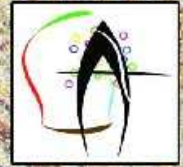




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L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle
Africa and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century
A África e os desafios do Século XXI

إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**Unpacking the complexities of Identity Politics
in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

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This paper seeks to explore the complexities of identity politics in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as consequence of colonialism and post-colonial nation-building strategies. The focus is on ethnicity and citizenship issues that have been among the most important root causes of systematic conflict in the DRC. The paper will provide a pre-colonial historical background to the formation of what eventually became DRC, how colonialism politicised identities including the role of King Leopold II and finally how post-colonial leaders (Patrice Lumumba, Mobutu Se Seko, and the Kabilas) have handled the issue of ethnicity and citizenship. The case study of the DRC is very important because the country has been rocked by numerous conflicts since the 1960s leading some scholars to even doubt whether the DRC really exist as nation-state. The paper will also discuss the role of external factors in worsening the problems of nation-building in the DRC.