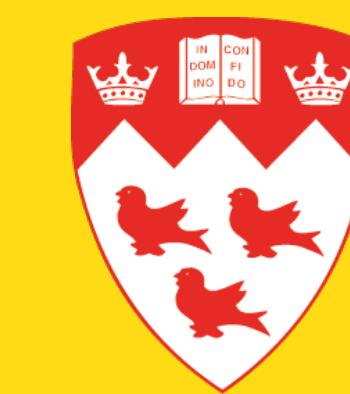


Pandemics, Conflict Actors, and Implications for Peace Operations

Nathan Devereaux, B.A. Political Science

Supervised by Prof. Jennifer Welsh & Dirk Druet

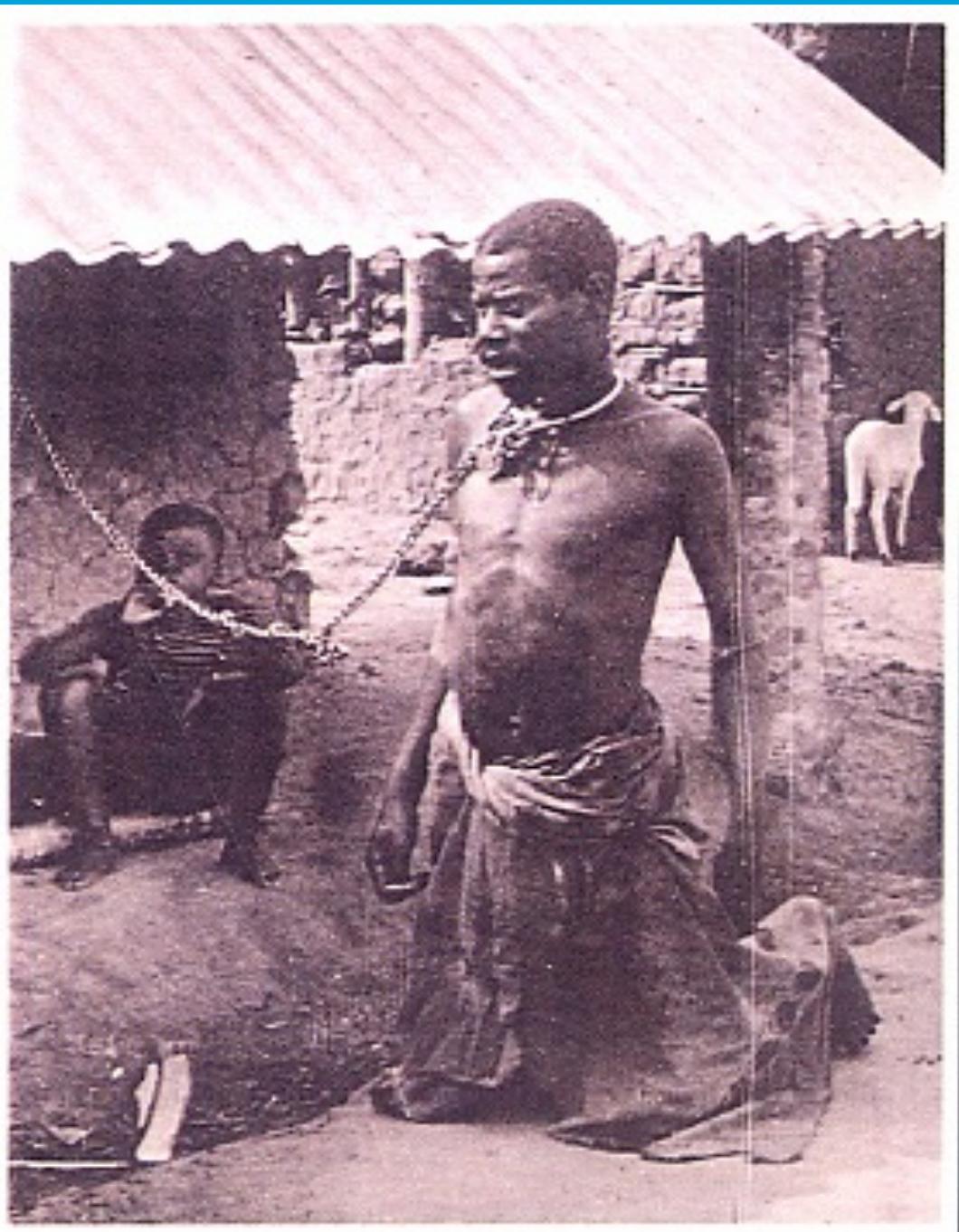


McGill
UNIVERSITY

Introduction

This research project looks at the **2018-2020 Ebola outbreak** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to see how a **public health crisis intersected with armed conflict** in a setting that involved international actors and a peacekeeping presence.

My contribution to this project was providing a **historical review of public health** in the DRC and investigating the **resistance to Ebola treatment** from both armed groups and the public.



Historical Review

King Leopold's Rule (1885–1908)

Under King Leopold's rule, **living conditions** for the Congolese were **horrid**, leaving the population vulnerable to disease. **Sleeping Sickness**, was estimated to have **killed 500,000** Congolese by 1901.

Belgian Rule (1908-1960)

Belgium launched a campaign against sleeping sickness by **aggressively controlling movements** and using **experimental treatments**. By 1960 the Belgian's argued they had created the best health system in Africa, but most **Congolese did not trust** this system.

Post-Independence (1960-1997)

Throughout his time in power, Mobutu would **devastate public services** through his **relentless corruption**. By 1992 the government was only spending **2.1 percent** on health and education.

Laurent-Désiré Kabila would **overthrow Mobutu** in 1997 in a war that **devastated eastern DRC**; however, the plight of the Congolese did not change. Investments in public services remained low and **corruption remained rampant**.

2018-2020 Ebola Outbreak

The **objective** for looking at this outbreak was to understand the relationship between **armed groups** and the **outbreak response**.

Using available **databases**, we compiled reports of **attacks on healthcare workers** and assessed for subsequent medical centre shutdowns. This assessment clearly demonstrated that **violent attacks** were the **main threat** to the **containment of Ebola**.

A **surge of violence** between August and October 2018 resulted in **only 20 percent** of contacts being traced. Attacks also caused MSF to **shut down its activities** entirely in Butembo and Katwa in February 2019.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to **Professor Jennifer Welsh** and **Dirk Druet** for their willingness to include me in this project. Their support and passion on the subject made this an **unforgettable experience**. Thanks to the **Arts Internship Office** and **Mr. Harry Samuel** for providing ARIA and making this experience possible.