

EMPOWERING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TO PROMOTE GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT,  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

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## DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original research and has not been submitted for a degree or some other award in any other University.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to The Lord God Almighty for giving me good health, strength and provision to complete this program. Secondly, to my beloved wife, Jael, and our five children, Douceur, Fidele, Patience, Marvel, and Angel who stood by me at all times and circumstances. I am deeply grateful.

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## ABSTRACT

The National Parliament is the backbone of every nation and the foundation upon which good governance, a prerequisite for sustainable development, is built. It is only when the institution is strong, empowered, respected, and functional that it is going to work effectively. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a wealthy nation, with vast natural resources that include cobalt, copper, diamonds, gold, arable land, and forests, among others. Yet, the country is regarded among the poorest nations in the world. Bad leadership practices and poor governance in the DRC have resulted in low levels of development. The National Parliament has failed to effectively play its role. This case study sought to examine how the National Parliament can be empowered to promote good governance practices for the sustainable development of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The study had five objectives: (1) to identify relevant dimensions of institutional empowerment of parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo; (2) to establish stakeholder views on the state of the elements of empowerment in the Democratic Republic of Congo; (3) to identify leadership practices considered to have affected institutional empowerment/governance of parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo; (4) to establish stakeholder views on the level of development in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and (5) to make recommendations based on the findings of the study. Data was collected using 40 one-on-one in-depth interviews, four focus group discussions, and observations. The findings show a powerless, manipulated National Parliament, lacking respect and the autonomy to work independently. Recommendations are given to strengthen the institution to ensure it promotes good governance practices that are vital for sustainable development.

*Keywords:* National Parliament, Empowerment, Good Governance, Sustainable Development

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADF	African Development Fund
AfDB	African Development Bank
AMCOW	African Ministers Council on Water
CRG	Congolese Research Group
CENI	Independent National Election Commission
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
GOPAC	Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MW	Megawatts
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OI-FLEG	Independent Observer of Forest Law Enforcement and Governance
PaRS	Parliamentary Research Services
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UN	United Nations
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

## GLOSSARY

**Democracy:** Democracy refers to a system of rule and a set of beliefs that involve a right to engage in self-government, self-regulation, and self-determination (Afolabi, 2018). Botchway (2018) has defined democracy as a system of government in which the people rule and exercise power to govern either directly or through democratically elected representatives. Democracy can be perceived as a governmental system where the majority rule, and the minority have their rights. In the context of this study, the term *democracy* refers to a system of governance where people have the freedom to elect Members of Parliament of their own choice to serve the interests of the electorate.

**Empowerment:** Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) defined empowerment as the uplifting of the members of an institution, through the provision of autonomy, which allows them to make decisions of their own, and which ultimately leads to different positive outcomes, particularly better performance of institutions. Conversely, Eyben (2011) observed that empowerment involves the process through which people, groups, or institutions increase their autonomy and power to realize certain outcomes they desire or need. According to this study, *empowerment* refers to providing the members of the National Parliament with knowledge, tools, budget freedom, autonomy, security, and the capacity to carry out their mandate autonomously, without fear, coercion, or intimidation.

**Governance:** The term *governance* does not have a consensus definition. Different scholars and entities define the term governance within the context of its application. Keping (2018) has defined governance as a set of established institutions and actors who formulate and create boundaries and responsibilities to address both economic and social issues, identify the separation of power, and emphasize the importance of autonomous self-governing networks of



actors. Katsamunska (2016) defined governance as the institutional capacity of public institutions to access public goods and services that the citizens of a country require, in a manner that is effective, accountable, transparent, and impartial, while subject to the constraints of available resources. In the context of this study, *governance* refers to the management of public institutions, the conduct of public servants, the administration of public resources, the autonomy of public institutions, the rule of law and social order, and an empowered National Parliament that provides oversight.

**Institutions:** The meaning of *institution* is often not always evident since its usage changes with intangible norms and values that shape societal behavior (Habibov & Afandi, 2017). In the context of this inquiry, *institutions* refer to the skeleton or backbone upon which the governance of a society is built, and without which there would be chaos and anarchy.

**Parliament:** Generally refers to a public representative institution with supreme powers and mandate to enact legislation, vote on the budget and provide oversight (Bressanelli, Koop, & Reh, 2016). In the context of this study, National Parliament refers to the national legislative body of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is the highest law-making institution in the country, headquartered in Kinshasa, the capital city.

**Sustainable Development:** The United Nations (2012) described sustainable development as a series of practices and policies that involve action and focus on improving the quality of human life, providing a solid strategy for eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities in society, creating inclusive growth, and making production and consumption more sustainable. Afolabi (2018) has defined sustainable development as the process of both nourishing and keeping alive the development of mankind as a key indicator of human commitment to improving one's well-being, and the environment's welfare. The definition of sustainable

development depends on the circumstances in which it is used. In the context of this study, *sustainable development* means meeting the needs of the current generation while taking care of the future generation's ability to meet their own. It implies effectively managing the affairs and institutions of a country to ensure development is realized now and in the future.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

Parliament is one of the most important public institutions in a society. It is the voice of the electorate, which legislates as well as oversees the Executive. It is only when parliament is empowered with proper tools that carries out its mandate efficiently (Brack, 2018). Parliament needs proper training, autonomy, freedom of expression, security, an independent operational budget, viable facilities, and other tools to be effective in carrying out its mandate.

Good governance is the vehicle for advancement and sustainable development in an organization or country (Guney, 2017). However, good governance has been a major challenge in most African nations due to bad leadership and mismanagement (Bojang, 2017). People elect leaders believing they will work to improve their lives; but it is only when principles of good governance and management are applied that the electorate benefit. There is need for an empowered National Parliament that can build strong legislation to guide and regulate the management of the Executive as well as other stakeholders. Human beings have the potential to commit great evil if they are not kept in check; parliament is one key institution that can play this role since it has the mandate from the electorate to oversee the Executive.

This study focuses on empowering the legislators of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at the national level to help them serve their people effectively. The DRC has struggled with dictatorship, corruption, nepotism, demagoguery, and mismanagement at a high level. The Congolese Parliament has been ineffective in carrying out its role due to lack of freedom of expression, concerns about security of their own lives informed by threats from the Executive, lack of an operational budget, and other necessary tools for good and effective performance.

## Background of the Study

A national parliament is one of the most fundamental, key public institutions charged with the responsibility of promoting a democratic system of governance and sustainable development of a country (Bressanelli, Koop, & Reh, 2016). Already, burgeoning literature (Adiputri, 2018; Bonenberg & Kaplinski, 2018; Datta & Rabbany, 2016) indicate that a strong link exists between empowered national parliaments, good governance, democracy, and sustainable development. Countries that are developed have discovered that empowered national parliaments are the foundation on which good governance and socio-economic development are built (Brack, 2018).

According to Kubala (2011), in societies where national parliaments are not empowered, exposure to political and economic abuses often occur, especially by the Executive. The need for empowering national parliaments is widely acknowledged as being very critical in the promotion of good governance and democracy, in addition to being recognized as an essential vehicle for enhancing the participation of the public in the governance of a society. The participation of the citizens ensures empowered national parliaments are built in a manner that respects and protects the rights of the citizens to justice, equity, fairness, freedoms, and inclusivity. Sustainable democracy exists and flourishes in societies where there is continual performance of empowered parliamentary institutions, which, in the long run, foster national good governance and socio-economic development (King & Ivor, 2013).

Empowered national parliaments are accepted as the most crucial public institutions that ensure representation, oversight, and the performance of national legislative duties. National parliaments represent symbols of integration and national unity in a nation. Various development partners and stakeholders, such as the European Union (EU) and the World Bank,

argue that building a democratic system provides a sustainable pathway that countries can use to empower their national parliaments, create good governance, and promote socio-economic development. The European Union and the World Bank persuade nations around the world to strengthen their public institutions by empowering national parliaments (Brack, 2018).

Empowered national parliaments are autonomous, staffed adequately, and have access to, and control, budgets. This enables them to conduct their parliamentary duties effectively, which include legislating good laws and providing oversight to other arms of government.

Additionally, empowered national parliaments control the calendar of their activities and regulate the activities of political parties in a transparent and accountable way (Bicketon & Puetter, 2015; King & Ivor, 2013).

Good governance is the catalyst for sustainable development of both developed as well as developing countries (Onyekachi, 2013). According to Guney (2017), the link between good governance and social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development is indisputable (Grindle, 2017; Katsamunskaya, 2016).

In countries that are economically and politically developed, there is trust between the society and the government. They have mature democratic systems of governance that allow governments to govern to a certain level, while strong parliamentary institutions built into the system provide necessary checks and balances on such governments (Vries, 2013). Zarrouk (2014) argued that good governance and solid national parliaments are an essential catalyst for sustainable development and have been recognized by the international community as a major pillar of the development agenda.

Nations that have succeeded in developing their economies have been associated with strong national parliaments. In North America, the Congress of the United States remains a

pillar of an empowered institution that oversees the Executive (Kamarck, 2016). Due to the strong oversight by the United States Congress, other public institutions in the country have been empowered, which has led to tremendous development and national economic growth. In Europe, the National Parliament in Denmark is acknowledged as an empowered and effective public institution in the world (Mello & Dirk, 2018). France, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany also have strong national parliaments that respect the liberties and freedoms of individuals, safeguard the rule of law, ensure the protection of civil rights, and have enough institutional authority and power to implement good policies and practices (Auel, Olivier, & Angela, 2015; Rub, Heinemann, & Zohlhofer, 2017).

In Africa, governments across the continent are advocating for the need to strengthen their national parliaments. Further, legislation of good policies is being encouraged. These efforts are aimed at promoting good governance for sustainable development across the continent (Africa Economic Outlook, 2017). Bojang (2017) observed that disempowered national parliaments and the continuous formulation of ineffective laws and policies have for a long time hindered good governance and sustainable development in Africa. In Nigeria, an ineffective, disempowered, and fragile national parliament has created a culture where poor governance practices flourish, negatively impacting the sustainable development of the nation (Akanle & Adesina, 2015; Ola, Adamu, & Audi, 2014). In Kenya, a weak justice system and ineffectual leadership – corrupted by a passion for profit and power – have been the greatest deterrents to national socio-economic development (Anaya, 2016). On the contrary, political leadership in Botswana is highly committed towards building empowered and effective public institutions, particularly the National Parliament. Public governance practice and the National Parliament in Botswana are acclaimed as being among the best and most successful across the African

continent. These have promoted a culture of good governance in Botswana, which will, in the long run, ensure sustainable development of the nation (Nhema, 2016). On the southern side, South Africa has espoused traits of an empowered National Parliament, which has forced sitting presidents to leave office on two occasions, on grounds of corruption and gross mismanagement of public affairs (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2018).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the National Parliament is incapacitated and unable to shape political debates in the country since it is undermined by the Executive, which has negatively affected its mandate (Gnassou, 2017). The Executive controls the accessibility of finances to Parliament and determines what the latter can or cannot do. Members of Parliament in the DRC lack operational facilities such as equipment, office space, staff, computers and transportation to help them do their job. A communication deficit also exists between the general public and parliament (Trefon, 2013). The National Parliament in DRC has thus failed to perform its work effectively because it has been hijacked by the Executive through technocratic experts in various ministries. Additionally, external advisors significantly influence the legislation of new laws, which has further reduced the level of independence of the National Parliament. The DRC is currently witnessing a persistence of a legacy of parliamentary powerlessness as the institution has failed to promote a culture of good governance for the sustainable development of the country (Trefon, 2013).

### Problem Statement

The Democratic Republic of Congo has for a long time experienced an authoritative style of leadership, corruption, injustice, nepotism, and a lack of accountability and inclusion. These ills have led the country to unending strife and wars. The country faces massive structural constraints on governance, resulting in severe levels of poverty, low socio-economic

development, poor infrastructure, a deeply-rooted culture of clientelism, decades of burdensome and violent conflicts, and an absence of trust in institutions and state agents by the Congolese masses (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018). State institutions such as the National Parliament, which are tasked with providing checks and balances on government, suffer from a lack of professionalism, corruption, and dismal performance (Gnassou, 2017). These structural and systemic problems have significantly contributed to the current socio-economic and political state of the DRC, a country riddled with a major governance crisis.

The Democratic Republic of Congo is endowed with a vast, fertile, and very rich land in terms of mineral resources, forests, lakes, rivers, national parks, manpower, among many other resources that are, unfortunately, poorly managed. The DRC has everything any nation would need to ensure development, yet the country is ranked as one the most underdeveloped and fragile nations on earth (World Bank, 2018, p. 39). It is Africa's second largest country with a geographical area covering 2,345,410 square km and has inhabitants numbering over 75 million (World Bank, 2018, p. 13). The DRC has, in part, the second largest rainforest in the world that cuts across Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and Gabon. This rainforest accounts for more than 18% of all the remaining rainforests in the world. About 57% of DRC land is covered by forest and very fertile soils, where crops grow with no application of fertilizers. The world's second largest river, the Congo River, waters the country, and thus irrigation and land cultivation are possible year-round. The DRC has the world's fourth largest dam with a capacity of producing 1,775 Megawatts (MW) of electricity (Damania, Alvaro, Barra, & Russ, 2016).

A lack of proper governance of these vast resources has resulted in electricity still being a luxury in most of the cities in the DRC (Maupin, 2017). Despite its abundance of water and



fertile land, the DRC imports flour, rice, and maize from Pakistan, Zambia, Tanzania, and other countries (Eric, Xu, Yu, Wang, Ahmed, Darith, & Eliane, 2017; Sondi, Kalambaie, & Mafwila, 2018). Because the country has been poorly governed, its agricultural sector is still nascent. Paradoxically, this has resulted in perennial food insecurity in the country. Ironically, the DRC is the richest country on earth, endowed with abundant mineral deposits such as copper, titanium, gold, rare diamonds, tin, casserrite, cobalt, uranium, coltan, and oil (Geenen & Marysse, 2016). It is arguably the most endowed nation in terms of mineral resources that can potentially generate an estimated 24 trillion US dollars in revenue, but this potential is yet to be realized (United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), 2011a). The DRC's vast and rich wealth deposits would have by now made it one of the most developed and prosperous countries in the world. Ironically, the DRC has the second lowest nominal GDP in the world, and a majority of its citizens continue struggling to survive (African Development Bank, 2018; Vogel & Musamba, 2017). The natural mineral deposits are grossly mismanaged with no clear accountability on how they are exploited. They are neither sustainably exploited nor have a majority of citizens benefited from this resource.

Even after a half-a-century since independence, an extremely poor road network cannot connect provinces with each other and to the capital city of Kinshasa. Poor infrastructural governance has resulted in roads built during the colonial era becoming dilapidated and entirely impassable (Ali, Barra, Berg, Damania, Nash, & Russ, 2015). Consequently, a majority of travel in the DRC is by air, which is very expensive. Farmers are unable to take their produce to the market because of impassable roads. As a result, food is very expensive. Additionally, economic and administrative governance and development of the DRC have been hampered by the dilapidated state of the roads in the country (Food and Agricultural Organization [FAO], 2017).

Poor governance, low development levels, food insecurity, low living standards, armed conflicts, and the absence of the rule of law have in recent years seen a large number of Congolese refugees flee the country to seek refuge in other fairly stable and developed countries (Zihindula, Weitz, & Akintola, 2015).

The DRC has not benefited from its natural resource endowments, which have often been referred to as a curse and not a blessing (Acar, 2017; Siakwah, 2017; Zubikova, 2018). Also, international organizations such as the World Bank, European Union (EU), African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), and International Monetary Fund (IMF) have not succeed in addressing the crisis in the DRC. Although renowned scholars from various backgrounds have researched and written about the painful situation in the DRC, a long-term solution is yet to be found. A study on governance in the DRC by Englebert (2014) found that government officials were heavily entangled in predatory rule and used their positions to appropriate and accumulate public resources. Another study by Gouzou (2012) on governance processes in the DRC and the role of civil society established that civil society bodies barely fulfilled their role of advocating for democratic governance in the DRC. The study concluded that bad governance was widely accepted as one of the major causes of conflict, underdevelopment and marginalization in the DRC. Chamber's (2013) study on governance in the DRC revealed that the country had never had any form of mandatory social contract in which accountability and good governance practices were demonstrated by the state. In another study, Trefon (2013) reported high levels of impunity as a big challenge to governance in the DRC. The study further found that parliamentary work and oversight were not a significant political force in the DRC and had failed to promote a culture of good governance practices.

The Democratic Republic of Congo thus faces massive structural constraints on governance, which include severe levels of poverty, very low levels of socio-economic development, poor infrastructural levels, a large and difficult political territory that is sparsely populated, a deeply rooted culture of clientelism, a poorly educated workforce, decades of burdensome and violent conflicts, daily violence in the conflict-ridden parts of the country, and a total absence of trust in institutions and state agents by a majority of Congolese (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018). Further, the DRC lacks competent leaders since those in charge neither strive for a liberal democracy, nor are they committed to policies that promote good governance practices (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2018).

The National Parliament, which is tasked with providing checks and balances on the government, suffers from corruption, a lack of professionalism, and dismal performance. Preliminary findings of this study established that, among other factors, a lack of accountability, transparency, absence of the rule of law, mismanagement, exclusiveness, lack of democracy, injustice thrive in the DRC. As a result, the National Parliament is ineffective and continues to operate below globally-acceptable standards. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine how to empower the DRC National Parliament to promote good governance to realize sustainable development.

## Research Objectives

### General Objective

Empowering public institutions to promote good governance for sustainable development: The case of the National Parliament, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

### Specific Objectives

- (i) To identify relevant dimensions of institutional empowerment of parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- (ii) To establish stakeholder views on the state of the elements of empowerment in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- (iii) To identify leadership practices considered to have affected institutional empowerment/governance of parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- (iv) To establish stakeholder views on the level of development in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- (v) To make recommendations based on the findings of the study

### Research Questions

- (i) What are the relevant dimensions of institutional empowerment of parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo?
- (ii) Which are the stakeholder views on the state of the elements of empowerment in the Democratic Republic of Congo?
- (iii) What leadership practices are considered to have affected institutional empowerment/governance of parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo?
- (iv) What are the stakeholder views on the level of development in the Democratic Republic of Congo?
- (v) Which recommendations can be made based on the findings of the study?

## Assumptions of the Study

The study made the following assumptions:

- i) The participants of the study would give honest feedback about the subject.
- ii) The Members of Parliament chosen to participate in the study understand how the institution of the National Parliament works and the challenges it faces.

## Justification of the Study

The ineffectiveness of the National Parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo has resulted in a lack of accountability, absence of the rule of law, poor leadership, poor governance, corruption, impunity, and a raid on public coffers. This has resulted in low development levels and high levels of poverty among the inhabitants of the DRC. The National Parliament is an important public institution with the mandate and power of overseeing the actions of the Executive, and of ensuring a system of governance that is transparent, accountable, and responsible. The Congolese National Parliament as a public institution has been both manipulated and undermined by those in power, people who have controlled the institution and fulfilled their selfish interests. There is no nation or society in the world where good governance and sustainable development occur without the presence of strong and empowered public institutions. Consequently, it is imperative that the DRC citizens understand the importance of having a strong and effective National Parliament that is focused on good governance if sustainable development is to be realized.

Empirical literature on issues of governance and sustainability has, until now, focused more on the social, economic, and environmental triad, with little emphasis given to the role that

empowering public institutions, particularly national parliaments, plays in creating an environment in which good governance flourishes, and which supports sustainable development.

### Significance of the Study

This study informs and educates the Congolese masses and the political class on the need for an empowered National Parliament and to help them understand the link between good governance and sustainable development in a nation. It informs the public about their role in endorsing leaders who practice good governance. Further, those charged with leading public institutions are informed about good leadership practices for managing public institutions, and future researchers will draw from the findings of this study for their scholarly endeavors. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to challenge, train, educate, empower, and equip parliamentarians to understand their delegated responsibility so that they can effectively carry out their mandate. This will lead to sustainable national development.

### Scope

This study included both members of the current National Parliament and ex-members of the House. The researcher focused on the National Parliament as a representative of other public institutions in the DRC. Methodology-wise, the researcher gathered qualitative data over a four-month period in a geographical area that covered four provinces in the Democratic Republic of Congo, namely: Kinshasa, Haut-Katanga, Kwalezi, and North Kivu.

### Limitations of the Study

Due to the large size of the DRC, the insecurity and conflict in remote regions of the country, a poor road network, and the cost of transportation from one place to another; the researcher selected four key provinces to represent the nation. Time and financial constraints do

not allow the researcher to focus on all public institutions in the nation. In light of these limitations, the researcher has selected the Congolese National Parliament as a key public institution to represent the rest.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses what has been written on topics relevant to the research study and presents empirical reviews related to the study objectives. The chapter presents theories that are relevant to the study, the conceptual framework and the research gap identified by the study.

#### What is Empowerment?

The term ‘empowerment’ has a variety of meanings and flavors that encapsulates it. The socio-cultural or political context in which it is used largely determines the type of definition assigned to it (Chaudhuri, 2016). Burgeoning scholarly definitions of what empowerment means exemplify the varying meanings it portrays to different contexts. To the World Bank (2016), empowerment refers to the process of enhancing the capacity of people, groups or institutions to enable them make decisions and transform such decisions into desired outcomes and actions. This involves the expansion of the capabilities and assets of people within a society to enable them participate in, negotiate with, control, influence and hold institutions that affect their lives accountable.

Mohapatra and Sundaray (2018) have taken a different perspective. They define empowerment as the uplifting of the members of an institution through the provision of autonomy that allows them to make decisions of their own, which ultimately leads to different positive outcomes, better institutional performance being a part of it. The United Nations (UN) (2012) views empowerment as the processes of enabling individuals to gain control over factors that influence their lives, to build their capacities to gain access to networks, partners, and have



their say in shaping and gaining control over their lives. Nikkah and Redzuan (2009) defined empowerment as the process of change through which people or groups with little or no power obtain the power and ability to make choices that influence their lives.

What is common in all the foregoing definitions is that they view empowerment in terms of provision of autonomy and freedom that enables a people, group, or institution to operate at liberty, and to make independent decisions on matters related to their wellbeing. In the context of this inquiry, however, empowerment of the National Parliament as a public institution implies making the DRC Parliament strong, and building its capacity of influence. It also includes solidifying and equipping the Parliamentarians by giving them autonomy, control and power to effectively discharge their activities and attain the goals and objectives they desire; for example, good governance, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

### Empowerment as a Concept

The use of the term *empowerment* has become ubiquitous in the sphere of social development. It has often been identified as the answer to most of the problems in a society (Chaudhuri, 2016). Aghazamani and Hunt (2017) argued that the word *empowerment* lacks a clear definition, noting that scholars often use the concept narrowly, often for their own program or for a specific scholarly discipline.

Martinez, Morales, Maso, and Bernet (2017) observed that as a concept, empowerment remains an ambiguous and complex term without well-established boundaries and, therefore, applicable to varying situations and processes. Existing literature indicates a wide use of the terms: women empowerment (Huis, Hansen, Otten, & Lensink, 2017), youth empowerment (Christens & Peterson, 2012; Morton & Montgomery, 2012), economic empowerment

(Govindaraj, 2018), employee empowerment (Hanaysha, 2016; Kumar & Kumar 2017), political empowerment (Alexander, Bolzendahl, & Jalalzai, 2016; Dieleman & Andersson, 2016) and structural empowerment (Hagerman, Högberg, Skytt, Wadensten, & Engström, 2017). Notably, *empowerment*, as a concept, has received widespread use in social science research, which suggests it is a powerful and attractive construct. Empowerment is popularly used as a tool to address issues of poor governance, poverty, and underdevelopment (World Bank, 2016). Empowerment has also been closely associated with sustainable development outcomes. Ki-Moon (2012) noted in his address as the United Nations Secretary-General that empowerment was essential to achieving sustainable development among other outcomes. Additionally, the World Bank (2016) observed that no single model for empowerment exists as the context in which it is applied determines the manner of its implementation. According to existing literature, empowerment as a concept is anchored on the context of application. True to this wide application, the current study focusses on the empowerment of the National Parliament as a tool to enhance good governance for the sustainable development of the DRC.

## Theories of Empowerment

### Empowerment Theory

The Theory of Empowerment is associated with Swift and Levine (1987) who asserted that it encompasses both processes and outcomes. According to the theory, activities, actions or structures can be empowering, and outcomes from such processes result in a certain level of empowerment. However, Zimmerman (1995) clarified the Empowerment Theory further by analyzing it on a psychological, institutional, and community level. According to Zimmerman (1995), empowering processes are those that seek to gain control, acquire needed resources, and critically understand the social environment of people or institutions. Conversely, empowered

outcomes encompass the operationalization of empowerment, and in an institutional construct, include institutional networks, acquisition of resources, policy making, realizing set goals, and becoming strengthened, among other related outcomes (Zimmerman, 1995).

According to the Theory of Empowerment, changes in attitudes and beliefs significantly determine the participation of people in the processes of social change. The theory assumes that individuals are more likely to work for the common good when they develop a sense of critical consciousness (Gutierrez, 1995). Zimmerman (1995) posited that empowered people or institutions have the power to take decisive steps to address problems that affect their immediate environments. Thus, empowered institutions such as a national parliament means it is autonomous, independent and free to make decisions that bring about social change and address the issues in the society where it operates from.

Critique of empowerment theory. Despite the potential benefits that can be derived from an empowerment process or program, scholars have criticized the Theory of Empowerment. Notably, Botchway (2001) and Danso (2009) pointed the paradox of empowerment as a major critique of this theory. According to the paradox of empowerment critique, empowerment efforts can sometimes result or create feelings of disappointment, indignation, resentment or disempowerment on the side of those who are being empowered. Although empowerment is aimed at eliminating powerlessness, efforts to bring empowerment can result to empowerees having a sense of resentment and provocation (Weidenstedt, 2016).

Weidenstedt (2016) also criticized the empowerment theory, arguing that the empowering party must be more powerful than the party that is empowered. This implies that a power differential must exist for power to be transferred from the more powerful to the less powerful. The disempowered party thus becomes a subordinate to the empowered, which can

create a number of negative emotions on the party that is being empowered. Further, the loss of resources by the party that is empowering to the party that is being empowered can be regarded as being small, which can be perceived as an indicator of inferiority in which the empoweree needs the empowerer more than the empoweree needs the party that is less powerful.

Weidenstedt (2016) further noted that acts of empowering often require reciprocity because acts of giving empowering cannot be entirely free and often require acts of gratitude or recognition of the party that is empowering by the party that is being empowered.

### Structural Empowerment Theory

This theory was put forward by Kanter (1993) in her renowned work, 'Men and Women of the Corporation'. According to the Structural Empowerment Theory, individuals or groups within an institution are affected by certain contextual factors, which determine how effective they are in discharging their work. The theory posits that people are influenced by four essential social structures that they ought to access within an institutional context. These are; information relating to work and the institution, opportunities to advance and grow within the organization, support from colleagues, subordinates and leaders, and the availability of resources in terms of materials, personnel, sufficient time and adequate financing. Kanter (1993) argues that when members of an institution access these empowerment structures, the chances of them accessing formal and informal power are increased. She further notes that power is more likely to bring with it more power as a result of accessing the structural empowerment elements, thus empowering the members of an institution.

This theory further asserts that when the structures of opportunity and power are adequately availed, members of an institution get a sense of empowerment, which makes them committed to their work, feel a sense of autonomy and control (Kanter, 1993). On the contrary,

members of an institution who feel powerless will often experience a sense of a failure to do their work, which leads to a culture of negative behaviour and attitudes such as disengagement and lackadaisical work practices that negatively impact on the overall performance of an institution (Kanter, 1993). This theory is essential in explaining a lack of structural empowerment factors in the Congolese National Parliament that has had a negative effect on how effective the institution has become. Members of the National Parliament in the DRC are not adequately, structurally empowered, which has often resulted in them feeling powerless in terms of executing their full constitutional mandate. As Kanter asserted, a sense of being empowered only arises when elements of structural empowerment are adequately availed to the members of an institution. As such, the theory sufficiently describes what empowerment means in the context of institutions, which is the main focus area of the current study. Additionally, this theory has also been found to have an effect on other aspects of empowerment. Wagner, Cummings, Smith, Olson, Anderson, and Warren (2010) noted that structural empowerment is a precursor of psychological empowerment. Evidence in literature has confirmed this relationship, which links high levels of structural empowerment to psychological empowerment (Hagerman et al., 2017).

Critique of structural empowerment theory. Evidence in literature indicate scholarly critique of Structural Empowerment Theory. Weidenstedt (2016) criticized this theory by noting that the transfer of power to empower does not take place in a social vacuum. The Structural Theory of Empowerment is concerned precisely with what needs to be transferred to achieve a certain goal. It evaluates the transfer and ways for making it more efficient. However, the Structural Empowerment Theory ignores the social perspective of the empowering process, which often occurs through communicating the empowerment process. Thus, while the theory

mainly focusses on the transfer of power per se, a communicative approach discusses the social setting in which the empowerment takes place, and includes indirect messages with implicit assumptions and ascriptions being sent between the empowerer and the empoweree (Weidenstedt, 2016).

Further, this theory emphasizes on giving up resources and power, which often lead to expectations of reciprocation from the party being empowered, implying that the empowering party becomes less empowered due to the transfer of resources, which does not properly portray the intentions of what the empowerment process aims to achieve. Instead of viewing empowerment as simply the transfer of resources and power, empowerment needs to be viewed as interactions between parties in which social, cultural and situational meanings are communicated. Empowerment should thus not require reciprocation as it is portrayed in the Structural Empowerment Theory.

### Psychological Empowerment Theory

The Psychological Empowerment Theory traces its origins to the works of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) and Spreitzer (1995, 1996). According to the theory, psychological empowerment is a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses the four cognitive dimensions of meaning, self-determination, competence and impact. Meaning refers to the purpose or value of work that is judged based on the standards or ideals of a person. Meaning also entails having a fit between the requirements of work beliefs, values, roles and behaviors (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) and Spreitzer (1995, 1996). Competence relates to the capability of an individual to perform work with skill, and is often linked to personal mastery in performing work duties (Bandura, 1989). Self-determination refers to the sense of an individual having the choice of initiating and regulating actions. This reflects autonomy in the initiation and continuation of

work processes and behaviour (Jaiswal & Joge, 2018). Finally, impact refers to the degree to which a person can influence administrative, strategic or operating outcomes at work (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Spreitzer (1995) further built on the concept of psychological empowerment, noting that it can be regarded as the reflections of a person their work role. The theory further asserts that the capability of an individual to shape mandated roles is built on four major spheres of psychological empowerment. These are; competence, which is the ability of a person to perform their work; meaning, which refers to the values of the workplace; self-determination, which is having a sense of autonomy and control of the behavior and processes of work, and finally, impact, which refers to the level to which a person influences the context of work to create outcomes that are effective, strategic, administrative, or operative (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). On the other hand, Jaiswal and Joge (2018) viewed psychological empowerment as giving people the authority to make decisions relating to their work without having to offer supervisory approvals. In the context of this study, psychological empowerment implies availing to Members of Parliament the freedom and authority to make decisions without external influences such as from the Executive, judiciary or rent seeking parties. Jaiswal and Joge (2018) further argued that psychological empowerment is the oil lubricating the activities of people in an institution or organization, and that it makes a powerful contribution towards the success of a team and the institution at large.

### The Elements of Empowered Parliaments

#### Autonomy

Autonomy of parliament is at the core of the oversight and legislative roles that parliament plays. Muheeb and Aiyede (2018) asserted that institutional autonomy of parliament

is at the heart of relationships between the executive and the legislature. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2017), parliaments need formal powers to oversee the activities of the Executive. These powers must be clearly established in law and in the rules of parliament. National parliaments must also be given administrative and financial autonomy, and a staff that is both dedicated and professional. In cases where parliament lacks control over its staff and budget, pursuing these fundamental attributes of parliamentary autonomy are the first paramount step.

Notably, the executive will often be reluctant to freely give up some of its powers to parliament. However, to effectively empower the parliament, the executive must cede some power. Parliaments can then benchmark from other national parliaments to attain autonomy as an internationally-accepted good practice (IPU & UNDP, 2017). The DRC case needs such autonomy, where National Parliament controls its own budget, staff, and calendar, which will strengthen the institution to effectively play its oversight and legislative roles. To effectively empower the parliament as a public institution, autonomy is fundamental and will serve to embolden and empower the National Parliament in the DRC.

### The Contribution of the Opposition in Parliament

The opposition in parliament encompasses all movements and political parties that are not part of the parliamentary majority or the government coalition, and who primarily voice their critical views or disagreements concerning actions by the government. Sanyal (2015) observed that empowering the opposition includes availing avenues for the opposition to set the agenda for parliament or force the government in power to convene a parliamentary session. This involves creating time within the parliamentary calendar to allow the opposition to question, seek amendment or challenge government programs and activities (IPU & UNDP, 2017).



An effective way through which the opposition can be empowered to keep the government in check and force it to talk about issues is through parliamentary questions. Opposition parties often have interests of exposing failures in government policies, which draw the attention of the government. Often, in empowered parliaments, more parliamentary questions are asked by members of the opposition party (Vliegthart, Walgrave, & Zicha, 2013). A strong opposition monitors the government or the ruling coalition by raising issues of public concern in parliament. A strong opposition in parliament plays an important role in providing oversight and checking the excesses of the government or the ruling coalition. There is, therefore, a need to protect the rights of the opposition, which should be clearly set out in parliamentary rules (IPU & UNDP, 2017).

Parliament can only fulfill its role when members of the house enjoy certain rights such as the freedom of expression. They must also be free to receive, seek or impart information and ideas without fear of reprisal (IPU & UNDP, 2017). Reviewed literature indicate that the opposition in the DRC is weak, fragmented, and often unable to provide oversight over what the government is doing. Often, the opposition is manipulated or bought out by the ruling government, a vice that consequently weakens and compromises its role in checking the same government. There is thus an urgent need to empower the opposition in parliament as one of the ways of empowering the institution so it can fulfil its role in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### Parliamentary Research Services

Democratic parliaments have strong Parliamentary Research Services (PaRS), which provide services related to data and knowledge, in addition to elevating parliaments to first order national institutions (Fitsilis & Koutsogiannis, 2017). According to a report by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNDP (2017), one of the major ways of strengthening national

parliaments is through developing specific research capacity to enable it provide oversight. This implies development of an efficient, effective, and professional parliamentary research unit to carry out research to support the activities of the parliament itself, parliamentary committees, the speaker and other stakeholders that are closely knitted to the national parliament. PaRS enhance the strengthening of national parliaments by driving innovation and change in many traditional parliamentary domains such as transparency, citizen's empowerment and openness, which makes them indispensable parts of modern parliaments (Fitsilis & Koutsogiannis, 2017).

In Europe for instance, a study by Papazoski (2013) found that a majority of national parliaments had established and developed their Parliamentary Research Services as a way of offering high quality professional support to members of parliament, external stakeholders and parliamentary services. Australia, the Hellenic Republic, and the Republic of Serbia all have Parliamentary Research Services that support the work done by the MPs and parliamentary institutions such as committees, speakers, and groups (Fitsilis & Koutsogiannis, 2017).

Examined literature indicate that one of the indispensable components of empowered parliaments are Parliamentary Research Services, which plays a critical part in strengthening the role of parliament. Thus, one of the tools that can be used to empower a national legislative body such as the one in the DRC is the development of a very strong parliamentary research unit.

### The Benefits of an Empowered Parliament

Evidence in literature reveal that empowered parliaments have a strong association with good governance and sustainable development across different societies in the world (Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption, 2018). Strong national parliaments ensure that proper oversight practices are secured in the fundamental state structures, laws, constitution and parliaments' own procedural rules (Juncker et al., 2015). Empowered parliaments are

bequeathed with adequate human, financial and capacitation resources that enable them to oversee executive functions and control these resources in an independent but transparent way (Adiputri, 2018). Bonenberg and Kaplinski (2018) argue that an empowered parliament improves the quality of governance in a society and as a result ensures that development occurs in a sustainable manner. Additionally, the need for ensuring that the national parliaments are solidified and work effectively has resulted in concerted efforts to promote strong and empowered parliaments as key public institutions in the world (GOPAC, 2018).

In Europe, Denmark is built on a parliamentary system of governance. Their parliament is empowered with the mandate to oversee the activities of those in government and keep them accountable to the electors. Denmark's system has promoted a culture of civility, rule of law, liberty, accountability, and good governance (Laursen, Andersen, & Jahn, 2017). The Danish constitution has given its parliament power to protect citizen liberties and freedoms. These are enforced and respected. For a long time, Denmark has been ranked among trailblazers in civil liberties and political rights (Laursen et al., 2017). The Danish parliament is independent from state manipulation, which has given the institution autonomy in the conduct of its business. The independence of the Danish National Parliament has given the institution power to oversee the Executive, protect the rights of the citizens and ensure freedoms and political rights are protected in the country (Laursen, et al., 2017). Additionally, Denmark is ranked top among the least corrupt countries on earth, according to Transparency International (2017). This has consequently fostered a culture of good governance in Denmark that is the foundation of sustainable development witnessed in the country.

In Germany, the constitution ensures a parliament whose members are elected in free, equal, fair, and secret elections, a major prerequisite for an empowered parliament (Friedbert,

Ulbricht, & Zohlnhofer, 2017). Germany has a parliamentary council for sustainable development in charge of supervising the government's sustainability strategies (Friedbert et al., 2017). This council, which is reconstituted after every parliamentary election, has moderate political influence in its activities, making it a strong advocate for long-term development practices by the government (Friedbert et al., 2017). Notably, Germany has one of the strongest parliaments in the developed world and has been instrumental in promoting a culture of good governance and development in the country.

In Africa, Ghana recognizes the National Parliament as a key public institution responsible for providing oversight over the Executive and restraining the Executive from carrying out acts that are beyond its mandate (Draman, Stapenhurst, Imbeau, & Staddon, 2017). The electoral process is regarded as open and fair, and governance of the country by those in power is based on transparency, participation by citizens, accountability and use of modern technologies for good governance (Draman et al., 2017). The Ghanaian National Parliament provides strong oversight over the Executive and other public institutions. This oversight role has promoted a culture of good governance in the country. Botchway (2018) opined that Ghana is on a good path, marching towards consolidating its democracy, improving the quality of governance and thus ensuring sustainable development. Additionally, Ghana continues to enjoy a good reputation of having one of the most stable democracies on the African continent (Botchway, 2018). This has made Ghana a beacon of democracy and good governance on the African Continent.

In Botswana, government functions are conducted in a democratic manner, courtesy of parliamentary democracy. Elections in Botswana are free, fair and transparent, and the government is responsive to the needs of the electorate (Lewin, 2018). Botswana has

empowered watchdog institutions such as the Ombudsman, anti-corruption parliament, and an independent electoral commission. The Constitution of Botswana empowers the parliament to inspect and report on how public accounts are used in all departments and government parastatals (Sebudubudu, 2010). The country has a strong and empowered National Parliament that is effective in discharging its activities (Lewin, 2018). The Executive is thus kept in proper check by the National Parliament, which has promoted a culture of good governance that has impacted development and poverty reduction in Botswana.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, however, public institutions, notably the National Parliament, is undermined and largely controlled by the Executive (Shephard, 2014). The National Parliament has failed to shape political discourses largely due to lack of institutional frameworks and incapacitation (Afoaku, 2010). Parliamentarians lack adequate staff, facilities, and have insufficient budgets to effectively do their work (Trefon, 2013). Trefon further argued that there is a persistence of parliamentary powerlessness and, as a result, it has failed to adequately provide oversight over the Executive among other mandated constitutional obligations.

In analyzing the Congolese Parliament, Afoaku (2010) realized that the opposition in the parliament is not only weak in capacity, but highly fragmented, which has made parliament ineffective in challenging the ruling coalition. The oversight role that parliament was tasked to do is almost non-existent in the Congolese Parliament as noted by Trefon (2013). It can thus be concluded that the DRC National Parliament is seriously structurally disempowered.

## Leadership

### Concept of Leadership

While leadership practitioners and scholars reflect their own perspectives and objectives when defining leadership, Northouse (2016) provides a functional definition, noting that leadership is behavioral. Leadership behaviors reveal characteristics and skills developed through learning and experience. Leadership is not innate. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) posit that leadership involves inspiring people to give their best to achieve desired results and common goals (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2013; Ivanchevich, Konapasko & Matteson, 2014). It implies motivating people and securing their total commitment. In the context of this study, leadership refers to the ability to influence and lead others in accomplishing sustainable development goals for the common good of all.

### Value-Based Leadership

The value-based leadership model aligns with values explored in this study – values such as good governance, empowerment, and sustainable development. Daft (2016) defines value-based leadership as one based on a relationship between the leader and the followers, and sustained by shared values. Value-based leadership is characterized as being exemplary, ethical, and authentic. Leaders lead by example – a good leader inspiring good behavior and bad leader behaviors legitimizing bad behavior by the followers (Daft, 2016).

Value-based leadership is a caring style of leadership whereby the leader treats every person with respect and dignity. It is a combination of both strategy and character (Daft, 2016). Leaders have the responsibility to serve others before serving themselves, making good decisions that are not harmful to their followers. Value-based leaders treat people humanely. They are

concerned with the values of fairness and justice (Northouse, 2016). Leaders' values define their character, their ethics, and their way of life. In this study, value-based leadership refers to leadership based on values of authenticity, trust, morality, care and compassion. It sees value in every human being, and therefore treats all with dignity.

According to Bano, Ishrat and Mishra (2020), the value-based leadership model is based on ethical moral values, authenticity and selflessness. Such leadership stays true to the principles of the value-based leadership and never changes its moral ethics whatever the circumstances may be. Copeland (2014) observed that values-based leaders possess specific and clear principles by which they live and operate. Additionally, they are honest and congruent in their actions, which, in return, yield big dividends in that it becomes the foundation of inspiration to their followers.

Daft (2016) posits that followers learn about values by watching the leader, just as students learn by watching their professors. Actions speak louder than mere words and, therefore, a values-based leader lives by pre-established principles upon which his beliefs are built. Zydziunaite (2018) notes that values-based leadership style distinguishes the great from the rest. This means the values of a society, or an institution are the bedrock upon which the institution is built and decisions are made in an organization. Values-based leaders establish the ethos of an institution and clearly articulate its values and culture.

Hester (2019) notes that moral acuity and service is the foundation of values-based leadership. Further, this style of leadership is a learning and maturation process where negatives are set aside and the positives embraced, and where an attitude of determination becomes necessary, while patience and guidance are encouraged. Hester further observes that values-based leadership is a direct petition to common sense. People don't live in a vacuum, but in a given context. It is, therefore, imperative to live by the values and culture of the society in which

one operates. This encompasses dignity and obligations of a democratic nation to the ordinary life of the citizens.

According to Rao (2017), value-based leadership highlights what is wrong and what is right rather than who is wrong and who is right. It emphasizes the means rather than the ends. Further, charisma is essential to values-based leadership, which emphasizes on integrity, ethics, ideals, values, ideas, principles, transparency and fairness among leaders. These values are paramount and are not a basis for compromise regardless of the challenge. Rao, further notes that values-based leadership focusses on adding value to the institutions rather than individuals who pioneer values-based leadership.

In the context of this study, values-based leadership is used to refer to a model of leadership that is anchored on the core values agreed upon by a society. It entails leadership that is morally ethical, selfless, authentic, caring, and trustworthy. Leadership which is honest and accountable to the followers or electorate who possess sovereign power on who leads them. Values-based leadership respects every person in the group, as well as the engagement taken by the leader *vis a vis* the electorates. Values-based leadership can easily promote democracy and good governance, a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development in a country. Values-based leadership works from the inside-out of a leader and encourages them to be morally sensitive in their leadership responsibilities. This kind of leadership is paramount for a nation that has been so badly tortured like the Democratic Republic of Congo.

#### Qualities of Values-Based Leadership

A number of key qualities are associated with values-based leadership. Daft (2016) points out six main qualities of values-based leadership, namely; caring, honest, humble, ethical,



accountable, and one who accepts responsibility. Rao (2017) highlights that values-based leadership is anchored on the principles of truth, what is wrong and what is good. Truth is considered key, the very landmark of values-based leadership. What matters to these leaders is not the results or achievements, but the principles, values, and morals employed to get results. The aim is not survival, but doing what is right. Bano et al. (2020) identify five main qualities; self-reflection, character, balance, self-confidence, and humility.

- a) *Self-reflection* refers to an essential quality that enables individuals to recognize and estimate their key values. It encompasses caring about how learning, experiences, values, principles and priorities influence the decisions of individuals. Self-reflection helps leaders to reflect deeply on what they stand for and to look inside themselves by regularly reflecting and striving for greater self-awareness (Bano et al., 2020). Daft (2016) posits that values-based leadership is concerned with defining own values first before trying to impose them on the followers. The emphasis is on being ideal, real and authentic.
- b) *Character*: the character of an individual encompasses behaviors and values that differentiate one person from another. Qualities such as honesty, affection, motivation, mission, vision and concern identify the individuality of a person to influence how they perform their duties (Bano et al., 2020). Daft (2016) argues that leadership is about character. One may lack other things, but not character, which is the key to leading others.
- c) *Balance* refers to the talents an individual has to analyze circumstances from different perspectives. People with good balance skills are open-minded and take into consideration all thoughts before making decisions or assessing a condition. Through balance, a leader is able to see a situation from varying perspectives and viewpoints.

This gives them a deeper understanding of the situation since all opinions are taken into consideration (Bano et al., 2020).

- d) *Self-confidence* enables individuals to take risks or make tough decisions. It is essential that leaders recognize what their strong and weak points are and systematically develop their capacities. Zydziunaite (2018) notes that self-confident leaders seek help when they need it and apply their strengths to assist their followers. They can discern who among their followers are better gifted, successful and accomplished, allowing them to accept their strengths and weaknesses, and strive to always make improvements. Finally, values-based leadership may fall short of expectations, whether such shortcomings are genuine or perceived, but they are able to accept this and strive to make necessary adjustments. Podgorska and Pichlak (2019) outline the characteristics of this value as risk taking, sympathy, compassion, encouraging, inspirational and creativity.
- e) *Humility* enables individuals to respect others and be kind to them. They stay grounded and perform their duties in close consultation with others. Genuine humility allows the leader to keep life in perspective and helps them value and treat each individual with respect (Bano et al., 2020). Daft (2016) says that values-based leadership does not discriminate; it honors and treats every member of the organization with respect. It is humble and ready to learn. The leader admits his own mistakes and those of his employees. Values-based leaders are open to the process of learning throughout their career.

### Leadership in the DRC

A leadership crisis is one of the major factors that has crippled the Democratic Republic of Congo, leaving the country languishing in misery. It is impossible for bad leadership to

produce good, desired results (Verweijen, 2017). Kouzes and Posner (2013) posit that great leadership produces great workplaces, which in turn brings forth positive results. According to Stanard (2017), the major factor contributing to a leadership crisis and unsustainable development in the DRC is poorly-run institutions. The country has had paternalistic political leadership that is heavily anchored in its past, including its colonial past. Its political leaders have never ensured that the rule of law, national public assets, and the well-being of its citizens would be protected (de Vries, 2016). Unsurprisingly, the form of leadership in the country is based on a theory of personal rule where those in power outrageously exploit the country economically, socially and politically (Lukongo, 2018).

Networks of patronage were used to unleash a dictatorial leadership style by previous regimes in a way that only benefitted those close to the Executive (Verweijen, 2017). The Executive in the DRC is known to lead the country using personal cronies rather than through empowered public institutions (Trefon, 2013). The pork-barrel style of political leadership in the DRC has been both predatory and patrimonial, in spite of attempts to introduce democracy into the country through presidential and legislative elections (Maskin & Tirole, 2014). The last general election was held in the DRC in 2011; no election has been held since in spite of a constitutional requirement to hold elections after every five years (Tshimba, 2017). Public institutions, notably the National Parliament's failure to address the election quagmire, is disturbing. The electorate feel betrayed by the parliamentarians (Mbombo, 2017). The DRC appears to be progressively sinking deeper into the tyrannical style of leadership that has for more than five decades plagued the country (Badru, 2010; Mbombo, 2017).

A predatory style of national leadership has resulted in the plundering of public resources, which are often siphoned to private off-shore accounts owned by those in power and

their political cronies (Lamer, Laudati, & Clark, 2013). This situation is informed by a political leadership that is maintained by influential individuals and real power holders who must satisfy their political bases as a way of ensuring continuity in power (Clark, 2008). Public institutions, particularly the National Parliament, have literally been shunted and rendered ineffective by those who openly exploit the country for personal gain (Chene, 2014; Mayamba, 2012).

The International Crisis Group (2015) observed that the political regime in the DRC can be regarded as an authoritarian presidential system. Those in power have used state authority to privately appropriate, accumulate, and redistribute public resources. This practice continues to be a major obstacle towards good economic governance and sustainable development of the country (Englebert, 2014). The persistent conflicts in the DRC are closely linked to the existing political leadership crisis, which can only improve through ensuring greater accountability of the political and military leadership of the country (Congolese Research Group [CRG], 2018). Shephard (2014) argues for a need to run elections in the DRC in a timely, well-organized manner to ensure that the political voices of the Congolese people are a significant force in bringing political progress in the country. This will create a good socio-political environment in the country where the rule of law is upheld by all citizens.

Political interference has seriously affected the rule of law in the DRC. Consequently, the DRC has moved from being a semi-parliamentary system into a fully authoritarian presidential system (Trefon, 2013). Chambers and Booth (2013) contend that the DRC lacks a culture of issue-based politics and accountability for its politicians. Rather, the DRC politics are based on predation and clientelism. The National Parliament in the DRC is undermined by the strong presidential system and has failed in executing its function to provide oversight on the Executive (Shephard, 2014). Besides being controlled by the Executive, the National Parliament is fragile

in its institutional capacity to promote a culture of good governance that is vital for the sustainable development of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015; Trefon, 2013).

### What are Institutions?

There is no agreed-upon definition of institutions; the context in which the term is used largely determines the definition that is assigned to it (Habibov & Afandi, 2017). Scott (2014) defines institutions as the structures in society that have achieved a high level of resilience and encompass normative, cultural-cognitive, and regulative elements. Engelstad, Larsen, Rogstad, and Steen-Johnse (2017) define an institution as the set rules or norms that regulate how individuals, organizations, and corporate actors behave.

North (2016) gives a widely-accepted definition: “Institutions are the rules of the game in a social setting and encompass humanly devised boundaries or constraints that shape interactions between human beings. They give structure to exchanges among humans whether social, economic or political” (p. 3). Institutions can either be formal, meaning laws, constitution, and regulations; or informal, referring to customs, social norms or traditions responsible for constraining the behaviour of individuals in a society (North, 2016). Wallis (2017) similarly defines institutions as deliberate attempts by groups of people to form agreements on the manner in which they should relate with one another. Aoki (2007) defines an institution as “a self-sustaining, salient pattern of social interaction that is represented by meaningful rules known by every agent, and incorporated as agents shared beliefs about the manner in which a game must be played” (p. 7).

## Institutions as a Concept

The term institution is assigned different meanings and rules of a game (North, 2016), behavioural rules for social interaction (Skoog, 2005), and public organizations (Erickson, 2002). Institutions are the formal rules such as laws, regulations, constitutions, and the informal rules, which include codes of conduct, norms of behaviour and routines. Institutions are not personal. They are social since they are shared among members belonging to a particular society within which they apply. Institutions must be enforceable to be effective in terms of actually being adhered to and applied through the use of some sort of sanctions (Fombad, 2017). When there is a failure to enforce institutions, they become ineffective and can be perceived as non-existent with regard to their influence on the behaviour of people and their interactions within a society (Ngang, 2014).

Institutions can also be based on the functions they do in a society (i.e. the activities that they regulate). Thus, they can be political institutions, meaning they regulate political activities, economic institutions in charge of the economic system or socio-cultural institutions charged with regulating social and cultural interactions (Ferguson, 2013). Although there are different types of institutions in a society, they are functionally interrelated. They govern human behavior not governed by other rules, for example having one type of institution take over where another institution stops (Jaksic & Jacksic, 2014).

The growth in recognition of the role institutions play in a society involves recognizing that interactions and activities between individuals are structured in terms implicit or overt rules. Institutions allow ordered thought, actions, as well as human expectations, to be consistent. By themselves, they are fundamental in the social realm since they create the stuff of social life by either constraining or enabling behaviour (Hodgson, 2006).

Public institutions are critical for economic and social development (Green, 2011; Paldam & Gundlach, 2008). However, institutions do not function or emerge in a vacuum, and for them to be effective, people need to trust them as they exist to serve the society (Mishler & Rose, 2005). Jacksac and Jacksac (2018) point out that good institutions have three key attributes: the establishment and protection of property rights, the restriction of social elites from misappropriating the income and property of other society members, and providing equal opportunities for employment, social security and civil rights to all members of a society. The key role of institutions is ensuring that the stability and continuity of a society is secured.

Parliament is increasingly gaining traction as a central cog in the wheel of modern society democracy. It is a strong link between the people and politics (Clark & Wilford, 2012; Judge & Bandeira, 2018). In most developing nations, parliament as a legislative institution has for a long time remained fragile due to the influence of political parties and politicians from authoritarian regimes, very high turnover in legislatures, and a collapse of the ability to shape capable and elite professionals in parliamentary affairs (Semenova, Edinger, & Heinrich, 2014; Zheng, Liang, & Wilhelm, 2014). As such, there is need to strengthen parliaments as main pillars to promote good governance and sustainable development in societies today. It is imperative that parliaments undergo institutional reforms and become more empowered to be genuinely professional and independent legislative bodies (Egreteau, 2017).

### Theories of Institutions

The term 'institution' has been very difficult to define. This has led to the development of different views and theories of institutions propounded by different scholars. The theories of institutions that this study draws on are: Institutions as a Rule, Institutions as Equilibria, and The Unified Theory of Institutions.

## Institutions as a Rule Theory

The Institutions as a Rule theory holds the view that institutions are rules for regulating behaviour in a society. The rule approach is based on North's (1990) definition that views institutions as the rules of the game in a society. The theory regards institutions as behavioral, and that they constrain or guide behavior in social interactions. Institutions include both formal and informal constraints. According to the theory, different rules especially formal rules, are selected through a centralized process by bargaining and through political conflict between individuals that make attempts at changing the rules for their individual benefit. Institutions as Rules holds the view that institutions are best understood on how they function, because they are often responsive to the needs and demands of those who create them (Schofield & Caballero, 2011).

This approach looks at the enforcement of rules as a different issue from the formation and content of the rules themselves. For rules to be enforced, some costs must be met. Both formal and informal rules, and the ways in which they are enforced, constitute the structure of an institution (Schofield & Caballero, 2011). The Institutions as a Rule approach uses the rational choice perspective on how institutions are formed and how they work to conceptualize what is meant by institutions in a society. Additionally, Schofield and Caballero (2011) pointed out that rules by themselves do not influence how people behave; rather, the expected behavior of others influences how people behave in a society. The approach argues that formal rules are designed or constructed by polity, while the informal norms are inherited through the people's culture. In this case, it is arguable that formal rules are men's creation, and informal rules are passed on from one generation to another (Schofield & Caballero, 2011).



Critique of rule theory. This approach to institutions has received criticism from different scholars. Hindriks and Guala (2014) observed that the many established rules are never followed and that rules cannot be regarded as institutions because by themselves, they have no power to influence behavior. This departs from North's (1990) definition of institutions as rules that guide human behavior, arguing that rules by themselves have no power to influence how people behave. Greif and Kingston (2011) further critiqued the Institutions as a Rule theory by arguing that rules do not create a motivation of a pattern of behavior that is in line with an established rule. The argument here is that rules cannot emerge as institutions because rules do not enforce themselves in a society.

This critique of institutions as rules of the game departs from the idea that institutions are humanly-devised constraints meant to check the behavior and actions of people. Wallis (2017) has argued that institutions arise from choices that communities, countries, families or groups deliberately make and that agreed-upon rules do not ensure the desired behavior. Additionally, Peters (2000) observed that the rules-approach to institutions fails to clearly identify what constitutes a rule in a society. When widely accepted and known rules are not obeyed, the question begs: are they really rules? There is a need to measure compliance and to ascertain whether an institution actually exists in reality and not just on paper. This creates the problem where the existence of institutions is merely hypothetical, because a failure in enforcing the rule means the institution does not exist.

### Institutions as Equilibria

The theory of Institutions as Equilibria proposes that institutions can be regarded as equilibria. Lewis (1969) put forward the equilibria theory of institutions and has been popular in literature on institutions. The Institutions as Equilibria approach views institutions as regularities

or patterns of behavior. The theory argues that actions that are out-of-equilibrium are unstable and therefore unlikely to be repeated in the course of many interactions. By using this Game Theory, Lewis (1969) noted that in equilibria, no individual is served better by acting differently, implying that institutions by themselves bring equality by serving everyone in the same manner. No one is given preferential treatment just because of what they do or don't do. Therefore, where societal institutions are fair and just, they treat everyone equally.

The Institutions as Equilibria approach elaborates the ultimate expectations on the behaviour of other actors such as politicians, judges, police, and public servants who create institutional constraints that mold the behavior of people in a society (Schofield & Caballero, 2011). The main idea of the Institutions as Equilibria approach is the behavior and expected behavior of others and not the rules of behavior that motivate people to choose to behave in a particular manner. The aggregated behavior in a society is the basis for the motivation of each individual to behave in a particular manner. The theory notes that the behavior of individuals in a society is based on how other individuals within the same society behave, and not the established rules in a society (Dixit, 2004). Kingston and Caballero (2009) noted that poor governance, corruption, and low levels of development that plague many political systems across the world are not caused by a lack of rules that clearly spell out the preventive measures, but rather, they are a result of particular regularities of behavior. The implication here, for instance, is that people choose to be corrupt because it is the accepted norm in the society they live in.

Critique of equilibria. Hindriks and Guala (2014) argued that the Equilibria Theory of Institutions regards institutions as the equilibrium and that no rules are needed. This view is disputed by Hindriks and Guala (2014) who defend the important role played by rules in achieving Equilibria, which creates institutions in a society. Wallis (2017) critiqued the

Equilibria approach to Institutions by stating that behavioral rules are internal to individuals. Behavioral equilibria is based on how the actions of individuals reinforce behavior patterns of people around them; therefore, norms of behavior elicit patterns of behavior. When people fail to individually and internally evaluate how other people behave, and decide to act in a manner that is in line with the normative behavior of society, it would reinforce the pattern that exists. This implies that equilibria will also fail to exist, meaning that no institution will be present in the society (Wallis, 2017).

### Unified Theory of Institutions

Literature combines the different perspectives of the two approaches of rules and equilibria to create a new and improved theory of explaining institutions. Hindriks and Guala (2014) proposed the Unified Theory of Institutions that aims at both explaining what common people perceive institutions to be, and as the basis upon which social scientists explain behavior in social interactions. The theory unifies the different approaches to institutions, including the institutions as a rule approach and institutions as equilibria approach, to give a new and powerful theory of explaining in depth what is meant by ‘institutions’.

Hindriks and Guala (2014), the theory proponents, sought to provide an adequate definition of what institutions are by combining both the rules and the equilibrium approaches of institutions. This theory addresses the shortcomings of the rules and equilibria approaches and suggests a deeper explanation of what institutions are. Additionally, the Unified Theory of Institutions provides a higher level of understanding of the nature of institutions. It focuses on the relationship between property, money, power and presidents, and the explanatory insights from social sciences. The theory allows its users to appreciate the differences as well as commonalities among incommensurable theories (Hindriks & Guala, 2014).

Critique of unified theory. Sugden (2015) states that the Unified Theory of Institutions appear have been looking for a theory of institutions and uses the word ‘institution’ to refer to whatever is described by the word in the ordinary language, rather than a specific domain of observable behavior. This creates a problem when discussing the concept of institutions since the word has a very wide range of meanings in the ordinary language. The theory excludes the behavior of other non-human creatures. This omission occurs in spite of ample evidence to the effect that similarities exist between the psychological and behavioral patterns of humans and other intelligent animals. Sugden (2015) noted that the theory fails to explain the phenomena present in both human and non-human animals and suggested the establishment of a scientific presumption that favors the development of theories that are applicable across species.

#### Parliament as a Public Institution in the DRC

Parliament consists of elected representatives of people with a mandate to make decisions on behalf of the electorate. National parliaments have a constitutional mandate of supporting and monitoring sustainable development through enactment of legislation, adoption of budgets, monitoring the Executive and ensuring accountability in the management of public affairs (Bonenberg & Kaplinski, 2018). Parliament promotes peaceful societies, provision of equitable access to justice for all, and building public institutions that are effective, accountable and inclusive at all levels (Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption [GOPAC] & United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2018).

In the DRC, the National Parliament, which is one of the major public institutions, has been systemically undermined by the Executive (Gnassou, 2017; Shephard, 2014). The oversight role parliament has failed to translate into a significant political force since it is weak,

ineffective and lacks the structures to ensure empowered public institutions are given room to flourish in the DRC. Parliamentarians lack the resources to adequately do their job (Trefon, 2013). The International Crisis Group (ICG) (2015) further noted that the opposition is weak and fragmented, which has made it ineffective and unable to challenge and oversee the Executive. As a result, it has not been possible to develop the country in a sustainable manner. Public resources have been misappropriated, leaders have not been held accountable for their actions by parliament, and a majority of the Congolese people continue to live in abject poverty.

The Parliament in Kinshasa merely rubber stamps what the Executive dictates due to a weak system of checks and balances (Bertelsmann, 2018). In the Congolese Parliament, opportunism and alliance creation among parliamentarians is common, which has resulted in power becoming centralized in the Presidency, who has hijacked the legislature through intimidation and channeling of state resources into supporters of the Executive (Bertelsmann, 2018).

## Governance

Various scholars have spoken and written about governance, and commonly define it according to context or goals they wanted to achieve.

What is Governance?

According to Keping (2018) governance refers to the sum of the different ways in which individuals and institutions, private and public, conduct the management of common affairs. It encompasses formal institutions and regimes with power to enforce compliance as well as informal arrangements that institutions and people have either agreed, or deemed, to be in their best interest. Fukuyama (2013) defined governance as the ability of a government to make and

enforce rules to deliver services, regardless of whether such a government is democratic or not. Raadschelders (2003) viewed governance as organizations and institutions concerned with how a society is structured, including both governmental and non-governmental actors, as well as independent agencies, without dominance from any one of them.

Kjar (2004) referred to governance as the capacity of a government to make and implement policies aimed at steering a society in a particular direction. Adetiba and Rahm (2012) similarly defined governance as the ability to exercise political, economic, and administrative authority to manage the affairs of a country at all levels.

### Governance as a Concept

Governance as a concept has received a lot of debates in growing literature. It is a domain under increasing focus across different countries. Due to growth in democratic societies in the world, the need for good governance is quickly becoming the benchmark for judging the level of the credibility of societies around the world (Iyoha, Gberevbie, Iruonagbe, & Egharevba, 2015). Vries (2014) aptly observed that governance as a concept encompasses new and different phenomena that are related with the steering of development in a society. Originally, governance was seen as a replacement for government where development of a society was left to societal actors who had to use networks rather than hierarchy in achieving societal development. The role of government and creation of strong institutions by the government has only recently found new traction in societies. Katsamunskas (2016) has pointed that the major reason for the growth in popularity of governance as a concept compared to the narrower term of government, is its capacity of covering the whole range of institutions and the relationships encompassed in the process of governing.

Adetiba and Rahim (2012) contended that governance encompasses three major dimensions of being: political, economic or administrative. Political governance entails the process of making decisions and formulating policies that aim at preventing and reducing inter and intra-state conflict. It also promotes constitutional democracy, including free and fair elections, and safeguards the rule of law and the protection of human rights. Economic governance involves the process of making decisions on the economic activities of a country and the relationship it has with other economies. Administrative governance envisions a system of implementing policies and promoting efficiency and accountability for people holding public offices (Adetiba & Rahim, 2012; Guga, 2014).

Governance is a process, not a set of rules or an activity. It's also not a formal institution. Governance is a process based on coordination, not control. It entails interaction between private and public sectors. Both the governor and the governed are involved in the process of governance (Iyoha et al., 2015). To determine whether governance is good, it is essential to examine the mechanisms that promote it, the type of process used, and the outcomes achieved (UNDP, 2014). Good governance mechanisms include democratic and transparent institutions, and effective and efficient public services. The governance process involves a level of participation and inclusion in social, economic, and political activities in a society where every voice matters when making decisions (UNDP, 2005). Outcomes from good governance include peaceful, resilient, and stable societies where services that reflect the needs of communities are delivered, with the voices of those who are most vulnerable and poor being included in decision-making (UNDP, 2014).

Gridle (2008) argued that many citizens of developing countries would be much better off if public activities were conducted by judicious, fair, transparent, participatory, accountable,

well-managed, responsive, and efficient institutions. For many people across the world who live each day in conditions of instability, public insecurity, abuse of law, corruption, public service failure, inequality, and poverty, good governance represents a beacon of hope. Keping (2018) posited that governance entails the exercise of authority to maintain order. It meets the needs of the public within a certain acceptable range. The aim of governance is guiding, steering, and regulating the activities of citizens through varying systems of power and relations to maximize the interest of the public (Fukuyama, 2013; Grindle, 2017).

### Theories of Governance

#### Good Governance Theory

The Good Governance Theory arose out of a set of policies and principles put forward by the World Bank to developing countries as a prerequisite for assistance. The Good Governance Theory outlines basic principles upon which a good government must be run, whatever its form. These principles include transparency, control, accountability, efficiency, public participation, responsiveness, economy, rule of law, independent judiciary, equity and inclusiveness, broad consensus, tackling corruption, and a strategic vision (Ekundayo, 2017; IMF, 2012; UNDP, 2007; World Bank, 1992).

According to the theory, adopting the principles is essential in seeking solutions that ensure that governance in any society is inclined to the paradigm of a good governance system. This is attributed to the idea that good governance can be promoted by embracing the foregoing principles of good governance and reducing the role of the state in governing (Peter, 2010). This theory will guide this study in understanding the governance practices around the world and the



underlying institutional explanation, and the resulting effects on development, more specifically in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where this study is situated.

### Collective Action Theory

The Collective Action Theory was put forward by Olson (1965) in his highly-publicized work, 'The Logic of Collective Action'. The theory states that collective action in a social setting can create dilemmas when joint decisions of two or more people result in undesirable outcomes in a society. Therefore, collective action often creates dilemmas due to the interdependence between people, where one individual relies on the actions of others. To remedy these collective dilemmas, governance rearrangements are necessary to alter the benefits an individual receives without harming other members of the society. The rearrangements in governance should create institutional frameworks that ascertain the benefits an individual requires in a given society. Through rearrangements in governance, the creation of monitoring mechanisms, rewarding incentives, building trust, and providing information is encouraged since it promotes the likelihood of collective action (Ostrom, 2005). The absence of coordinating governance arrangements result in the under-provision of collective or public goods and services, which leads to inequalities in the society (Holahan & Lubell, 2016).

According to this theory, the provision of public goods in a society such as legislation, national defense, and enforcement of the law or good governance requires concession to protect other political and civic freedoms of individuals within the society. The theory further states that the extent to which public goods are provided in a society, such as education, infrastructure, healthcare, democratic public institutions, and so on, depends on the level of political bargaining and the type of political philosophies a society embraces (Czech, 2016).

## Concept of Good Governance

Good Governance is a proposition put forward by the World Bank, IMF, and the UNDP, suggesting that any governance can only be called ‘good’ if it attains at least certain thresholds. Economic growth, poverty eradication, and sustainable development are hinged on how a country is managed. Thus, for any governance to be called good, it must take into consideration all the facets of the wellbeing of the society it governs (IMF, 2012; UNDP, 1997; World Bank, 1992). Keping (2018) argued that good governance entails a process of public administration in which the interests of the public are the central focus. Often, it involves collaboration between the management of the public affairs by both the State and the citizens, and the creation of a relationship between the civil society and the political state. Similarly, Agwu (2011) observed that good governance strives to meet the noble objectives of the state; it is the way power is exercised to achieve the general agenda of the government for the benefit of the citizens. Good governance is utilizing the instruments of the state to attain public good (Ogundiya, 2010).

Keping (2018) further noted that good governance has six essential elements: legitimacy, transparency, accountability, the rule of law, effectiveness, and responsiveness. Shikha and Aktan (2017) included government ethics, meritocracy, decentralization, equity, and sustainability as important canons of good governance. Guga (2014) added that good governance encompasses the participation of all citizens eligible to vote, and equity. Kovac and Gajduschek (2015) posited that good governance is conducted by debates, discussions, and agreements rather than by a predetermined set of procedures. At the bare minimum, good governance requires a legal framework that is impartially enforced by an independent judiciary, and whose decisions and enforcement are transparent and conducted in a manner that follows the established regulations and rules. Guga (2014) noted that good governance involves competent

management of the affairs and resources of a country in an equitable, transparent, open, accountable manner and is responsive to the needs of the people. Good governance avails opportunities for the democratic participation in the process of decision-making that influences society. Involves access to power by the citizenry and holding those in power accountable. A system of good governance encompasses a set of institutions and rules, a legal framework to ensure development, and a public administration that is responsible, transparent, and accountable (Bullasant, Burgees, Corbett-Nolan, & Godfee, 2011).

### Principles of Good Governance

**Legitimacy.** This is defined as the general perception that the government's exercise of power is desirable, acceptable, and appropriate within the norms, values and beliefs of a given society (Daft, 2016). Legitimacy implies that authority and social order are recognized and voluntarily obeyed by members of a society. Regulations and laws may be legal, yet illegitimate; and only orders and authorities that people recognize are regarded as legitimate (Keping, 2018). When the degree of legitimacy is high, the level of good governance is also high. Thus, to improve the level of legitimacy, there must be consensus and a shared political identity by the members of a society. As a way of promoting good governance, public institutions need to manage the conflict of interests between the state and the citizens to ensure the maximum consent of the citizens is obtained, and that they approve the legitimacy of public institutions (Cheyne, 2015; Keping, 2018).

In the DRC, the legitimacy of institutions, specifically the Executive has generated a lot of debates in an ever-growing body of literature. The general election conducted in the DRC in 2011 went down as probably the most dramatic electoral failure on the African continent. It was attributed to the Congolese people, the political elite and institutions, particularly the National

Parliament in the country (Mangu, 2012). The Executive has continued to hold office even after the officially-constituted time limit passed, a situation that has seen unrest and demonstrations in the country as the government is governing illegitimately. The legitimacy of elections in the country has also been seriously contested, especially by opposition parties (Mangu, 2012). The legitimacy of the Parliament itself is greatly contested since, despite the end of its constitutional mandate, it continues operating as the national legislative body.

Participation is defined as the process in which individuals are involved in the decision making of the political, cultural, economic, and social endeavors affecting them. Participation has gradually changed from being a one-man show to a primary obligation and right of all members of a society (Gonzales & Arrondo, 2017). Participation often takes three dimensions; the scope of participation, method of communication and the level of authority. All three dimensions seek to address the important issues of democratic governance, legitimacy, and justice (Fung, 2006). Participation is an important ingredient of good governance because the country does not belong only to those in leadership, but to all the citizens. Those eligible to vote need to be involved in the politics of their nation and everything concerning their lives. This can be done directly or through representation by those mandated to do so (Woleola, 2017). The World Bank views the principle of participation as paramount to the theory of good governance, ostensibly because citizens must be involved in all matters pertaining to their destiny (Osmani, 2007; Rotberg, 2004; Weiss, 2000).

To be fair, the DRC has made some strides in the formulation of policy and legislation geared towards improving public participation in public affairs, especially in the National Parliament, as a way of strengthening governance. However, serious loopholes exist in legislation with regard to governance, law enforcement, equity, public participation, and

sustainable management of public resources (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015). Further, gender imbalances are glaring when one peers into the politics of the country. With regard to women voting rights or the involvement of female candidates in the elections, their participation in politics is generally weak (Davis, Fabbri, & Alphonse, 2014).

Transparency. Keping (2018) defined transparency as the publicity of political information. All members of the society are entitled to access policy information such as public expenditures, administrative budget, legislative activities, policy enforcement, legal provisions, among other information that affect their lives. The principle of transparency demands accessibility, availability, and comprehensibility of public information (Buijze, 2013).

Transparency requires political information to be communicated appropriately to the people so they can participate and supervise the process of policy making and public administration. The higher the level of transparency in a society, the higher the level of good governance (Keping, 2018; Mitchell, 2011). However, lack of transparency undermines the legitimacy of institutions in a society. Transparency is an important tool for promoting democracy, enhancing trust, accountability, legitimacy, and the making of quality decisions agreed on by all (Suykens, Priest, van Doorn-Hoekveld, Thuillier, & van Rijswick, 2016). Johnston (2018) observes that without transparency in the management of a country, good governance remains a dream.

In 2017, Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index ranked DRC at 161 out of 180 countries (Transparency International, 2018). The country ranks very low in terms of transparent public administration activities. Parliament is not open to the public, and often the citizens are left in the dark on what is happening in this critical institution. Further, Trefon (2013) observes that the civil society in the DRC has not been a significant political force that can act as a force towards improving transparency and mitigating corruption in the country. The

World Bank (2016) reported that a large gap exists between what is paid in tax revenue from forests and mining, and what actually gets recorded, primarily due to a lack of transparency and accountability, coupled with fraudulent practices by government agencies and corporations (Trefon, 2013). Parliament has equally failed in its constitutional mandate of putting checks and balances on the executive branch of government. Samndong and Nhatumbo (2015) concluded that there was an absence of institutional frameworks that implement governance provisions and transparency. This is largely due to a failure in legislation by the National Parliament.

The rule of law. The rule of law is a principle of good governance that consists of equity, fairness and justice to all (Woleola, 2017). Johnston (2018) defined the *rule of law* as the manner in which the state exercises power, and is guided by established standards. Such standards are written down and published. They enjoy the support of the public because they promote social values within the society. This principle implies that the law is the supreme principle in the management of public affairs; hence, it must be respected by all without exception. Everyone must be equal before the law if good governance is to be achieved (Keping, 2018). For this to happen, the judiciary must be independent, unbiased, transparent and accountable. There is no society that succeeds in good governance and sustainable development with a selective system of justice (Waleola, 2017).

The rule of law is strong in a state where there is separation of power among the main organs of government, namely the judiciary, the executive and the legislature. The power to make laws, implement them and adjudicate does not belong to a single individual or a group of individuals (Nwekeaku, 2014). The rule of law determines who qualifies to hold public office as well as ensuring that public officers are held accountable for what they do in those offices (Nwekeaku, 2014).

In the DRC, the law is selective in the sense that those in power are treated differently, and with respect, from the common man. The justice system in the DRC is both incapable of ensuring a day-to-day rule of law among the Congolese people, and tackling serious abuses and crimes in the country such as rape and sexual violence during civil wars (Afoaku, 2010; Davis et al., 2014). The state apparatus is weak, meaning there is no consistency in the application of the rule of law, despite new legislation and constitutions (Jackson, 2007). Political interference and a deeply-rooted culture of corruption have seriously undermined the rule of law in the DRC (Bertelsmann, 2014).

Accountability. Keping (2018) referred to accountability as the process of holding everyone responsible for their behavior. In public sector governance, it implies holding accountable institutions to corresponding obligations that they must fulfill. When they fail to fulfill their functions, or do so in a manner that is inappropriate, such conduct is deemed as desertion of duty and a lack of accountability. Higher accountability in the public sector translates into a higher level of good governance in a society (Keping, 2018). Accountability is significantly related to good governance, implying that responsible public institutions conduct themselves in a manner that is fundamentally free from corruption and abuse, and is based on the rule of law (Bhuiyan & Amagoh, 2012).

Subramaniam, Stewart and Shulman (2013) contend that accountability in the management of public affairs is imperative because people have the right to be provided with facts and figures that enable them to debate and decide the future of their elected representatives. Accountability is thus seen as essential attribute in democratic societies since it's a key indicator of how governments conduct the management of public affairs (Almquist, Grossi, van Helden, & Reichard, 2013).

Chambers and Booth (2013) posited that the DRC has never had a system of public governance that was based on the accountability of available resources and taxpayers' money. Public affairs, particularly parliamentary activities, are conducted in a shrewd and secretive manner. The public hardly knows what is going on. Political elites have hijacked public institutions, such as the National Parliament and, by extension, decide what the level of accountability of such institutions and their members are.

### Democracy

Existing literature continues to define democracy in varying ways, with scholars trying to craft definitions that best serve their work. As a result, democracy means different things to different people based on the context in which it is defined and the purpose for which it is applied. Afollabi (2015) noted that even though there are different meanings and features of democracy, what must constitute the form and practice of democracy and aligning with the ideas of those who practice it also poses a big challenge. Thus, the ideological emphasis and position of democratic principles is a key determinant of the type of democratic governance in any society (Coppedge, Kelly, Megan, Svend-Erik, Jeffrey, . . . Brigitte, 2015). This work, therefore, uses definitions of democracy in the context and purpose of the study.

In defining democracy, Afolabi (2018) has argued that democracy is a form of political structure or a system of rule where citizens possess a right to engage in self-regulation or self-rule within a political society. In democracy, all members of a society have the freedom to make choices and decisions without any pressure, coercion, manipulation, and with complete knowledge of all the facts (Veld, 2017).



Democracy is thus seen as a system of rule where sufficient room for popular participation of people in governance is the norm rather than the exception. Democracy allows members of a society to have their say, particularly through free and fair elections (Munck, 2015; Steiner, 2012). Therefore, democracy is viewed as an avenue or arrangement that enables those ruled to give their consent to the rulers. When such consent ceases to exist, democracy vanishes from a society and other systems such as autocracy, dictatorship and authoritarianism take over (Afolabi, 2015). Datta and Rabbany (2016) opined that the mere existence of parliament does not imply the presence of democracy, but democracy cannot exist without a parliament. It is thus safe to claim that without parliament, it's not possible to practice democracy.

Across the African continent, democracy is closely tied with politics, which is often regarded as the only game in town. In majority of African cases, for instance, the link between politics and democracy has been hugely tilted against sustainable development. This is because politics have often alienated a large segment of citizens in a way that the level of their participation in good governance and sustainable development has been limited (Afolabi, 2018). A plethora of political and election incidences such as killings, violence and the disenfranchisement of many groups in societies have negatively affected programs around good governance and sustainable development. This explains why politics have done more harm than good to democracy, particularly in African countries such as the DRC where sustainable development and good governance are hard to achieve. The situation is exacerbated by an environment in which violence is rampant, resulting in disputes over politics, power, and electoral outcomes (Aucoin, 2017).

## Democratic Consolidation

In describing democratic consolidation, Botchway (2018) has suggested that this is the persistence and stability of democracy and democratic principles. Ebirim (2014) defined democratic consolidation as a status in which maturity in democracy exists in a way that it can no longer be truncated or threatened by external or internal forces. Ebirim (2014) further observed that democratic consolidation encompasses the process through which a new democracy matures in a manner that it is unlikely to return to authoritarianism. Democratic consolidation is also perceived as the process of attaining deep and broad legitimacy where all major actors in the political scene accept that popular rule is in the best interest of the society instead of unrealistic alternative that they may not fathom (Kwassau, 2013).

Political institutions of democracy, particularly parliaments, should be capable, autonomous, and coherent enough to provide an atmosphere where all the key political actors are committed to, and bound by, their rules and norms for the consolidation of democracy (Botchway, 2018). National parliaments as constitutional institutions play significant roles in the consolidation of democracy. Parliament as an institution needs to make democracy strong and virile through its operations and functions such as legislation, representation and oversight (Ahmed, 2011; Yusuf, Yusoff, & Zengeni, 2018).

Institutions, specifically parliament, in the DRC have contributed to a plethora of issues and disputes around the control of state and management of natural resources, often leading to conflict, poor governance and unsustainable development. The establishment of liberal democracy has done little to improve governance in the country, which continues to remain as a fundamental obstacle to the consolidation of democracy in the DRC (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA], 2015). The establishment of liberal democracy in the DRC

has failed to address her wars and conflicts largely due to fragile institutions such as the national parliament, which has been a major obstacle in the consolidation of democracy in the country (UNECA, 2015).

### The Flaw in Democracy

Democracy is the right of the people to self-determine their destiny directly or indirectly through electing their representatives. When they elect representatives in an open, democratic manner, those representatives take over the governance of the society and often govern in the way they deem fit (Achen & Bartels, 2016; Diamond, 2016). Democratically elected representatives sometimes sneak in bad governance since citizens cannot directly monitor their activities on a daily basis. Further, such leaders abuse or undermine independent public institutions, violate the rights of minority groups, and shun the rule of law (Mounk, 2018). As a result, democracy is often regarded as being far from perfect, and its flaws should be corrected (Marder, 2016).

The role of checking the activities of the representatives of the citizens, promoting the rule of law, democracy, and good governance, must be assigned to strong and empowered institutions (Botchway, 2018; Charron, 2014; Gerring, Strom, & Rodrigo, 2017; Piccone, 2017). These institutions correct this flaw in democracy by properly regulating and monitoring the behavior of persons, especially those elected or appointed to govern on behalf of others (Sanchez, 2015; Jacksic & Jacksic, 2018). However, when such public institutions are ineffective, corrupt, incapacitated or where they do not exist, then a well-intentioned democratic process can midwife leaders and institutions that are autocratic, inefficient, unaccountable, and irresponsible. Democracy, therefore, must be imbued with strong institutions that steer the society towards good governance and sustainable development.

## Governance in the DRC

### Natural Resources Governance

Governance of natural resources has a major impact on the effectiveness that extraction of such resources has on the economic well-being of a society (Gamu, Philippe, & Samuel, 2015). Thus, the concern of how the ownership arrangements of the natural resources affect different socio-economic and political outcomes is rapidly gaining scholarly attention. For instance, Luong and Welnthal (2010) initiated a study on why good governance of natural resources is essential in promoting development within a society. Aragon et al. (2015) noted that a lack of political will and effective laws that guide distribution of revenue from exploitation of natural resources negatively affects the sustainable development of a country. Wilson (2015) further argued that institutions play an indispensable role in understanding how the national resources of an economy need to be managed. Daniele (2011), in an assessment study of Botswana, Equatorial Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo, concluded that the impact of natural resources on economic and human development is strictly related to the type of political institutions, and the strength of public institutions, responsible for the governance of natural resources.

In reviewing how resources are governed in the DRC, it is important to first bring to light what exactly is being governed or needs to be governed to fully appreciate the context of the analysis. The DRC is massively endowed with natural resources such as oil, forestry, fertile arable land, minerals such as copper, cobalt, diamond, tin, gold, Lithium, Tantalum, oil, zinc, among other rare minerals on earth (United States Geological Survey [USGS], 2018). The country has the highest concentration of mineral deposits on the planet, and since this concentration is so wide and extensive, the DRC has for long been referred to as a geological

scandal (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2004; Usanov et al., 2013). However, the presence of these minerals has seemingly brought more harm than good to the country, often leaving the DRC as a perfect case study of minerals as a resource curse. Conflicts, wars, poor infrastructure, and blatant theft and corruption in the mineral sector are some of the consequences that literature ascribe to the mineral deposits in the DRC (Matti, 2010a; McCloskey, 2010; Nibishaka, 2011). These minerals could have played the essential role in driving economic development and improving the standards of living of the Congolese people. Instead, conflict, wars and lowest human development indices define the DRC (Chambers, 2013; Lamer et al., 2013; Smith, 2009).

Growing evidence in literature has portrayed the wars and conflict in the DRC as being fueled by her natural resources in what is infamously referred to as blood minerals (Carpenter, 2012; Cuvelier, 2013; Diemel & Hilhorst, 2018; Geenen & Claessens, 2013; Larmer, Laudati, & Clark, 2013; Muller-Kone, 2015). However, the natural resources by themselves are not the direct causes of conflict and war. The real culprit is poor governance and unequal distribution of benefits from natural resources (Constantinescu, 2015). Thus, instead of a diverse endowment of natural resources being the issue, a failure to create strong institutions and to properly regulate the natural resource sector in an effective manner is the nagging issue. This failure to establish empowered institutions, particularly the National Parliament, and in ensuring good governance in the natural resources sector, has significantly contributed to the unsustainable development and growth of the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNECA, 2015).

Not surprisingly, the DRC is an epicenter for a global scramble of natural resources, mainly due to increased global demand for energy and raw materials for industries (Arnold, 2009; Padraig, 2011; Strong, 2016). Tengu (2007) concluded that the DRC has everything a country would need on this earth to develop itself. However, those in charge of governing the

DRC have pursued development strategies and policies that have failed to improve the well-being of the ordinary Congolese masses and instead promoted the accumulation of personal wealth from the natural resources of the country (African Development Bank [AfDB] & African Development Fund [ADF], 2013). Additionally, the rulers of the country have used crafty policies to sell off the nation's natural resources to commercial interests from foreign countries, a situation that has resulted in the unsustainable development and poor natural resource governance in the DRC (AfDB & ADF, 2013).

Mineral resource governance. The mineral sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a significant player in the global production of minerals such as titanium, germanium, tourmaline, gold, silver, tantalum, niobium, tungsten, diamond, copper, crude oil, coal, cobalt, tin and cassiterite (Anderson, 2016; Brininstool, 2016; Papp, 2016; Shedd, 2016). Latest estimates (USGS, 2018) indicate that the DRC has about half of the world's global cobalt reserves and produces more than 55% of global cobalt production, 30% of global tantalum production, and 31% of global industrial diamonds (USGS, 2018). The mineral deposits in DRC are so vast that world renowned geologist, Jules Cornet, once referred to the DRC as 'a geological scandal' in reference to the numerous and diverse mineral resources in the country (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2004). The FAO (2017) further reported that there are over 1100 minerals and precious metals identified in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which makes the country a global king in terms of mineral deposits.

In spite of this rich endowment of mineral deposits, mismanagement, corruption, fragile and incapacitated institutions, coupled with governance deficiencies, have resulted in the dismal performance of the lucrative mining sector (Trefon, 2013). Existing mining codes and legal frameworks for regulation of the mining sector have failed to address the numerous challenges

facing the mining sector, specifically a lack of transparency in the issuance of mining contracts and evasion of taxes by multinational companies exploiting DRC's minerals (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015). Large discrepancies exist between what is received as mining revenue and what is recorded due to fraudulent practices and a lack of openness in the administration of mining revenue by the central government and mining corporations (World Bank, 2008).

Mining codes in developing countries are often designed with a bias towards promoting inward foreign investments rather than objectives for sustainable development (Besada & Martin, 2013). The scenario in DRC is clearly depicted by this observation, which despite having new mining laws and regulations, the government has failed to effectively implement these laws, and crafty loopholes still exist in the laws such as public participation, law enforcement, sustainable management and equitable sharing of mining benefits (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015). The failure in the law represents a failure on the legislative process by the National Parliament, which enacted the ineffective mining code Law No. 007/2002 that is yet to address a plethora of challenges facing the mining sector in the DRC (Matti, 2010a; Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015).

Additionally, local populations who live in areas where some of these minerals are found such as Katanga (which is rich in copper and cobalt deposits) are yet to benefit from the resources in their backyard (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015). Armed groups control several mining sites, especially in the eastern part of Congo. These groups often engage in illegal taxation of miners and have for a long time employed forced labour in some mining sites. Corruption also continues to pose a major challenge to effective governance of the mining sector (Chene, 2014). Parliament has failed to craft watertight legislation to effectively regulate the mining sector. The National Assembly is also not effective in executing its constitutional

obligation of providing oversight of the Executive. As a result, misappropriation of revenues from the mining sector by the Executive continues unabated (Davis, 2009; ICG, 2015; Shepard, 2014; Trefon, 2013).

Forest governance. The DRC has one of the largest rainforests in the world (Lawson, 2014). The second largest tropical rainforest that is essential to carbon regulation is located in the Congo basin. The DRC alone is home to more than half of the tropical rainforest. It is estimated to have more than 1000 species of birds, 421 types of mammals (de Wasseige, de Marcken, Bayol, Hiol, Mayaux, Desclée, . . . Eba'a, 2012), a number of freshwater fish and more than 300 species of reptiles (Billand, 2012). Additionally, it is estimated that more than 10,000 species of plants are found in the forest together with ants, insects and butterflies (de Wasseige et al., 2012). The forestry sector in the DRC provides timber, forest foods, medicine and significantly regulates the carbon levels (Trefon, 2017). Timber resources in the DRC are estimated to equal the combined African timber industry with global increases in demands from China and India driving growth in the sector (Jonsson, Giurca, Masiero, Pepke, Pettenella, Prestemon, & Winkel, 2015).

Trefon (2010) aptly revealed that the forestry sector, just like the mining sector, holds high business stakes and has thus attracted corrupt officials and unscrupulous parties who do not play by the rules. Instead, they indiscriminately change the rules, heavily marinating the lucrative forestry industry in corruption, a lack of transparency, illegal logging, cartels and a lack of accountability in forest revenues. The governance of the environmental sector in the DRC is not only a technical issue but a serious social and political challenge (Trefon, 2010). It's not a surprise, then, that there have been deleterious environmental outcomes in the Democratic Republic of Congo.



The legislative framework from the National Parliament incorporates best practices in forest governance. These include respect for local communities and public tendering when seeking harvesting licenses (Independent Observer of Forest Law Enforcement and Governance [OI-FLEG], 2012). However, the legal framework is incomplete, and the forest code of 2002 has only seen the implementation of eight regulations out of a total of 45, meaning that 37 forest regulations are yet to be implemented. Additionally, the DRC lacks a forestry policy, which has been a major factor contributing to the disorganization of forest management systems in the DRC (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015).

The dismal mismanagement of the forest sector in the DRC is, therefore, an expected result. Mbala and Karsenty (2010) pointed out that the institutions in charge of conserving and managing forests in the DRC have been seriously under resourced with regard to numbers, equipment, office space and remuneration. Majority of the staff are not educated beyond secondary school level and are poorly paid. This implies that they are not competent enough to effectively govern the forest resources in the country (Du Preez & Sturman, 2009). Besides, there is weak enforcement of the laws of management of forests, which poses a major challenge to the management and protection of forests in the DRC (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015). Further, the payment of forestry revenues by loggers has not benefitted the local communities due to a lack of transparency and accountability from the central government (Trefon, 2010; Wan, 2009). Industrial logging and the conservation of forests in the DRC has also remained below its potential compared with the scale of forest resources that the country is endowed with (Lawson, 2014).

The DRC's forest regulation and legislation has significant inconsistencies and gaps. These include a lack of regulation that defines how forest zones are organized, lack of regulation

on tax rates for deforestation, a lack of regulation on how communities are supposed to participate in management of forests, a lack of regulation on procedures for timber exports, no regulation for licensing of artisanal miners, and an absence of regulation on planning of national forests (OI-FLEG, 2012). This serious flaw in the legal framework around forest governance continues to hamper the sector, largely resulting in illegal logging activities (Lawson, 2014). Institutions governing the forestry sector in the DRC are either absent, fragile and weak. The National Parliament as the major public institution charged with legislation clearly has its work cut out with regard to forest governance laws in the DRC.

Land governance. Land governance includes the institutional, legal, administrative and use of best approaches around governance that emphasizes the need to have strategies that are inclusive, and which consider all multi-stakeholders in the land sector (Simbizi, Bennett, & Zevenbergen, 2014). Good land governance is defined as strengthening and clarifying the relations between people and land in a manner inclined towards sustainable development and economic growth of a society (Van Leeuwen & Van Der, 2014). Enemark, McLaren, and Van Der Molen (2010) noted that effective land governance is decentralized and involves all major parties and stakeholders across different levels, ranging from the local level to the national level.

According to the FAO (2017), the DRC has about 80 million hectares of arable land, which is capable of providing food to more than 1 billion people. It has the potential to eradicate poverty and hunger in the country and make the DRC a serious driver of economic growth in Africa. However, according to latest reports by the FAO (2017), about one-third of people in the country are food insecure, with millions facing emergency levels of food insecurity. Reports also indicate that just about 10% of the arable land is under cultivation (Food Agriculture and

Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network, 2010). Thus, the DRC can also be regarded as an ‘agricultural scandal’.

The land law in the DRC has been a major contributor to effective land development. Land registration is not only a long process, but an equally expensive one, a situation that has seen a majority of the population unable to secure land rights (Mpoyi, 2013). Several institutions and authorities are currently in charge of governing land tenure in the DRC, which has resulted in legal pluralism in the land sector. This has seen the state unable to enforce taxation of land and therefore creating an underfunded land administration system (Bayengeha, 2014). Additionally, there is evidence of use of force and an inequitable expropriation and displacement of people and communities from their land (often under the guise of customary law) (Huggins, 2015). The political class and the elite have also dug into the land issue with many of them owning large chunks of land, often through dubious mechanisms, for speculation purposes or as a source of income (Huggins, 2015). The land governance in the DRC is thus in a disarray and needs urgent legal and policy reforms, most of which must originate from the National Parliament and the public administration sector through the Executive.

Lecoutere, Vlassenroot, and Raeymaekers (2009) argued that the DRC needs accountable, transparent and strong public institutions to ensure equitable access to land resources in the country. Samndong and Nhantumbo (2015) further suggested that the DRC requires institutions that properly function to effectively govern the natural resources of the country. Such institutions should be built with a deep understanding of the existing land management and natural resource systems, as well as from the effects of conflict and migration, and the popularity of a democratic decision-making process. The National Parliament must play its role of legislating appropriate land laws and the Executive should strictly follow such laws in

managing the land sector in the DRC. The Judiciary should be effective in enforcing the law and holding corrupt officials, and those breaking the law, to account for their deeds (Trefon, 2010). However, it is fair to mention that the DRC has made efforts towards developing a national policy for land use, which includes training of public servants on land use, offering required technical assistance and assisting in the creation of land-use plans (Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015).

**Water Basin Governance.** Water resources in the DRC are sufficient to cater for all Congolese people. The Congo River, for instance, runs over 12,700 km and is highly navigable. The potential of the country to generate hydro-power is about 100,000 MW, yet only 2.5% has been harnessed (Alsdorf, Beighley, Laraque, Lee, Tshimanga, Loughlin, . . . Spencer, 2016; Dargie, Lewis, Lawson, Mitchard, Page, & Bocko, 2017). An exploitation of these water basin resources in a rational manner holds immense potential for sustainable development, if principles of good governance are applied by the state together with public institutions (AfDB, 2013). However, in spite of the vast endowments in water resources, most parts of the DRC still lack electricity (Oyewo, Farfan, Peltoniemi, & Breyer, 2018). Access to safe drinking water is at 26%, which compares poorly with the 60% average for the rest of the continent (African Ministers Council on Water [AMCOW], 2011; UNEP, 2011b).

The water sector is riddled with poor quality services, weak governance and a weak institutional framework. The Congolese state has failed to protect the human right of access to water by its citizens (Montejano, 2013). AMCOW (2011) observed that the DRC has fragmented and ineffective institutions in charge of the water sector. Existing institutions in the water sector are severely resources constrained and totally dysfunctional. Additionally, the country lacks a national policy to guide the management of the sector.

## Sustainable Development

In 2015, leaders from 193 countries around the world converged to address the challenges of the future such as droughts, famines, plagues, wars and poverty, which were evident in their own urban and rural areas (UNDP, 2015). The result of the 2015 convergence saw the formulation of an ambitious plan, now referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and which encompassed 17 goals that envisioned a future free of hunger, poverty, and safe from the consequences of global climate change (UNDP, 2015). The three major components of sustainable development are economic growth, inclusivity in the society, and sustainability of the environment (Anderson, Ryan, Sonntag, Kavvada, & Friedl, 2017). Goal number 16 of the SDGs envisions peace, justice, and strong institutions. It seeks to build societies that are peaceful and inclusive, and which provide a conducive environment for sustainable development, including access to justice for all and building accountable, solid, effective, and inclusive institutions at all levels in the society (UNDP, 2015).

For people to eat, work, and raise families in any country, peace is inevitable. Similarly, no peace is realized when justice is selective, and the rights of the citizens are taken away from them by an authoritarian, self-imposing government. Peace is the source of justice as justice is the source of peace. When people have been treated fairly, they feel loved and respected by their government, which then results in peace and harmony.

### What is Sustainable Development?

Sustainable Development received its original definition from the Brundtland Commission of the World Commission on Environment and Sustainable Development (WCED) in 1987, which defined it as a system of development that meets the needs of the present-day

generations without affecting or compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy or meet their own needs (Onyekachi, 2013; Rosen, 2017; Stodart, 2011; WCED, 1987). Rosen (2017) further observed that new definitions of sustainable development keep emerging as literature on sustainable development continue to evolve.

Arrow, Partha, Lawrence, Goulder, and Kirsten (2012) defined sustainable development as the capacity to assure the wellbeing of future generations (indicated through measuring inclusive wealth comprehensively), and which includes human capital, natural capital, and institutions. Jukneviene and Karaeivaite (2012) describe sustainable development as a long-term relationship system that combines the social, economic and environmental sub-systems. The United Nations Secretary General's High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012) refers to sustainable development as a series of practices and policies that involve action and focus on improving the quality of human life, providing a solid strategy of eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities in society, creating inclusive growth, and making production and consumption more sustainable. Gomis, Parra, Hoffmann, and McNulty (2011) defined sustainable development as the habitual way of acting. As a result, human beings must stop destructive effects on the social, economic, and environmental aspects and create relationships that are harmonious and which promote a good way of living.

### Concept of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development has received scholarly attention in literature with different scholars coining descriptions that best describe their contexts. Barter and Russell (2012) notes that sustainable development does not imply saving nature; rather, it refers to the internalization of strategies that result in the addition of new resources to spur inclusive economic growth and prosperity. Onyekachi (2013) argues that sustainable development

encompasses four models, which include economic sustainability, ecological sustainability, political sustainability and a cultural sustainability. Guney (2017) opines that sustainable development calls for the participation by the public in the process of making decisions about developmental issues, such as alleviating poverty, environmental protection and respecting the welfare of future generations. This means that sustainable development needs the use of proper planning and organization to achieve the SDGs.

According to Soderbaum and Tortajada (2011), the concept of sustainable development was created as a principle to guide local, regional, national, and global communities. The concept emphasizes the moral obligations a society has to the future as well to the current generations, and thus calls for the need to consider both generations in the development agenda. Further, sustainable development identifies the need to strengthen democracy as a tool in fostering a sense of community and interdependence among the members of a society. Solid institutions are at the core of democracy, which comes out of good governance, and which, in turn, fuels sustainable development in the society (Soderbaum & Tortajada, 2011).

### Good Governance and Sustainable Development

Good governance is the catalyst for sustainable development (Onyekachi, 2013). It has a significant influence on sustainable development (Guney, 2017). The link between good governance and sustainable development is indisputable. In a majority of developed countries, there is trust between the citizens and government. Additionally, governance is conducted in a democratic way where empowered public institutions provide checks and balances over the excesses of government (Vries, 2013). Zarrouk (2014) pointed out that the recognition of good governance and solid institutions as an essential catalyst for sustainable development has seen a prioritization of good governance by the international community as a major pillar in the

development agenda. Good governance in developed as well as developing countries is essential for a sustainable development vision, so are its three dimensions of social, economic and environment aspects (Guney, 2017).

The mantra of good governance as promoted by the international community is more likely to benefit developing countries such as the DRC, particularly with regard to improved living standards for the people, economic growth and delivery of services to members of the Congolese society (Reddy, 2016). In the quest to achieve good governance, parliament is a crucial public institution. Its role is to protect and promote good governance and democracy, thereby providing checks and balances and developing the standards and norms for institutions of democracy and good governance (Datta & Rabbany, 2016).

#### Parliament and Sustainable Development

There is a growing consensus in literature on the need for parliamentarians to be closely engaged in promoting inclusive growth and sustainable development that puts into consideration the environmental, social and economic triad. For instance, by their constitutional mandates of creating laws and overseeing programs and policies of the government such as the approval of budgets, parliament as a public institution needs to ensure a system of governance that is inclusive, accountable, transparent and participatory, which is fundamental in realizing sustainable development for everyone (GOPAC, 2018). Datta and Rabbany (2016) notes that parliament as the institution charged with ensuring democracy plays a significant role in successfully achieving sustainable development by ensuring democratic governance. This makes parliament the center of the agenda of development around which sustainable development can be built.



Parliament can initiate a political dialogue that is inclusive and based on participation by all, to aid in the development of a national development vision. Equally, through the yearly reviews of proposed expenditures by the government, parliament can ensure that the national budgets represent sustainable development priorities (Datta & Rabbany, 2016). Parliament also plays the crucial role of building accountable, inclusive and effective institutions to create good governance for sustainable development as spelled out in Goal 16 of the SDGs (UNDP, 2015). Through the law-making and budgeting process, parliament can promote inclusivity and hold governments to account for their programs and policies on ensuring that no one is left behind (UN, 2016). Parliamentarians, being the elected representatives of members of a society, have a crucial task in driving forward the developmental agendas that are reflective of the needs of the people. Further, parliament is in a unique position to make laws that ensure equal access to resources in a society such as education, economic resources, health, new technologies and empowered institutions, all of which are indicators and targets of sustainable development (Organization for Economic Growth and Development [OECD], 2012; World Bank, 2013a).

## Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.0 portrays the desirable principles of good governance and constructive development as desirable goals of the National Parliament of the DRC. These principles of effectiveness are examined through an investigative inquiry and analysis of the National Parliament.

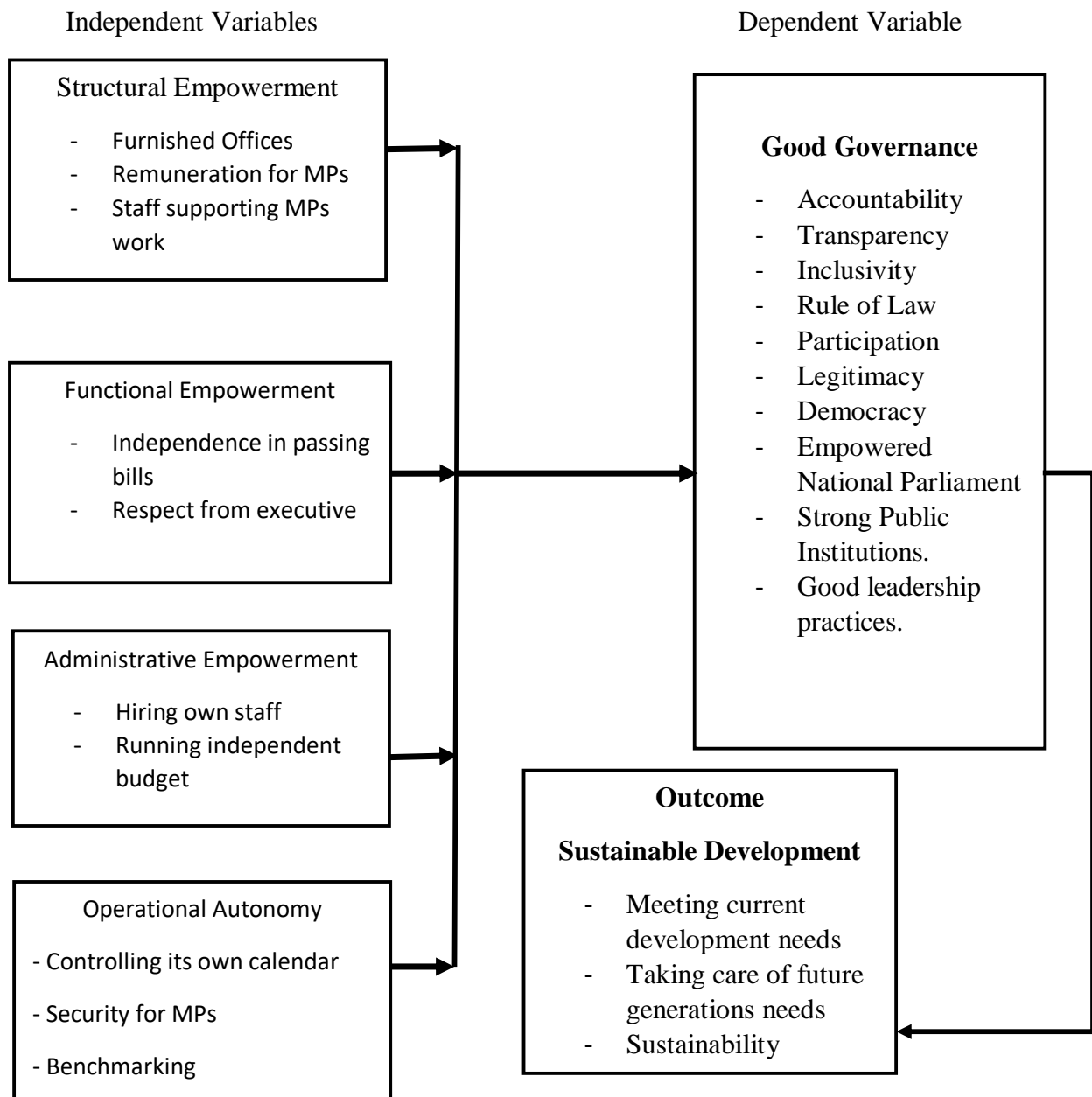


Figure 2.0. Conceptual framework. Source: Author, 2020.

### Research Gap

S/ No.	Year	Author	Topic/Title	Sample Sector or Size	Techniques Used
1.	2009	Moffet, L.	Ending the cycle of violence in the Congo: Is peace possible in the heart of darkness?	National government	Secondary data

#### Gap of the Study

Moffet (2009) looks at conflict in the DRC and identifies the causes and initiative taken by the national government to resolve the conflict. The study concludes that the underlying causes of conflict and violence have not been appropriately addressed. Moffet (2009) notes that the failure of the international community and the involvement of neighboring countries in the DRC have resulted in too many benefitting from the conflict and a negligible number willing to end it. An important question, therefore, is: where is the voice of the Congolese masses and their institutions when their country is being pillaged by foreigners?

2.	2010	Matti, S. A.	The Democratic Republic of the Congo? Corruption, patronage, and competitive authoritarianism in the DRC.	Judiciary, media, electoral arena and legislature	Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

Matti (2010b) identifies bad leadership as the problem in the DRC, arguing that authoritarian rule by the Executive does not meet the minimal requirements of democracy. The study concluded that democracy and governance in the DRC are based on external rather than

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internal pressure, which has resulted in networks of patronage and corruption. The study generally examined various democratic institutions such as the judiciary, media, electoral arena and the legislature. It evaluates their role in the politics of the country, arguing that bad leadership is the problem in the DRC. Notably, the study does not specifically examine the legislature's state and role in promoting good governance practices, a major concern of this study. Additionally, this study does not discuss how such democratic institutions can be strengthened to perform their roles.

3.	2010	Matti, S. A.	Resources and rent seeking in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.	Political economy	Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

This study was done within the purview of the Congolese political economy and the 'resource curse' theory. It examines chronic underdevelopment in the DRC. According to the study, corruption, autocracy, foreign aid and rent-seeking by the political elite is what bedevils the country. Matti (2010a) focusses on the misuse and bad governance of the vast resources of the country and identifies this as the genesis of underdevelopment in the DRC. However, the study avoids discussing institutions of the country and whether they have served any role in solving the resource curse. The study only focusses on bad governance practices of the Executive with no solid examination of other state institutions and what such institutions, for example parliament, can do to bring order to the DRC. This is the focus of the current study.

4.	2010	McCloskey, M.	Politics of war and peace conflict report		Report
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### Gap of the Study

McCloskey (2010) focuses on widespread conflict between the government and ethnic groups in the DRC over resources and land. According to the study, wars and genocide in countries neighboring DRC led to the migration of Central Africans into the DRC, causing a humanitarian crisis. The author argues that autocracy in the country was transferred from one ruler to the next, which has resulted in poor governance in the country. Institutions and the role they play to end autocracy are not discussed.

5.	2010	Sebudubudu, D.	The impact of good governance on development and poverty in Africa: Botswana – A relatively successful African initiative.		Secondary data
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### Gap of the Study

Sebudubudu (2012) examines how good governance practices have created sustainable development in Botswana besides reducing levels of poverty in the country. The study provides a good example on the benefits of encouraging good governance in a Sub-Saharan African country. The paper notes that the watchdog institutions that have created such a conducive environment include the Auditor General's Office, Ombudsman, Public Accounts Committee, the Accountant General, and the Anti-Corruption Body. The study discussed the structure of these institutions, particularly those that empower parliament. Parliamentary strengthening and

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empowerment are not exhaustively discussed. Sebudubudu also focusses on a different geographical scope with different public institutions and government structure.

6.	2012	Tshiyoyo, M. M.	Current leadership challenges in Africa: The case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.		Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

Tshiyoyo (2012) focuses on leadership challenges and governance issues facing the DRC and discusses how such leadership challenges impact on the governance of the country and consequently hamper development. The study noted that there is a decay of public institutions in the country, but it offers no remedy to address such institutional decay.

7.	2012	Mangu, M. A.	Democracy and states' compliance with regional and sub-regional election benchmarks in Africa: The 28 November 2011 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo in retrospect.		Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

The study was conducted in the purview of elections in the DRC, noting that they have neither been transparent nor credible and have therefore failed to promote good governance and

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democratic consolidation. Mangu (2012) focuses on the 2011 election in the DRC and discusses the concepts of democracy and elections in the DRC, which are described as dramatic. The author cites the lack of democracy as the main problem in the DRC. However, the flaw in democracy is reviewed in this study, and an observation made that democracy has a strong relationship with empowered public institutions such as the National Parliament.

8.	2012	Adetiba, T. C. & Rahim, A.	Good governance and sustainable socio-political development.		Secondary data  Discourse analysis
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#### Gap of the Study

Adetiba and Rahim (2012) focus on good governance for sustainable socio-political development, noting that good governance is extremely pivotal to successful sustainable development. The authors note that tenets of good governance must be properly institutionalized for sustainable development to be realized. The study discussed the inefficiently-run state institutions, particularly the National Parliament in Nigeria, which has often resulted in enormous abuse of power and authority. While noting the important role of the National Parliament and a lack of respect for the institution by the Executive, the study does not examine how the institutions can be strengthened to ensure Parliament fulfills its duty of providing checks and balances. The study was carried out in Nigeria, which has a different constitutional setup, and the demographic, social, and political variables are different from those in the DRC.

9.	2012	Juknevičienė, V. & Karaišvaitė, R.	Good governance as the instrument for the		Secondary data
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			implementation of sustainable development's conception.		
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#### Gap of the Study

The study examined the important role that good governance plays in sustainable development. Jukneviene and Karaeivaite (2012) note that government and public administration entities must actively employ good governance practices. However, they mostly fail to do so, and such a role of checking and monitoring their governance practices must be assigned to an empowered national legislature. The study uses secondary data to analyze governance practices in Lithuania, which is a completely different contextual environment from that of the current study.

10.	2013	Onyekachi, D. O.	Good governance: a catalyst to sustainable development.		Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

Onyekach (2013) concludes that governance is determined by the quality of leadership, noting that bad governance impedes sustainable development. The study, however, fails to illustrate how such good governance can be realized. The geographical scope of the study is equally very broad, covering the African continent, unlike the current study which focusses only on the DRC. The study also analyzed existing literature, while the current study will collect primary data for analysis.



11.	2013	Trefon, T.	Uncertainty and powerlessness in Congo 2012.		
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#### Gap of the Study

Trefon's (2013) analysis was done with the purview of elections mismanagement, and questions about whether management really matters in elections of the DRC. However, elections are a single variable and often assigned to the electoral commission and courts to resolve arising disputes. Other public institutions must equally work to ensure elections are not manipulated by political elites. The scope of the study narrowly focuses on elections and the effect they have had on the leadership of the DRC. Additionally, although the study highlights some of the problems facing the National Parliament, it does not offer solutions on how to resolve the issues that the National Parliament is facing.

12.	2013	Evans, W. & Ferguson, C.	Governance, institutions, growth and poverty reduction: A literature review.		Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

Evans and Ferguson (2013) examine the link between institutions, governance, economic growth and poverty reduction. They conclude that corruption, poor leadership, and conflict are indicators of poor governance, which impede sustainable development. However, the study does

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not specifically discuss what institutions need to do and how they should operate to create an environment where good governance flourishes since good governance and strong institutions are inseparable.

13.	2014	Maskin, E. & Tirole, J.	The pork-barrel style of political governance in the DRC.		Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

Maskin and Tirole (2014) focus on the autocratic style of leadership in the DRC. However, they fail to mention what role the National Parliament could have played in addressing the autocratic leadership. Poor political governance does not occur on its own, and bad governance is an indicator of a weak institutional framework, notably the National Parliament.

14.	2014	Guga, A.	Good governance, a key driver to sustainable development in Nigeria.		
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#### Gap of the Study

Guga (2014) identifies good governance as a key driver of sustainable development. The study focused on governance concepts and their underlying principles, concluding that good governance can be realized when true democracy exists and when civil society groups are proactive in advocating for the rights of the citizenry. The author reviewed the problems

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associated with democracy, such as its manipulation by the political elites, and notes that sometimes civil society fails in effectively carrying out its role.

15.	2016	Kehinde, O. J., Imhonopi, D. & Evbuoma, I. K.	Good governance and leadership: Pathway to sustainable national development in Nigeria.		Qualitative research  Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

Drawing on secondary data, the study concluded that poor leadership and governance impede sustainable development. This current study, however, collected primary data and focused on how leadership and governance operate in an institutional framework.

16.	2016	Davis, T.	Good governance as a foundation for sustainable human development in sub- Saharan Africa.		
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#### Gap of the Study

Davis' (2016) study was done within the purview of good governance and human development across sub-Saharan Africa. Findings suggest that good governance could be promoted through improving government effectiveness, having political stability and good policy formulation for sustainable development. While the recommendations are valid, politics and governance are closely intertwined with public institutions, and must be equally strong and empowered to have sustainable development in a society.

17.	2017	Guney, T.	Governance and sustainable development: How effective is governance?		
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#### Gap of the Study

Guney (2017) argues that governance is required for sustainable development and encourages countries to improve their levels of governance. The study did not illustrate how such improvements in governance could be done.

18.	2016	Nhema, G. A.	Public administration and the development of Africa: A critical assessment.		
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#### Gap of the Study

The scope of Nhema's (2016) study was the entire African continent. It focused on the linkages between public administration and development. Often, institutions determine the manner in which public affairs are managed, particularly an empowered national parliament that provides the necessary checks and balances.

19.	2017 \\	Shikaha, V. & Aktan, C. C.	Progression from ideal state to good governance: An introductory overview.		Secondary data
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#### Gap of the Study

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The study examined the principles of good governance and what constitutes the fundamentals of an ideal state. Its main focus was reviewing good governance practices and the challenges of good governance. The study did not, however, examine how such good governance could be achieved. It focused primarily on features of good governance and not on the institutional framework that supports good governance.

20.	2017	Mbombo, M. J.	National dialogue as solution to African problems: The D. R. Congo in focus.		Secondary data  Elite clientelism
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#### Gap of the Study

Mbombo (2017) focused on actions taken by the government in the DRC and noted that the Executive had initiated political dialogue with the aim of dividing the opposition and rewarding a few political cronies as a strategy of holding on to power. Additionally, the study noted that the president had manipulated and undermined some state institutions, such as the electoral commission, parliament, and constitutional courts, which saw him remain in office long after his term came to an end. If state institutions can be manipulated, it means they neither have independence nor empowerment. This is the focus of the current study.

21.	2017	Standard, G. M.	Revisiting Bula Matari and the Congo Crisis: Successes and anxieties in Belgium's late colonial state.		
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### Gap of the Study

Standard (2017) argues that the former colonizer of the DRC is largely to blame for the crisis in the DR Congo. According to Standard's analysis, a bad colonial experience and a poor transition into independence precipitated the problem in the DRC. While it raises a serious point, other countries on the African countries faced similar scenarios and handled the transition differently. Now, more than six decades later, the country should have built strong public institutions and upheld a culture of good governance practices.

22.	2017	Tshimba, N. D.	The pitfalls of liberal democracy: Lessons from electioneering in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.		Secondary data
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### Gap of the Study

Tshimba (2017) established that elections in the DRC have been used to legitimize power, which renews violence and worsens the already-bad situation. The elections have been accused of being neither transparent nor credible since the political elite hijacked the process to govern the country illegally. The article promotes democracy; but democracy cannot exist without empowered public institutions such as the National Parliament, a gap this study seeks to bridge.

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23.	2017	Bojang, S. M.	Critical issues affecting Africa's development: E-government, democracy and democratic principles, and governance as an alternative for socio-economic development in Africa.	Sample of 150, bureaucrats and post-graduate students	Survey
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#### Gap of the Study

Bojang (2017) observes that economic progress in Africa largely depends on her political development. It is further revealed that the impediments to development in Africa include bad governance, corruption, undemocratic values, and weak political institutions. The findings of the study indicate that major institutional reforms must be carried out in Africa to achieve sustainable development. The study, however, focuses on reforming political institutions as a whole and does not specify particular institutions, nor what type of reforms are needed. The geographical scope of Bojang's study is also wide, covering the entire continent. In contrast, the current study selected one country and a particular institution (the national parliament).

24.	2018	Lukongo, E. O.	Kleptocracy and its relation to economic performance: The case study of Congo.	From World Development Indicators	Secondary data Event study design
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#### Gap of the Study

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Lukongo's (2018) study focuses on the style of leadership and its role in the development of the DRC. The study identifies the important role played by institutions in the development agenda of a country, and specifically examined how a failure to strictly enforce the constitution in the DRC impacts on the development of the country and on good governance practices. This study focusses on the constitution and concludes that the main problem in the DRC is poor leadership and a lack of respect for the constitution. However, the role that the National Parliament would play when the constitution is being assaulted and disrespected is altogether avoided. The study focused only on losses in the agricultural sector; this narrows its scope. The study suggests that bad governance and a lack of sustainable development of the DRC is only largely attributed to the DRC's kleptocratic style of leadership over time.

25.	2018	Johnston, M.	Good governance: Rule of law, transparency, and accountability.		
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#### Gap in the Study

Johnston's (2018) analysis focuses on good governance and its features, and notes that institutions must be improved for good governance to be realized. There is, however, no mention of any particular institution, and the manner in which that needs to be strengthened. Therefore, this study, which focuses on parliament as a national institution, makes a critical contribution to the body of scholarship.

26.	2018	Sarker, E. A. & Khalid, S.	An exploratory analysis of governance dynamics, institutional reforms and		
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			development: A comparative study of India and Bangladesh.		
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### Gap of the Study

Finally, Sarker and Khalid's (2018) study focuses on the relationship between dominant power coalitions and their influence on institutional reform, as well as the overall effect this has on economic development. Although institutions are many, this study selected the National Parliament as a representative entity and discussed reforms that need to take place. Additionally, the geographical focus of the study is Southeast Asia, which is far-removed from the sub-Saharan Africa focus of the current study.

Empirical literature on issues of governance and sustainability has until now focused mainly on the social, economic, and environmental triad, with little emphasis on the role that empowering public institutions, particularly national parliaments, plays in creating an environment in which good governance flourishes, and consequently enabling sustainable development. Existing studies on sustainable development and governance in Africa have focused on corruption, management incompetence, leadership crisis, lack of resources, poor governance, complex global economic systems, illiteracy and low economic endowments. They have also ignored fragile and weak public institutions. Additionally, studies governance have focused more on the changing public management as a remedy to poor governance. They have given minimal attention to the need for empowering and strengthening the national parliament. There cannot be good governance and sustainable development in a country with a weak national parliament, no matter how endowed it is with resources.

The National Parliament functions best when it is empowered, independent, inclusive, participative, trained, transparent, accountable, equipped, secured, and solid. Good governance and sustainable development are intertwined, and both are tied to an empowered National Parliament. This study seeks to make a powerful contribution by providing new empirical research that examines sustainable development and good governance arising from an empowered, strong National Parliament, which is a key public institution in a country that is richly-endowed with natural resources.

## Conclusion

Chapter two discussed concepts such as institutions, empowerment, governance, sustainable development, and how these relate to the National Parliament of the DRC. Theories explaining the key concepts of the study are discussed and critiqued. The chapter concludes by offering a conceptual framework for the study and an explanation of how it addresses the research gaps identified from the literature review.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the qualitative research design and its relevance to the objectives of this study, the location of the study, the population, and how sampling was done. It also includes the methods of data collection, data analysis, and presentation of the research findings and the ethical considerations that were used in the inquiry.

#### Research Philosophy

The present study adopted the philosophical assumptions underpinned in the interpretive tradition, which means the reality or knowledge (epistemology) generated was socially constructed from the respondents (ontology) (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). In data collection, case studies comprising the elected members of DRC Congo Parliament were formed. Fieldwork was conducted on site from February to June 2019. However, a vibrant correspondence has continued between the researcher and the informants for the purposes of clarification and explanation of ambiguous statements. The study employed semi-structured interviews, participant observation, group discussion, and documentation analysis as the main data collection tools and techniques.

#### Research Design

This study was a qualitative case study that examined how empowering the National Parliament can promote good governance for the sustainable development of the DRC. The National Parliament was selected as a typical case of other public institutions in the DRC. The use of a case study was appropriate for this inquiry as it gave an in-depth understanding on how

the DRC National Parliament has fared, and how it can be empowered to promote good governance for sustainable development.

A case study is appropriate for this inquiry because it allows the researcher to address a wide range of research questions on how, why, and what, with regard to the topic under study and to assist the researcher to explain, explore, evaluate, and theorize subjects that are complex, within their context (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). Additionally, application and current debates on the validity, capability, and value of case study research have reinforced the efficacy of the use of case studies as a powerful form of conducting qualitative research (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Mills, 2014; Stewart, 2014; Yin, 2014).

The inquiry selected the National Parliament as a representative of other public institutions in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The choice of a representative case study was to enable the researcher obtain empirical findings that represent other public institutions in the DRC. Representative case studies are often selected because they epitomize a much larger category of similar cases, or cases that can offer an appropriate context to answer certain research questions (Bryman, 2016).

Further, case study research is the best for a holistic, comprehensive, and in-depth investigation of complex research phenomena, situations, institutions, or events (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). The choice of a case study was due to its ability to provide a deeper understanding of the issue (National Parliament) being investigated in real-life settings. It help the researcher to come up with answers to the questions of the inquiry (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Stewart, 2014).

### Location of Study

The study was carried out in four out of the 26 provinces of the DRC; namely, Kinshasa, Haut-Katanga, North Kivu, and Maniema. The provinces were selected on the basis of their accessibility, geographical representation, and availability of the participants from which data was sourced for the study.

### Target Population

The target population for this study was members of the National Assembly and members of civil society organizations, from whom participants for the study were purposively recruited. The DRC comprises of 26 provinces and has a total of 500 members of the National Parliament, among whom 63 are women and 108 are members of the Senate. The entire population of the DRC stands at about 84 million (UN, 2018). 245 civil society organizations operate in the DRC (World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, 2018).

### Sampling Technique

To achieve national representation in the sample, six members of the National Parliament were selected from each of the four provinces. The study was limited to these four provinces because they were most accessible, and safe, providing a conducive environment for the researcher to collect data for the study. The selected four provinces were Kinshasa, Katanga, Goma and Maniema. The four provinces provided a fair representation of the geographical coverage in the DRC, considering its extensive territory and current safety concerns. Out of the four provinces, six MPs were chosen per province, which added up to a total of 24 selected Members of Parliament. One-on-one in-depth interviews were conducted with the 24 MPs, six from each province. Further one-on-one interviews with four civil society organizations per

province were also conducted. In total, 16 civil society groups were interviewed. The interviewees consisted of senior management officials of the civil society organizations and staff handling issues of governance and leadership in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The researcher conducted eight focus group discussions, two in each of the four selected provinces of Kinshasa, Katanga, Goma and Maniema. Each focus group discussion had between eight and ten members, comprising of participants from civil society organizations, politicians, religious leaders, and students with an understanding and focus on the subject matter under investigation. The study was purposely gender-sensitive to ensure both male and female participants were represented in the focus group discussions. The study also included different age categories, ethnic groups, and political affiliations representing the diverse characteristics of DRC's population. The sample size selected from the population is illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

*Sample Size*

Category	Population	Sample
Provinces	26 provinces	4 provinces
Members of Parliament	500 members	6 members from each province, totaling 24 MPs
Civil society organizations	245 organizations	4 organizations per province, totaling 16 civil society organizations
DRC citizens	84 million	2 focus group per province, totaling eight focus groups, each with 8 to 10 members drawn from civil society organizations, politicians, religious leaders, students and business people

Source: DRC Constitution, World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (2018), World Bank (2018).

The sample presented in Table 3.1 was selected purposively. In choosing civil society groups, participants were recruited based on their degree of involvement in governance or development operations in the country. Flick (2014) argues that individuals are chosen as participants for qualitative studies not because they represent their population but rather because of their relevance to the research topic. Further, the sample selection for qualitative research should be done gradually and should not be limited in the number of participants selected until data saturation point. The researcher reached a saturation point by the 20th in-depth interview (Flick, 2014).

#### Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

One-on-one in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observations were used to collect data. The researcher adopted the use of multiple sources and methods of data collection because it provided a more comprehensive view of the subject under study. This view is supported by Harrison et al. (2017) who observed that the use of multiple data collection methods is recommended in the collection of qualitative data.

To collect data for the study, one-on-one in-depth interviews with six MPs per province were conducted (from North Kivu, Maniema, Katanga, and Kinshasa), yielding 24 in total. One-on-one interviews with professionals from 16 selected civil society bodies across the four provinces were also conducted. The selected civil society bodies were those that focused on leadership, democracy and good governance. The rationale for choosing civil society organizations was based on their broad knowledge on the subject matter under investigation. A further eight focus group discussions were conducted, two per province, in the four selected regions.

Data was recorded through note-taking by the researcher. This was the preferred method of data recording due to the requirements for safety and privacy by the participants, notably the MPs and civil society members. Their preference and requests not to be recorded were adhered to by the researcher. Further, this also provided freedom for the participants to speak openly and freely without fear for their own safety or privacy concerns. The researcher additionally made focus group observations on their views on the effectiveness of the National Parliament, its independence, how it protects the constitution and the Congolese masses, and its oversight function. In reviewing historical documentation, the researcher gathered archival data and information on resource allocation and use, legislation, and the administrative role exercised by the National Parliament of the DRC.

The researcher chose the qualitative approach of one-on-one in-depth interviews it protected the privacy and confidentiality of individual Members of Parliament, who would otherwise not have participated in focus group sessions. Similarly, due to the sensitive nature of the interview questions and the potentially volatile political and social atmosphere of the data collection sites, the researcher used the one-on-one in-depth interview method with members of the civil society.

Interviews lasted between 45 minutes to one hour depending on the participants' availability. Focus group discussions lasted on average 90 minutes. These longer and larger group sessions enabled the researcher to observe group dynamics and understand the expressed points of view as group members deliberated on a question and probed each other on their views about a particular question. This provided the researcher with valuable contextual understanding of the topic under study.



Interviews and observations are appropriate when collecting data for qualitative case study research. This is because they build a holistic picture that allows the interviewees to express their feelings and thoughts and also allows the investigator to analyze their words and report explicit and particularized views from the respondents (Alshenqeeti, 2014; Harrison et al., 2017). The value of using unstructured interviews as an interactive data collection tool is that it allows the interviewees to freely express themselves while the researcher probes for more information (Alshenqeeti, 2014). This feature broadens the understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

The researcher conducted the interviews in French, Lingala, and Swahili, because these are the most commonly spoken languages in the four provinces that were selected for the study.

### Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research has been criticized in terms of reliability, validity and trustworthiness as there is no consensus on the standards by which to judge a qualitative study (Hayashi, Abib & Hoppen, 2019; Aguinis & Solarino, 2019). Therefore, the researcher followed the outlined steps to ensure validity and reliability of the study.

The researcher maintained objectivity in the data collection process by treating all respondent views and opinions equally, regardless of the nature or the details of information given, and by treating all information as having equal merit regardless of the identity of participants. The researcher collected extensive and rich data to ensure that an accurate picture was portrayed in the observations. The observations made included the location of office space for MPs, level of physical security for parliamentarians, support staff and other capacitation to enable them perform their parliamentary work. The observations were captured by video

recordings and note-taking; this allowed the researcher to reexamine their observations and enhanced the reliability of the interviews (Franklin, Cody & Ballan, 2010). The researcher used multiple sources of data and participants to improve validity of the data set, and to ensure results do not apply to only to one sample of the population or one observation (Franklin, Cody & Ballan, 2010). Observations focused on how the participants worked and lived. The researcher cross-checked the notes taken with the respondents and had them verify that what was taken down as notes accurately reflected what they said.

In terms of the interview process, the researcher avoided asking the interviewees leading questions and gave them enough time to summarize their points, and add clarifying comments on any points they wanted to elaborate on. To ensure validity of these one-on-one in-depth interviews, participants were also invited to comment directly on the interview transcript and assess whether the concepts and final themes generated were an accurate interpretation of the interviewee's comments. The researcher avoided seeking responses that supported any preconceived notions. Thus, this fact-checking process avoided misperceptions by the interviewer regarding what the interviewee was saying. The researcher also conducted a pilot interview to improve the reliability of the interviews.

The researcher minimized the bias in sampling, data collection and data analysis by engaging with other external researchers. The researcher kept a detailed record of the research process to demonstrate that ethical and uncompromising research procedures were followed to ensure that data was collected and interpreted in a way that is trustworthy and defensible. Thus, the findings accurately reflect the data collected. The authenticity of the findings is further supported by the verbatim responses of participants.

## Data Analysis and Presentation

The data analysis begun by translating into English. This is because, originally, the data was collected in Lingala, French and Swahili. Data was then anonymized with any identifiers removed from the transcript. The researcher then developed codes according to themes and labelled the data by assigning symbolic codes to the data. Categorization of the data involved identifying and grouping codes with similar characteristics. The entire data set was systematically coded and collated. A systematic analysis was made to enable the researcher to explore issues and gain clarification to further refine categories if the results suggested more narrowly defined categories.

The researcher then searched for themes (Braun et al., 2019). These were reviewed to ascertain whether they correspond with the coded data and if they contributed to the discovery of themes. The researcher defined and named themes, and continued to further refine the themes and overall narrative (Lester, Cho & Lochmiller, 2020). The final stage involved producing the report that describes the thematic findings of the study. Relevant examples were used to illustrate the identified themes.

## Research Ethics

Kara and Pickering (2017) note that research ethics concern itself with issues of confidentiality, informed consent of the participants, anonymity, balanced and unbiased recruitment, as well as formal ethical regulations. Bryman (2016) concurs that inquiries which involve human beings should, as much as possible, be based on the freely obtained consent of the participants of the study. The researcher's procedures for carrying out this study meets the standards of ethical best practices.

Before embarking on this research, the researcher received formal ethics clearance to collect data. This was provided by PAC University prior to the commencement of data collection. The approval letter for data collection was presented to each potential research participant before the researcher proceeded to gather data or information. After explaining the purpose of the study, the researcher obtained informed consent from the participants before proceeding with an interview or focus group session. Recruited participants were made aware that they were free to withdraw from participating in the study at any given time, for whatever reason, or to withdraw any type of data which they had already offered to the researcher.

Further, participant confidentiality and anonymity is provided to the participants in the letter of consent that outlines the purpose of the study, along with the parameters of data collection, analysis, storage, and reporting. Any and all data tied to a participant's identity will be removed in the analysis process; thereby providing rich but anonymous comments.

To ensure fair representation of qualified respondents, the researcher emphasized gender balance and unbiased recruitment of participants for the study. Finally, the researcher was mindful of the ethical requirements of non-maleficence and beneficence – do no harm and only aim to do good. Research was carried out with utmost decorum and respect for the communities in which data was collected (Kara & Pickering, 2017).

## Conclusion

Chapter three discussed the methodology that the researcher adopted in conducting this study. The chapter presents the research design and the reasons qualitative research was the appropriate methodology. This chapter also discussed the data collection methods and procedures, data analysis, validity and reliability, and the ethical considerations pertinent to the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### Introduction

Chapter four presents the findings of the data analysis in line with the objectives of the study. The chapter presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents before presenting the results in line with the main objectives of the study. The analysis was done thematically, where the key themes that emerged formed the main sub-sections under this chapter. The chapter concludes with a summary and a buildup to the next chapter, where a discussion of the findings is done.

The study focus of the study was on how to empower the National Parliament to promote good governance for sustainable development of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The study was guided by the following objectives; To establish the various impediments that have obstructed the empowerment of the National Parliament; To examine the leadership practices and the impact they have had on governance in the DRC; To understand the characteristics of a strong and empowered National Parliament; and finally, To evaluate the different theories and models of empowerment that can be applied to the National Parliament to promote good governance for sustainable development in the DRC.

The research data collection was done between February and June 2019. During this period, the DRC had just inaugurated a new president and the spirits of people were very high as they expected to see change in the handling of public affairs. The aim of the data collection was to source for information on the role of the National Parliament as an institution, its impact on democracy, good governance, as well as sustainable development.

The one-on-one in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations yielded enough data for the study. The interviews were conducted with members of the National Parliament who gave enriching information about the National Parliament as an institution, her mandate *vis a vis* the constitution, as well as how the institution operates. Further, focus group discussions were conducted, which yielded more enriching data for the study.

The study was also carried out with the administrative personnel of the National Parliament to get the administrative dimension of the institution. The focus group discussions were conducted with members of the civil society, who also presented their opinions and views on the National Parliament, the executive and governance practices. Furthermore, various observations were made while conducting interviews with Members of Parliament, politicians, the civil society, as well as during the focus group discussions. The data collection was done with the aim of establishing what ails the Congolese National Parliament and what remedies or mechanisms could be applied to ensure the National Parliament plays her role effectively in promoting good governance and sustainable development in the country.

Members of parliament were drawn from across the pre-established provinces of the DRC, with the civil society respondents being drawn from entities that focused their activities on leadership, governance and development operations in the DRC. The findings illustrate how the national parliament has been working over the years and the significant variables that have led it to the current state. Participants were members of parliament, the administrative staff of the National Parliament, members of the civil society and the Congolese citizens recruited for the study. Therefore, this chapter presents the themes that emerged from the findings of the data collected, stressing the manner in which the National Parliament has worked, and the impact it has had on leadership, democracy, and sustainable development.

## Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the findings on the various demographic characteristics of the participants of the study. It begins with a discussion on the gender and education levels of interviewed parliamentarians and presents the locations and dates when focused group discussions were carried out. Sections deals with gender and analyze the levels of education of interviewed members of parliament.

### Gender of Respondents

The study analyzed the gender ratio of members of the National Parliament who were interviewed. This was done to understand the level of gender parity in the institution. Table 4.1 summarizes the results from this analysis, which indicates the number and gender of members of Parliament who were interviewed during the study. From the analysis, it is evident that a majority of the members of the National Parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo are male. The proportion of the entire number of members of Parliament depict a similar picture. Out of the 500 members of the current National Parliament, only 63 are female; the rest of them are male.

Globally, efforts are being made to ensure fair representation of both gender in key areas of leadership and public administration. A report by Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) (2019) on women in parliaments found that only 24.3% of all National Parliamentarians were women as of February 2019, which was a slow increase from 11.3% in 1995. This disproportionate representation by women in National Parliaments has resulted in some countries enshrining a gender requirement in their constitutions, stating that no particular gender should have a larger-than proportionate number in public institutions such as the National Parliament. Similar efforts for more women representation in National Parliaments have been called for in reports by UN

Women (2019) and the World Bank (2019). The reports indicate an established and growing evidence that more participation of women in leadership and political decision-making processes improves those institutions. Further, women are known to work across party lines in parliamentary caucuses and championing issues related to gender parity. More needs to be done to ensure that more female members are elected into the Democratic Republic of Congo's National Parliament. Table 4.1 indicates the number of male and female members of parliament interviewed for the study.

Table 4.1

*Number of Members of Parliament Interviewed*

Interviewees Occupation	Gender	Number
MP	m	17
MP	f	7
Total		24

Source: Research Data Findings, 2020

The findings indicate that a majority of the members of the National Parliament in the DRC are male. This is proportionally represented in Table 4.1 above.

Level of Education among Parliamentarians

The study assessed the levels of education among members of the National Parliament. This was important because it allowed the researcher to evaluate the capacity of members of parliament to perform their duties in the National Parliament. Table 4.2 summarizes the results on this sub-section. The various levels of education among the interviewed members of parliament are illustrated.



Table 4.2

*General Education Levels of the MPs*

Level of Education	Number
University	12
Tertiary/ College	10
Secondary	4
Total	26

Source: Research Data Findings, 2020

The results showed that the interviewed members had received formal education training with more than two-thirds having either tertiary or university level education. This indicated that a majority of them were able to comprehend and articulate issues in the National Parliament. Education level requirements are emerging as a major pre-requisite for seeking public office, and members of parliament are not exempted. All over the world, countries are demanding that legislators have specific minimum academic qualifications before vying for parliamentary seats. Erikson and Josefsson's (2019) study on whether higher education matters in parliamentary work, established that legislators value skills acquired through higher education. These include the ability to handle large volumes of text and information. The study also found that members who lacked higher education possessed compensating skills acquired through life experience. Education is critical for an empowered National Parliament, and it is important that members possess adequate training and capacity building to ensure they are better-equipped to perform their duties as parliamentarians.

The next sections present the results in line with what the objectives of the study were. The study sought to establish the various impediments to the empowerment of the National Parliament in the DRC, the impact of leadership practices on governance in the country, characteristics of a strong and empowered National Parliament, and the recommended models for empowering the National Parliament to promote good governance for the sustainable development of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

#### Objective One:

##### Impediments to the Empowerment of the National Parliament in the DRC

The first objective of the study was to establish the various impediments to the empowerment of the Democratic Republic of Congo's National Parliament. This sub-section presents the findings on specific objectives based on the main emerging themes and sub-themes on what ails the institution. These are discussed in sub-sections. The analysis of the data revealed various obstacles to the parliamentary empowerment in the DRC. From the answers by the respondents, the study came up with the different themes, which are discussed in this section.

##### Nothing is Considered Sacred by the Parliamentarians, Except the President

The analysis of the data revealed the perspectives on what was one of the main impediments obstructing the empowerment of the National Parliament. It was revealed that in the National Parliament, nothing is considered a taboo by the parliamentarians. The members of the body do not hold anything sacred in how they do their work as parliamentarians. Instead, nothing is off the table; they can do almost anything if they are sufficiently persuaded. This indicates the very low levels of moral values in the National Parliament, where their conscience does not stop them from acts they know are both harmful to the institution and the country at large. Human

life is normally governed by moral values that define behaviors. Things that are allowed by the family, clan, tribe, or a group of people are considered sacred, while those forbidden are considered a taboo by the community. While collecting the data in Kinshasa, one of the CEOs of a non-governmental organization exclaimed that with the Congolese Parliamentarians:

*Nothing is considered sacred except President Joseph Kabila! MPs can do everything that benefits them despite the feelings and opinions of the people who sent them to the National Parliament. Congolese MPs have nothing that they cannot do, as long as their personal interests are taken good care off. The word 'taboo' or forbidden does not exist in their language; they do not have principles that they can die for. Nothing is sacred, nothing is a taboo, there is nothing a Congolese MP cannot do; money decides the behavior and the direction a Congolese MP will take.*

'Nothing is sacred' is a figure of speech meaning that there is nothing that Congolese MPs can die for. This explains why the National Parliament of the DRC has been powerless and ineffective in the discharge of its duties. When the fabric of good moral values of the members of the National Parliament is destroyed, there is nothing good that the people can expect from them. MPs are often bribed to sell their votes or to vote according to pre-determined patterns that do not have the interests of the country at heart.

When nothing is sacred, it means everything is allowed; there are no limits or boundaries that MPs abide by. Nothing is sacred means there are no principles for which members of the National Assembly can die for. When nothing is sacred, it means the conscience to decide what is good from what is wrong in terms of good leadership or governance is dead. When nothing is sacred, it means the principles of good governance are either ignored or inexistent. What is sacred is always respected, a no-go zone. The lack of ethics among the parliamentarians

explains why parliament has been unable to make a meaningful contribution to democracy and good governance in the DRC.

Another respondent had this to say:

*The Congolese Parliamentarian has sold himself to the executive in the sense that they have become absent on the political field. How do you explain this, that our MPs can go as far as changing the constitution of the land for the benefits of one man; the President. People went to the street to protest the decision, and were met with tear gas and bullets, among which some of the protesters were killed.*

‘Nothing is sacred’ is a figure of speech coined by a civil society group, and the idea behind the expression reveals the bitterness, disappointment and desperation of Congolese citizens toward the people they thought would go to the National Parliament to make their voices heard. But the parliamentarians’ priorities were totally different from theirs.

#### Endemic Corruption in the DRC Parliament

Corruption in the National Parliament emerged as one of the major themes from the data analysis. Corruption has seriously affected how the institution performs its duties, and this has been a major obstacle to a strong parliament in the country. Endemic corruption in the DRC was found to be one of the main factors negatively influencing the strengthening of parliament as an institution. The manner in which one becomes a Member of Parliament does not uphold democratic principles, which insist on free and fair elections. A respondent interviewee observed that;

*MPs are not elected on personal merit or the agenda they have for the people they represent, but because of their affiliation and loyalty to the head of state. In the DRC*

*politics, it is the positioning of a person that decides the outcome, not his moral values or the program of his agenda for the nation. One can have good education and all the qualifications needed for the parliamentary job, but his political affiliation can lock him outside; that is the rule of the game in the DRC political arena.*

This explains the fact that, even after leaving power, the former President called all the newly elected MPs affiliated to his party to go to a city called Kingakati, where he lives in Kinshasa, to sign a pact of allegiance to him. Even though he is out of power as president, he still has power over the parliamentarians.

One of the respondents Member of Parliament argued:

*The executive decides who becomes an MP and how they will do their job, and what happens in the National Parliament on day-to-day business. The choice of the speaker of The National Assembly and his committee are also appointed by him; and that is also another deciding factor of the distortion of democracy in the DRC. The members of Parliament thus elect a speaker who has been fronted by the executive because he or she is regarded as a patron of the MPs funded by the executive.*

The above statement infers that parliament serves the interests of the president, right from its inception. It works for the executive rather than the nation. The manner in which the National Parliament is constituted, together with how the speaker becomes elected, indicates the level of corruption in the National Parliament.

One of the participants further revealed that:

*The National Parliament of the DRC is operated as just one of the ministry of the government. The MPs are just like public workers at the service of the government. They*

*cannot oppose anything that comes from the mouth of the head of state because they owe him. Having been funded by the executive and helped to come to Parliament through the manipulation of the CENI (Independent National Election Commission), the MP is just the President's employee. He gives orders, abuses them, and even beat one of the MPs in the presence of others; and they keep quiet. We don't see the work of MPs. They are just there to validate the decisions taken by the executive.*

Most respondents believed:

*President Kabila has become too much for the Parliamentarians and even the country at large. MPs fear him like a lion. He uses his presidential 'guards' to shut any tentative of manifestation by the population; only God can rescue Congo from the hands of Kabila. MPs support, defend and fight for his survival, knowing that his survival and wellbeing is also theirs; they rise together and fall together. The presidency is built on total corruption for its survival and that of the partners.*

From its inception, the DRC National Parliament is weak, ineffective, powerless, and incapacitated in the discharge of its duties by the manner in which it is constructed. The executive uses money to buy, twist, and corrupt MPs to serve his purposes.

#### MPs and State Sponsorship

MPs revealed how the executive sponsors aspirants to become members of Parliament. One of the respondents revealed that during elections,

*The executive locates the candidates who have potential, in terms of education, good public speakers and university lecturers, people who have the capacity to influence others and sponsor them to Parliament.*

Candidates vying for parliamentary seats are normally requested to pay a huge fee for their names to be included on the ballot papers. Frequently, candidates are short of money to pay the fee to contest a parliamentary seat and to sponsor their own campaign; that is where the executive comes in to pay for some parliamentary aspirants the required fee by the electoral commission and to bankroll their election campaigns. A respondent was quoted saying,

*The president normally does pay the enrolment fees of potential candidates to the CENI for their enrollment, and also sponsors their campaign throughout to the end. Having the CENI at his disposal, he gives the list of his candidates to the CENI to make sure that those selected are proclaimed winners.*

Therefore, most MPs are ineffective in the National Assembly as they feel indebted to the president for the goodness shown to them. This explains why on the floor of the house of the DRC Parliament, there has never been a motion of censure addressed to a cabinet minister, company CEO, or the president. It is always business as usual, no matter the pain the people go through, or the cries of the common citizens for help.

One of the respondents observed:

*Lack of independence and transparency by the CENI, the high price for enrolment to enter the race to Parliament, the funding and sponsoring of the campaigns for Parliamentary candidates is one of the major issues that has contributed to the total degradation of standards required of the National Assembly. The elements mentioned above have destroyed the independence, credibility and power of the National Parliament as one of the three arms of the government in the DRC.*

The data shows that around 70% of the members of the National Parliament have their hands tied, although they know what is good for the nation, but they can't do it, due to their position vis a vis the executive; they owe their seat in parliament to the head of state.

It's not all gloom, though; some members indicated they were not puppets of the executive since they received no support or funding from the executive to become members of the National Parliament. Such a liberated member of parliament exclaimed:

*I campaigned on my own, with my own resources and those of well-wishers and my political supporters. The state has not sponsored me to this position but, rather, the voters who elected me to this position.*

This indicates that in the National Parliament, there are members who feel independent and not beholden to the executive by dint of how they got elected. However, whether this actually influences how independent they work could be contested given that they can be influenced and persuaded by other members to vote, or act in a particular manner in the National Parliament. Furthermore, the numbers of independent minds is insignificant in the sense that they are unable to influence decisions of the National Parliament.

### Corruption in Passing Bills

The findings show that whenever important bills are being discussed in the house, the executive releases money to entice parliamentarians so they can support the bill. One of the respondents said,

*When the president wanted to change the constitution to continue his stay in the office, money was distributed to the MPs in order to influence them to support the bill. The bill went through, and the president continued to stay in power outside of his given terms.*



*Money is a major deciding factor in Congolese Politics; that's why it is impossible to explain how a so rich nation like the DRC can be counted among the poorest nations on earth.*

The data indicates that in case of big or massive corruption, the people will put pressure on members of the National Assembly from the opposition to bring a motion of censure on the floor against the culprit. In most cases, the executive gives money to the speaker of the National Assembly to bribe members to vote against the motion of censure presented on the floor of the house. According to the findings, even opposition members of parliament accept bribes to support the government. When it comes to money, parliamentarians from both sides are vulnerable; they don't resist the temptation of money. This is one of the major setbacks that has rendered the National Parliament incapable of challenging the government on good governance. Those supporting the government denied the corruption and bribery allegations in the parliament. They argued that the National Parliament was independent and that MPs acted independently with their conscience whenever a motion was brought on the floor of the House. One of the MPs observed:

*We vote independently in the house, and are not influenced by the executive or anyone to vote in a particular way. When we vote in a specific way, we are not bribed to do so! We vote because we either support or oppose a particular bill or motion in the house.*

This finding is in sharp contrast with what was established in the literature that the executive not only manipulates the members of the National Parliament, but it also incentivizes them to vote in a specific way on the floor of the house.

## Objective Two:

### Leadership Practices and their Impact on Governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The study sought to find the type of impact that leadership practices had on the country. The preferred leadership model for the Democratic Republic of Congo was also investigated by the researcher. This section presents the findings on this objective. The discussion happens in sections.

### Leadership Practices for the Empowerment of Parliament in the DRC

Leadership is everything. The failure and success of an organization or society depends on what leaders say and do. The empowerment of the Parliament in the DRC, therefore, cannot be achieved without effective leadership. At the end of the day, it is what is said and done that determines the direction of the National Parliament.

The study established that the leadership practices, which most respondents preferred, were those based on true democracy. The CENI, or the National Electoral Independent Commission, has the mandate to carry out independent elections. Respondents believe that the powerlessness of the National Parliament in the DRC starts from enrolment. Most well educated and seemingly influential candidates are bought by the executive and sponsored or given money by the Head of State to campaign for parliamentary seats. The electoral body is part of this. It is tasked with ensuring that selected candidates win the election. An interviewee respondent supported this assertion;

*The CENI is manipulated during elections to make sure that the candidates of the Head of State are elected. It does not matter how hard the electorates try to campaign and rally for votes, it is the wrong candidates who make it to the National Parliament.*

The reality on the ground is that the Congolese voters are disappointed with everything that is happening in the country. They go to the election believing that it will help solve their predicament, but at the end of the day, it is the wrong people who are picked for Parliament. Candidates that are believed to stand for change are declared losers.

*Respondents believed unanimously that some of the good practices of leadership are first of all democracy, allowing people to live in liberty, choose the kind of leaders they want, allow them to make their voice to be heard is what most respondents are longing for.*

The findings show that participative politics is what most Congolese want, a setting where freedom reigns, a context where people are at liberty to decide their own destiny. A world that is free of fear and intimidation. This was expressed by one of the respondents, who said:

*This country has been unfortunate to have had strong leaders who ran the show alone, who take their own choice for that of the people. It is time for leadership which is participatory in decision making, problem solving and development of self-leadership among the leaders so as to build a strong and independent Parliament ready to serve all Congolese people and not one strong man.*

The respondents agreed that only participative leadership in which the voice of every Congolese is heard and respected will help the country move forward. Leaders need to believe in the value of every citizen's opinion, and be ready to listen and be corrected, if need be. These sentiments were aired by one of the respondents, who said:

*It is not everybody who can give this kind of leadership. It will take a humble leader who has a vision for the country, ready to pay the ultimate sacrifice for the nation.*

According to the respondents, they felt that at the moment the country needs servant and transformational leadership. That combination was accepted as the best leadership style for the empowerment of parliament and the strengthening of good governance and sustainable development. This was strongly expressed by one of the respondents, who said:

*I am convinced that a servant leader is the best leader because he shares power with the other leaders. He or she considers the needs of others first. He grows other individuals and develops them so they may improve their performance. Servant leaders are willing to learn from others and concentrate on performance of the organization. They don't just watch things happen. They are in control as good planners and coaches of others to boost their performance. We need that more in DRC to correct the past mess and workout a better future.*

When probed why they were combining servant leadership and transformational leadership, the respondents said they wanted to benefit fully from the merits of each model. For example, one of the respondents said:

*Due to the historical and political complexities, the combination will give us more efficiency and effectiveness. For example, servant leadership is helpful in supporting and developing the individual leaders within the organizations and institutions. Transformational leadership is about the inspiration of the members to work together towards the achievement of a common national vision and goal. This leadership recipe is what DRC needs for the empowerment of public institutions like our parliament.*

When leaders know what they want and how to achieve it, there's hope in regard to the enhancement of transformed institutions in DRC. Other stakeholders must build on the ideas of the elected leaders for more sustainable transformation as the people are likely to support any

change based on their thinking and needs. All development partners should also focus on servant and transformational leadership, which are essential in the promotion of good governance to stimulate sustainable development of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The study revealed that respondents supporting the government saw nothing unsatisfactory in the leadership of the country. They believed that President Kabila was a fantastic leader who served the interests of the nation with diligence. One of the respondents in Kinshasa said:

*President Kabila is the best thing the country has ever had! When he took power, the country was divided in different fractions by the warlords. After taking power, the president showed humility by accepting to dialogue with the rebels in order to unify the country back. If the president did not have the interests of the country at heart, he could not have accepted to share the leadership of the country with four vice presidents.*

The preceding quote explains why, even after relinquishing power to his successor, his followers did not want to let him go but, instead, they gave him a new role, the title of the ‘Moral Authority’ of their party. Even though he is no longer in power, his party still consults him on every important decision concerning the country or their party.

The findings on leadership in the country indicate an urgent need on how the country and her institutions are managed. Leadership has a significant impact on good governance and sustainable development. It became apparent that there was a clear lack of values among the leaders of the country, and that there was a desire for a values-based leadership model. Leadership based on values ensures that those in power not only put the country first, but also act in a morally upright and acceptable manner. The citizens should be able to look up to the leader with admiration and respect. This infers that leaders need to espouse and embody ideals and

principles they believe in. Values-based leaders embrace ethical values and morals and practice these every day. Leaders with high-principled values will put the DRC country ahead of their individual interests or ambitions. Respected leaders exemplify good and desirable values, including a love for the country, inclusivity, patriotism, justice, accountability, and responsibility in how they perform their leadership roles.

### Objective Three:

#### The Characteristics of a Strong and Empowered National Parliament for the Promotion of Good Governance for Sustainable Development in the DRC

The third objective of the study sought to understand the characteristics of an empowered parliament. This section discusses the findings from the data analysis on the characteristics of strong and empowered National Parliaments. Section begins with a discussion on autonomy, which emerged as one of the major themes of empowered parliaments. The subsequent sub-sections discuss in detail the various sub-themes that emerged in the data analysis. Autonomy in parliament includes the freedom in passing of bills, separation of power between the executive and the National Parliament, and Financial independence of the institution. These are discussed under this section on the findings of the study.

#### An Autonomous National Parliament

The study findings revealed that the DRC Parliament has not had any autonomy for decades since independence. This was attributed to the executive's control and domination. Although the members spent a lot of time carrying out legislation and discussing bills, they do not determine the final outcome. With a clear majority in Parliament, the executive decides whether the enacted laws will be implemented or gather dust on the shelves. The problem of the

DRC is not lack of good laws that can push the country forward, implementation is the sticking issue. One of the respondents made the following remarks:

*The National Parliament is a vital institution in the country due to the immense role it has to play. This includes making laws for the country, and providing checks and balances. However, in spite of all the efforts of the members of Parliament, the final word is not ours; but, rather, it is the executive's. Often, he uses the speaker of the parliament to dictate the business of the house and what is supposed to be legislated.*

The respondents understood fully that it was wrong to have a parliament that lacked autonomy. Yet, the structures by the ruling party made it that way deliberately to ensure their continued control of the parliament and to remain in power and enjoy stability as the ruling party. The statement by another respondent clarifies this claim further:

*The executive does not want to see a free Parliament that sets her own agenda and do deliberations on various issues independently because it does not want to be exposed or challenged. Therefore, in the National Parliament, there are no frank debates where members of the National Assembly are left at liberty to discuss issues freely, engage their knowledge and expertise to solve Congolese problems. MPs in Parliament are not at liberty to engage in serious debates, talk on issues that can bring change in the nation.*

A similar sentiment is expressed by another respondent,

*There is no freedom of expression or opinion in Parliament. The executive has placed some parliamentarians whose job is to listen to what MPs say and take the report to the head of state. MPs live in fear like prisoners, everybody is suspecting everybody, because you don't know who is who. Fear and lack of freedom of expression has*

*contributed a lot to the powerlessness and ineffectiveness of parliament. Liberty and freedom in debates are tools of power as they create room for challenges and creativity, which is vital for the improvement and modernization of the country.*

Autonomy or independence is the backbone of every democracy in the world. It enables members of Parliament to take part or participate in the development of their country by sharing their ideas. Autonomy implies maturity, a context whereby people are at liberty to engage in the affairs of their nation without fear or intimidation. Therefore, according to the findings of the study, parliament is not autonomous; it exists almost at the mercy of the executive through direct or indirect micromanagement.

In every country, there is always those who support the government, especially those who have benefited from it. DRC is not an exception. Parliamentarians supporting the government, especially those coming from the province of the president, argued that the National Parliament enjoyed autonomy at a high level, even though the findings proved otherwise. During focus group discussions in Katanga Province, one of the respondents argued that:

*The DRC National Parliament enjoyed autonomy at the fullest, and that those denying it are just detractors and tribal people who are against their son.*

The person was supported by the majority of the group. It took the researcher some minutes to cool the temper of the respondents down as part of the group were shouting, calling those opposed to their views jealous and tribal.

#### Autonomy in Passing Bills

The findings showed that the DRC National Parliament does not have autonomy in passing important bills or motions in the house. These include motions of defiance, motions of



censure, motions aimed at the prime minister or a member of his government, motions of questions and answers, parliamentary investigations, among others.

Some of the respondents revealed:

*The DRC National Parliament motions of censure are always fruitless because they are always done as a pretext to feed the eyes and ears of the public that parliament is doing something; but, in reality, the motion will end up bringing nothing positive. This is because in the National Parliament every motion that comes to the floor is dealt with according to the directives given by the head of state. Having a total majority in the National Assembly, the Speaker of the Parliament receives orders and directives from above in order to support the government, no matter what.*

Parliamentary investigations are always done according to the directives of the leader or president, which means they do not achieve anything meaningful. One of the respondents had this to say:

*The executive and the members of parliament belonging to the president's party always work together on the Floor of the House. They cannot speak different languages. Motions are discussed first with the head of state and his technocrats who advise him on the way forward. The motions are then brought to the Speaker of the House who, in return, calls a meeting with the MPs belonging to the party of the government to deliberate on the way forward. In case they need the backing of the opposition members of Parliament to pass the bill, they call MPs from the opposition secretly, one by one, and give them money to vote with the MPs from the party of the president.*

Yet another respondent, similarly comments:

*The data unfold that, even members of parliament belonging to the opposition parties do take bribes to support the government. When it comes to money, parliamentarians from both sides are vulnerable. They do not resist the temptation of money, which is one of the major elements that has made the National Parliament incapable of challenging the government on good governance.*

One of the respondents supporting the government refuted this allegation, saying it was guided by evil feelings.

The role of parliament in passing bills is one of the elements of an empowered parliament, but it has not been the case as the use of big money to influence the outcomes of the bills in parliament robs the institution the responsibility and objectivity when discussing matters of national importance.

#### Financial Autonomy

According to the constitution of the DRC, the National Parliament is one of the three arms of the government designed to operate independently, just like the executive and the judiciary. The National Assembly has the mandate of legislating the laws of the country, voting on the budget and authorizing the government to use public resources besides playing the oversight role over the executive to ensure practices of good governance are respected. One of the MP interviewed revealed:

*However, in reality, the National Parliament is not autonomous because it depends totally on the executive for everything, which also decides what happens in parliament. In the DRC, MPs are regarded as public servants, depending totally on the executive for survival.*

The study findings showed that the budget of the National Assembly is normally prepared by the finance committee and then sent to the government for incorporation into the general budget of the government. After the budget has been approved by parliament, it is the duty of the government, through the Minister of Finance, to transfer the funds allocated to the parliament into its bank accounts. One of the respondents stated:

*The National Assembly of the DRC depends totally on the executive in order to carry out its functions. Money is given to the parliament in piecemeal by the Minister of Finance, depending on its immediate need. Sometimes the MPs can go for several months without remuneration. This makes parliament weak and vulnerable because it depends on the executive for financial resources. The executive uses money as a secret weapon to keep the parliamentarians under control.*

This was also captured by another respondent:

*Our operations are tricky, the flow of funds depend on the willingness of the executive. There are no funds available or at the disposal of parliament to use at will. It totally depends on the executive for funding even on simple matters. The dependence on the executive has weakened the institution by making it vulnerable to manipulation and corruption.*

The data show the dependence of parliament on the executive for money is the major reason MPs have turned into beggars by depending totally on the executive for survival. This status quo explains why the DRC National Assembly is so weak and ineffective in discharging its duties.

Most MPs interviewed agreed on the following sentiments:

*The state of affairs is: parliament is funded only when it is pleasing to the executive.*

*Wherever there is a push towards more autonomy, funding is curtailed. But when parliament tows the line, the government brings its budget to be approved and integrated by parliament to finance its functions.*

In the constitution, there is a provision that gives the National Assembly the autonomy to decide her own budget, but in reality, the National Assembly depend totally on the executive to have their budget approved.

The cry from most respondents was:

*To get money from the government, the National Assembly has to go through the normal procedure like other government offices. Parliament has no money at its disposal to spend, parliamentarians and staff are paid by the national government like other public servants, and sometimes they have arrears of unpaid salaries. The DRC National Parliament has no money to manage, but money is always released by central government whenever the need arises, and sometimes the Parliament is told that there is no money, and thus they have to wait.*

The findings also reveal that the budget of the National Assembly has never been accepted and approved by the government entirely. The highest it has ever received was seventy percent of its request. The data collected show that the budget of the National Parliament is only proposed to the government, which in turn decides which item to fund and which ones to reject. Lack of financial autonomy and bureaucracy has greatly hampered parliamentary complementary services such as hiring of assistants and quality remuneration for the staff. One of the respondents said:

*The parliament does not even have power to do the recruitment of their own staff. The hiring of staff is made by the minister of public works in conjunction with that of finance. The reason why the Parliament cannot hire her own staff is because they do not have their own money to pay the workers. MPs are paid just like other civil servants by the minister of finance. The parliament must present their need for money or for more staff to the minister of public works who will do consultation with his counterpart of finance, who will in return give his approval depending on the budget at hand, then, the minister of public works will be the one to do the hiring and send the new staff to the National Assembly.*

Respondents in support of the government argued that the government does not refuse to give money to Parliament for the sake of doing so. They asserted that the only explanation is a shortage in revenue collection, which means that the government does not have enough money to give parliament everything they want.

Lack of a strong financial base badly compromises the parliament's ability to run its affairs efficiently and satisfactorily.

### Power Separation

The study established that the respondents understood the doctrine of separation of powers very well. For example, the division of the core national tasks of the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary. The division was seen as critical for credibility, efficiency and national integration and cohesion. One of the respondents commented:

*History does not lie. It has been proven by history that whenever an individual enjoys unlimited power in his hands, the individual will in the end suppress others or have their fundamental powers curtailed. Therefore, the separation of powers safeguards*

*democracy and prevents abuse of power by one arm of government. An empowered parliament is important to keep the executive in check in order to avoid much abuse as we see it today.*

According to this statement, in the DRC, although the three arms of the government exist on paper (Executive, Judiciary, Legislature), in reality, there is no separation of power between the three arms of government. The executive has all the powers; there is little the citizens or members of Parliament can do. The constitution is clear, but the executive totally ignores what it says about the government institutions. The study found that parliament is not independent; it is controlled by the head of state and adopts what is directed by the executive to the letter without discussion. Any move by any Member of Parliament to change the status quo is resisted by the executive. This was explained by one of the respondents:

*Whenever an MP or a section of MPs from the opposition parties oppose the government, or refuse to support certain bills brought by the government, the government will keep quiet and set traps, look for an opportunity to catch the rebel MPs in the future in order to punish them. They will pursue the rebel using different methods, including giving money to their own friends to tempt them with bribery in order to capture them or use any other compromising deal in order to use it as a blackmail, unless they tow the line. The system has made it difficult and almost impossible for members of the National Assembly to operate independently for the benefit of the common citizens.*

The government protects its supporters in parliament very jealously such that even where there is clear overreaching in exercising their powers, no punitive actions are taken against them, especially in parliament. This is what one of the respondents said about this matter:

*In case an MP from the opposition brings a motion of censure to the floor of the house against a minister of the government, the president of the republic, or a CEO mismanaging public funds, the motion of censure will definitely be defeated as both the executive and parliament work for a common cause. To the Congolese National Assembly, the aspirations of the people mean nothing; what is important is what they get from the executive for being loyal.*

The findings reveal that loyalty is a key ingredient in the Congolese politics. From the politician to the common citizen, the years of dictatorship have brought much fear and intimidation to the Congolese mind. Congolese citizens have never enjoyed the fruits of freedom from colonization. While independence may be written on paper, the Congolese have never enjoyed freedom as the Congolese mind lives in captivity. They live with the head of state on their mind; they are careful of their talk and deeds. Similarly, the separation of power between the Executive and the National Parliament exists only in the constitution, but in reality, there is no separation of power between the Executive and the Parliament as long as the parliamentarians receive orders from the Executive.

Some of the interviewed members of the National Assembly had a different perspective, noting that there was separation of power between the Executive and the National Parliament. One of the respondents commented:

*The constitution guarantees that the Executive and the National Parliament be separate and independent. No one should interfere with how the other institution works. It is in the law and we have it!*

This was a departure from what was already established in the findings and the review of literature that the National Parliament was under state capture. Nevertheless, the findings support

the belief that some members of the National Parliament affirm the independence of the institution despite literature and evidence showing a contrary state and opinion.

#### Objective Four:

### Theories and Models of Empowerment That Can Be Applied to the National Parliament to Promote Good Governance for Sustainable Development in the DRC

#### Structural Empowerment

The study reveals that most respondents wanted an empowered parliament, equipped with offices, computers, staff, and other operational materials to make their work easy and effective.

*It is really inconveniencing that when I need to see my MP to discuss things pertaining to my constituency, I have to go searching for his private office. Some of these MPs don't even have a private office and operate from their homes. To go to somebody's house to discuss official matters can sometimes be questionable, because in case he is a male MP, his wife may not understand what is happening. And the setting of a private home, instead of a public office, turns an official matter into a kind of private one.*

The respondents are very much aware that the DRC's National Parliament is not empowered in its current state. They want a Parliament that is well furnished with offices for every Parliamentarian for privacy and accountability purposes.

One of the respondents believed that it will be definitely impossible to make these MPs accountable as long as they don't have official parliamentary offices, believing that, apart from the Parliament building, such is the only other place they can be held accountable in case they didn't report to work. How will you make somebody accountable when they are using their private office?



The debates with most of the focus groups were open and enjoyable since the respondents spoke with freedom and enthusiasm. They were willing to contribute to what they believed could be used in the future to better their lives through the Parliament.

#### Empowerment through Furnished Offices with Computers

The other element, which elicited a lot of debate, was that MPs should start operating like the rest of modern society. It was noted that most MPs in the DRC still keep most of their notes and documents in books and hard copies instead of computers.

*How can it be that in this 21<sup>st</sup> century our members of Parliament are still using personal note books to keep public information, and in case one dies, whatever was for the public interests is lost. Parliament needs to provide computers for MPs to keep the records. In case another one comes tomorrow, he will know where to start.*

It is amazing that the respondents were able to make critical suggestions beyond what was planned, things that could be applied to empower the National Parliament. When someone records public information in a private note book, the information becomes private. However, if the same was stored in a public computer, it will remain public and future MPs can refer to it to serve their constituency.

*Administratively speaking a separation must be made between public and private information, and the records kept for future use or by other generations. We don't die with everything that we have done in our time on earth. Keeping information is important to help the future generations learn from the past, and to help them know what kind of a people we were.*

The respondent believed that there was more to the empowerment of parliament. They didn't just see empowerment in terms of the budget or the autonomy of Parliament. They believed that a lot could be done to have a truly empowered Parliament.

*Those learned use their own laptops, iPads to keep public information, which is also wrong because what is private remains their own property. The National Parliament is one of the most important organs in our country. Their budget should reflect what they really represent to enable the institution function appropriately.*

These sentiments were supported by most of the respondents; that the National Parliament should evolve. It should be understood that parliament is an important institution of the land, and that how it operates affects all Congolese people. It should therefore upgrade the way it serves the nation.

#### Budget and Financial Empowerment of the National Parliament

Everything starts with the budget and ends up with the budget. Money is critical for success to be achieved. Money answers all things.

*The Parliament cannot achieve much without a good strong budget. The budget of our parliament is just like the budget of a very small private institution, which is why the parliament is weak and incapable of standing on its own.*

It was unanimously agreed by respondents that the budget of the National Parliament is very small, that it does not reflect the vast country it represents.

*The budget of the National Parliament is always challenged by the government, arguing that they do not have enough money to fund the budget; thus, they have to come up with a revised budget that the government will agree to.*

*The government's job is to collect tax and to make sure the budget of parliament is met.*

*We cannot have a strong parliament without a strong, good budget that meets the needs of the House.*

The respondents believed that parliament's budget deficit is a major element, and that it lends it vulnerable to the demands of the executive. They also believed that the status quo is one of the reasons there is rampant corruption in the country.

*The budget has always been a projection, made in terms of the needs of the House. It is unfortunate for the government to say that there is no money. The government must create more ways or channels of revenue collection, and not to tell the Parliament to cut their budget down and come up with something that is impossible. How can the Parliament function properly without a proper budget to meet their needs? We cannot have a strong Parliament with a poor budget. The budget represents what kind of institution our Parliament is.*

The respondents seemed to agree that an improved budget of the Parliament could make the Parliament strong and solve some of the institution's shortcomings. They seemed to believe that the government was cutting down the budget of parliament to keep it under the subjection of the executive.

#### Empowerment through Adequate Staff

The findings established that the National Parliament lacked adequate staff to enable the institution carry out its work professionally. The Assembly does not have the resources to hire its own staff and must make a request to the minister of public services for staff to be hired on

behalf of the Parliament. MPs also lack enough supporting staff to help them do their work. One of the respondents expressed their concern on this matter, saying:

*There are not enough staff to enable the National Parliament carry out its work properly, and the few staff that are there are hired by the ministry of public works, who decides whom to hire and whom to reject. The staff of the Parliament are answerable to the government than to the Parliament, because the government is the hiring agent. They have their allegiance to the government than to the Parliament.*

*There is no way the Parliament can do its work secretly because everything they plan will be automatically transmitted to the executive because nobody knows the intention of the executive or its purpose for hiring certain staff. Maybe they are placed there to spy for the government.*

Given that the MPs do not have offices and have to hire private offices, they also must hire their personal secretaries whom they pay out of their pockets. This affects how they do their work because such staff should be provided for by the government to give the MPs ample time to do their work.

During the one-on-one interview, one of the MPs said:

*The staff that we have in the National Parliament are strangers to us because they are always hired by the government. We have to hire our own secretaries to do our work. And we need to pay our own secretaries from our salaries. This is why when there are certain bills in which the executive has much interest, we ask for money, which turns to be corruption.*

An empowered parliament needs autonomy to hire its own staff. Personal secretaries should be remunerated using the parliamentary budget to avoid the kind of corruption witnessed in this institution.

### Empowerment through Security for Members of Parliament

In countries prone by dictatorship, security is one of the pillars of parliamentary empowerment. During one-on-one interview with parliamentarians, it was revealed that security is one of their major concerns. Most MPs said:

*The first time it came to my mind to join parliament, I believed I was going to the National Parliament to change things, fight corruption, dictatorship and most negative values and behaviors in the government. I thought I would use the institution of parliament to change things. But, when I went to parliament, I found a totally different environment with strange realities, which changed my resolve. I said to myself, I rather keep my mouth shut and live than opening it wide and die, leaving my children orphans.*

Security was mentioned by most of MPs interviewed as one of loopholes that has made parliament vulnerable. MPs do not have police security posted at their homes for protection. Police are only found in the premises of parliament.

Most MPs stated that they were allowing other things to happen out of fear for their lives. During the interviews, one parliamentarian belonging to the party of the president said:

*After the sessions of parliament, every person will go to his home, eat and sleep peacefully, including the people I have come to represent. Why should I be the one to die for others and be buried before my time? I am not Jesus Christ who came to die for humanity.*

The findings reveal that a majority of MPs are not comfortable with most of the things they do, but they do them out of fear for their lives. They do not want to be seen as opposing the government, which could result in dangerous implications on their lives, as well as their career as MPs.

Security is only provided to MPs on request; and in such a case, the MP pays the soldier assigned to him out of his pocket and not the government or the Parliament. It is usually an arrangement between the Minister for Internal security and the individual parliamentarian. One of the MP said:

*Getting a security officer or two is only done at personal request, and one can only be given due to the personal discretion of the Minister of Internal Security, or he can decide to reject the request by the MP, saying that his life is not under threat to warrant private police protection.*

The findings demonstrate that members of parliament are not provided with police protection, and even where the Minister of Internal Security approves, they have pay the salaries of such police from their own resources. Given the sensitivity of the work of parliamentarians and the volatile political atmosphere in the country, providing security to members of parliament should not be a matter for debate.

Most of the civil society respondents interviewed noted that:

*It was wise to provide police security for MPs due to the present state of the nation. They believed that the job of the MPs was always threatened in case they refused to cooperate with the executive. It is believed that most positions taken by Parliamentarians during*

*votes in the National Parliament, in passing laws and bills, did not reflect their free will, that they voted the executive's way to protect their lives.*

Therefore, if the DRC National Parliament is to be empowered, the issue of MPs' security must not be ignored. It should be taken seriously. Only a secured person will give his best to the nation, because insecurity creates instability.

#### Remuneration for MPs

The findings show that sometimes an MP can go for several months without pay. This negatively affects their performance.

The sentiments of most MPs are captured below:

*Their salaries do not always come on time. Sometimes they do go through several months without remuneration. According to some MPs, the government's delay to release pay for MPs is tactical, meant to make MPs vulnerable to the temptation of corruption. When you have not received your salary for several months and the executive presents you an offer, it is very difficult to refuse.*

It was brought to the attention of the researcher that the executive views the salaries of the parliamentarians as a favor done to them rather remuneration for work done.

*Most respondents expressed their views that, once the budget is passed, the money allocated to the National Parliament should be deposited in the Parliament's account to eliminate its dependence on the executive. Parliament is a huge institution in the country. The executive should treat it with respect.*

This study established that it was impossible for a country to talk about good governance when it has a begging Parliament. When parliament controls its budgetary allocation, it has a chance to be strong, independent and self-sufficient.

### Benchmarking

The findings reveal that benchmarking has never been done by Congolese Parliamentarians. It actually does not exist on their calendar. The Members of the National Parliament rely only on their knowledge and understanding to carry out parliamentary work. One of the respondents noted:

*The executive cannot give money to parliament to do benchmarking because the executive is insecure. How can the executive give money to parliament to go and learn how parliaments are run in other parts of the world and come back with a revolution to change things in the DRC Parliament? The executive doesn't want the MPs to get exposure out of fear to be challenged. Benchmarking will open the eyes of MPs, and in return, they would like to get more autonomy as they learn from others. Without a true democracy in the DRC, parliament will never enjoy the privileges and benefits enjoyed by other parliamentarians around the world.*

Exposure is a powerful weapon for change, and the executive in the DRC doesn't want that to happen. This explains why sometimes the internet is disabled in the DRC to keep people from being exposed to the outside world. A respondent noted that:

*Most dictators do not want their people to get much contact with the outside world, especially nations where democracy has been well established because exposure has always been a catalyst of most revolutions that have happened around the world. And*



*the DRC is not exempted. The dictator feels insecure, and because of that, he will never release money to the National Assembly for such endeavor.*

Therefore, as long as the political atmosphere remains the same in the country, the DRC will never enjoy the benefits of benchmarking to help them learn from the experience of others so they can their parliament.

### Autonomy of Operation in Parliament

The findings reveal that the National Parliament of the DRC does not have autonomy in passing important bills or motions in the house. These include motions of defiance, motions of censure, motions aiming at the prime minister or a member of his government, motions of questions and answers, parliamentary investigation, among others. A respondent noted:

*In the DRC National Parliament, motions of censure are always fruitless because they are always done as a pretext to feed the eyes and ears of the public that parliament is doing something, but in reality, the motion will end up bringing nothing positive. This is because in the National Parliament every motion that comes to the floor is dealt with according to the directives given by the head of state.*

One of the respondent MPs stated:

*Having a total majority in the National Assembly, the Speaker of the Parliament receives orders and directives from above in order to support the government by all means. The speaker mobilizes all Parliamentarians belonging to the party of the head of state and strategizes with them on how to vote, according to the directives given by the president, which means they do not achieve anything meaningful. Often, MPs are bribed to vote in a particular way to carry out the agenda of the executive.*

The DRC National Parliament is merely a puppet to legalize what has been decided by the head of state instead of independently conducting the agenda of the National Assembly.

Some members of parliament held a different view, noting that bills pass in the house because they receive the support of a majority of members. Those with majority will always have their say in the house when voting on certain bills. An interviewee MP observed;

*When a certain number of members support a bill and they pass it in the house, does that mean it passed because of corruption? No! It simply passed because it was overwhelmingly supported and voted for by a majority of the parliamentarians and not because they have been bribed or given anything to vote in a particular manner.*

#### Summary of Emerging Themes

This section gives a summary of the main themes emerging from the analysis and prepares the groundwork for the discussion of findings in relation to literature in chapter five.

The major themes that emerged from the findings are summarized in Table 4.3. This is in line with the thematic analysis of the data collected and its subsequent analysis. Notable emerging themes from the data include a lack of values among the parliamentarians. Nothing is considered a taboo or sacred by the members of the National Parliament. Everything goes, and the members are ready and willing to do anything at the behest of the executive.

Corruption in the National Parliament is another major theme. The institution is corrupt at its core due to the way in which MPs are sponsored to parliament by the executive. They feel indebted to the president who sponsored their candidacy and ensured their win and, therefore, cannot operate or make decisions outside the demands of the executive. Rather than working for the people and the country, they end up working for the executive and a few cronies who

sponsored them to the National Parliament. This seriously undermines their independence, competence and autonomy in how they conduct parliamentary business.

Corruption in parliament is evident in how parliamentarians pass bills in the house. Bills are only given the nod if they are aligned with the wishes and the direction of the executive. This means that what the executive decides in terms of which bills should be passed in the National Parliament is final. This is testament to the levels to which the National Parliament has been captured by the executive. Autonomy in passing key bills is basically absent. The findings indicated that performing checks and balances on the executive and other oversight positions is almost impossible given the levels of corruption in the National Parliament. As a result, an authoritarian style of leadership has been entrenched in the country. Those who have led the country have used their power for personal gain while the rest of the country and the citizens wallow in poverty. This is evidenced by the low levels of development in the country in spite of its vast natural and human resources. There's an absence of a developed infrastructure, which includes a good road and rail network, and electricity. Also plaguing the country are food shortages and instability. All these problems can be attributed to one serious shortcoming in the country; deficient leadership practices.

Finally, the analysis has established that an empowered National Parliament must have financial autonomy, functional autonomy and administrative autonomy. Empowered parliaments also enjoy the power separation, adequate staff and the provision of state-paid security for parliamentarians. At the time of this study, these features were missing in the DRC National Parliament, which perhaps explains its current weak and inefficient state. Chapter five discusses this and other findings of the study in detail. The main themes emerging from the analysis of data are summarized in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

*Main Themes Emerging from the Data Analysis*

Research Objective	Emerging Themes
1: Impediments to the empowerment of the National Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of values - Nothing is considered sacred. There is no taboo.</li> <li>• Corruption - National Parliament is corrupt from its inception.</li> <li>• Executive manipulates members of the National Parliament - MPs are sponsored by the state, hence lack independence</li> <li>• Lack of independence - Bills are conveyed in the house through corruption</li> </ul>
2: Impact of leadership practices on governance in the DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership issues - A crisis of leadership in the country</li> <li>• Authoritarianism - Calls for servant and transformational leadership styles</li> <li>• Poor governance</li> <li>• Low levels of development</li> <li>• Calls for better leadership - Improvements in leadership of the country</li> </ul>
3: Characteristics of a strong and empowered National Parliament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial autonomy</li> <li>- Functional autonomy</li> <li>- Administrative autonomy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Separation of powers</li> <li>• Adequate staff</li> <li>• Security for parliamentarians</li> <li>• Need for benchmarking</li> </ul>

Source: Research Data Findings, 2020

Chapter four has presented the results from the data analysis, which applied the thematic analysis approach. The main emerging themes were the guiding tool for the presentation of the main synthesized findings of the study. The chapter presented the results on the various impediments that have obstructed the empowerment of the National Parliament in the DRC, the impact that leadership has had on governance, the characteristics of a strong and empowered

National Parliament, and what respondents believed were appropriate ways through which the National Parliament can be empowered. These findings will be discussed in light of the literature review in Chapters One and Two. The study concludes with a review of the specific objectives of this study, and with recommendations arising from the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings based on how the objectives were presented in chapter four. The research findings presented in the previous chapter were to identify various impediments that have obstructed the empowerment of the National Parliament, to examine leadership practices and the impact they have had on governance in the DRC, to understand the characteristics of a strong and empowered National Parliament, and finally, to apply different theories and models of empowerment to the National Parliament in the DRC. The discussion relates the findings with literature that was already reviewed in chapter one and chapter two.

This chapter also discusses the findings and how the Congolese National Parliament can be empowered to enable it promote good governance that will be a catalyst for sustainable development in the country. The discussions on empowerment are based on the findings of what ails the National Parliament. The chapter analyzes and proposes various approaches, techniques and methods that are appropriate for the empowerment of the National Parliament as a public institution. Chapter five also presents a summary, conclusion, and recommendations from the study.

Next section begins with a discussion on Objective One, which was on the various obstacles that have obstructed the empowerment of the National Parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## Discussion on Objective One: Impediments to Empowerment of the National Parliament

Corruption emerged as one of the main obstacles affecting the National Parliament in the DRC. This section discusses the need for addressing this issue in the institution. The section also discusses this theme and relates it with literature reviewed in the previous Chapter One and Two.

### Fighting and Eradicating Corruption

The results from the field revealed that corruption is endemic in the DRC. It is the biggest obstacle to good governance and sustainable development in the country. Transparency International (2018) confirms this finding by ranking the DRC 161 of 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index. The Parliament itself, which should be the pinnacle of good governance, is deeply marinated in a culture of massive corruption and rent-seeking politics. Receiving bribes from the executive to shut up their mouths and close their ears is the order of the day. Bertelsmann (2014) found out that there is a deeply rooted-culture of corruption in the DRC, and isolates it as one of the major elements that have seriously undermined the rule of law in the country.

Bhuiyan and Amagoh (2012) found that responsible public institutions conduct themselves in a manner that is fundamentally free from corruption and abuse, and which is based on the rule of law. Similar findings were reported by McCloskey (2010), Nibishaka (2011), Matti (2010a); Chene (2014) and Bojang (2017), who concluded that corruption and blatant theft in the DRC has negatively affected good governance practices for sustainable development. Sustainable development in the DRC will not be realized if the deep-rooted culture of corruption remains untamed. This is because corruption has impeded transparency in government institutions, particularly the National Parliament. Further, the institutional framework is

dysfunctional, which has significantly contributed to the spread of corruption. Parliament cannot work alone. It needs the support of other institutions such as the judiciary, police, and the executive, among others, to curb corruption.

Persuading public institutions to curb corruption and come up with radical anti-corruption measures will be crucial in promoting good governance for sustainable development in the DRC. Such anti-corruption reforms will be successful only when supported by the civil society organizations and with sustained pressure from the international financial sector, which should target corrupt individuals, and adoption of anti-money laundering measures (Relief Web, 2019). There is, therefore, a serious need to address the existing corruption system that has crippled the nation and sunk it into poverty. There is urgent need to build a strong, well-equipped and empowered National Parliament that will legislate bipartisan laws to fight and eradicate corruption in all its forms to build a strong and prosperous nation at the heart of the African continent.

This study recommends that the National Parliament should legislate new laws to address rampant corruption in the country. The new law must ensure that only people with a record of high ethics get to run for parliamentary positions. The Member of Parliament must regularly declare their wealth before taking office, during their stay in office and before leaving office. A law requiring MPs to undergo a lifestyle audit on a regular basis should also be established. On the other hand, legislation forbidding the Executive from interfering in the business of the National Parliament should be enacted so the parliamentarians can carry out their work freely. Laws of voting through secret ballot must also be introduced to protect the identity of members so they are not pursued by the executive due to their political views or voting patterns. This is because a majority of the MPs are compelled to vote for the president and his government out of



fear since once they are labeled or identified as working against the government, traps will be placed everywhere to make sure they are taught a lesson.

Laws on the freedom of the agenda of parliament should be enforced to make the parliament unpredictable. The predictability of the agenda of the National Assembly alerts the executive of their movements. The latter then attempts to counter any motion that seeks to address malpractices in the government. Legislation spelling out tough consequences for corrupt members of Parliament must be established, and those found guilty of corruption persecuted and sentenced according to the law.

Equally, parliament must hold the executive and other persons accused of corruption accountable and summon them whenever corruption cases arise. This means that the Parliament needs to create a body, or an anticorruption subcommittee, to carry out independent investigations into corruption matters and debate such cases in the house before the cameras to discourage corrupt people. The purpose of interrogating corrupt persons before the cameras is to give the taxpayers the opportunity to evaluate the way cases are handled by parliament. This will build confidence and trust between the National Assembly and the electorate since everything will be done in the open and in a transparent manner. Censure motions against ministers or government officials should also take place before the cameras so people can identify corrupt people, who should not be eligible for public office should they be convicted in a free, fair, and transparent process. Through debates and motions, parliament should have the power to impeach or remove corrupt civil servants, including the president, from public office.

## Discussion on Objective Two: Impact of Leadership on Governance in the DRC

A leadership crisis emerged as a major theme of the study from the analysis of the data in Chapter Four. This section discusses the leadership concern for the country and makes recommendations on what can be done to remedy the situation.

### Values-Based Leadership

The situation in the DRC is just unspeakable. There's rampant corruption, poverty, traffic of influence, nepotism, anti-values behavior, rebellions in different parts of the country, rapes, killing of innocent citizens as the parliament and the government watch, the list is endless. The findings reveal that most of the things mentioned here are a result of lack of patriotism by those with the responsibility to lead the country. There's a dearth of Members of the National Parliament who are patriotic, MPs who love the country enough to sacrifice their interests for those of the people and the country.

The kind of corruption and behaviors expressed in DRC's National Parliament is evidence of a lack of concern by MPs toward the electorate and the country. They are totally disconnected from the reality of what is going on in the country. They don't have the guts to challenge the Executive or hold it accountable for the mismanagement of public funds, insecurity in the Eastern part of the DRC, the invasion of natural resources by the Chinese in the Katanga Province, poor governance, poor remuneration of public servants, lack of infrastructure, injustice, nepotism, dictatorship, arbitrarily killing of citizens on the basis of political affiliation, mass graves in Kasai, among other atrocities. The National Assembly has never held the Executive to task over any of these injustices. Instead, Members of the National Parliament are

busy defending President Kabila and his government since their main concern is not the country, but their stomachs. Meanwhile, the majority of the citizens are crippled in misery.

Some members of parliament are suspected to be foreigners who have infiltrated the country through illegal means. Bertelsmann (2018) concur with the findings of this study that the Parliament in Kinshasa is not patriotic and never acts in the best interests of the country. The institution often merely rubberstamps what the dictates of the executive even if doing so hurts the country and the people. They do not work for the people who elected them, but for themselves. This behavior is by any definition highly unpatriotic. If the MPs care about the interests of the country, they would resist manipulation and incentives from the executive in favor of the best interests of the country.

Corruption, injustices, nepotism, and mismanagement of public funds have never been censured by the DRC parliament, even when it is clear that the government is very corrupt. Public office abuses are deeply rooted in the DRC's system of governance. People are elected and sent to parliament to make good laws, to advocate for good governance and to keep the executive in check. However, once they are elected, they go MIA, leaving the electorate unrepresented. The findings demonstrate that the Congolese MP is only preoccupied with his personal remuneration, and the bribes from the Executive. The wellbeing of the country and the electorate are the last thing on their minds. Only patriots can work for the benefit of their people and the nation.

According to the findings, a Member of the DRC's National Assembly gets a salary of about \$13,000 per month, while a primary school teacher and other public servants are paid between USD \$50 and \$90 per month. Patriotism is key to the development of any nation on earth. It is critical that Members of the National Parliament embrace it to show their commitment

to the wellbeing of the country. It helps them strive for good governance, justice, democracy and equality.

The present situation in the DRC proves that MPs go to parliament to work for their personal interests and not those of the citizens. They protect and defend the president, who is their political leader, at the detriment of the country and the people. For the MPs, President Kabila comes first. He must be protected at all costs so his regime can continue. Everything and everyone can be sacrificed except Joseph Kabila, the de facto leader of parliamentarians from Kabila's political party, the Common Front for Congo (FCC). Kabila is honored, and almost worshiped, by MPs from his party. The country means nothing to these MPs. During debates on the floor of the House, or when interviewed on national television, MPs associated to President protect and defend him, no matter what the people or the country are going through. This uncritical loyalty is one of the main reasons dictatorship, corruption, and mismanagement are rampant in the DRC. In Parliament, the Opposition is almost non-existent. The International Crisis Group (2015) concurs that the Opposition is weak and fragmented, and that it has made the institution ineffective in challenging and overseeing the Executive. The Opposition has failed to provide checks and balances against the excesses of government.

Members of the National Assembly must be people who have the interests of the country at heart, and who support and love their country. They must pursue politics that put the country first, and seek to see their country prosper and develop. Patriotic parliamentarians will not allow the country to disintegrate into a state of lawlessness. They will, instead, hold the Executive, the Judiciary and other public institutions accountable to the Congolese people. Patriotism has everything to do with the individual's loyalty to the country. Honorable MPs with integrity will not sell their country to foreigners; principled MPs will oversee the Executive; irreproachable

MPs will protect the interests of the public and ensure that Parliament discharges her mandate effectively. MPs who are true countrymen will love, sacrifice, and even die for their country.

To promote patriotism among the members of the National Assembly, this study recommends that a course addressing the values and benefits of good citizenship be introduced not only to the MPs, but to all Congolese, starting from primary school. As time goes by, the DRC will automatically have a new crop of leaders with patriotic roots, people who understand that the country is bigger than any one citizen. MPs, as well as all the Congolese citizens, are called to protect and defend their country.

#### The DRC Has an Excellent Constitution

The findings reveal that the DRC has one of the best written constitutions, which borrows from the French Constitution. It is surprising that this constitution has not met the aspirations of Congolese citizens. The study established that the reason for this status quo was in the implementation, the lack thereof. Previously, it was assumed that the constitution was the problem, that, perhaps, constitution-wise, parliament didn't have adequate powers to do her work independently. Constitutions are written to serve the people's interests, but, unless they are implemented, they remain irrelevant as they are absent in the people's lives. Good writings in themselves are irrelevant unless they are applied to real life. A good constitution lying on the Parliament shelves is as good as if it didn't exist since it cannot answer to the needs of the people. No human writings have ever brought change in human lives just because they are good, or because they make sense. Writings need to be translated into actions and deeds to affect the nation positively. This explains why, despite having one of the best constitutions on earth, the DRC is among the most failed and poorest nations on earth. North (2016) concurs by observing that when institutions are not obeyed, they fail in the role they are supposed to perform. When

they merely exist on paper, they are as good as non-existent since institutions must be active for them to be effective.

There is a saying that actions speak louder than words. It can also be said that actions speak louder than writings. The manuscript or constitution must be accepted, believed, obeyed and applied for it to have the desired impact.

In the Congolese Constitution, the president of the republic holds the power to defend, uphold, and protect the country's constitution. Being the guarantor of the constitution, only the Parliament can challenge the executive in case of a violation of the constitution. The Parliament is the only institution mandated to hold him responsible, or even impeach him should there be reason to do so. But according to this study, the Parliament of the DRC finds itself in a position of weakness, even when the constitution has been blatantly violated, which explains why President Kabila extended his second mandate from five to seven years at will in flagrant contradiction of what is stipulated in the constitution. The people went to the street to protest against the extension as the National Assembly watched. Citizens were blocked, teargassed, arrested, and some killed by the police. The National Parliament said nothing. Instead, they approved everything the executive did. The beauty of any constitution is in its application, not its quality. This study recommends that an amendment be made that states that no citizen is above the constitution. Should there be a need to make a major amendment to the constitution, it must be subjected to a referendum.

## Discussion on Objective Three: Characteristics of an Empowered National Parliament

Objective three sought to establish what the characteristics of a strong and empowered National Parliament are. The discussion from the results is presented in this section. The sub-sections discuss the various characteristics of empowered, autonomous National Parliaments.

### The Autonomy of Parliament

This is the most sensitive area that a National Parliament anywhere in the world must protect to remain relevant. As one of the three arms of the government, the independence of the legislature is paramount since it is expected to play a key role in the country. But, the findings from this study demonstrate that the DRC National Parliament is not autonomous. It is totally dependent on the executive in almost everything to function. The National Assembly lacks administrative as well as financial autonomy to discharge her mandate independently. Administratively speaking, the parliament lacks offices, bureaucratic materials such as computers, laptops, vehicles, among other important tools to allow her to carry out her work effectively.

The findings reveal that there are no offices for parliamentarians in the Parliament building. MPs use their own private offices to carry out parliamentary work. Those who do not have the ability to rent their own work from home, and only come to the Parliament building when it is convened, and in case they have other official work after Parliament goes on recess, they carry the assignments home. No computer or laptop is provided for the members of Parliament. Every MP uses their own computer or laptop to do official work, and those who do not have computers use physical notebooks for recording purposes. Relying on notebooks to do official work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a clear statement that the DRC National Parliament is not

empowered. This study recommends that the National Assembly of the DRC be empowered with computers and laptops to promote effectiveness. Currently, the government does not provide vehicles for members of Parliament. Every member must buy their own vehicle to discharge both personal and parliamentary duties.

Financially speaking, there is no money at the disposal of the National Parliament to spend. In case of need, the National Parliament has to ask for money from the minister of finance, just like any other government ministry. Although the findings reveal that during the drafting of the budget the National Parliament usually comes up with her own budget, which is also included in the national budget and brought to the floor of the House for approval. Despite the fact that the DRC Parliament has her own budget, the money is only released in chunks, according to current need. Parliament is never given the authority to manage her own money. Instead, the government manages the money on her behalf. Parliament is therefore dependent on the executive. Empirical evidence in the literature review supports the findings that the DRC parliament is not financially independent. Parliamentarians have insufficient budgets to effectively do their work (Afoaku, 2010; Trefon, 2013; Bertelsmann, 2018).

Empowered national parliaments are autonomous. They set and control their own budgets so they can conduct their parliamentary duties effectively, which include legislating good laws and providing oversight over other arms of government (Bicketon & Puetter, 2015; King & Ivor, 2013).

In the DRC, parliament is viewed as one of the ministries of the government, which rely totally on the executive to function. Money is the most important weapon of power for every institution on earth as it provides Parliament with the ability to build offices, buy work-enabling equipment like furniture, computers, and vehicles, pay salaries for parliament's staff, and attend



to other important needs of the National Assembly. The autonomy of parliament can be categorized into two main areas; administrative and financial autonomy. The financial autonomy of parliament is one of the major pillars of a strong and empowered parliament. It gives the institution the freedom it needs to carry out her constitutional obligations. The stronger the autonomy, the more powerful the National Parliament will be.

### Administrative Autonomy

As mentioned earlier in the literature review, the DRC parliament need to function independently as stipulated in the Constitution. Administrative autonomy means that the Parliament is at liberty to fix her own agenda without guidelines from external forces. The findings show that most of the agenda carried out by Parliamentarian must have the blessing of the executive, otherwise it won't see the light of day. Empirical evidence in the literature review by Gnassou (2017) reports how the executive in the DRC has undermined the National Parliament and crippled it completely. Nothing happens on the floor of the House without the blessing of the executive. As one of the three arms of government, the parliament needs to understand that, just like the executive and the judiciary, it has a constitutional right to run her affairs independently. MPs need to understand that autonomy is not a privilege given to them by the executive, but their constitutional right to help them discharge their affairs independently. Looking at the role the National Assembly is mandated to play, the need for independence is paramount.

It's critical to note here that the findings reveal that the DRC members of parliament are not ignorant. They understand the constitution and the fact that the National Assembly is an independent body. They also understand the role they are supposed to play as parliamentarians. However, most MPs have sold their conscience and authority to the executive by accepting

bribes. A National Parliament devoid of administrative capacity is completely crippled and has no power to discharge her duties properly. This study recommends that offices be built for members of the National Parliament to provide them with a conducive environment so they can work effectively. Offices for MPs mean they will not be forced to carry out official duties at home. Official work, especially by legislators charged with making laws for the country, must be carried out in an official capacity. When one receives a client at their home or in a private office, the implication is that such an encounter is a private or personal matter. MPs need functional offices, replete with administrative staff provided by parliament, ideally within the parliament buildings. Such offices will facilitate their work and motivate them to work with diligence. When an MP conducts parliamentary work from home, it's difficult to evaluate their performance. However, if they have offices in parliament, it's easy to monitor them and ensure they work when they are supposed to work. Parliament has no way of making sure MPs work if they are working from home or from their private offices. When somebody is given an office, they understand the responsibility that goes with it. In return, they are bound to work with diligence, knowing that people are watching. The office is a suitable place for the MPs to meet their constituents and carry out parliamentary work. Having an office is also critical since it creates a sense of responsibility and reflects the importance of the office of the MP. It also elicits respect from the electorate.

The National Assembly must also be allowed to hire her own staff, people who are accountable to them and not to the executive. Employees are accountable to whoever hires them. One person cannot hire while another seeks to control or supervise the hired employee. An employee's allegiance is to his employer. This study recommends that the National Assembly be allowed to hire her own staff, not the executive. This is because the Parliament is not a

department of the executive, but an independent body that should be respected as such. Money should be made available to Parliament to enable the purchase of appropriate office equipment. The writer believes that with good working tools, the National Assembly will carry its work effectively.

### Financial Autonomy

The study reveals that there is no financial autonomy in the DRC National Parliament. It depends totally on the executive to finance its projects. There is no money at the disposal of Parliament. Trefonn (2013) and Shephard (2014) concur that the parliament is financially beholden to the executive. Money has the power to buy things, and even people. Inadequate funding has crippled the DRC National Parliament and rendered it completely powerless and ineffective. This study recommends that parliamentarians be trained and taught financial literacy to help them understand their constitutional rights on financial matters. As an institution with the mandate to keep the executive in check, parliament needs her own budget so it can implement its projects without having to beg the executive.

The National Parliament is mandated to make laws and provide oversight on the use of public resources by the executive and other government officials. How then can the National Parliament play her role effectively while begging from the same institution it is supposed to check or supervise? The DRC National Parliament has been ineffective for decades because of her reliance on the executive for funding. Corrupt MPs are bought by the executive at will since parliament does not have control over its budget. They are often manipulated by the executive to do its bidding or be denied funding. The National Parliament, as one of the three arms of the government, should understand that budgetary allocations are not a favor given by the executive out of pity. It's their right. Once the budget has been passed, budgetary allocations for parliament

must be released to parliament forthwith so it can manage its affairs without having to beg the executive.

Assessing the financial autonomy of parliament can be a complex undertaking given the nature in which government operates. The parliamentary budget usually forms part of the national budget, which is also voted for and approved by parliament before spending begins. Financial autonomy involves giving parliament both budgetary autonomy and freedom of executing the parliamentary estate. Parliament must be allowed to draw up its budget without interference from the executive or the ministry of finance. Governments must not challenge the budgets presented to them by the National Parliament. However, the budget prepared by parliament needs to reflect the economic situation of the country. Adequate resources must be made available to the National Assembly to enable her function properly. Money is power, and without it, parliament will always be vulnerable to, and preyed on by, the executive.

#### Security for Members of Parliament

The findings indicate that the government does not provide security to all Members of National Assembly in the DRC. Security is only provided in case of a personal request, especially when one has reason to believe their life is in danger, and even in such a case the MP has to pay the salary of the security personnel provided. This study recommends that the National Assembly drafts a law making the provision of security to all Members of the National Parliament a right, especially owing to the prevailing political climate in the country. The findings reveal that most members of the National Assembly, especially those from the opposition parties, feel insecure, especially when they go against a motion brought to the floor of the House by the executive. Security is one of the pillars of good performance. People perform better when they do not feel threatened.

## Benchmarking

The findings reveal that the Congolese parliament has never done benchmarking since its inception. The members of parliament rely on their knowledge and understanding to lead and function in the National Assembly. The literature review shows that benchmarking is critical since it educates, informs and enlightens the MPs on good parliamentary practices and procedures. Kouzes and Posner (2013) noted that one of leadership's most essential lesson is working with and learning from other people. No matter how capable a leader or institution is, he or she will not deliver effectively without working with others. When at their best, leaders and great institutions foster collaboration through facilitating relationships and building trust by developing competencies and increasing self-determination. This can only be achieved by learning from others and working in collaboration with them. This study recommends that an amendment be made to the constitution of the land to create a benchmarking program. There is no sin in learning from others. It is through learning and observation of what others are doing that the National Parliament is going to improve its performance for a prosperous Democratic Republic of Congo.

## Models of Empowerment of the National Parliament

This section reviews the ways through which the national parliament can be strengthened to enable it promote good governance in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Section begins with the prerequisites of what is required for one to qualify to run for election as a member of parliament. The other sub-sections argue the case for the best models for the National Parliament in the DRC.

## The Qualification of a Member of Parliament

Ethics and Values. According to the findings from the field, it was observed that several elements have contributed to the degradation and ineffectiveness of the National Parliament of the DRC. The most critical elements that have crippled the institution are: lack of patriotism, greed, corruption, impunity, and lack of political will. Patriotism is an indispensable component in every community or society of people. This is because it motivates citizens to offer selfless services to the community. Patriotism promotes good governance as it motivates the citizens to work for a common cause, for the progress and wellbeing of the country as a whole. The data reveals that lack of patriotism by members of the National Assembly has been at the center of the underperformance of the institution. Every MP fights for their own interests rather than those of the country.

This explains the many rebellious groups that have invaded the country for many years, raping women and killing their own people without mercy under the watch of the National Parliament of Kinshasa. National parks have been ravaged, rare animals have become extinct, forest destroyed, minerals plundered while members of the National Parliament are busy fighting for their personal interests. The DRC will never take off until the citizens put aside selfishness and work toward the common good of all Congolese people. This study recommends the creation of a course on patriotism, to be introduced in the national curriculum to encourage people to love their country. The course should be mandatory for all members of parliament. This exercise should not only be limited to members of parliament, but to all civil servants as well and all citizens. This is critical since only patriotic citizens can lay down their lives and sacrifice for their nation.

Aragon et al. (2015) noted that a lack of political will among the leaders of a country negatively affects its sustainable development. Wilson (2015) observed that institutions play an indispensable role in understanding how a country and economy are governed. Moral ethics is built on values by which a person lives. Ethics is concerned with making judgments and decisions about which course of action to take (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Daft (2016) observed that moral ethics are unbendable values or principles that guide the life of a person. They are shaped by the environment within which the individual lives, their place of work, family or religious beliefs. Ethical principles are crucial for a better and successful leadership for the people. Leaders with good moral values cannot be compromised nor influenced by circumstances at hand. A Member of Parliament must be a person with good morals to discharge their duties effectively. Good ethics is the foundation of good leadership since it guides a leader on what is right or wrong.

Ethics or moral integrity is a very effective tool in guiding human behavior. It speaks to the inner person, even when one is alone. When ethical behavior is encouraged and applauded, people will trust their leadership and respect the institutions they represent. This can only be good for the society.

Armstrong and Taylor (2014) notes that good morals can be expressed through care, consideration and performance. If the National Assembly is constituted by members who care for, and value, their constituents, the nation will be more progressive and inclined towards sustainable development. This study recommends that an independent body be created to deal with the redefinition of the values of a member of the National Assembly as a society's values define what is expected of them. Redefinition of the ethical values will retrain the conscience of

the members of the National Assembly so they can carry out their noble role as representatives of the Congolese people.

As noted above, greed and corruption are among the major problems afflicting the DRC parliament. Corruption has degraded, crippled and made parliament ineffective in its work. The study reveals that the National Assembly serve personal interests instead of national interests. Corruption is rampant in the way bills and motions are brought to the floor of the House and how MPs vote. The Congolese Parliament is ready to pass any bill or law at the detriment of the feelings and will of the people as long as the executive is behind it. What matters to most Congolese Parliamentarians is their own interests; the rest of the common Congolese people are on their own.

Bertelsmann (2004) observes that political interference and a deeply-rooted culture of corruption have seriously undermined the rule of law in the DRC. Shephard (2014) found that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, public institutions, notably the National Assembly, are undermined and largely controlled by the Executive. Parliament has failed to execute its function of providing oversight over the Executive. The surveyed literature revealed that bills in the National Assembly are passed at the behest of the executive. Besides, the National Parliament is fragile in its institutional capacity to promote a culture of good governance that is vital for the sustainable development of the Democratic Republic of Congo (Trefon, 2013; Samndong & Nhantumbo, 2015).

The data show that the DRC Parliament is corrupt, right from its composition, since members of the National Assembly are recruited and sponsored by the head of state, who funds their campaign. Having been bought by the Head of State from the onset, members feel indebted to the president. In short, they owe him their seats in parliament. This explains why the DRC



National Parliament was ready to change the constitution to suit President Kabila's desire. That amendment added two extra years to his term as president, even after the constitutional two terms expired. The constitution was violated and the president given two more years to run outside his mandate. The data reveal that during this period, there were numerous demonstrations in the capital city of Kinshasa and other parts of the country. Citizens were vehemently opposed to the idea of extending the mandate of the president. The government reacted to the protests by teargassing people and using live ammunitions on them. As a result, many people lost their lives.

These findings concur with Trefon (2013) and Samndong and Nhantumbo (2015) who found that the DRC National Parliament is controlled by the executive who gets to decide who becomes a Member of Parliament and how they perform their duties. Having sold their conscience to the executive because of money, members of parliament are left with no option but to comply with the demands of the executive. This explains why the country is mismanaged as parliament stands by, seemingly incapable of doing its work. No motion of censure of a minister, or a member of the government has ever been passed at the floor of the House. Every decision in the house is made according to the directives of the executive. It is impossible to tell a slave to make independent decisions. It is business as usual while anti-values practices leave the country reeling in poverty, and the DRC joining the infamous club of the poorest nations on the earth, notwithstanding her vast mineral resources, expansive forests and a river that should generate enough electricity for all.

This study recommends that an independent body of trustworthy people be created to do background checks on every person seeking election as an MP. This will ensure that only individuals with good ethics are recruited. Creating a law prohibiting members of Parliament

from seeking the executive's sponsorship in elections is also recommended. Declaration of wealth must be mandatory before one is sworn in as a Member of Parliament, and their wealth made public. Continual assessment of one's wealth must be mandatory throughout their term in office.

Accountability must be made mandatory since the office of the MP is a public one. Everything must be done in transparent way. Keping (2018) referred to accountability as the process of holding everyone responsible for their behavior. In the governance of the public sector, accountability implies holding institutions to account for how they fulfill their obligations. When there is accountability in the public sector, a higher level of good governance is realized (Keping, 2018). Accountability is significantly related to good governance, implying that responsible public institutions conduct themselves in a manner that is fundamentally free from corruption and abuse, and which is based on the rule of law (Bhuiyan & Amagoh, 2012). Accountability is also an indicator of how governments conduct the management of public affairs (Almquist, Grossi, van Helden, & Reichard, 2013).

A conducive working environment is critical for MPs to carry out their duties independently and in peace. Adequate equipment, offices, computers, and vehicles should be provided for MPs to work effectively. Security should be provided to all Members of the National Assembly to help them carry out their duties freely and without fear or intimidation from the executive. When voting on sensitive matters, the vote must be cast through secret ballot to protect their identity from the tyrant. Secret voting will curb corruption since MPs will vote with their conscience, whether or not the executive has incentivized them. Secret ballot has the benefit of concealing the identity of voters. It's not possible to know how one voted. MPs must be adequately remunerated so they don't depend on the Executive for handouts. This will go a

long way in eliminating corruption and manipulation by the Executive. Parliament should be allowed to draft its budget and money released at once according to its budget. This will check the current scenario where the executive uses money as a secret weapon to control parliament. Parliament cannot be expected to be autonomous without money to run its programs. It must not beg for money from the executive. Its budget must be funded in full so they can hire their own staff and carry out their mandate independently. The work of oversight can only be carried out by a parliament that is financially independent.

The absence of a strong work ethic is another challenge plaguing the DRC Parliament. Ethics guide how we behave. Good ethics instruct, refrain, correct and lead a person to good and acceptable behavior. They keep the conscience alive and alert. A person with good morals will always check their actions against the prevailing standards of behavior the society abides by. Where one's conscience is dead, a person acts selfishly. When Yew Lee became the prime minister of Singapore, the country was in a very difficult situation. He could have taken the country in any direction he wished. However, his moral ethics would not allow him to do so. He came up with a working system that was built on moral integrity. The result? Singapore took off from a third world country to a first (Yew, 2000).

The DRC National Assembly has been incapacitated and unable to deliver services or fulfill its mandate due to weak and distorted ethical values. There is no society or organization on earth that succeeds with weak and questionable ethical values.

Political will is critical in running any institution, the parliament especially. The will to serve, to sacrifice, and to give the best service are critical attributes for stellar MPs. Lack of political will is defined as a refusal to act positively despite the fact that one has the power to do the right thing (Roberts, 2017). The data at hand reveal that most Congolese MPs lack the

political will to serve their nation, even when given the opportunity to do so. They have a mandate to represent the electorates and check the executive, but they are not willing to do so for one reason or another. As a result, the desired outcome of good governance and oversight of key public institutions is forfeited.

Culture. From the findings, the current culture in the National Assembly of the DRC is a stumbling block to the principles of good governance and the prosperity of the nation. The culture in the current Parliament promotes self-centeredness. The executive and the MPs work hand in hand, passing bills that benefit themselves while the common citizen and the country is totally ignored. The language in the National Parliament is about “how much money are we going to be given to change the constitution or pass a given bill.” It is not about improving the lives of the citizens. Trefon (2013) found that the DRC National Parliament has failed to promote a culture of good governance for sustainable development of the country due to selfishness and corruption.

De Vries (2016) concurs with Trefon, observing that the DRC Parliament has never encouraged a culture of good governance where leaders are taken to task for their stewardship. Sustainable development does not happen in a vacuum. It requires a friendly context where systems of good governance are constructed to support sustainable development programs.

Political interference and a deeply-rooted culture of corruption have seriously undermined the rule of law in the DRC (Bertelsmann, 2014). The country has never had a culture or system that ensures the rule of law, public assets and the wellbeing of the people are protected (de Vries, 2016). Chambers and Booth (2013) contended that the DRC lacks a political culture of issue-based politics since the country has never really had a system of holding

those in charge of running the state accountable. Rather, the DRC politics are based on predation and clientelism.

This study recommends that a code of new rules and regulations that uphold the principles of good governance should be drafted to guide the behavior of parliamentarians in the National Assembly. Parliament should come up with a training program on principles of good governance that every MP must take. The program should take at least three days at the beginning of every term. New and improved rules must also be drafted to prevent immoral, corrupt and people with a questionable character or a bad record from becoming a Member of Parliament.

Parliamentarians are supposed to speak for the electorate. They are their eyes, ears and mouthpieces. They are elected with a mandate to make laws that will improve the lives of the citizens. They are not elected to serve their personal interests, but those of the people. Therefore, inculcating a culture that supports good governance is paramount. The new rules and regulations will block corrupt people from becoming members of the National Assembly and establish a new culture that promotes good governance for a prosperous DRC. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) noted that a change of culture aims at improving the effectiveness of an organization and its ability to meet its goals. Therefore, a change of culture in the House will strengthen the institution to meet the expectations of the DRC and her people.

Training. The study revealed a dire need for training of members of the National Assembly. MPs do not seem to understand the difference between the independence of parliament and accountability. While parliament has a constitutional mandate to operate independently without interference from outside, it is accountable to the electorate. Trefon (2013) found that parliament has failed to carry out its work, which is to make laws and provide

oversight to the government. It is weak, ineffective, and lacks authority and proper structures to function as intended. A close look at the way the current parliament is operating, and the conduct of MPs in the House, indicates that training is needed that lays a clear understanding of the role and the mandate of a Member of Parliament. Such training will equip them with knowledge and enhance their capacity and skills for better performance in the House. Currently, the conduct of MPs on the floor of the House indicates that they don't clearly understand their role clearly, nor their responsibility to the electorates.

The World Bank (2016) refers to empowerment as the process of enhancing the capacity of people, groups or institutions to help them make decisions and transform such decisions into outcomes and desired actions. This includes the expansion of their capacity and assets within a society so they can participate in, negotiate with, control, influence and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. In a similar manner, a report by the IPU and UNDP (2017) found that one of the major ways of strengthening national parliaments is through developing specific research capacity so it can provide effective oversight. This capacity-building involves training members on what they are expected to do and enhancing their capacity to perform their duties.

Currently, MPs view parliamentary work like any other job. They see it as a way to improve their standard of living. They do not view their job in terms of a calling, a mandate given to them by the people to work for them. Congolese MPs go to parliament to achieve their personal goals and not those of the electorate, and this explains why the conduct of MPs in the house is so under par. It also explains the constitutional amendment of 2016 that MPs passed to give President Kabila two more years beyond his mandate, which unabashedly violated and contradicted the Congolese constitution. Constitutionally, the president's term was to end on

19<sup>th</sup> December 2016, but they extended it to December 2018. The electorate opposed the idea and went to the streets to express their discontentment and frustration, but they were met with the fire and fury of live bullets and police brutality, which saw some of them die in the demonstrations, while the MPs watched quietly from the sidelines.

It's on this basis that the study recommends a training program for all parliamentarians to promote good governance practices. With such training, MPs will play their oversight role effectively and make sure that the Executive is kept in check. This can only be good for both the country and its people. The study believes that adequately trained MPs will articulate issues and matters of the country in a more rational way. Their understanding of the public office will be enhanced in a manner that will serve the national interests instead of personal interests.

Competence. Contrary to other findings, this study found that the DRC's National Assembly is made up of the most educated people in the nation; namely, university graduates, lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, university professors, and successful business men and women, among others. The question many people are asking is; why the poor performance? The findings reveal that greed from both the Executive and the MPs is at the center of the ineffectiveness of the DRC National Parliament. There is a very strong culture of greed and bootlicking in the DRC. From the musicians to police officers, to the comedians, civil servants and politicians, greed and bootlicking are the order of the day. One just needs to listen to Congolese Music to understand the findings of this study. The music often glorifies high profile individuals, politicians, and rich men or women. The same culture applies to the National Assembly, where most members of the National Parliament sing praises of the President of the Republic to get his attention. Gnassou (2017), Shephard (2014), and Verweijen (2017) found that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Executive controls the National Parliament,

making the institution ineffective in the discharge of its duties. The Executive has used networks of patronage, notably the members of Parliament, to pursue personal interests. Some of the MPs protect the personal interests of the Executive while ignoring those of the rest of the country. Further, the Executive controls and manipulates the members of the National Parliament for its selfish agenda.

This study recommends continuous training to eradicate the anti-values mentality to make the parliament a strong and effective institution. The majority of MPs are qualified to serve as members of parliament, but they are easily manipulated by the Executive because of their greed. It's instructive that even after President Kabila retired from power, a majority of MPs still owe allegiance to him and regard him as their moral authority. They consider him as their source of inspiration and a role model. They wait upon him to provide guidance, as if they do not have their own mind to make good judgments on what is good and acceptable to move the country forward. Despite the level of mismanagement, corruption and poverty experienced in the country, most Congolese MPs still support the past regime. There is a total disconnect between the feelings of the majority of the people and those of the MPs who served with him. It's not surprising that most of the MPs who served under the Kabila regime served their personal interests, not those of the people they represented.

Competence in its self is not enough to make parliament effective, unless it is combined with moral ethics, patriotism and a political will to see the country move forward. In Africa and in some parts of the world, there are nations that do not have the kind of mineral resources and manpower that the DRC has. Yet, they are doing far better than the DRC. MPs need more than competence. They are supposed to be people of integrity who love their country and are ready to sacrifice their own interests for those of the nation. During interviews with different



parliamentarians, it was evident that most of them are knowledgeable. They understand the constitution, the role of parliament, and the expectations of the electorate. They are also aware of the discontentment among the electorates in view of their performance. However, they are blinded by personal greed. A parliamentarian should be a soldier to his people, to represent, defend, protect and make laws that contribute to their wellbeing. This, however, is not the case with the DRC's members of Parliament. Bertelsmann Stiftung (2018) argues that the DRC lacks competent leaders in parliament since those holding in charge neither strive for a liberal democracy, nor are they committed to policies that promote good governance practices. The findings of this study on this sub-topic disagree with Bertelsmann. The DRC Parliament is composed of very intelligent individuals, among them lawyers, medical doctors, engineers, university lecturers, astute businessmen and women, among others.

This study recommends a strong, independent body be established to deal with the root causes of the ineffectiveness in the DRC Parliament. The body should be made up of people with integrity, and who have a good reputation and a proven record of dealing mercilessly with corrupt MPs and other public officers. A law that gives the judiciary the power to take on such cases, without the interference of parliament or the executive, must be set up. Also, a law determining or stating clearly the length or period within which such cases should be heard and determined must be drafted. Laws giving special attention and priority to corruption cases should be enacted. Such cases should be heard and determined within a month. Corruption cases in DRC can drag on for years. The process goes something like this: the cases starts but then drag on endlessly. The courts keep on postponing the hearings until people forget about the scandal. At the end, after the public has given up, the case is thrown out for lack of enough evidence. Nobody is taken to prison.

A specialized branch of police should be mandated to investigate privately and come up with concrete evidence before the matter is brought to court or to the knowledge of the public. This will deal with corruption in the judiciary as it will prevent it from saying it doesn't have enough evidence to continue with the case, as has been the practice in the past. It should be stated here that, like the parliament, the judiciary is not exempted from corruption. Once a case of corruption has been established, drastic measures must immediately be taken to deal with the culprit, including jailing them or confiscating what was stolen. This will bring sanity in parliament and in the overall management of public offices by civil servants.

### Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

#### Summary

The National Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Congo is ineffective and lacks the power to do its work as revealed in the Chapter Four of this study. It is faced with deep-seated issues that begin with how members get elected to parliament. At election time, individuals with potential or influence are identified and recruited by the president or his close allies through recommendation. The selected candidates are sponsored or given money by the executive to campaign and a list with their names forwarded to the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission to make sure they get elected to the National Parliament. The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), which is one of the arms of the executive, makes sure that the candidates of the Head of State go through.

When members get to parliament through such a flawed process, they literally owe their seat in parliament to the entity or person that sponsored them, in this case the executive. They,

therefore, feel duty-bound to do the bidding of their master once they are in parliament. This explains why in the DRC's National Parliament, there has never been a motion of censure of a member of the government, a CEO of a public company, or the head of state, despite the plethora of abuses committed in the country, or the incessant cries of the citizens for change. The majority of MPs sponsored by the executive know they are in the National Assembly fraudulently and must cooperate with the executive so they are not exposed. MPs are, therefore, just like other civil servants hired by the executive to work for him and not the electorates. It is practically impossible to tell a slave to make independent decisions. The result has been that DRC's MPs are powerless and ineffective in the discharge of their duties.

Authoritarian leadership has also crippled the National Assembly. Since most Congolese presidents came to power through military coups, their styles of leadership were always authoritarian, denying the citizens the right to choose their leaders. Most members of the National Assembly were imposed on the people on the basis of their political affiliation and not their agenda for the people. People who oppose the system are intimidated, arrested, put in the prison, some killed, while others flee into exile to save their dear lives. The majority of MPs from the opposition parties are also bought with money or enticed with government posts to shift allegiance and join the ruling party. The few remaining, who are faithful to their calling, are ostracized.

Another reason the DRC National Parliament is ineffective is lack of autonomy to carry out its operations. Whatever happens in the National Assembly must have the blessing of the executive. The head-of-state must be consulted before any major or important motion is passed in parliament. Despite the acknowledgement by the constitution of the autonomy and independence of parliament, in reality, there is nothing like autonomy. MPs are civil servants at

the service of the head-of-state, who decides and dictates everything that happens in the House, including changing the constitution to accommodate his personal ambitions. Lack of autonomy has rendered the National Parliament powerless and ineffective as it is unable to discharge her mandate, which is to make laws, authorize government expenditure, provide proper oversight over the executive, and to debate national matters.

Dictatorship has greatly hampered the doctrine of separation of powers. Parliament is supposed to be an independent body as stated in the constitution. This is especially critical since it is charged with the responsibility of providing oversight over the executive. The vulnerability of parliament has affected the prospect of good governance practices, which has in return negatively affected the development of the nation. It is almost impossible for members of the parliament sponsored by the executive to think of separation of powers between the executive and the National Assembly. They are themselves a product of interference with the doctrine of separation of powers.

Financially speaking, the National Assembly is inadequately funded. As such, it heavily relies on the goodwill of the executive. Despite the budget of the National Parliament, money is disbursed by the finance minister in piecemeal, but with the consent of the head-of-state. Sometimes MPs go for several months without salaries as they wait on the minister of finance to come to their rescue. The executive uses money as a weapon to keep the National Parliament under control. Parliament does not have money to build offices for MPs, purchase administrative equipment and tools, and employ parliamentary personnel, among other things. Besides, parliament does not do benchmarking with other national parliaments as it does not fund for such an exercise. MPs are limited and ignorant in terms of parliamentary best practice in other nations as they are confined in one place due to a lack of funds.

Lack of financial autonomy has also contributed tremendously to the crippling of the National Parliament of the DRC. It has exposed to total dependence on the executive for survival. Money is one of the most important tools of power. It is like a weapon in the hands of whoever possess it. Money promotes freedom and independence of mind and operation. It creates an environment of confidence and optimism, whereby MPs can discharge their duties independently without having to beg for assistance. Money creates a sense of pride as it frees MPs from the captivity of dependency and liability, which in turn empowers them with boldness in decision making. No institution on earth succeeds out of dependency. In the absence of adequate funding, parliament has no power to make independent decisions and is an easy prey for the executive. It's not surprising that corruption has become endemic in DRC's National Parliament as MPs strive to survive.

DRC has one of the best constitutions in the world, which advocates separation of powers between the executive, the judiciary and the legislature. This should come with financial freedom of these institutions. Despite the fact that the DRC has an excellent constitution that advocates the autonomy of parliament, this is true only on paper, but in reality, it's anything but. Matters such as constitutional term limits for the president have on several occasions been abused or manipulated with the help of the National Parliament. The constitution cannot bring needed change in the country when it's gathering dust on shelves, never mind the fact that the National Parliament is mandated to oversight the Executive. This summary explains why the National Parliament of the DRC is powerless and ineffective in meeting the needs of the electorate.

### Conclusion

The National Parliament is mandated to play a central role in promoting good governance practices, which are essential pillars of the sustainable development of a nation on earth, and the

DRC is not an exception. The National Parliament is mandated to legislate the laws of the land, approve the budget of the government, give the government the authorization to spend or use public money, and provide oversight on how public affairs are conducted in a country. It is only when public resources are spent well and public affairs handled appropriately that the country will benefit from sustainable development.

Abuses of public office, corruption, dictatorship, nepotism, traffic of influence, and theft, among other anti-values behavior have been witnessed in the DRC. This explains why, despite the vast natural resources in the country, the DRC is ranked among the poorest nations in the world. The potential of this nation has largely gone unnoticed by a citizenry who have not benefitted from it. Levels of poverty and food insecurity are extremely high in a country that has the potential to feed a billion people. The country can only prosper when its revenues are properly managed and channeled into development projects. This can only happen on the back of good leadership and governance, a virtue that is currently absent in the DRC. The National Parliament in the DRC must provide adequate checks and balances in the utilization of resources and management of public affairs.

The Parliament, being an oversight institution mandated by the people, is the only body that can challenge the executive in terms of abuses of public office, corruption, bad governance, among others. However, this can only happen in the context where the National Parliament is capacitated with the right tools. To enable parliament to operate independently, it must be provided with structural, financial, and operational autonomy. A clear demarcation needs to be drawn, separating the National Parliament from the executive so it can operate independently from the dictatorship of the executive. Benchmarking is also important since it helps MPs to broaden the understanding of their role as representatives of the people. This means it can set its

own agenda, hire staff her own choice, pass bills without interference from outside, and finance her activities from her own budget. Such an empowered parliament is strong enough to play its role effectively and ensure that public office is well-managed to meet the expectations of Congolese citizens. Only an empowered National Parliament can take the government to task to ensure the practices of good governance are applied to achieve sustainable development in the DRC.

The study concludes that a strong parliament is critical for societies that uphold good governance practices, a prerequisite for sustainable development. Empowered parliaments have certain key elements. Members of such strong parliaments have certain personal and work ethics and values. A good starting point should be to work on the ethics, morals and values of members of parliament since these are the key attributes of an effective leader who cannot be bought. To discharge their duties effectively, members must be people of integrity, leaders who understand what is right or wrong.

Culture in national parliaments is an enabler or a stumbling block to good governance practices. Culture influences how national parliaments work. Therefore, it is critical to have a parliamentary culture where the interests of the nation and the people come first. Empowered parliaments have cultures that uphold good moral ethics and principles of good governance. The study has established that culture is indispensable in countries that seek to strengthen their national parliaments, the DRC is not an exception. The study concludes that corruption and sustainable development cannot coexist. Countries that have corruption embedded in their leadership and governance, such as the DRC, will continue facing developmental challenges. The deeply-rooted culture of corruption in the National Parliament of the DRC explains the high levels of underdevelopment and bad governance practices. Societies that seek improved

governance should put in place measures to adequately curb corruption and eliminate the vice within their leadership and governance systems. This implies that the National Parliament must play a significant role in addressing corruption if good governance for sustainable development is to be realized.

Finally, autonomy is the key to any effective parliament in the world. Sustainable development cannot be realized in a vacuum, but in the context of good governance. The executive is entrusted with taxpayers' money to develop the country and improve the living standards of the citizens. When these resources are properly utilized, sustainable development and high living standards will be realized. In Africa and in many other parts of the world, there has always been a temptation by the executive to mismanage the public resources entrusted to them. This has been well-documented in the DRC. Parliament as an oversight agent must be strengthened and empowered with operational, administrative, and financial capacities so it can discharge its constitutional mandate effectively. Mechanisms must be put in place to prevent the executive from interfering with the work of parliament through bribing, traffic of influence, manipulation, among other forms of interference that can compromise the work of the National Assembly.

### Recommendations

The study makes several recommendations that are aimed at strengthening the National Parliament of the Democratic Republic of Congo to promote good governance for the attainment of sustainable development in the country. These recommendations are solely based on the findings of the study, which has generally revealed that the DRC's National Parliament is seriously disempowered and ineffective. These recommendations are meant to contribute to the



strengthening of the institution to enable the MPs play their role effectively and promote good governance for the sustainable development of the country.

a) Impediments to the empowerment of the National Parliament in the DRC: The findings reveal that nothing is considered sacred in the National Parliament of the DRC, except the president. Therefore, the study recommends that legislation of laws that stipulate the National Parliament as a sacred institution, which deserves great respect and the observance of irreproachable morals and values, be drafted. Anyone who falls short of these morals and ethical values should not be allowed to vie for a seat in parliament. By sieving aspirants seeking to be members of the National Parliament, only candidates who meet the ethical and moral threshold should pass through the sieve.

i) The findings reveal that the National Parliament of the DRC is corrupt from inception. From the get-go, the wrong candidates are the ones who usually make it to parliament. Most of these aspirants are sponsored by the executive to get to the National Parliament. Once in parliament, they become liabilities, pawns who are indebted to the goodwill of the executive. The study therefore recommends an urgent need to build a strong and independent electoral body that will ensure free, fair and independent elections. The members of the National Independent Electoral Body should be vetted and approved by all stakeholders to serve as credible referees. This means individuals garnering the most popular vote get to be elected to parliament.

ii) According to the findings, most aspirants for parliamentary seats in the DRC are sponsored by the head-of-state. This turns MPs into a liability because they

have to reciprocate the favor done to them. Therefore, the study recommends that malpractices by aspirants, such as accepting or giving bribes, should be sanctioned under the law. Individuals who receive money from the state should be disqualified. This will ensure that aspirants are elected to parliament based on their ideologies and policies rather than simply going into the National Parliament to serve the Executive and his cronies.

- b) The impact of leadership practices on governance in the DRC: There is a deep leadership crisis in the DRC, which has resulted in poor governance and a lack of much-needed development. Thus, the study recommends a value-based model of leadership, built on high ethical moral values where the interests of the electorate are elevated above individual ambitions. A leadership that is caring, built on integrity and mutual respect for the common goals of both the leader and the electorate, must be fostered. Values-based leadership is the way to go for the DRC because it is selfless, caring, accommodative, and empathetic. This style of leadership focusses on what is beneficial to the country.
- c) The characteristics of an empowered Parliament: the findings reveal that autonomy is the most important component of an empowered National Parliament. Administrative, functional and financial autonomy is key to any effective National Parliament. The DRC National Parliament lacks all of the three critical elements. Therefore, the study recommends that legislation be enacted obligating the Executive to release the total amount of money due to the National Parliament at the beginning of every financial year, and not in chunks (*compte good*), as is currently the case in the DRC. This will enable the National Parliament to run its affairs independently and efficiently without

have to rely on the Executive. The National Parliament should be allowed, among other financial obligations, to run her own budget, which should include hiring parliamentary support personnel, creating furnished offices for MPs, and paying salaries on time. At the same time, financial autonomy will curb corruption in the National Parliament as MPs will have access to financial resources to cater for their needs.

- d) The models of empowerment: The study has proven beyond any shadow of doubt that the DRC National Parliament is ineffective for a number of reasons. First, it lacks autonomy and does not enjoy separation of powers. Second, it's financially dependent on the executive, among other challenges. It's the recommendation of this study that a select committee be domiciled within the parliament premises to oversee sustainable development.
- (i) Benchmarking must be made mandatory to expose the MPs to how other parliaments around the world function.
  - (ii) One-week training and capacity building for Members of Parliament at the beginning of every term. The training should cover ethics, the sanctity of parliament, and what is expected of a legislator.
  - (iii) A school of patriotism need to be established. Such a school should teach individuals the beauty and benefits of loving their country. This will inculcate in them a sense of patriotism, which is indispensable for a unified Congo that is free of strife and wars.

- (iv) Security should be provided to all the Members of the National Assembly at the cost of the state. Enhancement of security will ensure that MPs carry out their duties without intimidation or fear for their lives.
- e) CENI: The findings revealed that the electoral body in the DRC has contributed to the current state in the National Parliament since it is held captive by the executive. This study recommends that a law be enacted stipulating a total restructuring of the CENI, from the way members are elected, and how they carry out their mandate.

### Recommendations for Further Research

This study was a case study of the DRC's National Parliament as a public institution.

Further research is recommended on the following:

- a) Empowerment of the judiciary to bring balance between the executive and the National Parliament by limiting the power of the executive over the National Assembly. Only a strong and independent judiciary can play the role of a referee in time of crises.
- b) A study on empowering the electoral body (CENI) in the DRC to help it perform its role of ensuring credible elections. This will further empower the National Parliament.

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## *Appendix A*

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT, AND CIVIL SOCIETY PROFESSIONALS

#### Background Information

The researcher interviewed members of the National parliament and civil society professionals from the four selected provinces namely, Kinshasa, Haut-Katanga, North Kivu and Maniema.

The members were sitting in the current national parliament. The researcher will seek their views, opinions, and perspectives on the topic of study.

#### Opening

Hello. (Smile and handshake). Thank you honorable member for agreeing to let me interview you and making time in your schedule for this interview.

In our conversation earlier, I mentioned that I am doing this interview for my doctoral research. I would like to find out more about the national parliament and about the work you are doing.

Do you have any clarifications or questions before we begin?

#### Body

##### A. Topic: Qualification and Professionalism

1. Who qualifies to be a Member of Parliament? What are the ethical standards, ethical checks, education, and background checks among others?
2. Are majority of parliamentarians competent, knowledgeable and professional in doing their work?
3. Do parliamentarians receive any kind of training and benchmarking?

B. Topic: Role and Mandate of Parliament

4. What is the role and mandate of the national parliament according to the constitution?
5. How do you evaluate the national parliament face-to-face to its constitutional mandate?
6. What are the national parliament's current practices regarding its constitutional mandate?
7. How do you rate the national parliament in checking other arms of government such as the executive, the judiciary and other related institutions?

C. Topic: Autonomy of Parliament

8. Is there power separation between the parliament and other arms of government such as the executive, judiciary among others?
9. Is the national parliament autonomous in passing its bills freely or are they threatened or intimidated?
10. What normally happens when a section of parliamentarians oppose government bills?

D. Topic: Capacity and Financial Independence

11. How much financial resources are allocated to the national parliament?
12. Are the resources enough for effective functioning of the national parliament?
13. Does the parliament have enough staff, offices and equipment such as computers, vehicles and other facilities to enable the parliament adequately do its work?

14. Does the executive make sufficient finances available to the national parliament to enable them freedom of operation?
15. Is security given to all parliamentarians, both those in the opposition and those in government?

E. Topic: Parliament and Good Governance

16. What is the parliament's contribution to democracy and good governance?
17. Does parliament promote transparency in governance and respect for human rights?
18. Is the executive accountable to the national parliament? If 'yes' how? If 'no' why?
19. What is the role of the national parliament in the development of Congo?
20. What is the role of the parliament in fighting corruption and bad leadership?

F. Topic: Empowerment of the National Parliament

21. What can be done to empower Congo's national parliament?
22. Which areas do you think parliamentarians need to make improvements on for effective performance?
23. How can we enhance the capacity of parliament?
24. Is the national parliament influenced by outside/foreign bodies or entities?
25. Is the environment conducive and friendly for the parliamentarians to carry out their duties freely without fear or intimidation?

Appendix B

APPROVAL LETTERS OF DATA COLLECTION APPROVAL

21<sup>st</sup> January, 2019



P.O. Box 56875 - 00200  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu  
off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd  
Tel: 0734 400694/0721 932050  
Email: [enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke](mailto:enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke)  
website: [www.pacuniversity.ac.ke](http://www.pacuniversity.ac.ke)

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

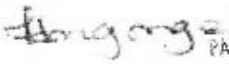
RE: TENGU YOKA REG. NO POLD/7072/16

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership.

He is at the final stage of the programme and he is preparing to collect data to enable him finalise on his dissertation. The dissertation title is '**Empowering Public Institutions to Promote Good Governance for Sustainable Development: The Case of National Parliament, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**'.

We therefore kindly request that you allow him conduct research at your organization.

Warm Regards,

  
Dr. Lilian Vikiro  
Registrar Academics

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
P.O. Box 56875, NAIROBI 00200.  
TEL: 0551820/8551945/2013146

21<sup>st</sup> January, 2019

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*Where Leaders are Made*



21<sup>st</sup> January, 2019



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Tel: 0734 400694/0721 932050  
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**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: TENGU YOKA REG. NO POLD/7072/16**

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership.

He is at the final stage of the programme and he is preparing to collect data to enable him finalise on his dissertation. The dissertation title is '**Empowering Public Institutions to Promote Good Governance for Sustainable Development: The Case of National Parliament, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**'.

We therefore kindly request that you allow him conduct research at your organization.

Warm Regards,

*Lilian Vikiru*  
Dr. Lilian Vikiru  
Registrar Academics

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY  
P. O. Box 56875, NAIROBI - 00200.  
TEL: 03618271/3561945/2913146

21<sup>st</sup> January, 2019

## Appendix C

### MAP

#### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (2020)



Administrative Map of the DRC- Congo