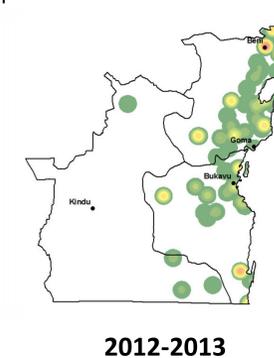
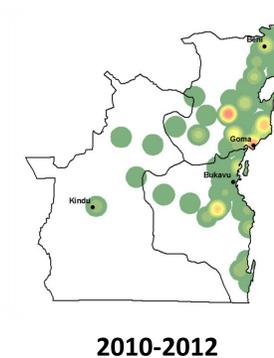
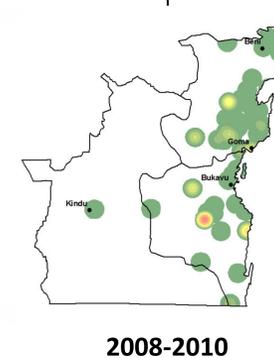
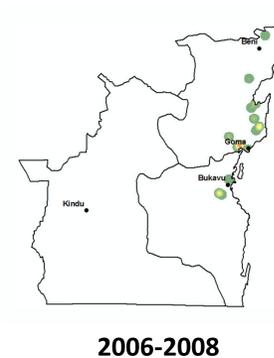
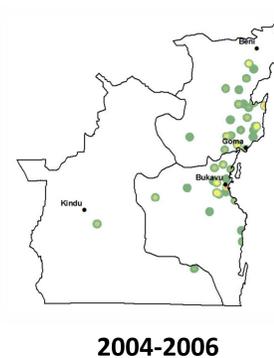
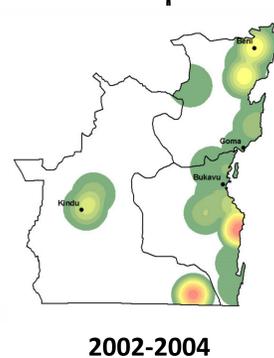
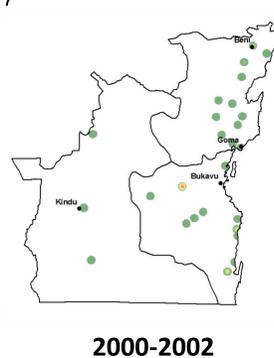
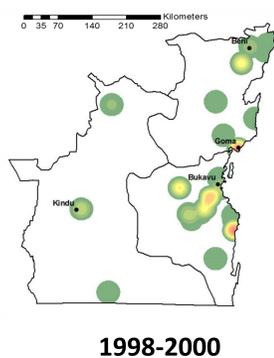
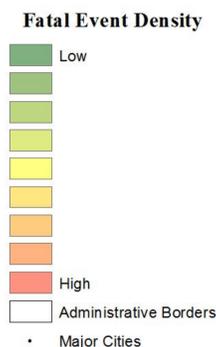
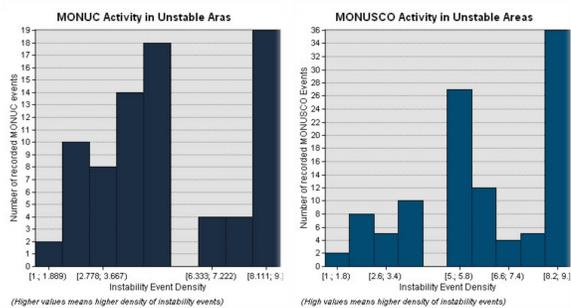
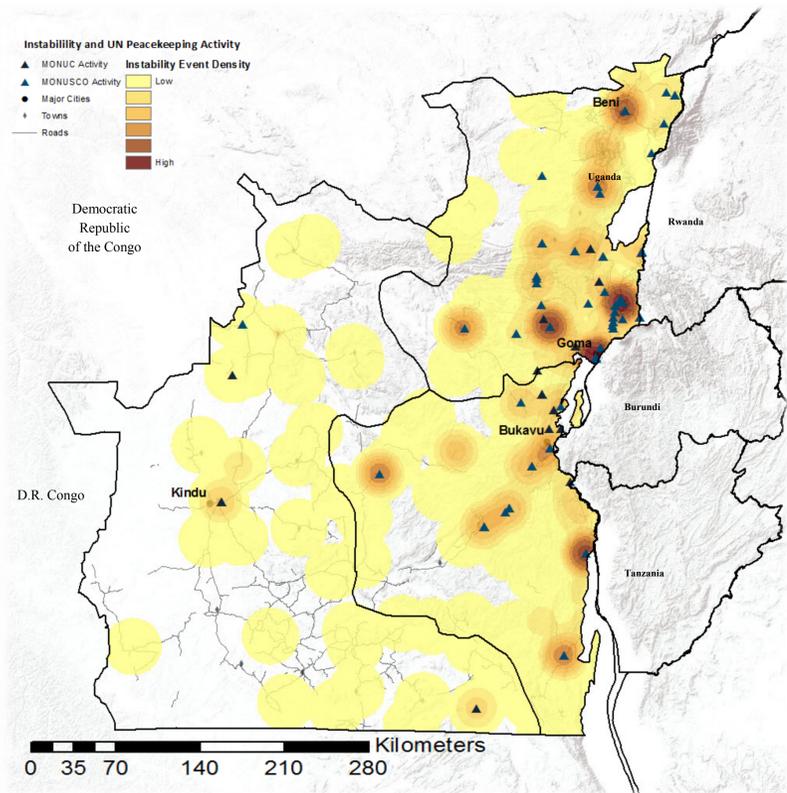


Instability, Accessibility, and UN Peacekeeping in the Eastern D.R. Congo



Introduction

Jason Stearns declared that the Congo Wars stand “among the other great human cataclysms of our time.” Since 1996, over five million people have died in nearly nonstop violence. Behind the violence is a dizzying multiplicity of actors, including insurgent groups, local militias, and the national militaries of nine countries. This complexity is part of what gives the Congo its sense of incomprehensibility — the Armed Conflict Location and Events Database (ACLED) lists *one hundred and one* different non-state armed groups active in the DRC between 1997 and 2013. The epicenter of instability has always been the eastern provinces of the Kivus, where disenfranchisement and simmering tensions with Rwanda catalyze ethnic and political instability.

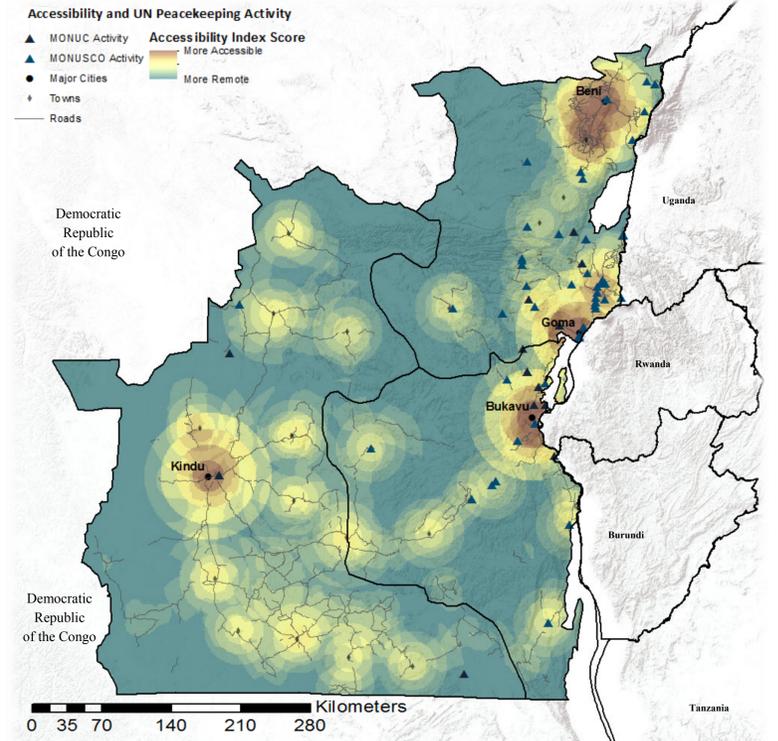
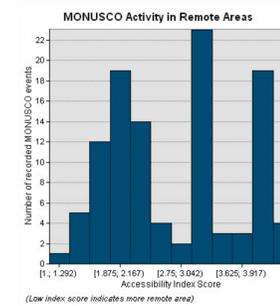
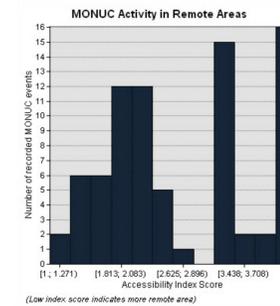
The international community’s answer to the violence in the DRC was the United Nations Mission in the Congo (MONUC), initially formed in 1999. In 2010, MONUC was renamed the UN Stabilization Organization Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO), and in 2013 was further expanded with the introduction of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB), which some have called “the UN’s first ever ‘offensive’ combat force.” However, the UN’s “islands of stability” strategy, modelled on US counterinsurgency theory, has garnered criticism; specifically, that these “islands of stability” will be, almost by definition, surrounded by “swamps of instability” whose vulnerable populations are inaccessible to government services and humanitarian assistance. While it is too soon to assess the FIB’s performance, there is data available for the study of peacekeeping in the Congo from 1998-2013.

Methods and Pre-Processing

The basis of this project is ACLED data on the Congo 1997-2008, trimmed in ArcGIS to include only the provinces of Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, and Maniema. Instability events were selected by extracting events instigated by non-state armed groups, before using the kernel density calculator to create a raster measure of instability. Fatal event density was measured by using kernel density to compute density of all kinetic events, weighted by number of fatalities. UN operations were extracted using the select-by-attribute function, and include all events involving UN forces.

The accessibility index was constructed by rasterizing road density, proximity to cities, and proximity to towns, before using reclass and map algebra to create the index. Graphs were created using extract values to points to compare UN deployment patterns to accessibility levels.

Due to the remoteness of the area of study and security issues involved with working in the Kivus during active conflict, a lack of recorded conflict events should not be taken to mean that there is no violence in a particular area, particularly during the Second Congo War itself.



Objectives and Conclusions

This study aimed to compare, contrast, and assess MONUC and MONUSCO in terms of their coverage of regions of significant instability and areas of reduced accessibility. The UN’s strategy of “shape, clear, hold, build” to create “islands of stability” (which would later be linked up to form “continents” of stability) has been criticized on the grounds that it would lead humanitarian agencies to prioritize these “islands” for aid delivery, reducing available aid for more vulnerable rural populations. Historically, has the UN concentrated its efforts around convenient “islands?”

In practice, both MONUC and MONUSCO show a very slight inclination towards areas of greater instability, with the locations of MONUSCO events averaging slightly higher instability scores. Meanwhile, both MONUC and MONUSCO tend to operate in fairly accessible areas, outside of built-up city centers but in the vicinity of road networks and population centers, rather than deep in the countryside. Consult the table below for averages.

The tendency of UN peacekeeping missions to operate on the periphery of accessible regions would seem to suggest that MONUC/MONUSCO intended to clear these areas of armed groups. Both missions demonstrated operating biases towards areas of greater instability, especially MONUSCO. Intense examination of contemporary MONUSCO and FIB data is needed to assess whether the “islands of stability” is proving effective.

	MONUC Average	MONUSCO Average	Maximum
Instability Score	5.4	6.1	9
Accessibility Index Score	2.74	2.8	4.5

Timeline: The Second Congo War and its Aftermath

Second Congo War, 1998-2003

CNDP Uprising, 2003-2009

M23 Rebellion, 2012-2013

2004: MONUC reaches full strength

2010: MONUC becomes MONUSCO

2013: Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) formed

MONUC Operations

MONUSCO Operations