

Political violence and
its effect on poor
females in the
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Quantitative Research Proposal

Statement of Problem

Over the years, the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly known as Zaire) has been slowly recovering from various experiences with conflict and internal wars. These conflicts have not only resulted in the high number of death rates, but a number of issues. Some of these issues include: the production of child soldiers, governmental corruption, high poverty rates and sexual violence against women. Sexual violence against women continue to plague different parts of the nation today. Rape in Congo is used as a weapon of war. Some even refer to Congo as, “ The Rape Capital of the World”. Sexual abuse in Congo is used as method of torture against women specifically. Eastern Congo has the highest amount of rape committed by militia groups. According to the New York Times, “ a woman is raped every minute in the Congo” (Gettleman, 2011). Although the Congolese Constitution views sexual violence as a form of gender-based violence and gender discrimination, the perpetrators of these sexual crimes are rarely charged for their actions. In result, victims are left with psychological, physical trauma and lack of health care.

A study completed by Peterman, Palermo, Bredenkamp (2011) provided data-based estimates of sexual violence in the DRC and examined risk factors in determining the presence of such violence against women. The study determined that the women of the North-Kivu region of DRC were more likely to face different types of sexual violence. However, the study did not include the socio-economic status of the participants in which can be a leading factor

of vulnerability to sexual violence. As Paul Farmer states, “ gender alone does not define risk for such assaults on dignity. It is poor women who bear the brunt of these assaults” (Farmer, 2003, p. 280). He further explains that poor are the “ chief victims” of structural violence.

Purpose of Study

The intent of this study will be to examine the relationship between political violence and its effects on poor females in the eastern region of Congo. This study will specifically focus on structural violence and sexual violence.

Definition/Measure of Terms

Political violence will be measure be the internal wars / conflicts that have taken place in that region between 1990 to present day. Structural violence will be measure by the experiences of survival sex and transactional sex. Survival sex refers to a form of prostitution in which the person engages in a sexual act for the extreme need of survival. Transactional sex refers to a sexual relationship in which gifts and services are given in material form. Sexual violence will be measure by the experience of unlawful sexual assault involving forcible penetration without consent of the victim. For the purpose of this study, the independent variable will be political violence and the dependent variables will be structural violence and sexual violence. This study intends to show that poor females from the eastern region of Congo are at higher risk of structural and sexual violence because of political violence.

Research Question/Hypothesis

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1. Political violence results in poor females from the eastern region of Congo to be at risk of sexual and/ or structural violence.
2. Eastern areas with higher rates/experiences of political violence have higher numbers of females who are victims of sexual and/or structural violence.

Methods Section

Sampling Frame:

Political violence in the DRC has been associated with a number of social and economic issues specifically, the populations that are most commonly affected by the political instability are poor women and children. Congolese women constitute for 53% of the country's population. According to national data that has been collected over the years, violence against women, correlates with underdevelopment. This study will focus on the experience of poor females ages 12-60 in the Eastern region of the DRC. About 64% of the population are living below the poverty line. Within that population, women are most vulnerable with a third of them being exposed to sexual violence. Women are more likely to face gender related violence while living in poverty at the same time. In order to determine who is considered poor in the DRC, I will be using the definition provided by the World Bank which states, poverty is measures by those making less than \$1. 90 a day.

The women selected would be chosen from the eastern region of Congo considering that is the area in which there has been large numbers of violent outbreaks caused by militia groups. The study aims to have about 200 women participate. To determine who will be included in the study, the

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participants would be screened for certain criteria. These requirements will verify that participant is from the Eastern region of the DRC, a female with age ranging from 12-60 years old, an income/living wage must be less than 3,068.23 Congolese Fran (CDF) which is equivalent to \$1.90 and the participant is a victim of structural and/or sexual violence.

In order to screen if the criteria are met, a cross-sectional questionnaire will be distributed prior to the study. The questionnaire would be created in English then converted to French considering that is the main language spoken. Once results are collected, they would be converted to English for the purpose of data analysis. Considering this is a complex issue, there would be some strengths and limitations of the chosen sampling frame. The strengths would include representation of poor Eastern Congolese females ages 12-60 affected by sexual and/or structural violence, a controlled sampling frame that will enable convenient data analysis and the use of the sampling frame for effective future policy implementations based on the experience of a particular population. Some limitations of the sampling are the disregards of sexual violence and/or structural violence experiences from females below age 12 and above age 60, exclusion of sexual violence and/or structural violence experiences from females outside Eastern region and exclusion of sexual violence and/or structural violence experiences from females who are not considered poor.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling is required to understand the unique perspectives of the women who will be participating in the study. The study will use non-
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probability sampling in order to interpret the individual experiences of the participants. I will use convenience sampling and snowball sampling. Convenience sampling will allow me to select from a particular population that I will have easier access to. Snowball sampling would produce a larger sample population as a result of the convenience sampling. I intend to recruit participants for the study by reaching out to local organizations in that area that work with women's rights. Reaching out to local organizations will be beneficial because it will provide me access to distribute the survey that determines the criteria required. In this case, the women would already feel comfortable and would have established a relationship with the members of the organization. This would make it easier for me to collect the data. This form of recruitment may impact the composition of my sampling frame considering some women may fear sharing their experiences and may not be members of local organization. Also, some females in the area may not have access to some other organizations available.

Research Design

A survey will be created to ask the participants about their experiences of sexual and/or structural violence during the times of political violence. The survey will ask various questions in regards to their experience with sexual violence and/or structural violence. Considering the survey will be the main source of data collection, the type of research design that would be used is a survey design. The survey design will help me determine the relationship between political violence, sexual and structural violence by using the results of the survey that would be distributed. Considering the hypotheses are that political violence puts poor females from the eastern region of <https://assignbuster.com/political-violence-and-its-effect-on-poor-females-in-the-eastern-region-of-the-democratic-republic-of-congo/>

Congo at risk of sexual and or structural violence and Eastern areas with higher rates/experiences of political violence have higher numbers of females who are victims of sexual and/or structural violence, I plan to manipulate the independent variable by focusing on the specific outbreaks of political violence from 1990. The independent variable will remain constant and be compared to structural violence and sexual violence.

Research Procedure

As a facilitator, the first step of the research would be to complete the screening of participants to verify eligibility for the survey. Once a participant has met the requirements, they would be eligible to partake in the survey. The participants will be provided written consent for their approval prior to data collection. The main source of data would be the surveys that will be distributed to the participants. The surveys will be distributed with the help of organization members. The participants will be given an hour to complete the survey. Afterwards, there will be a follow up in which the participants can state any questions or concerns in regards to the study. Once the surveys are completed and converted into English, the results would be compiled and entered into an excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet would then be uploaded in to SPSS for statistical analysis. In addition, a bivariate analysis will be used to analyze the relationship of the independent variable and dependent variables. This way, we can see there is a causal relationship of political violence on structural violence and sexual violence. The main role of the participants would be to answer the survey provided. In order to maintain confidentiality, the females would be given an identification number that would be associated with their responses.

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Some additional areas to take into consideration would be the access to participants, consent for underage participants and language barriers. Considering some females may fear reporting on their experiences, there may be a low turnout for the completed surveys. In this case, I may need to go out into communities and recruit participants. This may be a challenge since I am not from the area and they may not trust me as much. In that case, I will seek help from local community members or leaders who would accompany me while I recruit. Also, some of the participants would potentially be underage, I would have to seek the consent of their parents in order for them to participate. In this case, some parents may feel reluctant to share the experiences of their child. In terms of language, although the official language spoken in the DRC is French, some females that are from poor areas, typically don't have access to education. In this case, they may only know how to speak their native language. I would need the help of a translator who would be able to translate the survey for these females orally.

Threats to Validity

Considering certain parts of Eastern Congo is unstable, during the study it can be possible that a violent outbreak may take place. This will result in the loss of participants due to them migrating to different areas. Another threat can be the change of instrument. Some of the participants may not want to complete a survey but instead would want to report their experiences anonymously. In that case, another type of instrument must be created to insure we gather that information. One common threat can be experimental mortality. In other words, throughout the process, some participant may try to drop out of the study. In order to minimized some of these threats, <https://assignbuster.com/political-violence-and-its-effect-on-poor-females-in-the-eastern-region-of-the-democratic-republic-of-congo/>

creating an efficient survey will be ideal. For the cases in which a participant may not feel comfortable completing a survey, the survey can be done in a conversational matter to make the participant feel more comfortable.

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