

To cite this article: Papy KOLONGO Nguma, Jerome Waliala Apataki Itindi Yenga and Désiré ISETCHA Tawiti (2026). CAUSES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN BANALIA TERRITORY (DR CONGO), International Journal of Applied Science and Engineering Review (IJASER) 7 (4): 01-09 Article No. 285 Sub Id 422

CAUSES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN BANALIA TERRITORY (DR CONGO)

Papy KOLONGO Nguma¹, Jerome Waliala Apataki Itindi Yenga² and Désiré ISETCHA Tawiti³

¹Sociologist, Head of Work and Researcher at the Faculty of Social, Administrative and Political Sciences of the University of Kisangani,

²Sociologist, Head of Research and researcher at the Faculty of Social, Administrative and Political Sciences of the University of Kisangani,

³Psychologist, Professor and Researcher at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Kisangani

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52267/IJASER.2026.7401>

ABSTRACT

This scientific reflection seeks to identify the causes at the root of the underdevelopment of the Banalia Territory.

On the methodological level, the research uses the dynamist method of George Balandier supported by the technique of disengaged direct observation, the documentary technique, the technique of free interview. The sampling technique and data processing technique was deciphered from content and statistical analysis.

Thus, the results of the study show that the poor governance of the political authorities of the State, the non-existence of the impact of the ETDs and the disinterest of the local population in the projects are the reasons at the root of the underdevelopment in the Banalia Territory.

KEYWORDS: Factors, development, underdevelopment and the Banalia Territory

1. PROBLEM

Underdevelopment is a social phenomenon characteristic of the countries of the South. The countries that make up this periphery have common characteristics. Their economy is still largely dominated by agricultural activities. Industry is in its infancy, their population is growing rapidly, which can be a spur for development, which is all the more essential as their standard of living is lower than that of the industrialized countries of the North. Finally, almost all of these countries have been colonized.

Despite the intervention of bilateral partners (World Bank, IMF, etc.) in the development environment, the problems of underdevelopment are still acute in Third World countries in general and in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, particularly in the DRC, which is why we have to carry out this study.

Banalia is a territory and locality in the Province of Tshopo in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is of agricultural, forestry and mining affiliation. In this entity, rice, cassava, groundnuts, maize, plantains are grown as food agricultural products and as perennial products, oil palm, rubber, cocoa, coffee and, in the forest, there is wood and game with several species of wood and non-wood forest products. These products have made this territory, in the past, a lung of development of what was the district of Tshopo, now a province. This territory was better known for its many groups of peasantry and its palm, rubber and coffee plantations. In each group, there was a peasantry. This Belgian policy gave each group the chance to develop its potential and improve its living conditions. However, this territory has various ethnic groups with different cultures. It is mainly populated by tribes: Manga (40%), Ngelema (35%), Boa (10%), Popoyi (10%) and Baboro (5%). Each of these stands has its own culture and practices. In addition to these tribes, there are also lokele, topoke, tetela, ...

But in general, all these peoples are hardworking. Paradoxically, for more than two decades, whatever the agricultural, mining, forestry, wildlife and socio-cultural potential of these peoples, they have still not been socio-economically emancipated, even though they are only 125 km from the capital of this province. This territory is crossed by the RN4 which offers business opportunities in terms of evacuation and supply of its forestry, wildlife and agricultural products.

The discovery of the diamond mines, which has attracted thousands of economic operators from different backgrounds, has not been able to benefit the local populations. While economic operators have earned millions of dollars, the territory and its people have remained underdeveloped and not emancipated.

Agricultural feeder roads are impassable, the forest is devastated by both artisanal and industrial loggers, the bed of the Aruwimi River is polluted by the exploitation of minerals without the territory benefiting from it, rubber and oil palm plantations are abandoned. The iron deposit is still unexploited.

The Bengamisa cocoa plantation still does not offer enough job opportunities to young people and local populations. The Higher Institute of Agronomic Studies of Bengamisa does not have a positive impact on the socio-economic environment of this territory.

This reflection aims to identify the factors at the root of the underdevelopment of the Banalia Territory.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. *Method and techniques*

To analyse the information collected, the study used Balandier's dynamist method coupled with strategic analysis supported by *documentary technique* relating to the issue of underdevelopment in the world, in Africa, in the DRC and more particularly in the Banalia territory (journals, archives, etc.). Electronic documents, especially Internet browsing, have been a useful help to us in completing documentary technology. Direct disengaged observation has allowed us to observe the obstacles that are erected against the development of Banalia.

Semi-structured interview techniques with certain privileged informants such as village chiefs, leaders of certain religious denominations, agronomists or agricultural monitors, heads of schools, those of higher education and university institutions, chief doctors of health zones, heads of NGOs, civil society coordinators and women leaders.

The techniques of individual unstructured interviews were deepened. These are oral reports on a one-on-one between two people or group of people, one of whom transmits information about a topic to the other.

The questionnaire allowed us to collect the opinions of our respondents on the difficulties encountered in the Banalia territory for its development.

The focus group to obtain verbal information from the respondents concerning their economic practices related to their emergence and development. Data were collected in Swahili and Lingala on the basis of an interview guide.

The application of these techniques in the field requires the constitution of a representative sample of the population concerned by this study. Muchelli defines sampling as "the action of choosing a limited number of individuals, objects, or items applicable to the entire population from which the choice was made."¹ In doing so, a selected sample of 100 social actors from social forces in the Banalia territory randomly chosen from the Banalia territory concerned by the study was constituted for this purpose. These are territorial leaders, leaders of religious denominations, heads of academic and educational establishments, customary authorities, chief doctors of health zones, leaders of NGOs, women leaders.

¹ Muchelli, R., quoted by Bolinda wa Bolinda, *Impact of the Topoke-Lokele ethnic conflict on the development of Isangi. Search for sociological antidotes*. Doctoral thesis in sociology, UNIKIS/FSSAP, 2000, p.22.

As Luhahi tells us, “Random sampling consists of randomly drawing subjects from a defined population”.²

The choice of these 100 social actors takes into account the indeterminate number of people involved in production activities for the development of the Banalia territory. The constitution of the sample was made possible thanks to snowball sampling techniques. It was a non-probabilistic choice of the target persons to be submitted to the questionnaire, from which several others of the same characteristics were produced.

2.2. Study environment

The Territory of Banalia is a decentralised entity in the province of Tshopo in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Located about 128 km north of Kisangani, it covers an area of 24,430 km² for an estimated population of more than 490,000 inhabitants.

The capital, Banalia, is located at 1°33'0" N latitude and 25°12'60" E longitude, at an altitude of 432 m. It is connected to Kisangani by a track that can be used by vehicle (about 2 hours of travel). The Territory is characterized by a humid equatorial climate, typical of the Congo Basin, with alternating dry and rainy seasons. The dominant vegetation is dense equatorial forest.

It consists of 4 sectors (Bamanga, Bangba-Banalia, Popoyi, Baboa de Kole) and 1 chiefdom (Baboro), bringing together nearly 402 villages. It is also home to the Yakpa Game Reserve. The soil is particularly suitable for agriculture and the subsoil is full of mining potential (Kibalian geological formations).

The latest estimates put the local population at between 464,416 and 493,697 inhabitants, for a low average density of about 20 inhabitants/km². The territory is inhabited by several distinct communities. The main ethnic groups are the Ngelema, the Bamanga (who occupy the Bengamisa sector), the Boa and the Popoy. The Territory of Banalia was officially founded during the colonial era, on 15 March 1933, by Ordinance No. 40/A.I.MO.

Historically attached to the district of Tshopo, it has become a decentralized administrative entity of the new province of Tshopo since Ministerial Circular No. 001 of 2015. The territory benefits from modernization projects, such as the construction of its new administrative building financed by the Local Development Program of the 145 territories.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Level of education

² Luhahi a Nyama Luhahi, *course in research methodology: quantitative analysis*, (unpublished), FSSAP/UNIKIS, 1988-1989.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by children's level of education.

Level of education	f	%
Primary	42	42
Secondary	40	40
No level of education	18	18
Total	100	100

It appears from this table that our respondents, the large proportion of 42 (42%) have a primary level of education; compared to 18 subjects, or 18%, who have not even attended primary school. The level of school or academic training and education of the respondents determine the development of the environment or an entity.

The low level of education in the Territory of Banalia (Tshopo Province) limits the adoption of agricultural technical innovations and hinders the development of its potential (forests, arable land, diamonds). This underdevelopment can be explained by the lack of infrastructure, isolation and an untransformed local subsistence economy.

Our results are not far from those of Gary Becker³, who has argued that education and training are direct investments. According to him, a low level of education limits the productive capacity of individuals and nations, thus constituting the main source of inequality and underdevelopment.

In the same sense, Yves Lacoste⁴ also considered the illiteracy and lack of culture of the masses as "constitutive characteristics" of underdevelopment. He even said that the low level of education prevents the assimilation of technological progress and perpetuates poverty.

Other researchers relativize the weight of education alone, arguing that it is the mechanisms of economic domination, structural inequalities or the poor quality of institutions that keep countries underdeveloped, sometimes making education ineffective. Among these authors, we retain Lant Pritchett, author of the *Liberal Father*⁵, who demonstrates the absence of an automatic relationship between the expansion of education (the number of years of study) and economic growth. He explains that in a failing institutional environment or when the demand for skilled jobs is stagnant, a low level of education is not the primary

³ Becker, G., *Human Capital : A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education (Traduit en français sous le titre L'Investissement en capital humain)*, New York, Columbia University Press Année de publication, p. 1964, pp. 15-28

⁴ Lacoste, Y., *Géographie du sous-développement*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), 1965, p. 74

⁵ Lant Pritchett, *Where Has All the Education Gone ?* Washington D.C., The World Bank Economic Review, Vol. 15, n° 3, 2001, pp. 367-391

trigger for underdevelopment, but rather a consequence of a structurally blocked economy.

Samir Amin⁶ argued that underdevelopment is not caused by internal shortcomings such as low levels of education, but by mechanisms of economic domination, dependence and plundering of wealth by countries from the centre (capitalists) to the periphery. For him, illiteracy is a symptom of this unequal system, not its source.

3.2. Knowledge of underdevelopment

Table 2: Knowledge of underdevelopment

Are you familiar with f	%
underdevelopment?	
Yes	19
Not	31
I don't know	50
Total	100

It emerges from this table that the majority of respondents, i.e. 50%, have no idea about underdevelopment, compared with a minority of 19 people, i.e. 19% of respondents, who confirm that they have knowledge of underdevelopment. This deficit of underdevelopment is justified by the low educational or scientific level of the social actors in the entity under study.

Rostow Walt Whitman⁷ offers a linear vision of development in five stages. According to him, underdevelopment is simply the early phases (the traditional society and the prerequisites for start-up). Any country can get out of it by following the Western capitalist model, provided it accumulates enough savings and investments.

André Gunder Frank⁸ firmly rejects the idea that underdevelopment is simply backwardness. They claim that it is a historical creation brought about by the expansion of world capitalism, where the developed countries (the Centre) exploit the poor countries (the Periphery). He argued that underdevelopment is not

⁶ Samir Amin, *L'Accumulation à l'échelle mondiale: critique de la théorie du sous-développement*, Paris, Éditions Anthropos, 1970, pp. 112-118

⁷ Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto (French translation)*, Paris, Éditions Seuil, 1963, pp. 11-25

⁸ André Gunder Frank, "Le développement du sous-développement", in *Capitalisme et sous-développement en Amérique latine*, Paris, Éditions Maspero, 1972, pp. 27-35

a state of nature, but the historical result of colonialism and capitalism. The development of the countries of the North has been made possible by the active creation of underdevelopment in the countries of the South.

3.3. Causes of underdevelopment

Table 3: Causes of underdevelopment

Causes of underdevelopment	f	%
Poor governance of the public affairs of the State	70	70
Non-existence of the impact of ETDs	15	15
Lack of interest of the local population in local development projects	10	10
Undecided	5	5
Total	100	100

It emerges from this table that the majority of respondents believe that their poor living conditions can be explained by the poor governance of the political authorities of the State, 70% of respondents certified this against a minority 5% of respondents who have no opinions. Poor governance and the lack of visible impact of the political authorities that manage the decentralized entities under study do not make it possible to boost popular energies to improve their social experience.

The explanations for underdevelopment vary considerably according to the theoretical approach adopted by economists and sociologists. There are generally two main types of causes: internal causes (endogenous factors specific to the structures of poor countries) and external causes (exogenous factors linked to the history and structure of world trade).

Among the authors who have recognized the internal causes of underdevelopment, Ragnar Nurkse⁹ has proven that underdevelopment is caused by a lack of savings and investment due to low individual incomes. Since people are poor, they consume all of what they earn; The savings capacity is therefore zero, which prevents the financing of industries, keeping the country in a derisory productivity.

Walt Whitman Rostow¹⁰ pointed out that the cause of underdevelopment lies in the persistence of traditional social structures and irrational behaviour towards modern science. He said that underdevelopment is only a temporary historical backwardness that a country can overcome by adopting

⁹ Ragnar Nurkse, *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1953, pp. 4-5

¹⁰ Rostow Whitman, W., *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Paris, Éditions Seuil, 1963, p. 24

Western production techniques and capitalism.

Other authors have blamed underdevelopment on the asymmetrical relations of the world capitalist system, colonization and economic exploitation. This is the case of Arghiri Emmanuel¹¹, who indicated that the major cause of underdevelopment lies in international trade. He added that Third World countries sell their raw materials at low prices (because labour is underpaid) and buy very expensive manufactured goods from the North. This mechanism leads to a massive and continuous transfer of value from poor countries to rich countries.

On the other hand, André Gunder Fran¹² rejected the idea of a simple "delay". For him, underdevelopment is a historical creation caused by the forced integration of the countries of the South into the capitalist world economy. The countries of the North ("metropolises") have actively underdeveloped the countries of the South ("satellites") by plundering their economic surpluses to finance their own development.

4. CONCLUSION

The objective of this scientific study was to identify the causes at the root of the underdevelopment of the Banalia Territory.

Through a qualitative field survey conducted among 100 social actors of social forces in the Banalia Territory randomly chosen in the space concerned by this study was constituted for this purpose. These are territorial officials, religious denominations, academic and school officials, customary authorities, medical chiefs of health zones, NGO leaders, women leaders, we have been able to highlight significant results that confirm that the causes at the root of underdevelopment in Banalia Territory can be explained by the lack of the governance of the public affairs of the State, the non-existence of the impact of the ETDs as well as the disinterest of the local population in local development projects.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

André Gunder Fran, *Le développement du sous-développement*, Paris, Éditions Maspero, 1972

André Gunder Frank, "Le développement du sous-développement", in *Capitalisme et sous-développement en Amérique latine*, Paris, Éditions Maspero, 1972, pp. 27-35

¹¹ Arghiri Emmanuel, *L'Échange inégal: Essai sur les antagonismes dans les rapports économiques internationales*, Paris, Éditions Maspero, 1969, pp. 165-172

¹² André Gunder Fran, *Le développement du sous-développement*, Paris, Éditions Maspero, 1972, p. 29

- Arghiri Emmanuel, *L'Échange inégal: Essai sur les antagonismes dans les rapports économiques internationales*, Paris, Éditions Maspero, 1969
- Becker, G., *Human Capital : A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education (Traduit en français sous le titre L'Investissement en capital humain)*, New York, Columbia University Press, p. 1964, pp. 15-28
- Lacoste, Y., *Géographie du sous-développement*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), 1965
- Lant Pritchett, *Where Has All the Education Gone ? Washington D.C.*, The World Bank Economic Review, Vol. 15, n° 3, 2001, pp. 367-391
- Luhahi a Nyama Luhahi, *course in research methodology: quantitative analysis*, (unpublished), FSSAP/UNIKIS, 1988-1989
- Muchelli, R., quoted by Bolinda wa Bolinda, *Impact of the Topoke-Lokele ethnic conflict on the development of Isangi. Search for sociological antidotes*. Doctoral thesis in sociology, UNIKIS/FSSAP, 2000
- Ragnar Nurkse, *Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries*, Oxford, Oxford University, Press, 1953
- Rostow Whitman, W., *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Paris, Éditions Seuil, 1964
- Samir Amin, *L'Accumulation à l'échelle mondiale: critique de la théorie du sous-développement*, Paris, Éditions Anthropos, 1970