



La Repubblica Democratica del Congo: conflitti e problematiche socio-territoriali
Francesco De Pascale, Luca Jourdan, Kalenge Nguvulu Chris (Eds.)

Land, citizenship and ethnicity: the prelude to the “Congo wars”

Anna Caltabiano¹

Abstract

The DRC is crossed by conflicts, often interpreted as the result of national and international interests for the natural resources of the state or as deriving from atavistic ethnic hatred?. An analysis of the historical roots of this violence shows, however, that the troubled path of construction of the nation-state has its roots in a colonial past that raised political and social problems linked to the recognition of inclusive and inviolable citizenship rights. In particular, the indirect rule policies of the colonial regime bound the recognition of citizenship to the possibility of access to land, based on an alleged ethnicity. In the post-colonial period, a long process of land reform and the adoption of contradictory citizenship laws, contributed to inflame relations between populations that claimed land ownership on the basis of ethnicity, which became increasingly selective and marginalized. With the transition to multi-party politics in the 1990s, the need to be recognized as citizens of the Congolese State and participate in political competitions clashed with the problems linked to the recognition of citizenship. In a territory crossed by migrations said issues are also connected to the conflicts that emerged in neighboring countries. The ethnicization of politics had a strong influence on the democratization process of the country, with obvious repercussions on the Congolese conflicts.

Keywords: Earth, citizenship, conflicts, Democratic Republic of Congo

Works cited

Boone, C., 2014, *Property and Political Order in Africa. Land Rights and the Structure of Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Chambers, R., Gonway, G.R., 1992, *Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century*, University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex.

FAO, 2002, *Land Tenure and Rural Development, Economic and Social Development Department*.

Gentili, A.M., 2004, “Sovranità e democrazia: dove va il Congo?”, *Afriche e orienti*, 1-2, 137-145

Gentili, A.M., 2008, *Il leone e il cacciatore*, II edizione, Carrocci, Roma.

¹ Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, Strada Maggiore 45, Università di Bologna, 40125, Bologna. E-mail: anna.caltabiano2@unibo.it.



La Repubblica Democratica del Congo: conflitti e problematiche socio-territoriali
Francesco De Pascale, Luca Jourdan, Kalenge Nguvulu Chris (Eds.)

- Mamdani, M., 1997, *Kivu, 1997: An Essay on Citizenship and State Crisis in Africa*, Mimeo, CODESRIA, Dakar.
- Mamdani, M., 2002, *When Victims Become Killers*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Marriage, Z., 2015, "Recent History, The Democratic Republic of the Congo", *Africa South of the Sahara*, 323-330.
- Mathieu P., Willame, J.-C., 1999, *Conflits et guerres au Kivu et dans la region des Grands Lacs*, CEDAF, l'Harmattan, Paris.
- Mugangu, M., 1998, *Terre, territoire et nationalité : les enjeux des conflits ethniques dans le Kivu Montagneux*, Paper presented at the International Colloquium of Bujumbura, 18-22 May.
- Pottier, J., 2004, "Terra e conflitto nella regione di Ituri", *Afriche e orienti*, 1-2, 52-67.
- Prunier, G., 1997, "La crise du Kivu et ses conséquences dans la région des Grands Lacs", *Herodote : Revue de Géographie et de Géopolitique*, 3-4, 42-56.
- Tornimbeni, C., 2010, *Stranieri e autoctoni in Africa sub-sahariana*, Carrocci, Roma.
- Van Acker F., Vlassenroot, K., 2000, "Youth and Conflict in Kivu: "Komona Clair", *The Journal of Humanitaria Assistance*, 1-17.
- Vlassenroot, K., 2004a, "I molti volti delle ribellioni nella Repubblica Democratica del Congo. Una prospettiva "dal basso" su violenza e guerra nelle province del Kivu e in Ituri", *Afriche e orienti*, 1-2, 4-19.
- Vlassenroot, K., 2004b, "Identità e incertezza nel Sud Kivu: il caso dei banyamulenge", *Afriche e orienti*, 1-2, 87-103.
- Vlassenroot, K., Raeymaekers, T., 2004, *Conflict and social transformation in Eastern DR Congo*, Gent:Academia.Conflict Research Group.
- Vlassenroot, K., Huggins, C., 2005, Land, migration and conflict in Eastern DRC. In: Vlassenroot, K., Huggins C. (Eds.), *From the ground up: land rights, conflict and peace in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Gent, ISS, 115-194.
- Willame, J.-C., 1997, *Banyarwanda et banyamulenge*, CEDAF, l'Harmattan, Bruxelles, Paris.