

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES
IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT:
THE CASE OF ZAIRE

By

JACK EDWARD WEBER
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Thesis Approved:

David V. Lane

Thesis Adviser

Frank A. von Sauer

Raymond H. Hays

D. D. Durbin

Dean of the Graduate College

923625

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In May 1967, President Joseph D. Mobutu established the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR) as one of the political parties that would participate in the national elections in the Republic of Zaire.¹ From independence in June 1960, to the coup d'état that propelled Mobutu to the presidency in November 1965, Zaire had a multi-party political structure. Under the constitution that was written in 1967, a two-party system was technically possible; however, it soon became apparent that Zaire would follow the pattern of many other African States by establishing a single-party political system. The official justification for this action was that the multi-party system had "caused divisions, anarchy, and confusion and that thousands of Congolese had been killed and entire regions devastated in the name of nationalism and democracy."² In other words, the multi-party political system reflected the cultural and ethnic fragmentation of Zaire. This fragmentation resulted in a lack of consensus on the type of political system that should be established, on the political role of the individual in the system, and generally, an absence of political trust. More simply stated, there

¹The Constitution of 1967 allowed for "no more than two political parties" to be established. "Draft Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Translations on Africa, No. 566, 1967, Art. 4.

²"Single Party for the Congo," The New York Times, May 24, 1970, col. 5, p. 70.

was a fragmented political culture that the multi-party system reinforced, thus barring compromise on basic political issues.

This thesis is concerned with three basic questions. First, who are the current political leaders and what are their political backgrounds? Second, how are these leaders attempting to establish a dominant political culture? Third, what are the characteristics of the political culture that these leaders are attempting to create?

Development of a dominant political culture is one of the necessary steps taken by a society to bring about the orderly functioning of a political system, for without this development, the political system can not achieve a wide measure of legitimacy or consensus. For the purpose of this thesis, the creation of a dominant political culture within a society refers only to those individuals or groups that are allowed to participate in the political system. In culturally fragmented and ethnically divided states such as Zaire, a dominant political culture is necessary to prevent the occurrence of the political instability such as that which took place in Zaire from 1960 through 1967. Therefore, the problem to which this thesis addresses itself is, can the present single-party political system of Zaire create a dominant political culture?

President Mobutu is attempting to create a dominant political culture through the MPR. The process by which the party is attempting to create this dominant culture is the political socialization process, i.e., the process by which individuals are inducted into the political system, and the way their attitudes toward political objects are changed. The purpose of this thesis is not to claim that the so-called tribal and regional hatred or disrespect and mistrust have no place in Zairean

politics, but to show that there was an absence of a dominant political culture at the time of independence, and that the multi-party system reinforced the fragmentation that existed at that time. The current attempts to create a dominant political culture through the structure of the MPR have met with a measure of success.

Literature Review

There are pressures which act against the orderly expansion of the Zairean political system. Zaire has been struggling with the requirement of building the spiritual base of nationhood and the functional structures of the state while performing the expected daily operations of a political system.

The basic problem, as Claude Ake states, is, "the problem of developing a political culture and inducing a commitment to it."³ For the system as a whole, political culture provides a systematic structure of values and national considerations which ensures coherence in the performance of institutions and organizations, and gives the system a measure of stability.⁴ The nature of the values which make up the political culture must be such that the commitment to them furthers the maintenance of the political structure. To use Sidney Verba's example:

the belief that political power ought to be used to promote the interest of a parochially defined group may be common held. But the fact that members of the political system may differ on the particular parochial group whose interest is to be promoted may lead to grave political strife.⁵

³Claude Ake, A Theory of Political Integration (Homewood, 1967), p. 1.

⁴Ibid., pp. 1-4.

⁵Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Boston, 1963), p. 11.

James Bustin, in his essay, "The Quest for Political Stability in the Congo," agrees with Verba. Bustin states that, "reliance on the normative and coercive apparatus of the state tends to be maximized in those countries where values of national consciousness and popular mobilization are most deficient."⁶ In other words, where a political culture is not unquestionably rooted in a sufficiently widespread national sentiment, it tends to be derived from such sources as control of institutions, the effective use of state power, and adherence to a certain amount of legal formality.

Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr. state that:

The question of orientations to the national political system as a whole constitutes one of the most serious developmental problems in the political systems of the new nations. In Africa these nations have been constructed from a great variety of ethnic, political, and geographic subnational units which have no common political bonds and whose members by and large have little information and loyalty beyond this local unit. The process of nation building involves in some respect the dissemination of information about and the commitment to the national unit. At some point in the history of any new nation, as loyalty to the traditional subnational units conflicts with national loyalties and goals, the issues of national identity are likely to become paramount.⁷

Neville Curtis, in his essay, "South Africa: The Politics of Fragmentation," writes about a political party and its efforts to create a fragmented political culture. The Nationalist Party, with its control over the political socialization process, is attempting to fragment the peoples of South Africa into social and ethnic groups, and effectively segregate one from the others. Thus, by its control of the political

⁶James Bustin, "The Quest for Political Stability in the Congo," Africa, Herbert J. Spiro, ed. (New York, 1966), p. 21.

⁷Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell Jr., Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston, 1966), p. 52.

socialization process, the Nationalist Party of South Africa has attempted to create as many as 20 different political cultures.⁸

Peter M. Gukiina bases his entire book on the problems of creating a dominant political culture in Uganda.⁹ Gukiina says that the most significant element of Uganda's political unrest is the diversity of Ugandan ethnic groups. The first part of his study examines the absence of a dominant political culture in Uganda at the time of independence, with a review of the precolonial and colonial experiences. The second section of the book examines Dr. Milton Obote's (the former President of Uganda) attempts to create a dominant political culture through the creation of a one-party-dominant political system. This party stressed the need for national consensus and political unity and structured the government so as to give all ethnic groups representation. Thus, through time, national loyalties would emerge out of the central government's responsiveness to those interests and expectations widely held in all parts of Uganda.

Hypothesis and Definitions

In an attempt to offer a solution to the questions which have been raised, the following hypothesis has been formulated. The experience of Zaire would suggest that in ethnically fragmented societies an integrated political leadership working through a single-party system will more likely generate a dominant political culture than a pluralistic leadership dispersed within a multi-party system.

⁸Neville Curtis, "South Africa: The Politics of Fragmentation," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 50, No. 2 (January, 1972), pp. 283-296.

⁹Peter M. Gukiina, Uganda: A Case Study in African Political Development (Notre Dame, 1972), pp. 1-12.

Defining these concepts is not a simple task. There is yet no substantial agreement among scholars as to their meaning. Definitions to date vary, depending on the perspective of the author and the needs of specific studies. The writers discussed briefly in this study are, at best, only representative of the principal scholars who have worked on these concepts.

Political culture for the purposes of this thesis means "a system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols and values which define the situation in which political action takes place."¹⁰ But what are some of these beliefs and values? First, there is an awareness of and support for the national political system as a whole. This problem of national identity is intensified in states without a tradition of national involvement. The various ethnic groups will correctly perceive that their institutions and values are being threatened and will no doubt resist, thereby creating conflicts of loyalty. Second, there needs to be a basic conception of how politics is conducted. In other words, is it a harmonious process or a discordant process? Is politics viewed as legitimate representation of interests or a series of struggles for supremacy? Finally, is there a level of civility in political interaction, or is there a degree to which more or less formal norms of courtesy tend to subdue the roughness of political disagreements?¹¹

The term "dominant" implies that there presently exists a fragmented political culture, and that this fragmentation creates an environment

¹⁰ Lucien Pye and Sidney Verba, Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton, 1965), p. 513.

¹¹ Almond and Powell, pp. 54-57.

in which the political system can not perform its necessary functions, in that the ethnic and/or regional interests counteract its efforts.

Methodology, Organization, and Justification

A case study focusing on the symbolic capability of the single-party political system provides the framework of analysis for this thesis. The symbolic capability of the party system, or the image that it produces, is a reflection of how the population identifies with the central authority. At the heart of this process lies the notion of legitimacy. Legitimacy of a political system implies that "there is a set of attitudes and values associated with it which support the political authority."¹² The significance of a high symbolic capability of a nation should not be underestimated. It is through the creation and exploitation of a set of symbols that political leaders are able to gain acceptance of their policies, although they may be agonizing and unpopular.

The symbolic capability is difficult to measure, "but political elites (and journalists and scholars) often attempt to do so by counting crowds and audiences."¹³ Survey research would aid in the measurement; however, this would be impossible to do because it is not feasible to travel to Zaire for that purpose. Also, there are not enough Zaireans in the United States to provide an adequate sample. Data such as the crime rate, number of political prisoners, and number of political executions can be used. Also, the acceptance of the party policies by

¹²Christian P. Patholm, Four African Political Systems (Englewood Cliffs, 1970), p. 25.

¹³Almond and Powell, p. 199.

other institutions in the state, such as the church, media, and universities, can be determined by reading the literature produced by these institutions.

To gather this type of information a content analysis of pertinent essays in periodicals such as Africa Today, Foreign Affairs, and Orbis, will be utilized. Also, Department of State and numerous intelligence documents to which the writer is privy will be used.¹⁴ Other sources, such as articles from The New York Times and Armed Forces Press Clips will also be used.

Chapter Two is an examination of the structure of leadership and its orientation toward a dominant political culture at the time of independence. An analysis of the organization and functioning of the political system will be made to determine the degree to which progress was made toward stabilizing a political order that was oriented toward a national political culture that transcended the ethnic groupings within the state. We know that this system failed; thus, this analysis will focus on why a national political culture did not evolve.

The third chapter of this study examines the rise to power of the new leadership which organized the MPR subsequent to its creation in 1967. The regime is sustained by military and police power. Through the activities of the government and the MPR a determined campaign has been made to legitimize the political system. A careful analysis of the behavior of political leadership, the government, and the MPR will be made in terms of the problem of generating a dominant political culture.

¹⁴ Documents such as Central Intelligence Agency, Military Assistance and Advisory Groups, Ambassador reports. Any information classified Secret will not be used.

The fourth and final chapter will consist of the conclusions. Although this study may not present clear-cut answers or solutions to Zaire's political problems, it does provide a basis for one to know what to expect and what to praise or criticize when one looks at Zairean politics.

The choice of Zaire as the topic of study is not a chance selection. It results from the writer's acquaintance with the area and from the writer's interest in an apparently growing trend of single-party political systems in sub-Saharan Africa. With the coming of independence for the Portuguese colonies, the nearing national elections in Nigeria, and the recent coup d'etat in Ethiopia, this list will continue to grow.

Zaire in the past, and at present, has played an active role in the politics of Africa. If the MPR and President Mobutu succeed in their attempt to create national unity in Zaire, then their model may offer possible solutions to the other African states that are afflicted with cultural and ethnic fragmentation.

CHAPTER II

ANATOMY OF LEADERSHIP

For any observer of the Congolese political scene significant changes have taken place since General Mobutu took control of the government in November, 1965. A period of insecurity and uncertainty has been replaced by a period of relative stability which has been used to reshape the state apparatus. The previous decentralized structure has been replaced by a centralized regime; and the professional politician has been replaced by the "young expert". This chapter focuses on the initial leadership, i.e., individuals or groups that exercised a significant amount of political power; How they reacted to the specific events that occurred; Why they acted as they did; and their eventual failure in attempting to create a national political culture. The factors considered in this analysis include the origin of the leaders (their geographic origin and education), their political orientations, and their political roles and styles.

Origins of the Leadership Structure

In examining the leadership of the Congo in its initial five years of independence one recognizes almost immediately that the most successful leaders have come from Leopoldville (Kinshasa).¹ Joseph Kasavubu,

¹The names of cities, provinces, and the state will be used interchangeably depending on the time factor.

Cyril Adoula, Justin Bombako, and Albert Kalondji had all been located in the capital for a number of years. Only a few individuals from the "outside" had had any influence in Congolese political affairs.

The most notable of these was Patrice Lumumba, the first premier of the country. His influence, however, lasted only a brief three months. One of the most significant factors in his downfall was his inability to gain any significant degree of support in the city of Leopoldville itself.²

The aspirant leaders from the outlying provinces faced a difficult choice in the selection of the political arena they hoped to enter. If they chose the national arena, this would mean prolonged absences from their home, which in turn would mean that their personal base of power would become eroded and others would rise as replacements. Also, the lack of a close network of old colleagues and ethnically related persons in Leopoldville made the exercise of power, in the national arena, very difficult. Both Lumumba and Christophe Gbenye provided interesting examples of this phenomenon. Both were at their zenith of power in Orientale province. The case of Lumumba was discussed above, but Gbenye provides an even better example. In 1959, he became the assistant mayor of Stanleyville, and in 1960, he moved to the top position of the city from which he exercised considerable influence throughout the province. After the death of Lumumba, he was one of the leaders who established the "Provisional Government of the Congo" at Stanleyville, and was elected to take Lumumba's place as leader of the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), one of the most powerful political parties in the

²Crawford Young, Politics in the Congo (Princeton, 1965), p. 386.

Congo. When the United Nations appointed Cyril Adoula as the new Premier in the government of reconciliation, one of the conditions of support for Adoula by the Lumumbists was the inclusion of Gbenye as Minister of the Interior. Once in Leopoldville, Gbenye found that he was not able to use the powers of his ministry; indeed, he discovered that he had been under virtual arrest by the Chief of the Security Police. At the same time, Dominique Kehleko, assistant mayor under Gbenye, became the mayor of Stanleyville and emerged as the dominant figure in Orientale province thus Gbenye had lost on both counts.³

On the other hand, leaders from provinces such as Kwilu or Bas-Congo could become involved at the national level while still retaining their local power bases. Kasavubu was probably the most well-known illustration. Having his origin in Bas-Congo, Kasavubu became the leader of the Bakongos. In 1953, when he took over the leadership of the Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO), originally a cultural association, it became the political party that Kasavubu used for his rise to the Presidency. In 1957, Kasavubu was elected mayor of Leopoldville and in 1960 he became the first President of the Congo. He not only remained the President until the Mobutu take-over, but he also continued to serve as head of the ABAKO until the party was declared illegal in November 1965.⁴

Political Orientations

The political orientations of the initial leadership structure can

³Pierre Artigue, These Are the Congolese Leaders (Brussels, 1963), pp. 123-125.

⁴René Lemarchand, Political Awakening in the Belgian Congo (Berkley, 1964), p. 202.

be illustrated by the position and activities of three individuals, each representing a different type of orientation. The first described is Albert Kalondji, the caricature of traditionalism. The second is Joseph Kasavubu, a man who used both tradition and Western orientations to preserve his position. The third example is Patrice Lumumba, a man who gave up his tribal orientations and became an ardent nationalist.

The case of Albert Kalondji must be mentioned in any analysis of the leadership of the Congo. It is somewhat ironic that a man with a good education and a long association with Western political orientations would deliberately become a traditionalist. Kalondji was born into the Baluba tribe in Kasai province. His father, being a Catholic, opened the doors for his son's education in the Catholic primary schools. When he showed remarkable intellectual curiosity, the mission priests placed him in the Sainte Marie secondary school where he completed his secondary education. He was admitted to Lovanium University where he graduated in 1956. When the Congo became independent, he was one of only 17 individuals of Congolese origin who had a college education.⁵

In 1957, Kalondji was elected to the Kasai Provincial Council, and soon became known for his radical statements against the colonial administration. In 1958, he joined the MNC; because of his nationalist views, however, he disagreed with Lumumba's "personal rule" of the party. In July, 1959, he and other intellectuals, such as Cyril Adoula, Joseph Ileo, and Joseph Ngalula who disagreed with Lumumba's actions, set up their own moderate wing of the MNC. This party rapidly became known as the MNC-Kalondji.⁶ Kalondji rapidly transformed this new wing of the

⁵International Fides Services (Rome, January 24, 1967).

⁶Artigue, p. 128.

party into a Baluba ethnic party. Instead of appointing the intellectuals to the top posts within the party, he installed three Baluba chieftains as the principal leaders. Although this in itself did not transform the new wing into an ethnic party, the subsequent actions of the MNC-Lumumba did. After Kalondji named the three chieftains to positions of authority, the Lumumba wing of the party began to back the Lulua tribe in its conflict with the Balubas.

The historic circumstances of this conflict are worth a brief comment at this point not only because they help illustrate Kalondji's actions, but also because this conflict and others like it prevented the establishment of a dominant political culture. Historic facts point out that until the European penetration there were no cultural or linguistic differences between the Baluba or the Lulua. The name Lulua was apparently adopted by the German explorer Von Wissmann about 1885 to designate a group of Baluba living on the west bank of the Lulua River. In brief, as Professor Lemarchand points out:

what we have here is a new "tribe" which was born after 1885 in the same way most tribes are born; they came to be regarded as culturally different among themselves and by other tribes, and they expressed their differences by a tribal name. Thus, even though both groups actually share the same cultural features, their consciousness of belonging to different tribes is what lies at the root of their mutual antagonisms.⁷

The basic conflict arose out of the Baluba migrations into what were accepted as traditional Lulua lands. The Baluba were then thought of as the "Usurpers" of territory. Also, because of the willingness to accept the Western philosophies, they quickly adapted to the colonial system and as a result had a virtual monopoly of the available clerical

⁷Lemarchand, Political Awakening in the Belgian Congo, p. 206.

jobs. It was the increasing fear of the Lulua of being dominated by the "Usurper" that they organized the Association Lulua-Freres in 1952. Although this organization did not bring about any significant changes, it instilled the basic tribal cleavages into the Lulua, and competition between the two tribes came to be viewed as a life and death struggle. Between July and December, 1959, tribal fighting broke out. The Lulua engaged in what they felt was a fight for supremacy and they became ruthless in their actions.

They went on a path of terror and violence; huts were burned, farmers chased from their land, families molested and men were killed. The Association Lulua-Freres transformed into an atavistic-cum-terroristic organization. Armed raids became more frequent, and the resulting casualties more numerous.⁸

Although most Congolese leaders made use of traditional symbols to communicate with the mass, Kalondji carried this to the point of obscurantism. It was because of the ethnic conflict between the Baluba and Lulua, the support of the MNC-L for the Lulua, and his own ethnic origins that Kalondji transformed his political party into an ethnic and superstitious messianic movement.⁹ A leading intellectual and Foreign Minister, from April to December, 1963, Mabiko-Kalanda described in these terms Kalondji's manipulation of superstition and politics to influence mass opinion.

Kalondji declared that he had returned from the Council of Legislation session in Belgium with independence "physically" in his pocket. The Belgians, he said, had done everything to prevent his return; he had been thrown-out of the plane into the Atlantic Ocean with a stone tied around his neck.

⁸ Antoine Rubbens, "Political Awakening in the Belgian Congo," Civilizations, X, No. 1 (1960), p. 66.

⁹ From an unpublished discussion with Donald Morris, author of The Washing of the Spears, and retired C.I.A. Chief--Zaire.

But his magic power had been too strong for the Belgians, and he had been able to safely return to his people.¹⁰

The second type of leadership orientation is exhibited by Joseph Kasavubu. Born in 1913 into the Bakongo tribe, Kasavubu was thought of as the elder statesman of the Congo. He used a combination of traditional and Western orientations to secure his position as both President of the Congo and leader of the Bakongo people. On the one hand, Kasavubu displayed traditional authority to influence the political perspectives of the Bakongo. The values identified with Kasavubu's personality are deeply rooted in the traditional authority structure of the Congo. The Bakongo show a wide measure of deference and esteem toward their traditional leaders. It was this theme that "King Kasa" used to maintain his place as the Bakongo leader. He also used a religious dimension to establish his charismatic political personality. For example, in late 1959, pictures were circulated throughout Bakongo country showing Peter giving the keys of independence to Kasavubu.¹¹

A Western orientation is reflected in Kasavubu's belief that the Congo should remain intact and to achieve this, modern integrated governmental structures had to be developed.¹² At the same time, the people were given a voice in the decision-making process. Further, he believed that a strong states-rights system had to be adopted because the Congo was so ethnically divided. He could not forget the basic cornerstone of the ABAKO party, which was Bakongo ethnic nationalism.

¹⁰Unpublished lecture, given at the Congolese Institute of Politics, Leopoldville, June 8, 1962.

¹¹Young, Politics in the Congo, p. 391.

¹²Ibid., pp. 390-391.

The third type of leader that displayed another political orientation was Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba was born into a Catholic family in 1925, though his family belonged to the Batatola tribe. He received a Catholic primary education and in 1943, moved to Stanleyville where he became employed as clerk by the Symetain Company. The fact that he had not received a formal education beyond the primary level did not prevent him from writing and publishing about the political and social environment as he observed it. Lumumba's material emphasized problems of racial, social, and economic discrimination. In 1956, he entered the political arena. Unlike other politicians who tended to use their tribal association as a means of access to the political arena, Lumumba entered politics through broadly based associations. In 1951, he became a member of the Association des Postiers de la Province Orientale (APIPO), a professional organization. In 1953, he was elected to the post of vice-chairman of the Association des Anciens Eleves des Peres de Scheut (Adapes); and in 1955, he was chairman of both the Association des Evolues, and the Association du Personnel Indigene de la Colonie (APIC). Then finally, in 1956, he founded both the Amaties Belgo-Congolaises and Amicale Liberale de Stanleyville. These were cultural organizations which included Africans and Europeans as members. He hoped that these would give him a base of support for his denunciations of the colonial authorities.¹³

Lumumba was firmly committed to Congolese nationalism; and he saw a difference between what he termed "true" and "false" nationalism:

A man without any nationalist tendencies is a man without a soul. What we must avoid in our country is false

¹³ Lemarchand, Political Awakening in the Congo, pp. 198-200.

nationalism, the cramped nationalism that conceals forms of racialism and hatred for those of another race. This struggle against racialist nationalism can be effective only if we are able to abolish its causes.¹⁴

Lumumba's nationalism stemmed from different sources. His origin in a tribe whose value system had been affected by Arab influences, his career as a clerk in the Manienma, and his move to Stanleyville all contributed to eroding his tribal loyalty.¹⁵ Also, one must remember that he became engaged in politics in the post-war period when nationalist ideas were affecting the political imagination of many African leaders. Additionally, a visit to Belgium in 1956 brought him into contact with a new environment and had a profound impact on his attitude. On his return he commented:

I am most anxious that a large number of Congolese elites be allowed to explore the mother country, people who can profit by the experience of getting to know the Belgians and can return to pass on this experience to their own people.¹⁶

Finally, the fact that he had served a prison sentence at the hands of the colonial authorities predisposed him to a radical orientation.

The most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this rapid description is that this rather perplexing picture reflects in part the complete absence of previous political training, and the absence of agreement on the part of the Congolese elites as to what type of governmental structures should be established to assist in creating a dominant political culture. In fact just the opposite occurred. One of the striking aspects of this situation was the tendency of the Congolese politicians

¹⁴Patrice Lumumba, Congo: My Country (New York, 1962), p. 173.

¹⁵René Lemarchand, "Patrice Lumumba: A Political Post-Mortem?", Africa Report, 31 (February, 1961), pp. 13-14.

¹⁶Lumumba, p. 42.

to seek power through whatever means were available. Thus, the politicians used their own tribes as stepping-stones to positions of leadership. As they foresaw their position of their group of origin in the context of an independent nation-state, they also foresaw the real threat of "tribal domination" thus the politicians began to seek any alliance that could offset this threat.

The Leadership Structure

The political styles and roles played by the leadership give insight into the nature of the political process and the place of the political sector within it. The leadership structure of the Congo, in the early stages before independence and immediately after independence, can be characterized by its patrimonial political style. Literature dealing with political leaders of the newer states tends to emphasize this type of political style. This literature generally focuses on the national level.¹⁷ In the Congo, however, this patrimonial type leadership took place at the lower levels of political action. Only Lumumba can be said to be in the patrimonial tradition on the national level.

Max Weber describes patrimonialism in the following manner:

The organized group exercising authority is primarily based on relations of personal loyalty, cultivated through a common process of education. The person exercising authority is not a 'superior' but a personal 'chief'. His administrative staff does not consist of officials but of personal retainers. Those are either his traditional comrades or his subjects. What

¹⁷ Aristide R. Zolberg, Creating Political Order: The Party States of West Africa (Chicago, 1966); Guenther Rath, "Personal Rulership, Patrimonialism and Empire-building in the New States," World Politics, XX (1968); and Claude E. Welch, Military Roles and Rule (North Scituate, 1974).

determines the relations of the administrative staff to the chief is not impersonal obligations of office but personal loyalty to the 'chief'.¹⁸

In the Congo, a similar pattern of relationships emerged from the tribalization and regionalization of the political life that occurred after independence. A few words about tribalism are necessary before continuing. Much of present day literature concerning the new states has conceived the relation between tribalism and nationalism as two ends of the "tradition-modernity." Tribalism, in an anthropological sense, is defined as being a state of backwardness. However, there is a difference between this "old" term and the newer one. Modern tribalism lacks both the strict kinship relation determined by time and generation and the narrow and ill-defined ecological dimensions that characterize the old term. Modern tribalism involves a much more extensive set of relations than the old network of kinship ties. The most striking Congolese example of this change is found among the Bangala, a name that was created by the Belgian authorities to identify people living in a large circular region around Leopoldville which included parts of the provinces of Kasai, Bandundu, Equateur, and Kongo-Central. Bakongo, at the time of independence, referred to all non-Bakongo as Bangala and the term came to be used to identify the Kassians, Mongo, and Kwilu peoples.¹⁹

This new form of tribalism is a recent phenomenon. The ethnic rivalries that developed must be understood as competition among certain

¹⁸Max Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization (New York, 1957), p. 341.

¹⁹Lucien Levy-Bruhl, The Primitive Mentality (Paris, 1965), pp. 201-210.

groups or communities for modern objects.

Tribal awakening developed along with decolonization in an environment of intense politicization. Initially, the Bakongo were the first to awake, "and become the most modernized ethnic group in the country."²⁰ Their political radicalism came from the fear of being overrun in the competition for power with the Bangala. Thus, ABAKO (Alliance of the Bakongo) was created. Initially it served as a cultural society, but later was transformed by Kasavubu into a political party to protect the interests of the Bakongo. The reaction of the Bangala elite, of course, was to establish their own organization, Parti Solidaire Africain (PSA). This pattern of competition also prevailed in Kasai province among the leadership of the Baluba and their rivals, the Balulua. At the time of independence this pattern had so prevailed that the Congo was saturated with more than 150 political parties or associations, each of them being constituted as a reaction against "others."²¹ This political phenomenon of ethnicity was eventually institutionalized by the division of the country into 22 provinces, each representing a major tribe. This formation was not only the result of general ethnic awakening but, also, of development of individual loyalties and allegiances around a leadership structure that fired ethnic and regional identification.

Therefore, the political center of power in the Congo did not rest on a single legitimate focus of authority. Instead, legitimacy rested with the regional and ethnic leaders. After February, 1961, political

²⁰ Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Washington D.C., 1971), p. 75.

²¹ Crawford Young, "Congo Political Parties Revisited," Africa Report, Vol. 8 (August, 1963), p. 15.

decisions were made by a series of conferences or "round table" discussions that were attended only by the most powerful leaders. It was at these conferences that the leaders attempted to transform their individual "suzerainties" into provinces or states. The central government had no legitimacy of its own; it was, in fact, a creation of the United Nations' officials, backed by a loose coalition of tribal leaders who had participated in the various round table discussions.²²

Another structural characteristic of patrimonialism is its large use of coercive organization--military or paramilitary forces--by the rulers to preserve their respective positions. Weber drew special attention to the social organization of the military force that enabled a patrimonial ruler to preserve his power. He distinguished five types of military organization: 1) an army, composed of personal subordinates to whom the ruler has assigned rewards in return for services or payments in kind; 2) a force composed of people who are entirely separated from the society; 3) an army based on recruitment of alien mercenaries; 4) an army composed of alien people to whom the ruler has granted some rewards for their military service; 5) a personal military force recruited among the ruler's own subjects.²³

The National Congolese Army (ANC) was, at independence, of the second type, due to the history of its forerunner, the former Force Publique. Belgian policies of isolating the military from its immediate surroundings and using a draft system that included people from all the

²²Stanley Hoffman, "In Search of a Thread: The UN in the Congo Labyrinth," International Organization, XVI, No. 2 (Spring, 1962), pp. 341-342.

²³Reinhardt Bendix, Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait (New York, 1962), pp. 341-344.

various ethnic groups made the old Force Publique one of the most integrated, feared, and repressive forces throughout Africa. At independence, however, this integrated military force collapsed. The ANC could not withstand "harassment by political leaders who attempted to find support among soldiers drawn from their own region."²⁴ In other words, there was a shift from a military force of type two to private or tribal armies of type five.

Within eight months after independence, the ANC had broken into four fragments: 1) the "Diamond State" Army, organized by "Emperor" Albert Kalonji. This army was composed almost entirely of Baluba troops. 2) The army of the secessionist Katanga created by and controlled by Moise Tshombe. This army was composed of Bayeke and Balunda warriors and a body of white mercenaries recruited from Europe, South Africa, and Rhodesia. 3) The National Congolese Army of Stanleyville directed by former ANC officers and comprised mainly of members of the Batetela and Basuku tribes. This army was controlled by Antione Gizenga and the "spirit of Lumumba." 4) The National Congolese Army of Leopoldville consisted of most of the old Force Publique and was loyal to its commander-in-chief, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Mobutu. In addition to these four major segments, each "suzerain" controlled paramilitary forces that were used as private bodyguards to help police his province.

Taken individually these three variables may not have brought about the failure of the leadership to create a national political culture; when combined, they produced an environment that resulted in ethnic

²⁴Jean-Claude Willame, "The Provinces of the Congo," Collections of Politics, 1, 4 (August, 1967), p. 74.

rivalry, regionalism, and secessionism, thereby making it impossible to develop any type of a national political culture.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND POLITICAL GENERATION

In discussing the second political generation of Zaire and the success it has gained in stabilizing the country, one must first look at the rise to power of a new set of leaders, that is, the development of the new political elite and their take-over of the governmental processes. Secondly, one must look at the differences in the leadership structure and the attitudes of the new leaders. And finally, one must look at the policies that the new generation has instituted in their attempt at generating a dominant political culture in Zaire. This will include the "Policy of Authenticity", its foundations, and its implementation.

Breaking Point: The Rise of a New Political Leadership

The rebellion of 1964-65 represents the turning point between the first and second political generations in Zaire. In the volatile environment generated by the patrimonial type of government, a basic weakness was brought to the point of open warfare. The system of tribal and ethnic patronage created enclaves of prosperity and further widened the gap between the elites and their followers and the masses. This pattern generally followed the form of opposition between the towns and the rural surroundings. During the colonial period, Zaire was one of

the most industrialized countries of Africa.¹ From 1950 through 1959, over 59 percent of the male population was employed in commercialized production and at that time agriculture, mining activities, and other industries represented respectively 44.6, 19.7, and 34.6 percent of the total production of goods.² After 1960, although little information on actual agricultural production exists, export statistics indicate that rural peasant participation in the economy fell off drastically. For example, the production of bananas, rice, and palm oil, the most common crops produced and consumed by the rural community, dropped from 30,000 to 13,000 tons respectively between 1960 and 1964.³ Thus, in many respects the rural areas returned to subsistence. Schools, hospitals, and welfare institutions either ceased to function or moved to the towns during the 1960-1964 time frame.

During this same period, political frustrations increased. Between 1961 and 1964, Zaire was ruled by the "suzerains" and their series of Round Table Conferences. This created the tendency on the part of the power elite to disregard the rights and demands of the political minorities. Many nationalist leaders and followers of Lumumba were forced into exile in neighboring countries where they formed "governments of national-liberation." In 1964, when the Kwilu Uprising started, many of these former leaders returned, notably Christopher Gibenye and Antoine

¹Agency For International Development, Congo, Kinshasa (October, 1970), Revision No. 248, p. 8.

²United Nations Statistical Yearbook, 1971 (New York, 1972), pp. 250-298.

³Ibid.

Gizenga, and quickly changed this uprising into a full scale civil war.⁴ At the beginning of 1965, two-thirds of Zaire was in the hands of the insurgents.

But from this time until November 1965, neither they nor their leaders could gain a significant victory. The leaders of the rebellion, lacking leadership capacities and any revolutionary plans and perspective, lost their strength as soon as they attempted further expansion. At the same time, the "professional politicians" who controlled the government, unable to understand that they were not the victims but the object of the rebellion, continued to play their "game of politics."⁵ During all of this, changes occurred within the ANC, which at the time went unnoticed, but they were changes that were of immense consequence.

The most important changes in the ANC were threefold: 1) Military retraining, 2) The rise of a new military elite, and 3) The new technical capacity of the ANC. The process of retraining began with the mutiny of the Force Publique in July, 1960. This revolt brought an immediate Africanization of the officer corps. The soldiers dismissed their white officers and elected their own leaders. Recourse to this unusual procedure had many risks, since the new officers drew their authority from the soldiers, who could without warning withdraw their support. "In fact, only the semiautomatic reflex of obeying superior officers and the hesitation of troops to use their new power prevented an era of anarchy."⁶

⁴GIST (Washington D.C., 1972), pp. 3-4.

⁵Department of State, Update: Republic of Zaire (Washington D.C., 1974), pp. 7-8. Classification Secret. This information consists of five paragraphs that were not classified.

⁶Ibid, p. 9.

Command of this new army was taken-over by the former sergeants who succeeded in imposing authority upon the ranks without great difficulty.

As the institutional and political mechanisms under civilian control became ineffective, the army emerged as the sole force of relative unity. From this point-of-view, the army benefited from Belgian policy which had avoided introducing tribal differentiations into the Force Publique. It also profited from the communications network that had been built by the European officers; this also contributed to the rapid progression of the mutiny across the country.

Outside sources also contributed to the retraining of the army. In November, 1960, the United States, Belgium, France, Israel, Italy, and Great Britain signed agreements with the Congolese government to assist in the retraining and equipping of the ANC. The European countries gave or sold airplanes, tanks, artillery, and small arms, while the United States and Israel sent advisors to begin the retraining process.⁷

The unity of the army was far from being fully realized, however. Despite the continued propaganda of the army command attempting to separate the military from politics, the ANC could never escape external solicitations until the Mobutu coup d'etat in 1965. From 1960 to 1962, the ANC was split into four rival groups, as was previously mentioned. These divisions cut heavily into the army's morale, especially when the rebel troops were re-integrated at their former ranks when the various secessionist movements were ended. Added to these external divisions, there were also internal divisions. Tensions that resulted from the creation of an elite group within the army--the Israeli trained

⁷Ernest W. Lefever, Spear and Scepter (Washington D.C., 1972), Appendix 5, pp. 226-229.

paracommandos became the praetorian guard of General Mobutu.⁸

However, despite these forces of disintegration, the ANC demonstrated an esprit de corps that contrasted with the factionalism that prevailed in politics. The military, after they had put their own house in order, felt a profound scorn for politicians and the civilians whom they considered directly responsible for the political crisis. In General Mobutu's own words:

Unlike the army which has been able to reorganize itself, the political sphere remains corrupt, unstable, and irrational. The political crisis was completely in the realm of politics ... Political leaders indulged in a series of sterile struggles for public office without considering the welfare of the citizens of this country. The politicians have ruined this country.⁹

The second series of changes within the ANC came from the rise of a new military elite. Immediately following the mutiny of the Force Publique, a small group of sergeants took-over the command of the ANC. This group formed the nucleus of the High Command of the ANC. In addition to this generation, who had been trained under the principles of the old Force Publique, a new group of officers and noncommissioned officers emerged. A large number of these had been sent abroad to receive their training.

In September, 1964, 664 officers and noncommissioned officers benefited from higher training in Belgian military schools. At the same time 276 officers continued their training in Belgium and the United States. These figures are particularly significant when one realizes that the Congolese army included only 1308 officers and noncommissioned officers in 1964.¹⁰

⁸"Zaire," African Digest, 19 (August, 1972), pp. 82-84.

⁹"President Mobutu's Message to the ANC," Translations on Africa, No. 42118 (February, 1966), p. 299.

¹⁰"External Aid to the Republic of the Congo," Congolese Studies, IX, No. 3 (1966), 1-36, p. 21.

This new generation differed a great deal from the preceding one. The older generation "were practitioners of armed struggle, without extensive training;"¹¹ the new generation received training on a significantly higher level in the various military academies. Tensions between these two groups have surfaced over such things as slow promotions and low pay, however, the two groups complemented each other in dealing with the internal problems that faced the Congo.

Finally, the technical capacity of the ANC had grown until it was equipped with some of the most modern armaments in Africa. The Congo benefited from a vast amount of foreign aid. The United Nations' command reorganized the Congolese army. Belgium, the United States, Israel, Great Britain, and Italy contributed to the new operational groups of the ANC, including such military items as a tactical air force, air transport, river patrol boats, communications and the like. In June 1964, American and Belgian aid was \$6.1 million and \$1.27 million respectively.¹²

Taking all of these factors into account, the army lacked only an excuse to intervene in the political life of the country.

The New Leadership

The professional politicians, as usual, offered the excuse that was needed for General Mobutu to step in. In keeping with the factionalism that had been created by the political parties and their leaders, the national elections scheduled for March, 1966 produced political

¹¹Ibid., p. 22.

¹²Agency For International Development, p. 7.

stagnation and the threat of Katangan secession again surfaced. Kasavubu and Tshombe were attempting to outmaneuver each other and in the process the charges of regionalism and tribalism had brought a halt to the development of national institutions concerned with the operation of the government. On November 25, 1965, General Mobutu announced that he had deposed President Kasavubu and that he had assumed the presidency himself. Mobutu stated:

The race for power is over. By Saturday Colonel Mulamba will have formed a Government of National Union. It will be approved by acclamation in Parliament...You have all been able to see that our politicians have failed utterly. This is not a military coup d'etat; the Army is merely taking up its responsibilities towards the country.¹³

The coup d'etat clearly brought about basic changes in the leadership structure of Zaire. And, though the ANC remains the central element of support, new strata have emerged whose political importance did not matter before.

Describing this new leadership and its attempts at creating a dominant political culture is not simple. However, one thing is clear: the military intervention of General Mobutu has not led to a military regime, in the sense that the government is directly controlled by the military. In the beginning Mobutu seemed to act as the direct emanation of the military High Command. In its name, he declared himself President for a period of five years. Also, the junta seemed to be substantiated by three facts: 1) the naming of military officers as the head of regions that continued to have political tensions; 2) the use of military courts in cases that had previously been conducted by civil courts; and 3) the use of the military in symbolic operations such as "Return to

¹³Keesings Contemporary Archives (London, 1965), p. 21137A.

the Land" and "Operation Roll Up Our Sleeves."¹⁴

After six months, however, Mobutu began to stand apart from the army and particularly the High Command. In October, 1966, Mobutu defined the proper role of the military as "an organism of execution operating in a strictly military context, not a pressure group or a political assembly."¹⁵ In the provinces, military commissioners were replaced by civil authorities. The military courts were disbanded, and the symbolic use of the army came to an end. Mobutu began to seek an alternative pattern of government to supplant the ineffectual patrimonial system.

Between April, 1966, and July, 1967, the Mobutu regime can best be described in the words of Jean-Claude Willame as a "caesarist bureaucracy."¹⁶ As such, it includes four basic features of a pure bureaucracy as described by Weber:

- 1) Official business tends to be conducted more and more on a continuous basis...
- 2) It is conducted in relative secrecy by experts and in accordance with stipulated rational rules...
- 3) Officials' responsibilities and authority are part of a centralized hierarchy of authority...
- 4) Officials and other administrative employees do not own the resources necessary for the performances of their assigned functions.¹⁷

In this analysis of rational legal authority, Weber was concerned with the relationship between the struggle for power and the trend toward bureaucratization. He believed that some equilibrium must be

¹⁴"Mobutu Stirs Discontent in the Congo With Austerity Programs," The New York Times (February 18, 1966), col. 4, p. 8. These programs were aimed at cleaning up the big cities, and returning unemployed city inhabitants to rural areas.

¹⁵Deadline Data on World Affairs (October 26, 1966), p. 209.

¹⁶Jean-Claude Willame, "Toward A Caesarist Bureaucracy," Africa Today, Vol. 40 (January, 1971), p. 130.

¹⁷Weber, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, pp. 330-332.

maintained between them. A failure to achieve this balance meant that bureaucracy had usurped political decision-making or "all problems of politics are turned into problems of administration."¹⁸ This trend toward "depoliticization", at the same time emphasizing public office, hierarchy, and centralization was basic during this 13 month span of time. Not only was the politician designated as being evil, but politics itself became the main evil.¹⁹ The following discussion of decisions and events confirms this trend.

One of the first acts President Mobutu issued was to limit the autonomy of parliamentary institutions. Although the parliament was allowed to continue, the five year state of emergency declaration withdrew its law-making powers. The parliament could be called upon to confirm the president's decrees but it could not function as a law-making institution any more.²⁰

Another initial act was the disbanding of all political parties and political associations. A statement in The New York Times describes this action very well:

Mobutu has suspended politics--i.e. the development of regulative procedures, mechanisms and organizational patterns of communication, and setting up organs with which political struggle occurs. By stressing the elements of stability and permanence, he has shelved politics. Mobutu has failed to relate tensional forces of society to the political order.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Unpublished discussion with Donald Morris. See Footnote 9, Ch. 2.

²⁰ "Mobutu Assumes Legislative Powers," The New York Times (August 1, 1967), col. 3, p. 6.

²¹ "Mobutu Seeking Stronger Federal Control in Congo," The New York Times (August 1, 1967), col. 4, p. 8.

Government functions were increasingly placed in the hand of "experts" acting under the watchful eye and direct supervision of the president. This is most easily illustrated by the decline of professional politicians in the cabinet between 1966 and 1967. In mid-1966, almost all ministerial positions were in the hands of professional politicians. By the end of 1966, nine of the 21 portfolios were in the hands of depoliticized university graduates; at the end of 1967, 14 of those positions were held by the university graduates.²²

Parallel to the increasing importance of the depoliticized experts, there was an increasing centralization of power by President Mobutu. By the end of 1966, Mobutu held both the functions of chief-of-state and head of the government. In addition to these functions, he controlled the mass media, the Department of Defense, and the national security services. And finally, the president reduced the number of provinces from 22 to eight and imposed the authority of the central government upon them.²³

As was mentioned earlier, Weber noted that one of the main consequences of bureaucratic development in a society is depersonalization.

When fully developed bureaucracy stands in a specific sense under the principle of sine ira ac studio. Its specific nature, which is welcomed by capitalism, develops the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation. This is the specific nature of bureaucracy and it is appraised as its special virtue.²⁴

²²Willame, "Toward A Caesarist Bureaucracy," p. 142.

²³Keesings Contemporary Archives (London, January 1967), p. 21807A.

²⁴Max Weber, "Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft" from Max Weber, Essays in Sociology, trans and ed. H. H. Geerth and C. Wright Mills (London, 1964), pp. 215-216.

Mobutu has not attempted to remove the personal and emotional elements as cited above, but he has made a serious attempt to detribalize the society by administrative measures. His government is highly personalized. Patrimonial relationships are being transformed into personalization, by an attachment to the president. In October, 1966, Mobutu interjected charismatic elements into his politics by "rehabilitating Patrice Lumumba."²⁵ He claimed to be the spiritual successor of Lumumba and projected himself as a national hero.²⁶

The dominant themes of the Mobutu government in mid-1967 became highly moralizing and nationalistic. Initially the themes attacked the professional politician who was described as being corrupt, treasonous, and exploitive. When this campaign was over, the Lumumba resurrection was created. And in mid-1966, a new campaign was launched; Economic Independence and Congolese control of the economy became the theme.

However, these campaigns did little to increase the legitimacy of the regime or change the political orientations of the masses. Although this caesarist bureaucracy showed increasing rationality and coherence, stability and continuance of political structures remained a goal not a reality.

In mid-1967, in an attempt to seek legitimacy of national political structures and to alter the political attitudes and orientations of the masses, Mobutu established the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR).

²⁵Keesings Contemporary Archives (London, October 22, 1966), p. 21455A.

²⁶Ibid.

This was done to establish permanent lines of communication with the general population.²⁷ At its creation, the overall goal of the MPR was defined "as the mobilization of the masses in order to educate them politically, to inform them of government programs and policies, and to enlist their active participation in the development of the nation."²⁸

The central document of the MPR is the Manifesto of N'sele, so named because it was issued from the president's rural residence at N'sele. This doctrine presented the party goals only in general terms with the overall doctrine described as one of Congolese nationalism. This doctrine stresses the need for broad participation and party membership in order for the country's problems to be solved.²⁹ So in the party's drive for membership and its attempt to change the political orientations of the masses, the Policy of Authenticity was launched.

The MPR and Authenticity: Its Origins and Implementation and Supporters

In Zaire, the MPR was founded on May 20, 1967, one-and-a-half years after General Mobutu took control of the government. Mobutu believed, after the failure or only marginal successes of the previous campaigns, that certain state goals could not be achieved without a framework in which the nation would be transformed into a coherent whole, while the guiding principles of the party were being disseminated throughout the populace. However, in keeping with his distrust of politicians and

²⁷ Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, p. 246.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 247-248.

their political parties he did not call it a party, but a movement, because its purpose was to maintain a continuing action.

But why only a single organization as opposed to a two-party political system, as the Constitution of 1967 calls for.³⁰ Generally, a political party is defined as a group of individuals sharing the same political and philosophical concepts, and organized for political struggle so as to acquire and exercise power. Outside of this rather universal definition of a political party, Zairean, as well as a large number of other African states, have taken another approach which defines their special situation.

In Zaire, the political party has the same characteristics as most African single-party political systems. The mutual dependence of the party and the government is apparent in the structure and leadership of the MPR. The president of the Republic is also head of the party, and the ministers of state serve as members of the party's National Political Bureau. In the provinces, the governors serve as the chief party officials, and many of the other government administrators also hold party posts.

In theory, the highest organ of the MPR is the General Party Congress, made up of party officers and regional representatives. However, in practice, the supreme body of the party is the National Political Bureau, composed of twenty-one members, including the president, who presides over its weekly meetings. An MPR official, Albert Mavungu, described the relationship of the party to the government in the phrase,

³⁰"Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Translations on Africa (April, 1967), No. 566, Art. 4, of Mobutu's calls for not more than a two-party system.

"The party, by the Political Bureau, decides; the government executes."³¹

The National Executive Committee works under the direction of the National Political Bureau and coordinates the party activities of the provincial, district, and local committees. This committee is composed of five members: the general secretary, the chairman of the youth wing, the secretary for information, and the national treasurer.

Government administrators fill dual roles in the government and the party, and the pattern of MPR authority is pyramidal in form, with each unit subordinate to the one directly above it. From the provincial level down to the local community level, the party is structured along the lines of the government administration. Provincial committees function under the leadership of the governor; and committees corresponding to the districts and territories, the provincial subdivisions, are headed by the district commissioners and the territorial administrators. Mayors head the town committees, and local groups are organized as neighborhood cells.

The party also consists of a youth branch, the JMPR, and also the labor movement, the National Union of Congolese Workers (UNTC). Both of which are discussed later.

In Zaire, the party is attempting to develop a new form of struggle, namely the struggle against under-equipment, in order to achieve social and political development. In order to reach this goal, the party must attempt to muster all the forces possible "to cement the union of the various ethnic groups through integration into a single group called a nation which elsewhere in the world preceded the existence of an

³¹Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, p. 248.

organized state."³² Thus, the MPR is considered the link that will help the country through this period of mutation.

A glance at the history of Zaire helps explain the current political context. While it is not the purpose of this thesis to dwell on the historical events of Zaire,³³ it is enough to say that after five years of secessions, mutinies, and open warfare, in which over 100 political parties helped fan the ideas of regionalism and tribalism, even a two-party system was considered dangerous by the new power elite.³⁴

In addition to the historical events in Zaire, a more theoretical explanation may be advanced. In a divided society, the party represents and defends the interests of a class; the existence of several parties is a reflection of a struggle conducted by the various classes in the society. In an attempt to alter these orientations and attitudes and to mold one coordinated group out of many, the existence of more than one party to achieve this purpose would be diametrically opposed to the purpose.

Thus, in Mobutu's attempt to alter the orientations and attitudes of the masses, he has focused all sources of legitimacy on the party. The party has become synonymous with the state.

This trilogy: People, Movement, and State, makes the MPR the primary reference for any action by the State. On the other hand, this relative mingling of three elements of a single whole requires the predominance of the Movement over all other institutions. The Republic only acts through the will of the

³²Young, Politics in the Congo, p. 5.

³³Two excellent sources that present an in depth analysis of the initial five years of Congolese independence are: M. Crawford Young, Politics in the Congo; and Conor C. O'Brien, To Katanga and Back (New York, 1964).

³⁴Young, "Congo Political Parties Revisited," p. 16.

Movement. Thus the MPR is the Supreme Institution of the Republic of Zaire; all other institutions are subordinated to it and operate under its control.³⁵

Once the party was organized and established, a doctrine was needed in the leadership attempts to politically educate the general populace. This doctrine as spelled out by the MPR Manifesto has become known as "Authentic Zairean Nationalism." The Manifesto states the purpose of this program of authenticity.

In order for all Zaireans to become authentic nationalists, we must free ourselves of the complexes which characterize a colonized people and free ourselves of all impulses which negate our values.³⁶

Thus, authenticity is the political method by which the Zairean leadership is attempting to create a Zairean first and African second. As Mobutu stated, he must convince the Zairean that he is not "a Frenchman, a Belgian, an American or an Italian from Africa, but that he is an African from Zaire."³⁷

Authentic Zairean Nationalism was a movement which aimed at establishing a society based on national values. It was an attempt to create a new political culture by integrating all the societies and their political cultures into a unified one and to create a nation which is aware of its own values.

In this area, the MPR started by changing the currency. It followed this by changing the European names of all towns and cities, streets, public squares and monuments. Finally, the river, country,

³⁵Keesings Contemporary Archives (London, December 1970), p. 23614A.

³⁶"N'Sele Manifesto," Translations on Africa (June, 1967), No. 798.

³⁷Unpublished Lecture by Mobutu at the University of Zaire in November, 1967, as related by Donald Morris. See Footnote 9, Ch. 2.

and all citizens were all given authentic Zairean names.³⁸

More importantly, the education system was changed. For example, in the colonial era all students were taught the history and geography of the Gauls, Belgium, and France, and virtually nothing about their own state. Now the system teaches about the early history of Zaire and how the early society was organized and that life revolved around the community. Thus, the new education program stresses the Zairean ancestry and how the authenticity program is an attempt to reorganize the society around the national community.³⁹ Finally, authenticity is a philosophical position which stresses a psychological change:

It is the affirmation of a choice, of an ideology which does not accept universal doctrines. Choices must be dictated by the realities of the environment. Authenticity will show the people how to live their own lives, and how to take responsibility for their own future.⁴⁰

Thus, Mobutu, through the MPR and its doctrine of authenticity, has attempted to weld together a number of various ethnic groups into a unified nation. But is this just rhetoric aimed at insuring his own position or have any changes occurred that support this political method? A brief look at the new regime support groups helps provide an answer.

Of course, the army is the major supportive group, however, since they achieved some degree of unity before the MPR and its policies were launched, other groups should be looked at to gain a better measure of verification.

³⁸International Fides Services (Rome, September 1973), No. 3824.

³⁹Ibid., and Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, pp. 159-160.

⁴⁰The New York Times (February 14, 1972), col. 4, p. 14.

University students serve as a good indicator of regime support. In Africa, South America and Southeast Asia, the support of this group often means the difference between regime maintenance or loss of power.

In the Congo, students first participated in politics at the time of Mobutu's first coup in September, 1960. In an attempt to end the chaos of the time, Mobutu gave the students a major hand in the control of the government. He created the College of Commissioners, staffed it with university students or recent graduates, and gave it the task of governing the Congo.

This unique political experiment failed because the students lacked the political and administrative training. Also, their functions were never clearly defined, thus, creating a lot of overlap in many of the ministerial portfolios. Upon the collapse of the College of Commissioners, the students took up the role of opposition to the return of the old political elite. "On the whole, however, the students lacked identity, unity, and sense of purpose."⁴¹

With Mobutu's return to power in 1965, the position of the student has greatly improved. Once Mobutu consolidated his position and introduced the MPR, the regime responded positively to the student demands "by re-integrating the students into national and regional administrations. It is this body that makes up a majority of the MPR cadre and is disseminating the principles of the MPR."⁴² Thus, Mobutu has accomplished what none of the other power elite of Zaire could do, and

⁴¹Willame, "Toward A Caesarist Bureaucracy," p. 151.

⁴²International Fides Services (Rome, January 1973), No. 2464.

"that is to combine the symbols of Lumumbism with concrete reform measures to harness the loyalty and energy of the students."⁴³

There are still areas in which the students are discontented with the government. For example, they are concerned about the poor quality of instructors and the limited facilities at the university. On the whole, however, the students accept the stability that the Mobutu regime has given the country and the principles of the MPR.

Another regime supportive group was the urban youth. When Mobutu took power, he received a great amount of support from the various youth movements which he organized into the Volunteer Corps of the Republic (CVR). In 1967, Mobutu reorganized this group into the Junior Popular Revolutionary Movement (JMPR) to re-educate the youth of the country to the principles of authenticity. Although the stated purpose of the organization was "to promote national consciousness among the masses and participation in the country's reconstruction,"⁴⁴ in the beginning the organization functioned as an intelligence agency spending most of its time watching the old politicians. Since late 1970, however, the youth movement has served as one of the main vehicles for dissemination of the MPR's policies to the masses. It has been overhauled and it now has a chapter in almost every city and village, and many of the members serve as MPR cadre at the grassroots level.⁴⁵

Labor is another major support group of the Mobutu regime and its policies. In January, 1968, all labor unions were consolidated in the

⁴³Willame, "Toward A Caesarist Bureaucracy," p. 151.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 149.

⁴⁵Area Handbook for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, pp. 249-250.

National Union of Congolese Workers (UNTC). The governing body of this organization was given the responsibility of rewriting the Labor Code to protect the rights and benefits of the workers. It also created a National Labor Council that arbitrates strikes and institutes better health and safety conditions. The major factor support from labor was Mobutu's willingness to raise the minimum wage by about 45 percent in 1971. The UNTC has become the major communicator for the MPR in the labor environment. It has been through this structure that government policies have been passed down, and at the same time it has acted as a spring-board for demands made by the workers on the government. With better pay, working conditions, and benefits, the Labor force has become a major supportive group of the MPR and its policies.

What about the general populace? Has the MPR made inroads in altering political attitudes? The answer is difficult to make because of the lack of political material concerning the outlying areas. However, certain indicators are available. Although the MPR and the authenticity program have enjoyed considerably more success in the cities than in the countryside, most contemporary Zairean "experts" agree that the programs are slowly being accepted in the rural areas.⁴⁶ The main reasons have been Mobutu's ability to stabilize the countryside, the party's attempts to curb corruption in the government at all levels,⁴⁷ and the public works projects that Mobutu and the MPR have initiated. Projects such as

⁴⁶ Scholars such as Jean-Claude Willame, Crawford Young, Rene Lemarchand and author Donald Morris, from their various writings in the political journals all agree that Mobutu's program is gaining acceptance in the countryside.

⁴⁷ In 1965, almost 50 percent of total government revenue disappeared in corruption. In 1973, this figure had dropped to less than 25 percent. Department of State, Update: Republic of Zaire, p. 11.

opening roads from provincial capitals to outlying areas have made possible higher earnings for the farmers and have opened a communication system between the party and the farmers. The construction of hospitals, schools, and other public services in the rural area have all aided in changing the political values of the rural population.⁴⁸

This chapter has concerned itself with the rise of a new political elite, the differences between it and the elite that was displaced, the growth of a new political party, the ideology of that party, and finally the effects of that ideology on the general population of Zaire. This chapter has attempted to explain the creation of a dominant political culture and has described the initial results of the changes. Only time will reveal the vitality of the effort.

⁴⁸The New York Times (October 22, 1969), col. 4, p. 2; (June 28, 1970), col. 1, p. 15; and (December 1, 1973), col. 1, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis is based on the hypothesis that a dominant political culture will more likely be generated by an integrated political leadership working through a single party system than a pluralistic leadership dispersed within a multiparty system, in an ethnically fragmented society such as Zaire. The importance of such a hypothesis is the contribution toward an understanding of the colonial society, the dialectic of decolonization, the elements in the political system as they have operated in the environment of independence, and the importance of an established dominant political culture for the society i.e., an awareness of and support for the national political system as a whole, a basic conception of how politics will be conducted, and a civility in politics that will smooth the edges of political disagreement rather than looking at each individual political question as a life or death struggle.

Granting that the predominance of parochial loyalties constituted a formidable obstacle to the creation of a dominant political culture in Zaire, how should one account for the failure of the initial political leadership to transcend regional and ethnic particularisms? Was it a reflection of Belgian colonialism? How has the new generation of political leadership transcended regional and ethnic particularisms? Was it a reflection of Belgian colonialism? How has the new generation of political leaders attempted to deal with this problem and to what extent have

these leaders been able to alter the political attitudes and values of the populace in their attempts to create a dominant political culture?

From the outset of the Congo's independence, there were three major problems confronting the leadership in their quest to create a dominant political culture. One was the fact that Congolese nationalism received its initial drive from a narrow-based political movement which asserted itself as the vehicle of an ethnic type of nationalism. As was mentioned earlier, the avant-garde of this type of nationalism was founded by the Bakongo who worked through the political party ABAKO. This spearheading role enabled its members to pose as the champions of independence. Since the ABAKO could claim credit for initiating the first important steps toward independence, it attempted to endow its leaders with the aura of legitimacy for taking over the reins of governmental leadership after independence. Since this organization was one based on Bakongo values and attitudes, the other ethnic groups could not join it; thus, they formed new movements which in turn became regional or ethnic in nature.

This particular aspect of Congolese nationalism has been paralleled in other African states. For example, the dominant role played by the Baganda in Uganda, the Ewe in Togo, and the Ibo in Nigeria. However, in these other cases, the separatist implications of these narrow-based movements were overcome by unified territorial movements. This was especially the case in Nigeria. To quote Professor Coleman: "The vision of the prestige and power that a unified Nigeria would bring was highly seductive, and therefore sobering. As a result, self-government was postponed for a few years."¹ In contrast, however, the Bakongo and

¹James S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961), p. 42.

other Congolese ethnic groups refused to delay independence for the sake of the national political system as a whole. They lacked the patience to do so, and refused to accommodate their ultimate political objective of creating their own individual states within the larger Congo territory. This refusal to accept the idea of a unified Congo as the primary objective led to the failure of the leadership to resolve the basic issue of the type of political system that was to be established--federalist or unitary.

The second major problem facing the initial leadership was the lack of mutual confidence and respect. This was mainly the result of Belgian colonial policies which refused the Congolese leaders the opportunity to conduct among themselves common political actions. The initial elites grew up in a number of regional centers with virtually no contact among themselves on a national scale until the Brussels Exposition in 1958. Before this event the leadership had no opportunity for travel either within the boundaries of the Congo, or travel overseas and were thus sealed off with considerable effectiveness until the eve of independence. By that time the seeds of ethnic and regional rivalries were too deeply ingrained to allow for a degree of civility in political interaction. Thus, the tensions created by political disagreements became viewed as struggles for supremacy among competing groups.

The third major problem was the very different conceptions of the content of independence between the leadership and the mass. The leadership proposed to take over the management of an effective administrative system and operate it more effectively. From the oratory of the election campaigns the mass understood that the benefits of independence meant increased opportunities for schools, medical treatment, jobs, and

farming equipment, lower taxes and the elimination of forced labor on road networks. As soon as the Congo achieved independence, the facade of a united grassroot support for independence underwent a radical change. The promises of increased opportunities were not kept, and in most areas taxation actually increased rather than decreased. Also, the new deputies and provincial councilors failed to communicate with their constituents. The latter, who had placed high hopes in these officials, were bitterly disappointed by what they considered to be total indifference to their desiderata. Thus, in 1962, the president of the MNC in Walikale district of Orientale province wrote that the local representatives "never visited the people of Walikale to inquire about their needs and grievances and that the whole population of Walikale laments that it has never had a chance to meet its provincial councilors."² Thus, many of the Congolese felt that only the politicians would reap the benefits of independence.

Another source of tension between the leadership and the people was the breakdown of the political parties themselves. In the countryside, party activity ceased from 1960 to 1970. For example, party membership cards were no longer sold, meetings were no longer held, and eventually branches quietly ceased to function. The wholesale and abrupt Africanization of the civil service brought about by the mass exodus of Belgian civil servants after the revolt of the Force Publique, absorbed the majority of the party leaders. Thus, in the competition for power, the mass base was no longer relevant.³

²Lemarchand, Political Awakening in the Congo, p. 290.

³Young, "Congo Political Parties Revisited," pp. 20-21.

Also, the Africanization of the civil service created the final break between the mass and the leadership. Besides the fact that the number of posts to be filled could hardly expect to meet the demand, nepotism became predominant in the upper reaches of the civil service. Many secretaries, deputy secretaries, and undersecretaries were appointed on the basis of merit, but this was the exception rather than typical. In most instances, a minister not only selected his chef de cabinet among his friends and relatives from his own ethnic group, but his administrative staff as well. Party members denied these favors became embittered by the situation. The mass initially reacted by withdrawing into cynicism and alienation. "Politician" came to mean, he who usurped all the material benefits of independence. Thus, when General Mobutu took control of the government in November 1965, and took away the power of the politician hardly a voice was raised in the countryside.⁴

An even more difficult task of this study was to explain the role of Belgian colonial policies and their effects on the failure of the initial leadership in creating a dominant political culture. No effort at all was made to institutionalize social changes through meaningful representative organs. This was evidenced by a total absence of integrative governmental structure at the local and central levels to assist the Congolese communities toward the attainment of common goals. Thus, when the Africans took control of the government they were faced with the almost impossible task of developing governmental machinery where none had previously existed.

⁴Willame, "Toward A Caesarist Bureaucracy," pp. 130-143.

There were other reasons for Belgium's failure to assist in developing a dominant political culture among the Congolese. First, compared to the colonial presence of England and France, Belgian colonial rule was exceedingly short--57 years. However, even if Belgium could have maintained its presence for more than its fifty-seven years, there is no guarantee that it could have produced a more effective union of the various Congolese ethnic groups. Aside from the difficulties arising from the nature of the Belgian colonial policies there was the fact that Belgium itself has a divided political culture in which national symbols were generally identified with a subculture, i.e., either Flemish or Walloon, rather than with a larger national political culture. Obviously then, a nation that lacks a strong national group awareness, such as Belgium, can not be expected to ignite strong national loyalties among other diverse peoples. Thus, as Professor Willame observed, "from this contact between two countries, none of which was a nation, resulted a total absence of national political structuring."⁵

Another element that inhibited the creation of a dominant political culture had to do with the several media in which the Belgian acculturative interests were placed on the Congolese scene, i.e., interests of businessmen, colonial administrators, and the various Christian missionaries. These agencies, which were involved in the colonial control of the Congolese, produced widespread ambivalence in the attitude of the Congolese toward the locus and nature of civil authority. In other words, independence meant the eviction of Belgian-vested interests

⁵Congo 1960-1962, (Bruxelles, 1963), p. 159.

rather than a common striving toward the construction of a viable nation-state.⁶

The essential element of society is the interaction of human beings in such a manner as to mutually benefit and support one another. But if man is to love in society, he must have some way of steering it so that the society can collectively make decisions about its public posture and policies. This process must take place in the political culture of a society.⁷

The essential element mentioned above has not been present in Zaire and it is this element that Mobutu through the MPR has been attempting to produce in the Zairean society. But has Mobutu been any more successful than the previous leadership in bringing about a harmonious "interaction of human beings?" The answer of course can not be definite; however, the MPR at the time of this writing has begun to move the Zaireans on this course.

Since November, 1965, President Mobutu has been the dominant force in the political scene. In addition to his control over the government and the security forces as head of state and head of government, he is also the founder and leader of the MPR. Since his assumption of power, Mobutu has progressively centralized political power in the office and person of the president. The Constitution of June 1967 provided for a strong presidential system with the office of prime minister being incorporated into that of the president. The chief of state was further empowered to name and recall members of government; government ministers, and provincial ministers were made directly responsible to the president.⁸

⁶Wyatt MacGaffey, "Kongo and the King of the Americans," Journal of Modern African Studies, VI, No. 2 (August, 1968), pp. 179-181.

⁷Almond and Coleman, p. 247.

⁸"Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo," Articles 1, 2, 3, 15, 16, 33, and 54.

In other words, Mobutu has been attempting to establish legitimacy in the office of the presidency. The initial leadership failed in its efforts to do this because the basic principle of the multi-party system was the promotion of interests of only a specific region or ethnic group. Thus, there was not an awareness of or support for the national political system as a whole.

Since its creation in May 1967, the MPR has developed as the locus of political power and the only channel to political office. Under the guidance of the president, party leaders have carried out intensive programs of political education. On both the national and local levels, the MPR has sought to orient attitudes toward civic responsibility and active participation in political affairs. Although the MPR has more influence in urban areas, the government has increasingly made efforts toward the extension of political activities in all parts of the country.⁹

The populace now tends to view the government and the political party as one and the same, primarily because of the duality of roles whereby government officials are also party leaders. Both government and party are looked upon as voices of authority to be obeyed.¹⁰ Enthusiasm for political party activities is more evident among the under-thirty age group, particularly among primary and secondary school students who are objects of political indoctrination, and among persons whose jobs are directly and indirectly connected to the government.¹¹

⁹The New York Times (January 31, 1972), col. 1, p. 58.

¹⁰Armed Forces Press Clips, Vol. IX, No. 49 (Dec. 3, 1974), p. 23.

¹¹Ibid., p. 24.

As mentioned before, in the more remote areas of the country, the influence of the government and party was weaker than in urban areas. Life goes on much the same as it has in the past decades, and the benefits of political, social, and economic progress are only very slowly being extended to the outlying areas. However, since mid-1972, the government and the MPR have been making a concerted effort to increase their influence in these areas. The methods by which this is being done is the construction of new roads and the development of communication media, the construction of numerous schools and medical facilities, and the appointment of MPR representatives who establish cellular branches of the party in the remote villages of the areas.¹² The effects of these programs at this time can not be evaluated because they are too new, but it can be noted that because of the increase of the communication networks, the sale of cash crops in the district markets has increased 13.8 percent over any other recorded year.¹³ Also, United Nations health officials have recorded somewhat smaller infant mortality rates over the past two years than previously existed in Orientale province.¹⁴

Thus, Mobutu and the MPR have begun to accomplish the goals that were articulated when the MPR was originally established. First, the MPR has established the infrastructure that has been able to draw attention to the central authority. Thus, it has been able to project an image that has impregnated the ideas of "nation-state". Secondly, the

¹²The New York Times (January 31, 1972), col. 1, p. 58; Agency for International Development, Annual Report; Zaire (July 1974), pp. 119-126.

¹³Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 122.

MPR has established the guidelines of how political activity will be conducted, i.e., there is no longer any question as to what type of governmental formula will be established; unitarism has overcome the forces of federalism. And finally, the MPR has introduced civility into the political life of Zaire; since early 1968, there has not been a single challenge to the authority of President Mobutu or the MPR. Hence, Mobutu, through the MPR and the program of authenticity, has interjected into the political life of Zaire a political culture that stresses unity among the people and a definite character in the political system.

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VITA

Jack Edward Weber

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Thesis: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT:
THE CASE OF ZAIRE

Major Field: Political Science

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, January 1, 1945,
the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Weber.

Education: Graduated from Central High School, Muskogee, Oklahoma,
in June, 1963; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Education
from Northeastern State College in 1967; enrolled in Masters
program at Oklahoma State University in 1974; completed re-
quirements for the Master of Arts degree in July, 1975.
United States Army Institute of Military Assistance, Fort
Bragg, North Carolina, 1974; Defense Language Institute,
Presidio of Monterey, Monterey, California, 1975.

Professional Experience: Teacher of History, Memorial High School,
Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1967-1968; United States Army, 1968 to
present, assignments include 10th Engineer Battalion,
Kitzingen, Germany; 27th Engineer Battalion, Camp Evans,
Republic of Viet Nam, Instructor, United States Army Corps of
Engineers Advanced Course. Next Assignment, Assistant Mili-
tary Attache, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.