability to seek the well-being of their subjects. The reality changed after colonisation and the Berlin Conference, which resulted in the dismemberment of the continent into states. This process came along with democracy for certain countries, while powerful kingdoms remained within nations and were attuned to the modernity that affected their organisations as well. Africa experienced the erosion of its traditional values, such as solidarity, Ubuntu and the communitarian conception of society and the common good. The exposure of African leaders to wealth, the Western imagination of power, and markets and money transfer technologies across countries and continents became the source of social ills, dictatorship, kleptocratic tendencies associated with governance, corruption, embezzlement of individual public treasuries and an increasing manoeuvre to remain as kings disguised as democratically elected representatives of the masses. Democracy became a ceremonial and symbolic system because it could not be dismantled for fear of political and economic repercussions from powerful Western countries, who make the so-called 'aid' conditional on respect for human rights and functional democracy. We now experience a pseudo-democracy or *electionism* characterised by obscurantist conduct at the polls, rigged ballots, bribing voters, election trade and nominations of candidates who never win, or unlimited terms of office or a mono-party system such as the Zairian model established by Mobutu and his MPR party. The erosion of African values goes alongside that of democratic values in a pseudo-democracy.

The European Center for Populism Studies (ECPS) (n.d.) describes pseudo-democracy as:

[A] political system which calls itself democratic but offers no real choice for the citizens. This lack of choice can come from limited amount of diverse parties eligible for a vote, cemented power structures which are not really affected by any vote, no availability of a voting option 'none of the above' for voters who favour change to the current political landscape, no direct democratic means, etc. (n.p.)

Volpi (2004) associates pseudo-democracy with the democratisation process and democracy in the Muslim world. He argues that pseudo-democracies in the Muslim world are developed and bolstered by 'the structural opposition between three types of democratic doctrines, social practices and institutional mechanisms inspired by liberalism, republicanism and Islamism' (p. 1061). He further remarks that 'this account emphasises that pseudo-democratic regimes are not simply an expedient fallback position from liberal democratic systems but dynamic political orders based on alternative notions of democracy' (p. 1061). These views challenge a monolithic understanding of democracy; however, there is no one-size-fits-all consensual conventional definition of democracy. The changing nature of contemporary governance systems itself becomes a quandary to

the interpretation and praxis of democracy – creating space for uses and misuses of democracy that are synonymous with context-based interpretation. Wamba-dia-Wamba (1993) concurs:

Democracy is certainly on the agenda in Africa, but it should not be confused with the parliamentary state that comes to us from the outside and which only favours the elite interested in sharing power, as is the case in Zaïre. A self-empowered development of the peoples necessarily involves new forms of organisation capable of promoting the political capacities of the masses for liberation. (p. 95)³⁷

The problematic interpretation of democracy affects its practice in Africa. It has been proved over the years that even military, authoritarian and dictatorial regimes call themselves ‘democratic republics’. In the modern world, international financial institutions lobby for democratic regimes and set democracy as a condition for funding. They often associate democracy with good governance and development. This understanding compels African regimes to disguise their authoritarian rules as democracies to win favour with financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF (Chepkwony 1999, p. 98). In a similar vein, Diamond (1994, p. 24) ascertains that pseudo-democracy falls under the contemporary era’s thinking, with which it resonates distinctively, ‘in which democracy is the only broadly legitimate regime form, and regimes have felt unprecedented pressure (international and domestic) to adopt – or at least to mimic – the democratic form’. Public administration shoulders the burden of determining what indicators will classify the democratic system adopted and ensuring that the overall process reflects standard democratic values; this results in a pure pseudo-democracy. Drawing from Jørgen Elklit and Palle Svensson’s *What makes elections free and fair?* (July 1997) and the essays on electoral administration by Schedler et al. (1999), Diamond suggests the following criteria to determine the fairness of elections: Administered by a neutral authority; conducted by a sufficiently resourceful and competent electoral administration that takes essential precautions against fraud in the polls and ballot counting; impartial treatment of competing candidates by the police, military and courts throughout the process; free and equitable access to the public media by all contenders; non-discriminatory and fair access for the opposition in electoral districts and the rules do not disadvantage the opposition; independent monitoring of polling stations and unhindered access to vote-counting in all locations; protection of the secrecy of the ballot; and:

[W]hen virtually all adults can vote; when the procedures for organizing and counting the vote are transparent and known to all; and when there are clear and impartial procedures for resolving complaints and disputes. (Diamond 1994, p. 29)

37. Translated by the author from the French abstract of the article.

Upholding these sets of democratic values and processes is nightmarish, not only in the DRC but in many other African countries. The challenge is to accommodate the Euro-American-inspired democracy on African soil. In this regard, Chepkwony argues that democracy is more than just a system of governance; it involves the people's worldview, cultural realities and values. He ascertains that:

'[D]emocracy' is a way of life governed by a set of rules, laws and guidelines with which a particular community identifies itself. Since cultural values are different from one society to another, the content and structure of 'democracy' is bound to vary. (Chepkwony 1999, p. 99)

Thus, democracy can appear as a multifaceted theory. This is why it is so often challenged.

■ **Democracy perceived as a foreign system of governance**

Democracy in Africa is contested and conceived as a foreign system of government. This challenge can only be overcome by what Chepkwony (1999) calls 'respect for the transcendence'. He posits that democracy comprises a set of transcendental values that cross all cultures. These values, such as fraternity, collective responsibility, fairness and tolerance, constitute the ethos of democracy and are present in African culture. He situates the foundation of this ethos in the ultimate source of authority, the Supreme Being (Chepkwony 1999, p. 98). African traditional societies were rooted in this ethos, as expressed in the philosophy of Ubuntu (Aydın 2022; Kiyala 2022b, 2022c; Lutz 2009), *Ujamaa* (Kiyala 2022c; Nyerere 1987) and *Bisoïté* (Ngoyi 2006). These fundamental principles define humanity as fraternity, unity and solidarity. In this sense, democracy is not that foreign to Africa because its application is based on universal values that are rooted in African communitarianism. Africans are capable of practising democracy, which is in accord with their ethics. The problem may be the insufficiency of knowledge and education about democracy. This is another challenge.

■ **Lack of civic education and misconstrued notion of democracy**

Africa is a continent with a high rate of illiteracy. Many people are ignorant of their constitutional rights and their civic obligations and live in countries where equality, freedom of expression and human dignity are disregarded. The majority of the populace constituting the electorate is often subject to manipulations and demagogic speeches of politicians. It is very hard to measure the credibility of election results in circumscriptions because of

highly illiterate populations. The necessity to emphasise civic education and virtue in the democratisation process is advocated by Chepkwony (1999, p. 104); he asserts that the 'tenets and values of democratic governance must [...] be disseminated to the populace for democracy to be realised'. Similarly, Aristotle underlined the significance of education, virtue and ethics in the regime of the multitude who administer the *polis* (Cherry 2009). Civic education should include both constitutional rights and education in the democratic process. Africa should begin fighting illiteracy if it is determined to progress towards true democracy.

It is challenging (if not impossible) to think of democracy in some parts of Africa if we assess it using the aspects of Lukas' definition of democracy in the questions: Who makes the decision? Under which principle are decisions made? For whose interest or benefit are these decisions made? (Magesa & Nthamburi 1999). In reality, African democracies are one-man systems for personal gains and interests, but in the name of the people's will. It is perceptible that nepotism, favouritism and self-giving power prevail on the continent.

■ Government of national unity in democracies

A new trend being developed in Africa is called 'government of national unity'. It is a negotiated, consensual sharing of power between warring parties to solve post-electoral disputes. This aberration continues to weaken the democratic process in African countries. Recently, in Kenya and Zimbabwe, violence erupted because the elections were allegedly rigged. A few people, not even mandated by the respective electorates of Kenya or Zimbabwe, embarked on a venture of denying the people their will, which was expressed through the polls. Some argue that this political negotiation appeases protagonists and spares people from civil wars. On the other hand, encouraging the formation of national unity governments makes democracy fragile. It is an excellent legalised injustice, which undermines the constitutional rights of individuals and is a significant violation of the democratic ethos.

The independence of the judiciary is pivotal in young African democracies. Disputes over the outcome of the polls should only be settled by constitutional arrangements if Africa is to consolidate its democratic culture. This is a challenge for African leadership.

■ Challenges to democracy in Africa

In an investigation like this, it is difficult to separate the nature of and challenges to democracy in an ordered manner. The reason is that the nature of a system can denote strengths, as well as weaknesses. Democracy in

Africa conveys weaknesses which can be attributed to the leadership. The trajectory of African democracies has been illustrated under the themes of the practice and nature of democracy in Africa. It was demonstrated that many African states lack the credentials to be called democratic. Many African nations have poor records on human rights. Violations of constitutions and fragmentation of the opposition are common.

The rule of democratic fair play requires that regime change is sustained by tolerance, reconciliation and recognition of opposition rights to challenge the ruling party. A poorly managed transition from one regime to another has, in most cases, caused animosity and civil war. For instance, in Congo Brazzaville, the democratically elected president, Professor Paschal Lissouba, was overthrown in a military conflict by the current president, General Sassou Nguessou. We should also recognise democratic management as a challenge because of triumphalism and undermining those who were the losers in the polls. But it also happens that the party that wins the polls becomes despotic, like the AFDL that overthrew Mobutu in the former Zaïre. Tolerance and freedom of the opposition to operate by accessing public communication media without being harassed, ensuring that the political rights of individuals and political parties are not restricted and that the judiciary is independent are all essential (Magesa & Nthamburi 1999).

Establishing a rule by the majority in an environment where tribal influence highly impacts voters' choices is another conundrum of democracy in African society, where tribal bonds are stronger than individual freedom to choose for whom they should vote. People cast ballots along the lines of regionalist, ethnic and tribal belonging. Tribalism, corruption, fragmentation of opposition, ignorance of constitutional and individual rights by the majority of the electorate, illiteracy and poverty remain the stumbling blocks to democracy in Africa. Lack of adherence to the rules of democracy also causes unease among dictators because of a fear of being prosecuted. Should amnesty politics become a component of democracy to assure despots that they will not face the law for their mismanagement? Would not that be a way of condoning anti-democratic values and encouraging impunity? Each regime should be accountable and face the legal consequences of not complying with democratic principles. Organising sham elections, rigging the polls and changing constitutions are political manoeuvres that weaken democracy. They can only be overcome by another more theological approach. This will be the responsibility of the Church in the democratisation of Africa.

■ Democracy and the crisis of leadership in Africa

The crisis of democracy in Africa is closely linked to a crisis of leadership. A misunderstanding of authority and power has led to the erosion of

democratic principles. It is not the democratic system itself that is flawed in most African countries; rather, the decline of democracy stems from a distortion of the essence of power and a misinterpretation of the concept of *res publica* and the true purpose of democracy. The model of authority based on service put forward by Jesus and the traditional components of power that characterised African societies, namely unity, justice, and reverence of God and the ancestors, should be the basis of a democratic system. African countries are torn apart, not because of democracy but because of greed that has generated misery and poverty for the majority of Africans. The challenge for African leaders is to rediscover and apply the African ethos in political structures and democracy. I maintain that democracy and the meaning of power are rooted in the participation of all in the *res publica*, sharing responsibilities in the management of the community. Such a move will enhance the development that Africa has been dreaming of. This necessitates a new breed of leaders convinced of the transcendental values that sustain democracy. Magesa and Nthamburi (1999) appeal for a new understanding of leadership and indicate that this will bring about new democratic practices in Africa:

The most important obligation of every leader is to do whatever is in his/her power to protect and prolong the life of the clan-community according to the order established by the ancestors and transmitted by tradition [...] Authority is 'authority-for life', for reconciliation and unity. Abuse of power is, in the end, void and null. (pp. 124-125)

Democracy in Africa is obscured by a number of factors that need to be addressed before embarking on the process itself. A sound system of governance should rest on the principle of accountability, with control of government treasuries and officials. Any institution or individual involved in corruption or economic criminal acts must be brought to a court of law. Any success of democracy in Africa is contingent upon accountability and the independence of the judiciary.

■ Democracy in Africa

■ Preliminary remarks

When Mobutu seized power on 24 November 1965 after overthrowing Joseph Kasa-Vubu, he cancelled all scheduled elections and established a presidential form of government. He inaugurated a monolithic regime with one party, the MPR and ruled as an autocrat for over three decades. Convinced that he was a Democrat, he organised a few elections where he presented himself as the lone contender for the presidency, and the whole of Zaïre had to vote green, the symbol of the MPR. Mobutu's regime was well known for its kleptocracy, impunity, arbitrariness, corruption, mismanagement and extra-judiciary executions of opposition leaders and

civil society activists. The MPR institutionalised a repressive machinery to silence the opposition and terrify the population. Many private intelligence services were established and spread all over the country. Some of those security services were the BSRS (Special Investigation and Surveillance Brigade), the DSP, the GC, the SARM (*Service d'action et des Renseignements Militaires* [Military Investigations and Action Unit]) and the SNIP (*Service National d'Intelligence et de Protection* [National Intelligence and Protection Service]). Mobutu ruled the prosperous country of Zaïre unopposed and never shared power.

Mobutu was overthrown by LD Kabila, the leader of the AFDL, in 1997. The regime change revived all the aspirations of the people of Zaïre. Laurent Désiré Kabila promised democracy in line with the name of his political party, but proved himself not ready for reconciliation. No power sharing and the exclusion of other democratic forces marked his regime. He increased the number of security services to silence the opposition.

Laurent Désiré Kabila organised the following special intelligence services: ANR (*Agence Nationale de Renseignement* [National Intelligence Agency]), BEI (Office of Study and Investigation), DGSE (*Direction Générale de Sécurité Extérieure* [General Directorate of External Security]), DSIR (Special Investigation Bureau), CPD (The People's Defence Committees [*Comités de Défense Populaire*]), CPP (People's Power Committee), DEMIAP (*Détention Militaire des Activistes Anti-patrie* [the Military Detention of Anti-Patriotic Activities or Anti-Motherland Activities]), INSD (the Investigation and National Security Directorship [Security Agency of the Kabila regime]), the FAP (The People's Self-Defence Forces) and the PIR (*Police d'Intervention Rapide* [the Rapid Intervention Forces]). All these were security agencies of LD Kabila's regime. These two regimes and parties, the MPR and the AFDL, did not respond to the criteria of democracy, respect for human rights, freedom of expression and opinion, or equality before the law. During the AFDL rule, many Congolese were seized after being accused of being sympathisers of the deceased MPR. Democracy was just a formality.

■ Ceremonial democracy in African countries

We have demonstrated that democracy is a strenuous exercise in Africa. Many nations still cannot dissociate themselves from this system of governance, which gives credit to any government and attracts foreign investors. African leaders are caught in the dilemma of being true democrats to appease international financial institutions and losing their power and prestige or disguising themselves as democrats while being tyrannical rulers. This duplicity has created an alternative way that several governments have adopted, namely ceremonial democracy. Democracy here corresponds to a symbolic gesture without any meaning in its application.

This approach justifies what many political observers call rigged elections, sham and political masquerades during the polls. In a ceremonial democracy, elections can formally be organised, but the ruling party will not relinquish or share power, perhaps for decades and will never lose the polls. They put in place mechanisms to ensure that they still have enough votes to win. This was the case in Zaïre, where Mobutu ruled for more than 30 years; Blaise Compaoré, who took power by military coup in Burkina Faso, has been in power for 21 years; Paul Biya has ruled Cameroon for 26 years; Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has been winning all elections since 1979 and has had 45 years in power in Equatorial Guinea; and President Omar Bongo of Gabon has been ruling for 41 years. The same tradition has been seen in Congo-Brazzaville with President Dennis Sassou Nguessou, in Libya with President Muammar Gaddafi, in Egypt with President Muhammed Hosni Mubarak, in Kenya with President Daniel arap Moi, in Sudan with President Omar al-Bashir, in Mali with President Moussa Traoré, in Nigeria with President Sani Abacha and in Zimbabwe with President Robert Mugabe.

These presidents and their governments have either amended constitutions to remain in power, weakened the opposition or simply utilised arbitrary and repressive rule to cement their regimes. The absolute monarchy of Swaziland is no exception. All these countries are established on antithetical democratic practices and have poor human rights records. Once again, their concept of *res publica* is questionable because they do not rule in the interests of the people, and neither do they have a mandate from the people.

The notion of democracy in Africa has been problematic because of misinterpretations, which have made its implementation difficult. Before attempting any assessment of democracy in Africa, we first need to ask whether states exist in the sense of the *res publica*, 'the public thing'. The form and nature of a governance system depend on whether a government exists to embody this system. I believe many African countries are ruled like private farms or properties. Head of state and their circle of friends initiate policies and amend constitutions as it suits their greed and avidity for power. We face the difficult task of evaluating the nature of democracy in Africa. However, we see two forms of democracy that have thrived over the years: monolithic and pluralistic.

■ Mono-party system

The monolithic model consists of a one-party system that rules the country. For instance, in Benin, Mathieu Kérékou seized power in 1972 and passed a new constitution in 1977 that instituted the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin as the sole political party. Mathieu Kérékou was elected president by

the National Revolutionary Assembly in 1980 and re-elected in 1984. In Togo, the *Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais* (RPT, or Togolese People's Assembly) was the sole political party established by Lieutenant Colonel Étienne Eyadéma (later Gnassingbé Eyadéma), the army chief of staff, as head of government. He abrogated the constitution and dissolved the legislative body. He assumed the offices of president and defence minister. However, he allowed a multi-party system in 1991, and many opposition parties were legalised.

Mwalimu Julius Nyerere advocated for a mono-party governance system, which he did not see as incompatible with democracy. He argued that *multi-partyism* was foreign to Africa. Nyerere and other African leaders supported the idea that Africa needed to be united to enhance economic growth. Thus, many leaders in the independence era were loath to embrace the new trend of political diversity. The dangers of a monolithic system of governance are the concentration of power in one person, favouritism, nepotism, abuse of power, lack of accountability, a clique of people who constantly manipulate the majority and an illusion of stability.

Mobutu in Zaïre was the only candidate in a sole-party regime and won all elections till 1990 when he allowed opposition parties to operate. In Mali, Moussa Traoré initiated the Democratic Union of Malian People in 1976 and ran as the sole candidate of the only legal political party, being duly elected president of Mali. Although Mobutu, Moussa Traoré, Kérékou and Eyadama considered themselves democrats, the nature of the 'democracy' they implemented was unacceptable and did not comply with the principles or tenets of a democratic system. Their rules were marked by human rights violations, repression and tyranny. They ruled by their own will, not by the will of their people.

After facing mounting pressure from the international community, they allowed for political pluralism, which was presented as a form of democracy. However, this innovation did not address the aspirations of their people, as the multi-party system was still supervised and controlled by the ruling party.

■ Multi-party system

In a multi-party system, political parties are conceived as democratic forces that offer alternative policies and projects for society and hold the ruling party accountable for any of its actions. Governments emerging from post-colonial revolutions claimed to be the architects of a new Africa, free from colonial powers. Although some of these movements became dictatorial, they still permitted other parties to operate under their surveillance. Military coups disrupted democratically elected regimes. This happened in Congo/

Zaïre, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Comoros, Burkina Faso and Burundi, among others. All these countries have had elections, but no regime change has been possible employing polls, and this state of affairs has lasted for many decades. This is the real face of what Africans call democracy, which in reality does not exist. The recent military coup in Mauritania confirms the anti-democratic tradition of African countries.

Normally, democracy provides an environment where citizens freely express their opinions and choose the way of engaging to bring change without obstruction. But in Africa, political harassment, intimidation, suppression of freedom, infringing the constitutional rights of citizens and coups d'état have turned into means of taking power and governing. These practices are against democratic principles. A pluralistic political environment is a more appropriate and ideal form of governance in Africa. It allows citizens to express their opinions and participate in decision-making for a better social and economic life. Power left in the hands of a minority engenders greed and marginalisation. This may result in authoritarianism, dictatorship and arbitrariness, which has been the case in several African countries.

Magesa and Nthamburi (1999) advocate a democratic system of governance whereby the people govern with their elected representative instead of a 'personalised rule'; they argue:

If democracy is the rule of the people, by the people, then personalised rule cannot be regarded as 'democratic'. Personalised rule depends almost entirely on an individual's authority and power, assisted by some few powerful and privileged persons. (p. 17)

Tanzania may be the only African country which has survived with a mono-party system. Notwithstanding the success of Tanzania, arguments still support a pluralistic political configuration.

■ Conclusion

This chapter examined various approaches and aspects of democracy, from Ancient Greece to its contemporary practice, using the USA as a case study in democratic governance. Regarding the contested interpretations and definitions of democracy, this chapter argued that Aristotle's works convey a wide array of meanings for democracy, primarily as one of the types of constitutional or political regimes, alongside oligarchy, kingship, tyranny and polity. It is an important exercise to go back to scholars who argue that Aristotle favoured democracy – or polity, which is regarded as the 'second-best' form of regime after democracy and standing between democracy and oligarchy. Aristotle starts with the notions of 'city', 'citizens' and 'public' to underline the implications of these notions for each regime's

form and performance. The essence of citizenship denotes rights, obligations, responsibilities and virtues that are intrinsic parts of the relation between citizen and city that are expressed by the form of a regime that actualises the participation of a citizen in the affairs of the city and the means of getting involved and attributing authority to rule others. In examining participatory democracy, in the view held by Aristotle on democracy, it becomes evident that citizens have equal rights to commit themselves to a democratic process aimed at attaining the common good by free self-determination of a city or government.

This discussion led to the understanding of the republic as a type of government in which the representatives of the citizens rule the state. This interaction has critical implications, which demand accountability and the rule of law to be upheld equally by all citizens. To contextualise the debate and bring it closer to the DRC, I examined how democracy functions in Africa, how the traditional source of authority explains political instabilities in Africa, long-terms of office, aristocracy disguised as participatory democracy, and the establishment of dictatorships and mono-party systems falsely held as democracies. The essence of democracy as 'the rule of the people by the people' has been contorted by African leaders who construct their power and attribute influence along ethnic lines and via clientelism and by unethical operations such as kickbacks, favouritism and bypassing the norms of democracy. The tenets of democracy that were embodied by the *res publica* state remain on paper with little materialisation in power exercises. As a result, Africa continues to face the problem of embracing democracy at the expense of the traditional structure of power.

Arguments for separating economic growth from political participation emerged, with democracy perceived as an illusion if governments failed to address their citizens' social and economic welfare. Africa's struggle to implement democracy was understood within the context of revolutionary movements that replaced colonial rules. Those movements morphed into political parties, which were later overthrown by military coups, and authoritarian regimes were put in place. The tradition of taking power by means of coups is incrementally becoming a common practice; it imperils democracy on the African continent. Under these circumstances, the future of democracy is in danger, but there seems to be no alternative form of political regime.

In order to support the democratic process in Africa, the pervasive problem of corruption must be eradicated. There is a need to encourage democracy through 'evolution', meaning that power should be transferred from central government to local institutions, from the elites to the people. True decentralisation should be applied in all public institutions. African leaders should embrace the values of democracy and accountability.

If a government's actions conform to the constitution and heads of state and their political parties uphold virtuous practices within the constitutional framework while respecting the rule of law, this will help prevent any collapse of the democratic process.

African leaders are reluctant to relinquish power for fear of facing legal consequences for mismanagement of public resources and violations of human rights. A democratic ethos is not incompatible with African ethics. Those who argue that democracy is foreign to Africa may need to reassess their stance and explore the roots of traditional African leadership, where chiefs held moral authority to protect their subjects against external aggression – governing 'for the people'.

PART 3

**Peacebuilding theories
and practice**

Peacebuilding theory and praxis

■ Introduction

The scale of community, regional and international conflicts and their impacts on local and global peace have increased peace research and diversified theories and practices of peace in various contexts. These models of peace praxis stand as a way of responding to disputes before they degenerate into violence or become measured and targeted interventions to minimise the effects of violence and pave the way for lasting peace after the root causes of violence have been addressed. In any case, whether of structural violence or direct violence, the nature of the peace approach – whether it be peacekeeping, peacebuilding or peacemaking – demands individual or collective initiatives and resources to yield realistic and tangible outcomes.

This chapter focuses on the emergence of peacebuilding theory. The concept of peace is prevalent in indigenous and traditional religions, as well as in mainstream world religions, where it often serves as a greeting: an invitation to harmony, a wish for well-being or wellness, an expressed desire to see harmony prevail in interpersonal relations, at the intra-national and regional levels. These are the prerequisites of development and the conditions to be created and supported by public administration and the entire governance system.

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■ Faith-based interpretation of peace

According to Christian teaching, Jesus used the word ‘peace’ to greet his disciples at a time when they were heartbroken and troubled by the traumatic experience of his atrocious death,³⁸ and his unexpected post-resurrection departure from earthly life. This word also means ‘goodbye’. *Shalom* (spelt in Hebrew: שָׁלוֹם, šālōm, or sholom, sholem, sholoim, shulem) conveys a promise and expresses wishful thoughts towards others. It is associated with harmony within individuals or social groups, a desire for mental and physical wellness, a sense of wholeness or fullness, as well as prosperity, individual or communal welfare, and tranquillity. It could also be extended to mean both ‘hello’ and ‘goodbye’. *Shalom* is further explained by Zehr (2002) as the essence of ‘restorative justice’ because harmony and wellness are needed when interpersonal and intercommunity peace has been destroyed by harm or any antisocial action. From the perspective of the ancient Hebrew, *Shalom* entails peacemaking and covers a wide spectrum of meanings in human interrelations that should be aimed for, as Zehr (2002) explains: “‘Shalom’ implies “all-rightness” with each other, with the creator and with the environment’ (p. 19). According to its conceptualisation by Zehr, the depth of peace has a cosmological dimension, and ‘all-rightness’ underscores harmony, wellness, healthy relationships and fair mutual treatment that help society thrive.

The concept of peace is fluid, and its meaning is often framed by context and the teleological interests of its various users. The term is possibly misused or abused when understanding it is narrowed or tailored to a particular social, political or religious context. Interestingly, definitions of peace by religions crosscut its understanding of what it may be. For instance, Galtung (1969, p. 167) notes that ‘[b]y projecting an image of harmony of interests the term “peace” may also help bring about such a harmony’. He sets three parameters for a definition of peace, namely (1) its application to social goals, (2) the complexities of social goals, which may not be easily attainable and (3) he argues that ‘[t]he statement peace is the absence of violence shall be retained as valid’ (p. 167).

■ Positive peace

Galtung further contrasts positive peace with negative peace while associating the meaning of peace with violence, and he suggests linking the terms ‘peace’ and ‘violence’ to each other in a way that “‘peace” can be regarded as “absence of violence”” (Galtung 1969, p. 168). This semantically contrasted understanding of violence is better represented in

38. See ‘Peace be with you’ (Jn 20:19); John 14:2: ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you’.

Galtung's (1969) typology of violence, constructed fundamentally as personal or direct violence – with the absence of personal violence depicted as negative peace – and structural or indirect violence, with positive peace conceived of as the absence of structural violence. Galtung refers to structural violence as social injustice, while positive peace equates to social justice. Expanding our understanding of the nexus of peace and violence creates a more comprehensive reality of how the absence of violence can tremendously contribute to building positive peace; even negative peace can be transformed when the narrative of peace bears the hope of harmony to which I alluded earlier (Galtung 1969, p. 183).

The contribution of Galtung is intense and integrative, enriching various aspects of peace that mostly evolve as either a response to violence or its prevention. Thus, peace has a political, sociological, religious, environmental and anthropological purpose and significance. Its derivatives remain an important field of research for the well-being of humanity, whether they be positive or negative peace, peace ecology, peace treaties, peacemaking or peace education.

In addition, while the concept of positive peace appears:

[A]s a valuable “touchstone” for public administration, [*it is*] one which is not part of the discipline's lexicon because a negative definition of peace (the absence of violent conflict) is dominant. (Rissler & Shields 2019, p. 60)

These authors acknowledge peace as a fundamentally contested concept; however, they argue that ‘a richer conceptualization of positive peace – one that is rooted in a reciprocal relationship ethic – is more useful for public administration in four dimensions’ (Rissler & Shields 2019, p. 60). This mutual ethical relation supposes an understanding of a wide-ranging aspiration for public administration, a reminder to consider root causes, a push towards a pluralist value-based perspective, and a goal that embraces ‘cross-cultural capacity in an increasingly complex and diverse global context’ (Rissler & Shields 2019, p. 60).

Besides the prominent conceptualisation of positive peace developed by Galtung (1969, 2005), peace is also rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition backed by Lederach, and it is linked to positive peace and public administration (Shields & Rissler 2016). Although peace evolves from the realm of religion, the concept pervades the various scholarly disciplines, including peacebuilding and public administration (Galtung 1969; Rissler & Shields 2019; Shields & Rissler 2016). Similarly, Shields and Rissler (2016) also see some interrelations between public administration and peacebuilding, but they trace the roots of this in the understanding of peace within the Judeo-Christian tradition. When exploring the notion of positive peace through the lens of Lederach's peacebuilding theory, Shields and Rissler (2016) apply the notion of positive peace to public administration

and cultivate an agenda to incorporate positive peace into public administration and the body of knowledge.

■ Negative peace

The nexus between positive and negative peace is prominently featured as a key concept in peace studies, the political sciences, sociology and the study of war. Galtung (2005) defines negative peace as the ‘absence of violence’ – more precisely, violence in the context of ‘a personal violence’ (p. 190). According to Galtung’s framework, this type of peace is characteristic of environments, places, circumstances, situations or conditions where there is an apparent lack of direct personal violence but where peace is volatile and weakened by latent violence. The DRC is a case in point, as some scholars describe its state as that of ‘no war, no peace’ (Larmer, Laudati & Clark 2013; Swart 2011). While there is no large-scale war or violence across the country, the reality of life is undoubtedly that of wartime. Some parts of the country are occupied by insurrectionist forces known as the M23, who, with impunity, continue to terrorise local populations and perpetrate human atrocities on innocent civilians. Human Rights Watch (2023b) reports that Rwanda-backed M23 rebels have committed heinous war crimes such as ‘unlawful killings, rape, and other apparent war crimes since late 2022’ (n.p.).

The prevailing insecurity in the eastern DRC has prompted the government to impose martial law in the majority of the region infested by armed groups, violence and fighting – mostly along ethnic lines (HRW 2023b). The same report suggests that ‘[t]he United Nations Security Council should add M23 leaders, as well as Rwandan officials who are assisting this abusive armed group, to the council’s existing sanctions list’ (HRW 2023b, n.p.). These terrorists deploy explosive weapons in attacks in populated areas of the North Kivu province, where they have killed and injured many civilians and destroyed infrastructure, thus exacerbating the already extreme humanitarian crisis (HRW 2023b). These alarming findings about the M23 insurrection stem from interviews (in-person and by phone) conducted by HRW with Congolese victims of abuses, their family members, witnesses, local authorities, some representatives of Congolese and international NGOs, UN officials and foreign diplomats; they were verified by means of satellite imagery, photos and videos of the shelling and destruction of civilian infrastructure gained by HRW (HRW 2023b). It is evident that the DRC’s situation of ‘no war, no peace’ belies the truth of ongoing violence carried out by the M23 that has maintained instability and caused displacement of many people in the eastern provinces of the DRC, particularly North Kivu. The DRC government seems powerless; regional forces from SADC, the EACRF and MUNUSCO have failed to quell

the M23-led war against the FARDC and other cross-border fighters deployed in the DRC.

In light of the evidence presented by HRW, it is increasingly puzzling to characterise the DRC as a 'no war, no peace' state or possibly a country absorbed in negative peace. Several voices are calling for the AU and the UN to intensify efforts aimed at assisting the DRC government to provide better protection for civilians left vulnerable to armed attacks, as advocated by De Montjoye (HRW 2023b). Other calls echo the same sentiment:

The United Nations should impose targeted sanctions on those assisting the M23 and other abusive forces. Foreign governments currently providing military assistance to Rwanda should recognize that they too may be complicit in rebel atrocities. (n.p.)

The incapacity of the DRC to protect its borders and secure its citizens raises critical concerns over the effectiveness of its public administration. As a result, concerted efforts between Kinshasa, the EU and UN experts have levelled accusations against Rwanda for backing the M23 rebels; unfortunately, these accusations are denied by Kigali (*Al Jazeera* 2023a). The DRC has taken further action by formally referring its allegation of Rwanda's involvement in fighting alongside the M23 to the ICC so that the court could investigate the 'alleged systematic pillaging of its natural resources in the country's east by the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF) and the M23 rebel group' (*Al Jazeera* 2023a, n.p.). The same report conveys the Congolese Justice Ministry's concerns about the hardship suffered by the populations in areas of its territory affected by the acts of violence and pillaging of the DRC's resources (*Al Jazeera* 2023a).

Public administration could play a decisive role in both the transformation of negative to positive peace and in the prevention of conflicts and violence caused by the persistent environment and atmosphere dominated by negative peace that explodes into rebellions, armed conflicts and support for civil war or revolution – such as that of the FDL led by LD Kabila, who overthrew Mobutu.

■ From contemporary Africa to the Democratic Republic of the Congo's conflicts

Dion and Sany (2021) refer to the new waves of *coups d'état*, especially in Mali, as part of a worrying anti-democratic shift in 2021 that the U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres described as an 'epidemic of coups' (cited in Dion & Sany 2021). The resurgence of military coups and civil wars aiming to seize power by non-democratic means is disturbing, and the ascendant trend in such military takeovers is equally concerning for the UN. The Mali and Guinea coups and the recent political violence in Sudan

- where two military rivals (the country's military leader, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo) are engaged in fierce fighting that has expanded miles away from the Capital, Khartoum to the eastern city of Port Sudan and the western Darfur region (CNN 2023) - demonstrate how fragile and unstable African countries are. Because of alleged fraud, violence has erupted from disputed poll results in various African nations (Asunka et al. 2019; Kovacs 2018). This has been the case in Kenya, Zanzibar (Laakso 2007; Onyebadi & Oyededeji 2011) and Nigeria (Bamgbose 2012).

Adding to all these challenges, African contemporary conflicts cover a large spectrum of unresolved disputes that range from cross-border identity conflicts or identity-driven conflicts that are prevalent in the Great Lakes Region, the emergence of jihadist and Salafist movements that affect country and regional stability, intractable conflicts maintained by insurgent armed groups and the resurgence of military coups to climate change and numerous other challenges. Climate change-induced conflicts in the Sahel Region (Bronkhorst 2011), and in Africa generally (Scheffran, Link & Schilling 2019) and Islamist insurgencies in countries such as the DRC (Stearns & Verweijen 2013) and Nigeria (Pérouse de Montclos 2012) are very complex because there is little evidence of successful strategies for addressing them and preventing their recurrence. Climate change is a major cause of local, national and global instability, a reality that cannot be ignored in a study aiming to provide a holistic understanding of key players in peacebuilding. This endeavour cannot be realistically achieved without thoroughly investigating the myriad conflicts that wound and weaken the African continent.

Other African conflicts can be described as state-based or non-state-induced conflicts (Palik, Obermeier & Rustad 2022). Relying upon the definition provided by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme's (UCDP) dataset, Palik et al. (2022) suggest:

[A] state-based conflict [is defined] as a conflict in which a contested incompatibility over the government [6] and/or territory [7] involves the use of armed force between two parties that results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year. (p. 10)

Here, battle-related deaths refer to fatalities caused by the warring parties that can be directly linked to combat (p. 10). The significance of this measurement is to provide an understanding and determination of the severity of a conflict when comprehending war as 'a state-based conflict or conflict-dyad that leads to at least 1,000 battle-related deaths in a calendar year' (Palik et al. 2022, p. 1). It is important that scaling war in this way excludes indirect deaths from conflict, for example, death caused by famine or disease; so far, there is no credible data to measure such indirect deaths (Palik et al. 2022). It is reported that in the last few years, 12 countries experienced external involvement in their domestic conflicts; these are

'Burkina Faso (which experienced two internationalized civil conflicts), Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, DR Congo (two), Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali (two), Mozambique, Niger (two), Nigeria (two), and Somalia' (Palik et al. 2022, p. 10). While interstate conflicts are uncommon, it is noteworthy to observe that several countries are implicated in intrastate conflicts (Palik et al. 2022). This has been the case with the DRC in the Great Lakes Region. The two Congo 'World Wars' (1996–1997; 1998–2002) epitomise this range of conflicts, where nine countries fought inside the DRC via their proxy armed groups. On the Congo side, there were Angola, Zimbabwe, Chad, Namibia and Sudan, whereas on the rebellion and aggressors' side, there were Rwanda, Uganda and Angola.

Based on the UCDP's definition, non-state conflicts consist of 'the use of armed force between organized groups, none of which is the government of a state, that results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year' (Palik et al. 2022, p. 20). Both state-based conflicts and non-state conflicts are responsible for fatalities that are increased by 'one-sided violence' that occurs when the government of a state supports one armed force or when a formally organised group targets civilians, causing at least 25 battle-related deaths. This excludes extrajudicial killings that happen in custody (Palik et al. 2022). On top of this, in 2021, 12 African countries experienced external participation in their domestic conflicts; these comprise: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia (Palik et al. 2022).

Various studies show different trends and variations in the scale and severity of battle-related deaths when comparing countries. The salient point of this representation is the rise in battle-related deaths between 2020 and 2021 in Africa, especially in Burkina Faso, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia. The Central African Republic also features as a country that saw the resurgence of violent conflicts resulting in battle-related deaths. Palik et al. (2022) explain these contrasts in the following terms:

- Battle-related deaths resulting from two conflicts in Ethiopia surged significantly between 2020 and 2021, one conflict opposing the Ethiopian government to the Oromo Liberation Front (OLA), and the other between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), where deaths increased from 1,592 to 8,637 (Palik et al. 2022, p. 13).
- In Burkina Faso, battle-related deaths increased as a result of its two state-based conflicts. The first took place between the government of Burkina Faso and the Islamic State (IS), increasing battle-related deaths from 160 to 170; the second opposed the government to the Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin' (JNIM), causing deaths to surge from 352 to 836 (Palik et al. 2022).

The severity of the battle-related death toll reached genocidal and holocaust proportions in Rwanda (Nyseth Brehm, Uggen & Gasanabo 2014, n.p.; Smeulders & Hoex 2010), and some scholars likewise speak of the holocaust or genocide in the DRC (Cooper 2013; Okosun & Kibiswa 2013).

The expansion of the IS sustains the statement I made about the changing nature of contemporary conflicts. Numerous state-based conflicts in Africa appear to be tied to the upsurge in or buildout of IS (Palik et al. 2022). Palik et al. relate that in 2021, nine countries in Africa faced IS-related conflicts inside their territories; those countries were Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia, and IS was enlarged to reach Tanzania in 2020, which marks the first year that a state-based conflict in Tanzania surfaced in the dataset (Palik et al. 2022):

[*Nonetheless,*] the conflict did not meet the 25 battle-related deaths threshold in 2021. Low-intensity conflicts resulted in more battle-related deaths in 2021 than in any other year in Africa since the beginning of the dataset in 1989. (p. 9)

Studies show that battle-related deaths in Africa increased between 2020 and 2021, principally as a result of the conflict between the government of Ethiopia and the TPLF, which caused 8,637 battle-related deaths; the uptrend in numbers was additionally because of battle-related deaths resulting from IS's expansion into Tanzania (Palik et al. 2022). The likelihood of battle-related deaths is evident following the confrontation of two rival military forces, such as that between the para-troop insurgents and the regular army that broke out in April 2023 in Sudan. On 15 April 2023, clashes broke out across Sudan, mainly in the capital city of Khartoum and in the Darfur region, between the country's military (armed forces) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). By 20 April, approximately 330 people had been killed and nearly 3,200 injured. The conflict continues, and reports from Sudan indicate little optimism for a ceasefire. Gunfire and explosions continued to be heard, and fighter jets crossed the sky over Sudan's capital, Khartoum, on Tuesday, 18 April, as gunmen allegedly stormed the homes of people working for the UN and other international organisations while reports of an agreed ceasefire were aired in the country (Yeung et al. 2023).

■ Peacebuilding conceptual framework

Scientists have argued convincingly about the necessarily tight connection between the theory, methods and analytic strategy used to investigate phenomena:

[T]he meaning of theory in any scientific field is to provide a framework within which to explain connections among the phenomena under study and to provide insights leading to the discovery of new connections. (Tudge et al. 2009, p. 198)

A theory represents reality and serves multiple purposes, including providing researchers with a familiar scientific language and explaining empirical studies. This allows findings from different studies to be evaluated using a common framework (Tudge et al. 2009). While an empirical study can be 'atheoretical', such as grounded theory design or inductive research (Creswell et al. 2007; Tudge et al. 2009), the current inquiry uses a pluralist strategy and a multimethodology approach. Multimethodology integrates operational definitions and conceptual paradigms in studies that aim to address 'wicked issues' (Mingers 1997, 2001). Thus, peacebuilding and public administration are employed as integrated theories to guide this study that explores complex issues associated with structural violence, protracted conflicts, insecurity induced by displacements of people in the aftermath of violent armed conflicts and protracted ethnicity-and-identity conflicts, which are the major peace predicaments in the volatile eastern regions of the DRC.

Public administration and peacebuilding theories will guide this chapter and orient the line of arguments to be set forth while tapping into the notion of justice conceived as a system that leads society. This is for the simple reason that public administration has links with justice (Bergling et al. 2008; Rosenbloom, O'leary & Chanin 2017; Wright 2011). The relationship between public administration and the administration of justice as a catalyst for peacebuilding is discussed, and I begin with analysing and discussing peacebuilding and its derived concepts.

Research suggests that peacebuilding studies can be informed and advised by the vast established subject area of public administration and policy, which offers a wealth of knowledge and historical indications about the ways contemporary peacebuilding models and practices are being implemented in various fields of knowledge and policy, particularly in the context of bureaucratic or technocratic organisational settings – contexts that in many regards reflect various peacebuilding interventions (Williams & Mengistu 2015). Other scholars relate public administration to positive peace, which they describe as a beneficial 'touchstone' for public administration – though peace, as such, is not incorporated into the definition of public administration as a result of the dominant conceptualisation of peace as the absence of violent conflict (Rissler & Shields 2019).

The concept of 'peacebuilding', 'peace-building' or 'building peace' is complex and multidimensional, and even finding a consensual definition is problematic. Developed in the post-Cold War context and evolving from the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the notion of building peace denotes a structural framework that comprises several branches, such as justice, violence prevention, rebuilding relationships, healing, laying the foundation for future harmonious relationships, and avoidance of renewed conflicts

and violence. Peacebuilding can be understood as a discipline and as a theoretical framework concerned with the research and development of conceptual models and pragmatic approaches and strategies to address multiple types of violence that erupt because of frozen, protracted and unresolved conflict. Peacebuilding theory is pluralist because it aims to transform conflicts and create structures or systems within which sustainable peace can be achieved.

Armed conflicts disrupt peace, and these have been exacerbated in the post-Cold War era and have mostly affected poorer countries (Lederach 1997b) till recently, when Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022, causing war to resurge in Europe. Intra-state armed conflicts in Sudan and the Russo-Ukraine War are two demonstrations of how the international community has become powerless to deal with inter-state and intra-state wars. The reconfiguration of peace architecture and players and the consideration of a bottom-up approach are worth examining and promoting. The reason for rethinking strategies for peace is the history of contemporary conflicts that are of an internal nature, with groups in conflict sharing close living environments geographically; they have experienced direct trauma which they relate to their perceived enemies, and this may be a history marked by grievances and enmity that has built over generations (Lederach 1997a). In this context, people with long-standing rivalries live as neighbours while entangled in persistent cycles of hostilities that affect their interactions.

Each theory of peacebuilding reflects the nature of conflicts; thus, scholarship has developed various subsets of peacebuilding theory. According to the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies (2023, n.p.), '[p]eacebuilding is the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries'. This process aims at resolving injustice by nonviolent means and transforming structural conditions that create deadly conflict; it can incorporate the following: conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution and transformation, and post-conflict reconciliation (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2023). Besides being a theory, peacebuilding can also take the form of a strategy when it functions over a long period and at all levels of society to form and keep relationships among people at local and global levels (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2023). Furthermore, strategic peacebuilding brings people and groups together 'on the ground' in religious affiliations, grassroots organisations and governmental and international institutions (the UN, corporations, banking institutions, etc.) (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2023). Moreover, its goals are not limited to settling disputes only but also involve building 'societies, institutions, policies, and relationships that are better able to sustain peace and justice' (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2023, n.p.). Lastly, strategic peacebuilders

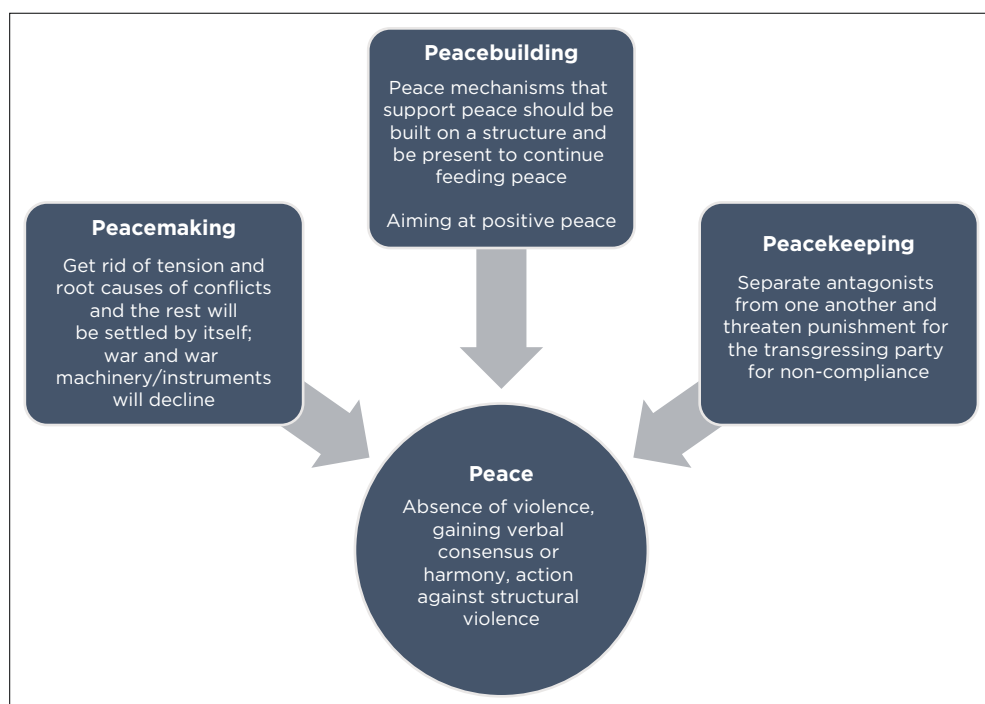
tackle human rights, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability issues and address violence as well (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2023).

Dealing with relations is a key component of strategic peacebuilding. Failure to do so after violent conflicts may jeopardise peace and lead to the recurrence of violence years or many decades later; peacemaking circles may be utilised to avoid renewed conflicts and violence (Minja 2005). While peacebuilding proponents emphasise the transformational teleological dimension of peacebuilding via trauma healing and conflict transformation – utilising negotiation, mediation and dialogue approaches, employing restorative justice and transitional justice models of justice and accountability, and fostering good governance and policymaking (Schirch 2006) – there is no discussion in policy spheres and international relations scholarship on the necessity of addressing issues of the relationship between systems to achieve this, and the expected and desired outcomes inasmuch as justice and reconciliation are concerned (Lambourne 2004). Integrating reconciliation and justice is extensively discussed as an effective path to peacebuilding (Lambourne 2004; Schirch 2006).

Galtung is recognised and remembered for his substantive contribution to the development of theories of violence and peace. Firstly, he constructed peace as a dynamic that rests on three approaches: peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding (Galtung 1976); secondly, he conceptualised the notion of positive peace and negative peace, along with the study of direct violence and structural violence. Figure 8.1 displays the focal point of the three processes: the search for peace and its consolidation.

■ Peacekeeping

The peacekeeping process is subdivided into three types, namely intra-national (states interventions domestically), intra-regional (the monopoly of power by the centre and prevention of attacks launched by neighbouring countries against interventions of the central decision-making regional powers) and inter-national (informed by the UN Charter and decisions made by the UN Security Council) (Galtung 1976). At the *intra-national* level, peacekeepers are constituted by public powers and each state's security apparatus, such as the Ministry of Police, the Interior Ministry, the Defence Ministry and CSOs (local NGOs and international NGOs, faith-based organisations, local tribal and traditional leaders, etc.). At the *intra-regional* level, peacekeeping operations are decided by political and military regional organisations, such as SADC and the EACRF, sent to the DRC to quell the M23 rebellion and bring peace to the country's war-torn east. Intra-regional peacekeeping initiatives are met with scepticism (Dorn 1998) while simultaneously being considered as experiments in



Source: Author's design based on Galtung's theory (1976).

FIGURE 8.1: Galtung's (1976) three approaches to peace.

sub-Saharan Africa (Coleman 2011) or discussed when debating whether regional peacekeeping operations undermine or complement those of the UN (Bures 2006; Churrua 2015).

There is an additional aspect to peacekeeping, concerned with vertical conflicts that Galtung (1976, p. 288) describes as 'conflicts arising from structural violence'. In this situation, peacemaking features the trajectory of peacebuilding, and contentious issues tied to structural violence must be addressed in order to consolidate peace. Individual government officials become peacemakers when they manage to respond to or eradicate structural violence.

Regional leaders, political as well as military, are the main players in such a search for peace and peacemaking. At the macro-level, the UN Security Council is a major player, despite the controversies surrounding its missions around the world, both successes and failures (Bayo 2012; Boot 2000) – for example, the massacre in the DRC allegedly perpetrated by UN peacekeepers (Hannum 2006). In some instances, the EUFOR has intervened militarily in Africa, such as in the DRC, to settle post-election violence. This intervention occurred in 2006 to keep Jean-Pierre Bemba, who allegedly won the polls, away from Joseph Kabila, the incumbent accused of rigging the election. The EUFOR was set at the request of the UN to invigorate its operation in

the Congo; thus, EUFOR was inaugurated on 12 June 2006 and became fully operational by 30 July 2006 (Chevallier 2006). European Military Forces managed to intervene to separate the belligerents from the two rival parties and militias. There was no supplementary initiative to build sustainable peace, except the excessive use of military force to interpose between disputing parties. European Military Forces' interventions in the DRC, Central African Republic (Nováky 2016) and Chad (Tull 2008) expand peacekeeping to the trans-continental level. It is important to acknowledge that the use of force by the EU and EUFOR has shown limited effects in building sustainable peace. It sanctions the narrow purview of peacekeeping as a peace approach.

■ Peacemaking

Peacemaking is directed towards eliminating underlying conflicts and tensions in ways that cause war and the machinery of war to wither (Galtung 1976). Galtung (1976) links peacemaking to conflict resolution to overcome the world's legacy of many 'conflicts frozen into protraction', describing conflict resolution as:

[A] way for mankind to progress, to transcend incompatibilities or contradictions that stifle progress and channel attention and all kinds of resources away from more important pursuits, away from the realization of fundamental world goals. (p. 290)

Individual governments are the primary peacemakers in this context.

Noll (2006, p. 18) defines peacemaking as 'a form of mediation that seeks a reconciliation between parties. Peacemaking creates relational and structural justice that allows for social and personal well-being'. Peacemaking actors' tasks vary according to their individual and collective understanding of the drivers of conflicts and their root causes, but they aim to extirpate them before the conflicts degenerate into full-blown violence. The human needs theory and its relation to conflict and peace show that all humans have some needs that must be satisfied, and when these needs are not met, conflicts become a potential result of that failure (Danesh 2011). The pursuit of peace through addressing the primary causes of conflict involves a new category of peacebuilding actors, specifically those responsible for meeting needs as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy (Maslow & Lewis 1987) and John Burton's categories of universal needs (Burton 1990). In West Africa, youth insurgencies and radicalisation are driven by marginalisation, the lack of livelihoods and the lack of distributive justice. The task of peacemakers in this situation is to provide services and inclusiveness and to enhance social justice. Lederach's theory of conflict transformation and Galtung's notions of positive peace, negative peace, and direct and structural violence are essential in expounding the interlinkages between peacebuilding, needs-driven conflict and peace.

■ Peacebuilding

The peacebuilding concept is subject to multiple interpretations, depending on the contexts and the nature of the interventions projected as a means of consolidating peace. However, all its definitions emphasise post-conflict stability and attending to the needs that have arisen because of violent conflict. For Lambourne (2004, p. 3), post-conflict peacebuilding consists of ‘strategies designed to promote a secure and stable lasting peace in which the basic human needs of the population are met, and violent conflicts do not recur’. This definition links peacebuilding to stability, satisfying needs and preventing further violent conflicts. In the view of Paffenholz and Spurk (2006), peacebuilding entails an overarching concept that describes:

[A] long-term process covering all activities with the overall objective to prevent violent outbreaks of conflict or to sustainably transform armed conflicts into constructive peaceful ways of managing conflict. (p. 15)

The teleological dimension of peacebuilding is a halt to the recurrence of violence resulting from unresolved conflicts. This interpretation is common in post-conflict peace discourse and in the pursuit of alternative and complementary approaches to peacebuilding (Burton 1990; Danesh 2011; Lambourne 2004).

Peacebuilding is often studied in conjunction with various dimensions of violence, whether direct and structural (Galtung 1969), chronic (Adams 2012) or cultural (Galtung 1990); finally, peacebuilding, alongside peacekeeping and peacemaking, constitutes one of the main strategies designed to respond to violence and to build peace (Galtung 1976). A comprehensive approach to peace should acknowledge the multiplicity of incidences of conflict and the root causes of conflicts before adopting and implementing an approach that is likely to yield results – which in most cases is positive peace, in contrast to negative peace (employing Galtung’s categories). A holistic peace infrastructure should adopt multiple strategies to address the root causes of direct and structural violence and socio-political violence and similarly address the drivers of environmental conflicts. However, this chapter focuses on the strife that fuels socio-political violence and discusses various implications of peacebuilding models and the variety of actors that have leverage in forging the path to sustainable peace, particularly post-armed conflict or in the aftermath of large-scale violence.

■ Liberal peacebuilding theory

Contemporary peacebuilding is depicted as ‘liberal peacebuilding’ because it covers a broad scope of peacebuilding activities; the accent is put ‘on

building institutions based upon market economics and democracy' (Newman 2009, pp. 10–11). Liberal peacebuilding theory, whose nature and impact entail promoting democracy, energising market-based economic reforms and an array of other institutions connected to 'modern' states, is viewed as the driving force in peacebuilding (Newman 2009, p. 3). Newman's liberal peacebuilding discussion explores the implications of and evidence for efforts to build peace in a broader range of experiences, and although its focus remains cases of major UN peacebuilding, it reaches out beyond the narrow centre of attention on democracy and market economics by probing a larger area of peacebuilding engagement, such as rebuilding state institutions. It applies 'critical' analysis to the peacebuilding inquiry and looks into the implications of peacebuilding activities for wide-ranging arguments concerning 'power, legitimacy and international order' (Newman 2009, p. 5). In the final analysis, Newman's consideration of liberal peacebuilding 'takes the debate beyond the realms of liberal Western academia by involving scholars and analysts with direct experience in conflict-prone and post-conflict societies' (p. 5). It is interesting to note also how this discourse merges liberal peacebuilding with the concept of 'democratic peace', which Newman describes as 'the international variant of liberal peacebuilding' (p. 11). This theory coalesced into local peacebuilding theory via the following argument put forward by Newman (2009, p. 39): 'The liberal peace proposition considers the domestic realm of the democratic peace thesis: that liberal democracy and free market economics make countries more peaceful domestically'.

■ Building peace amid natural resources-driven conflicts

Ongoing research into various actors in peacebuilding cannot ignore environmental spheres and natural resources factors, where the potential for conflicts is high. The conventional players for peace, such as states or governments, are duty-bound to develop strategies to meet environmental peacebuilding demands to mitigate climate-change-induced conflicts and violence. Similarly, both international and domestic actors are also committed to redressing the most critical situations in post-conflict contexts where socio-political violence can erupt. These actors work in the most demanding and complex sphere of policymaking because environmental and natural resource governance can potentially clear the way for peacebuilding in those contexts (Krampe, Hegazi & VanDeveer 2021). Thus, environmental settings should not be excluded in debates that aim to search for security, peace and stability because several armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa are related to controlling and managing natural resources, minerals and oil reservoirs. The DRC has become the epicentre of armed conflict in the Great Lakes Region because of its large

mineral resource reserves. Gold and coltan have been recognised as the drivers of instability in the DRC, to the extent that these natural riches have been called a 'curse' (HRW 2005; Oboth 2011) because of the intensity of violence and the propensity of armed groups to operate with impunity and create a security vacuum to facilitate the plundering of mineral resources.

Similarly, endemic conflict, youth insurgencies (Anugwom 2011; Ikelegbe 2005) and violence are largely driven by what is perceived as structural injustice in the management of oil in the Delta Region of Nigeria (Obi 2009, 2010; Onuoha 2016). Other engines of unrest in the region are the economic marginalisation and disenchantment of the youth, who feel disadvantaged and do not get a fair share of the oil produced from oil extraction and commercialisation (Anugwom 2011). In militarising conflicts in the Delta Region, the youth are emboldened by their belief in the *Egbesu* deity, who confers invincibility (Anugwom 2011). Although natural resources-induced conflicts in the DRC and Nigeria do not erupt from climate change, it is fair to acknowledge the impacts of environmental conflicts on society so that they can be included in the national and regional peace and security agenda.

Several studies have examined the prospects for peace by exploring the wider benefits of natural resource management. They have argued that they have the potential for minimising political fragility in affected countries and paving the way for positive peace (Krampe et al. 2021). These scholars underline three mechanisms that are susceptible to enhancing natural resource governance in the aftermath of conflict in a way that fosters positive peace. These points include: The idea that bias and prejudice can be minimised through the facilitation of intergroup cooperation; the belief that civil society is strengthened when transnational norms are diffused and various aspects of good governance, particularly in environmental management and human empowerment, are established; and finally, the notion that when states deliver public services and address the instrumental needs of communities, they bolster trust in the state (Krampe et al. 2021). From this analysis, one realises the agency of the state, transnational actors and civil society in building stability and positive peace, and the link between environmental and conventional peacebuilding appears obvious. Krampe et al. (2021) see this interrelation as an opportunity to support a comprehensive peace agenda that aims to achieve positive peace.

Kyrou (2007, p. 81) maintains: 'Peace ecology values the preservation and harmonious interaction of societies with nature as peace; at the same time, it values a society striving to maintain positive peace as an ecological asset'. This argument is supported by Krampe et al. (2021). To further link peace ecology to a holistic, sustainable peace, Kyrou (2007) ascertains that violence in its multiple forms, including what is experienced in negative

peace (a lack of physical violence), can trigger direct physical violence in the context of unstable systems. It is the responsibility of public administration to ensure that multifaceted violence is eradicated in society. In addition, Kyrou argues from the perspective of Galtung (1996) that a system that transforms conflict productively by regularly taking the edge off 'all forms of violence (cultural and structural) [*is*] more stable, characterized as "positive peace". [...] It is this multi-dimensional and sustainable peace that Peace Ecology promotes' (Kyrou 2007, p. 81). This argument begs the question: Who are the players in the broader vision of a peaceful society? Chapter 9 responds to this question.

■ Conclusion

Peacebuilding encompasses a wide range of theories, practices, and disciplines. It emerges that the definition of peacebuilding varies among the various perspectives held by peace actors in the field, scientists and researchers who have dedicated their work to peace. Among the actors we identified, faith-based actors associate their comprehension with their religious beliefs that infuse peacebuilding conceptualisation and praxis. Religious actors have been vocal and active in seeking to prevent violence and being directly involved in peace processes to minimise the devastating impact of conflicts, particularly in the DRC. Their approaches to peace are closely linked to their value systems and a transcendental understanding of the relationship between human reality and the spiritual dimension of life. This perspective posits that human actions are guided by a transcendental power, described as the Supreme Being, which governs and directs humanity towards prosperity and harmonious communal, social and interpersonal relationships. From this perspective, peace is a response to the transcendental reality that humans who believe assent to. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, God is the force that prompts peace and good living with others, forgiveness, reconciliation, communal and universal harmony.

Besides faith-based peace activism, we identified CSOs as another major player in peace. Exploring in depth the concepts of negative peace and positive peace from Galtung's descriptions and theorisation of peace and violence allows us to comprehend holistically how direct violence and structural violence affect stable and durable peace. Learning and understanding the root causes of violence ensuing from conflicts is consequential to peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Knowledge about the drivers of all types of violence that confront the DRC would lead to initiating strategic responses susceptible to advancing positive peace, which is the absence of structural violence stemming from social injustices. The prevailing condition of the DRC used to be described as 'no war, no peace', which conveys the meaning of negative peace, the

absence of direct violence that is halted in some way, while the real experience of people in such environment is that of struggle: They are confronted with multifaceted challenges not limited to economic and social injustices. It is evident that the present situation of the DRC is that of prevailing insecurity, with no peace, war in the Kivu provinces, instability, precarious daily life, insecurity, fear, mourning and internal unrest.

In the DRC's present context, three approaches to peace – peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping – as well as indigenous approaches – have been tried but have yet to be shown to have limited success as conflicts and violence persist. The way to comprehensively overcome the ills that affect the DRC supposes strengthening public administration, making it more effective and ridding the country of kleptocrats, kickbacks, bribery and corrupt practices that are antithetical to good governance. The prevailing environment of negative peace and structural violence erodes durable peace prospects and fragilises peace while impeding sustainable development. The nexus between peacebuilding and public administration should always be the focus of the DRC government to ensure the country remains decisively on the path to sustainable development.

Key players in peacebuilding

■ Introduction

The complex and changing nature of contemporary conflicts and warfare has expanded the discipline of peace studies by developing a new theoretical peacebuilding framework. This chapter explores the role of key players in peacebuilding from the perspective of the PBEST that emerged from this work – evolving from the nexus of peacebuilding, neuroscience, peace studies and environmental studies to leverage a global agency towards peace and security. The PBEST was developed to address the challenges posed by predominant peacebuilding theories that primarily follow a ‘top-down trajectory’, while the PBEST reflects a bottom-up approach. This theory maintains that the circumstances, environmental conditions and interactions during early childhood development (ECD) could enhance peacemaking inclinations and determine future relationships, interrelations and behaviours. The argument put forward by the PBEST consists, firstly, in acknowledging that ECD’s dyadic and triadic interactions have leverage on violent or peaceful behaviours in the future, depending on the level of the neuropeptide oxytocin (OT), to enhance or diminish peacekeeping and peacebuilding attitudes and conduct. Secondly, an analysis of the neuropsychology of conflicts and the interplay between neuroscience and peacebuilding suggests a rethinking and shifting of the top-down trajectory of peacebuilding by advocating a bottom-up model that uses the ecology of peace as the cornerstone of peacebuilding

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architecture and infrastructure, where the primary major players are parents, nurses, caregivers and education during the ECD process.

Enormous challenges confront the globe. The world is faced with a multiplicity of conflicts that affect many countries. According to Ero and Atwood (2023), ten are the most prominent, namely Ukraine, Armenia and Azerbaijan, Iran, Yemen, Ethiopia, the DRC and the Great Lakes, the Sahel, Haiti, Pakistan and Taiwan. This list is far from exhaustive because the crises in the Korean peninsula, the Middle East (the Israeli–Palestinian conflicts and the Syrian insurgencies), Sudan, Mali and Russia are not included. These conflicts heavily affect human lives, livelihoods and infrastructure. Often, these conflicts end without addressing the root causes needed to build durable peace. For instance, one of the deadliest wars of 2022 erupted in and around Ethiopia's Tigray region. Although the fighting has stopped, the calm remains fragile because the underlying issues of the conflict have not been resolved, namely 'whether Tigray's forces will disarm and whether Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, whose army has been fighting alongside Ethiopian troops, will withdraw his troops to the internationally recognised border' (Ero & Atwood 2023).

The DRC and the Great Lakes Region are grappling with the rebellion of the March 23 (M23) insurgents and the instability caused by these fighters, who are backed by the neighbouring country of Rwanda, as suggested by a UN report. These rebels continue to hold a few areas in the east of the DRC (Ero & Atwood 2023). The M23 insurgency remains a crisis that has been dealt with militarily since 2013. Besides the Jihadist insurgents, the Sahel Region has been a theatre of political instability exacerbated by military coups over the past year. There have been two coups in this timeframe, both triggered by militant massacres of troops. Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba seized power in Burkina Faso in January 2022 and was then shortly followed in September by Captain Ibrahim Traoré, who continues to struggle to bring unity among divided security forces (Ero & Atwood 2023). Mali suffered coups in 2020 and 2021, adding to its legacy of previous coups in 1968, 1991 and 2012. Another coup was staged in Guinea on 05 September 2021 by special forces commander Mamady Doumbouy, deposing President Alpha Condé, who was captured by the country's armed forces after gunfire in the capital, Conakry. This military takeover adds to the legacy of successive autocratic political rules in Guinea, which has been accused of decades of corrupt rule. A previous military coup was instigated in 2008, shortly after the death of Lansana Conté.

Against the backdrop of evidence that substantiates the scope and scale of conflicts and the severity of battle-related violence and death, peacebuilding is no longer an aspiration but rather an imperative that must be pursued. Thus, the objectives of this chapter are threefold: (1) to

identify key players in peacebuilding, (2) to appraise the level of their successes and failures, and finally, (3) to argue for peacebuilding that should evolve as a complex system of overlapping layers that places the individual and the ecology of peace at the centre of the peacebuilding architecture, followed by local networks, national networks, regional networks and international networks. The ecology of peace is defined as a conceptual framework that provides a model for studying and understanding the various relations between ECD and peacebuilding (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). While ‘the ecology of peace’ and ‘peace ecology’ are used interchangeably, the ecology of peace in this chapter refers to a framework that conceives early childhood as the focus of efforts to address violence and build a peaceful society, based on hypotheses that are anchored in neurology, affiliative bonding (AB), parent education, early learning and grassroots movements (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 2). These concepts will be explained in this chapter, which will present various assumptions for using compounded theoretical frameworks in the peacebuilding enterprise.

The chapter consists of eight major parts, namely the introduction that outlines the problem, sets the objective of developing this text and surveys African contemporary conflicts. The section that follows provides useful insights into active and prominent peacebuilding actors within specific systems (peace infrastructure, strategic peacebuilding and CSOs – including faith-based organisations and indigenous leadership). An exploration of the ecology of peace theory follows. Then, a discussion on the PBEST is embarked upon and is followed by an exploration of the relations between predominant PBEST peacebuilding theories and peacebuilding actors before arguing for rethinking and shifting the focus of key players in peacebuilding. Drawing concluding remarks ends this critical reflection.

■ Actors in conflict transformation and peacebuilding

According to Galtung (1976), mechanisms that sustain peace should be embedded within the structure to continually nourish and maintain it. He notes that ‘structures must be found that remove causes of wars and offer alternatives to war in situations where wars might occur’ (p. 298). To sum up, he argues:

[P]eace has a structure, and it is an infrastructure more than a suprastructure (although the two are dialectically related). It is also a multilevel structure. To be of any value in the fight against violence it must be built within nations as well as between nations. (Galtung 1976, p. 303)

Peace has two sides: '[A]bsence of personal violence, and absence of structural violence' (Galtung 1969, p. 183). The starting point for peace is conflict resolution and peacemaking in a way that eradicates social injustices. Key players mandated to create an environment for durable peace by ridding society of injustice, inequalities, direct violence and structural violence are individual states and the institutions put in place to achieve these goals. It is evident that peacebuilders represent the plethora of individuals and collectives who act voluntarily or with a mandate to ensure that social and economic conditions are conducive to peace.

Lederach (1997a, p. 39) identifies three types of actors who engage at three levels of peacebuilding, categorising them into three distinct approaches:

- Level 1 features *top leaders* with high visibility in society from various sectors of life, notably the military, political establishment and religious leaders. Approaches that are consistent with this level include a high degree of negotiations that emphasise cease-fire and that is achievable with the involvement of a mediator.
- Level 2 consists of *middle-range leadership* represented by highly respected ethnic and religious leaders, academics, a range of intellectuals and leading figures from humanitarian NGOs. Various activities are involved here, namely training via seminars and workshops in peacebuilding, conflict resolution and conflict transformation, as well as instituting peace commissions and putting peace working groups in place.
- Level 3 comprises *grassroots leadership*, mainly leaders of local communities, persons in charge of indigenous NGOs, community developers, local health care coordinators and refugee care officials. At this stage, the major tasks of peacebuilding encompass the establishment of local peace commissions, training of grassroots in peacebuilding, taking various actions aimed at reducing and preventing prejudice, and developing psychosocial activities that address post-war traumatising life and individual traumatic experiences.

The categorisation of leadership level, coupled with the differentiations of the corresponding models of engagement, serves as an additional illustration of the pathways to peacebuilding: These involve a multiplicity of players according to the various categories conveyed in the illustration. From the perspective of Lederach (1997a), building peace in divided societies is anchored on the notion of reconciliation because of the number of armed conflicts and the increasing number of minor armed disputes. Many societies are fragile because of conflicts and violence, which raise ongoing concerns for sustainable peace at both intra-national and inter-national levels. Several scholars have identified justice and reconciliation as the primary vectors of post-conflict peacebuilding (Lambourne 2004).

Lederach's works show how three sets of actors can achieve peace and what kinds of approaches they can use to foster peace and reconciliation. Lederach's peacebuilding pyramid (1997a, p. 39) displays the types of actors and their respective roles in peacebuilding. While the middle-range substantially influences the top-level actors, the grassroots leadership represents a force that engages directly with the masses to build peace and prevent violence. Peacebuilding actors are all-inclusive; the three levels require cooperation among the different levels and the participation of both civilian and military actors. Each post-conflict situation shows specific needs, and leaders apply corresponding and adequate strategies to respond to such demands with a view to attaining durable peace.

Civilian peacemaking has increasingly permeated peacebuilding discourse and practice (Schirch 2006), and several strategies have been developed to showcase the significant role that civil society and other civic actors play in peacebuilding (Paffenholz 2015; Paffenholz & Spurk 2006). The civilian populations committed to peace appear to overwhelm the military divide.

■ Strategic peacebuilding roadmap

The complexities of contemporary conflicts and the scale of the inhumanities suffered by African communities demand a strategic plan of action to guide all attempts to settle disputes, make peace and attain lasting peace. From the strategic peacebuilding paths designed by John Paul Lederach and Katie Mansfield (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2023), three types of interventions emerge at the centre: (1) structural and institutional change and development; (2) justice and healing; and (3) violence prevention, conflict response and transformation. The outer layer maps out various enhancers of peace that include dealing with transnational and global threats, development, education, dialogue, conflict resolution strategies, non-violent social change, government and multi-lateral efforts, humanitarian action, trauma healing, transitional justice, restorative justice and law (advocacy and solidarity). These actions can be conducted concomitantly or convergently and evolve the centre. It follows that actors needed to build sustainable peace emerge from specific spheres of life: educators, nurses, medical personnel, judiciary members, civil society, etc. All take diverse responsibility to ensure that society regains harmony and stability.

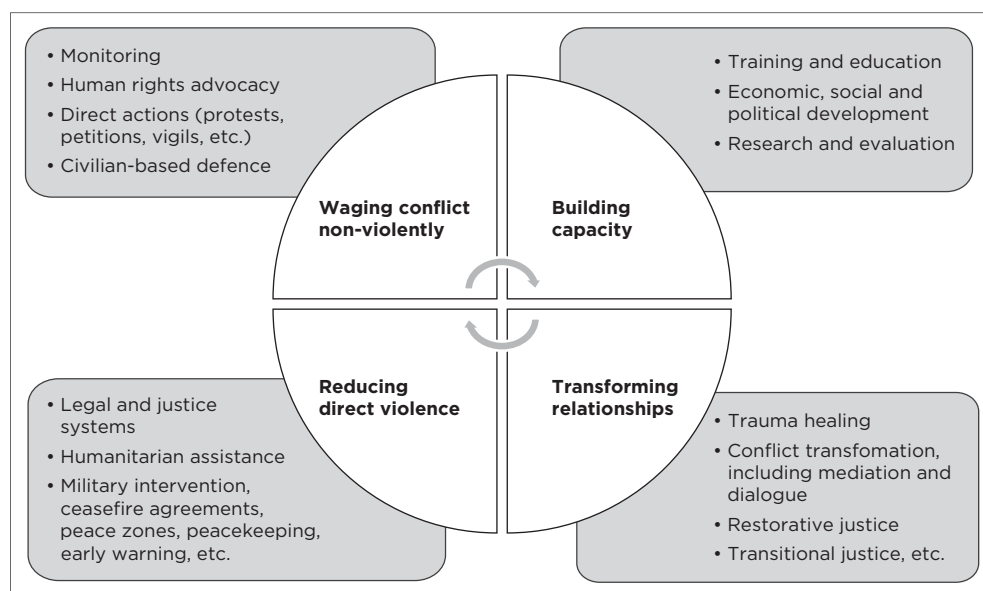
In societies undergoing transition, various mechanisms have been employed to address past injustices, including TRCs, transitional justice mechanisms and conventional justice systems, such as domestic and international courts and tribunals. Notable examples include the SCSL (United Nations 2000), the TRC of Sierra Leone and traditional justice models (Taylor-Smith 2009). Additionally, the *Gacaca* courts were

established to hold perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide accountable (*Ministère de la Justice* [Justice Ministry] 2004). South Africa's TRC also serves as a significant case study (Gibson 2002; Posel 1999), while Zimbabwe has focused on trauma healing and justice for atrocities committed during the *Gukurahundi* campaign against the Ndebele and Kalanga people between 1982 and 1987 (Killander & Nyathi 2015; Ngwenya 2017). The plethora of interventions undertaken in the aftermath of conflicts multiplies the category and number of players searching for justice, healing and reconciliation to transform relationships and society.

The strategic dimensions of peacebuilding conveyed by Lederach and Mansfield's works (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies 2023) resonate with Lederach's pyramid of peacebuilders and their corresponding models of actions and the peacebuilding map (Figure 9.1) of Schirch (2006) inasmuch as peacemakers and peacebuilding actors are concerned.

Figure 9.1 features the relationship of various components of peace to a central idea in a cyclical progression from waging conflict non-violently and building capacity to transforming relationships and reducing direct violence. The peacebuilding agency is determined by various civilian actors whose commitment to peace is systematically shown on the side of each of the four components.

At the stage of 'waging conflicts non-violently', advocates and activists are instrumental; they look for support to bring change by increasing a group's power to deal with issues, seek favourable conditions to transform relationships



Source: Author's own work adapted from Schirch 2006, p. 14.

FIGURE 9.1: Map of peacebuilding.

and proceed to democracy and human rights protections (Schirch 2006). At the 'reducing direct violence' stage, efforts are focused on reducing direct violence to restrain perpetrators of violence, providing immediate relief of the victims' suffering and creating a safer space that is also conducive to addressing the root causes of conflicts and favourable to performing peacebuilding activities (Schirch 2006). Civilians are the major players in conducting activities such as advocacy for human rights, monitoring and evaluation of peace processes and ensuring the protection of civilians.

At the 'transforming relationships' stage, efforts are concentrated on trauma healing, transforming relationships and providing justice; these processes aim to transform relationships and people and give them the chance to create long-term and durable solutions to respond to their needs (Schirch 2006).

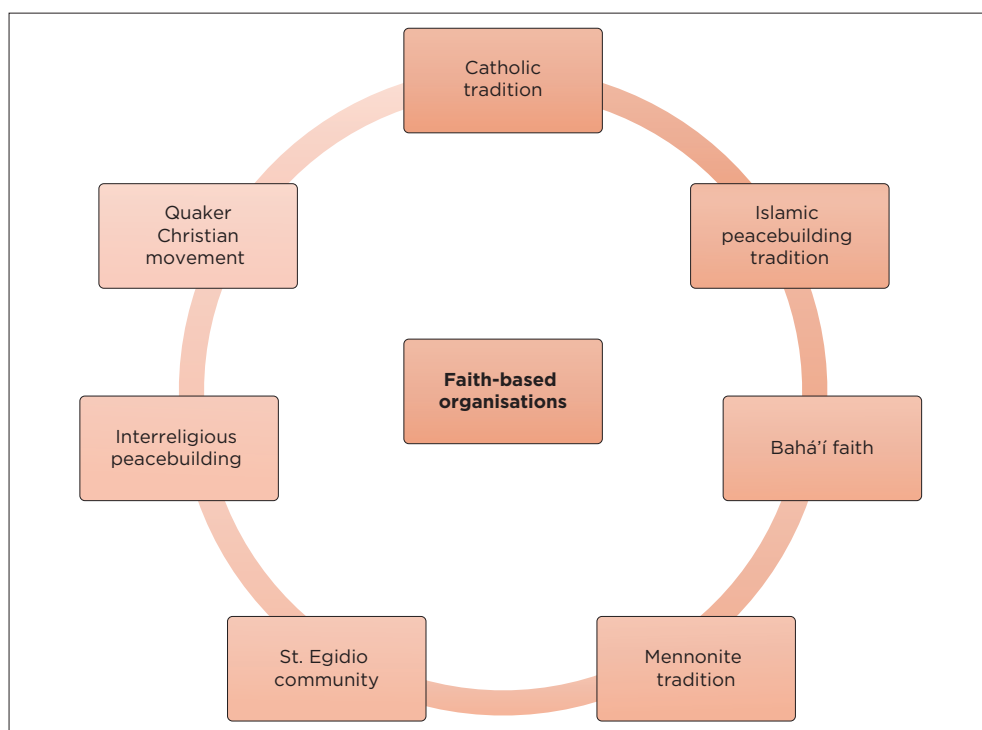
At the 'capacity building' stage, a longer-term commitment to peacebuilding strengthens the capacities of existing institutions to address various needs (including human rights) and curb violence via education and training, development, conversion of former combatants from military to civilian, conducting research, and monitoring and evaluation (Schirch 2006). These activities seek to construct just structures capable of backing a sustainable culture of peace (Schirch 2006). Scholars such as Schirch (2006) and Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) acknowledge the plurality of actors engaged in multiple categories of peacebuilding. It is worth noting that several approaches are undertaken by various actors involved in the diversity of peacebuilding categories. Many more are identified among civil society actors and grouped into different categories (Paffenholz & Spurk 2006).

■ Faith-based organisations

The transformative trajectory of Lederach's peacebuilding process highlights the role of CSOs as actors in peacebuilding; these are incorporated under the three levels of the pyramid and comprise religious leaders, ethnic leaders, academics, intellectuals, humanitarians (members of NGOs), local leaders, leaders of indigenous NGOs and local community developers. These networks fit within the categories of civil society (Paffenholz 2014a). It is important to acknowledge the role of faith-based organisations in peacebuilding processes, particularly during the NCs in Africa (Harris & Reilly 1998; Lund & Santiso 1998; Santiso 1998). Spiritual and religious leaders continue to leverage peace through their ethical guidance. Among the prominent cases of such undertakings are the role played by bishops during NCs and, in South Africa, the memorable responsibility and engagement of Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu during South Africa's TRC. The principle underlying Archbishop Tutu's philosophy of reconciliation and peacebuilding was drawn from the concept of Ubuntu, which is both a philosophy and a social ethos in Africa (Battle 2000; Tutu 1999).

The concept of 'faith-based' peacebuilding refers to beliefs across various world religions that consider the notion of peace as a vital need in the human community and see peace as a transcendental reality. Institutions that approach peace and conflict resolution from the perspective of their cultural and religious beliefs are the Catholic tradition, the Islamic tradition, the Bahá'í faith, the Mennonite tradition, the St. Egidio Community, interreligious peacebuilding projects and the Quaker Christian religious movement. The Catholic tradition defines the ecclesial community as a group brought together by the Risen Christ, whom they have committed to following. They bear witness to his resurrection by safeguarding his teachings, which are rooted in love and the transcendental dimension of the human person – their spiritual ability to communicate with God. The Quakers constitute a Christian religious movement which is also known as the Religious Society of Friends. Several adepts of Quaker movements believe in the existential ability of each human being to enter into a living experience of God's existence in every person.

Figure 9.2 illustrates prominent faith-based associations concerned with peace and also acknowledged as peacebuilding players.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 9.2: Major faith-based organisations involved in peacebuilding.

Lederach (1997b) acknowledges the contributions of various NGOs, including the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Quaker Peace, in developing service programmes and providing personnel for conciliation and conflict resolution. The works of faith-based organisations should be recognised and applauded, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where religions and spiritual movements positively influence society, particularly in communities affected by large-scale violence. The case of Rwanda, where the Church's image has been tarnished by allegations of being associated with the tragic event of genocide, is an exception. In many other countries such as the DRC, Togo, Benin and Congo Brazzaville, the influence of the church in attempting to foster socio-political transformation and national reconciliation has been lauded, though transition processes that ensued from those conferences were ephemeral in countries such as the DRC.

■ Indigenous leadership and peacebuilding

In my earlier works, I primarily discussed the impact of indigenous approaches and actors in peacebuilding, particularly local traditional leaders in the DRC (Kiyala 2016, 2022b) and Mozambique, where local leaders work with traditional healers to cleanse people directly affected by civil war to ease social reintegration (Honwana 1997; Kiyala 2016, 2022b, 2024).

Ubuntu promotes reconciliation, forgiveness, kindness and care in place of retribution. It encourages restorative justice instead of punitive justice in the aftermath of inhumanities and egregious human rights violations (Battle 2000; Ngoenha 2006). Additionally, it pursues non-violent conflict resolution to build peace and harmony (Akinola & Uzodike 2018) and advances restorative justice to address the strife of division in the context of post-apartheid South Africa (Gade 2013). As an African-based peacemaking model (Murithi 2006), Ubuntu is credited with a global peacebuilding dimension and is also proposed as a suitable framework for the Pan-African agenda of peace that can inspire the UN Sustaining Peace Agenda (Aydın 2022; Tieku 2012). Ubuntu is rooted in the African communitarian worldview that explains personhood and community as an ontologically tied-up reality, promoting reconciliation, dialogue and forgiveness.

Reimagining peacebuilding in Africa implies setting an agenda integrating global peace perspectives, domestic initiatives and indigenous mechanisms, philosophy and social ethos. Tieku (2012) embraces this conception to develop the notion of a Pan-African agenda constructed on peace and security pillars that embody:

[A]n [U]buntu understanding of sovereignty; an acceptance of elements of the responsibility to protect (R2P); a shift towards a human-security-oriented view of peace; and, finally, a new set of doctrines on post-war reconstruction. (p. 373)

These assumptions are shared by African leaders and fostered by the AU's vision for continental peace and security. The four suggested cornerstones of peace and security, in Tieku's analysis, align with the UN's *An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping* (Boutros-Ghali 1992). The roles of various actors at times overlap. This has happened in Northern Uganda, where traditional healers performed the *Mato Oput* ritual to cleanse former combatants of the LRA in the presence of government officials to ensure that perpetrators of heinous atrocities against civilians complied with the sanctions imposed on them to repair the harm they caused (Negara 2012). The process helped to bring justice to victims, make reparation, foster reconciliation and facilitate the social reintegration of former combatants. All these efforts are aimed at bringing peace and preventing the recurrence of past atrocities.

In the DRC, the Intercommunity *Baraza* of Elders collaborated with the government to deter warlords from attacking Goma, the capital of the North Kivu province. The members of the *Baraza* utilised their influence and customary authority to prevent intercommunity violence in Pinga locality, as well as in other areas of Walikale, Rutshuru and Masisi districts, which had been affected by such conflicts (Kiyala 2016). In post-civil war Mozambique, local officials and traditional healers worked together to facilitate cleansing rituals known as *Ka Pahla* to provide psycho-social well-being and bring emotional, mental and spiritual healing to persons affected by traumatic war experiences (Honwana 1997). These interactive actions and collaboration between indigenous communities and local officials are popular in peacebuilding endeavours (Kiyala 2022b).

In my latest work (Kiyala 2024), I compounded various indigenous peacebuilding practices that are rooted in African social ethos and sustained by sub-Saharan wisdom and value systems embedded in concepts such as Ubuntu, *Ujamaa*, *Baraza* and *Indaba* (Kiyala 2022c). The relationships between conflict, violence, the environment, and peace have demonstrated the rationale for emerging global perspectives on peace. This development, known as peace ecology, focuses on the impact of environmental factors on peace. More assertively, it examines the extent to which bioecological elements can enhance or undermine peacemaking and peacebuilding. The ecology of peace, which is distinct from peace ecology, provides a set of hypotheses that posit the influence of ecology in ECD as a dynamism that can help the child develop peaceful inclinations. To avoid a misinterpretation and misreading of these two distinct concepts, which are sometimes used interchangeably, the 'The ecology of peace' section clarifies the interpretation of the ecology of peace framework in this chapter.

■ The ecology of peace

Hakala and Kononenko (2022) provide the following definition:

‘[E]cology of peace’ is based on the notion that in order to address the varied and complex security implications of climate change, the concept of security needs to be seen beyond national security frames, linking it to everyday security, human dignity and the ability to lead a good life. (p. 6)

Similarly, Britto and Leckman (2023, n.p.) ascertain that ‘the “ecology of peace” framework provides a set of hypotheses to illuminate the associations between early childhood development and peace building’. The following five components explain the interconnectedness between the bio-behavioural paradigms and socio-ecological paradigms of childhood development: (1) the neurobiology of peace, (2) AB, (3) parenting and peacemaking, (4) early learning and peacemaking and (5) peacemaking and peacebuilding. These five elements contribute to the development from childhood peacemaking and peacebuilding to adulthood peacemaking and peacebuilding. The neurobiology of peace represents the pathway between biology and behaviour at the childhood stage, particularly ‘the neuronal development as a predictor of peace building’ (Yale University and Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 2).

Based on neuroscience research findings, early childhood experiences, particularly the initial bonds nurtured between infants and their caregivers, can map out future interactions (Yale University and Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). At this level, parents, caregivers and educators play a significant role in nurturing peace values in a child, thus laying the foundation for a peaceful society. The concept of an ecology of peace:

[C]aptures the web of ecosystems that extend from our internal biology to our subjective sense of self (i.e. our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours) to the environments in which we live. (Britto et al. 2014, p. 27)

The argument put forward by Britto and colleagues, like that of other neuroscientists (Noll 2006; Pouligny, Ghahremani & Rossano 2021), supports the significant role early childhood ecology plays in fostering a child’s ability to establish and maintain peace. Britto et al. (2014) contend:

[P]ositive, stimulating, and harmonious early childhoods can contribute to peace and human security, and [...] early-life interventions have transformative power which may help lay the foundations for conflict resolution and peace in future generations. (p. 27)

Noll (2006) further explains that peacemakers must be acutely aware of the neuropsychological factors involved in human conflict, as these factors shed light on conflict behaviours. Consequently, the relationship between neuroscience and peacemaking is gaining increasing attention in research. The implications of these assertions are such that peacemakers and peacebuilders require information that assists them in their tasks.

They require an understanding of the big picture that provides a profound awareness of conflict behaviours and the types of interventions that are useful in creating positive peace (Noll 2006). In this task, the brain is a key player because all human psychological experiences rely upon the activity of the brain, developing temperament, attitudes and behaviours that are biologically based (Strelau 1994 cited in Noll 2006).

■ **Peace from neurobiological development in early childhood**

The neurobiology of peace represents the pathway between biology and behaviour at the childhood stage, particularly ‘neuronal development as a predictor of peace building’ (Yale University and Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 2). Neuroscience research indicates that early childhood experiences, particularly the initial bonds nurtured between infants and their caregivers, can map out future interactions (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). From the perspective of neuroscience studies, the neuropeptide OT is considered a fundamental element in researching the biological factors that may be linked to peacebuilding:

[/]t is crucial not only to choose physiological components that are directly involved in the behavioural building blocks (e.g. early-life bonding), but also to focus on systems that have an interactive role in the body. (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 2)

Thus, the OT system ‘is a prime candidate for peace-building research, because of the complex neural and somatic systems that it influences during the emergence of intimate dyadic relationships throughout development’ (p. 2). Despite some unanswered questions and gaps in the OT research (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012), current findings report interesting revelations about how the OT system is primarily involved in behaviours that concern peace, trust and cooperation among in-group members (even the ability to read the mental status of others); it can inspire feelings of empathy towards others. In a similar vein, De Dreu et al. (2010, p. 1408) point to the fact that humans control intergroup conflicts via ‘parochial altruism’, where they self-sacrifice to contribute to in-group welfare while also aggressing against competing out-groups.

Oxytocin, also called ‘the hormone of love’ or ‘love drug’ because it facilitates childbirth, is ‘a hormone that’s produced in the hypothalamus and released into the bloodstream by the pituitary gland’ (Watson 2021, n.p.). It is linked to love and is also believed to have evolved as a component of the brain that can enhance in-group cohesion and efficiency; this explains how ‘parochial altruism’ works in this context (De Dreu et al. 2010). Oxytocin

has been further linked to the regulation of intergroup conflict, according to an experimental study conducted by De Dreu et al. (2010) using a double-blind placebo-controlled design. The findings revealed that ‘oxytocin drives a “tend and defend” response in that it promoted in-group trust and cooperation, and defensive, but not offensive, aggression toward competing out-groups’ (p. 1408). Oxytocin can increase caring and loving gestures:

[7]he simple act of touch seems to boost oxytocin release. Giving someone a massage, cuddling, making love, or giving someone a hug leads to higher levels of this hormone and a greater sense of well-being. (Watson 2021, n.p.)

A child who is surrounded by this loving treatment develops attitudes and behaviours imbued with a peaceful predisposition.

■ **Affiliative bonding (oxytocin and bonding in early life)**

This component, AB, is defined as:

[7]he pathway between biology, at the level of the child, and parenting as part of the family context [...] – specifically, early bonding as a precursor to behaviors associated with peacemaking. (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 3)

Studies have found that the ‘parent-child dyadic interactions and pair bonding in later life are regulated, in part, by OT and the closely related neuropeptide, vasopressin’ (Britto et al. 2014, p. 32). Expressions of behaviours in ECD during dyadic and triadic interactions, such as face-to-face interactions between the smallest possible social group, like mother-child and father-child (dyadic), and a group of three people, such as mother-father-child or child-caregiver-parent (triadic), can influence the neurobiological impulses of a child. The effects of the neuropeptide OT are believed to impact AB (Britto et al. 2014; Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). However, the ECD and peacebuilding and the OT hypotheses need further analyses to determine the extent to which they could be extrapolated beyond dyadic relationships and in groups to the larger community and inter-group relations (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). Thus, further clarification on this supposition does not invalidate the initial findings on ECD AB and peacebuilding.

■ **Birthing and parenting towards peacemaking**

Affiliative bonding is described as ‘the pathway between family context and behavior at the level of the child [...] – specifically, the impact of parenting programs on parent and child peacemaking behaviors’

(Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 3). The child's interactions with caregivers constitute the foundation for development in the early years and this stands as the process through which 'caregivers meet a child's physical, cognitive, and social emotional needs' (p. 3). This aspect of the child's growth is part of the constituent part of parenting – defined as 'interactions, behaviors, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and practices associated with child health, development, learning, protection and well-being' (p. 3).

■ **Peacemaking from early teaching and learning**

Early Learning Peacemaking focuses on 'the pathway between ECD programs and behavior at the child level [...] specifically, the association between early learning programs and peacemaking' (Yale University & Mother Child Education (AÇEV) Partnership 2012, p. 4). For Noll (2006, p. 18), '[p]eacemaking implies the use of cooperative, constructive processes to resolve human conflicts while restoring relationships'. Early teaching curricula could serve as an entry point to peacemaking via the roles played by teachers, the curricula and training if that yielded the desired outcomes – that is, enhancement of the child's inclinations to peace (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). It follows that the effectiveness of these intercommunicative learning and teaching activities, along with their potential to foster peace, needs to be further assessed.

■ **Peacebuilding from child development perspectives**

The fifth component, 'from peacemaking to peacebuilding', stands as 'the pathway between the level of the child and the outermost social contexts [...] – specifically, the association between individual-level outcomes and community – and society-level functioning' (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). The levels of the individual and the family are the environment within which parenting and early learning programmes take place, and this reflects the peacemaking level in peace nomenclature (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). The ecology of peace framework explores the leverage families have to impact communities and how peacemaking is possibly translated into peacebuilding (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). This signifies the macro-level of the ecology of peace model, which considers the social, cultural, political and economic context (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 4). Against this backdrop, the five components of the ecology of peace can either support or undermine peace. This depends on whether the ECD of an individual actor in peacemaking and peacebuilding or that of the

collective social groups allows the ecology of peace to permeate their human growth. This growth should align with neurobiological developmental processes (the brain's development towards managing emotions in a way that helps deal with conflicts constructively and prevents violence).

From a general perspective, peacemaking is tied with neurobiological progression – predispositions nurtured by external ecological factors and meaningful in interpersonal relationships, and these interactions are seen in a continuum from rationality to emotionality and vice versa. Based on scientific evidence for humans being predominantly emotional, one would expect human interrelations to be inclined towards emotions. Noll (2006, p. 1) develops this point by arguing that '[p]eople engaged in peacemaking, from the interpersonal to the international level, assumed that despite the emotions of conflict, people fundamentally were rational'. The emotional dimension of human beings must be taken into consideration because 'human beings are 98 percent emotional and about 2 percent rational. Thus, the assumptions underlying many disciplines and practices, especially peacemaking, need significant revisions' (Noll 2006, pp. 1-2). Conflicts can be effectively managed at any level of the peace evolution system theory through a multidisciplinary approach that interweaves ontology, epistemology, neurobiology, and peacebuilding theories.

■ Conclusion

This chapter explores the key players in peacebuilding in Africa, a continent plagued by violent conflicts that are persistent, evolving and result in significant death tolls in both intra-national (or intra-state) and inter-state armed conflicts. It begins by clarifying three approaches to peace: peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. The chapter then provides an overview of various prominent peace and peacebuilding theories that have shaped peace discourse and practice, including the concepts of liberal peace, democratic peace, negative peace and positive peace, peace ecology and the ecology of peace. A wide range of peacebuilding actors were identified within specific categories reflecting either social or political responsibilities or engagement in civil society. The role of faith-based organisations and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms was surveyed, revealing that many actors contribute to efforts aimed at creating a peaceful society. Traditional leaders, traditional healers, local tribal and ethnic leaders, religious leaders, and military leaders are all involved in peacebuilding efforts.

The major contribution of this chapter to the book is twofold. Firstly, it highlights the interactions among peace actors, each relying on principles that define them: Faith and belief in a transcendental power that guides human action towards peace, and indigenous peace research that upholds

an ethical foundation rooted in the African communitarian worldview. This worldview embodies the Ubuntu philosophy (African humanism) and *Ujamaa* (African socialism), which promotes solidarity, hospitality, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. Secondly, it lays down a foundation for peacebuilding that envisions peace as a seed that needs to be nurtured in all stages of human development, beginning in childhood. During this formative period, OT infuses children with humanistic and philanthropic values, fostering love, care and tolerance. This creates an ecology of peace – a vast interconnectedness of ecosystems that spans from human internal biology to an individual's subjective sense of self, and extends to external environments such as families, communities and societies (Britto et al. 2014). The internal biological environment encompasses human thoughts, emotions and behaviours (Britto et al. 2014). Children who benefit from positive parenting and are enriched by OT are more likely to contribute to a society inclined towards peacebuilding. The implications of this are a reduction in interpersonal violence and an enhancement of societal harmony.

Peacebuilding evolution systems theory

■ Introduction

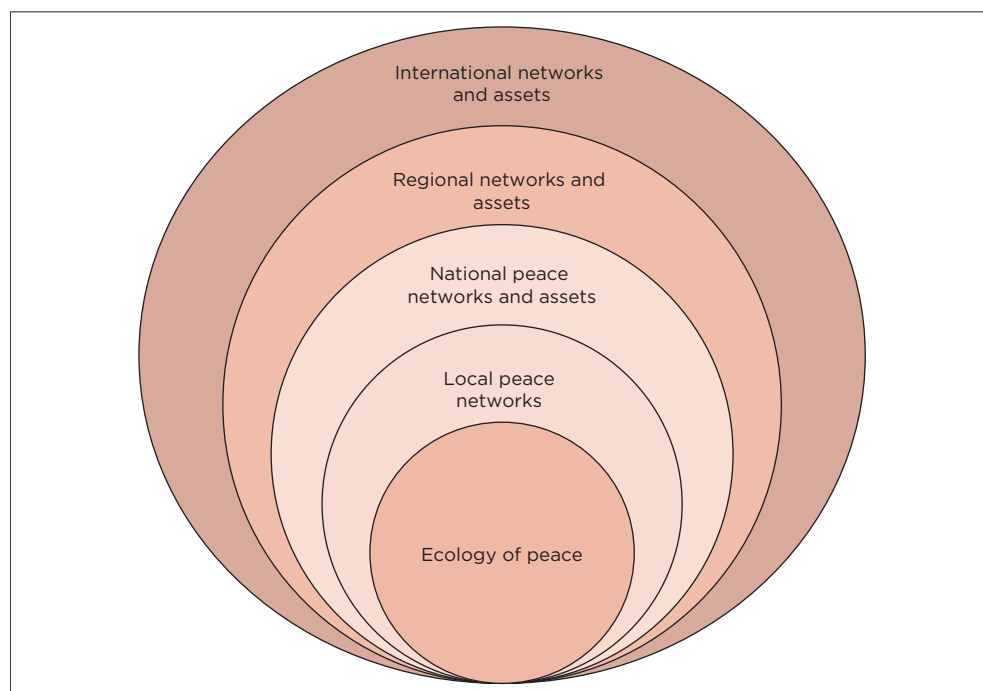
The complexity, nature and geography of contemporary conflicts demand a rethinking of approaches that can make the settlement of these conflicts more than simply a resolution of apparent consequences that are manifested in violence. Dealing with protracted, entrenched, latent and frozen conflicts that become the main causes of death, suffering and misery requires a compound strategy that recognises the various layers of the peacebuilding process and the interplay of interactions and roles played by multiple actors (Lederach 1997a, p. 39). This foundational stage is the starting point of peace infrastructure, without which the whole ‘peacebuilding’ enterprise remains exposed to multiple risks of collapse, particularly in the context of contemporary conflicts that are complex, unpredictable, changing, protracted, prolonged and multifaceted. While several tangible factors are the ostensible drivers of conflicts, the real propensity to violence stems from the breakdown of and the inability to mend relationships. The failure to peacefully settle scores and the crumbling of peaceful systems of violence prevention is the tipping point, as a result of which direct violence is unstoppable. Attitudes, behaviours and tendencies that open an individual to the other in the process of settling disputes are primarily internal and neurobiological predispositions that external environmental agents can bolster. The resumption of direct violence is often traced back

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to the irreversible breakdown and irretrievable subsidence of relationships, whether at the interpersonal, inter-community, inter-social group, international or inter-alliance level. The reversal of this situation is still possible via peacebuilding and peacemaking initiatives. In this context, peacebuilding entails actions that foster durable peace by providing the prosocial skills required for peace; peacemaking is to be achieved via ‘the enhancement of positive reciprocal communication within families, communities, and nations’ (Britto et al. 2014, p. 27).

It is worth acknowledging that it is within the ecology of peace that the seed of peace is nurtured and developed and carried through the various levels of the PBEST. This theory explains the complex relations between structures within which peace processes are fostered. The ‘local’ concept in peacebuilding has gained ground. The approaches within each layer crosscut with one another. Recognised players in conflict transformation, peacemaking and peacebuilding are found among a wide range of civilians, as illustrated in Figure 10.1.

Peace should be studied, explained and practised in a way that considers the development of human persons within their respective environments, which are surrounded by complex and overlapping layers



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 10.1: Ecology of peacebuilding.

of interrelated structures, systems and networks wherein individual and organised group actions inform or disrupt peace. The five main layers developed in this chapter are peace ecology, local, national, regional and international peace networks. The ecology of peace foregrounds each level of the five layers (Figure 10.1). Creating a loving and caring environment in ECD, where OT could influence peaceful inclinations in the child, should be perceived as the cornerstone of any peace architecture.

A productive study of peace and the prospects for building peace that neglects peace ecology remains deficient because it only deals with external factors, thus ignoring the internal dispositions of each person to nurture peaceful attitudes and act peacefully within their immediate environment. The ecology of peace remains unavoidable in the conceptualisation, understanding, exercise and practice of peace; it should be the stimulus and *leitmotif* of peacebuilding and peacemaking discourse. Thus, parents, nurses, caregivers and ECD teachers represent the forgotten, unnoticed and silent players in peacebuilding because they lay the foundation for peace architecture, and the seed of peace becomes perceptible in the peace infrastructure. This process displays the significance of a bottom-up trajectory of peacebuilding evolution; it is advocated as an emerging trend in the interplay of neuroscience and peacebuilding.

Britto et al. (2014) argue from a similar vantage point by employing evidence-based findings from available developmental neurobiology studies, including social and economic studies, pointing out that:

[C]hange in favor of peace can be initiated not only from the top down, through official policies and agencies, but also from the bottom up, by supporting the physical, emotional, and social development of children and the well-being of their families and communities. (p. 27)

The aforementioned assertion is founded in studies on the neurobiological foundations of peace, as well as the 'genetic, epigenetic, hormonal, developmental, and social factors that shape young brains' (Britto et al. 2014, p. 27). It highlights the significant role of these factors and parenting in early learning for peacebuilding, as well as the intersection of ECD with the processes of peacebuilding and peacemaking (Britto et al. 2014). The peacemaking process requires that negotiators and mediators explore their essential assumptions about human nature, the philosophy of rationality and human behaviour in the context of neuroscience (Noll 2006). Thus, peacebuilding, as it proceeds from peacemaking, should consider the role of the human brain and emotion (Noll 2006). Key players in peacebuilding are determined by the roles that various actors play at each layer of the PBEST framework (Figure 10.1).

■ The ecology of peace

The predominant narratives of violence, wars and large-scale conflicts have created a peacebuilding trend that is primarily understood as a response to this triad; thus, important players for peace, such as parents, caregivers and educators, who nurture children by means of bonding love, are invisible actors of peacebuilding. Countless civilians are involved in peacekeeping (Schirch 2006), sometimes portrayed as invisible peacebuilders (Mateos 2010). Their agency should not be undermined when the debate about peace is engaged. This perspective reflects the thought of Britto et al. (2014), who argue:

Evidence from available developmental neurobiology well as social and economic studies suggests that change in favor of peace can be initiated not only from the top down, through official policies and agencies, but also from the bottom up, by supporting the physical, emotional, and social development of children and the well-being of their families and communities. (p. 27)

This assertion is supported by scholars who debate the nexus of neuroscience and peacebuilding and argue for a peacebuilding process involving various layers – from individual, collective and institutional agencies. Pouligny, Ghahremani and Rossano (2021) suggest that peace should be ritualised in as many ways as war is; they contend:

We need to do the same with peace, at the individual and collective levels, in order to mark the importance of a transformation that is not only external but also deeply internal, at least if it is to be sustainable. (p. 30)

Neuroscientists have clearly outlined how birthing and parenting can nurture peace, foster in-group bonding and enhance attitudes that promote peace. An individual child who benefits from OT enhancement in early childhood becomes a peacemaker. When people interact collectively, on the ground of a bonding frame of mind and emotional inclinations stimulated by OT, peacebuilding becomes a habit and a natural way of life.

■ Locally based peacebuilding theory and actors

As noted by Paffenholz (2014b), international peacebuilding, particularly the transformative peacebuilding theories drawn from John Paul Lederach's work, has influenced local peacebuilding practice regarding policy discourse and backing local settings and undertakings. Examining 20 years of peacebuilding frameworks shifting to the impact of grassroots networks and local peacebuilding actors, Paffenholz (2014b) found that this paradigm has not succeeded in yielding the desired outcomes for the following reasons: (1) Perceptions of local approaches on the part of international actors; (2) limited international support strategies, characterised by a

disregard for the wider international, regional and local peacebuilding spheres and existing power relations; and (3) 'the mantra status of Lederach's middle-out approach as an almost unquestioned theory of change in civil society peacebuilding that invites reflections on theory-practice encounters and responsible peacebuilding scholarship' (Paffenholz 2014b, p. 1).

Locally based peacebuilding theory provides a framework within which efforts to build peace focus on the role of local actors (Stanton & Kelly 2015); it contrasts with the liberal and post-liberal model (Debiel & Rinck 2016). In the post-Cold War context and the plethora of conflicts and civil wars affecting many regions, the UN deployed its arsenal of peacemaking and peacekeeping missions to halt wars and create stability in specific situations (Debiel & Rinck 2016). In these circumstances, peacebuilding involved:

[A] deliberate strategy of external and/or domestic actors, aimed at moving a country away from the mere absence of armed conflict and towards preventing the outbreak of renewed collective violence. (p. 240)

Such peace perspectives consisted of anticipating further conflicts, reorienting socio-economic policies, forging reforms related to governance, and making new arrangements for power sharing and control (Debiel & Rinck 2016).

Several studies debate local and international peacebuilding programmes side by side and demonstrate how local peacebuilders can partner with international efforts to secure lasting domestic peace (Autesserre 2017). This resistance by local communities to post-war peacebuilding interventions is featured in peacebuilding literature. For instance, in post-war Cambodia, resistance was led by local actors regarding the land distribution process (Lee 2015). Drawing from interviews with 23 fieldworkers conducted between 2011 and 2014, with practitioners working on development programmes in Somalia, South Cambodia, the DRC, Afghanistan, Iraq and Kenya, it was found that the motivations for resistance to peacebuilding vary and can be widely put into five categories; these are:

[J]ustice-seeking resistance based on religion/nationalism; resistance in response to the incompatibility of peacebuilding programmes with local contexts; interest-power-seeking resistance; and two types of involuntary resistance (uninformed resistance and resistance resulting from restrictive conditions). (Lee 2015, p. 1442)

Arguing from the perspective of Ubuntu (African humanistic philosophy), Archbishop Desmond Tutu remained adamant in defending the role of forgiveness, reconciliation and humanising justice in the South African post-apartheid peace processes and nation-building (Tutu 1999). Forgiveness in South African isiZulu culture underpins that which provides harmony, vitality and development in society (Hay 1998).

In several post-conflict African societies, reconciliation, forgiveness and building domestic and local peace have been associated with rituals. This was the case in the healing rituals practised in Mozambique after the civil war (30 May 1977–04 October 1992). *Ka Pahla* rites of healing conducted by a traditional healer were used to restore the spiritual and psychological well-being of persons directly involved in hostilities (Honwana 1997; Kiyala 2022b). In Uganda, *Mato Oput* (consumption of a bitter root concoction in the Acholi culture of Northern Uganda) served to cleanse and reconcile former soldiers of the LRA of John Kony and repair the harm they had caused during the Ugandan war (1986–1994). In Sierra Leone, the *Fambul Tok* [‘family talk/conversation’] dialogue model was practised, seeking forgiveness for inhumanities perpetrated by former young soldiers and fostering post-civil war societal reconciliation (Graybill 2010; Hoffman 2008).

In the DRC, trials conducted on the *Baraza*, a locally based jurisprudence and conflict resolution institution, yielded promising results in terms of forging the path to reconciliation and reintegration of former young soldiers who participated in civil wars (1996–2002) and later conflicts. In Rwanda, *Gacaca* experiments of justice were applied to speed up trials of alleged perpetrators of genocide, with the further purpose of seeking national reconciliation (Sosnov 2007). The prospects for *Gacaca* fostering advanced reconciliation remain a contentious issue (Rettig 2008; Takeuchi 2011), and there is little study linking Rwanda’s current development, socio-political stability, and post-genocide nation-reconstruction and economic growth to the effects of *Gacaca* courts. However, Rwanda is lauded for fast-tracking post-genocide accountability processes through its hybrid model of justice, which integrates the NURC (National Legislative Bodies/National Authorities 1999), the *Gacaca* courts³⁹ and domestic courts re-instated to try genocide-related lawsuits (Drumbl 1997). While modernised *Gacaca* and domestic courts function within the logic and judicial parameters of the conventional criminal courts, the NURC was designed as an instrument to foster national reconciliation and build peace:

The National Unity and Reconciliation Commission was empowered to organize national public debates aimed at promoting reconciliation, foster tolerance and a culture of peace and human rights, and denounce any ideas aimed at disunity. (United States Institute of Peace 2003, n.p.)

Moreover, the NURC sought to educate Rwandese society on its rights and those of others and was a draft law aimed at deepening reconciliation and monitoring efforts by the national unity and reconciliation authorities,

39. Set by Organic Law No. 16/2004 of 19/6/2004, establishing the Organisation, Competence and Functioning of Gacaca Courts Charged with Prosecuting and Trying the Perpetrators of The Crime of Genocide and Other Crimes Against humanity, Committed Between 01 October 1990 and 31 December 1994 (Ministère de la Justice [Justice Ministry] 2004).

and by the people in general, to respect and observe the policies put in place (United States Institute of Peace n.d.). This awareness campaign was conducted according to the Political Code of Ethics of Arusha (United States Institute of Peace n.d.).

Local peacebuilding has also seen the revival of post-conflict peacebuilding rituals. Rituals have played a crucial role in transforming identity and shifting roles from civilian to military – and vice versa, when combatants are demobilised and reintegrated into society with civilian identities, as was the case in Sierra Leone (Pouligny et al. 2021), in Mozambique (Honwana 1997) and in northern Uganda (Justice and Reconciliation Project 2018). Ethnographic research has established that rituals play multiple roles in controlling socio-emotional reactions and supporting healing (Pouligny et al. 2021). Healing is critical to peacebuilding (Honwana 1997; Lambourne & Niyonzima 2016; Ngwenya & Harris 2015). The effectiveness of ritual practices in post-conflict contexts in bringing healing has social and cosmological values sustained by religious beliefs (Christianity and African traditional religions). Some of those practices have fuelled ‘deeper individual and collective transformation, helping communities to transform fear and trauma and to move away from violence and separation’ (Pouligny et al. 2021, p. 30). These operations constitute a large reservoir of human knowledge; unfortunately, they are very often undermined or forgotten in peacebuilding processes, possibly because they may be alien to Western cultures (Pouligny et al. 2021). Thus, the role of traditional leaders and local leadership in healing rituals, reconciliation and peacebuilding should be recognised. These peacebuilder categories feature in Lederach’s peace infrastructure (1997a, p. 39). Interventions by international actors tapping into local wisdom by involving grassroots and existing cultural practices of peace will likely yield promising results.

■ National peace networks

Peace processes on the African continent are increasingly taken over by domestic networks, involving various actors from various spheres of life – high-profile religious persons, unions, the media, CSOs, and spontaneous and organised non-violent protests planned and executed locally. Drawing from Lederach’s (1997a, p. 39) peacebuilding pyramid, all three levels of actors represent the diversity of peacebuilding key players at national and grassroots levels. The top of the pyramid features military authorities, high-profile politicians, inspirational leaders and religious authorities with significant influence at a national level.

In Sierra Leone, national networks worked to resist the Siaka Stevens’ All People’s Congress (APC) Party, founded in 1990. Mateos (2010) describes the civilian resistance as an invisible peacebuilding actor, and he notes the

paradigm shift in the perception of the civilian population from 'victimised populations' to active players in peacebuilding. The networks that non-violently resisted the APC grew to become the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy, which integrated nearly all the pressure groups, civil associations and organisations, unions (the National Union of Sierra Leone students, the Labour Congress, journalists' associations, trade unions, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists) and many other civilian movements who joined in opposing the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), associated with a group of Sierra Leone soldiers that became an ally of the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The people's force was backed by several movements, including the Women's Movement for Peace (led by Zainab Bangura), academics and local NGOs, the Campaign for Good Governance, the Network Movement for Justice and Development and the Human Rights Committee; these were instrumental in the Abidjan (1996) and Lomé (1999) peace agreements (Mateos 2010).

In the late 1980s, a new consciousness arose across sub-Saharan African countries that were experiencing autocratic rule. Their aspirations were translated into pressure to organise NCs (Lund & Santiso 1998; Santiso 1998). Civilians engaged in peaceful campaigns to subvert the *status quo* and move their respective countries from violent regimes to a peaceful transition to democracy. Civilian movements led to NCs; these were held in several nations. Lund and Santiso (1998) define an NC (or national debate or national assembly) as:

[A] public forum, held over an extended period, at which representatives from key political and civic groups are invited to discuss and develop a plan for the country's political future, preferably on a consensus basis. (p. 253)

The objective of an NC, besides preventing violent conflicts in the process of encouraging political change, is to help test the government's actual willingness for that transformation; the fundamental objective of an NC is to:

[P]rovide an opportunity for representatives of all sides to discuss, plan and reach a maximum level of consensus on a country's political future, hence addressing potential and actual political crises. (Lund & Santiso 1998, p. 253)

This lays the foundation for creating institutions and democratic processes that are more inclusive and provides a legal framework for operating multipartyism, drafting a new constitution for an electoral system, attaining peaceful alternation of power and putting in place a timetable for post-electoral democratic transition (Lund & Santiso 1998). These responsibilities were shouldered by bishops and other religious leaders, who emerged as chief mediators, negotiators and political figures who prevented their countries from plunging into chaos, thus salvaging some of them.

Some NCs successfully achieved peaceful transfers of power; therefore, this forum's model can be regarded as 'an indigenously generated African

contribution to political institution building and regime transition' (Lund & Santiso 1998, p. 253). In the late 1990s, calls for NCs resurged and were sustained by the aspirations of concerned countries 'to build consensus on reforming state structures, initiating transitions to democracy and resolving deep-rooted conflicts, such as in Kenya in 1997 and in Nigeria after the death of Abacha' (p. 254). One of the salient characteristics of these conferences was the tactful leadership role played by the Catholic bishops who presided over them and their neutrality (Gifford 1994). National conferences were a peaceful tool used by citizens' groups, particularly in Francophone Africa, in the struggle to force dictators to acknowledge the scale of power abuse and the catastrophic consequences of their despotic rules; the dictators became vulnerable as a result of the loss of support from their Westerners backers, and they relented, albeit only in the short term (Gifford 1994). Some cases of NC successes include:

- In Benin, the NC was presided over by Isidore de Sousa, Archbishop of Cotonou, who then became the president of the *Haut Conseil de la Republique* overseeing the transition process – the highest authority in the land – and supervised the peaceful democratic elections and transfer of power.
- In Zaïre (the DRC), the NC elected Monsignor Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, Archbishop of Kisangani, to preside over the assembly, which lasted 2 years (July 1991–December 1992). Monsignor Monsengwo was then elected the HCR-PT president. He was the highest authority of the HCR-PT, which was the highest institution in Zaïre, although it was at loggerheads with President Mobutu, who believed he should remain the ultimate institution. The HCR-PT emerged from the SNC, a more empowered institution that had evolved from the NC. It was mandated with the mission to plan the new constitution and prepare democratic elections. However, President Mobutu abruptly halted the SNC.

National conferences were also held in Gabon, presided over by Monsignor Basile Mvé Engone, Bishop of Oyem; in Togo, where Monsignor Sanouko Kpodzro, Bishop of Atakpame, presided over the assembly; and in the Congo (Brazzaville), presided over by Monsignor Ernest Kombo, the Bishop of Owando (Gifford 1994). Well-known spiritual leaders with high visibility have played a substantive role in leading peaceful alterations of regimes via transitional and democratisation processes, which have high stakes in either driving a country to chaos or post-conflict reconstruction and economic growth. This view is supported by Gifford (1994); he refers to Kenya, where the most vocal critics of President Moi were the Anglican Bishops, whom the National Council of Churches of Kenya later joined. In Malawi, via the 1992 Lenten pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops, a whole opposition was built against President Banda's rule; in Madagascar, President Ratsiraka was

ousted by the ‘*Forces Vives*’ in 1992, under the impulse of the Council of Churches; and in Zambia, churches featured among the most conspicuous local bodies that leveraged a peaceful transition to democracy, thus unlocking the crisis.

There is a strong link between NCs, democratisation processes and peacebuilding in sub-Saharan Africa. This has been demonstrated in the volume published by Harris and Reilly (1998). For this reason, the role of individual bodies and actors that work towards promoting democracy should be seen as peacebuilding efforts. Bloomfield and Reilly (1998, p. 6) note that democratic structures and institutions can provide an effective way for the peaceful handling of deep-rooted conflicts by means of ‘inclusive, just and accountable frameworks’. In addition, disputes that arise under a democracy are deliberated upon, processed, discussed and acted upon rather than being resolved definitively and in a permanent way; a democratic government permits grievances to be expressed openly and responded to. In short, democracy operates as a conflict management system without recourse to violence. This ability to handle conflicts without having to suppress them or be engulfed by them distinguishes a democratic government from its major alternatives (Bloomfield & Reilly 1998, p. 19). Lund and Santiso (1998, p. 253) contend that ‘[s]ome national conferences even achieved peaceful alternations in power. In this way, they can be seen as an indigenously generated African contribution to political institution building and regime transition’. In the DRC, the NGO *Agir pour des Elections Transparentes et Apaisées* [Acting for Transparent and Peaceful Elections] (AETA) plays a significant role in the facilitation of the democratisation process (Kiyala & Bisambu 2022). This is a case in point of intra-national peace efforts to support democracy to foster peace.

■ Regional peace networks

The AU is a continental organisation comprising 55 member states and was officially founded in 2002 to take over from the OAU (1963–1999). The main objectives of the defunct OAU were to remove the continent from the remnants of colonisation and apartheid, to promote unity and solidarity among African states, to coordinate and intensify development cooperation, to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states and to promote international cooperation (AU 2023). Member states of the AU are grouped into regional political and military blocs that occasionally attempt to conduct peacekeeping operations. Some such cases include:

- Interventions by the ECOWAS employing military force and the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s (Arthur 2010)

- Economic Community of West African States' intervention in Côte D'Ivoire in 2003, and Togo in 2005 (Arthur 2010)
- Economic Community of West African States and the UN's peacekeeping mission in Mali (Adebajo 2018)
- The sub-regional operations in the DRC (Mutisi 2016).

At times, joint operations have involved CSOs in the African Peace and Security Architecture, particularly with the participation of the AU, ECOWAS and SADC (Aeby 2021). Peacekeeping and peacemaking occur in very complex environments with unfamiliar external actors; they lack a complete understanding of the geopolitical and cultural intricacies of conflicts and the inter-relations among the parties in conflict. As a result, even if peacekeeping operations manage to broker peace deals, the route to peacebuilding is a long-term dream because peacemaking is not founded on extirpating the root causes of conflicts and violence (which are mostly embedded in cultural, social, economic and political structures). The persistence of structural violence and apparent direct violence remains a hindrance to effective peacebuilding.

There have been criticisms levelled against the practice of regional peacekeeping missions in sub-Saharan Africa. For instance, Coleman (2011, p. 517) singles out three critical trends that undervalue the conceptual chasm between regional peacekeeping and the UN global peacekeeping commitment. He notes that: (1) sub-Saharan African states have moved some distance from the tradition of autonomous regional peacekeeping by favouring interim missions as an alternative to the UN peacekeeping agenda; (2) there is a lack of clarity in distinguishing regional peacekeeping from the sub-Saharan African tradition characterised by solidarity deployments (military support of embattled governments) – a trend that is unnoticed by the practice of regional versus global peacekeeping dichotomy and (3) regional conflicts are addressed by sub-Saharan African states via their participation in UN operations deployed in the different regions. Consequently, 'UN peacekeeping has thus emerged as a preferred form of regional peacekeeping in sub-Saharan Africa' (Coleman 2011, p. 517).

Based on the lessons learned from ECOWAS's military intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone, Arthur (2010) argues that ECOMOG was confronted with multiple challenges stemming from disagreements among ECOWAS member states. In addition, there were financial constraints, equipment and logistical difficulties in carrying out operations in Côte D'Ivoire in 2003, and this was partly because of the lack of political will by leaders to commit funds to back the logistical demands of the operations. In a similar vein, Williams (2017), in *Global and regional peacekeepers: Trends, opportunities, risks and a way ahead*, underlines how it has become significant for policymakers to balance regional and global forms of peacekeeping. He argues that certain regional organisations, especially in

Africa and Europe, are substantively involved in playing roles towards peace, despite the fact that the UN Security Council holds the primary responsibility to ensure international peace and security are maintained, with its single and largest peacekeeping personnel contingent (Williams 2017). It transpires from the discussion that the prospects of attaining sustainable peace remain a distant outcome, notwithstanding the importance of regional and international peacekeeping missions. As mentioned before, the road to sustainable peace is not limited to peacekeeping but rather moves on to peacemaking and addressing the main drivers of conflicts. The scarcity of resources and logistical and financial constraints are the major stumbling blocks to securing lasting peace in many regions of the continent. Thus, rethinking peace approaches should focus on building the human person's abilities to refrain from violence, develop peaceful predispositions and rely on local, cost-effective and indigenous mechanisms.

■ International peacebuilding framework

Peacebuilding is institutionalised by governmental, regional and international bodies that adopt definitions that overlap and show consistency with each organisation's interests, worldviews and existing meaning (Barnett et al. 2007). The settings, including at the UN's Peacebuilding Commission, explore the possibilities and suitability of the terrain where violence is occurring for an international intervention that uses the UN missions to back local assets to address conflict, prevent further escalation, stabilise peace and maintain durable peace (Doyle & Sambanis 2000). Autesserre (2017) examined the conditions, context, reasons and cases that call for international interventions. This study was based on in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted in nine different conflict zones, supported by document analysis. She categorises international interveners as 'donors, diplomats, peacekeepers, and the foreign staff of international and non-governmental organizations', and argues that these entities can leverage 'successful local and bottom-up peace efforts' (Autesserre 2017, p. 114).

In addition, the UN, individual states and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) have increasingly become partners in the global agenda to rebuild peaceful societies in post-violence environments. Coming back to Autesserre, her work contributes to understanding the perceived shortfall in research outcomes and scholarly literature pertaining to the policy regarding successful international backing of local conflict resolution; it points up the demanding and under-studied role of assumptions in mapping out peacebuilding initiatives and 'it develops a theoretical framework to analyse how assumptions influence international peace efforts' (Autesserre 2017, p.

114). Her efforts consisted of examining three general assumptions concerning peacebuilding and the role played by peacebuilders. In this critical analysis, Autesserre's research challenged assumptions regarding the activities of international interveners – often taken for granted, but in reality untrue and damaging – while it singled out the premise that fosters peacebuilding effectiveness.

In some places, such as Cambodia, Namibia, Mozambique or Central America, some stability was noticeable, albeit ephemeral, and in other cases, such as the DRC, the UN mission has failed to stabilise the eastern part of the country and achieve sustainable peace. The apparent inefficacy of international peacebuilding efforts has led some proponents of the liberal peacebuilding theory to acknowledge the problem of applying top-down peacebuilding initiatives in local contexts (Debiel & Rinck 2016). International peacebuilding theory can increase the likelihood of ending a civil war, based on the tests conducted by Doyle and Sambanis (2000) using a data set of 124 post-WWII civil wars. This study discovered that multilateralism and UN peace missions made a positive difference in wartime, and 'UN peacekeeping is positively correlated with democratization processes after civil war, and multilateral enforcement operations are usually successful in ending the violence' (p. 779). Their finding opens the space for designing effective and all-embracing strategies and guidelines for peacebuilding considering facts related to 'hostility, local capacities, and international capacities' (p. 779). However, international peacekeeping missions have been seriously criticised because of failures experienced in several contexts, such as the DRC, the Central African Republic and Mali (Karlsrud 2015). The UN has been described as powerless to prevent the 1994 Rwanda genocide (Barnett 2018).

Despite over a decade of UN presence in the DRC – its most significant peacekeeping mission in terms of personnel – achieving durable peace remains a long-term dream (Autesserre 2007; Jacobson 2012). Similarly, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), authorised by the UN Security Council in July 2013, has faced enormous challenges in achieving stability, especially following two successive military coups that have ousted democratically elected civilian presidents. To address the Malian crisis, Dion and Sany (2021) advocate concerted and synergic approaches that should involve regional and international actors. This strategy should first identify the root causes of the conflicts and then prioritise locally designed and accepted solutions susceptible to tackling the root causes of Mali's political turmoil (Dion & Sany 2021). The agency of international interveners in helping halt violence is acknowledged, albeit disputable. They can support peace efforts despite their limitations in creating structures for lasting peace in very complex

contexts characterised by deep-seated conflicts and recurrent hostilities, often triggered by unresolved disputes. This optimism is pointed out by Autesserre (2017), who states:

International interventions can help achieve this goal, but they often fail to make their intended impact, and they sometimes worsen the situation. It is therefore crucial to increase the effectiveness of international peace efforts. (p. 126)

In a similar vein, Lambourne (2004) contends that the international community can play a critical role in fostering or compromising fragile peacebuilding processes in which fighting has stopped, and post-conflict circumstances offer an opportunity to build lasting peace – to be seized or undermined. Such a window of chance has been explored and utilised by the OHCHR in UN Peacemaking and Peacebuilding to advocate and protect human rights in the context of conflict resolution in many African countries, namely Guinea-Bissau, Sudan, Liberia, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola and Sierra Leone (Hannum 2006). The role of international peacebuilders is to salvage fragile peace and pursue justice and reconciliation, which are essential for transforming war-affected communities into peaceful societies. This argument is widely accepted among scholars (Lambourne 2004; Lederach 1997a).

The heaviest criticism of international networks came as a result of the failure of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (MINUAR) to prevent the 1994 Rwandan genocide; the mission turned into a witness to genocide (Barnett 2018). In the DRC, MONUSCO has been severely criticised for failing to stabilise the eastern DRC and even for being involved in killing civilians during a squabble with protesters in February 2023. Reuters News (2023) reported that eight people were killed and 28 wounded in the North Kivu province when protesters blocked a convoy of UN peacekeepers on Tuesday, 09 February 2023. In Mali, MINUSMA, established by the Security Council to support political processes, was confronted by civilians in that country. In October 2022, a roadside bomb killed three soldiers from the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which subsequently announced that it had launched an investigation into the explosion (*Al Jazeera* 2022). Attacks and confrontations between UN peacekeeping missions and the local populace indicate disapproval of the UN presence on the part of locals who witness the failures of UN-led peacekeeping operations. Dessu and Yohannes (2022) identify the following causes of rejection of MONUSCO and MINUSMA by locals:

- There are problems with the consent of the host nation and the legitimacy of operations in the eyes of local populations.
- Dialogue has been under-prioritised while missions emphasise a people-centred protection approach.

- The current mandate of MONUSCO 'straddles two priorities: civilian protection and helping to strengthen state institutions' (n.p.).
- The two missions have become entangled in the dark national politics of their host nations.
- Local politicians have invariably incited anti-UN peace mission sentiments among some sections of the population.
- Local dissatisfaction with the peace missions has been exacerbated by '[g]lobal geopolitical rivalries' (n.p.).
- Africa has become a battleground of the world's shifting political order, spheres of influence and the struggle of African countries to reposition (in the contest between France and Russia).
- The missions must deal with regional rivalries and work in demanding security environments characterised by international hostilities (e.g. DRC v. Rwanda, where Rwanda is accused of fuelling conflicts in the DRC).
- Both missions struggle to implement their mandates in a hostile environment and when confronted by local people's resistance.
- There has been little cooperation from host governments, and the rising insecurity is creating opportunities for insurgents and terrorists.
- Protests expose the shortcomings of the 'cardinal principles of UN peacekeeping, particularly consent, impartiality and the non-use of force' (n.p.).

There is a need to boost political engagement between national and international actors, and similarly with local civilians, to address the limitations of international peace actors such as the UN in the context of MONUSCO and MINUSMA (Dessu & Yohannes 2022). To translate into peacebuilding, peacekeeping needs to acknowledge its limitations, shift to a peacebuilding philosophy and seek more participation from locals.

■ Peacebuilding in diverse and complex contexts

The Yale University and Mother Child Education (AÇEV) Partnership (2012) and other studies on peacebuilding relate peace discourse to social, cultural, economic, political and economic contexts that can either reinforce or weaken peace prospects. These elements constitute the pillars of peace architecture in both pre- and post-conflict circumstances (along with justice, reconciliation, healing and socio-political transformation), mainly in the aftermath of large-scale violence. A systematic identification of peacebuilders, their roles and the effectiveness of their actions is conducted within this context. The interplay of social, cultural, economic and political factors is crucial to laying the foundation of sustainable peace and stability. Failure to do so may result in social, cultural, economic and political violence. In such instances, peacemaking and peacebuilding are not

identical; a multiplicity of players is involved with respect to the demands of each, which may require exceptional competence and skills to distil peace processes and obtain satisfactory outcomes, particularly in an environment such as the DRC, affected by protracted, frozen or prolonged conflicts, African identity and ethnic conflicts, and African cross-border conflicts in the Great Lakes Region.

■ Peacebuilding in the context of social violence

This is reflected in social violence built on ‘acts of violence between individuals or small groups of individuals that do not have an explicitly political motivation contrast’ (Fox & Hoelscher 2010, p. 1). While there exist comparatively few studies that deal with the causes and consequences of social violence, the scourge of this violence is alarming, as noted by Fox and Hoelscher (2010):

[S]ocial violence represents a far greater risk to human security worldwide than political violence. According to data produced by the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2002 there were approximately 170,000 war-related deaths and over 500,000 deaths due to interpersonal violence worldwide. In 2004 the counts were 182,000 and 598,000 respectively. (p. 1)

These statistics are concerning and justify the thesis of starting peacebuilding by preventing instances of social violence. The ecology of peace provides a space to learn social values that reflect sociability and care at the micro- and macro-societal levels. This is achievable via social justice that is nurtured in interpersonal relationships, starting from birth and running through parenting and socialisation at the macro level.

■ Peacebuilding in the context of cultural violence

In the progression from peacemaking to peacebuilding, the ecology of peace touches on cultural context. It is important to note that culture can become a driver of conflict and violence. In the context of conflicts, Noll (2003, p. 233) defines culture as ‘a set of beliefs, norms, rituals, and perspectives that people share within a group’. This understanding of culture explains how a collective of people could easily embrace an ideology and, in the name of culture, mobilise to behave in ways or adopt ideas that may be detrimental to either persons or other cultures and incidentally occasion cultural violence, which is defined by Galtung (1990, p. 291) as ‘any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form’. He notes further that, unlike the symbolic violence embodied in a culture that does not kill or maim, direct violence originates

from factors that are linked to culture; such violence is utilised ‘to legitimize either or both’.

Cultural violence is responsible for genocide, extremism, sectarian violence, ethnic cleansing, etc. From Noll’s (2003, p. 243) perspective, ‘[c]ulture comes from individual experience and is passed socially from peers or predecessors’. Based on the premise that the ecology of peace influences individual interactions at various levels of human development, Noll (2003, p. 234) asserts that ‘cultural beliefs are accepted without question; they tend to disappear from consciousness’. On this ground, the ecology of peace is even more relevant in terms of developing inner abilities and inclinations towards peacemaking from birth, parenting and ECD; these impact culture. The main players in peacebuilding in this environment are often unnoticeable; they are ordinary civilians who care for a child, nurturing a mindset imbued with peacemaking values as the child grows into adulthood.

■ **Peacebuilding in the context of economic and political violence**

At the macro level, the ecology of peace touches on political and economic contexts to move from peacemaking to peacebuilding (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). Political violence takes multiple forms and intersects with social, cultural and economic violence. The causes of political violence are embedded in social, religious, ideological, economic and cultural structures and become manifest as political violence. Terrorism, radicalisation and extremism stem from religious, economic and ideological motives. The complexity and interconnectedness of the drivers of displayed violence often blur the demarcation lines between these. Such multifaceted violence affects the tendencies of the youth and is displayed in the political arena. The link between social violence and other contexts that may compromise peace is apparent, for social violence, economic violence and cultural violence can translate into large-scale political violence. The factors that sustain political violence are embedded in economic, cultural and social structures. Because of the detrimental impact of social violence, which affects human security and ‘socio-economic development’ (Fox & Hoelscher 2010, p. 1), pinpointing actors involved in undermining peace is essential to identifying peacebuilding actors in this context.

■ **Rethinking and shifting to focus on key players in peacebuilding**

Two significant peacebuilding mechanisms have been employed to address conflicts in Africa: conventional structures, primarily represented by the AU’s peacekeeping missions and regional peacekeeping operations, and

indigenous approaches, which are increasingly utilised in the context of peacebuilding following large-scale human atrocities. While the former has focused on conflict contentions involving state actors and non-state actors, intra-state and regional conflicts, the latter have mostly been used as a response to immediate post-conflict atrocities and deployed as mechanisms of responding to the needs of justice, accountability, repair of harm and post-conflict national reconstruction. In these approaches, we acknowledge the role played by TRCs in some countries to pave the path to peace via national reconciliation.

Peacebuilding is extremely complex and works both pragmatically (as a process) and theoretically (as sets of paradigms and thoughts that may leverage peace). A synergic commitment to peace implies integrating its three approaches, namely peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding; the latter entails creating a setting for the sustainability of peace and societal stability. Peace is a vital aspiration of the human community, although humans err in discerning conflicts and leaning to confrontation when emotions prevail over rationality. Young children and their families have been exposed to violence in their closest environments (such as homes, schools and communities) across the globe (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012). Based on the evidence provided by neuroscience and neurobiological studies, ECD reveals unambiguously how lasting and intergenerational change can happen via interventions early in life (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 5). So, AÇEV argues that ‘to break the cycle of violence and promote peaceful societies, young children must be the focus’ (p. 5).

The ecology of peace, supported by evidence in the field, backs the mutual influence between neuroscience and peacebuilding. The interplay of the two suggests that peacebuilding is primarily a bottom-up and evolving process that should prioritise building the capacity to handle conflicts from social interactions early in an individual’s life. The seed of peace sown in a child and growing in a loving and caring environment is likely to transform the person and instil peaceful behaviours. This fact is supported by Noll’s 2006 work on *The neurology of conflicts and peaceful behaviors*, which describes our brains as constituting two distinct emotional systems that are relevant to conflict and peacemaking, and capable of identifying conflict behaviours. Noll notes that ‘the first system is selfish and directed towards self-preservation’ (p. 7); the second system is ‘consistent with descriptions of peaceful behaviors, is selfless and directed towards attachment, social bonding, and cooperation’ (Noll 2006, p. 7). The latter reflects the patterns of ECD’s peace culture developed by Yale University and Mother Child Education (AÇEV) Partnership (2012). Noll (2006) asserts that the second system is not as well understood as the first ‘fear response system’ (p. 7), but it lays the

foundation for mother-infant bonding, sexual pair attachment, group bonding and social cooperation. As with the selfish system, the selfless system comprises distinct neural networks controlled by neurotransmitters and neurohormones.

The interplay of neuroscience and peacebuilding has been a forgotten foundational phase of peacebuilding, to the extent that peacebuilding literature in the post-conflict context has remained silent about the major actors of peacebuilding discussed under the ecology of peace. The underlying assumptions of the ecology of peace maintain 'the viability of promoting peace through early childhood. These hypotheses are rooted in neurobiology, AB, parent education, early learning, and grassroots movements' (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 5). Despite the lack of sustained studies to test these hypotheses and further establish the effectiveness of parenting and early learning in developing peaceful behaviours throughout human personal development, credit should be given to grassroots actors (parents, caregivers, nurses and educators) who sow the seed of peace and nurture it until peaceful inclinations pervade the adult person's life.

Rethinking the priorities in peacebuilding and the key players in peacebuilding requires a systemic shift from emphasising post-conflict peacemaking and peacekeeping to developing peacemaking and peacebuilding capacities early at the ECD stage. The lack of such learning and teaching is possibly the cause of the recurrence of conflicts. Large-scale violence and the failure and inefficacy of the liberal and democratic peace provisions are displayed at national, regional and international levels. Conflict, war and other types of violence could be restrained by promoting the culture of peace via peace education. Building a culture of peace is based, first and foremost, on respect for human rights. Such respect, however, must go beyond mere acquiescence. This begins with the application of peaceful means of conflict resolution, which results in an increase in tolerance of other points of view and the development of an international understanding. The person then actively commits to doing things differently (Conley 2014). The *Resolution Adopted by the [UN] General Assembly: Culture of peace*, paragraph 2, calls for:

[7]he promotion of a culture of peace based on the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and on respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, the promotion of development, education for peace, the free flow of information and the wider participation of women as an integral approach to preventing violence and conflicts, and efforts aimed at the creation of conditions for peace and its consolidation. (United Nations 1998, p. 2)

The culture of peace is nurtured via education and using PBEST at the level of the ecology of peace. Building a culture of peace is based first

and foremost on respect for human rights; these values and the respect for the dignity of the human person, however, must go beyond mere acquiescence and acknowledgement of such. It begins with the application of peaceful means of conflict resolution that should be taught and learned in families, schools and the larger society. Enhancing the human capacity of tolerance and developing an international understanding of this can change nations' behaviour patterns that could act differently from what the world experiences today (Conley 2014). The next section will cover the most important aspects of culture of peace and nonviolence, and peace education. However, more studies are necessary to determine the impact of parenting and early learning in: (1) Promoting positive development and well-being in young children, (2) promoting peace building through improving interactions within the home and classroom, and among peers, and (3) promoting peace building through the formation of culturally diverse parenting groups, particularly groups of fathers. (Yale University & Mother Child Education [AÇEV] Partnership 2012, p. 5)

Future investigation in this area is essential to help develop policies and educational curricula that take the PBEST into consideration. The absence of AB in the development of children and youth can negatively affect human development and expose youths to violent behaviours. A study by Dianzenza and Harris (2022) highlights the role of parents in peacebuilding; they are described as primary peace educators. The authors note that the absence of many fathers from their children's lives shows deep negative social consequences. Four years after conducting training programmes in responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering, the training's effectiveness was evaluated. The results show that the formation given to the youths yielded positive outcomes: changes towards caring and loving fathering occurred among the trainees (Dianzenza & Harris 2022). It thus becomes evident that education for peace at an early age could stimulate peaceful attitudes and behaviours to curb violence.

■ Culture of peace and nonviolence, and peace education

According to United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) documents (UNESCO 2008, 2012b, 2013), the culture of peace and nonviolence is incomplete without specific and concrete actions; it should combine peace education and promoting attitudes and behaviours throughout the world, particularly in Africa, where conflict is endemic, and in other parts of the world (Ukraine, Russia, Palestine and Israel) entangled in a violent struggle.

■ Culture of peace

Building a culture of peace is based, first and foremost, on respect for human rights. This respect, however, must go beyond mere acquiescence. It begins with the application of peaceful means of conflict resolution, resulting in an increase in tolerance of other people's points of view and the development of an international understanding (Conley 2014). The *Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly* (Document A/52/L.4/Rev.1 and Add.1, Culture of peace) on the culture of peace, paragraph 2, calls for:

[7]he promotion of a culture of peace based on the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and on respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, the promotion of development, education for peace, the free flow of information and the wider participation of women as an integral approach to preventing violence and conflicts, and efforts aimed at the creation of conditions for peace and its consolidation [...]. (United Nations 1998, p. 2)

The UN was founded after the 'great and terrible' WWII to develop and keep peace through economic, social or political agreements; however, this is not enough because the foundations of peace are shaken and have yet to be consolidated with the help of the specialised agencies that make up the UN system (UNESCO 2012b, 2013). Since its foundation more than 60 years ago, UNESCO has taken up this mission in accordance with its Constitution, which affirms that '[s]ince wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed' (UNESCO 2012b, p. 4). In this regard, the same Constitution emphasises that:

[A] peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that [...] peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. (UNESCO 2012b, p. 4)

This mandate has endowed UNESCO with extensive experience in promoting mutual understanding while combating discrimination, intolerance and violence. Because of metastasising emerging international challenges and conflicts, there is a need for social cohesion in a world where individualism is increasing while solidarity is decreasing. Peace should be a daily commitment of all levels of society (UNESCO 2012b). The constant question remains: How best should a way of life of unity in diversity be approached to learn and foster living together by participating fully in the infinite richness of the world's cultures while avoiding the reflex of fear when faced with our differences? Thus, authentic and sustainable dialogue is obligatory to reimagine the advantages of cultural diversity for all, circumvent cultural and religious barriers, break stereotypes and steer people away from violence (UNESCO 2012b). A culture of peace is essential

to pursuing sustainable development and creating conditions for good living. The culture of peace is UNESCO's main strategic axis, along with sustainable development; these are two sides of the same coin (UNESCO 2012b). Peace has often been considered a critical condition for sustainable prosperity, and the well-being of the environment also relies on it. Today, sustainable development demands a rethinking of the ways that humans relate to the economy and how society interacts with the environment, keeping in mind that the present and future of humanity depend upon both individual and collective action – the kind of solidarity that can only be prompted by the culture of peace, nonviolence and dialogue that condenses 'what binds' cultures and societies together and from within (UNESCO 2012b). It is worth acknowledging that 'a culture of peace fosters sustainable development because it aims to help people to become resilient and creative with ethical, cultural, political, environmental and other transformations' (UNESCO 2012b, p. 10).

■ Peace education

Promoting a culture of peace and nonviolence through education is one of UNESCO's main missions. Children and women constitute the categories of people who are most tragically touched by conflicts and violence that ensue from hostilities around the globe, and they are, for the most part, innocent. A paper by UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report indicates that the number of children out of school has fallen from 60 million in 2008 to 57 million in 2011 (UNESCO 2012a). However, the benefits of this slow progress have not reached children in conflict-affected countries; they now make up 50% of children who are denied an education, up from 42% in 2008 (UNESCO 2012a, p. 1).

The contribution of world religion has been discernible, both in peace education and in leading initiatives aimed at national reconciliation, peacebuilding and democratic processes. More attention is needed to ensure that education systems contribute to building peaceful and sustainable societies. This includes integrating peace education and conflict prevention, where appropriate, throughout the education system.

■ The scientific community and peacebuilding

The ongoing research and literature made available to scientists in conflict resolution remains a considerable asset to peace processes in societies undergoing transition. The work of Reychler and Paffenholz (2001), which disseminates a wide range of research by scholarly peace scientists, is relevant to the field of peacebuilding, conflict resolution and transitional justice and is also an asset to efforts to build peace in the world. It is a

global resource that can greatly contribute to education and peacebuilding. From a similar perspective, the work of Kaye and Harris (2017) provides insightful and innovative methodological approaches to peacebuilding through action research. These two examples set the direction for future theoretical and pragmatic approaches to dealing with peace and advancing the needs of a harmonious world where a common understanding of social and common good cements interrelationships.

A scientific and systematic study of peace requires sound and rigorous structural planning to ensure that the investigation leads to valid and reliable results. Because of the multifaceted and complex nature of modern conflicts, science has provided concepts, methods, paradigmatic guidance and a conceptual framework that are useful and likely to produce scientific knowledge and develop strategies and policies that we can act on in the pursuit of peacebuilding. It is important to emphasise that complex issues such as peace and conflict resolution cannot rely on a single design or methodology. A simultaneous, pluralistic and pragmatic approach is needed. A pluralistic strategy involves a combination of methods, a strategy for collecting data and sampling research units, a combination of conceptual frameworks and a paradigmatic orientation.

Integrative research strategies that use mixed methods, combined paradigms and a conceptual framework in complementarity are common in research. For example, Mingers (2001) provides an in-depth examination at the desirability, feasibility, viability, challenges and practical guidance related to multi-method research. In support of the combined theoretical framework, Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) advocate a theory of peacebuilding and democracy that articulates the various ways of engagement that civil society utilises as a response to complex contemporary conflicts and the peacebuilding agenda. The two theories – namely, peacebuilding and democracy – are not mutually exclusive but complementary. On the one hand, peacebuilding aims at achieving positive peace; it encompasses activities and outcomes that include, but are not limited to, ‘negotiations, peacekeeping, trauma healing, poverty reduction and democratization’ (Paffenholz & Spurk 2006, pp. 15–16). On the other hand, democracy theory focuses on democratic values, rights, freedom, upholding the rule of law, and observing election processes, mechanisms and outcomes. It excludes other models of civil society (such as service delivery) that are not part of the democratisation agenda (Merkel & Lauth 1998, p. 10, cited in Paffenholz & Spurk 2006, p. 13).

In addition to these two theories, Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) associate development theory and discourse. These scholars argue that incorporating the ‘civil society discourse into democracy theory, along with civil society’s discourse on development and peacebuilding’ will clarify the meaning and

understanding of the role that civil society plays in peacebuilding (Paffenholz & Spurk 2006, p. 33). The interdisciplinary dimension of this book is discernible in the diversification of the overarching argument that focuses on peacebuilding and democracy as key drivers of peace and sustainable development. Peace should not be taken for granted; it needs to be nurtured and taught in educational curricula so that humans can grow as peacemakers, peacekeepers and peacebuilders.

■ Conclusion

The discussion on peacebuilding actors has shifted significantly to reconnoitre the impact of the ecology of peace in helping a child develop loving, caring and peaceful inclinations as he/she experiences this early in life. Further critical analysis of the assumptions and hypotheses surrounding the ecology of peace has led to the development of what I call PBEST. This peacebuilding framework acknowledges the fact that peacebuilding has a bottom-up evolutionary trajectory and suggests shifting the starting point of peacebuilding from a post-conflict stance to ECD, making this the cornerstone of both peacebuilding architecture and infrastructure. The seed of peace, empathy, care and love that germinates at the ecology of peace level continues to develop at the community networks level, the national networks level, the regional networks level and the international networks level because all individuals with shared inclinations for peace can only generate peace.

This theory is based on the assumptions of the ecology of peace and analyses and conclusions reached by the Yale University and Mother Child Education (AÇEV) Partnership (2012), the evidence provided by studies on the nexus of neuroscience and peacebuilding (Britto & Engle 2015; Britto et al. 2014), the analyses of the implications of the neuropsychology of conflicts for peacemaking (Noll 2006), and the neurobiological knowledge of how rituals and emotions can back peacemaking (Pouligny et al. 2021). Society at large should develop policies and strategies capable of creating and maintaining safer spaces for ECD, monitor each child's behaviours, identify the signs of weak levels of OT and increase this neurobiological brain nutrient to ensure that each child grows with empathetic feeling, starting with the child's immediate environment. This is a determinant factor in shaping violent or peaceful interactions, relationships and future behaviours. These pathways are effective routes to peace.

Civil society, democracy and peacebuilding

■ Introduction

Since 24 April 1991, the DRC has been experiencing a proliferation of CSOs and their free operation in the political space that Mobutu inaugurated after relinquishing his position as the MPR's president in a historic speech that sealed the demise of the MPR and opened the era of the multi-party system. Five years later, a rebellion started in the eastern provinces backed by Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, and it turned into a full-fledged revolution led by LD Kabila. This period is remembered for the atrocities of the two African World Wars fought within the DRC, where a host of armed groups sought to overthrow successive regimes to that of Mobutu. Because of the collapse of public administration as a result of the severity of armed conflicts, several CSOs worked in parallel to the government emerging from the wars. These organisations were committed to delivering the social and public goods that the DRC government could not at a time when the country was confronted with multifaceted challenges.

This chapter explores civil society's historical and contextual development and its emergence in the DRC. It explores the semantic evolution of the notion of 'civil society' and its role in the democratisation process in general and in that of the DRC. It further examines the role played by a platform called *Agir pour des élections transparentes et apaisées* (AETA) [Acting for

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transparent and peaceful elections], an influential CSO that was significantly involved in the DRC's democratisation process to ensure the polls were conducted peacefully and transparently (Kiyala & Bisambu 2022). Subsequently, the chapter discusses the following themes: how civil society is organised, its components and its areas of action, which are all relevant to this investigation. It further examines civil society's role in democratic processes, particularly in the DRC (especially faith-based CSOs). The trajectory of the democratisation process in the DRC is considered, along with the civic engagement of the DRC's civil society, especially the National Civil Society Consultation Framework (NCSCF) and the National Order of Electoral Experts (NOEE). Finally, this chapter provides useful insights into the interconnectedness between civil society and public administration. It is clear that civil society, public administration and democracy are interlinked theories and practices as they influence each other. When public administration fails to deliver democracy and other basic and public services, civil society can supplement the work of public administration – importantly, in the context of failed states.

■ Semantic development

The notion of 'civil society' has evolved throughout history and has distant origins in Greek antiquity. This concept dates back to the fourth century BC, in the Aristotelian notion of *koinōnia politikè* (literally translated as 'political community'), and in its many Latin translations (*societas civilis* [civil society] and *communitas civililis* [civil community]), which we owe to Cicero and with the help of which the ancient world defined the political unity of the city [*polis, civitas*] (Laudani 2012). Jaysawal (2013, p. 1) notes that the use of the term 'civil society' is increasingly trivialised and is often confusing because of the fact that its connotations vary in the ways it is used by politicians, scientists, economists, the media and even citizens in general. This makes the definition of civil society diverse, and it denotes a versatile concept that sometimes becomes the vehicle of ideologies that empty it of its true *ratio legis* (Jaysawal 2013, p. 1).

While the concept of 'civil society' in its classical usage refers to the state, its meaning in modern politics is owed to the philosophers of Enlightenment, from Thomas Paine to Georg Hegel in the 18th century, and it is equated with 'a domain parallel to, but separated from, the state: a realm where citizens associate according to their own interests' (Carothers & Barndt 1999, p. 18). According to Alexis de Tocqueville, it is the place of birth and exercise of civic virtues such as participation; it represents the 'School of Democracy and Freedom' (Cvetek & Daiber 2009). In addition, it stands for a public political body which observes and criticises the state's actions. This understanding implies, therefore, that the existence of civil society is necessary for the survival of democracy (Cvetek & Daiber 2009).

The philosopher Georg Hegel believed that the concept of civil society designates:

[A]n independent environment, outside the natural sphere of the family and the higher sphere of the state, [where] citizens, as private persons, [can] pursue their legitimate [special] interests (first, their economic interests), settle their differences and, to some extent, settle their affairs. (Cvetek & Daiber 2009, p. 7)

Hegel's view refers to the fact that civil society represents a collective force distinct from the state, family and business and seeks the welfare of citizens. Civil society provides checks on businesses and the state or political community and maintains its role of balancing the excesses of these two forces for the interests of the entire civil community.

Despite the concept originating from the philosophical school, the theoretical and practical usage of civil society has become a significant part of political, economic and social discourse, particularly in the context where peace is sought after conflict or failed democratic processes and in the aftermath of large-scale violent confrontation and armed conflict. Civil society has moved from being what defines a civil community and distinguishes it from a business, political and economic community to being an independent platform that dynamically pursues the welfare of all. In terms of the areas of its commitment or its functions, civil society embraces civil protection (locally and internationally) and the monitoring of the security and human rights situation (locally and internationally); it is involved in advocacy (locally and internationally) and in socialisation (by promoting inter-group bonding and pursuing peace agendas locally and globally); it plays an important role internationally in facilitation and mediation during contested democratic processes and political transition; and finally, civil society seeks to intervene for service delivery where wars have destroyed vital structures that provide a service to society (Paffenholz 2015).

Civil society comprises a constellation of various organisations that pursue different goals, depending on their nature and the cause they are committed to defending. Hamuli Kabarhuza, Mugumo and Shuku (2003, p. 25) describe civil society as a particularly large and heterogeneous mosaic, the contours of which, complex to establish, continue to extend as two or more individuals decide to exercise their freedom and their right of association by founding an organisation that allows them to achieve their objectives together, in accordance with the law, and regardless of the unauthorised intrusion of the public authorities into their functioning.

According to Cvetek and Daiber (2009), civil society is considered a sphere within society that has emerged between the state and private business sectors or between the state, the market and the family. It pursues objectives and advances the interests of the *res publica* community. Thus, civil society's actors are involved in politics without targeting state

functions – they prefer to keep an independent position *vis-à-vis* political actors and promote the development of societies, otherwise characterised by the term ‘democratisation’. The term ‘civil society’ often serves as a political call demanding ‘more democracy’. The concept of civil society could incorporate that of democracy without disregarding the other two components of society: The family and the economy. In *The Philosophy of Law* (1820), Georg Hegel asserts that modern society, and only the latter, comprises three levels: the family, civil society and the state (Pelczynski 1984). Participative democracy does not exclude any of these three components. To illustrate this point, McLaverty (2002) notes:

Given their importance for the workings of the state and politics in general and the time people spend in such institutions, any moves towards the creation of a democratic society which ignores those two arenas [family and economy], where power in capitalist, liberal democracies is very unequally distributed, will be inadequate. (p. 315)

The form of direct democracy is, therefore, a clear emanation of civil society, the result of the function and role it plays for citizens. Warren (2011) conducted a study exploring the potential connections between civil society’s functions, dimensions and models and their impact on democracy, examining how these relationships can either deepen democratic engagement or lead to a disconnect. The linkages between civil society and the concept of democracy create the consciousness that the former cannot be indifferent to the latter because, as noted by Warren (2011), the contributions of civil society to democracy can be explored from various angles and features of association that allow one to establish how CSOs contribute to democracy.

According to Cossette-Lefebvre (2016), modern democracy has given birth to a bipolar societal conception between the state and civil society, which organise themselves in discordant logics with respect to one another, although constantly having to communicate. He asserts that civil society is a decentralised space, characterised by a variety of organisations, identities and social movements. In contrast, the state, which seeks to regulate society, serves as the centralised source of legitimate political decisions. These two components of society each have their strengths and limitations. Moreover, while the state operates within a legal framework supported by the possibility of coercion, civil society refers to voluntary associations that are neither mandated nor organised by state institutions. They differ, in addition, regarding economic activities because their goal is not to make a profit or to impose themselves on an economic market (Cossette-Lefebvre 2016, p. 169). Civil society supports democratic behaviour and promotes tolerant and peaceful values within society, and therefore, as a theory and practice, it pursues the well-being of the community – primarily through the collective defence of the interests of its members, without seeking a profit in return.

■ Civil society's role in democratisation and electoral processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Amid political quarrels, many Zaïrians and Congolese continue to lose their lives in protracted armed conflict. In 2008, Moszynski (2008) reported that 5.4 million people had died in the DRC since 1998 as a result of conflict. Similarly, Coghlan et al. (2006) reported the same mortality rate in the DRC. According to a World Without Genocide Report (2023), close to 6 million people have been killed since the First Congo War in 1996; the DRC has been embroiled in violence that has killed as many as 6 million people. From an article originally published in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Stroehlein (2015) of the International Crisis Group observed that 1,000 people die daily in the DRC, an estimation made in 2015. Three years later, in 2018, the DRC's death toll continued to increase, and it is conjectured to have reached 12 million; these casualties are attributed to the war that started in 1994 in Rwanda and its consequences for the DRC during the First African World War (1996) and the Second African World War (1998), coupled with the actions of neighbouring countries in plundering the DRC's mineral resources (ACN 2018). The crimes of the DRC have been ignored, even though several studies have described the DRC's mortality rate relating to armed conflicts as the deadliest since WWII (Coghlan et al. 2008). The geopolitical wars have cost the lives of more than 12 million people in the DRC. Hundreds of children are dying of hunger daily. According to the UN WFP, the DRC is responsible for half of the rise in hunger in sub-Saharan Africa (Lappé et al. 2013).

Regarding mortality, the rate is constantly increasing as armed conflicts persist in the east of the country. However, the time of impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity may be coming, as noted by Vignoli (2024):

On October 14, the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor, Karim A. A. Khan, announced that his office would step up investigative efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, focusing in particular on crimes committed in the North Kivu province since January 2022. This action was prompted by the Congolese government's request to the ICC last year. (n.p.)

In the same vein, recently, Nobel Prize Laureate Dr Denis Mukwege has been raising his voice, calling for the implementation of the UN Mapping Report (United Nations 2010a, 2010b). In several press releases, such as in *AP News* (Petesch 2020), and a recent interview following general consultations called by the DRC's President Félix Tshisekedi, Dr Mukwege advocated on 09 November 2020 that there should be accountability for all the crimes committed in the DRC. In addition, he supported that the recommendations of the 2010 UN Mapping Report be implemented to curb the endemic

impunity that contributes to systemic insecurity and recurring human rights violations and recommended that there should be transitional justice mechanisms and reparations for the female victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, Dr Mukwege suggested that a second survey of ongoing human rights violations in the DRC should be pursued, along with setting up an ICC for the DRC that would investigate and indict all perpetrators of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide in the DRC. In this context of constant fear in which people live in the eastern DRC (Vinck et al. 2008) because of ongoing interethnic, community and regional conflict, as well as conflict related to the exploitation of rich mineral reservoirs, thousands of people in the DRC live with recurrent internal displacements, or as refugees in neighbouring countries. Many others have lost their homes, land, natural sources of income, etc.

Agir pour des Elections Transparentes et Apaisées [Acting for Transparent and Peaceful Elections] and other CSOs have strived to build on the proclamation made by President Mobutu on 24 April 1990, at a meeting during which, with deep emotions perceptible in the way he broke into tears, the 'leopard', as Mobutu was called, made an utterance that marked a turning point as he opened the Zaïrean political environment to a multi-party system. Following 25 years of unchallenged reign, Marshal Mobutu announced the departure from the single-party system in Zaïre at a rally attended by ministers, magistrates, generals and parliamentarians. Mobutu declared the following:

[A]lone before my conscience to try the experiment of political pluralism in our country [in Zaïre], with at the base the principle of the freedom for each citizen to adhere to the political formation of his choice [...] What becomes of the leader in all of this? [...] I announce to you that I am taking this day off from the Popular Revolutionary Movement, to allow it to choose a new leader to lead [...] [*Silence of a few seconds from the Leopard, followed by an almost pleading look in the direction of the audience, and which ends with three little words that have become famous*] 'Understand my emotion'. (Liffran 2018, n.p.)

This melancholic speech of Mobutu represented a significant move towards the democratisation of all institutions. Unfortunately, this dream for the political transformation of Zaïre was squashed by the rebellion led by LD Kabila, which toppled Mobutu on 17 May 1997.

In 1990, the Republic of Zaïre moved from a mono-party democracy (entailing the entire country going to the polls to elect one single candidate from one exclusive party) to a pluralist democracy, where there was a clash of ideologies and governance programmes among those parties that contested power. The first attempt at pluralist politics had been crushed by Mobutu after he was sworn in as President of the DRC following the 1970 election. The end of the mono-party rule was the start of a promising future because the MPR strengthened Mobutu's hold on power in the country that

he had ruled for more than three decades as an autocratic leader. In the New York Times, Noble (1990) reported:

Mr. Mobutu has wielded nearly absolute power in the sprawling Central African country since taking power in November 1965. Since 1970 every citizen of Zaïre has been required to be a member of the ruling party, the Popular Movement for the Revolution.

Mobutu's rule was decried and described as 'an African horror' (Berkeley 1993). A full discussion of Mobutu's despotic rule is beyond the scope of this chapter. Several writers have put together a thorough, non-complacent depiction of the nature, extremes, self-interested ruling style and political personality of Mobutu, which was disastrous (Berkeley 1993; Reno 1997), to the extent that Zaïre became the battleground of the First African World War (Kabemba 2001). This war ended with a new path to the second wave of democracy, which was crafted in the *Comprehensive and Inclusive Agreement* by the belligerents at Sun City on 17 December 2002 and adopted on 01 April 2003, paving the way to transition in the DRC. The *Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement on Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo* halted an approximately 5-year-long civil war involving seven countries (the DRC, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Chad against Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi) and their proxies fighting inside the DRC. This negotiated ending of war helped to promote reconciliation and promised accountability, as well as justice for war victims. Its signing was ratified in the presence of the heads of state of Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Among the achievements of this peace deal were a provisional constitution and a transitional government of one president and four vice presidents in a '1 + 4' presidency formula; all were former belligerents. General elections were then organised in 2006, but the outcomes did not reflect the truth of the polls, as was also observed in the elections that followed in 2008. The opacity of the way in which elections have been conducted in the DRC raised several questions about the future of democracy and indicated an environment of political mistrust, uncertainties and fragile peace. This required a massive involvement of citizens' movements to ensure that democracy remained an acceptable instrument of power sharing and power transfer.

According to Malu-Malu (2018), the CLC, created in Kinshasa, extended its actions to other cities. Its first march took place in Kinshasa in 2017, the call for the second was extended to other dioceses of the DRC and the third called for mobilisation across the country. During the third debate organised in N'djili municipality, in Kinshasa, a statement from the CLC invited the Congolese to march on 31 December 2017. This allowed the movement to spread across the various dioceses of the country. A pause was then observed because of the damages that ensued from these protests and the loss of life, in particular during the march of 31 December 2017, which was brutally repressed by the police, resulting in seven people

shot dead, 127 injured and several arrested (Malu-Malu 2018). The action of the CLC, which advocates non-violent actions, has had long-term effects and will be remembered for the peaceful transfer of power from Joseph Kabila to Félix Tshisekedi. It is worth noting that those who take part in protests organised by Filimbi and La LUCHA⁴⁰ are primarily young people, though a significant number of adults associate themselves with the objectives for which the DRC's youths have become the main actors in civic movements. Youth are at the forefront for various reasons, mainly because of the multiple deprivations to which they are a victim. These include a lack of education opportunities and unemployment.

Civil society, in its composite configuration, has played a leading role in anticipating strategic responses to counteract efforts to sabotage or corrupt the DRC's voting system, which is known as a system of appointments for the congress members. Lighting hope, influencing and mobilising the energies required for the benefit of the advent of full democratisation of the country's institutions, the DRC's CSOs bespeak autonomous commitment rooted in their own civic values, supported by the desire to attain the common good and social justice. *Agir pour des Elections Transparentes et Apaisées* [Acting for Transparent and Peaceful Elections], along with faith-based organisations (such as the Catholic Church) and citizens' movements, have proven how coordinated actions and selfless engagement for a noble cause, such as the pursuit of respect for civil liberties and human rights, can prevail over brutal and cowardly dictatorships.

■ Faith-based civil society and democratisation process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

As one of the components of civil society, the Church has often been criticised for not being democratic in its own institutions. Some tendencies have indicated that the Church should not mingle with temporal affairs and politics should be left to politicians. However, other views have raised concerns that politics is too important to be left only to politicians because it deals with crucial matters in the life and destiny of the *res publica*. Thus, everybody and every institution should participate in policies and decision-making in the state. As an institution, the Church plays its prophetic role and responds to its mandate to bring the kingdom of God into the world. This mission affects political life as Nthamburi (1999) expresses it:

Cultural, socio-political and economic struggles to overcome evil and oppression take place under divine presence. Salvation of individuals is not possible apart from

40. Filimbi Group and la LUCHA are human rights activists' organisations involved in the struggle of justice, respect of the human person's dignity, human rights and civil liberties.

the salvation of the world. Therefore, the Church must of necessity, move from being an institution of crisis management that puts bandages on the casualties of oppression (Luke 10:25–37) to an institution that equips men and women to become innovators of social transformation under the divine will. (p. 137)

I will examine how the Church can play a role in politics. Religion can educate political discourse and serve an important pedagogical role in democracy. Chepkwony argues that the Church has the means to communicate to its faithful the transcendental nature of democracy in relation to human aspirations and destiny. This civic education allows citizens to understand why political reforms are necessary and that the management of political parties and getting involved in the democratic and electoral process should not be undermined. Chepkwony writes: ‘The success of democracy lies in putting in place social, political, cultural, religious and people-centered educational institutions’ (Chepkwony 1999, p. 105). In a similar vein, Magesa traces the concept of democracy in the Christian tradition, namely in the concepts of the Trinity, family and African clan, which are founded on harmonious interaction, co-responsibility and unity. He argues that democracy is sustained by the following principles:

- Respect for the inalienable rights of individuals or groups of individuals within the context of a larger society.
- Respect for the dignity of the human element in every person or group, which presupposes the principle just mentioned.
- The preservation of the integrity and life of the community as a vital, just and harmonious community (Magesa 1999).

Democracy is measured using these elements as evaluation tools and sustaining the rule of law. A regime is called democratic if these components are observed. The Church can inspire democracy through its own mechanisms of subsidiarity, solidarity, participation and socialisation, which we believe can have an impact on consolidating democracy (Magesa 1999). Jesus’ Ministry and Teaching consisted of breaking down the walls of inequalities and structural injustices that separated the rich from the poor and enforced social stratification. His kingdom was based on love, justice and peace. Distributive justice was an imperative. About power, He taught that authority was service. He warned his disciples against authoritarianism:

You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mk 10:42–45)

In Zaïre, the Catholic Episcopal Conference was very vocal against the dictatorial regime of President Mobutu. Small Christian communities took up political matters and civic education. The faithful were guided by the

Amos Group⁴¹ to fight against corruption, injustices, and the autocratic rule of the MPR, which had taken the whole country hostage. During the transitional period, the Christians protested and marched against Mobutu's dictatorship.

On 16 February 1992, an important march called 'The March of Hope' was organised by the Catholic Church hierarchy and civil society. This nationwide protest against Mobutu's anti-democratic stance was successful and played a crucial role in pressuring Mobutu to allow the democratisation process to proceed. The 16th March protest emerged as a liberation event that enhanced political transformation, and Mobutu realised that the democratic process was irreversible. The Church played its prophetic role and activism for social justice to ensure the dehumanising governance system of Zaïre was transformed, and democracy and the rule of law prevailed.

■ The Democratic Republic of the Congo and its relationship to civil society

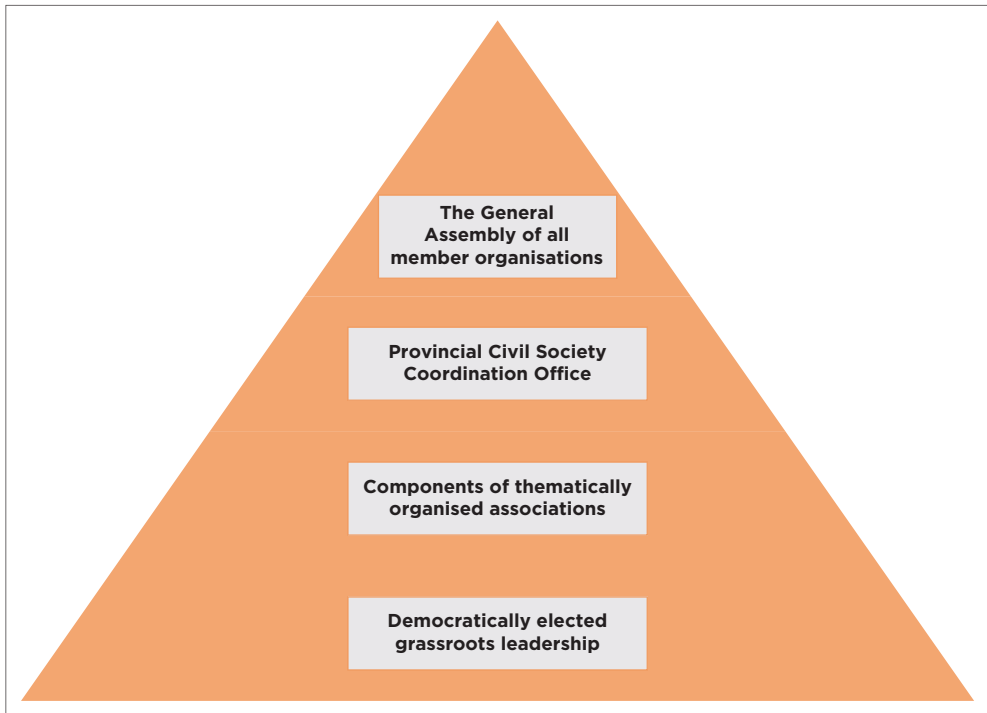
Civil society organisations in the DRC emerged in the 1880s, during the time of the Congo Free State (or the Independent State of Congo), which was administered by King Leopold II before becoming the Belgian Congo in 1908 (Kiyala 2022a). Their inception went through the following steps:

- The authorisation of private association by the Decree of 28 December 1888
- The recognition of the existence, validity and legality of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Congo by the Decree of 18 March 1912
- The granting of civil personality to CSOs by the Decree-Law of 01 March 1914
- The authorisation for the creation of non-profit public utility establishments by the Decree of 19 July 1926 (Kiyala 2022a; Kouassi 2008).

These four legal frameworks (Figure 11.1) provided the opportunity for the future development of CSOs, before the prominent role these organisations played during the SNC (1990–1992) (Kiyala 2022a).

Civil society organisations now play two significant roles in the DRC's communities' political and social lives: (1) Being the watchdog of public administration and (2) delivering social and public services where the government fails to shoulder its responsibilities. The nexus between civil society and public administration has been given limited attention in scholarly works despite its relevance in contemporary societies emerging

41. The Amos Group is an association initiated by the local clergy in Kinshasa (DR Congo) to raise awareness about social injustices and denounce the anti-democratic practices of Mobutu's dictatorship.



Source: Adapted from Kiyala, 2022a, pp. 251–269.

FIGURE 11.1: Structure of civil society in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

from a legacy of large-scale violence, where infrastructure and basic state structures that provide public and social services have been demolished. Civil society organisations (Box 11.1) have played a critical role in such societies, including the DRC (Kaganda & Kiyala 2022; Kiyala 2022a; Kiyala & Bisambu 2022).

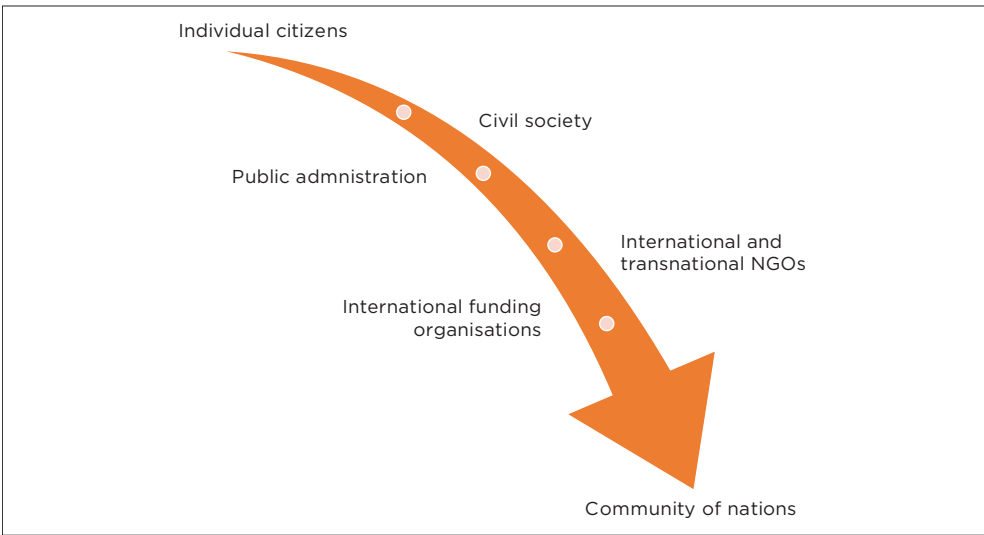
The objectives of public administration, such as the delivery of social and public goods for collective and individual welfare, are pursued by a progressive system that starts with an individual whose role is essential (whether at an individual, collective or organisational level) where several layers of agency are required to achieve the objectives of public administration. This assertion reflects Manzoor’s (2014, p. 1) view on public administration, which emphasises the imperative of efficiency at all levels. He states that ‘[p]ublic organizations are responsible for providing the necessary public goods and services to the citizens but that too without any discrimination specifically based on affordability’ (p. 1). Furthermore, he argues that ‘[p]ublic administration is traditionally grounded in the achievement of efficiency in the work of public departments in pursuance of goals related to the provision of public goods and services’ (Manzoor 2014, p. 1). While this thesis emphasises efficiency that can be measured and quantified in

BOX 11.1: Civil society's opportunities.

• Monitoring peace and easing disputes in the context of increasing political conflicts and military confrontations, and promoting interaction among citizens' movements
• Mobilising the resources available for development and ending recurring armed conflicts
• Opportunity for research on conflicts related to ethnicity and land control
• Fighting the mercantile spirit of economic operators that exploit children and fuel mineral resource conflicts
• Monitoring and implementation of peace agreements in inter-community and identity conflicts
• Redress social inequalities and tackle failures of service delivery and ongoing protests
• Fighting unequal access to education and advancing the promotion of human rights and gender equality
• Safeguarding democracy and peace
• Fighting against mismanagement or misuse of natural resources in organisations
• Militating the independence of civil society, its neutrality and cooperation among NGOs and citizens' movements.

Source: Kiyala 2022a, p. 266.

Key: NGOs, non-governmental organisations.



Source: Author's own work.

Key: NGOs, non-governmental organisations.

FIGURE 11.2: Trajectory of delivery of social and public goods.

business-related organisations and state institutions and departments (Manzoor 2014), the individual's role in pursuing the goals of public administration as civil society are often qualitatively appreciated. The fact is that the pursuit and achievement of public goods involve a complex web of interactions in which civil society is involved. It goes from micro-level (individual) to meso-level (civil society, state/national) to macro-level (international and transnational non-governmental organisations and the community of nations) (Figure 11.2).

As an important member of DRC civil society, Cardinal Monsengwo exemplifies the micro-level (individual) aspect of civil society. He openly criticised the political establishment and did not conceal his political opposition to Joseph Kabila's regime at the end of 2017, despite a ban on and systematic dispersal of all gatherings. In his fight for social justice, democracy and justice for human rights violations and alleged war crimes in the DRC, he has never spared his energies to advocating and lobbying for respect for democratic principles and a peaceful transition in the conflict-torn DRC. After his ascendancy to the HCR-PT (1992-1996), Cardinal Monsengwo played a prominent role in unlocking the vibrancy of the democratic process and the search for a smoother transition and transfer of power, though such engagement landed him in trouble and caused him to suffer abuse by the DRC politicians who were determined to maintain the *status quo*. These included the cronies of Presidents Mobutu and Joseph Kabila. Monsengwo's struggle for peace reverberates in the ongoing civil society commitment to pursue full democratisation and ensure the future of democracy in the DRC.

Earlier research I conducted in the DRC's war-torn North Kivu province identified four key activities for CSOs: (1) training and educating civil society actors and leaders; (2) introducing peacebuilding programmes at all educational levels; (3) sharing expertise with international CSOs/NGOs and (4) glocalisation and contextualisation training models and intervention strategies (Kiyala 2022a, p. 262).

Seventy participants responded to surveys related to the role of CSOs in peacebuilding training and supporting training for good governance. Their recommendations encompassed the following (Kiyala 2022a):

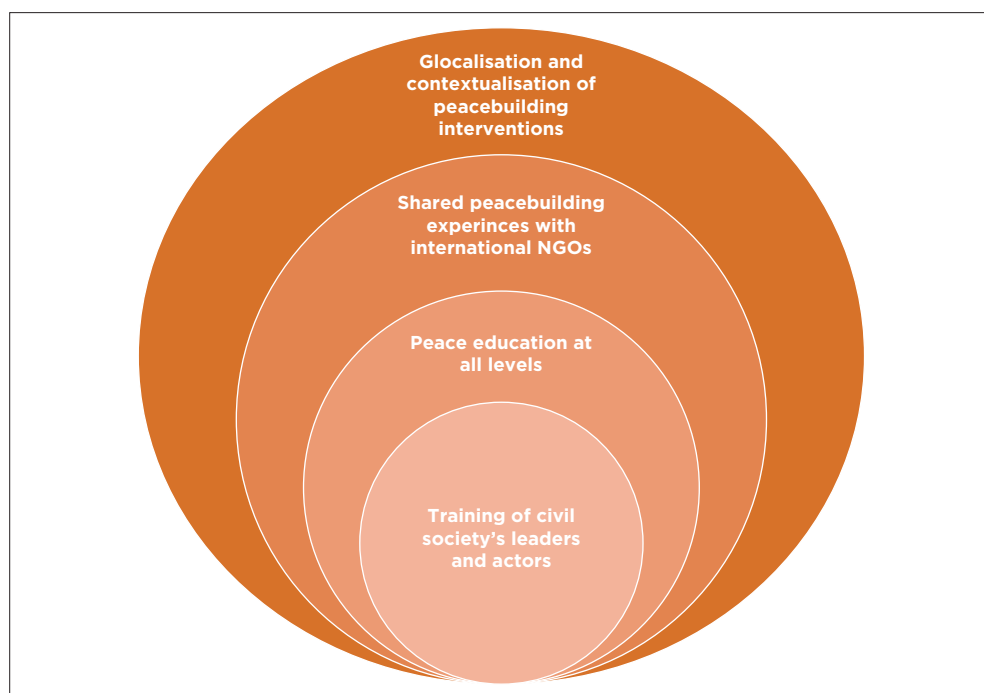
- Training of CSO actors and executives.
- Calling on international experts from NGOs to facilitate exchange programmes in peacebuilding, education and conflict prevention and resolution.
- Reviewing the education system to include curricula that deal with conflict resolution at all levels.
- Drawing from local wisdom, such as *Baraza* (Kiyala 2022b, 2022c), that taps into African social realities and ethos to develop realistic resolution and reconciliation approaches that are adapted to the DRC's context.
- Creating a group (an autonomous and independent think tank) to investigate all drivers of conflicts further and assist local organisations in tackling the identified root causes of conflicts.
- Integrating conflict management courses into the curriculum of primary and secondary schools.
- Introducing peacebuilding into the higher learning syllabus and encouraging scientific research in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

- Organising conferences on conflict resolution at various levels of communities (rural, urban and in higher learning environments).
- Organising listening sessions where people can share their frustrations and worries relating to conflicts.
- Creating radio broadcasts on conflict resolution.

Figures 11.3 and 11.4 illustrate the various levels of interactions within the PBEST; they further unveil the different spheres of intervention where civil society could make a significant impact in the DRC. Thereby:

[7]he context of civil society's action in this investigation covers the areas of democratisation and political transition to which we apply the peacebuilding theory. This methodological pluralism is deemed appropriate to anticipate and respond to the complexities associated with efforts to bring about political transformation and ease political transition in the aftermath of many decades of authoritarian rule and protracted armed [*conflict*]. (Kiyala & Bisambu 2022, pp. 273–274)

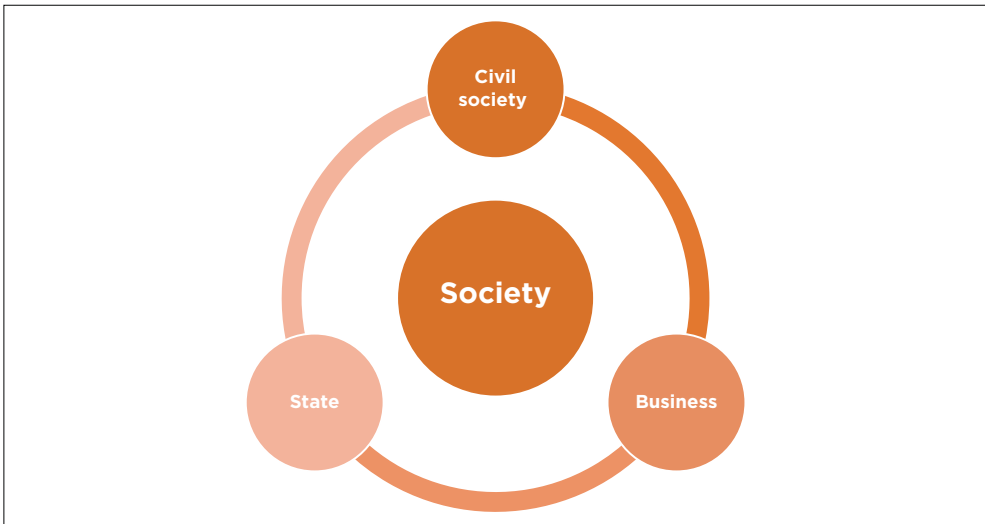
It is evident that civil society plays a significant role in the social and political sphere, and it remains a key player in dialogue, negotiations and other efforts susceptible to promoting both peace and democratisation processes.



Source: Author's own work.

Key: NGOs, non-governmental organisations.

FIGURE 11.3: Layers of civil society's effectiveness enterprise.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 11.4: Interlinks between three spheres of influence on society.

■ Civil society and public administration

Kryshtanovych et al. (2023) conducted a study based on modelling and established that ways of interaction exist between society and the public administration system; these are further linked to the planning of sustainable development policies. In a similar vein, Voronov et al. (2019) have attempted to craft a legal concept of public administration from the vantage point of administrative law, a legal frame of reference that conveys the essence of public administration and its translation into functional mechanisms in state administration via various concerned sectors, particularly in the context of Russia (Voronov et al. 2019). These scholars frame the parameters for understanding public administration using a composite organic triad within which the essential tasks and functions of the state administration are implemented. This compounded activity entails:

1. Satisfy the interests of the individual and institutions of civil society.
2. Implement administrative functions of state administration.
3. Protect public order, combat crimes and administrative offences, as well as to ensure the safety of the individual, civil society and the state. (Voronov et al. 2019, p. 250)

The authors also suggest a delimitation of legal relations between public administration and state administration to avert any violations of rights by representatives of state authorities, their officials and individuals (Voronov et al. 2019). This statement consolidates the view that civil society is a legitimate partner of the state in managing and distributing public goods.

The DRC is a case in point, where the interaction between civil society and public administration is noticed when state administration fails to provide public and social goods.

Waddell (2002) presents three organisation types that share core competence: The state, business and civil society. He notes that there is increasing partnership between business, civil society and government, most probably because organisations are discovering new approaches to achieve their primary goals; as he explains: 'An organisation is looking for partners who can do what it cannot, because it does not possess the critical skills and resources' (Waddell 2002, p. 43). He observes that developing core competence that can foster collaboration involving the three organisations is done 'by identifying distinguishing attributes, strengths and weaknesses associated with the distinct logics of business, government and civil society organisations' (Waddell 2002, p. 43). This model provides a useful set of instruments that assist in analysing challenges and the required support for their strategic development (Waddell 2002). The relationship between civil society and public administration is better expounded by this search for collaboration, particularly in post-conflict societies needing speedy service delivery and reconstruction of dilapidated infrastructure. Civil society's various functions are important in engaging businesses and the state in collaborative actions to achieve its goals. The three spheres are interlinked (Figure 11.4) and could be further understood through the lens of the Core collaboration competencies developed by Waddell (2002).

The DRC is a peculiar context that evidences the interconnections between public administration, peacebuilding and how civil society intervenes to leverage and scrutinise the government's management and implementation of programmes and policies that intend to achieve the welfare of the masses.

■ Conclusion

This chapter explored the concepts of civil society, including its definition, functions and interactions with democracy in the context of the DRC. It argued that civil society plays a significant role in the DRC's ongoing democratic process and post-conflict nation-building, particularly given the vast challenges the state faces in providing social and public goods and ensuring the welfare of the Congolese people. The core competence model of collaboration, developed by Waddell (2002), promotes cooperation among the state, business and civil society. This approach should be adopted by the DRC government to enhance the capacity of public administration in achieving its goals. More efforts need to be made by the

DRC government to allow CSOs and peacebuilding actors to operate without fear in order to back it up where service delivery is lagging and where democratic processes face enormous technical and credibility challenges. Collaboration between the three spheres of influence on society should be strengthened in terms of empowerment, building competence and developing adequate resources that are required for a joint or individual effort to achieve peace, mature democracy, and post-conflict nation-building and development. Civil society's activism and civic engagement in the DRC are expected to continue for many years until the DRC becomes an 'enduring state' and can fulfil all its obligations towards the nation and its people.

PART 4

**Empirical studies on
public administration,
peacebuilding and
development in the
Democratic Republic
of the Congo**

Public administration, peacebuilding and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

■ Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding theory to establish the extent to which public administration can inform peace by putting in place adequate mechanisms of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, conflict transformation and consolidating peace and addressing the underlying drivers of violence, such as rural exodus, displacement of people and insecurity. The DRC is used as a case study, concentrating on the South Kivu province and its capital, Bukavu, as this is one of the epicentres of violence, along with Goma in North Kivu.

This inquiry aimed to determine the links between public administration and peacebuilding through both literary and empirical data. It explores how failed public administration contributes to the perpetuation of multifaceted forms of violence, including structural violence, which is the mother of all forms of violence (Galtung 1969). I use a concept of public administration based on how Thornhill and Van Dijk (2010) and Stivers (2000) frame this

How to cite: Kiyala, JCK 2025, 'Public administration, peacebuilding and development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo', *Public administration, democracy and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, AOSIS Books, Cape Town, pp. 279–327. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2025.BK457.12>

theory – as a ‘discourse’ – that is used as an entry point in identifying what public administration entails in this study. Public administration tasks here include upholding the rule of law, which stands as the foundation upon which peace is built, and post-conflict recovery is pursued and attained (Bergling et al. 2008); it is concerned with individual rights (Rosenbloom, O’leary & Chanin 2017); it is related to multiple approaches of good governance in post-conflict states; it pursues positive peace and it explores peace as an essentially contested concept (Rosenbloom et al. 2017).

■ Aims and objectives of the study

This inquiry aims to assess the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding, examining how the connection between these two concepts informs and strengthens peace and addresses the drivers of structural violence. This investigation pursues five specific objectives, conveyed by the following questions:

1. How is public administration related to, or not related to, peacebuilding in the context of protracted conflicts and endemic violence in South Kivu?
2. How can public administration contribute to and work against preventing violence and building peace?
3. To what extent do peacebuilding and violence prevention rely upon effective public administration?
4. How can effective public administration leverage positive peace?
5. To what degree can the nexus of public administration and peacebuilding become the driver of durable peace and sustainable development?

The inquiry is conducted under the assumption that the DRC is home to protracted violence and insecurity because of an ineffective public administration, which subsequently impedes positive peace and sustainable development. A solution to this conundrum requires the DRC to have good governance and move from its current status of ‘failed state’ to ‘enduring state’. ‘Enduring state’ is used here in the way it was conceptualised by the London School of Economics and Political Science (2006).

■ Conceptual analysis

An analysis of concepts used in an inquiry is worthy of attention, particularly when investigating complex phenomena such as violence and peace, in the context of ‘failed states’ symbolised and illustrated by the case of the DRC. Part 4 of this book discusses the notions of violence, peace and failed states and shows their application to the DRC through factual evidence that supports the theoretical parameters that define them.

■ Methodological approach

This case study employed literary methods (online and printed sources) and empirical data obtained via interviews and survey questionnaires in the DRC's South Kivu province between June and July 2023. It sought to understand the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding while establishing the effectiveness of public administration in preventing violence and its drivers and thus stimulating sustainable development. The case study design seeks to understand a phenomenon via in-depth descriptive questions developed to gain a profound knowledge of interactions in cases that lead to an in-depth grasp of the single case under investigation (Creswell et al. 2007). This design presents several advantages and theoretical benefits, which can be useful 'in terms of understanding, theory-building, theory development, and theory testing' (Ridder 2017, p. 281). In addition, a case study is traditionally recognised as a design that helps collect 'multiple forms of data – qualitative and quantitative – to gain a more complete understanding of the case' (Guetterman & Fetters 2018, p. 900). I began by collecting literary data to substantiate the perception of the DRC's depiction as a failed state, notably because of its dysfunctional public administration, which is seen as the main problem faced by the country. That was further substantiated by quantitative data I used to measure the assumptions of the inquiry, namely that the DRC's public administration has neither sufficient nor viable mechanisms or structures to re-establish peace and maintain it, and hence forge the path to sustainable development.

■ Sampling

Purposive, snowballing and convenience sampling techniques were used to obtain a sample size of 152 from a population of 260. This sample size ensures a confidence level of 95%, with a margin of error of 5%. The population proportion is 50%, and the total population size is 260.⁴²

Recruitment of research participants is a very important dimension of scientific inquiry, especially when humans are used as sources of data. It allows the researcher to establish a connection with prospective participants and help enhance interest in the investigation to be undertaken. Manohar et al. (2018) observe: 'Research studies are often time and labor intensive, and inappropriate recruitment of research participants can significantly impact the study findings' (p. 71). Considering the challenges associated with this component of empirical research, after obtaining the gatekeepers' permission to use the Université Évangélique en Afrique as a research site,

42. Sample size generated by online sample size calculator: <https://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html?type=1&cl=95&ci=5&pp=50&ps=250&x=117&y=17> (17 September 2023).

I proceeded with a self-administered survey of students and included other categories of participants to have a heterogeneous sample frame that helped generate a broader understanding of the problem from the perspective of various social strata.

The main inclusion criteria of the inquiry was exposure to structural violence. All members of the population of Bukavu have experienced violence in multiple forms since 1996 because this town was the first to be seized by the revolutionary movement led by President LD Kabila, who overthrew President Mobutu in 1997. The region remains volatile because of intercommunal conflicts and violence that prompt constant displacements of people and a rural exodus. The outputs of this inquiry could become a catalyst for the re-establishment of peace and for the development that has long been impeded by protracted militarised identity and ethnic conflicts and that has been delayed because of the lack of strategies by the DRC Government to redress the situation.

■ Data analysis

On the process of combining methods (sequential and concurrent approaches), Mingers (2001, p. 250) affirms that '[s]equential methods are employed in sequence with results from one feeding into the later one' whereas multimethodology consists in a combination of methods, 'embodying different paradigms, developed specifically for the task' (p. 250). Applying these approaches, I conducted a survey after establishing facts about the dysfunctional nature of public administration to address violence and build peace. One hundred fifty-two questionnaires were dispatched and 148 were returned. I then conducted interviews with 50 participants from the following categories: 20 students, five teachers, two farmers, five businesspeople, 10 unemployed individuals and eight local NGO members. A pluralist approach to data analysis was employed to align with the nature of the collected data (qualitative and quantitative).

■ Quantitative data

I converted the survey questionnaires into variables and then entered them into IBM SPSS version 25.0, measuring them on ratio, nominal and ordinal scales. Quantitative analyses included Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency and reliability of the survey items. Descriptive analyses were used to show trends and relationships between variables, generating tables and graphs to illustrate the observed data. Factor analysis was conducted to establish factorial correlations between the variables. Thereafter, data reduction was conducted to extract component correlation metrics, allowing us to identify items that load together through factor analysis. This process transformed a large volume

of data into a more manageable and comprehensible dataset, revealing hidden patterns and their overlaps, as well as the characteristics common to multiple patterns (Glen 2023). Analysing the differences between the causes of structural violence and their potential to hinder peace, along with assessing the state of public administration and its inability to prevent violence and foster positive peace, was essential for drawing final inferences and suggesting robust approaches that could create conditions for sustainable peace and development.

■ Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data were analysed via integration of thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis (QCA): QCA, phenomenological method, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), hermeneutic phenomenology research (HPR), thematic content analysis (TCA) and phenomenological methods (Groenewald 2004) – all based on an interpretive paradigm. Caulfield (2022) expounds on thematic analysis as a qualitative data analysis method, which is traditionally applied to a set of texts, namely interviews or transcripts. Here, the role of the researcher is to closely sift collected data in order to identify what appears as common themes and topics, repeated ideas and patterns, and the meaning they bring (Caulfield 2022). When deciding on approaches to be adopted in analysing interviews, I took the following steps: (1) Familiarisation with data, (2) coding process, (3) generating recurrent themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and finally (6) writing up the report. I started by reading through data sets from the transcripts of in-depth interviews, then identified the patterns in meaning from which I derived themes across the data and built a thematic report while employing my reflections and applying my subjective experience without breaking phenomenological and hermeneutical norms on making meaning from data. While conducting thematic analysis, I was mindful of its philosophical underpinnings and epistemological assumptions to avoid its pitfalls, as suggested by Kiger and Varpio (2020), because a good utilisation of thematic analysis when processing data with rigour increases the scientific value of any findings. This perspective is put forward and supported by Castleberry and Nolen (2018).

■ Paradigmatic framework

Constructivist realism was used as a paradigmatic framework and consisted of developing knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection feeding into each other or employing both positivist and constructivist worldviews to generate generalisable knowledge (Cupchik 2001). The constructivist realism research philosophy or paradigmatic

framework has been used efficiently in studies concerned with peacebuilding and reintegration of former child soldiers; it has yielded outstanding outputs that have received international recognition (Kiyala 2015, 2018a, 2020).

■ Ethical procedures

‘The principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy, justice, respect for participants’ rights and dignity, rights to withdraw, informed consent and voluntary participation, the principle of confidentiality, anonymity, etc. were observed for all participants’ (Gordon 2020; Mlambo & Kiyala 2024). Participants were registered by pseudonyms and coded names so that they remained unidentifiable before, during and after the inquiry. This helped to keep them anonymous. Information provided by participants was not disclosed or divulged at any time, and the principle of confidentiality was upheld throughout and after the inquiry. Participants were assured that none of them would suffer any adverse effects as a result of their participation in this inquiry, which meant that I strove to minimise all risks to the greatest extent possible and protect the rights and welfare of participants. However, it is important to acknowledge that all preventive measures to curb risks to vulnerable populations may be taken, but they cannot rule out unexpected ethical issues that may arise, as Gordon (2020) observed. Fortunately, no adverse incident was reported during the entire period of the inquiry. I remained consistent with my research goals and also maintained standards of trustworthiness. The ethical clearance was issued by the DUT, South Africa.⁴³

This inquiry explores the concept of public administration and the extent to which this conceptual framework informs and sustains peace or fails to promote it. Peacebuilding practices and conflict transformation theory are examined and discussed through the lens of various public administration paradigms and their relations to positive peace by addressing structural violence. Starting with analyses of public administration and peacebuilding concepts and the assumptions underpinning the reliance of peacebuilding upon a functional and effective public administration, the study will report the viability – or the shortcomings – of public administration in creating an environment that is propitious to durable peace. The impacts of public powers at the macro-level (UN, the AU Peace and Security Council) and at the micro-level (the three branches of government – legislative, executive and judiciary powers) will be investigated and determined via empirical field data collected in the eastern DRC, where the efforts of public powers remain overstretched and constrained by multifaceted challenges.

43. Ethical clearance number: DUT_IREC 005/23.

In order to proceed with the main inquiry, I started with a pilot study. According to In (2017):

A pilot study asks whether something can be done, should the researchers proceed with it, and if so, how. However, a pilot study also has a specific design feature; it is conducted on a smaller scale than the main or full-scale study. (p. 601)

An inquiry into the linkages between three complex concepts, namely public administration, democracy and peacebuilding, demanded that I conduct a pilot study intended to establish the extent to which such an investigation was pragmatically feasible in the context of the DRC.

■ Pilot study

Feasibility or pilot studies are essential steps in the research process that have the potential to help identify any design problems and evaluate the feasibility of a study on pragmatic grounds in terms of resources, time and availability of necessary funds to complete the main research (Simkus 2023). The process of this research stage involves selecting a minimum number of people on whom the researcher can try the study; this strategy can help save money and time when the inquirer identifies some limitations of the inquiry at the earliest stage (Simkus 2023).

Conceived as mini versions of full-scale studies, providing the opportunity to test specific questions of particular investigations (questionnaires or interviews), pilot studies constitute a fundamental element of a good study design – though this process does not guarantee the success of the main study to be undertaken (Van Teijlingen & Hundley 2002). However, it does increase the likelihood of a study yielding positive outcomes, as such studies provide useful insights to researchers (Van Teijlingen & Hundley 2002).

Lancaster, Dodd and Williamson (2004) state that pilot studies should consist of clearly articulated aims and objectives and follow the methodological rigour of scientific inquiry; participants should not be included in later large-scale research to ensure the independence of the results of the main study; it should be based on descriptive analysis and progress to the main study.

■ Aims and objectives

This feasibility study explored the concept of public administration and the extent to which this conceptual framework informs and sustains peace or fails to promote it.

The pilot study helped to ascertain the feasibility of an inquiry to investigate the relationship between public administration and

peacebuilding, with a view to opening new conceptual boundaries into which the definition of peace could be expanded to include not only positive peace but also the drivers of peace that cannot be understood otherwise: Conflict prevention, peace reestablishment, peacebuilding and developing structures that support peace, namely viable infrastructure, job creation, the rule of law and viable government socio-economic and development policies.

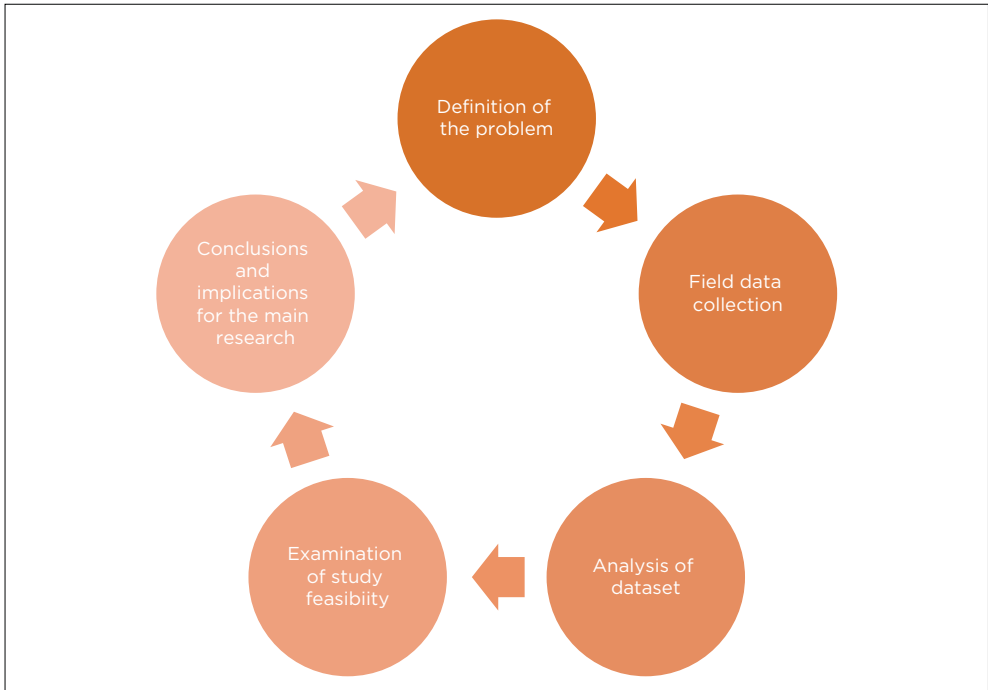
To ensure that a full-scale enquiry on 'public administration and peacebuilding in the DRC' would be viable, I conducted a feasibility study based on the research questions and tested on a heterogeneous sample selected largely from a student population. I considered this dynamic substantively justifiable to ensure that this pilot study generated data and knowledge that represent the views of the broader population.

■ Methodological approach

Several purposes underlie the questionnaire for a pilot study. According to Simkus (2023), these include ensuring that research participants understand the terminology utilised in the questionnaire; surveying and examining whether 'emotive questions' that can make respondents defensive and invalidate their answers are used in the preliminary inquiry questionnaire; ascertaining that the provided questionnaire can be filled in in a reasonable amount of time; ensuring that the main questions are not constructed in a way to produce bias in respondents' answers; and, finally, ensuring that a reasonable timeframe is accorded to respondents to prevent the loss of interest that may occur when responding to time-consuming questions. Figure 12.1 summarises the process of the feasibility study I conducted before the general research.

This five-stage procedure allowed me to forecast what an adequate sample size would be, what appropriate research budget I should allocate to the main project and what I should consider to ameliorate the design and methods prior to moving to the full-scale project I intended. I was able to evaluate the preliminary results and discover the main trends that the main study would generate; these were useful in strengthening the various components of the overall study. Furthermore, the availability of respondents was positive; it was encouraging and confirmed the sustainability of the main research project.

This pilot study was designed to test the questionnaire for the main study; it was open to either predicting the research outcomes or measuring the level of respondents' understanding of the key concepts, such as violence, structural violence, public powers or public administration, and peacebuilding. In line with Simkus (2023), who argues that a pilot study



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.1: Pilot study process.

'increases the reliability and validity of the main study's results' (n.p.), the outcomes of this feasibility study ensured that the main research stood the test of validity and reliability. It solely used qualitative and quantitative empirical data gathered through a survey questionnaire and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analysed using the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics (IBM version 29.0.1 [2023]) for thematic analytical methods. Six focus groups were organised, one for each of the following categories of participants: students, teachers, farmers, businesspersons, the unemployed and members of NGOs. They were selected purposively by convenience and snowballing. All questionnaires were designed to be self-administered; a respondent completed them without the researcher's assistance. Focus group discussions were explored via thematic analytical methods from which several themes emerged; only five are retained in this report because most are interconnected and overlap.

A total of 150 questionnaires were dispatched, and 148 were returned. These were captured on SPSS to determine each variable's trends in frequency distributions and percentages based on the responses provided by 148 participants. Figure 12.1 illustrates the process I followed to obtain the preliminary results presented here.

■ Results

Four variables that emerged from focus group discussions are reported here. These are (1) violence, (2) prevailing insecurity, (3) lack of infrastructure and (4) the rule of law. Results of the survey and focus group discussions are presented concomitantly and discussed in the same way.

■ Characteristics of the sample

Table 12.1 shows the main features of the sample. The sample consisted of 95 (64.2%) male and 53 (35.8%) female respondents ($n = 148$).

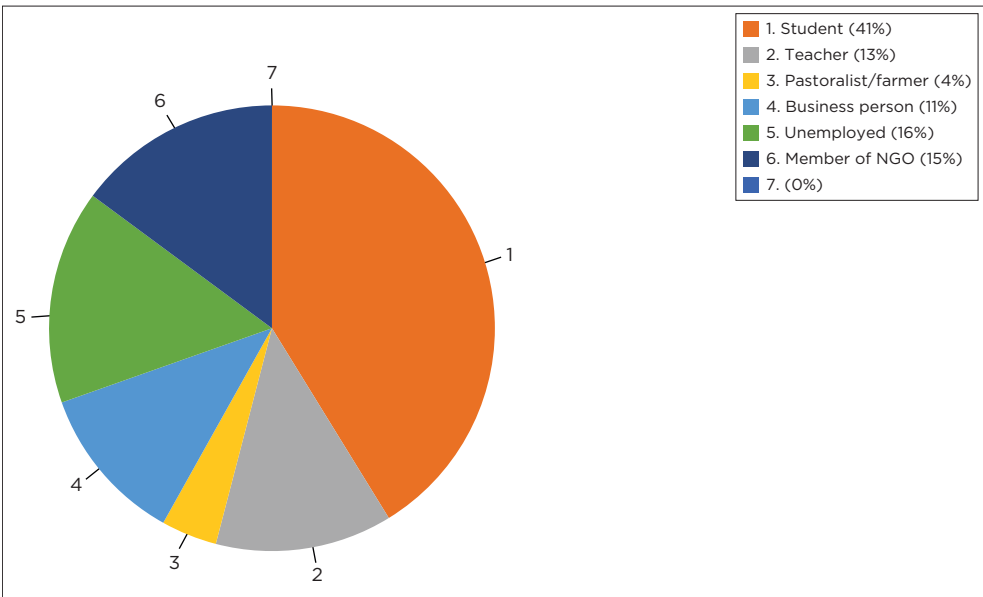
□ Occupations of participants

Figure 12.2 captures the occupations of the respondents in the pilot study. These comprise 61 students (41.2%), 19 teachers (12.8%), six farmers (4.1%), 17 businesspeople (11.5%), 23 unemployed (15.5%) and 22 members of NGOs (14.9%) ($n = 148$).

TABLE 12.1: Frequency distribution for gender.

Gender of participants	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Male	95	64.2	64.2	64.2
Female	53	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	148	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.



Source: Author's own work.

Key: NGO, non-governmental organisation.

FIGURE 12.2: Participants' occupations.

The largest portion of participants was made up of students. The purpose of this choice was based on the teleological nature of this book and its pedagogical orientation – empowering the students as future leaders of public organisations and as future public administrators. The other categories of participants are those who play an important role in society. Their views are of utmost significance in understanding public administration and its influence on peacebuilding.

■ Participants' territorial origins

Table 12.2 shows the participants' territories of origins of the respondents, namely the nine territories of the South Kivu province, which have experienced the horror of civil wars, violent conflicts and intercommunity hostilities with ever-growing insecurity. Most respondents have migrated from their homes in rural areas to Bukavu, the capital city of the South Kivu province.

□ Violence

The outcomes of the survey and focus group discussions are merged; these consisted of four main themes: violence, prevailing insecurity, lack of infrastructure and the rule of law.

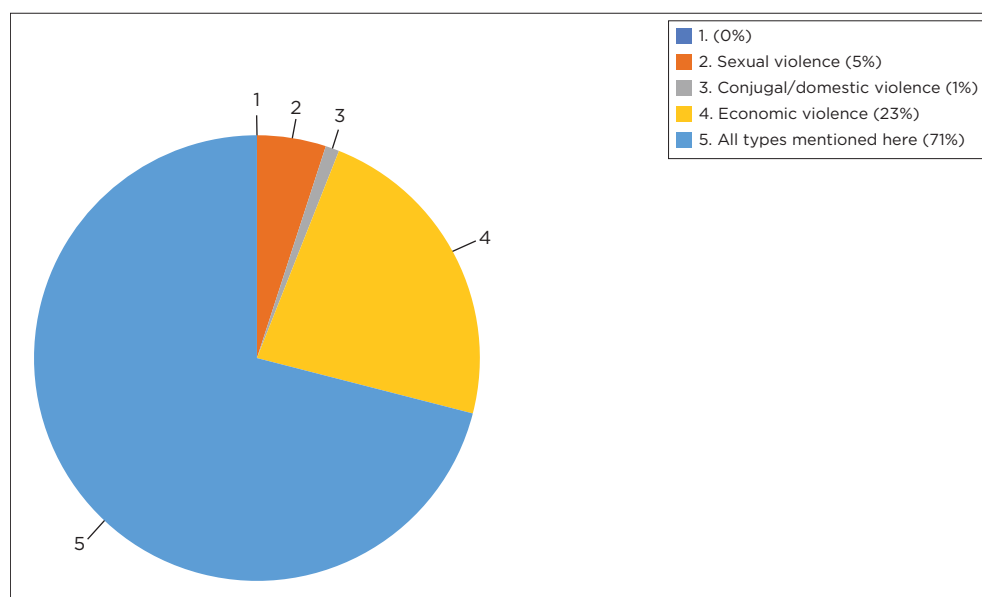
Figure 12.3 indicates the various types of violence that are common in the DRC. However, this list is not exhaustive.

While Figure 12.3 shows the main kinds of violence that affect the population of the South Kivu province, focus group discussions with the various categories of participants revealed that violence is entrenched in all structures of society. This clearly exemplifies the government's incapacity to address the root causes of the multifaceted violence. Re-establishing and maintaining peace is a real challenge as violence continues to erode peace.

TABLE 12.2: Territory of origin of respondents.

Territory of origin	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Kabare	29	19.6	19.6	19.6
Kalehe	15	10.1	10.1	29.7
Idjwi	5	3.4	3.4	33.1
Uvira	10	6.8	6.8	39.9
Mwenga	23	15.5	15.5	55.4
Fizi	13	8.8	8.8	64.2
Shabunda	7	4.7	4.7	68.9
Walungu	37	25.0	25.0	93.9
Not identified	9	6.1	6.1	100.0
Total	148	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.3: Existing types of violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

TABLE 12.3: Impact of structural violence on peace.

Response	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	91	61.5	61.5	61.5
Disagree	57	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total	148	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.

The call for reconciliation to ensure lasting peace, provide security to the populations in rural areas, create jobs in rural areas, build good schools in rural areas, reduce unemployment, mentor young people in various rural areas, teach young people about entrepreneurship, invest in agriculture and guaranteeing the availability of jobs in rural areas will minimise the influx of rural populations towards urban towns. The rural exodus leads to increased banditry, delinquency and joblessness, which exacerbate the security conditions in towns.

Table 12.3 reveals participants' views regarding the extent to which structural violence impacts peace. Their views show that 91 (61.5%) agreed structural violence affects peace, while 57 (38.5%) disagreed.

It emerged during focus group discussions that the DRC is experiencing all kinds of structural violence that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lack of access to clean water and food insecurity
- Lawlessness and lack of respect for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights
- Impunity that endangers the well-being of women and children in rural areas
- Endemic GBV
- Lack of infrastructure and few job and economic opportunities.

Violence and insecurity are intertwined because the lack of access to economic opportunities, infringement of human rights and civil liberties, the lack of jobs and impunity contribute to insecurity.

■ Prevailing insecurity

Among the most serious threats to peace were the prevailing insecurity, exacerbated by the displacement of people from rural settings to urban areas, poverty, famine and lack of employment or jobs (Table 12.4).

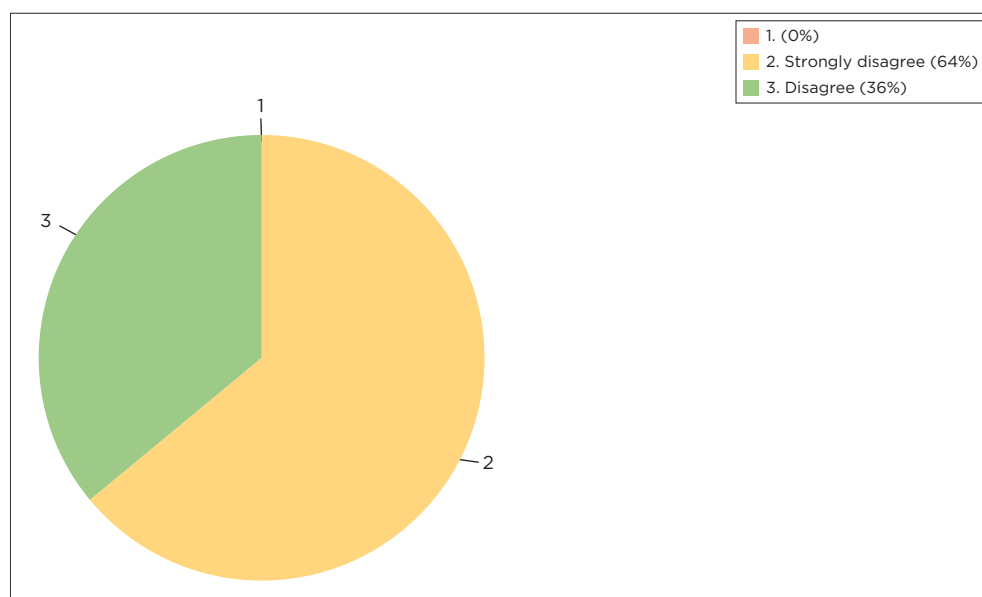
The study found that insecurity fuels the rural exodus and causes instability in local populations that keeps them fleeing from one place to another, leaving their home environments in search of places of refuge where they will be safe. Fighting insecurity, unemployment, illegal construction, fraud and the rising cost of living are real challenges to re-establishing peace and security. In addition, witchcraft, food insecurity, lack of employment, rape of women and girls, land conflicts and the lack of investment in the agricultural sector constitute other sources of insecurity because these factors trigger the displacement of people. Figure 12.4 illustrates the two trends in participants' views about the police presence in the country.

The absence of the police service was also noted by participants in this inquiry, who strongly disagreed that public administration ensured there is a police presence across the national territory of the DRC 95 (64%), while 53 (36.8%) disagreed that the DRC administration strives to make the police presence noticeable all over the country.

TABLE 12.4: Public powers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's effectiveness in increasing police presence countrywide.

Response	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	95	64.2	64.2	64.2
Disagree	53	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	148	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.4: Effective administration of police service.

TABLE 12.5: Respondents' views on the commitment of public powers to developing socio-economic infrastructure.

Response	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	91	61.5	61.5	61.5
Disagree	57	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total	148	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.

■ Lack of infrastructure

The majority of respondents agreed that the government is not developing sufficient infrastructure to respond to the high demands of the population affected by ongoing violence (Table 12.5).

The lack of infrastructure in the DRC is evident in the absence of roads that link the capital cities of its regions, practicable waterways, airports, health institutions, schools, universities and recreational spaces. The lack of good housing and the illegal building of houses in urban areas impede the movement of security and emergency services. The lack of roads inside peri-urban areas exacerbates this. The lack of electricity, clean water and other basic needs are characteristic of the ineffective public administration of the DRC.

■ Rule of law and state authority

Another aspect of this inquiry was to investigate how the rule of law functions in the DRC and to which extent the state authority fosters peace

and keeps people safe. In the face of unaccounted crimes, loss of lives and all the atrocities perpetrated by rebel groups and militias, several respondents agreed that the DRC's public powers are ineffective in reinforcing the authority of the state. A total of 49 (33%) agreed that the state is ensuring the rule of law is practised and the authority of the state is maintained, while 99 (67%) disagreed ($n = 148$).

Restoring the authority of the state and pacifying rural and urban areas is necessary to solve insecurity and crime. Security and peace in the villages are needed. Strengthening the rule of law and establishing a regime in which the population participates in decision-making is essential to re-establishing peace in the DRC. In order to combat insecurity and crimes, public powers should restore the culture of peace because insecurity causes people to live in fear. The DRC's public administration should demonstrate its ability to maintain durable peace by developing critical infrastructure such as schools, universities, clinics, roads and hospitals; by creating jobs and improving the social and economic welfare of the population and by minimising the prevailing detrimental insecurity, particularly in rural areas. There should be robust policies and strategies to bolster and maintain national security all over the country, putting in place sustainable conditions for durable peace; such an endeavour should be coupled with decisive mechanisms that tackle the scourge of galloping impunity and its subsequent effects – namely, uncontrolled corruption and crime which is worsened by the absence of the security services and police, especially in rural areas.

■ Preliminary remarks

This pilot study was designed to test the components of a large-scale research project that investigated the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding and the extent to which addressing structural violence will enhance durable peace in the DRC. It further sought to determine how such an inquiry would be feasible.

It emerged from the findings that violence, prevailing insecurity, lack of infrastructure and failure to uphold the rule of law explain the extent of the government's failure to manage the country, prevent all types of violence and maintain peace. Adding to that, it suggested the urgent need for peace, intercommunity mutual respect and acceptance, and a sense of common humanity to move from a culture of violence to peace. On the one hand, the sum of these elements would contribute to building harmonious relationships among the people of the DRC, as far as the relational aspect of the problem is concerned. On the other hand, the administration dimension of the research problem has lacked significant attention. This means that the DRC government should play a proactive role in fostering sustainable peace by creating jobs and putting in place peacebuilding

mechanisms that prioritise local leaders' empowerment in conflict resolution skills and knowledge. This demands a full commitment by the politico-administrative authorities who are expected to take up their responsibility to ensure people are secure, children go to decent schools, the roads are safe, and there are decent clinics and hospitals where people receive adequate medical treatment.

To solve insecurity and crime, it is necessary to restore the authority of the state across the whole territory of the DRC, particularly in the eastern and northeastern regions (North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri) that are plagued by armed conflicts and rebellions which the DRC government appears powerless to contain, unless by the presence of international peacekeeping missions. The incapacity to deter unjustified violence and the human rights violations perpetrated by armed groups, particularly the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, is discernible in the failure of the UN peacekeeping mission. Similarly, the EAC sent troops into the volatile eastern DRC region in November 2023 amid the resurgence of the M23 rebellion (*Al Jazeera* 2023a), but they have not managed to pacify the region nor safeguard the ceasefire signed between the DRC Government and the M23 rebel group.

This pilot study was conducted to determine whether a large-scale study of the questions tested here would be possible, whether the methodological approaches would be appropriate, and if it would be viable to gain valid results from the research sample. It appeared that all these conditions were satisfied, and there were no identified risks to pursuing the main research based on the outcomes of this feasibility study. The largest population of the sample were students. Their availability clearly indicates that a full-scale inquiry was achievable and sustainable.

The preliminary outcomes suggest that violence in the DRC is multifaceted and worsened by insecurity, impunity, the lack of infrastructure and the weakness of public powers to maintain the rule of law. Violence prevention implies redressing the structures that embed such violence in its multiple forms. Improving social life, building modern hospitals and schools, and putting an end to food insecurity would make it possible for the agents of the new order to be close to the people at all times. The state must ensure that it is responsible for ending the insecurity situation and that its leaders are well-advised on resolving conflicts. Where there is peace, there is no room for insecurity, particularly when food security is ensured. Crime will diminish or disappear, as many individuals turn to crime because of a lack of food. Rural-to-urban migration leads to higher unemployment in a city, food insecurity, poverty and stress. Many are criminals because of a lack of work; therefore, if jobs are created, many will be busy and will have enough to live on.

To bring about positive peace, it is necessary to strengthen security and create jobs, eradicate armed groups and militias that create insecurity, and

develop road infrastructure to facilitate the sale of agricultural products in order to feed the population of Bukavu and the surrounding areas. Putting an end to insecurity, prioritising the needs of the population, and ending poverty, unemployment and destitution are areas that require the attention of public administration. Political and administrative authorities are responsible for ensuring that people in rural areas and urban spaces are safe and no longer live in fear.

To illustrate these, Mobutu mapped out his more than three decades in power by being inspired by Machiavelli (Wrong 2000). His governance system plunged the country into despicable poverty and despotism. Laurent Désiré Kabila was no better as he sought to establish another authoritarian rule (Pashi 2013), and his life ended in his brutal murder in 1997. His son, Joseph Kabila, established his power following his election in 2008 with the slogan 'We Will Crush You' (HRW 2008). The current president, Félix Tshisekedi, took office after disputed poll results. His rule has been under scrutiny for human rights violations and for not delivering on his spurious promises to end the political repression and corruption that have become endemic in this country over many decades (Kasongo & Rolley 2023).

Instability, insecurity and ongoing fighting of the M23 by the DRC's armed forces are reminiscent of the past decades of no peace and no development. There is still hope that life could improve in the country if the necessary political, legislative and judicial reforms are carried out and backed by good governance.

■ Large-scale research

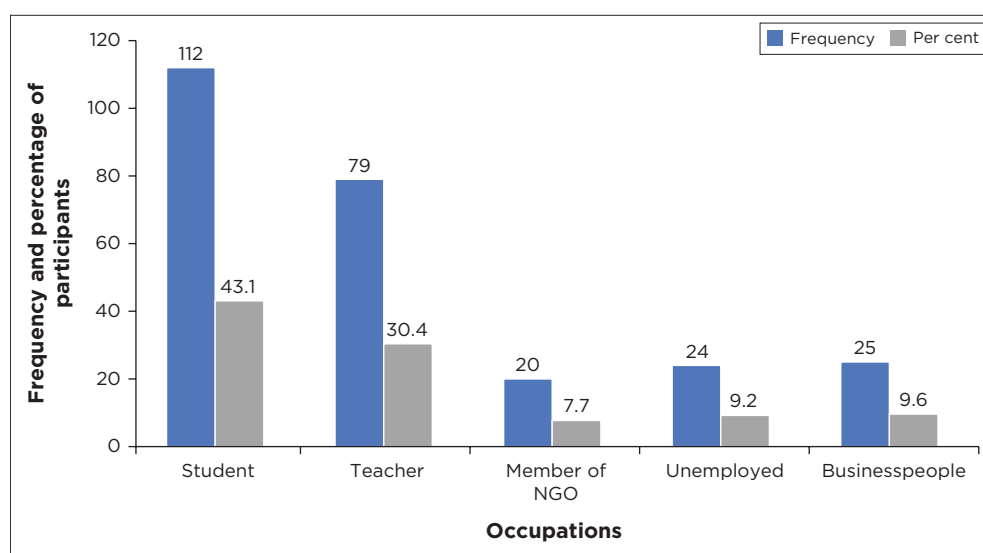
Following the pilot study, I expanded the study to a bigger sample. This section explains the research's methodological approach, its design and the ethical steps undertaken. I present the results and discuss the outputs before drawing conclusions from the data gathered and the literature reviewed.

■ Methodological approach

This inquiry was preceded by a pilot study that was conducted with the purpose of determining whether a large-scale survey of the questions tested here would be possible, whether the methodological approaches would be appropriate and whether the research sample would be viable to gain valid results. The feasibility study found that positive peace was achievable by developing an effective public administration. However, this required strengthening national security, creating jobs, eradicating armed groups and militias, developing critical infrastructure, etc. The necessary conditions were satisfied to progress towards this large study, and the sample size was increased from 148 to 260 participants.

■ Design and methods

This inquiry was designed as a case study of the DRC using a mixed methods approach, namely literary research (Correa & Owens 2010; Da Sousa Correa & Owens 2009) for qualitative data as well as quantitative methods of data collection and analysis (survey questionnaire). The survey was conducted in the South Kivu province of the DRC between June 2022 and July 2023 by a team of graduate students from the Faculty of Social Sciences at Université Evangélique en Afrique. These students served as co-researchers following a month-long seminar I held with them on public administration concepts, conflict resolution approaches, nonviolence theories and practices, and peace theories and strategies. They also received supplementary training in research methodology and fieldwork within the social sciences, making them competent to co-lead this research. A total of 260 questionnaires were dispatched and returned, after which we captured the dataset using IBM SPSS Statistics. Research questions were converted to variables and measured on nominal and ordinal scales. The sample size consisted of 159 male respondents (61.2%) and 101 female respondents (38.8), resulting in a total of $n = 260$. Additionally, the sample included 112 students (43.1%), 79 teachers (30.4%), 20 members of local NGOs (7.7%), 24 unemployed individuals (9.2%) and 25 businesspeople (9.6%), also totalling $n = 260$. Figure 12.5 illustrates the various occupations of participants in the main inquiry. All the survey questionnaires were self-administered.



Source: Author's own work.

Key: NGO, non-governmental organisation.

FIGURE 12.5: Occupations of participants.

The higher representation of students is justified by the need to empower the youth to become agents of peacebuilding and social transformation and lay the foundation for their future careers as public servants who would implement the pillars of public administration in their professional endeavours.

The main criteria for inclusion in this inquiry were exposure to structural violence and holding knowledge about public administration and peacebuilding. All the populations of South Kivu, like those of North Kivu and Ituri, experience structural violence and violence in its multiple forms daily.

To determine the internal consistency or reliability of the survey items, we employed Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient on 260 cases, yielding a value of $\alpha = 0.675$. This value is close to the acceptable threshold of $\alpha = 0.7$, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Additionally, we conducted descriptive analyses to identify trends and patterns among respondents concerning the key issue of the study, alongside SEM to explore the interrelationships among the variable patterns and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation (the relation between public administration and peacebuilding). Statistics Solutions (2023) explains SEM as 'a multivariate statistical analysis technique that is used to analyse structural relationships' (n.p.). Structural equation modelling can be imagined as a set of relationships that convey consistency and overall explanations of the real phenomena (Statistics Solutions 2023). It combines factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and it is employed 'to analyse the structural relationship between measured variables and latent constructs' (n.d.). Researchers prefer this method because it offers multiple advantages: 'It estimates the multiple and interrelated dependence in a single analysis. In this analysis, two types of variables are used: endogenous variables and exogenous variables'. Endogenous variables are equivalent to dependent variables and are equal to the independent variable (Statistics Solutions 2023, n.p.). Thus, using SEM was critical; it helped to analyse two types of variables, namely endogenous variables (dependent variables) and exogenous variables (independent variables), to establish how public administration as an independent variable influences various aspects of peacebuilding (dependent variable). The results of the SEM and descriptive analyses are presented in tables and graphs.

■ Results

The outcomes are drawn from both focus group discussions and quantitative surveys. The main themes developed from focus group discussions, scheduled interviews and surveys are presented and discussed in

this section. Rural exodus was singled out as one of the multiplier factors for insecurity, criminality and banditry in Goma. This issue was introduced into the research by participants at different stages of the inquiry; it came up as we diagnosed all the circumstances and drivers of violence. Rural exodus is caused by hostilities and the presence of fighting forces and militias that fight among civilian populations. A good portion of the data we collected dealt with this complex issue that reveals the failure of public administration to keep the population safe. To better grasp what rural exodus implies for peacebuilding, this section will examine the causes, consequences and strategies of rural exodus and its responses to increasing insecurity in the South Kivu province. Other issues that emerged from this study are grouped into themes.

These themes are *public administration and positive peace*, *public administration and violence prevention*, *public administration and security*, *public administration and peacebuilding*, *public administration and sustainable development*, *rural exodus as an effect of dysfunctional public administration*, and *the existence (or not) of a relation between public administration and peacebuilding*. The inquiry finds a strong correlation between public administration and building positive peace, reinforcing law and order, building socio-economic infrastructures, creating jobs, providing security to the population, and public powers to train local leaders in peace and conflict transformation. The potential of public administration is extended to reducing violence by increasing the police presence countrywide, combatting insecurity, eradicating poverty, controlling rural exodus, protecting civilians, preventing rural exodus and internally displaced persons (IDPs), maintaining durable peace and reinforcing state authority. Nine major themes that link public administration and violence prevention, security, peacebuilding, sustainable development and rural exodus emerged.

■ Causes of rural exodus

Various participants identified rural exodus as part of the failure of public administration to maintain security and protect civilian populations in war-torn eastern DRC. All the data incorporated here were gathered from informants in Bukavu Town in South Kivu between 20 May 2022 and 03 July 2023. I recorded, coded and classified participants' responses to interview questions under the main themes outlined here. They answered various questions related to their views. To protect their identity, I am using coded names.

A participant identified as Buk-25 (a high school teacher) observed:

'Rural exodus driven by armed conflicts is causing malnutrition that affects our people; there is no development that characterises civilization; there is

ignorance and criminality, and conflict. We need security, we need jobs, we need to investments, we need to improve socio-economic infrastructure; there is a need for training of local leaders in conflict resolution. We need development in rural settings; our populations must be provided with knowledge on land law, public health, jobs, and in [the] agricultural sector. The government must combat impunity, and seek the well-being of women and children in rural areas, and fight against gender-based [violence] which is exacerbated by armed conflicts and prevailing insecurity in the east where armed groups operate with impunity.⁴⁴

Interviews with residents from different areas of Bukavu revealed how the rural exodus affects people's lives. I was particularly interested in emigrants who had left their respective villages and settled in Bukavu. The main reasons expressed for their movements include running in search of safety and work, fleeing poverty and fleeing witchcraft. Participants identified several ramifications of rural exodus. These included food insecurities, pirate markets and illegal construction in Bukavu, which is now overpopulated. MD, a resident of Nyawera in Ibanda commune, explained:

'The rural exodus is the main cause of poverty in the city of Bukavu because the city of Bukavu has always been dependent on villages like Walungu, Kabare and others but the citizens fleeing these villages come to settle in the city leaving the crops, the fields, livestock [...] The city finds itself in a situation of food poverty as production becomes less and less and the population increases at a considerable rate. As a result, the prices of many foodstuffs in the city are rising.'⁴⁵

Affiliative bonding, a resident of the Panzi area, commented:

'We are aware that the city of Bukavu survives on food coming from the village for the city; there are no fields or space to farm in the city, but we cannot sacrifice our lives for the city; we're going to share what little there is, but there's no question of going back to the village; life in the village is too difficult compared to the city. Perhaps we can think of going back there on the sole condition that security is maintained in the villages, the distribution of fertilizers, agricultural inputs and agricultural tools is effective.'⁴⁶

Rural exodus and unemployment are associated. The issue of youth unemployment in Bukavu is a daily debate. In relation to this subject, we collected different people's words on the rural exodus and unemployment in the city of Bukavu. AC, another resident, expressed what follows:

'The mass of migration collected in the city of Bukavu means that there is a scarcity of jobs in the city. This is justified by the fact that in the city there are too many people while there are fewer jobs. For a single job, you often end up with a thousand job seekers. Having several people in the same position decreases the chances of getting a job.'⁴⁷

44. Teacher 01, 01 June 2022, Bukavu.

45. Community member 01, interview, Bukavu, 02 June 2022.

46. Community member 02, interview, Bukavu, 23 July 2022.

47. Community member 03, interview, Bukavu, 22 July 2022.

The residents of Bukavu city expressed a nearly uniform perspective, as exemplified in the following:

‘The rural exodus is a source of insecurity in our city because since the increase in the migratory mass, the city is subject to growing and permanent insecurity: burglaries, hold-ups, armed robbery, blackmail and threats against the wealthy [...] This kind of situation didn’t exist before! When there were fewer people in town, we were at peace without much hassle.’⁴⁸

Another resident, identified as Beech-21, averred:

‘Many Congolese leave the villages to settle in the cities in the hope of first finding jobs that remunerate better and pay better than in the villages; people in rural areas live in precarious conditions that become a push factor for exodus to town. The fear of being taken by armed groups and forced to fight unwanted wars is another push factor of exodus by young people.’⁴⁹

In focus groups, participants explained why they fled to Bukavu: Because of the insecurity in the rural areas. They went to look for a safe space and survival in the city, but the situation seemed to be the same, with armed robberies, killings here and there, and attacks both at night and in the middle of the day. They have encountered this in Bukavu, in the city and so saying that insecurity is at the root of the rural exodus is false. They further remarked that young people from different villages were unemployed, and everyone was struggling for survival. This shows how the populations are terrified and concerned about their survival; hence, the causes of insecurity in the city are multiple. In relation to this, the interviewees referred to the rural exodus as the root cause of illegal constructions. Nkafu, a Bukavu resident, averred:

‘The city of Bukavu has welcomed more people than expected, people are leaving the villages for the city and as the city is too small, we have seen anarchic constructions even in protected sites such as cemeteries, on ditches, etc. We are also witnessing the construction of houses like toilets and we wonder if we are still in the city or not?’⁵⁰

One refugee, Ntambo, said:

‘We are not at the root of the anarchic construction in this city. I say this because we buy land from the state through the relevant state structures and build these houses in full view of the local and urban authorities who even collect the money to get a “building permit” and tell us nothing. We build according to our means and our ideologies and therefore, anarchic construction does not depend on us, although it is our houses that are built on it. But who gives us these plots in cemeteries, along roads, on ditches, etc.’⁵¹

48. Community member 04, interview, Bukavu, 02 August 2022.

49. Focus group discussion with students, Bukavu, 02 August 2022.

50. Community member 05, interview, Bukavu, 02 August 2022.

51. Refugee from Burundi, interview, Bukavu, 02 August 2022.

Based on comments collected on the rural exodus and pirate markets, we observed commercial activity along the avenues, in front of shops, at bus stops, etc. Vendors display foodstuffs on the ground without considering hygiene regulations. Rubbish, cardboard boxes, unsold vegetables, etc. are piled up on the avenues. Some city inhabitants, not knowing where to dispose of their household waste, take advantage of the situation by placing piles of rubbish on top of those left by merchants. This observation supports the statements we collected on the ground.

One businessperson noted:

‘The rural exodus has destroyed the city of Bukavu on all levels: we are witnessing the creation of pirate markets all over the city of Bukavu with the consequences: insalubrity, traffic jams, traffic accidents and conflicts between passengers and vendors, police and vendors, along the various roads of the city.’⁵²

Another resident, a businessperson, held a different view regarding insecurity; he said:

‘Life is peaceful in the city: you buy everything in the city. Our children are unemployed, our husbands are unemployed, so to ensure our survival and that of our respective families, we run small businesses in the city; whether on a pavement or in a roadside display.’⁵³

Our inquiry in this section focused on the impact of rural exodus on conflicts, peace and security. We used an analytical and descriptive approach to the context of the city of Bukavu and its peripheries, utilising a hermeneutic critique throughout this work. We concluded that the inhabitants of Bukavu, particularly the youth, have decided to take matters into their own hands in response to the failure of public administration to address the rural exodus, insecurity and criminality in the city. Youth either engage in criminal activities to survive or mobilise against them. Improvisation, resourcefulness and self-care have become the logic of personal action anchored in the minds of the city’s inhabitants. Hence, the rural exodus is a source of conflict and insecurity – and, paradoxically, a way of survival by fleeing the insecurity created by armed groups in rural areas. In addition, we can say that the growing influx of the masses into the city where they stay idle, poor and unemployed pushes many of them to be involved in criminal practices like theft for their survival. Buk-7 reported the following regarding the consequences of the rural exodus:

‘[*The consequences are*] food insecurity and exaggerated poverty, educational and economic crisis. [*There are problems with*] giving the population access to drinking water, promoting youth in public enterprises. Insecurity fuels rural exodus and leads the population not to be stable, to flee their living environments

52. Business person 01, interview, Bukavu, 02 August 2022.

53. Community member 06, interview, Bukavu, 05 August 2022.

in search of places of refuge. To remedy this situation, the State must manage and assume its responsibilities and combat economic problems. Public powers must maintain the roads, improve medical services, education and job creation to balance life in urban and rural areas; regulate unemployment which leads young people into banditry, and the unpaid salary situation of public servants.⁵⁴

Buk-2 (a businessperson) commented on the consequences of insecurity in the following terms: 'In our villages, people are subjected to or spent in exaggerated sexual vagrancy, which is a reason for failure to do so [engage in employment]'. Buk-3 (a farmer) added: 'The lack of access to clean water, food insecurity and violence overnight'. Buk-4 (a student) referred to the lack of employment for young people as this leads to increased sexual vagrancy and high levels of banditry; this is worsened by insecurity resulting from the rural exodus. Buk-6 (another student) gave a similar answer to the question about the consequences of rural exodus; he remarked: 'The lack of work means that those who can get our young people into foreign [*cross border*] armed groups to the detriment of the people'. Beech-9⁵⁵ (a refugee in Bukavu) said: 'The lack of shelter following the wars created by the West in collaboration with one of our politicians' was another consequence.⁵⁶

The consequences of the rural exodus show ripple impacts on the well-being of the population of the eastern DRC, where violence and conflict are constant and endemic, thus undermining social welfare and deepening fear, instability and uncertainty. Most of the participants in this study identify the broken public administration inherited from the last two decades of large-scale conflicts and the ongoing struggle to maintain and build peace as the main drivers of the rural exodus. Some respondents singled out corruption, impunity and unemployment as the main factors in the persisting conflicts and insecurity and their corollaries, such as massive movements of people from rural areas to towns and internal displacements of communities.

■ Remedy for insecurity

Firstly, participants attributed the responsibility for maintaining peace and security and protecting civilians to the state. Based on the previous elements of this work, our observations, and the data collected in the field, we can say that the rural exodus stems from conflicts and violence, and it has itself become a driver of violence and criminality in the city. To remedy this situation, the government needs robust policies and an effective public

54. Farmer 01, interview, Bukavu, 20 June 2023.

55. Community member 07, Interview, Bukavu, 20 June 2023.

56. Business person 02, interview, Bukavu, 20 June 2023.

administration to implement them. For instance, Buk-1 (unemployed) suggested that the government should work hard to prevent the rural exodus and internal displacement of people from war zones to Bukavu and its suburbs. He said:

‘To prevent this phenomenon, peace must return to the villages in order to allow the inhabitants of this area to remain stable in their homes and cultivate their fields. To bring about positive peace, public powers (the state) should restructure the Ministry of Defence, pay soldiers well and provide them with quality training. The government has a part of responsibility in security; it should provide education to unemployed youths who find their way in armed groups because of unemployment, economic inequalities, lack of food, schools, medical care centres and hospitals in remote areas.’⁵⁷

The same interviewee further observed:

‘To curb insecurity induced by rural exodus, public powers must create jobs, train people in leadership; politico-administrative authorities should create modern schools, call people to reconciliation for lasting peace; make the populations independent to prevent rural exodus and overcrowding in Bukavu and its suburbs; it must strengthen security, [bring] peace, prevent the collaboration between people and armed groups taking over common interest. The government should ameliorate social life, put an end to food insecurity, bring security services close to the populations, at all costs.’⁵⁸

It is evident that the absence of security services, the regular presence of the police service and the inability of the FARDC (Congo Armed Forces) to respond quickly to violent conflicts and insurrection worsens the already dire needs of the populations who have been affected by conflicts for nearly 30 years.

Focus groups composed of various participants – mainly students, but also teachers, public servants, farmers, NGO members, refugees and displaced individuals – revealed that amid insecurity, crime and other social, political and economic challenges, both young and old people must understand that they need to take the initiative in fostering security and lasting peace before government intervention occurs. Participants emphasised the role that each member of the most troubled communities should play. Local leaders and public administrators should help IP achieve financial independence and, above all, encourage them to persuade militia collaborators in their villages to abandon their fight, as many of these individuals come from the same communities that have been subjected to heinous human rights violations.⁵⁹

57. Community member 07, interview, Bukavu, 20 June 2023.

58. Community member 08, interview, Bukavu, 20 June 2023.

59. Focus group discussion with students, Bukavu, 20 June 2023.

Others concurred that the DRC's authorities have the responsibility to secure its people and, above all, take control of the most vulnerable sites where there are a lot of pockets of insecurity, such as Masisi, Kitchanga, the Plateau of Ruzizi, etc.⁶⁰ They further advise that political and administrative authorities should strengthen security on the outskirts of the villages and towns to reduce insecurity. The leaders must be at the centre of the security services, the police and the population so that they can intervene when emergencies arise and villages and towns are attacked. They should have the means, strategies and resources to halt any attacks by enemies (rebels, insurrectionists, militias and cross-border fighters) before they start occupying villages, districts and territories.⁶¹

In addition, they note that the proximity between law enforcement officers and the local populations, the construction of viable roads and the development of the agricultural sector could possibly reduce insecurity created by fighting forces. Because of the impacts of trauma on the population in war-affected areas, public powers should put in place measures that provide psycho-social support to the traumatised populations of North and South Kivu, including children in schools and women in health care and mental health care facilities. Parents should address their children's psychological needs at home or refer them to professional centres where they can receive appropriate mental and psychological treatment to facilitate healing from post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) resulting from wars and violent hostilities.⁶²

Teachers expressed that the government's priorities should include strengthening social support for children in schools, assisting underprivileged citizens, creating jobs in both urban and rural areas and improving security. There is a need for good governance capable of caring for young people and creating educational and employment opportunities for them.⁶³ Buk-33 described insecurity:

'The condition that prevents people from living in peace; a condition marked by the lack of employment, land conflict, lack of financing of agricultural activities; a context where the government has no control over anarchic constructions; people not living in their own spaces – [*but*] between houses and even blocking back roads, and doing this in the eye of the state that does nothing. To prevent this from occurring and re-occurring, the government must have urbanisation plans [*for*] where the masses uncontrollably invade the towns while fleeing wars and set [*up*] their own camps that turn to be safe havens for criminals and other delinquents. The populations coming to town must be given spaces where they

60. Focus group with teachers, Bukavu, 20 June 2023.

61. Focus groups with refugees and IDPs, Bukavu, 23 June 2023.

62. Focus group with members of NGOs, Bukavu, 23 June 2023.

63. Focus group with teachers, Bukavu, 22 June 2023.

can settle under the supervision of the local public powers to avoid anarchy, insecurity and crime; they must educate the people and restore the culture of peace, and also evangelise the people.’⁶⁴

Another teacher identified as Buk-39 maintained that all the assertions by fellow members of the focus group were correct and reflected the situation in the DRC.⁶⁵ He added:

‘There is a need for good living conditions in rural areas. This will help to limit the rural exodus, if the safety of transport routes, security, education, good governance [...] are guaranteed. The State must build peace on the basis of its requirements – peace requires that all the fundamental rights of life be united and respected.’⁶⁶

Another participant known as Beech-40 (a student) shared the views of others, saying that insecurity, prostitution and illegal construction in towns increase insecurity. To avoid insecurity, he, like others, contended that the government must create jobs. Buk-95, a member of an NGO, argued:

‘Public authorities must respond to the needs of the people for growth and development. They must ensure equality and justice, and pluralism. The Mai-Mai Malaika rebels of Mandevu and Kasongo of Salamabila who block roads and collect taxes inside the country without being questioned by the Congolese state – these Mai-Mai factions are involved in the violent conflicts in the territory of Kabambare in the province of Maniema in the health zones of Mabanda and Kilalahuyu, in southern Maniema where about 3447 people have been displaced by these incursions, causing death to many people.’⁶⁷

Buk-128, a member of a local NGO, stated:

‘The state must dismantle the structures and institutions that cause conflict; take into account equity and equality in the distribution of natural resource revenues; involve all levels of society in building positive peace.’⁶⁸

Students gathered in focus groups⁶⁹ shared their views, which I present here. They maintained that public authorities must bring about positive peace; they must fight against unemployment. The state should make an equitable distribution of the country’s natural resources to meet the population’s basic needs. The government should strictly control all entry ports from the neighbouring countries, particularly Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, to prevent illegal traffic of weapons that fuel wars; people who

64. Statement by Teacher 02, during interview, Bukavu, 23 June 2023.

65. Statement by Teacher 03, during focus group discussion, Bukavu, 23 June 2023.

66. Statement by Teacher 04, during focus group discussion, Bukavu, 02 June 2023.

67. Local NGO member 01, statement made during focus group discussion, Bukavu, 25 June 2023.

68. Local NGO member 02, an opinion stated during the focus group discussion, Bukavu, 25 June 2023.

69. Focus group discussion with students, Bukavu, 02 July 2023.

transgress the law and wage war against their own people must be severely punished. The government must promote the well-being of all and ensure the population is safe.

My meeting with the business community was very insightful. They enumerated a number of issues that concern peace. They believed that promoting a state of harmony, serenity, acceptance, respect and a sense of common humanity within people to move from a culture of violence to a culture of peace and build harmonious relationships was essential to durable peace. In addition, they all agreed that the state must restore its authority throughout the country; public authorities must pay well-deserved salaries to all public servants, especially the military and security services, and review the way the country is managed for a lasting, positive peace for the well-being of the population. Securing security and peace in villages and protecting the population and their properties was the ultimate responsibility of the government and the FARDC, who should protect the integrity of the national territory in the face of balkanisation rhetoric and threats. The population must stop activism among armed groups.

Similarly, the members of various NGOs held the same views as the students and local businesspeople.⁷⁰ They concurred that the government must establish a mode of governance that prioritises service to the people, ensures that the Congolese have legitimate authorities and that they have a deterrent force. Public authorities must develop road infrastructure for the transport of agricultural produce and provide equipment to local communities for regular road maintenance. This will ensure an easy exchange of goods, livestock and agricultural products among the provinces of the DRC and their respective populations.

Finally, the teachers, for their part, did not contradict the previous groups' opinions and feelings; they agreed with them and added that there should be intercommunity engagement in the areas of peacebuilding, intercommunity social integration and job creation for young people involved in criminal activities. State authorities must be assertive and deliver on their promises of development, democracy and peace. The state must stabilise the social conditions of its population and must be concerned with the needs of the population. Helping citizens is essential because it shows its strength in the eyes of other countries. The state's role includes securing the population, ensuring their health, restoring its image and fostering positive peace aimed at meeting the populace's needs. Additionally, public administration must combat injustices, inequalities, corruption and favouritism to facilitate citizen development. It should prioritise the population's needs and work to eliminate poverty, unemployment, insecurity and destitution.

70. Focus group discussion with members of NGOs, Bukavu, 02 July 2023.

■ Public administration and positive peace

Various thoughts emerged from the study, particularly from the teachers in Bukavu, regarding the strategies to be used by the Government to bring positive peace. They advocate that the government must think about the people's daily lives and that politicians must think about strengthening security for the benefit of the people. The government must build modern hospitals and schools to benefit the people, get involved in agriculture and strengthen security. It should embark on a campaign of raising awareness among the population to have a love for the environment they live in – to let them know that they are firstly responsible for their safety. The government must increase its authority, uphold the rule of law, sustain state authority in some rural areas, maintain control over security and the economy, and let security be felt in all the villages. The government must get involved at all costs to reassure the population of security at all levels. The implications of this study are enormous for the future of the country:

- The rural exodus reduces manpower and causes a decline in rural industrial employment.
- It is necessary to ensure rural development in terms of infrastructure by linking rural areas to the big cities (road construction) and promoting the rural population's small-scale activities (fishing, animal husbandry, agriculture, etc.).
- There is a need to elect representatives and a president concerned with development and to encourage rural provincial and national deputies to make good arguments in relation to the problems of their entities.
- Public authorities must be responsible for working in the interests of the people and must establish a budget for rural development at a national level.
- Investing in agriculture in rural settings is critical to limit the rural exodus; public authorities must assume their responsibilities.
- Mentoring young people in different rural areas, creating more local (rural) jobs, and teaching young people about entrepreneurship are essential to limit the negative effects of unemployment and other ills I referred to earlier.

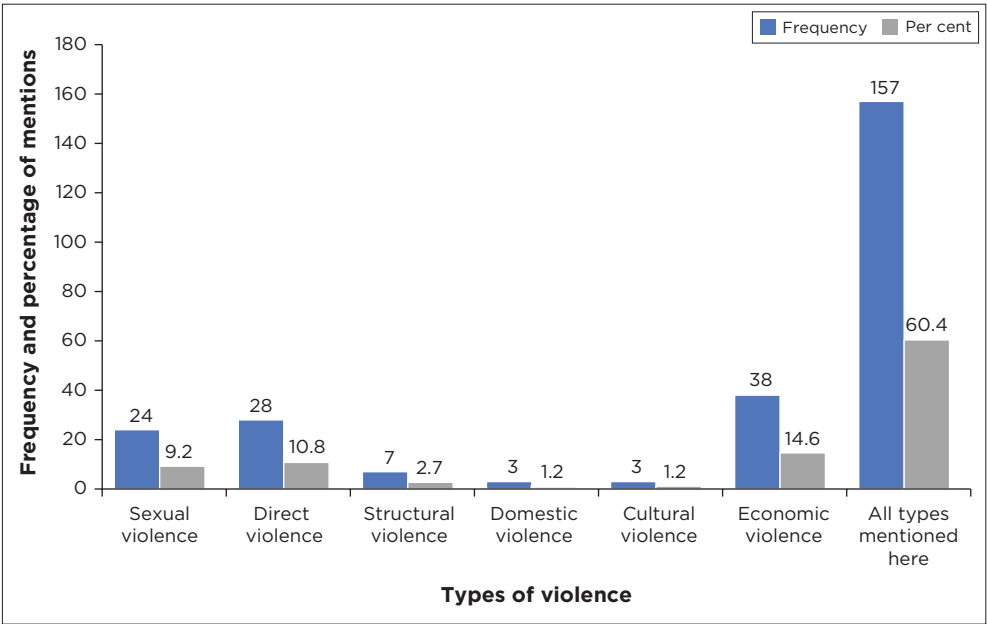
A large number of participants agreed that improving the living conditions in both rural and urban areas is essential, as is making jobs available in rural areas. Conducting a nationwide census to identify each inhabitant according to certain criteria would be a significant step by public administration to guarantee peace and security in urban and rural areas, which must be the primary goal of the government. It must ensure that it takes responsibility for the situation of insecurity that politico-administrative leaders must redress. These leaders should also organise structures at different levels of education to empower learners and students in various mechanisms of conflict resolution to minimise the scale of violence. The DRC needs to establish credible

institutions for the supervision of democratic processes, develop school peace clubs, and empower local traditional leaders to use indigenous approaches to peace, such as *Baraza*, to minimise intercommunity violence. The reduction of violence can be enhanced by providing quality education that emphasises civic and political education to instil democratic values and ethical leadership that is very much needed for the future of the country. Finally, learning environments should become the locus of a balanced education that compounds academic training and civil education, where students can develop a culture of tolerance in conflict management. In support of what is stated above, Buk-30, a student, concurred with the previous suggestions and agreed that public administration must open peace education to schools.⁷¹

Public administration and violence prevention

Participants were asked to identify the main types of violence they experienced. Their views corroborate the findings of the overall research, which reveals the alarming inability of public administration to expand a police presence across the country and reinforce the rule of law.

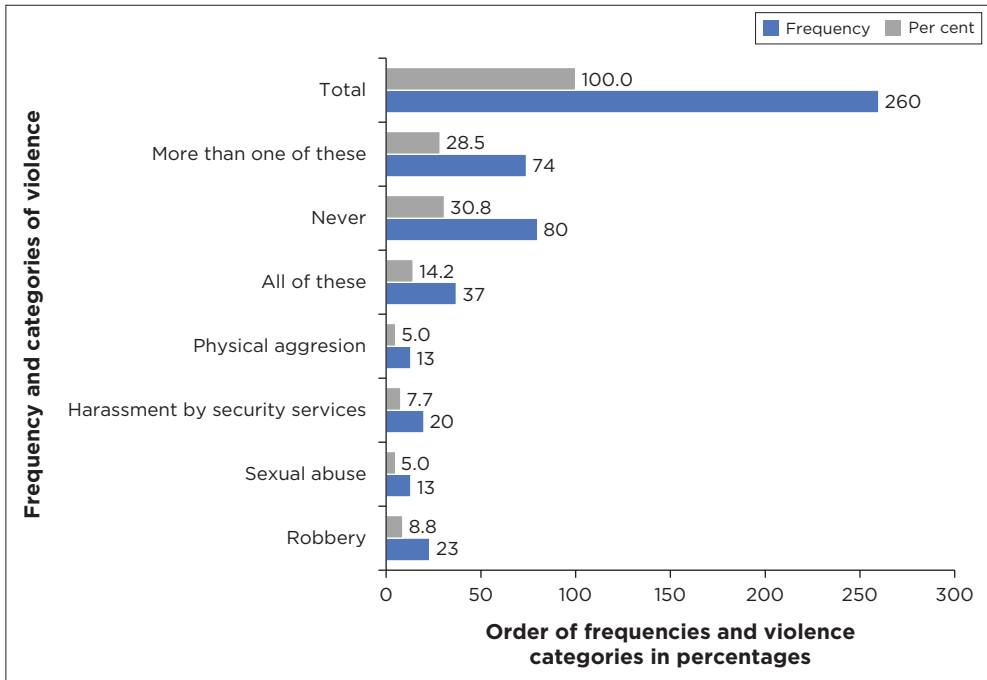
The trends shown in participants’ responses regarding their direct experience of violence are presented in Figures 12.6 and 12.7, with more than one type of violence carrying the second highest percentage of 28.5%.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.6: Types of violence identified by participants.

71. Focus group discussion with students, Bukavu, 23 July 2023.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.7: Participants' experience of violence.

The scale of such violence is discernible in the ongoing rebellion in the North Kivu province, where the M23 rebels continue to kill and terrorise the masses. The lengthy campaigns by the M23 over nearly a decade exemplify the government's incapacity to protect civilians and quell rebellions. Re-establishing and maintaining peace is a real challenge as violence continues to erode peace.

We further investigated the effectiveness of public administration in fighting violence. Participants responded to the statement: 'Public powers are effective to deter violence'. Their responses are: 208 strongly disagreed (80%), 45 disagreed (17.3%), one had no opinion (0.4%), five agreed (1.9%) and one strongly agreed (0.4%), totalling $n = 260$. Furthermore, participants expressed that structural violence negatively impacts peace (Table 12.6).

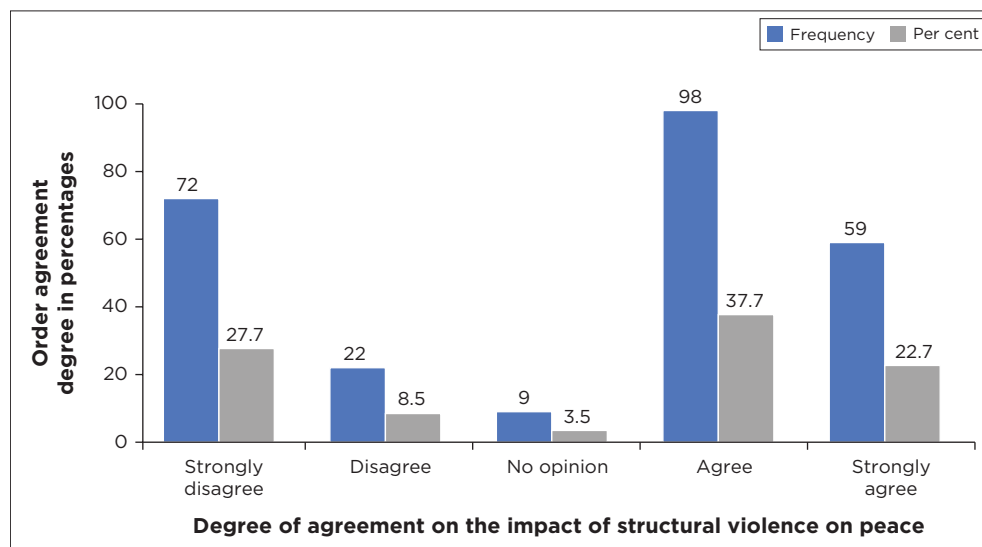
The failure of public administration to prevent violence was confirmed by participants, who also affirmed that structural violence was impacting peace (Figure 12.8). To the statement that structural violence affects peace, their responses show the following tendencies: 72 strongly disagreed (27.7%), 22 disagreed (8.5%), nine had no opinion (3.5%), 98 agreed (37.7%) and 59 strongly agreed (22.7%), resulting in a total of $n = 260$ (Figure 12.8).

Related to this statement was the capacity of public administration to reinforce the rule of law and combat insecurity (Table 12.7).

TABLE 12.6: Structural violence and peace.

Response	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid ⁷² percentage(%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	72	27.7	27.7	27.7
Disagree	22	8.5	8.5	36.2
No opinion	9	3.5	3.5	39.7
Agree	98	37.7	37.7	77.3
Strongly agree	59	22.7	22.7	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.8: Impact of structural violence on peace.**TABLE 12.7:** Public powers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's effectiveness in reinforcing law and order.

Response	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative (%)
Strongly disagree	135	51.9	51.9	51.9
Disagree	110	42.3	42.3	94.2
No opinion	12	4.6	4.6	98.8
Agree	3	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.

72. 'In descriptive statistics, "valid" typically refers to the number of cases or observations with non-missing data in a variable. It represents the number of responses or data points that are usable for analysis, excluding any missing values. The "Valid Per cent" column shows the percentage of valid responses within the total number of cases, excluding any missing data'. See: <https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&q=valid+in+descriptive+statistics&sourceid=opera&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

A total of 49 (33%) agreed that the state ensures the rule of law is practised and the authority of the state is maintained, while 99 (67%) disagreed, totalling $n = 148$.

■ Public administration and security

The majority of respondents objected to the statements according to which public administration displayed sufficient authority and strategies to maintain law and order and tackle insecurity. Regarding the rule of law, their responses revealed 135 respondents strongly disagreed (51.9%), 110 disagreed (42.3%), 12 had no opinion (4.6%) and three agreed (1.2%), resulting in a total of $n = 260$. Regarding addressing insecurity, their disagreement was expressed as follows: 114 respondents strongly disagreed (43.8%), 122 disagreed (46.9%), 23 had no opinion (8.8%), and one agreed (0.4%), totalling $n = 260$.

In addition, respondents disagreed with the assertion that public powers in the DRC effectively protect the population and act for their good. The following tendencies were observed: 129 respondents strongly disagreed (49.6%), 112 disagreed (43.1%), 17 had no opinion (6.5%), and two agreed (0.8%), resulting in a total of $n = 260$. These were very similar to their responses to the efficiency of public administration with regard to individual citizens; we noted the following: 122 strongly disagreed (46.9%), 125 disagreed (48.1%), 12 had no opinion (4.6%), and one agreed (0.4%), totalling $n = 260$.

■ Public administration and peacebuilding

Participants responded to the statement: 'There is a relation between public administration and peacebuilding'. To the statement that 'public powers in the DRC are effective in building positive peace', the participants' responses indicated 130 strongly disagreed (50%), 118 disagreed (45.4%) and 12 had no opinion (4.6%), totalling $n = 260$. The majority of participants refuted the assertion that public powers were effective in training local leaders in peace and conflict transformation. Their responses show the following tendencies: 119 strongly disagreed (45.8%), 118 disagreed (45.4%), 21 had no opinion (8.1%) and two agreed (0.8%), totalling $n = 260$ (Table 12.8).

TABLE 12.8: Participants' views on training of leaders in peace and conflict transformation.

Response	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Strongly disagree	119	45.8	45.8	45.8
Disagree	118	45.4	45.4	91.2
No opinion	21	8.1	8.1	99.3
Agree	2	0.8	0.8	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

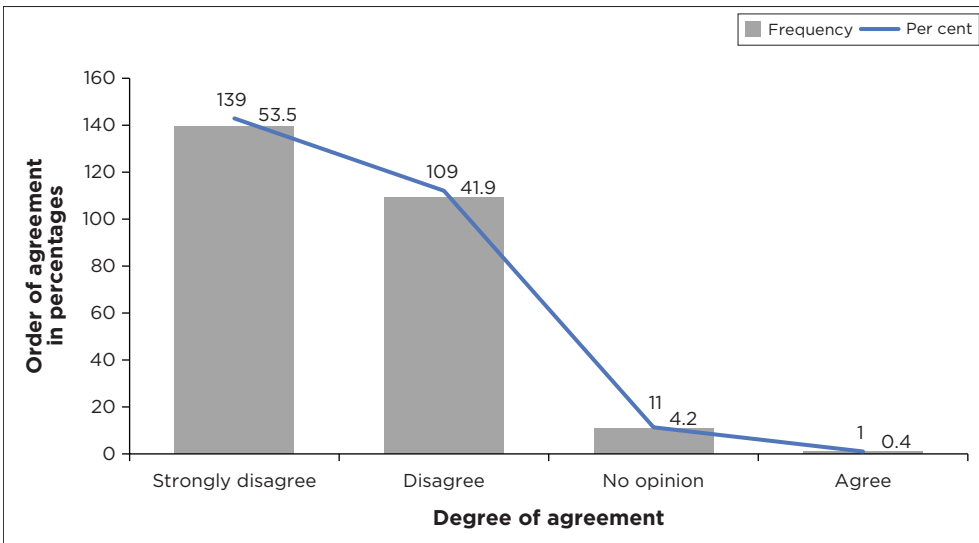
Source: Author's own work.

As far as public powers' efforts to maintain durable peace are concerned, most of the respondents noted the ineffectiveness of public administration to achieve this. Their views are represented by the following figures: 150 strongly disagreed (57.7%), 108 disagreed (41.5%) and two had no opinion (0.8%), totalling $n = 260$.

■ Public administration and sustainable development

Four aspects of development were examined: The development of socio-economic infrastructure, job creation, poverty eradication and steering sustainable development. As far as job creation strategies and reality are concerned, a majority of participants disagreed that public administration is making sufficient efforts to provide jobs to the masses; this was shown in the following tendencies and percentages from their responses: 122 strongly disagreed (46.9%), 119 disagreed (45.8%), 17 had no opinion (6.5%) and two agreed (0.8%), totalling $n = 260$. Similarly, they rejected the assertion we put to them that public administration was productive in terms of developing socio-economic infrastructure to enhance economic growth. They responded in the following way: 144 strongly disagreed (55.4%), 105 disagreed (40.4%), six had no opinion (2.3%) and five agreed (1.9%), totalling $n = 260$.

Regarding poverty eradication, most participants rejected our assertion that public powers in the DRC effectively eradicate poverty. The following trends were observed in their responses: 125 strongly disagreed (48.1%),



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.9: Effectiveness of public administration in ushering in development.

111 disagreed (42.7%), 23 had no opinion (8.8%) and one agreed (0.4%), totalling $n = 260$.

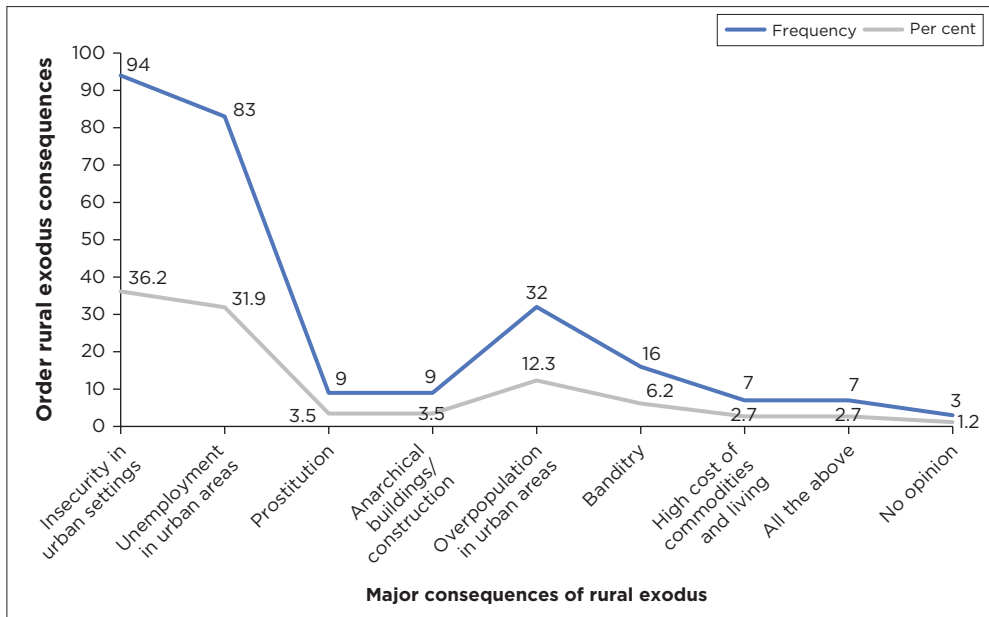
In addition to these figures, most respondents disagreed with the statement that public administration was functional and effective in steering sustainable development. Figure 12.9 captures participants' views on the matter.

The DRC's infrastructure is lacking. It does not have good roads linking the capital cities of its provinces. Some waterways, airports, health institutions, schools, universities, recreational spaces and housing conditions are deplorable, and many are dilapidated. The lack of electricity, clean water and other basic needs is characteristic of the DRC's ineffective public administration.

■ Rural exodus as an effect of dysfunctional public administration

Participants identified rural exodus as a failure of public administration; insecurity carries the highest weight, 94 (36.2%), in terms of consequences. Figure 12.10 elucidates this problem.

Rural exodus significantly impacts life in urban spaces, as expressed by participants when describing its consequences (Figure 12.10), which affect peace and development as well. To remedy such massive displacements of people towards major towns, respondents suggested the following strategies: 34 noted making the rural environment



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.10: Consequences of rural exodus.

peaceful (13.1%), 38 noted creating jobs (14.6%), seven noted creating economic opportunities (2.7%), 14 noted securing the environment (5.4%), nine noted re-establishing state authority (3.5%), seven noted improving socio-economic infrastructure (2.7%), five noted training leaders to peacebuilding and conflict transformation (1.9%), 10 noted increasing police presence in rural areas (3.8%) and 136 referred to all these strategies 136 (52.3%), totalling $n = 260$.

■ Structural equation model: Mediated variables

Sets of dependent and independent variables⁷³ were generated from mediated research questions. Mediated variables were measured at ordinal scales (Figure 12.11). Out of 27 questions converted into variables, those measured at ordinal scale are re-stated here because of their relatedness to the effects of public administration.

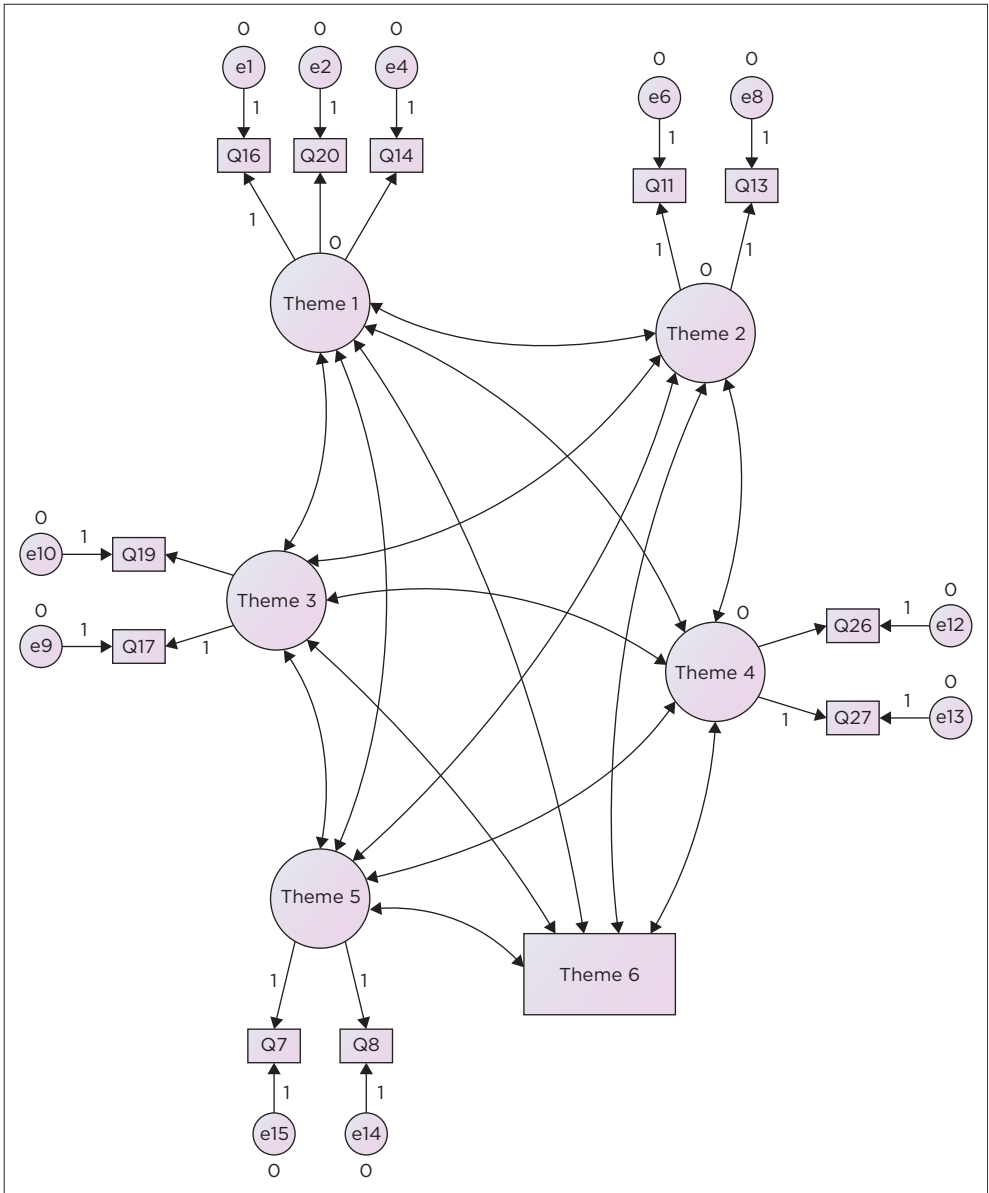
1. Existence or non-existence of the relation between public administration and peacebuilding
2. Efficacy of public powers in building positive peace
3. Efficacy of public powers in reinforcing law and order
4. Efficacy of public power in building socio-economic infrastructure
5. Efficacy of public power in creating jobs
6. Efficacy of public power in securing people and their goods
7. Action by public powers to train local leaders in peace and conflict transformation
8. Action by public powers to increase police presence countrywide
9. Efficacy of public powers in combatting insecurity
10. Efficacy of public powers in eradicating poverty
11. Efficacy of public powers in controlling rural exodus
12. Efficacy of public powers in protecting civilians
13. Participants' identified causes of rural exodus and IDPs
14. Remedies for rural to urban migration and IDPs
15. Public powers' actions to maintain durable peace
16. Public powers' actions to reinforce state authority
17. Public powers' involvement in preventing rural exodus.

□ Results (default model)

The minimum was achieved and the data in SPSS Statistics as follows:

- Chi-square = 86.701
- Degrees of freedom = 42
- Probability level = 0.000

73. Public administration and public powers are used interchangeably in this inquiry.



Source: Deepak Singh's (DUT) drawn from research dataset. Reproduced and published with courtesy from the author.

FIGURE 12.11: Structural equation modelling diagrammatic presentation of intervariable systems of relationships.

Table 12.9 shows the regression weights (group number 1 – default model).

TABLE 12.9: Maximum likelihood estimates.

			Estimate	SE	CR	p	Label
Q16	←	Theme1	1.000				
Q20	←	Theme1	0.917	0.128	7.174	***	par_1
Q14	←	Theme1	1.048	0.144	7.256	***	par_2
Q11	←	Theme2	1.000				
Q13	←	Theme2	1.000				
Q17	←	Theme3	1.000				
Q19	←	Theme3	0.790	0.144	5.485	***	par_3
Q26	←	Theme4	1.816	1.180	1.538	0.124	par_4
Q27	←	Theme4	1.000				
Q8	←	Theme5	1.000				
Q7	←	Theme5	1.000				

Source: Author's own work.

Key: SE, standard error; CR, composite reliability; p, p-value.

Table 12.10 displays the estimates of values obtained for each set of themes and questions.

TABLE 12.10: Correlations (group number 1 – Default model).

			Estimate
Theme1	↔	Theme2	0.214
Theme1	↔	Theme3	0.178
Theme1	↔	Theme4	0.025
Theme5	↔	Theme1	0.184
Theme2	↔	Theme3	0.510
Theme2	↔	Theme4	0.053
Theme5	↔	Theme2	0.032
Theme3	↔	Theme4	0.461
Theme5	↔	Theme3	0.286
Theme5	↔	Theme4	0.343
Q15	↔	Theme1	0.410
Q15	↔	Theme4	0.046
Q15	↔	Theme3	0.456
Q15	↔	Theme5	0.021
Q15	↔	Theme2	0.434

Source: Author's own work.

TABLE 12.11: Model fit summaries.

CMIN⁷⁴

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	p	CMIN/DF
Default model	48	86.701	42	0.000	2.064
Saturated model	90	0.000	0		
Independence model	24	489.833	66	0.000	7.422

74. CMIN or χ^2 is the chi-square statistic that compares the tested model and the independence model to the saturated model, <https://www.statistika.co/index.php/research-methods/sem-amos/chi-square-cmin>

Baseline comparisons

Model	NFI Δ 1	RFI ρ 1	IFI Δ 2	TLI ρ 2	CFI
Default model	0.823	0.722	0.900	0.834	0.895
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Author's own work.

RMSEA⁷⁵

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	0.064	0.045	0.083	0.109
Independence model	0.157	0.145	0.171	0.000

Source: Author's own work.

Keys: CMIN, chi-square statistic (compares the tested model and the independence model to the saturated model); CFI, comparative fit index; IFI, incremental fit index; NFI, normed fit index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; TLI, Tucker–Lewis index; DF, degrees of freedom; LO, log-linear model or a log-likelihood function; NPAR, network partitioning; PCLOSE, close a pipe stream to or from a process; RFI, radio frequency interference; HI, Health Index or Hypothesis Testing.

1. *Model fit*: The Chi-square test is a statistical test that checks whether observed data fits a model. A significant p -value ($p < 0.000$) suggests that the data does not fit the model well. However, Chi-square is sensitive to sample size, so other fit indices are also considered.
2. *Maximum likelihood estimates*: These are the parameter estimates that maximise the likelihood of the observed data given the model. The Estimate column in Table 12.9 provides the estimated parameter value. The standard error (SE) column in Table 12.9 is the SE of the estimate, which measures the estimate's variability. The critical ratio (CR) column in Table 12.9 is the CR, which is the estimate divided by the SE. The P column in Table 12.9 is the p -value, which tests the null hypothesis that the true parameter value is zero. If $p < 0.05$, the parameter is considered statistically significant.
3. *Covariances*: Covariance is a measure of how much two random variables vary together. It is similar to variance, but where variance tells you how a single variable varies, covariance tells you how two variables vary together.
4. *Correlations*: Correlation is another way to measure how two variables are related. While covariance gives the direction of the relationship, correlation measures both the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables.
5. *Baseline comparisons*: These are relative fit indices that compare your model's fit to the fit of a baseline model. The closer these indices are to 1, the better your model's fit.
6. *RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation)*: This is a measure of fit per degree of freedom that adjusts for model complexity. Values less

75. Root mean square error of approximation (values of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.08 indicate excellent, good and mediocre fit respectively, some go up to 0.10 for mediocre), <https://stats.oarc.ucla.edu/spss/seminars/introduction-to-factor-analysis/a-practical-introduction-to-factor-analysis-confirmatory-factor-analysis/>

than 0.05 indicate good fit, values between 0.05 and 0.08 indicate adequate fit, and values greater than 0.10 indicate poor fit.

7. *Normed fit index (NFI)*, *incremental fit index (IFI)*, *Tucker-Lewis index (TLI)* and *comparative fit index (CFI)* are incremental fit indices that compare this model's fit to the fit of a null model. Values greater than 0.95 are generally considered indicative of a good fit.

■ Structural equation modelling results

1. *Model fit*: The model has a Chi-square of 86.701 with 42 degrees of freedom (DF), which is significant ($p < 0.000$). This suggests that the model could be improved. The CMIN/DF value in Table 12.11 is 2.064, which is within the acceptable range (values less than five are generally considered good). The RMSEA is 0.064, which indicates a reasonable error of approximation.
2. *Maximum likelihood estimates*: The estimates for the regression weights are all significant at the $p < 0.05$ level, except for Q26 $\leftarrow$ Theme4 ($p = 0.124$). This suggests that most of the observed variables are significant indicators of their respective latent variables.
3. *Covariances*: The covariances between the themes are mostly not significant, except for Theme1 $\leftrightarrow$ Theme2 ($p = 0.024$) and Theme2 $\leftrightarrow$ Theme3 ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that these themes are related.
4. *Correlations*: The correlations between Q15 and the themes are all significant and positive, except for Q15 $\leftrightarrow$ Theme5 ($p = 0.823$). This suggests that Q15 is positively related to most of the themes.
5. *Baseline comparisons*: The NFI, IFI, TLI and CFI in Table 12.11 are all above 0.8, suggesting that the model fits the data well compared to the independence model. However, these indices are less than 0.95, which is the threshold for excellent fit.

■ Structural equation model: Interpretation of results

Sets of dependent and independent variables⁷⁶ were generated from mediated research questions. Mediated variables were measured at ordinal scales. Out of 27 variables, those measured at ordinal scales are re-stated here because of their relatedness to the effects of public administration. The total sample size consisted of 260 participants (Tables 12.12–12.14).

76. Public administration and public powers are used interchangeably in this inquiry.

TABLE 12.12: Occupations of participants.

Occupations	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Students	112	43.1	43.1	43.1
Teachers	79	30.4	30.4	73.5
Members of NGOs	20	7.7	7.7	81.2
Unemployed	24	9.2	9.2	90.4
Businesspeople	25	9.6	9.6	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.

Key: NGOs, non-governmental organisations.

1. *Existence (or not) of the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding*
 - There is a correlation between the role of public administration and peacebuilding efforts. This stems from the state's responsibility to design and implement policies that aim to foster peace.
 - As suggested by the field findings, the government's policies and actions to reduce conflict and tackle the drivers of violence and conflicts are not significant in the Kivu provinces.
2. *Efficacy of public powers in building positive peace*
 - As defined earlier, positive peace is perceptible where there is no violence or even fear that life is threatened, such as hunger, starvation or latent conflicts that may degenerate into war. These conditions that explain the lack of positive peace paradoxically define negative peace.
 - The government is responsible for pursuing national welfare and the well-being of its population. While this responsibility belongs ultimately to the state, its effects are limited and not acknowledged by the people. The majority – 254 (97.7%) – disagreed that public powers effectively build positive peace in the DRC.
3. *Efficacy of public powers in reinforcing law and order*

The state has the prerogative to enforce law and order to ensure that its citizens enjoy peace in conducting their business and going to work and school. Unfortunately, the current circumstances and prevailing insecurity show that there is insecurity, and people live in fear. The majority – 245 (94.2%) – of participants in this inquiry did not see the government reinforcing law and order.
4. *Efficacy of public power in building socio-economic infrastructure*

There is a strong link between public administration and infrastructural development in various sectors of a nation's economic and social life. Most participants, 245 (95.8%), observed that public administration is not doing enough to build socio-economic infrastructure.
5. *Efficacy of public power in creating jobs*

The connection between public administration and job creation was acknowledged. However, the majority of participants, 241 (92.7%), indicated that the government was not creating jobs for the population.

6. *Efficacy of public powers in securing people and their goods*

There is a relationship between public administration and civil protection. Nonetheless, the government is seen as incapable of ensuring the population's safety. A total of 241 (92.7%) participants agreed that public powers are not able to protect civilians.

7. *Action by public powers to train local leaders in peace and conflict transformation*

The state is responsible for empowering leaders at different levels of society with adequate training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation. The statistics reveal that 237 (91.2%) participants affirmed that the state lacks training programmes for leaders in these areas.

The same trends are shown for all variables, unpacking the incapacity of the government to address several issues, such as expanding the police presence across the country, eradicating poverty, controlling the rural exodus, protecting civilians, controlling IDPs, maintaining peace and reinforcing state authority.

1. *Inaction on the part of public powers to increase police presence countrywide*: 236 (90.8%) agreed.
2. *Inefficiency of public powers in combatting insecurity*: 236 (90.8%) agreed.
3. *Incapacity of public powers to eradicate poverty*: 236 (90.9%) agreed.
4. *Ineffective response by public powers to controlling the rural exodus*: 246 (94.6%) agreed.
5. *Ineffectual public powers, unable to protect civilians*: 247 (95%) agreed.

Participants identified the following causes of rural exodus and IDPs:

1. *Public powers' actions should ensure durable peace*: 258 (99.2%) agreed.
2. *Public powers' actions should reinforce state authority*: 253 (97.3%) agreed.
3. *Public powers' should be involved in preventing rural exodus*: 246 (94.6%) agreed.

TABLE 12.13: Participants' views on the causes of rural exodus and internally displaced persons.

Listed causes	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Insecurity	44	16.9	16.9	16.9
Unemployment	34	13.1	13.1	30.0
Land conflict	12	4.6	4.6	34.6
Lack of investment in agricultural sector	2	0.8	0.8	35.4
Active armed groups and militias	63	24.2	24.2	59.6
All causes combined	94	36.2	36.2	95.8
No opinion	4	1.5	1.5	97.3
Sorcery	7	2.7	2.7	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.

■ Remedies for rural to urban migration and internally displaced persons

TABLE 12.14: Consequences of rural exodus.

Listed consequences	Frequency	Per cent (%)	Valid percentage (%)	Cumulative percentage (%)
Insecurity in urban settings	94	36.2	36.2	36.2
Unemployment in urban areas	83	31.9	31.9	68.1
Prostitution	9	3.5	3.5	71.6
Anarchical buildings/construction	9	3.5	3.5	75.0
Overpopulation in urban areas	32	12.3	12.3	87.3
Banditry/delinquency	16	6.2	6.2	93.5
High cost of commodities and living	7	2.7	2.7	96.2
All the above	7	2.7	2.7	98.8
No opinion	3	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	260	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's own work.

The overwhelming indicators sustaining the correlations between public administration and the seventeen variables used to measure its effectiveness lead us to infer that the country's ills lie in an ineffectual public administration. It is essential to address the source of the country's multifaceted crises, which stem from the lack of a state; as one Mr Étienne Tshisekedi said, the state has collapsed in the DRC: '*l'état n'existe pas*' [state is non-existent]. The same was echoed in a sermon of Bishop Ekofo: the DRC has become a '*non-état*' [no-state] – meaning the non-existence of a state. According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica's* (2024b) definition ('State: sovereign political entity'), 'state' is defined as:

[The] political organization of society, or the body politic, or, more narrowly, the institutions of government. The state is a form of human association distinguished from other social groups by its purpose, the establishment of order and security; its methods, the laws and their enforcement; its territory, the area of jurisdiction or geographic boundaries; and finally by its sovereignty. The state consists, most broadly, of the agreement of the individuals on the means whereby disputes are settled in the form of laws. (n.p.)

The elements of a 'state' in this definition are non-existent in the DRC if not comprised of public administration. The findings of the empirical data substantiate the lack of enforcement of order and security and the borders that are violated in the east, northeast and south by its neighbours. The rule of law is undermined, as shown in a large body of scholarly knowledge (Kiyala 2018; Mlambo 2024). Simultaneously, this is noted by NGOs and organs of the UN. The UN supports strengthening the rule of law in the DRC amid ongoing conflict, but this requires, first and foremost, a political engagement and commitment to aiding the DRC's public authorities (United Nations 2018). It is important to acknowledge ongoing efforts by the UN as reported here:

It has served as a means of dialogue, demonstrating how the rule of law can be upheld, how the fight against impunity can be advanced, and how civilians can be better protected. (n.p.)

Furthermore, the same document states:

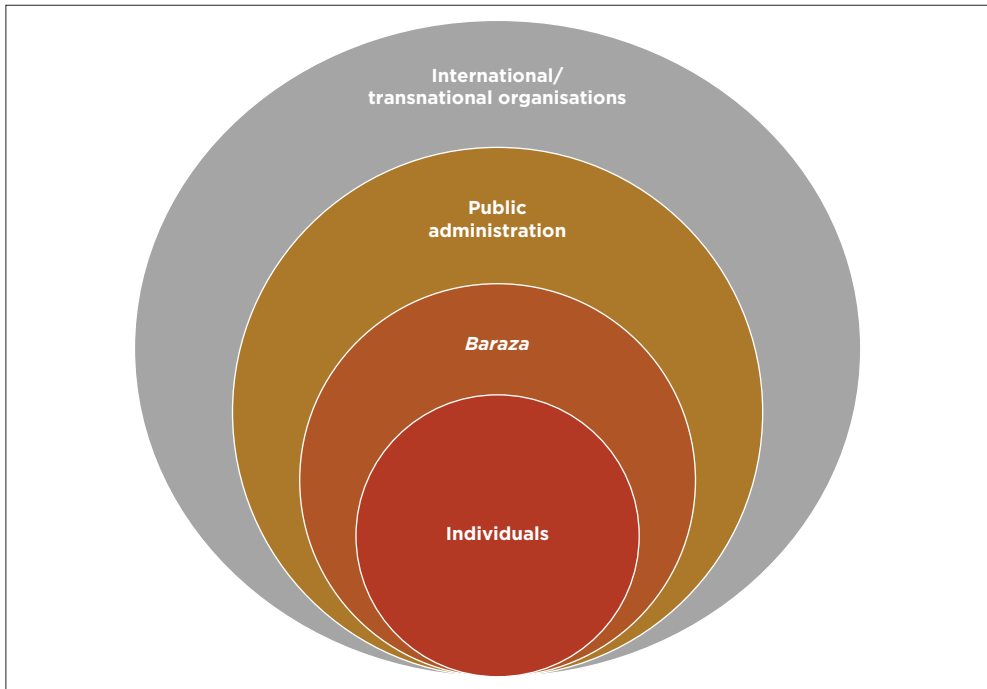
From its original focus on the military criminal justice chain, MONUSCO support is increasingly shifting to the civilian justice system. Our work has demonstrated how political engagement matched with technical and logistical support can contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, enforcing laws that uphold justice and develop strong institutions for sustainable peace. (n.p.)

As noted earlier, the rule of law, dismantling the networks of corruption and curbing the cycle of impunity (Hall & LaRocco 2012; Kiyala 2018; Yonekawa 2012) are crucial to transforming the DRC's governance crisis and putting the country on the path of economic recovery, post-conflict national reconstruction, democracy, peacebuilding and sustainable development.

■ Discussion

This research sought to respond to the following questions: (1) What are public administration-related factors that hinder durable peace and sustainable development in the DRC? and (2) What is the extent of their effects? Based on statistical analyses of the research findings presented in tables and graphs, using SEM and descriptive analyses, it appears that there are links between public administration and peacebuilding; the failure of the former becomes the main driver of violence that hinders positive peace and development. The major themes to be discussed in this section are the impact of structural violence on peacebuilding, infrastructure, prevailing insecurity, rule of law and state authority and sustainable development. Figure 12.12 capture four layers, representing the various levels where peace should be nurtured, developed and practised in the DRC.

Lambourne (2004, p. 2) argues that '[t]he United Nations, individual states and INGOs, have become increasingly involved in trying to rebuild peaceful societies in the aftermath of violent conflict'. However, the silencing of guns does not signify the advent of peace. A society fragmented by violence, death and injuries has specific needs. Scholarship demonstrates that among these needs are reconciliation (Lederach 1997a), justice (Huyse 2008; Lambourne 2004), and truth and reconciliation mechanisms, all of which are vital approaches to peacebuilding and post-conflict nation rebuilding (Rettig 2008). Such efforts stem from the individual's willingness to participate in the process, which may bring personal healing or nation-healing, which are not easy to measure. The role of individuals affected by conflicts will determine the effectiveness of a peacebuilding process and



Source: Author's own work.

FIGURE 12.12: Inclusive peacebuilding architecture.

the community's ownership and preponderant acceptance of the process. The role of traditional, indigenous or local structures in pursuing justice and achieving reconciliation is broadening the perspectives of post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation. Among such cases is the Northern Uganda case of traditional justice (Baines 2007; Nakayi 2008). The impact of locally based measures shows mitigated and controversial results such as *Gacaca* in Rwanda, which is recognised to have achieved positive results (Brounéus 2008), while others mitigate the impact of *Gacaca* on peacebuilding and redressing the 1994 genocide legacy (Zamani & Dashlibroon 2024). It is important to point out that *Gacaca* was a hybrid mechanism, namely a jurisprudence inspired by the traditional peacebuilding and conflict resolution fed with some elements of the conventional criminal justice system to speed up accountability processes and social reintegration of the many genocide suspects. Nonetheless, the cases of Sierra Leone, Uganda, Mozambique and the DRC yielded promising results in facilitating reconciliation between former child soldiers and their communities and bringing healing to a war-affected population in Mozambique. There is, therefore, the need for collaboration between public administration and local traditional leadership when working for peace. Such cooperation and partnership could be instrumental in achieving peace in conflict-affected societies like the DRC.

□ **Impact of structural violence on peace**

The experiences of violence in the DRC extend beyond the limited types identified in this inquiry's survey data. They encompass various forms of structural violence, including, but not limited to, the following: inadequate access to basic constitutional rights, such as electricity, clean water, food security, education, health care, housing, social security, social and cultural rights, civilian protection, freedom of speech and decent, fairly compensated jobs; systemic lawlessness and a lack of respect for civil liberties; impunity that jeopardises the well-being of women and children in rural and war-torn areas; endemic GBV in provinces affected by conflict; and insufficient infrastructure, livelihoods and economic opportunities. These issues are the consequences of failed public administration that must be addressed to transform the environment and foster a climate of economic growth and societal harmony.

□ **Infrastructure**

Infrastructure constitutes the engine of development. The lack of infrastructure in the DRC is evident in the absence of roads that link the capital cities of its provinces; and the lack of navigable waterways, airports, health institutions, viable schools and higher education institutions. Additionally, public servants, teachers, and the few who have the opportunity to work often receive inadequate salaries. The dearth of good housing and the resulting illegal and disorderly building of houses in urban areas impedes the movements of security and emergency services, and the lack of roads in peri-urban areas and a reliable government airline that operates in the DRC's 26 provinces, the absence of communication networks by road, rail, airways etc., are all characteristic of an ineffective public administration – and even a failed state. The sum of these deprivations amounts to structural violence that maintains the condition of war in the eastern and north-eastern provinces and 'no war, no peace' in southern, western, northern and central provinces where there is no active war or armed conflicts. It was evidenced that violence and insecurity are intertwined because the lack of access to economic opportunities, infringement of human rights and civil liberties, unemployment and impunity all contribute to the insecurity that is exacerbated by the rural exodus and its subsequent ills. Unless the government addresses the factors causing IDPs and rural exodus, the prospects for sustainable development, stable peace and societal harmony will remain distant dreams.

□ **Prevailing insecurity**

As noted previously, the most serious threats to peace are the prevailing insecurity and armed conflicts and the inability of the government to

develop strategies that secure the country's porous borders, particularly along the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi borders. Some of the ongoing instability is created by the M23 rebels (reportedly backed by Rwanda), who are responsible for IDPs, unlawful killing of civilians, rapes, deployment of rocket-propelled grenades in civilian-populated areas, war crimes and crimes against humanity (HRW 2023b). The same report observes that '[t]he Rwandan army has deployed troops to eastern Congo to provide direct military support to the M23, helping them expand control over Rutshuru and neighbouring Masisi territories' (HRW 2023b). This has exacerbated the displacement of people from rural settings to urban areas and increased food insecurity.

□ Rule of law and state authority

In the foreword to the book *Rule of law in public administration: Problems and ways ahead in peacebuilding and development*, Henrik Landerholm points out that the international community has recognised the rule of law as a critical foundation upon which peace should be built to enhance post-conflict recovery across the world (Bergling et al. 2008, p. XI). Thus, the rule of law is paramount in pursuing development, which cannot occur without sustainable peace. This explains, in part, the prevailing insecurity and impunity, which have also been identified as the major drivers of the child soldiering phenomenon in the DRC (Kiyala 2015, 2018a). It is thus urgent to restore and expand state authority across the whole national territory of the DRC to ensure the masses are truly citizens and no longer live in fear (Kiyala 2018a; Vinck et al. 2008). Living in fear affects both peace and development.

□ Sustainable development

The findings demonstrate how development is hindered by insecurity, impunity, the lack of peace, and the absence of rigorous strategies and development policies that could unleash durable development. The majority of respondents, 241 (92%), did not agree that public administration strives to create jobs. Participants expressed similar trends regarding the dilapidated and non-existent infrastructure; this obstacle to development reflects the notorious incapacity of public administration over the decades to bring welfare to the population of the DRC. Development cannot be achieved under the ongoing prevailing disastrous public administration. Thus, it is plausible to infer that public administration in the DRC has been dysfunctional and unable to achieve its required obligations. A redress of these barriers to peace and development would require good governance and a move from the DRC's current status of 'failed state' to one of 'enduring state'. 'Enduring state' is used here in the way it was conceptualised by the London School of Economics and Political Science (2006).

□ Early childhood development and peacebuilding

One of the key contributions of this book was the development, discussion and arguments on the ecology of peace, suggesting that good parenting is essential to nurturing and developing attitudes and inclinations towards caring in children. Children who experience care in external environments such as families, communities and different societies are likely to make a difference in their present lives and the future when they are called to lead or make important decisions about their respective communities. They will be able to minimise direct violence while being peacemakers. Thus, the theory I present here, PBEST, can be a novel way of envisioning peace. Moving from the bottom-down approach of peace and the actors involved to the bottom-up strategy is what PBEST suggests as an innovative evolution of peace and its actors. The contribution of neuroscience to peacebuilding is significant, as outlined below:

- Peacebuilding is a process that can be better managed by helping a child develop peacemaking inclinations with the help of OT.
- A child who has been exposed to a loving, caring and peaceful environment carries the seed of peace that will be found in other children who have grown to adulthood at each of the five PBEST layers.
- The failures and limitations of conventional peacebuilding theories are because of the lack of foundational experience in peacemaking and peacebuilding, without which any peacebuilding interventions remain vulnerable and exposed to the risk of collapse.
- The key players of peacebuilding are parents, caregivers, nurses and educators who interact with a child early in life and sow the seed of peace that is nurtured by the effects of OT to develop the child into a caring, peaceful and loving adult.
- The relationships between ECD and peacebuilding could be a significant catalyst for peacebuilding because the dyadic and triadic interactions are the foundation stone of future interactions and the vector of harmonious future inter-relationships.
- Key players in peacebuilding can only emerge within structures that embody engagement and commitment to peace or interventions that aim for peace (see Lederach's pyramid of conflict transformation and peacebuilding; the adapted Schirch's peacebuilding map, Figure 9.1; the strategic peacebuilding of Lederach and Mansfield; civil society categories; and the illustration and discussion on PBEST, Figure 10.1.).

Peacebuilding evolution systems theory emphasises the ecological importance of a child's behavioural development and the necessity of identifying the signs of weak levels of OT and increasing this neurobiological brain nutrient to ensure that each child is naturally instilled with empathetic feeling, starting from childhood and growing in the child's immediate environment.

■ Conclusion

The DRC has been plagued by decades of instability, insecurity, a poor record on upholding human rights and civil wars across successive administrations since the Congo Free State. This inquiry examined the nexus between public administration and peacebuilding and the extent to which improving governance would help curtail increasing structural violence in the DRC. The outputs of the descriptive analyses corroborate the findings from the qualitative data and the reviewed literature, confirming the influence of public administration on several factors that hinder peacebuilding and sustainable development. These factors include structural and chronic violence, prevailing insecurity, inadequate infrastructure, failure to uphold the rule of law and deficient governance.

Considering and recommending pathways to peace

The interlinkages between public administration, democracy and peacebuilding in the DRC are the main focus of this book. It employs a multimethodological approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, along with literary research and an empirical study I conducted in eastern DRC. A thorough analysis of the political, historical and security environment – characterised by painful memories – reveals the root causes of the DRC's suffering, despite its status as one of the richest countries on Earth. It is paradoxical to see the enormity of challenges the country (while potentially so wealthy) faces to build a strong economy and deliver much-needed services to its population. The country's vulnerability, which has been subjected to decades of human rights abuses from colonisation to post-colonial successive administrations, was highlighted. I attempted to indicate that the overall situation of the DRC requires redress, which an adequate and effective public administration must pilot. As the country continues to battle various armed groups, including the insurrectionist M23 movement, after nearly three decades (1996–2025) since the major African wars, the DRC should envisage deep political, security, social and economic reforms to meet the various demands of its populations and to pursue sustainable development. This will be possible only with an ethical and transparent public administration that

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manages public resources responsibly, secures its borders and prevents illegal exploitation and commercialisation of its mineral and natural resources.

The nexus between peacebuilding and public administration shows that the concepts are interconnected. When public administration fails to deliver service to its population, the term ‘failed state’ is attributed to such an administration. The DRC’s future lies in the pursuit of an agenda of transitional justice and national reconciliation (which relies significantly on well-framed policies that viable and reliable institutions support), as well as good governance and the political determination to end wars and criminality. In addition, the experiences of South Africa could inspire the DRC to utilise Ubuntu principles, *Bisoïté* philosophy, the African *Palaver* institution, and even the *Baraza* jurisprudence and conflict resolution forum. A strong and effective public administration is the starting point for recovery and peacebuilding in the DRC. Without transitional justice and national reconciliation processes, frozen intercommunity conflicts and animosity between Congo and its neighbours, who stand accused of using armed conflicts and rebellions to cause instability and lawlessness as a means to plunder the country’s resources, will remain unresolved.

The prospects of lasting peace in the DRC rely on a robust public administration as a governance system that is efficient in ending corruption and impunity, delivering democracy, upholding the rule of law and developing productive policies that will back all the necessary reforms in the education, agricultural, technological and health care sectors, among others. The current environment of prevailing conflicts and wars in the east has shown insufficient resources to counter insurgencies and the political strategy to negotiate with the M23 rebellion. The instability at the DRC’s borders with Uganda and Rwanda, where the M23 rebels make incursions to attack the country, remains concerning.

Peacebuilding and reconciliation processes must also resolve the following contentious issues:

1. The Banyamulenge’s Congolese citizenship and identity must be addressed through adequate legislation that will also pave the way to national reconciliation, which should ensue from a regional peace conference where essential players in the DRC’s instability and conflicts should meet. Zambia, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda must be part of this dialogue, which will lead to an inter-Congolese conference and national reconciliation agenda.
2. The *Dodd-Frank Act*’s Section 1502 on conflict minerals must de facto embargo minerals from the DRC to halt the illicit exploitation and trade of precious blood stones, particularly the 3Ts, whose production is associated with extreme human rights violations and armed conflicts.

3. The remnants of the FDLR and other forces perceived as threats to the peace and security of Rwanda must be repatriated to Rwanda, and there should be a monitoring process to establish how and to what extent those forces still represent a significant risk to the stability, peace and security of Rwanda.
4. The absorption of the M23 fighters into the DRC's military defense remains a complex issue that the DRC's public administration must deal with.

Following the discussion on the various aspects and tenets of peacebuilding, I introduced the concept of civil society to highlight its influence, alongside the state and business, on the well-being of society. The core competence model of collaboration developed by Waddell (2002) stands as a fundamental demonstration of the linkages between public administration, civil society and business and why the partnership of the three is meaningful and necessary to deliver public and social goods. This collaboration exists in the DRC when the state, business and civil society work together. In some instances, the DRC Government provides funds towards the operations of CSOs. Civil society's activism and civic engagement in the country are expected to last until the DRC becomes an 'enduring state' that meets its constitutional obligations to pursue and bring welfare to its people.

While the majority of the country experiences negative peace – the absence of direct violence – structural violence is omnipresent across the country, and such violence results from a dysfunctional public administration, which the country inherited from the preceding administrations that are remembered for their corruption, kleptocratic practices, human rights violations, starvation of the population and meagre wages paid to public servants (and years when they went unpaid). Peace processes and national reconciliation are still essential to ensure the country embarks fully on the path of post-conflict recovery and lasting peace. The inception of the democratisation process by Mobutu remains unfinished and is complexified by the logistical constraints resulting from the restructuring of the provinces, making up 26 provincial entities without adequate logistical or administrative infrastructure for them to develop.

An overview of public administration – its evolution, conceptual and theoretical background, the linkages between public administration and democracy, non-party polity, the rule of law and their implications for various systems of governance – was necessary to help rethink the way public administration operates in the DRC and how an innovative model of governance would advance respect for human dignity, human rights and the right to life. Democracy remains a favourable system of governance despite its many challenges in Africa and the DRC. The main issue with democracy is not the system itself and its principles; it is rather the problem emanating from the leadership crisis, which results from the erosion of

African traditional values, a misconception of the system and its manipulation to suit individual selfish leaders. *Electionism* or *pseudodemocracy* – the misconception and misuse of the democratic theory and praxis – are such practices that characterise many democracies in Africa. A renaissance of public administration based on the Ubuntu humanist and philanthropic philosophy is of primary importance and imperative for the future of democracy on the continent and in the DRC.

Ubuntu leadership is constructed on humanistic values that should be optimised in interactions between a leader and his or her subjects. It emphasises fairness, forgiveness and care for the people entrusted to the leader's responsibility. Ubuntu leadership promotes dialogue as a means of conflict management and seeks the well-being of the human person and that of the community. This is expected of the Ubuntu-informed public administration needed in the DRC.

One of the important goals of public administration is to deliver democracy because of the links between the two. Democracy is in jeopardy in Africa as the trend of military rule reemerges. To support the democratic process and establishments, African leaders must eradicate the pervasive problem of corruption; they should embrace the values of democracy and accountability and ensure that the rule of law prevails. A functional democratic regime is not a panacea to conflict and violence. However, it can minimise power struggle-driven conflicts if the process is conducted adequately.

The discussion and argument on peacebuilding covered extensive literature and empirical data outputs, and the global study narrowed down to the DRC case. The book underlines the interaction of key players in peacebuilding, especially faith-based organisations, as one of the components of CSOs and transnational and international actors. The three approaches to peace – peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding – along with indigenous methods of achieving peace, demonstrate the adaptability of procedures aimed at fostering peace. This also indicates that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution in peace strategies. Each context requires an appropriate and/or compounded strategy to establish and maintain peace. The DRC's complex history and ongoing violence are examples of cases where an innovative strategy for peace will require a combination of approaches and their use at different levels of society (community, district, provincial and national). An indigenous method like the *Baraza* can be useful for intercommunity peacebuilding, peacemaking and peacekeeping and may apply at the national level in the east where violence is ongoing. Peacebuilding via diplomacy and mediation would be useful because of the regionalisation of interventions and the involvement of foreign countries as sponsors and direct actors in the fighting. This should not preclude the involvement of the ICC and ICJ in resolving the

dispute in which Rwanda and Uganda are involved, whether by tracking rebels from both countries or for geoeconomic gains such as access to strategic mineral resources on the DRC's soil.

Based on the outputs drawn from qualitative and quantitative data analyses employed in this book, the links between public administration, democracy and peacebuilding are evident. Public administration is centred on the delivery of public and social goods via the variety of policies it initiates and pursues. Some of the goods it is expected to deliver are democracy, peace and making the country a 'welfare state'. In the DRC, an effective public administration seeks to address all kinds of violence (direct, structural, cultural and chronic) that impede peace and undermine developmental efforts, as well as the prevailing insecurity, the lack of infrastructure and the failure to uphold the rule of law and governance systems.

Durable peace and economic growth require multisectoral reforms in the political realm (executive and legislative branches), in the judiciary (the fight against impunity and reinforcing the rule of law), in the economic sector (good governance that enhances economic growth), in the development sector (initiating infrastructure that aims to achieve the UN's 17 SDGs) and in the social sector (creating an infrastructure for peace), to restore democratic values and uphold the twelve principles of public administration. Such a principle-based model of public administration compounds multisectoral reforms and operates on the basis of transparency, legitimacy, pluralism, responsibility, integrity, subsidiarity, accountability, representation, equity and access to services; this is the ground that constitutes the pathways to durable peace and economic growth. Finally, these reforms, along with the restoration of democratic values, are both imperative and urgent for peacebuilding and development in the DRC. Public administration must promote peace education and oversee ECD to ensure that children grow with an empathetic disposition, enhancing their inclination towards peace and encouraging a rejection of violent attitudes and behaviours.

The resilience of the DRC has been tested over time, including its survival in anarchy, rebellions, civil wars (particularly the two World Wars of Africa) and despotic rule. The expected dawn of democracy and peaceful transfers of powers in 2019 and 2023 remains the hope for a transformed and rising state that upholds the rule of law, makes good governance its priority and delivers public and social services to the people of the DRC. The country has tremendous potential in terms of mineral and natural resources that are capable of changing the miserable and meagre lives of its population. The new PDL initiated by the Tshisekedi administration needs to be really effective in rebuilding the country's dilapidated infrastructure, developing new infrastructure in the education, health care, agriculture, transportation

(air, road and water), tourism and industrial sectors. Such a comprehensive development strategy will create more jobs and enhance livelihoods and the standard of living. Stable democratic institutions and effective public administration remain the keys to durable peace and sustainable development that can be galvanised by the rigorous implementation of President Tshisekedi's ambitious PDL-145T.

The emerging discovery known as the PBEST, which arises from the intersection of peacebuilding and neuroscience, marks a significant theoretical advancement in the field of peace studies. It has the potential to foster a society imbued with peace-generating attitudes and actions across all spheres of life and levels of society. The PBEST is envisioned as a catalyst for global peace, systematically and progressively unfolding from each individual's inclination towards peace and the collective agency for peace and security. This book presents a cutting-edge contribution to knowledge, peace, democracy and good governance across the globe.

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Index

A

actions, 39, 60–61, 65, 68, 77, 86, 97, 105, 108, 119–120, 125, 133, 139, 141, 148, 152, 157, 162, 164, 180–181, 194, 197, 217, 222–224, 228, 236–237, 249, 254, 260, 263, 265–266, 274, 314, 319–320, 334

affiliative bonding, 221, 231, 299

Africa, 39, 44, 51, 53, 55–59, 68–70, 74–75, 80–81, 89, 93, 96–97, 99, 101–103, 105–106, 125, 127, 137, 140, 147, 156, 158–159, 161–162, 164–165, 167–171, 173, 178–180, 182, 184–197, 205–208, 212–213, 215, 224–225, 227, 233, 243–246, 249, 251, 254, 263, 265, 284, 330–333, 335–336, 338–347, 349–361

African democracy, 97

African Democratic System, 182

African kingdoms, 55–56, 341, 357

African World Wars, 259

alliance, 63, 67, 70, 75, 90, 236, 341, 346

Angola, 42, 57, 207, 248, 265

armed conflicts, 44, 51, 71, 89–90, 139, 205, 209–210, 214–215, 222, 233, 259, 263, 270, 294, 298–299, 324, 330, 349

aspects, 66, 76, 96, 120, 126, 149, 173–174, 189, 195, 203, 216, 254, 297, 312, 331, 340

attributes, 102, 156, 274

authority, 55, 57, 60, 62, 109, 111, 114, 139, 147–148, 150, 152, 154, 156, 158–159, 162–163, 174–175, 178–179, 182–185, 187–188, 190–191, 195–197, 228, 243, 267, 292–294, 298, 306–307, 311, 314, 320, 322, 325

B

balkanisation, 100, 306

Banyamulenge, 39–41, 52, 104, 107–108, 164, 330, 338–339, 356, 360

Baraza, 114, 117, 119, 123, 138–141, 228, 240, 271, 308, 323, 330, 332, 346

Baraza jurisprudence, 138, 140, 330

Belgium, 39, 51, 53, 57, 60, 68, 76, 83, 95, 98, 359

Birthing, 231, 238

Bisoïté, 106, 108, 111, 134, 141, 188, 330

Bukavu, 91, 279, 282, 289, 295, 298–308, 357

Burundi, 41–42, 91, 138, 195, 207, 248, 259, 265, 300, 305, 325, 330, 347

C

ceremonial democracy, 192–193

characteristics, 86, 88, 159, 243, 283, 288

civil society, 41, 65, 69, 93, 96–99, 110, 142, 192, 216, 223, 225, 233, 239, 257–264, 266, 268–275, 326, 331, 335, 338–340, 345–346, 349, 353, 355, 360

cobalt, 44, 36

colonisation, 53–55, 57–58, 116, 186, 244, 329

colonisers, 53, 63, 75

conflict transformation, 118, 122, 211, 213, 221–222, 236, 279, 284, 298, 311, 314, 320, 326, 353, 356

Congo Wars, 40, 69, 81, 116, 119

core competence model, 274, 331

corruption, 55, 70, 87, 111–112, 156, 159, 170, 179, 181, 186, 190–191, 196, 268, 293, 295, 302, 306, 322, 330–332, 347

crisis of leadership, 169, 19

culture of peace, 225, 240, 253–256, 293, 305–306, 339, 358

D

democracy, 53, 60, 62, 64–66, 68, 71, 73, 93, 97–100, 109–111, 113, 121, 124, 145, 147, 151, 153–155, 158–164, 171, 173–197, 201, 215, 219, 225, 235, 242–244, 253, 255, 257–260, 262, 264–268, 270–272, 274–275, 279, 285, 306, 322, 329–334, 337–338, 340, 342–343, 346–349, 352, 355, 359–361

democracy and peacebuilding, 53, 73, 93, 113, 147, 173, 201, 219, 235, 259–260, 262, 264, 266, 268, 270, 272, 274, 279, 285, 329, 333

democracy in Africa, 158, 173, 178, 182, 185, 188–191, 193

Democratic Republic of the Congo, 39–44, 46, 48, 50, 52–53, 69, 73–74, 76, 78–82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92–93, 99, 110, 112–113, 121–123, 147, 173, 201, 205, 219, 235, 259, 263, 265–266, 268–269, 277, 279, 290–291, 310, 329, 335–337, 340–341, 345, 347, 351–352, 357–361

democratisation, 76, 93, 95–96, 111, 114, 174, 186, 189–190, 243–244, 257, 259–260, 262–264, 266, 268, 271–272, 331, 346
Dodd-Frank Act, 42–44, 330

E

early childhood development, 219, 229, 326
 East African Community, 82
 ecology of peace, 219, 221, 228–229, 232–234, 236–238, 250–253, 258, 326, 338, 343, 361
 electoral processes, 90, 263
 ethnic, 39, 75, 81, 86, 103–104, 107, 110, 112, 116, 127, 132, 138, 162, 179, 185, 190, 196, 204, 210, 222, 225, 233, 250–251, 282, 341, 345, 351, 356
 ethnicity, 41, 83–84, 117, 179, 209, 270, 339
 evolution of public administration, 148

F

failed state, 55, 74, 85–89, 91, 280–281, 324–325, 330, 357
 faith-based civil society, 266
 Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo administration, 70

G

Goma, 79, 82–83, 85, 88, 91, 228, 279, 298
 good governance, 45, 52, 54–55, 74, 98, 150, 154–156, 159, 162–164, 169, 175, 187, 211, 216, 218, 242, 271, 280, 295, 304–305, 325, 330, 333–334, 357
 governance systems, 158, 180, 186, 333
 Great Lakes Region, 42, 206–207, 215, 220, 250

H

human rights, 40–41, 44, 52, 54–56, 61, 63–70, 78, 83–84, 86, 88–91, 95, 97, 100, 103, 108–109, 111–115, 117, 119–127, 133, 137–138, 140–141, 151, 155–156, 159, 162–164, 169, 171, 181–182, 186, 190, 192–194, 197, 204, 211, 224–225, 227, 240, 242, 248, 253–255, 261, 264, 266, 270–271, 291, 294–295, 303, 324, 327, 329–331, 338, 341, 343–344, 346, 351–353, 357–358, 360–361

I

independence, 39, 51, 58–60, 68, 71, 74–75, 90, 96, 98, 116, 155, 171, 179–180, 189, 191, 194, 270, 285, 303, 316–318, 345
 indigenous peacebuilding, 228
 insecurity, 48, 51, 55, 73, 77–78, 80, 82, 85, 88–89, 91, 121–122, 137, 204, 209, 218,

249, 264, 279–280, 288–289, 291, 293–295, 298–307, 309, 311, 313–314, 319–322, 324–325, 327, 333, 338, 357

insurgency, 70, 82, 220, 356
 insurrection, 39, 44, 98, 204, 303, 353
 intercommunity reconciliation, 107
 irredentism, 336, 342, 347

J

Joseph Kabila, 54, 67–69, 82, 99, 112, 115, 122–124, 212, 266, 271, 295
 Joseph Kabila administration, 68
 Joseph Kasa-Vubu, 54, 59–60, 63, 75, 191, 357, 360
 justice, 41, 56–57, 61, 65, 69–70, 74, 78, 86, 89–90, 94, 100, 102–103, 108, 110, 112–128, 130, 132, 134–143, 148, 151, 154, 157–158, 160, 164–165, 167, 170, 172, 191, 202–203, 205, 209–211, 213, 222–225, 227–228, 239–242, 248–250, 252, 256, 264–268, 271, 284, 305, 322–323, 330, 335–338, 340–356, 358, 360–361

K

Kabila, 54, 66–70, 73, 76, 81–82, 90, 93, 96, 98–100, 109, 111–112, 115, 122–124, 171, 192, 205, 212, 259, 264, 266, 271, 282, 295, 344, 347, 349, 356
 key players in peacebuilding, 206, 219–222, 224, 226, 228, 230, 232–234, 237, 251, 253, 326, 332
 kingdoms, 53, 55–57, 171, 178, 186, 341, 357
 Kinshasa, 59, 63, 67, 81, 85, 88–89, 98, 100, 108, 110, 122, 124, 205, 265, 268, 336, 338–339, 354, 361
 Kinyarwanda, 108
 Kinyarwanda speakers, 108
 Kivu, 39, 70–71, 79, 85, 91, 104, 204, 218, 228, 248, 263, 271, 279–281, 289, 294, 296–298, 304, 309, 319, 339, 345–346, 356, 360

L

land conflicts, 51, 291
 Laurent-Désiré Kabila, 54, 67, 192, 295
 Laurent-Désiré Kabila administration, 66
 law and order, 298, 310–311, 314, 319
 leadership, 61, 66, 96, 113, 142, 148, 159, 164–165, 169–172, 183, 185, 189–191, 197, 221–223, 227, 241, 243, 269, 303, 308, 323, 331–332, 336, 339, 350–351, 357
 Leopold II administration, 57
 liberal peacebuilding, 214–215, 247, 351
 liberal peacebuilding theory, 214–215, 247
 local development programme, 45–46

Local Development Programme of 145
Territories, 45
Lusaka Peace Accord, 98

M

M23, 39–41, 44–45, 49, 51–52, 70, 74, 82–85,
94, 100, 116, 119, 204–205, 211, 220,
294–295, 309, 325, 329–331, 335, 338,
344, 353–354
M23 insurgency, 220
M23 insurrection, 204
Mai-Mai, 108, 121, 305
Marche d'Espoir, 97
militias, 68, 73–74, 85, 97, 108, 213, 293–295,
298, 304, 320, 343
Minembwe, 21
mineral conflicts, 42
Mobutu, 39, 54, 59–68, 71, 76, 81–82, 90,
93–100, 105, 109, 111–112, 114–115,
130–131, 179, 182, 186, 190–194, 205,
243, 259, 264–265, 267–268, 271, 282,
295, 331, 348–349, 351–352, 361
Mobutu administration, 60–61, 99
mono-party system, 60, 94, 179, 186, 193
Monsengwo, 66, 87, 108–109, 115, 243,
271, 347
Mukwege, 89–90, 263–264, 353
Mulele rebellion, 73

N

national conference, 94–95, 109, 352
national peace networks, 236, 241
natural resources, 52, 68, 205, 215–216, 270,
305, 330, 333, 335, 348
negative peace, 202–205, 211, 213–214,
217–218, 233, 319, 331
nonviolence and peacebuilding, 167–168

O

oxytocin, 219, 230–231, 340, 360

P

palaver, 95, 110, 167, 170–171, 330, 335, 344,
352, 355
parenting, 229, 231–232, 234, 237–238,
250–251, 253–254, 326, 337
Patrice Emery Lumumba, 59–60, 63, 131
Peace, 39, 41–45, 51–57, 69–71, 73–74, 76,
80–82, 85–94, 96, 98–104, 106, 108,
110–112, 114–118, 120, 122–125, 127, 129,
137–142, 147, 153–155, 157, 159–161,
166–167, 169, 174, 183, 201–206,
209–230, 232–242, 244–258, 261,
265, 267, 270–272, 275, 279–286,
289–296, 298, 300–314, 319–320,

322–326, 329–340, 342–345,
347–348, 350–361
peace education, 117, 203, 253–254, 256,
272, 308, 333
peace processes and reconciliation, 93–94,
96, 98, 100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112
peacebuilding, 52–54, 56–57, 71, 73, 85,
90–91, 93, 101, 109, 111, 113–114, 118–119,
122, 127, 134, 138–141, 147–148, 154,
160, 164, 166–168, 173, 199, 201–204,
206, 208–242, 244–254, 256–260,
262, 264, 266, 268, 270–272, 274–275,
277, 279–282, 284–286, 288–290,
292–294, 296–298, 300, 302, 304,
306, 308, 310–312, 314, 316, 318–320,
322–327, 329–337, 340–343, 345–349,
351, 353–356, 358, 360
peacebuilding actors, 213, 221, 223–224,
233, 238, 251, 258, 275
peacebuilding and development in the DRC,
333
Peacebuilding Evolution Systems Theory,
235–236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246,
248, 250, 252, 254, 256, 258, 326
peacebuilding theory, 54, 201–204, 206,
208, 210, 212, 214–216, 218, 238–239,
247, 272, 279, 356
peacebuilding theory and praxis, 201–202,
204, 206, 208, 210, 212, 214, 216, 218
peaceful coexistence, 103, 108
peacemaking, 57, 201–203, 211–214, 217–219,
222–223, 227–229, 231–233, 236–237,
239, 245–246, 248–253, 258, 326,
332, 335, 337, 340, 342–343, 346,
350, 352
personification, 56
perspectives, 50, 91, 101, 107, 118, 173, 182,
185, 217, 227–228, 232, 239, 250, 323,
337, 343, 345–346, 350–351, 355, 359
players in peacebuilding, 206, 219–222, 224,
226, 228, 230, 232–234, 237, 242, 251,
253, 326, 332
polity, 147, 158, 160–163, 171, 174–175, 178,
184–185, 195, 331, 338, 361
positive peace, 55, 86, 91–92, 118, 138, 153,
160, 202–205, 209, 211–214, 216–217,
230, 233, 257, 280, 283–284, 286,
294–295, 298, 303, 305–307, 311, 314,
319, 322, 355
principled governance system, 181
*Programme de Développement Local de
145 Territoires*, 45, 47–49
prosecutorial justice, 119, 141
public administration, 40, 44, 52–56, 62, 65,
71, 73–74, 76–78, 81–82, 84–87, 91–94,
96, 100–101, 108, 111, 113–114, 118–119,

121-123, 138-140, 145, 147-154, 156-166, 168-173, 176, 179-181, 185, 187, 201, 203-205, 209, 217-219, 235, 259-260, 268-270, 273-274, 277, 279-286, 288-298, 300-302, 304, 306-314, 316, 318-327, 329-334, 337-338, 341, 343, 345-347, 349, 351-352, 354-359, 361

public administration and democracy, 145, 158, 162-163, 171, 260, 331, 337-338

public administration and development, 147, 157

public administration and globalisation, 161

public administration and governance systems, 158

public administration and the rule of law, 158

R

rebellion, 39, 73, 82, 207, 211, 220, 259, 264, 294, 309, 330, 345

reconciliation, 40, 42, 60, 65, 93-94, 96-112, 114, 117-118, 120, 122-143, 164-167, 172, 183, 190-192, 210-211, 213, 217, 222-225, 227-228, 234, 239-241, 248-249, 252, 256, 265, 271, 290, 303, 322-323, 330-331, 335-336, 338-349, 351-356, 359

regional peace networks, 244

republic, 39-46, 48, 50, 52-54, 57, 59-61, 68-69, 73-76, 78-82, 84, 86, 88, 90, 92-95, 99, 109-110, 112-113, 121-123, 140, 147, 154, 173, 179-180, 185, 196, 201, 205, 207, 213, 219, 235, 247-248, 259, 263-266, 268-269, 277, 279, 290-291, 310, 325, 329, 335-337, 339-361

restorative justice, 57, 114, 117, 119, 122, 139-140, 164-165, 170, 202, 211, 223-224, 227, 340, 342, 346, 348, 350, 354, 356, 360-361

rule of law, 53, 55-56, 74, 81, 87, 92, 98, 114, 118, 121, 147, 151, 153, 158, 160, 171, 175, 178, 196-197, 257, 267-268, 280, 286, 288-289, 292-294, 307-309, 311, 321-322, 325, 327, 330-333, 337, 341, 349, 358

rural exodus, 81, 279, 282, 290-291, 298-303, 305, 307, 313-314, 320-321, 324

Rwanda, 39-42, 52, 66, 81-85, 89, 91, 98-100, 109, 114, 117-119, 138, 204-205, 207-208, 220, 227, 240, 247-249, 259, 263, 265, 294, 305, 323, 325, 330-331, 333, 335, 337-339, 341, 344, 347-349, 351-352, 354, 356, 358-359, 361

S

social violence, 250-251, 342

South Africa, 57, 68, 81, 97, 99, 102-103, 125, 127, 137, 140, 165, 168-169, 224-225, 227, 265, 284, 330, 342-343, 350, 352, 354

Sovereign National Conference, 94, 109

state terrorism, 68, 76, 86, 91-92, 345

strategic minerals, 40

strategic peacebuilding, 210-211, 221, 223, 326, 347, 355

strategic peacebuilding roadmap, 223

structural violence, 76-81, 86, 91-92, 117, 153, 201, 203, 209, 211-214, 217-218, 222, 245, 279-280, 282-284, 286, 290-291, 293, 297, 309-310, 322, 324, 327, 331

successive administrations, 76-81, 86, 91-92, 117, 153, 201, 203, 209, 211-214, 217-218, 222, 245, 279-280, 282-284, 286, 290-291, 293, 297, 309-310, 322, 324, 327, 331

Sun City Inter-Congolese Dialogue, 99-100, 121-123

sustainable development, 52, 54-55, 74, 79, 87, 92, 147, 157, 218, 256, 258, 273, 280-281, 298, 312-313, 322, 324-325, 327, 329, 334, 339, 347, 350, 356, 358

T

tantalum, 40, 42-43, 354

terrorist, 85, 87, 90

tin, 40, 42-43, 313

transition without justice, 120

transitional justice, 89, 94, 112-120, 122, 124, 126, 128, 130, 132, 134, 136, 138, 140-143, 211, 223-224, 256, 264, 330, 336, 341, 349, 351, 353, 358, 360-361

Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 65, 111, 123-125, 127, 134, 341, 356, 359

Tshisekedi, 45, 51, 65, 69-70, 89, 91, 96, 100, 112, 115-116, 263, 266, 295, 321, 333-334, 354, 357

tungsten, 40, 42-43

U

Ubuntu, 57, 106-108, 111, 134, 140-142, 147-148, 151, 164-172, 183, 186, 188, 225, 227-228, 234, 239, 330, 332, 335-337, 341-342, 348, 350-351, 354, 357-358, 360

Ubuntu philosophy, 57, 142, 164-166, 169-170, 234, 336, 348, 351, 354

Ubuntu-informed leadership, 169

Ubuntu-informed public administration, 147, 164, 332

Uganda, 40–42, 52, 74, 81–85, 98–99, 109,
114, 119, 138, 140, 207, 228, 240–241,
259, 265, 305, 323, 325, 330, 333,
336–337, 351, 359
Ujamaa, 06–108, 111, 134, 141, 166–167, 170–171,
183, 188, 228, 234, 344, 352, 356

V

vicarious responsibility, 132–133, 136, 141–143
violence in the Democratic Republic of the
Congo, 73–74, 76, 78, 80, 82, 84, 86,
88, 90, 92, 290

W

Wall Street Reform, 359
war, 39, 41, 52, 60, 62–63, 70–71, 73–74,
76, 81–91, 93, 95, 99–100, 103, 110,
118–122, 124–125, 140, 148, 151, 159, 161,
164, 177–178, 190, 204–206, 209–213,
217–218, 221–222, 227–228, 238–240,
247–248, 250, 253, 263–265, 271,
303–304, 306, 319, 323–325, 335–337,
339, 342, 344–346, 348, 350–354,
356–357, 360
Wazalendo, 341, 346



Public administration, democracy and peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo critically explores the DRC's complex governance challenges, tracing its trajectory from colonial rule to contemporary struggles. It analyses how historical and structural dynamics continue to shape governance and peacebuilding efforts.

Structured across 13 analytically rich chapters, it addresses persistent issues such as resource-related conflict and governance failures. Kiyala introduces the novel peacebuilding evolution system theory (PBEST), offering an innovative framework for understanding and fostering sustainable peace in conflict-affected contexts.

Grounded in empirical research conducted within the DRC, the book provides practical and theoretical insights for scholars of African studies, public administration, political science, and peace and conflict studies. It also serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, NGOs and activists advocating for inclusive, rights-based development.

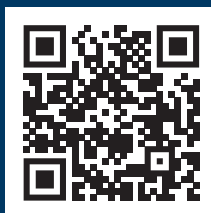
Prof. Andrew Phiri, Department of Economics, Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha, South Africa

This scholarly book rethinks the relationship between public administration and peacebuilding by expanding the concept of peace to include both positive peace and its underlying drivers. Central to the analysis is PBEST, which frames peace as a multi-level process – from individual attitudes to the influence of global institutions.

Using empirical data from the eastern DRC, Kiyala explores the limitations of public power. At the macro level, the book assesses the roles of the United Nations and the African Union Peace and Security Council, while at the micro level, it examines the workings of the DRC's executive, legislative and judicial branches, highlighting the systemic challenges they face.

This work makes a timely contribution to global discussions on peace, democracy and governance. It is essential reading for scholars and policymakers in African studies, public administration and conflict resolution.

Prof. Dr Ravinder Renda, DUT Business School, Faculty of Management Sciences, Durban University of Technology, Durban, South Africa



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