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Everyday resistance in post-conflict statebuilding: the case of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

de Heredia, Marta Iñiguez (2013) *Everyday resistance in post-conflict statebuilding: the case of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo*. PhD thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).



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Abstract

The thesis explores everyday resistance in post-conflict statebuilding. Despite the turn in peace and conflict studies to study everyday forms of resistance, the concept and the account of its practices remain limited. In addressing these limitations, the thesis develops an alternative account of both resistance and post-conflict statebuilding. Following the framework of James Scott, resistance is understood as the pattern of acts of individuals and collectives in a position of subordination against the everyday experience of domination. What is resisted is not an externally driven liberal intervention, but the coercive and extractive practices fostered by statebuilding. These dynamics are examined through the case of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, focusing on the provinces of North and South Kivu. Generally studied as a paradigmatic case of state-failure, the DRC provides an insight into post-conflict statebuilding as a plural, improvised and contradictory process. In the thesis, this is linked to historical and sociological practices of statebuilding more generally, and to the specificities of the African political space. Although statebuilding claims to be a strategy to restore state authority, peace, and democracy, the result has so far been a militarised environment, a pluralisation of state authority and a deterioration of living conditions. The thesis examines discursive, violent and survival practices that deny statebuilders the claim to legitimate authority and to the monopoly of violence, while enacting alternative channels of re-appropriation based on solidarity and reciprocity. Post-conflict statebuilding does not require a special framework of resistance. It requires a historicised account of practices, which grasps their heterogeneity and gradients, and which ultimately accounts for resistance as a prosaic presence in the relations of domination that sustain statebuilding.

Item Type: Thesis (PhD)

Additional Information: © 2013 Marta Iñiguez de Heredia

Library of Congress subject classification: [J Political Science > JA Political science \(General\)](#)
[J Political Science > JZ International relations](#)

Sets: [Departments > International Relations](#)

Supervisor: Lawson, George and Hoffman, Mark

URI: <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/708>

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The United States passed legislation in 2010 to reduce the purchase of “conflict minerals” and prevent the funding of armed militias, but complex supply chains in the DRC mineral sale business have made it difficult for companies that purchase resources from secondhand buyers to obtain certification. Congolese soldiers from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) rest in the forest after the army took control of an Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel camp near the town of Kimbau, North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo on February 18, 2018. Goran Tomasevic/Reuters. A polling official counts votes in a school in Kinshasa during the Democratic Republic of Congo’s general elections on December 30, 2018. Executive Summary. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a centralized constitutional republic. Voters popularly elect the president and the lower house of parliament (National Assembly). Following a two-year delay, presidential, legislative, and provincial elections were held on December 30, 2018; however, presidential elections were cancelled in Beni and Butembo, nominally due to an ongoing Ebola outbreak and security concerns, and in Yumbi because of intercommunal violence. Four other defendants in the case were acquitted due to insufficient evidence. The court ordered the payment of 33.8 million Congolese francs (\$20,000) to each of the victims represented in the case. b. Disappearance.