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HOWARD UNIVERSITY

**The New Techno-Economic Regime and
Political Development in Congo-Brazzaville
Globalization and Political and Socioeconomic Restructuring**

**A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences**

of

HOWARD UNIVERSITY

**in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Political Science

by

Guy-Maurille Massamba

**Washington, D.C.
December 2000**

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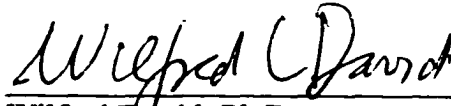
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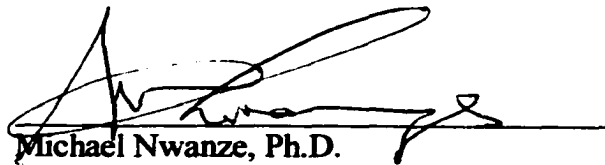
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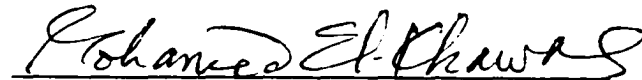



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DEDICATION

To:

My parents, André and Alphonsine,

My wife, Martine,

And my dear friend Angel Braestrup.

With love and profound gratitude!

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of two factors of global structural change—neoliberalism and technological change—on the Congolese society, which resulted in political and socioeconomic restructuring. It highlights the interaction between global factors and the underlying historical, political and socioeconomic dynamics in Congo-Brazzaville. The study suggests that while global factors were crucial in inducing restructuring, local traditional references, the vestiges of socialism and the aspirations of the people for a better life were also important in determining the evolution of the restructuring process.

As a qualitative analysis of the Congolese case, this study recognizes that restructuring was not merely an implementation of IMF and World Bank-monitored structural adjustment programs, but it was influenced by historical circumstances.

By urging political and socioeconomic restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville, global neoliberal forces pushed for the establishment of a new political regime characterized by institutional accountability and political pluralism. This caused the end of the Marxist system and revitalized civil society, as the emergence of independent political and social organizations and private initiatives indicated. The demise of Marxism generated more decentralized socioeconomic structures outside the state, and gave rise to new organizational forms intended to enhance the efficiency and productivity of economic enterprises.

However, political and socioeconomic restructuring proceeded with difficulty. Throughout the 1990s, the new regime was dominated by conflicts reflecting ethnic antagonism, the personal interests of the political leadership and the slow pace of

economic adjustment causing discontent among the population. In addition, a combination of factors contributed to impeding the decentralization of the new political order. These included persistent traditional ways, such as the hierarchical structure of new political parties, constant political instability, social unrest and strikes dismantling democratic institutions. This resulted in the 1997 civil war.

Despite the political crisis, the post-conflict era continued the restructuring process. This process must now take into account the evolution of political culture, which should espouse the nation and urge cooperation among political actors, rather than ethnic allegiances. It should continue the upgrading of socioeconomic infrastructures for economic productivity so that every group has a vested interest in the democratization process.

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INTRODUCTION

This study deals with the impact of global structural change on Congo-Brazzaville's socioeconomic and political system. It is a reflection on the way the determinants of global change affect political and socioeconomic development and institutional change in this country. Research and analysis will focus on the way the Congolese socioeconomic formation and political system relate to, and are affected by the factors of global change. The objective of this analysis is not to predict the outcome of Congo-Brazzaville's current crisis situation resulting from the process of political liberalization. An important objective is to understand the extent to which the strong and far-reaching factors of global structural change have touched Congo-Brazzaville, despite this country's anti-capitalist rhetoric on political and socioeconomic development based on Marxist ideology during the 1970s and 1980s. Also the study asserts that a positive interaction of Congo-Brazzaville with the global political economy will depend on the way the country's historical conditions facilitate the incorporation of the determinants of global structural change by social, economic and political actors.

From the point of view of its Marxist socioeconomic and political options, Congo-Brazzaville was not likely to embrace liberal democracy and the capitalist orientation dominating the world economy. The Congolese socialist regimes created socioeconomic and political structures embodying a state-controlled economy emphasizing state dominance in the industrial and agricultural sectors including ownership and management of educational institutions. This was a state-centric model that undervalued what Greenberg calls the "citizen-preference" (Greenberg, 1990:28). Its

dominant discourse, at the time of the neoliberal global resurgence in the 1970s, was a denouncement of capitalist-imperialist expansion and its disregard for social programs.

However, the triumph of global capitalism dominated by neoliberal guidelines of economic efficiency, associated with the demise of communist regimes worldwide, contributed to the disclosure of structural deficiencies in Congo-Brazzaville's developmental model. Also internal strife within the state apparatus reflected the contradictions between the socialist discourse emphasizing social programs and the behavior of self-interested political leadership. Congo-Brazzaville's socialist model led to industrial and agricultural policies that failed to promote technological change and foreign direct investment. In addition, it did not deliver its promise of establishing conditions for popular participation in political structures and processes.

A steady disintegration of political ethics, the failure to build a national and popular state in accordance with the heralded ideology and the absence of an economic sector outside the state led to the deterioration of the social and political basis of economic development. All this contributed to the political and economic marginalization of many citizens and reinforced the state's weakness to cope with exogenous factors. To this were added the inefficiency of fiscal and financial policies and social programs and the mismanagement of public administration service, all of which reinforced the government's difficulty to deal with the decline in international oil prices in the 1980s. These structural deficiencies weakened socioeconomic activities and agents, creating what the World Bank identified in Congo-Brazzaville, as "a pervasive sense of dependence on the Government as many became dependent on public spending" (World Bank, 1997:1). It is against this political and socioeconomic background that the

country had launched restructuring programs, in the late 1980s, under conditionalities stipulated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In addition, western European countries, especially France, made the implementation of liberal democracy, a pre-condition for receiving aid and other forms of assistance.

This analysis focuses on two particular determinants of global structural change. These are neoliberalism and technological change. The main criterion of selection of these categories is that not only do they provide a sound basis for the analysis of the ongoing global change, but they also constitute the elements that restructuring national systems have to embrace to be in tune with the global political economy. Neoliberalism is the dominant regime of accumulation and regulation of the global system, while technology, as Dieter Ernst notes, “is obviously a strategic factor at all levels of economic and social development” (Ernst, 1980:15).

Technological change is defined as the condition of innovative capability appropriately shaping the trajectory of existing technologies as well as new ones for problem-solving heuristics. It is embedded in manufacturing industry, based on technological knowledge, sustained by research and development and supported by explicit technology policy. Through manufacturing industry introducing new technologies with enhanced capability, and scattering production sites around the globe, technological change has acquired preeminence in the global economy. The globalization of production is partly linked to technological diffusion. Ernst observes that “the international transfer of technology has been an essential precondition for the internationalization of production” (Ernst, 1980:15).

If these factors are critical for the type of restructuring allowing for a positive interaction with the global political economy, it is, therefore, important to see the extent to which restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville has incorporated them. At the same time, it is equally important to examine the determinant role of endogenous socio-historical factors in restructuring. That is to say that historical circumstances give significance to the motivations of social, economic and political actors and institutions to embrace the new conditions of the changing world. Important historical elements include the political evolution, cultural referents, level of social and economic development, existing human resources, the introduction of Congo-Brazzaville into the capitalist mode of production through the colonial experience, the social, cultural, political and economic colonial legacy and the continued privileged relationship with the former colonial power. Does Congo-Brazzaville's historical background facilitate or obstruct the incorporation of technological change, the relationship with neoliberalism and the interaction with the global economy?

Underlying this research perspective is the thesis that *though Congo-Brazzaville's political and socioeconomic evolution stands in contrast with the patterns of global change, this country's restructuring process constitutes an effect of global restructuring, which has been influenced by national historical circumstances*. As the enthusiasm for political development and the worldwide spread of the democratic ideal shows, the neoliberal political culture is given a universal value (Wiarda, 1991). Yet, from the analytical point of view, the trends toward a universal interpretation of the principles of political development complicate the understanding of particular democratic trajectories of specific sub-Saharan African cases. Himmelstrand, Kinyanjui and Mbiguri warned

about the temptation of implementing modern principles that do not take account of historical conditions. “If the notion of modernization reappears among African social scientists, it must be a notion of modernization quite different from the concept of Westernization in every respect which was dominant in the old modernization paradigm” (Himmelstrand, Ulf, and others, 1994:9).

The validity of modernization ideas must be measured in the possibility of generating a new power base through a restructuring that can liberate human creativity and ability to make sense of what is lived here and now. What is required, therefore, is the contextualization of those modern categories that explain the fundamental values of human nature from a standpoint that allows for a self-redefinition and reinvigorating of sub-Saharan African societies in order to harness appropriate capacities.

To fully understand the transformation in Congo-Brazzaville in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, it is, therefore, important to consider the basis on which change will be achieved to facilitate an appropriate incorporation of technological change and political development and give a renewed vigor to society. One needs to pay attention to the way in which social behaviors and relationships, socioeconomic needs and institutional change affect each other, in Congo-Brazzaville’s sociohistorical context. The importance of historicity authorizes the following question: can one find justification for restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville’s history?

At this juncture, the new techno-economic model, elaborated in this study as a theoretical framework, presents a plausible explanation by stressing historicity and the microfoundational behaviors of structural change. It allows for an interpretation of long-term discontinuities and continuities that affect the patterns of change in the economic

and political system. Since the discussion deals with technological change and neoliberalism as dominant factors of global structural change, the model will disclose the historical conditions that have, over time, determined, and now justify, the incorporation of these factors by social, political and economic structures in Congo-Brazzaville. This incorporation may require the adoption of a more open and liberal political economy. That is to say that technological change and organizational and institutional change are “history-dependent” (Dosi, Giannetti and Toninelli, 1992:20).

CHAPTER I

PRESENTATION

Geographical and Historical Overview

Geographical Facts

Congo-Brazzaville is a Central African country, sharing borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo in the east, Angola in the south, Gabon in the west, Cameroon in the northwest and the Central African Republic in the northeast (see figure 1.1, which represents the map of the Republic of the Congo). It is crossed by the Equator in the northern part. The Congo River flows southward along the eastern boundary for about 625 miles. It has an area of 132,047 square miles and a population of 2.9 million people (figures from United Nations, 1999).

Congo-Brazzaville has seven main geographic zones:

- A coastal plain sloping slightly to the ocean with shores dotted with sand dunes;
- A mountainous zone covered by forest in the southeast, called the Mayombe;
- The Niari valley drained by rivers;
- The hilly Pool region;
- The dry, varied Batéké plateaus;
- The Congo Basin, a semi-aquatic and often-flooded zone;
- A fluvial zone in the northern region.

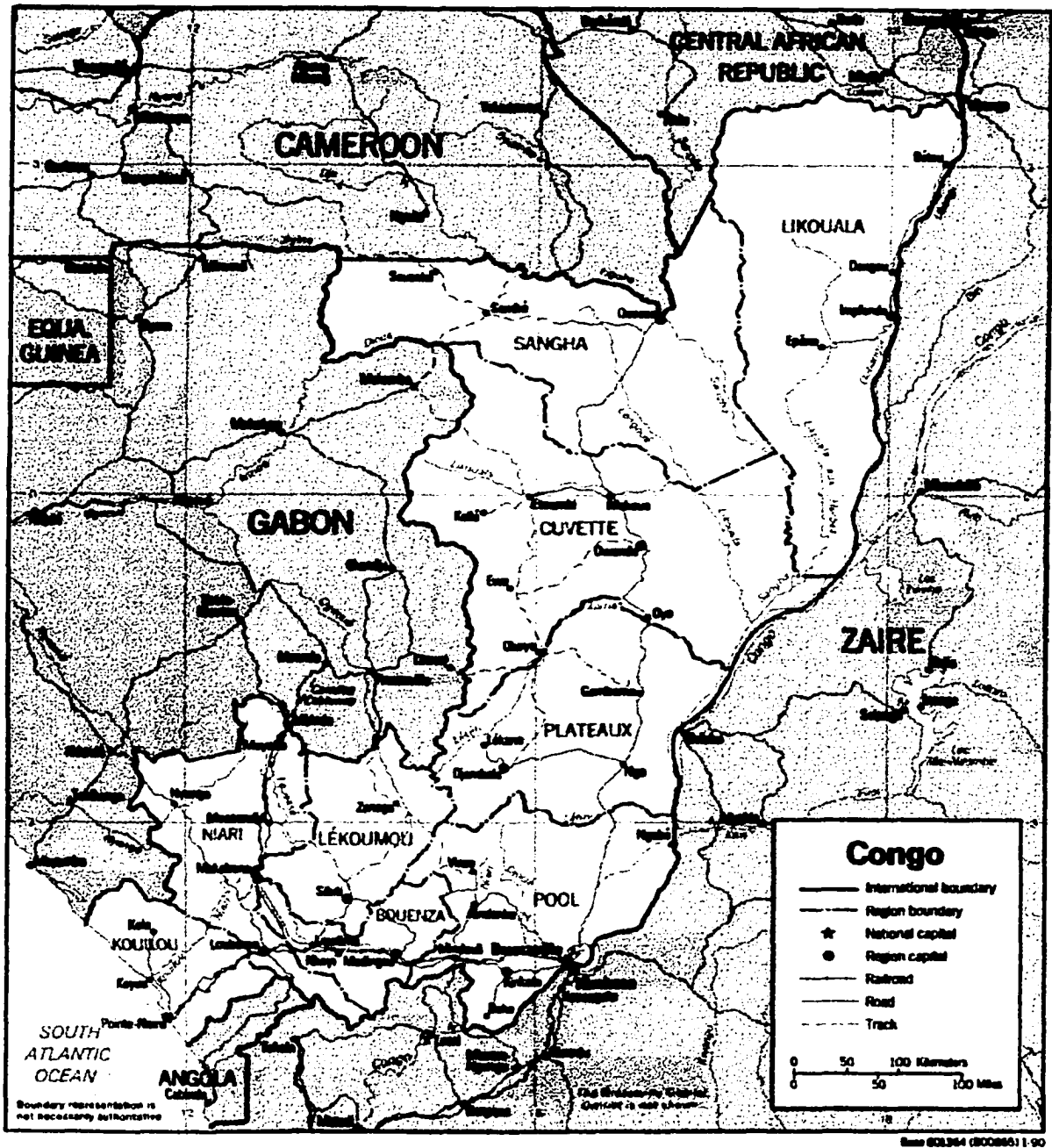


Figure 1.1 Map of the Republic of the Congo.

Congo-Brazzaville has two major climatic types. First, the south has a long rainy season, from September to June, due to heavy southern tropical influence, with moderate

rainfall in January and February. Second, the climate in the north is equatorial and brings heavier and more regular rainfall between May and October, interrupted by a dry season in July and August.

Historical Overview

The Colonial Middle Congo and the Process of Decolonization

Congo-Brazzaville gained independence on August 15, 1960, after being part of a federation created by France, called French Equatorial Africa, comprising Gabon, Central African Republic, Chad and the Middle Congo (which later became the Republic of Congo). The colonial administration was gradually established between 1883 and 1885. An important condition facilitating this development was a protectorate treaty signed in 1880 by the French explorer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, and Batéké king Makoko (Baniafouna, 1995).

The Middle Congo was an important element in this colonial setting. In 1910, Brazzaville became the capital of the federation, while Pointe-Noire was chosen as the seaport. Confronted with the government's reluctance to invest in the territory, Brazza suggested that the economic development of the territory be entrusted to private commercial companies, which instituted a system of exploitation based on trade in 1897. Later on, the colonial administration replaced this system with public investment in the 1930s, leading to the establishment of such limited infrastructures as roads, railway, and a

seaport. Mineral mining was concentrated in the southern part of the territory, between Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972).

During the period preceding World War II, the colonial administration governed the territory without native participation. World War II contributed to the acceleration of the decolonization process, which was reinforced by the emergence of educated natives. This process gradually transferred some political power to the natives according to the conditions formulated by the colonial state. Africans participated in the administration of the territory through the legislative body, while being excluded from the executive (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Decolonization was also reinforced by the emergence of local movements protesting against French brutal domination and demanding equality of rights with French citizens and participation in the political life of the territory.

The most notable movement was known as Matsouanism, bearing the name of its leader, André G. Matsoua. This movement adopted messianic perspectives proclaiming the future liberation of African Blacks from foreign domination (Sinda, 1972). Although this movement was initially intended by its leader to be apolitical, it had a political influence, stirring up political resistance. It became a reference for such independence political leaders as Fulbert Youlou who used it to attract political support from the Lari ethnic group from which the movement drew its followers (Baniafouna, 1996).

Despite the early rise of this movement, in the mid-1920s, its impact on the decolonization process was limited, since the colonial administration dismantled it by jailing its leader who died in prison in 1942. Its real influence was in the use that Lari leaders made of it in their race to political power (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). A former member of this movement that we have been able to interview admitted that the impact of

their movement diminished in the years preceding independence mostly because of the emergence of local political parties. He pointed out that the movement still contributed to unifying the Lari ethnic group around Youlou, which influenced the creation of Youlou's party, the Union Démocratique de Défense des Intérêts Africains (UDDIA). The Matsounists saw Youlou as the incarnation of Matsoua, and being a defrocked priest, he was regarded as an inspired figure to continue the struggle against foreign domination.

Other facts intensified the decolonization process. World War II gave the opportunity to French African colonies to fight on the side of de Gaulle's France. Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997:30) notes that the process leading to political autonomy accelerated during World War II. From the Equatorial federation, the governor of the territory, Félix Eboué, asserted the territory's support in the fight against Nazi occupation of France. Africans participated in the war, fighting for the liberation of France. Brazzaville became the capital of la *France libre*. It was from this city that, during the war, on October 27, 1940, General de Gaulle gave an important speech on the respect for democracy, criticizing Germany's totalitarianism (Baniafouna, 1995:22).

Brazzaville also hosted the conference organized by de Gaulle from January 28 to February 8, 1944, to launch the process of independence for French African colonies. This conference gave the momentum to French African decolonization and set the grounds for the creation of local representative assemblies and the formulation of ideas concerning French citizenship, which would allow Africans to assume executive responsibilities within the empire. Brazzaville was also the city in which, on August 24, 1958, de Gaulle launched his project for a constitutional referendum that would create a

scheme combining independence and membership in the French community (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997; Baniafouna, 1996:22).

The Autonomous State and the Emergence of Political Parties

The autonomous state emerged within the colonial political context established by the 1956 “Loi-Cadre” that France issued, allowing Africans to assume executive power inside the colonial federation. The “Loi-Cadre” gave extended responsibilities to governments in each colony, run by the leader of the dominant party in the Assembly. This leader, therefore, assumed the function of vice-president of the colonial territory, while the governor was the president of the federation. Territorial assemblies were no longer simply consultative bodies, but they also constituted governmental councils comprising members elected through legislative electoral processes and governor-appointed fellows. Hence, the territorial assembly functioned as council of ministers advising the governor.

The autonomy of the executive body instituted through the “Loi-Cadre” was reinforced as General de Gaulle returned to power in France, through the creation of a Franco-African Community of autonomous states associated to the French Republic. This gave more executive powers to the vice-president, head of the government in the colonial territory. The referendum held on September 28, 1958, in France, offered overseas territories the possibility to choose between the membership in the Franco-African Community and total independence. Only Guinea declared its refusal to remain in the Community. The Middle Congo or Congo-Brazzaville voted for continued

membership, with 78 percent of the vote, and became the Republic of Congo within the French Equatorial African federation (AEF) (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997: 35; Bernault, 1996; Baniafouna, 1995). During the second half of 1958, there was much talk about the new constitutional project in the Middle Congo. The discussion focused on integration, federation, confederation and independence (Gauze, 1973). This atmosphere gave rise to new political institutions in response to the need for organizing life in the territory and determining its newly acquired political identity.

Two types of political parties occupied the political sphere in Congo-Brazzaville during that time. First, there were French parties concerned with the interests of French people. To these were associated organized unions. Three parties dominated this category. They were the Parti Radical, the Union Démocratique et Socialiste de la Résistance (UDSR) and the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF). The RPF was the strongest of all three because it appealed to all French in general and accepted African members, while the other two had specific membership limited to a circle of French dignitaries, particularly those working for the French government, businessmen and professionals. The unions associated with these parties were mostly employers' associations, and were all linked through the network called the Comité de Liaison du Patronat (COLPAEF), which was directly affiliated with the Paris-based Conference of French employers (Bazenguissa, 1997).

The second set of parties represented exclusively the natives' interests. Bazenguissa-Ganga notes that the most distinctive characteristic of these parties was not their programs and ideas. Their identity was a reflection of the personality of their leaders (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:36). With all the dynamism of political activities

giving rise to new parties, four out of ten parties, dominated the pre-independence Congolese politics (Wagret, 1963). The Parti Progressiste Congolais (PPC) was the first party, created in 1945, as the local section of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), which was a pan-African organization established in many French African colonies. Until 1950, the PPC was related to the French Communist Party, under the leadership of Félix Tchicaya. The second organization was the Mouvement Socialiste Africain, also linked to a pan-African organization. This party was founded during a congress held in Conakry, Guinea, which gathered all African sections of the Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière, a socialist movement promoting the rights of the international labor movement. Its leader was Jacques Opango. The third political party, the Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF), albeit dominated by French interests, also recruited among Congolese. This party was open to Congolese who found some interests in de Gaulle's policies.

All these three parties had links with associations based in France. In some cases, they were local sections of overseas political organizations. The fourth party emerging last on the political scene in Congo-Brazzaville was the Union Démocratique de Défense des Intérêts Africains (UDDIA). Founded in Congo-Brazzaville, on May 27, 1956, under the leadership of Youlou, appealing to Matsouanists, this party had no link with French organizations (Yengo, 1997). This organization was later on affiliated with the pan-African organization, the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) in 1957. Its political orientation was economic liberalism and was resolutely anticommunist (Baniafouna, 1995:23). The other six less dominant parties in the pre-independence period, were the Mouvement d'Emancipation Sociale de l'Afrique Noire (MESAN), the

Front Démocratique Congolais (FDC), the Parti Démocratique de l'Indépendance (PDI), the Défense des Intérêts Sociaux et Economiques du Territoire du Moyen-Congo (DISEMTC), the Evolution Sociale Amicale du Congo (ESAC) and the Union Démocratique pour l'Evolution Sociale et Economique du Moyen-Congo (UDESMEC) (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Beside political parties, labor and student associations also played an important role in shaping politics in pre-independence Congo-Brazzaville and during the early years of the independence era. Some analysts explain this dynamism as a reflection of the fact that urban life was a major factor in the socioeconomic and political transformation of the country and continued to affect politics in the post-independence era (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1985; Gauze, 1973). The connection between urban life and labor and student organizations is also one of Bazenguissa-Ganga's observations, adding that labor unions were prominent in cities and had international connections.

Three labor associations were notable in the context of decolonization, sometimes linking their defense of the workers' interests with the struggle for political liberation from foreign domination. These were the Confédération Africaine des Syndicats Libres (C.A.S.L.), the Confédération Générale Africaine des Travailleurs (C.G.A.T.) and the Confédération Africaine des Travailleurs Croyants (C.A.T.C.). Gradually these organizations abandoned their French ties. According to Gauze, beside their interest in defending workers' rights, their driving force was the spirit of nationalism, which developed in the context of constitutional change in the French community in the years immediately preceding independence, and which created an atmosphere propitious for promoting labor's demands (Gauze, 1973:51).

Student associations emerged mostly from African student organizations created in France. The Fédération des Etudiants de l'Afrique Noire (FEAN), based in France, had a local section in Brazzaville, the Association des Etudiants Congolais (AEC), founded in 1952. With its nationalist orientation, this association played a vanguard role in the struggle for the emancipation of African people. Another student association, the Action Congolaise, emerged from the AEC, with the determination to intensify the struggle for national liberation. Other youth associations included the Association Scolaire du Congo (ASCO), organized as a student movement and finding inspiration in Marxist literature, and the Union de la Jeunesse Congolaise (UJC), a local section of the French youth movement. The UJC had a female branch called the Union des Femmes Africaines du Congo (U.F.A.C.), affiliated with the International Women's Federation, which was communist (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The emergence of these parties and associations allowed the natives to be present in the new political, legislative and executive institutions created since the constitutional change that prescribed a new identity of the colonies in the French community. The 1956 "Loi-Cadre" created the conditions for power sharing between the natives and the French who were in the administration of the territory, eliminating the discrimination between Europeans and Africans in political participation. In 1959, these conditions led to the establishment of universal suffrage, expanding the electorate in the territory and making possible "the diffusion of political life among the people" (Wagret, 1963:60). This diffusion, however, bore the marks of ethnic identification in the sense that ethnic allegiances affected the choices for leaders during the elections, leading to the formation of the first government of the independence period.

The Impact of Ethnicity in Pre-Independence Politics

The internal dynamics of socioeconomic and political interaction that have determined politics during Congo-Brazzaville's entire post-independence era can be understood by looking at important events that took place in February 1959, over a year before the state was officially granted independence. They were the political violence stirred by political bargaining between different political parties and their negotiations with the colonial administration in preparation for the 1959 legislative elections. They also marked the "ethnicization" of Congolese politics.

These elections were to determine the party alliances that would lead the country once independence was granted. This electoral process brought Youlou to power as the country's first president. The turbulence associated with the elections and the resulting civil war have had a particular significance in the political evolution of Congo-Brazzaville in the sense that, as Tsamouna Kitongo points out, "each parcel of society is now profiled by the geo-ethnic opposition between the North and the South" (quoted by Bernault, 1996:283). The seriousness of the impact of these events on the collective memory is suggested by the fact that the subject has remained taboo in Congolese politics and has generally been avoided. Meanwhile, this intentional silence has "continued to structure popular mentality and political life at the highest level" (Bernault, 1996:283).

Patrice Yengo identifies these events as a source of fragility for the post-colonial state. Until 1956, the Parti Progressiste Congolais (PPC) and the Mouvement Socialiste Africain (MSA) were the two political organizations that dominated the political

landscape of Congo-Brazzaville. While the PPC enjoyed support from the majority of the population in the south, mostly Bakongo, from the Kouilou to the Pool regions, the northern regions dominated by the Mbochis, constituted the bastions of the MSA and widely gave allegiance to Opangault. With its communist affiliation, the PPC directed its political action toward, and sought to draw support from, the labor force involved in large industrial enterprises such as the construction of railroad. Its influence was notable among unions, which it described as the proletariat. On the other hand, the MSA was very active in the administration and in medium-size enterprises. It mobilized its militants mostly in Brazzaville's northern neighborhoods, where the bulk of the population belonged to northern ethnic groups.

This political situation, in which the two leaders and their organizations were solidly entrenched and asserted their accrued influence, reduced the likelihood of the emergence of a third leader and party. The disruption of this political setting, however, occurred through an unexpected challenge from Youlou, who entered politics in 1956 while facing difficulties and rejection from his ecclesiastical authorities. Youlou emerged in the political sphere, almost unknown to colonial authorities. He astutely used his confrontation with the Church leadership to present himself as another victim of colonial complicity against the Bakongo, following the incarceration and death of Matsoua under colonial administration. With his party, the UDDIA, he successfully appealed to the allegiance of the Kongo-Lari, a subgroup of the Bakongos ethnic group, in his quest for political ascendancy. The 1956 legislative elections confirmed Youlou's impact on the political scene, giving him a solid third position with 27.7 percent of the vote, against 31 percent and 29.1 percent for Tchicaya and Opangault, respectively.

Youlou's stronghold was in Brazzaville, where he obtained 56 percent of the vote, establishing himself as a political leader to reckon with, enjoying decisive support from the Pool region where the Kongo-Lari are predominant.

Thus, before Youlou, politics featured two solidly established political organizations appealing to the political establishment dominated by colonial authorities and the African elite. Youlou's emergence inaugurated a new era whereby mobilization became an important political activity, appealing to segments of society outside the traditional political groups of the elite and government employees. According to Yengo, the year 1956 could, therefore, be considered a turning point. The political scene shifted from a classical mode of political expression relying on traditional political actors to a specific action of mobilization, notably among the youth and the marginalized. Yengo read this intervention from a sociological framework that described a generational conflict or interaction.

The new political scene revealed new dynamics spurring the eruption of young generations into the political processes. Incited by political mobilization, the youth and marginalized activated the heat of political confrontation that was to explode into violence in 1959 (Yengo, 1997:188). For instance, as Yengo reports, on January 2, 1956, teenagers gathered around ballot boxes in Brazzaville's southern neighborhoods to attack and harass voters they thought to be unfavorable to Youlou. Even police and military intervention did not preclude the intimidation perpetrated by youths in the city. Following the election, a series of violent attacks and acts of vandalism were reported in the neighborhoods of Bakongo and Poto-Poto.

Youlou's political influence began to be noticeable, as his January 1956 electoral victory in the legislative vote was consolidated by the municipal ballot on November 8, 1956. The UDDIA won the 23 of the 37 seats in the municipal council, against 11 for the MSA and 3 for the PPC. As a result, Youlou was elected mayor of Brazzaville on November 23, 1956. In the city of Pointe-Noire, the second largest, it was Stephane Tchichelle, a dissident of the PPC who became Youlou's ally, who was victorious in the municipal election, giving Youlou and his allies the control over the country's two largest cities. In the 1957 territorial elections, Youlou faced resistance from young leaders from the Niari region. His desire to reinforce his influence in the south led him to incite dissidence within the PPC and the MSA. In July 1957, a deputy of the territorial council, Georges Yambot, an MSA member from the Niari region, defected from the MSA to join Youlou's UDDIA. Such initiatives of defection in favor of the UDDIA and Youlou's direct provocation exacerbated the fragility of the political sphere and generated political instability (Yengo, 1997). This shows the extent to which politics and ethnicity are linked in Congo-Brazzaville.

Demographic Data

At independence, the Republic of Congo only had 930, 000 inhabitants, but its population amounted to 1,668,330 in 1983. This estimate for 1983 is based on adjustments made to the general population census of 1974 (CNSEE, 1984). Various data exist, making it difficult to chose a basis of analysis. For the purpose of this work, data from the United Nations are often referred to. When needed, Tati's (1993) work on

the demographics of Congo-Brazzaville will be also used. Table 1.1 presents demographic information on the Congolese population according to U.N. information. These figures indicate that urban population is more than half of total population in 1995, with a growth rate of 4.2 percent between 1995 and 2000 while total average population growth rate is 2.8 for the same period.

Table 1.1 Congo's Demographic, Social and Economic Indicators.

	Total Population (millions)	Average population urban growth rate (%)	Percentage of urban population	Urban growth rate
1999	2.9			
1995-1999		2.8		4.2
1995			59	

Source: United Nations Population Fund, 1999:70

Migrations to southern regions have caused demographic imbalance between the South/Southwest and the rest of the country, and this trend has increased over the last ten years. The South/Southwest, which represents 31 percent of the country's area (132,046 square miles), accounted for 81 percent of its population, in 1983. Moreover, the flight from the countryside to the cities reinforced the demographic imbalance between the North and the South, given that all major cities are located in the South. The South has a density of 9.73 inhabitants per square kilometer, compared with 1.19 in the North. This imbalance has increased since the last general population survey. This geographical distribution of the population also reflects the division of the population into a variety of ethnic groups.

Ethnic affiliation has been a very important political and socioeconomic determinant in Congo-Brazzaville. It has determined the allocation of resources and the distribution of political power. One finds three ethnic groups that dominated Congolese political life. The largest ethnic group, the Bakongo, constitutes 48 percent of the population and is divided into smaller subgroups, and is predominant in the southern parts of the country, particularly between Brazzaville and the coast, and along the bank of the Congo River. This group dominated politics and socioeconomic life from independence till the late 1960s.

The next largest group is the Bateke, also divided into smaller subgroups and constitutes 22 percent of the population. They are located principally north of Brazzaville, in the Plateaux Region and in some areas in the South and Southwest. They have shifted between the Bakongos and the Mbochis in terms of political connections. The Mbochi ethnic group is the third largest group, and it makes up 13 percent and is found mostly in the North (Kounzilat, 1993:41-42; CIA, 1999). This group has dominated politics in Congo-Brazzaville through the military, starting in the late 1960s. Ethnic relations constitute a dominant factor affecting politics in Congo-Brazzaville, and their expression has also determined the socioeconomic evolution of the country. As in all Sub-Saharan African societies, the existence of different ethnic entities within specific national boundaries has roots in the geographic configuration fashioned in accordance with the interests of colonial powers (Dorier-Apprill, 1997).

To understand the patterns of the relationships between ethnic groups in Congo-Brazzaville, one needs only look at the demographic configuration of the capital city. This is reflected in what Elisabeth Dorier-Apprill calls the geography of ethnic groups,

which indicates an “ethno-regional antagonism between Northerners and Southerners” and the noticeable segmentation of the city of Brazzaville according to ethnic division. The feelings of ethnic identity have become reinforced in Brazzaville, and they are anchored in the practices of political clientelism.

Although ethnic antagonisms predate the colonial era, as was revealed by the existence of wars during the era of the Kongo Kingdom and the slave trade, colonialism contributed to reinforcing them by playing one ethnic group against another to assert the interests of the colonial actors. Intensely influenced by Catholic and Protestant missions through which European values were conveyed, the Pool region and its dominant Kongo-lari tribal group, acquired great importance in providing the capital city with food and other necessary resources. The region also produced the most educated elements for the service of colonial administration and the first civil servants of the independence era (Dorier-Apprill, 1997:162).

Definition of Key Concepts

The study uses key concepts that need to be defined to establish the context and the analytical framework. These are global structural change, regime, regime change, techno-economic regime, neoliberalism, restructuring, globalization and historicity. In this study, global structural change refers to the transformation of the world economy whereby the nation-state ceases to be the sole center of decisions affecting domestic political and socioeconomic development and the world system. Global structural change has been seen as challenging national sovereignty, with a consequent weakening of the nation-state. V. Spike Peterson states that “state-centric political identity no longer

monopolizes but shares the stage with a growing number of non-territorial claimants” (Peterson, 1996:11). This change has generated global competition and cooperation in which non-state actors and transnational institutions have contributed to establishing wider networks of control, integration, production and marketing beyond the traditional national framework. It is understood as the evolution of the capitalist mode of production, and to a large extent, has been facilitated by technological advances in leading capitalist economies.

Regime means a complex of procedures, social, economic and political interactions, based on the existence of governing principles, norms and rules often promoted by dominant actors. These governing arrangements lay down appropriate structures of decision and policy making, regulating socioeconomic and political relations. Regime change refers to the alteration of governing principles and norms, associated with the emergence of new dominant actors and factors taking place within a structure of power relations. The transformation of the technological regime indicates that technological change and productive systems, organizational structures, institutions, market forces and procedures affect each other. This interaction substantiates the circumstances associated with the emergence of a new techno-economic regime.

The concept of “techno-economic” regime suggests change in technology and its relation to institutional forms, the structures of the economy as well as social and political systems. According to Christopher Freeman and Carlotta Perez, the term “techno-economic paradigm” implies two distinct and interrelated developments. One is the emergence of certain types of technological change and their widespread consequence for all sectors of socioeconomic formation. Second, the diffusion of these types of

technological change “is accompanied by a major structural crisis of adjustment, in which social and institutional changes are necessary to bring about a better ‘match’ between the new technology and the system of social management of the economy—or ‘regime of regulation’” (Freeman and Perez, 1988:38).

More concretely, the new techno-economic regime features new technologies in areas of microelectronics, computer-aided operations and communications, whose diffusion and widespread use force policy-makers to promote technology policy coordinating the interaction between the new technologies and social, economic and political processes. This new policy orientation reflects the necessity for socioeconomic and political structures to incorporate the new regime of accumulation and regulation.

Neoliberalism constitutes the ideology of the new regime of regulation setting the structure for global relations of production and accumulation in which market values determine socioeconomic formations and political systems at the global and national levels. The neoliberal approach has sought to elicit individual capabilities and foster the private sector inasmuch as they contribute to the functioning of the market and productive complex. Neoliberalism brings a political culture that stresses rational management embodied in socioeconomic and political behaviors and the functionality of structures. The establishment of functioning stable socioeconomic and political structures is anchored in this political culture. This ideological tenet promotes a climate of competition in the global economy with which national socioeconomic and political systems have to cope through restructuring.

Restructuring is the adjustment of institutional and organizational forms for corporations, national policy-making frameworks and individuals to adapt to the

competitive global economy. It is the dominant option of nations, societies and individuals linked together through a systematic set of neoliberal principles. It is also the inevitable choice for socioeconomic formations and political systems to interact with the global political economy. The interaction between socioeconomic formations, political systems and the global economy depends on the extent to which they have adjusted and are integrated in a single and integrated global system. Restructuring, therefore, facilitates and is a response to the process of globalization.

Globalization is the intensified capitalist expansion resulting in the socioeconomic, cultural and political integration of world economic, political forces and productive activities into the capitalist mode of production. It is regulated by a dominant regime of accumulation permeating all national systems through the reconstitution of the state. This process is linked in part to change in the financial system and expansion of industrial production. The financial deregulation that took place in the United States in the mid-1970s contributed to enhancing the mobility of capital, at an accelerated and unprecedented pace.

The expansion of industrial production has led to the increasing decentralization of production sites scattered around the globe particularly in areas that have favorable political and socioeconomic conditions and technological capabilities. As a result, “the globalization of production and finance undercuts national economic planning, eroding state sovereignty and the political identities it presupposes” (Peterson, 1996:12). To the process of globalization is associated the growing influence of supranational and transnational institutions as well as the upsurge of subnational entities whose emergence

sometimes stir up conflicts within the national system, questioning the validity of nationalist discourses and their notions of unity and homogeneity.

The concept of historicity is used in its philosophical meaning. It means a social context featuring human experience as it has been shaped by enduring cultural circumstances over time, which determines the way people relate to each other, to their society and the outside world. The historical approach is indispensable because the way people relate to the global economy indicates something deeper about their existence than merely their capability of incorporating the principles of the restructuring model. It is a revelation of an ethos marked by the beliefs and values upon which their existence is firmly rooted. From this viewpoint, by highlighting historicity, this study underscores the notion that the success of restructuring greatly depends on the way the new model of economic and political development accommodates historical factors. Much depends on what people make of the requirements of the global economy on the basis of their way of being that has been determined by lasting traditions, and on the basis of their existential needs, from which their expectations arise.

The need for clarity also forces us to justify the use of such concepts as tradition and Marxist, being used extensively in this study. Tradition is ineluctably used to encompass the cultural standards that determined the ways of life of the Congolese people and these standards should be recognized as preexistent to, and distinct from, the form of politics introduced by the colonial experience. Among these traditional elements, one can point out, for instance, the lineage structure distinguishing between different generations and highlighting the influence of the elders in society, the messianic approach to politics and ethnic allegiance.

What the colonial era brought to this society could be identified as modern. This means the implementation of Western principles and rules of government, for instance, in the form of electoral procedures, the distinction of powers and the election to political positions. The distinction between tradition and modernity does not necessarily imply a dichotomy between these two modes of operation in state formation in Congo-Brazzaville. State formation has been the result of a mixture of different principles originating from what we identified as distinctly Congolese cultural factors and Western culture. The distinction between the Congolese cultural ways of life and Western norms allows us to insist on the coexistence of both elements in state formation in Congo-Brazzaville and on the continued impact of Congolese cultures on the ongoing process of restructuring.

By referring to the concept Marxist in this study, we do not intend to give a characterization of the political regime in Congo-Brazzaville. This concept merely indicates the identity that the Congolese revolutionary leadership assigned to the political system it created to eradicate the neocolonial regime of the early independence period. As defined by this leadership, this notion evoked the quest for societal transformation through the gradual collectivization of national resources and a political system dominated by an alliance between working people, the military and foreign private owners of means of production. This alliance was a strategic unity organized with the perspective of state control, integrating “the Leninist principles of democratic centralism and state-directed economic institutions,” which were “seen as the crucial vehicles for the alteration of the social order” (Chazan and others, 1992:158).

Overall, the global political economy is a restructured system marked by technological advances in the capitalist mode of production, and operating under the neoliberal regime of accumulation, whose worldwide control has led to the integration of national economies into a mosaic of differentiated social and economic capabilities. Globalization implies that restructuring is globally embraced since new political and socioeconomic formations have emerged in formerly state-controlled economies and centralized political regimes. For instance, in all cases in sub-Saharan Africa, in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s, the trend toward socioeconomic and political restructuring has given a revived momentum to political development theory as a result of neoliberal influence.

Neoliberalism has promoted political adjustment to build a political culture and environment promoting a *laissez-faire* economy, thereby contributing to the revival of political development precepts in sub-Saharan Africa. Political development theory stresses the importance of viable political systems embodying the socioeconomic and political efficiency of institutions configured by stable and consistent rules of management, administration, decision and policy making. Furthermore, the theory establishes a crucial link between effective governance and economic performance whereby the former can be appreciated through the latter, both of which drawing strength from each other.

Nature of the Problem:
The Lack of Political Development and the Absence of Technology Policy

Political development is the materialization of the principle of institutional accountability through the interaction between state institutions, independent organizations, individuals and extra-systemic elements. This interaction embodies the regularity of political and legal processes, reinforces the civil public realm and accounts for effective public mobilization and management of resources. This definition implies the existence of independent organizations operating with a degree of autonomy (Dahl, 1982) and the necessity of political participation (Kasfir, 1976).

Other aspects of this idea involve the perspective of creating an integrated system of differentiated private and group identities and the efficiency of the public realm in pursuing the common good and accommodating private as well as group cultural, socioeconomic and political interests. An integrated polity is that which reflects a balance between state institutions and civil society. The notion of political development used in this analysis is based on the concept of governance, which adds the significance of good institutional performance to the view of structural capabilities prevailing in the structural-functional approach. Political development is seen in dynamic terms, encompassing “citizen influence and oversight, responsive and responsible leadership and social reciprocities” (Hyden, 1992:22-23).

In view of this definition of political development, the political economy of Congo-Brazzaville over the years since independence has been indicative of the following realities: 1) a lapse in political ethics on the part of the political leadership

diminished the importance of institutional accountability and ruined the institutional basis of political development; 2) a lack of balance existed between the state and the citizens' interests, initiatives and preferences. The establishment of "Marxist" regimes, starting in 1963, had resulted in a polity characterized by "overinstitutionalization" (Kasfir, 1976), in which the party-state overshadowed civil society through an excessive bureaucratization. Consequently, there existed no other form of socialization than that which the state generated; 3) a related element could be identified as "the absence of any economic life autonomous in relation to state power, and the concomitant absence of any autonomy of expression on the part of social forces in relation to this power" (Amin, 1987:3). This had hindered the creation of a democratic society and destroyed the basis of socioeconomic development. It weakened the country's productive capabilities, and reinforced the country's reliance on the traditional form of comparative advantage, whereby Congo-Brazzaville continued to rely on the export of raw materials and the import of manufactured goods; and 4) the adherence to the single party, associated with ethnic identification and clientelism, caused a steady marginalization of increasing numbers of citizens, thereby leading to the elimination of many from decisions involving the allocation of national resources. This accentuated political instability, as exclusion from power and control of resources by the ruling single party inflamed ethnic and class differences.

From the point of view of technology policy, the following deficiencies could be outlined: 1) an economic policy of nationalization of foreign enterprises curtailed foreign direct investment, placing the country outside the mainstream of technology transfer and diffusion. Nguyen Tien Hung observes that "during the seventies, manufacturing

underwent important socialist transformation with the government taking over a major number of production facilities such as sugar, energy, wood processing, fishing and building new factories such as cement, textile, and plastic” (Hung, 1987:29); 2) a governmental failure to promote technical education caused a highly urbanized population to lack technical and practical skills necessary for handling a modern economy; and 3) a lack of penetrative linkages between existing industrial activities precluded dynamic efficiency, which allows firms to use, improve, continuously adapt and expand technological knowledge. Dynamic efficiency means “the efficiency with which new bases of comparative advantage are created in increasingly technology-intensive industries” (Bell and Pavitt, 1992:257).

The Congolese industrial sector was made up of a diversity of enterprises dispersed in a productive system that showed no coherence in policies that inspired their existence. This reflects the fact that the establishment of the industrial sector was mostly justified by external factors than the needs of the domestic economy (Bertrand, 1975). The deterioration of the receipts from oil dramatized the vulnerability of the economy. The problem is that it is not enough to have production capacity, which is embodied in existing enterprises and implies the existence of various resources and factors of production incorporated in the production of industrial goods at given levels of efficiency and given input combinations. To cope with the new technological regime, it is essential to develop technological capability, which Bell and Pavitt define as “the additional and distinct resources needed to generate and manage technical change, including skills, knowledge and experience, and institutional structures and linkages” (Bell and Pavitt, 1992:261)

In addition, policies relative to rural development and the agricultural sector in the 1970s and 1980s were also characteristic of structural impediments to technological change. These could be identified as follows. First, investment in agricultural development did not induce a mechanization of some of the factors of production, but an increase in the public sector, adding a financial burden in terms of wages and administrative and bureaucratic services. Second, the establishment of agro-industry did not stem from the emergence of a modern industry producing inputs for agriculture, but involved the creation of state farms, which were in competition with peasant farmers. As Hung points out, "the result of the greatly enlarged state sector in agriculture is the declining role of the farmers in the national economy" (Hung, 1987:53). Third, with no transfer of human and material resources to agriculture, and due to lack of incentives to produce a surplus, the farmers were reduced to subsistence agriculture, which was confined to low value-added and primitive techniques. These techniques could hardly evolve into more competitive means of production. Agricultural production, which accounted for 23% of GDP in 1963, declined during the socialist years, to 16% in 1970, and 13% in 1980. Finally the problem of poor transport infrastructure had also affected the agricultural sector, limiting the drive of rural populations to produce commercialized products.

Overall as the state sought to consolidate its structures by resorting to expansion to revoke the neocolonial capitalist legacy of the early independence period, its institutional accountability diminished. The leadership's contradictory behaviors, the exclusion of many on the basis of ethnic discrimination and the regime's failure to deliver its promise of socioeconomic development based on Marxist principles, all of these

deepened the decay of institutional accountability. The advent of Marxist forces to power precluded the possibility for society to experience liberal democracy through the differentiation of economic, social, cultural and political interests and preferences. By resorting to methods of governing that impeded political development, the bureaucratic, centralized and over-expanded state in this country hindered social participation in economic development. This intensified the struggle for political participation, since struggle for political positions has also been essentially a struggle for access to state resources. The question of restructuring the state and achieving a sound level of political development, therefore, comprises components of social and economic transformation.

It is imperative for Congo-Brazzaville to create a political and socioeconomic climate that allows the effects of new global technological developments to be positively felt therein through the development of technological capability and inflow of foreign technology. The significance of foreign direct investment (FDI) is undeniable in terms of the exposure to global trends, and the availability of this channel of technology diffusion requires major national policy change. Consequential to policy change is the adoption of explicit technology policy, which as Marton and Singh note “must be viewed as a dynamic process which is essentially integrated with economic and industrial policies” (Marton and Singh, 1991:206). National technology policy change is not limited to attracting FDI, since the incorporation of technological change involves a long-term perspective that is consolidated by development perspectives.

To facilitate the incorporation of technological change, technology policy must yield “a set of principles with which a country regulates its acquisition, utilization, and disposal of technology for the purpose of achieving its development objectives” (Vitta,

1990:1471). The whole process of restructuring must, therefore, foster the view that technology policy constitutes an integral component of socioeconomic and industrial policies, and should not be inferred indirectly from existing industrial capacity. Crucial to this policy framework is the need for a well-defined strategy for embracing and dealing with new technologies, particularly informatics.

Research Problem and Statement of Purpose

The research problem that this study addresses can be formulated as a question. How have the factors of global change interacted with the historical dynamics of the Congolese society to determine the restructuring process? Through this research question, the study seeks to present an approach to understanding the extent to which the ineluctable restructuring process can be beneficial for Congo-Brazzaville, based on a realistic perception of the conditions that the Congolese society needs to meet to avoid continued and increased marginality. The country's leadership needs to wake up and create the conditions pertaining to the logic of the global system. Given the necessity of restructuring to cope with the global economy, the objective is to see how the factors of global change have been incorporated in Congo-Brazzaville, given the Congolese history, and to create the conditions of a positive interaction with the global political economy.

Marginalization from the trends of the global political economy and poor policy-making can be blamed for the country's technological lag, socioeconomic morosity and institutional decay. This has kept the Congolese society away from streams of innovative learning that sustains institutional change. Through an examination of the factors of

global structural change, this study asserts the validity and usefulness of the new techno-economic regime insofar as this model emphasizes innovative learning. This model also examines the conditions of institutional change that facilitate integration into the new global political economy. The notion of innovative learning does not suggest only the assimilation of information into social, political, economic and productive action. It also reflects human existential conditions, meaning that it is human needs and historical situations that motivate social, political and economic agents for innovative learning.

Technology-induced restructuring through the incorporation of technological change and learning facilitates incorporation into the trends of globalization of production and related developments that might enhance social, political and economic institutions and microbehaviors in Congo-Brazzaville. Learning processes—education, learning by using and exposure to global markets, etc.—will offer the Congolese society chances to achieve a degree of socioeconomic and political development that gives it a renewed dynamism. These learning processes comprise firms, government institutions, professions, educational channels, media, and many other productive activities in which social and economic agents are involved. It is obvious that, as Thomson clearly states, these forms of learning “affect the extent to which technological knowledge is shared by structuring communications channels” (Thomson, 1993:3). They will contribute to sustaining the restructuring process.

If learning is widely encouraged and spread all over the entire society and its methods well designed, it can induce a gradual penetration and dissemination of ideas into the various sectors of the Congolese population. One might refer to Thomson’s analysis describing the patterns of institutional transformation related to the incorporation

of technological change. “Technological change may form virtuous circles in which conducive institutions generate learning and innovations that strengthen the institutions” (Thomson, 1993:2).

Underlying this interconnection of microbehaviors of learning, technological change and institutional adaptation is the view that sustainable restructuring is the result of a holistic, systemic and evolutionary model. The approach would be systemic and evolutionary “in the sense that the socioeconomic system under investigation is conceived of as always in a state of flux and qualitative change, as its constituent elements alter their behaviour in relationship to each other and to the extra-systemic environment” (Freeman, 1988:4).

Thesis, Hypotheses and Questions

The Thesis

Though Congo-Brazzaville’s political and socioeconomic evolution stands in contrast with the patterns of global change, this country’s restructuring process constitutes an effect of global restructuring, which has been influenced by national historical circumstances.

Hypotheses and Questions

1. *Congo-Brazzaville's socioeconomic structures derived from the old technological regime, which was characterized by colonialism, a state-centric approach, nationalism, monopoly, protectionism and spatial specialization, and has continued to determine the socioeconomic development of the country.* This hypothesis explores the historical conditions of the Congolese socioeconomic formation. It deals with the entrenchment of the Congolese structures in the old technological regime. How have the Congo's socioeconomic structures been influenced by the old technological regime? What socioeconomic structures did the Congo inherit from this regime? What principles determined the emergence of the Congolese socioeconomic formation? This is the second chapter.

2. *State led development models in Congo-Brazzaville maintained a political economy reflecting the expansion of government functions, the gradual collectivization of national resources, the creation of state-directed socioeconomic institutions intended to alter the social order inherited from colonialism. These models were unlikely to embrace the neoliberal orientation emerging in the 1970s.* In the 1970s, when the neoliberal regime was gaining momentum, the Congolese path to political and socioeconomic development followed Marxist ideology and personal rule. Even before the emergence of Marxist ideology in Congo-Brazzaville, the political economy was state-centric. This hypothesis is designed to examine the evolution of the Congolese socioeconomic

formation and the political behaviors and norms that determined its relationship with the global system. How did the incorporation of the emerging neoliberal principles by the Marxist-determined Congolese society play out? This question will be the focus of the third chapter.

3. *The new techno-economic regime is characterized by the emergence of microelectronics, the notion of best practice inducing the necessity of developing the skills of the labor force, competition and the restructuring of the industrial sector according to neoliberal principles. To this development is associated global structural change and the transformation of national economies, which now follow the requirements of global capitalism.* This hypothesis is based on the idea that technological change and neoliberalism have determined the evolution of the global economy causing a transformation that requires the adjustment of productive systems and socioeconomic formations at the global and domestic levels. The hypothesis deals with the framework in which global structural change has taken place. What aspects of political economy have facilitated the incorporation of technological change? What are the factors of global structural change? What results from the incorporation of these factors? This hypothesis represents the fourth chapter of the study.

4. *The global influence of neoliberalism is one of the causes of political restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville, but this restructuring shows the limits of neoliberalism as an international political and economic ideology in the face of a fragile national consensus and the lack of commitment on the part of major internal actors. The failure of the first attempts at restructuring can, therefore, be traced to the inadequacy of global and national agents of neoliberalism to deal with internal dynamics reflected in*

popular demands, particular interests and expectations, ethnic allegiances and a full range of cultural elements. This is a discussion on the neoliberal direction that the global political economy has taken since the 1970s and how it affects the Congolese situation. Has Congo-Brazzaville's new political economy followed the organizational and institutional forms reflecting the neoliberal orientation? What are the internal dynamics that have determined the process of political liberalization following the impact of neoliberalism? How has the process of political liberalization been unfolding since it was initiated? What has happened in Congo-Brazzaville when socioeconomic and political structures and actors have attempted to implement neoliberal tenets? These questions will be dealt with in the fifth chapter.

5. *Congo-Brazzaville's socioeconomic structures reflect the colonial legacy through the continued privileged economic relationship with France, the lack of diversification of production and global economic partners and the continuation of the old comparative advantage based on a spatial specialization making the country a producer of raw materials. They also continue to bear the characteristics of a state-controlled economy of the socialist development model. All these factors were greatly reinforced by the decision-making process and the organizational forms that dominated the socioeconomic structures. Consequently, the deep impact of these factors affects productive capabilities and the ability of productive forces and organizational forms to incorporate the new model.* This hypothesis examines the capability of Congo-Brazzaville's structures to relate to the new techno-economic regime. To what extent have structural adjustment programs in Congo-Brazzaville brought about an incorporation of the factors of the new techno-economic regime? How does the

incompatibility between the historically determined socioeconomic structures and the new regime manifest itself? What impact does the adjustment process have on the interaction between Congo-Brazzaville and the global economy? These questions constitute the aim of the sixth chapter.

Methodology

The Case Study Method

The case study method is an analysis of cases to evaluate a general theory. It presents the advantage of an intensive examination, even though the resources at the disposal of the researcher are limited. Though its contribution to building theory is very weak, this method can still offer a basis for the confirmation or rejection of the theory. This study is a qualitative analysis of global structural change and the political and socioeconomic restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville. Using the global political economy as the unit of analysis, the study gives a careful examination of global structural change, and presents the restructuring process in Congo-Brazzaville as a case study in relation to global structural change. The case will be examined by looking at the internal dynamics that constitute the context and the patterns of socioeconomic and political formation and restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville. The study establishes a relationship between global structural change and the Congolese political and socioeconomic restructuring to

underscore the idea that the influence of Marxist ideology could not spare Congo-Brazzaville from globalization.

While the main characteristic of this method is a qualitative analysis of a case, it also offers a variety of procedures to use for doing this analysis. This study is based on the procedure of “process tracing” discussed by Alexander George and Timothy McKeown (see Collier, 1991). Process tracing allows for the understanding of the dynamics of formation and evolution that characterize the case being studied. It is possible to identify the dominant patterns that determine the case so as to establish a relationship between these patterns and the situations to which they give rise and those from which they emerge. This approach is based on a rationale “which supplements hypothesis testing based on the overall evaluation of the case with a close processual analysis of the unfolding of events over time within the case” (Collier, 1991:23). It has the advantage of establishing the historical connections between the processes being analyzed.

Using this procedure allows the study to unmask the ideological trends behind the process of liberalization and decentralization of the socioeconomic life and political practices in Congo-Brazzaville. It explains why the restructuring process in Congo-Brazzaville implied liberalization, decentralization and redefining the role of the state in the economy rather than another form. Also through the processual analysis, it will be possible to explain the interaction between the neoliberal orientation of the restructuring process and the behaviors of social actors and dominant actors of the Congolese political scene.

Research Design

Research involves data from different sources. Some sources, for instance, include official publications from the Congolese government, the United Nations, IMF and World Bank on projects conducted in Congo-Brazzaville, particularly social projects on education, and economic and political restructuring. Other sources are works published by scholars, researchers and corporate institutions on Congo-Brazzaville. Another set of sources involves newspapers publishing on current events in Congo-Brazzaville.

Research has also involved collecting data through interviews with a variety of people. The main criterion of selecting interviews is diversification. This criterion gave a wide range of conflicting political views. It also made possible a comparison between conflicting or complementary perspectives. Interviewees were selected according to their jobs, regional and ethnic background, party affiliation and socioeconomic situation. The place of interviews in the study was to be exploratory and corroborative, or to serve as support to the ideas and orientation followed in this study. Some interviews were conducted with people who are not natives of Congo-Brazzaville. These interviewees were chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the issues developed in the study, inasmuch as this knowledge relates to Congo-Brazzaville.

Data were collected through interviews with officials from the Congolese embassy in the United States. Two regimes have been represented in the United States since this work started. Early in 1997, some interviews led to gathering information from the Congolese ambassador, Dieudonné Antoine-Ganga, representing the Lissouba

administration and Mr. André Tentokolo, an official in charge of economic affairs and negotiations with the Bretton Woods institutions for the pursuit of structural adjustment programs in Congo-Brazzaville. In 1998 and 1999, after the 1997 civil war, we conducted some interviews with Mr. Serge Mombouli, Chargé d'Affaires, and Mr. Albert Ondongo, the Secretary for Cultural Affairs, at the Congolese embassy, representing the Sassou-Nguesso administration. We also interviewed Mr. Zacharie Bazolo-Ngoma, a former member of the Matsouanist nationalist movement.

We also interviewed people involved in corporate institutions interested in Congo-Brazzaville. We conducted interviews with French businessmen; some of them have had extensive experience in business in Congo-Brazzaville, while others have been involved in Congo-Brazzaville more recently, particularly in the oil sector. Information was also gathered from formal interviews with Congolese officials in charge of the oil sector, U.S. officials from the State Department, World Bank officials.

The research is oriented in such a way as categories of data collected highlight ideological, organizational and historical components of development and change in Congo-Brazzaville. These categories are intended to articulate the following aspects:

- 1) Emphasis on the degree of change in Congo-Brazzaville in relation to the process of political and socioeconomic change, which may indicate positive political and socioeconomic transformation.
- 2) Assessing the understanding of the new ideological tenets on the part of government officials and civil society, given the breakaway away from Marxist discourse.
- 3) Evaluating the degree of commitment to change as opposed to mere rhetoric, on the basis of ongoing socioeconomic activities and political practices and processes.

- 4) Comparing the old and new policy-making environments in light of the requirements and logic of the global political economy.
- 5) Determining the level of liberalization enjoyed by civil society.
- 6) Examining the potential of a positive interaction between Congo-Brazzaville and the global economy.

This examination will be done on the basis of the following socioeconomic and political indices, both ideological and organizational.

Ideological:

- 1) The degree of economic pragmatism replacing Marxist rhetoric.
- 2) The objective of achieving interdependence through world market niches
- 3) The opening of the Congolese socioeconomic formation to market economy.
- 4) Private sector development.
- 5) Party orientations.
- 6) National interest, competition and globalization.

Organizational:

- 1) Party coalitions.
- 2) The role of the restructured state in Congo-Brazzaville.
- 3) Political organizations and associations.
- 4) Electoral processes.
- 5) Educational institutions.

This approach is organized around the following line of questions:

- 1) What are the formal ways in which political power and practices are organized and exercised? What property rules and accumulation procedures has the state

formulated following the launching of the liberalization process? What is the nature of the relationship between the bureaucratic apparatus and civil society? What rules has the state adopted for the appointment of officials and the organization of offices?

2) What state structures show participative planning and management? To what extent have the habits of bureaucratization been kept at bay? Has the state instituted consultation processes to involve citizens in policy making and take citizens' preferences into account?

3) What damage has political violence caused to the efforts to democratize the political system? Has the 1997 civil war meant the return to authoritarian rule?

4) To what extent has the new foreign policy influenced the Congo's implementation of democratic rule? To what extent have Western institutions influenced political change in Congo-Brazzaville? How have popular demands affected the political system?

5) What rules has the government established showing commitment to market economy? What type of state enterprises have been divested and sold to private investors?

6) What principles guide the actions of corporate agencies to achieve high levels of productivity? What norms have been established to protect the rights of business and private firms?

7) What are the dominant trends of the economic restructuring process? What are the main characteristics of industrial restructuring? What are the new grounds

for foreign direct investment? What importance is being given to information systems in the Congolese socioeconomic structures?

8) What changes occurred in the educational system? Is the educational system facilitating the incorporation of technological change? Is education raising the students' awareness of global trends?

The Significance of the Study

In evaluating the degree of change in Congo-Brazzaville, the new techno-economic framework is of great use. It presents a model that reflects the conditions that facilitate positive and active interaction with the global political economy. In particular, data with respect to industrial restructuring, institutional and organizational forms, and change in the state will attest to the validity of the framework. In sum, the methodology will allow the identification of the following: 1) the proper objective of structural change in Congo-Brazzaville, and 2) the proper policy options that can positively transform the political economy of Congo-Brazzaville.

Literature Review

Global Structural Change and State Transformation

That the international system is experiencing change is a well-documented fact. For policy makers, global structural change constitutes a constraint upon national

choices, and they have to adjust their domestic socioeconomic and political structures for a more active interaction with the global political economy. As Friedrich List states, “the nation must sacrifice and give up a measure of material property in order to gain culture, skill and power of united production; it must sacrifice some present advantages in order to insure to itself future ones” (List, 1977:144).

Scholars note an increasing economic interdependence between national economies, and the conduct of international politics. For instance, the conceptual framework of complex interdependence elaborated by Keohane and Nye points to the existence of new governing principles in global politics affecting the behavior of nations and policy makers and other non-state actors. The authors also analyze the underlying causes and processes of change in international regimes (Keohane and Nye, 1989). According to this analysis, change in the international system reflects a transformation from competing national politics inspired by political realism to interdependent interactions that include nations and non-state actors. The decline of the state as the only unit of decision making has been associated with the integration of new actors, including non-state actors, in decision-making processes, thereby leading to the emergence of multiple channels through which issues are raised and treated. The result is that “the distinction between domestic and foreign issues becomes blurred” and the relationships between states are now intercepted by numerous factors that transform the way states deal with each other, imposing a more cautious and interdependent approach (Keohane and Nye, 1989:25). The emergence of multiple channels and issues causes an “absence of hierarchy among issues” thereby diminishing the primacy of politics.

The importance of politics, however, is where Geoffrey Underhill starts his conceptualization of change in the global system. His argument is centered on the interaction between politics and economics. "Politics" he says, "is the means by which economic structures, in particular the structures of the market, are established and in turn transformed." In other words, economic structures and processes are the result of political interactions. Domestic political interests are involved in international economic structures. However, the constant redefinition of these interests constitutes a response to the requirement of connecting national economies and creating a global economic system. In the global system, the action of defining national interests in light of the transformation of the global system consolidates the transnationalization of domestic economic systems (Underhill, 1994:18-20).

Following Underhill, it is possible to conclude that the global system does not diminish the importance of the state as the center of decisions affecting the polity. However, domestic socioeconomic and political systems are conditioned by their integration in the global economy where they face cooperation and competition. The national policy framework cannot remain unaffected by the interaction with the global economic system, however powerful the country may be (Kindleberger, 1969; Smith, 1994; Cox, 1994).

In this context, politics acquires a new and functional relevance implying the creation of favorable conditions for the development of other necessary structures facilitating interaction with the global system. This helps the national economy or the socioeconomic formation to face competition in the global economy. This confirms the instrumentality and functionality of politics noted by Cox who observes that "global

production requires a certain stability in politics and finance in order to expand” (Cox, 1994:48).

The restructuring of the nation-state may be seen as a redefinition of the state seeking to cope with global transformation. The adaptation of the domestic socioeconomic structures to the global economy depends on the way the state undertakes its own restructuring and the way it prepares its domestic constituencies for global competition (World Bank, 1997). More critical views relate socioeconomic and political restructuring with the need for the state to cope with the requirements of hegemonic capital. The state is evolving into a capitalist state whose primary responsibility is to make the polity suitable for capitalist accumulation (Reuten and Williams, 1989; Ross, 1990). The restructuring of the global economy and states indeed stems from the evolution of the capitalist system.

Another development that is noted in the literature regarding global change is the transformation of global finance and its impact on the globalization of production. Among the financial markets evolving to cause a shift in global transformation, Winston points to the existence and development of the Eurocurrency. His view is that the Eurocurrency grew to become part of the global financial network, facilitating a rapid and efficient movement of capital. He adds that its presence and use in the global system defy governments’ tendency to regulate financial dealings and capital (Winston, 1992). Strange also takes this view on the impact of the Eurocurrency on the global economic system and systematically associates the existence of this financial regime with trends toward liberalization that dominated the evolution of the leading capitalist economies.

While recognizing the dynamism of Eurocurrency in dealing and lending as a factor of transformation of the global financial system, Strange also associates the evolution of the global economy with the measures of financial deregulation initiated by the United States in the mid-1970s and early 1980s (Strange 1994:105). A similar view appeared in earlier analyses by Makler, Martinelli and Smelser. For these authors, the reconstruction of the international monetary system is among the factors that have contributed to the expansion and the internationalization of industry and capital (Makler, Martinelli and Smelser, 1982:10). Overall, the literature that deals with the transformation of the financial system focuses on the same underlying perspective, which is the increasing trend toward a more liberalized global economy.

The Factors of Global Change

The Resurgence and Prevalence of Neoliberalism

For an ideological construct to have a serious and global impact, it has to emerge from a profoundly critical situation. This critical reality does not have to be an exclusively political or economic crisis. It can be a crisis in the project of the prevailing model (Lipietz, 1992). Several analysts of the global economy suggest that neoliberalism emerged from such a condition. It was a crisis that struck the world economy in the late 1970s, creating the conditions for the emergence of a new regime of regulation and accumulation. According to Overbeek and van der Pijl:

It was a fundamental crisis of ‘normality’ affecting all aspects of the post-war order: social relations of production, the composition of the historic bloc and its

concepts of control, the role of the state, and the international order. Efforts to resolve this crisis necessarily acquired a comprehensive quality (Overbeek and van der Pijl, 1993:14).

The crisis reflected the difficulty of the leading capitalist elite to direct the world economic system within the prevailing and obsolete norms. Neoliberalism emerged in this context, promoting new practices that implied breaking away from state interventionism of the Keynesian approach. Reuter and Williams see in this orientation, a tendency to reduce the welfarist strategy of the state, congruent with its search for legitimacy through compliance with the demands of its domestic constituencies. Overbeek and van der Pijl also note the switch made by the leading states of the global political economy towards “synchronized deflationary policies” involving a fundamental questioning of the validity of the welfare state (Overbeek and van der Pijl, 1993:16). Neoliberalism accepts state social policies only inasmuch as these allow it to legitimize the existence of the state on the basis of its domestic social contract (Reuter and Williams, 1989). Seen from these authors’ analysis, the neoliberal idea of state renews the Lockean perspective for which the meaning of the state is not to be found in social existence, but in the individual’s liberty to choose to be a member of a community governed by the state. At the same time, neoliberalism affirms the meaning of the individual as a person endowed with liberty and rights and the capacity to use these in the pursuit of happiness. Among these rights are the right to create and own private property, which the state is supposed to protect. This constitutes the underlying perspective that explains the neoliberal insistence on the privatization of the economy and the restructuring of labor in domestic economies and in the global system.

Technology and Global Structural Change

Alongside neoliberalism, technology has been identified as a major determinant in global structural change. One analytical orientation sees technological change as enhancing the capacity to supply new products, which are made with new materials and new processes (Lars, 1981; Strange, 1994). Sharing this view is the literature examining the emergence of new key factors involved in production and how these factors are combined to achieve optimum quality production. In other words, the question comes down to the level of efficiency that productive systems and organizational forms have gained through technological innovation. This efficiency combines both quantitative and qualitative leaps deeply transforming the entire productive system and opening up new and broader investment and profit-making opportunities (Freeman and Perez, 1988).

In addition to the idea of efficiency, this view discusses the way in which the transformation of the productive system affects existing social and economic structures, causing social and institutional adjustment. This extends the understanding of the mutually reinforcing and conditioning relationship between technological change and socioeconomic structures. To this perception, David Edge adds an interesting element intended to “draw attention to the flexibility of the innovation process, and the extent to which choices and feedback are endemic to it” (Edge, 1995:14). Therefore, when one speaks of the way in which technology has affected socioeconomic and political structures, a particular accent should also be placed on the impact of social and political system on technological innovation. The type of social, economic and political system in

which technological change is embedded matters (Freeman and Perez, 1988). More specifically, the liberalization of the world economy has affected industrial production, relations and configuration, leading to a new and more efficient and competitive combination of the factors of production, and giving a new dynamism to R&D and technological innovation. The goal may have been production improvements, but an important effect is the transformation of entire economies. Therefore, technological change is not limited to the reality of production, but is also a matter of socioeconomic and political transformation (Rosenberg, 1992).

In addition to this framework explaining the connection between technological change and social, economic, political transformation and institutional change, there is a literature dealing with more specific ways in which technological change has influenced global structural change. One aspect of this debate characterizes global change in terms of globalization of production. Ernst makes an observation about the role of technology transfer in the “internationalization” of industrial production (Ernst, 1980). Reinforcing this view is Weiermair’s notion of industrial globalization, which he draws from his perspective of establishing a relationship between technological and organizational trajectories (Weiermair, 1993). According to this perception, industrial globalization relates to technological change in the sense that new innovations challenged Fordist principles and “signaled a possible shift in paradigmatic organization” (Weiermair, 1993: 164). A new organization emerged to increase the competitive advantage of firms and nations, creating a network of complex interpenetrating socioeconomic and technical systems of production and distribution. These interrelationships are characterized by a decentralization of production sites and a centralized control and coordination by

transnational corporations. According to the globalization of production thesis, these two related developments foster both increasing international interdependence and enhance TNC leverage over national governments and domestic unions.

Despite the accent on increased globalization of production and its related global interdependence and reduction in technological differentials between leading world economies, analysts have also observed intensified competition. The consequences of global technology diffusion or technology transfer through a more liberal world trade are not limited to interdependence only. Technology diffusion has also contributed to the economic recovery of former allies and enemies of World War II, while it has allowed the development of the technological capabilities of NICs. This resulted in challenges to the technological leadership of the United States and other leading economies. According to Pirages, "the rapid world-wide spread of technology is upsetting established power hierarchies, sharpening economic competition, bringing new actors into the game and weaving a web of much tighter interdependence among nations" (Pirages, 1990:11). Marxist and liberal interpretations discussed the rise of a competitive world economy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Amin, for instance, sees the challenge to U.S. industrial hegemony as an indication of intra-capitalist rivalry (Amin, 1975). On the other hand, Gilpin's liberal interpretation asserts that the challenge to United States technological and economic leadership comes from U.S. excessive investment abroad providing its technological expertise to other countries at too low a price, thereby undermining its own industrial strength (Gilpin, 1975).

More recent analyses focus on the way technology has imposed new productive methods that enhance competitiveness for national economies. For instance, Smith

states that “technology induced flexibility in production and the work place has become a central component of global competition in the 1980s” (Smith, 1994:453). Also competition increases pressure on individuals and organizations, including firms, corporate institutions and policy-making structures, all of which are compelled to adjust to cope with the new requirements of the global economy. It is from this point of view that Chandler understood the importance of technology-induced learning and continuous innovations for firms that wish to survive in an economic environment driven by profit making (Chandler, 1993; Thomson, 1993). This idea is also supported by Lazonick, associating competitive advantage with learning and the broadening of knowledge base (Lazonick, 1993). The significance of this perception lies in stressing a long-term development perspective. It implies that competitive success for enterprises is related to developing a broad knowledge base to sustain the dynamic interaction between organization and technology.

Opposing the view of the globalization of production is the approach claiming that the capitalist world economy has evolved into a new international division of labor (Frobel, Heinrichs, and Kreye, 1980). This thesis emphasizes the role of TNCs in relocating capital or investment opportunities from major OECD countries to low-cost production sites in developing countries. The new international division of labor means that the industrial dominance of leading economies and the key to competitiveness of core economies is based on the acquisition of the most sophisticated, knowledge-intensive and technology deepening industry, while the periphery constitutes the world markets of labor and production sites. To the dual configuration of core-periphery in the capitalist world economy, Shachar and Oberg add the third component of semi-periphery,

which comprises the newly industrialized countries, with a geographical concentration in the Asian Pacific Rim and Latin America. For these authors, the new international division of labor is characterized by the dominance of TNCs and the competition between countries to attract new and economically strong enterprises (Shachar and Oberg, 1990). Therefore, one of the main characteristics of the new international division of labor is that the leverage of TNCs and the competition between countries to attract capital have combined to control the labor force in the countries in which TNCs intend to invest.

Information Technology

Information technology has profound implications in the globalization process. The existence of telecommunications systems enabling communication across borders defies national attempts at controlling the flow of information. Winston notes that “cherished political, regulatory, and economic levers routinely used by sovereigns in the past are losing some of their power because the new information standard is not subject to effective political tinkering” (Winston, 1992:60). Examples of globalization of the international community abound, *inter alia*, in the world financial market whereby the new global financial network is no longer bound to a geographical space, but has evolved into an electronic mode from which negotiators and decision-makers interact through telecommunications systems. The spatial division of functions and operations is no longer a limitation to conducting business from a distance away. Cole sees some advantage in this perspective for developing countries since information technology can lead to the integration of economic activities, creating new and enhanced opportunities

for global partnership, for instance, through decentralized manufacturing (Cole, 1986). Ducatel and Miles observe that the decentralization of the operations of firms through global networks leads companies to create more coordinated systems of telecommunications for information transmission and control of the flow of materials and components (Ducatel and Miles, 1992).

Another way that information technology has been appreciated is its use in a diversity of fields including, *inter alia*, science, manufacturing, finance, marketing and personal information processing, games, etc. This widespread use has affected the way of conducting business, presenting a potential for efficiency and far-reaching connections. Mody and Dahlman think that this new framework of activities and new ways of operating determine social transformation beyond predictable proportions (Mody and Dahlman, 1992). Ducatel and Miles expand this issue of social change by looking at the implications for international public policy. They point out the need felt in many countries around the world for the liberalization of telecommunication services (Ducatel and Miles, 1992).

Despite the increasing use of information technology around the world, its availability is not to be taken for granted. Highlighting the importance of the appropriate telecommunications infrastructure, Mody and Dahlman (1992) point out the conditions not only for establishing the required equipment, but also for an effective use of information technology. They focus on the necessity for adequate structures in which the newly acquired technology has to be incorporated. For these authors, “organizational innovation” constitutes an important condition, which implies “greater decentralization of decision making, which in turn requires better trained and more experienced decision

makers” (Mody and Dahlman, 1992:1704). The disparities around the world in terms of technological change and socioeconomic and political adaptation show that some regions are more socially, economically and politically equipped to undertake the transformation required for integrating information technology. In the same line of thinking, and addressing the African situation, Moussa and Schwere also point out the importance of adequate technological infrastructure to facilitate the dissemination of information technology (Moussa and Schwere, 1992).

Sub-Saharan Africa and Global Structural Change

The remark by Mody and Dahlman evoking the need for “organizational innovation” indicates that the establishment of technological capabilities requires the removal of structural impediments to technological change. The following sections examine the literature that focuses on the way sub-Saharan African socioeconomic formations relate to technological change, and to the global political economy.

Sub-Saharan Africa and Technology

The dominant thread in the literature dealing with the development of technology in Sub-Saharan African economies is the observation concerning structural impediments to technological capabilities. Vitta, for instance, comments on the institutional inertia regarding the promotion of technology policies. His assessment traces the absence of explicit technology policy to the lack of understanding. He points out that in most

development policies, the connection between development and technology was seen as evident. Therefore, he concludes, “the absence of explicit technology policies, then, was in part a result of gaps in knowledge about development strategies generally, but about technological change particularly” (Vitta, 1990:1472).

Lall (1990) also puts the emphasis on the structural problems of sub-Saharan African industry. He sets the scene by pointing out the failure of industry in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve sustained growth and efficiency. Among the dominant factors affecting industry in the region, Lall points out the narrow base of industrial technical skills, despite the existence of basic labor competence. The consequence of the limited base of technical skills is the inability of large sectors of industry to achieve technical efficiency by international standards. A further consequence is what Smith noted as the difficulty for technological capabilities to emerge from existing industrial limitations. “Existing product capacities do not necessarily guarantee the establishment of technological capabilities” (Smith, 1995:35). Another element prevailing in the sub-Saharan African economic scene is the importance of informal sectors manufacturing simple products. Although Lall recognizes the dynamism of the existing informal sector and its readiness to provide services to low-income consumers, he is skeptical about the possibility for this sector to evolve into high value-added and competitive productive techniques. To this set of problems the author adds the lack of linkages among existing industrial sectors, which precludes the transfer of factors of production from one industrial sector to another.

Despite the absence of technological capabilities in the region, Sub-Saharan African societies are beginning to be familiar with the use of information technology, as Moussa and Schwere observe (Moussa and Schwere, 1992). African regional institutions

encourage states to participate in the regional initiative for information technology. A general framework from the Economic Commission for Africa (1996) describing the challenges of Africa's socioeconomic development supports this action. Among the issues dealt with through this approach are the development of human resources in information and telecommunications technologies, the establishment of an enabling environment to promote the development of information and communications. The program also urges policy makers to eliminate or reduce tariff barriers. All the specific actions proposed in the ECA plan reflect the importance of a long-term perspective.

However, there may be need for a cautionary note, given the structural obstacles affecting the implementation of such programs as the ECA initiative. Moussa and Schwere outline some problematic factors. The first difficulty refers to the inadequacy of planning reflecting institutional weaknesses. The second problem shows the lack of skilled users or what the authors identify as "the shortage of human resources". Third is the lack of financial resources to establish information systems. Fourth, the implementation of projects dealing with information technology in the region is often impeded by the lack of adequate infrastructure (Moussa and Schwere, 1992; see also Cane, 1992). Lastly, there is the problem of maintenance capability. Woherem also expresses this concern by calling for the development of technical support. (Woherem, 1995). Without support, Woherem observes, the implementation of information technology projects becomes rather costly since, by lack of maintenance capabilities, most users are forced to simply purchase new equipment, or forced to abandon the systems without using them to full capacity.

Some African analysts see cultural development as an important element facilitating contact with global technological trends. The prospects for development cannot be based on socioeconomic and political restructuring alone. They also suppose a cultural adjustment (Etounga-Manguelle, 1991; Kabou, 1991). Axelle Kabou rejects a static notion of culture reflected in the nostalgic thinking that prevailed in post-independence sub-Saharan Africa. National efforts concentrating on the rehabilitation of sub-Saharan African identity led to a cultural sclerosis by recentering the identity in the past rather than preparing societies for the future. Kabou believes that sub-Saharan African societies need to learn that identity is not a given, but the result of hard work and patient efforts consisting in continuously vitalizing the cultural heritage through an intelligent incorporation of new elements, be they foreign or local.

To some extent, sub-Saharan Africa's relation to technological and scientific development has been hampered by a reluctant attitude toward technological accomplishments, stigmatizing technology and scientific progress as Western means of conquest and colonization (Kabou, 1991:96). Such a view prevents sub-Saharan African societies from looking at the socioeconomic advantages and opportunities that science and technology offer. This results in the inability of sub-Saharan African societies to incorporate energizing cultural elements. Criticizing the cultural sclerosis of the region, Etounga-Manguelle argues that it is critical culture that will give African people the dynamic determination propelling them beyond established concepts and meanings. Critical culture is the continuous search for answers because it always places individuals and societies in a frame of mind that causes permanent questioning, enlarging the social environment in which individuals find meaning in their lives. It allows people to give

adapted and appropriate meaning to such global cultural trends as new technologies and new forms of political development.

The Resurgence of Political Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

Under the influence of neoliberal global agents, a new reflection on policy change has made its way into sub-Saharan Africa, as is illustrated by the leading role that African regional institutions play in changing attitudes toward issues of development policy. In 1985, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank issued a joint report admitting mistaken policies and their disastrous consequences on agricultural output as well as industrial productivity. The report also noted the defective environment for economic growth due partly to the mismanagement of state owned enterprises. According to the report, state policies were responsible for undermining private initiatives and annihilating the domestic private sector. The two institutions called for the establishment of a national strategic environment presenting favorable conditions for individual initiatives. Policy change was also to be effected in promoting the development of human resources. Along the same lines, in July 1985, in its Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery, 1986-90, the OAU proposed a strategy that recognized the vital importance of the agricultural sector, and urged states to promote industrial policies allowing greater economic involvement of the private sector. Overall, these regional initiatives express the understanding that socioeconomic development in sub-Saharan Africa is not possible without what Herbst calls "the structural adjustment of politics." (Herbst, 1990)

Optimistic writings report a degree of incorporation of global cultural trends by sub-Saharan African societies. For Apter and Rosberg, for instance, the experience of dissatisfaction and social discontent in most sub-Saharan African societies has generated concerns and social demands calling for political liberalization and the eradication of such behaviors as clientelism and the exclusion of many from centers of decision-making. In addition, the new perception is facilitated in part by new technologies in communication, contributing to raising social awareness around the world in the late 1980s and the 1990s, liberating the long repressed desire of individual societies to question the validity of self-legitimizing political systems. Analysts identify the slow, but steady, ongoing internalization of the principles of the global economy by sub-Saharan African societies as “the new realism” (Apter and Rosberg, 1994). In the same way, Gordon and Wolpe have identified a process of social transformation and awareness, calling it “a quiet renaissance.” These authors anticipate a socioeconomic dynamism stemming from the new political practices and express hope for the end of Afro-pessimism (Gordon and Wolpe, 1998).

Barkan also expresses hope in the rise of democracy through political liberalization and the resurgence of civil society. He traces the emergence of democratic movements in sub-Saharan Africa to the resurgence of the new modernization and political development approach. His view shows the significance of democratic rule in the process of socioeconomic and political development. He states that “viable rule and economic performance are mutually reinforcing” (Barkan, 1994: 87). The African context gives an illustration of the causality between bad governance and socioeconomic poverty through political and socioeconomic incapacitation of civil society and poor

policy making processes. The ongoing socioeconomic and political restructuring in the region creates a hopeful perspective of development policies leading to positive economic outcomes. Politics cannot operate meaningfully unless it incorporates the interests of the socioeconomic agents. The adequate establishment of political institutions, in this view, is interpreted as an inclusive response to social demands and aspirations. Inclusiveness underscores the accountability of political institutions in the sense that the political realm draws its legitimacy from its representation of the collective identity. This line of thought reasserts the perspective of the contractual state. The requirement of state accountability follows a logic that promotes the reactivation of civil society. The more accommodating the state is to socioeconomic demands, the stronger civil society.

Civil society has many other advocates who see the functionality of the state, not only from the procedural and fiduciary characteristics of accountability, but also from the dynamics of state-society relations. Through a conceptual framework of governance, Hyden, Bratton and others convey an idea that delineates the space within which civil society operates and specifies the role and ability of the state to govern. The authors' application of the idea of governance to the study of political development places the debate about politics into its original Aristotelian vision, premising the existence of a political realm associated with cognitive or theoretical activity. Why is this return to the classics meaningful? For Hyden, the reconstruction of a political space liberates human and social consciousness emerging from the interactions between social actors. This approach premises an active subjective identification of social agents that asserts the dynamic and creative role of society. This identification determines the relationships

among social actors, and between these and institutional and organizational forms (Hyden, 1992:22). It supposes the existence of appropriate and adequate structures in which social actors have creative relationships manifested in terms of rights and productive capacity. Through this vision, the approach to governance assumes and posits social existence and its representation through the institutional setting, confirming the Aristotelian view that humans are political—social beings. That is, they live in organized social environments in which they realize themselves.

Holm and Molutsi bring up particular instances of political development in African polities, drawn from the governance theoretical framework. In a study of the process of liberalization in Botswana, they entrench the practice of governance in the dynamics of state-society relations, asserting the conditioning role of civil society. In Botswana, governance emerges with the process of social and political liberalization. Under these new norms of interaction, liberalization brings “state dependence on social groups” and creates a more integrated administrative machine (Holm and Molutsi, 1992:81). The authors think that this has been facilitated by the fact that “top officials, heavily influenced by their expatriate allies, have come to believe that government programs work better if the public can be induced to participate, even in a token form, in governing processes” (Holm and Molutsi, 1992:82). Thanks to this social involvement, Botswana’s process of liberalization has resulted in the creation of a “universalistic bureaucracy,” which is the inclusion of citizens in the policy-making process. The universalistic bureaucracy has been achieved through interaction with interest groups, the election of community leaders and the dissemination of information regarding why and how government decisions are made. On the other hand, social influence on the state was

also reinforced by the emergence of market-oriented national entrepreneurs, particularly in the urban areas, in the 1980s. This emerging socioeconomic group had an interest in the liberalization of the political system, and many held political party offices. It promoted liberalization within the parties and through the growth of special interest groups.

Most sub-Saharan African societies have welcomed the process of political and socioeconomic liberalization. The demands for democracy in many sub-Saharan African countries are an indication of what analysts consider to be a new understanding of the logic and requirements of the global economy. The notion of resurrection of modernization proclaims the universal adoption of modernization principles because they are seen as offering a more convincing prospect for development than other models (Wiarda, 1991:44; Huntington, 1991:288).

Democratization

Transition and Regime Change

Democratization is defined as the process whereby authoritarian rules and centralized regimes open up to become more citizen-responsive systems characterized by political and social processes that allow citizens to influence the state and through which social interests are expressed. The passage from politically closed systems to democratic rule is often facilitated by a transition period. Transition constitutes an important stage in the process of democratization. The significance of the transitional period lies in the

process of establishing rules for the new political game. It allows for the consolidation of the transformation of the political system. Guillermo O'Donnell and others define transition as "the interval between one political regime and another" (O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, 1986:6). The main characteristic of this interval moment is that it places a variety of political and social actors in bargaining situations in which each category of actors wants its interests to be considered in the new rules (Huntington, 1991). This explains why the transitional period brings to the fore many interests that the new regime has to incorporate (O'Donnell and others, 1986). The incorporation of issues and interests is not the only aspect that makes transition difficult. Issues and interests are the reflection of the identities of the various actors that present them.

Scholars dealing with transition and the bargaining involved in the incorporation of various interests during this period, cannot help noticing its complexity (Huntington, 1991; O'Donnell and others, 1986, Ottaway, 1997). They all argue that the transformation of a political system is not a straightforward and linear process. The establishment of constitutional parameters and organizational structures is marked by uncertainty. O'Donnell and his colleagues point to "high degree of indeterminacy" characterized by "unexpected events (*fortuna*), insufficient information, hurried and audacious choices, confusion about motives and interests, plasticity, and even indefiniteness of political identities, as well as the talents of specific individuals (*virtù*)" (O'Donnell and others, 1986:5). In many cases, the uncertainty of transition is reflected in the fact that the new rules of political practices compel political and social actors to embrace new habits and a new political culture with which they are not familiar (Ottaway, 1997). In countries governed by authoritarian regimes, as many were in sub-

Saharan Africa, the incorporation of democratic rules implies a transformation that brings completely different rules. Ottaway remarks that “the outcome of any process of radical change is not easily predictable and even less easily controllable” (Ottaway, 1997). One might say that unpredictability has been a pattern in many cases of restructuring in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Impact of popular protest in the democratization process

Ottaway distinguishes two important elements initiating the process of democratization, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. On the one hand, political transformation can be seen in terms of the decision of policy-makers to broaden the space of political practice by allowing more political actors and interests to enter the political arena. In many cases, this engineering of social and political change results in institutional reforms and is geared toward the preservation of the interests of the ruling class. On the other hand, democratization also results from conflicts, violence and demands that place various actors in situations of confrontation and bargaining (Ottaway, 1997). In many cases, these situations triggered change by putting pressure on policy-makers to introduce new terms of political practices. In many sub-Saharan African countries, widespread movement of popular demands was manifested through demonstrations in capital cities, expressing discontent with political oppression and economic mismanagement that caused hardship and poverty.

Bratton and van de Walle (1992) assess a series of protests that took place in sub-Saharan African countries during in the 1990s and conclude that they resulted in social

and political reforms. In their observation, protests were mostly the expression of corporate demands by mostly urban interest groups seeking to improve material conditions. Students in Gabon and Cote d'Ivoire, for instance, reacted against poor teaching and study conditions. In other instances, in Zimbabwe and Kenya particularly, student protests addressed government's mismanagement, authoritarianism and arbitrariness. In many countries, though particular sections of the urban population initiated protests, they gathered momentum through the support of other social groups and evolved into coalitions of diverse corporate interests. Bazenguissa-Ganga also makes a similar observation in the case of Congo-Brazzaville where the single labor union started protests that found support in students' demands for grants and better study conditions. He notes that many disenchanted people who were previously members of the former single party supported these protests by making repeated demands in favor of political liberalization (Bassenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Governments were forced to take initiatives to deal with these protest movements. Their initial responses varied from threats and repression to selective compromise, as in Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Benin, where governments made attempts to contain movements for social demands with threats and concessions. However, this only contributed to fueling further unrest and popular rage (Bratton and van de Walle, 1992). As social reactions to governments' responses grew stronger and stronger, they succeeded in forcing the political leadership to abandon prevailing systems of single-party regimes and adopt political change. This change involved party reforms in Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya, Cameroon, Gabon, Zaire, administrative reforms in Benin, Gabon, Zambia, Congo-

Brazzaville, Central African Republic, institutional reforms in Cameroon, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, and Gabon (Bratton and van de Walle, 1992).

Industrial Restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville

Little has been written about industrial restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville. Yet the theme needs to be developed to generate an understanding of the conditions that Congo-Brazzaville has to meet for a positive and active interaction with the global economy. The idea of industrial restructuring has been pointed out as an important one for Congo-Brazzaville's recovery in World Bank documents. It has been suggested in proposals dealing with managerial restructuring, privatization and capacity building. Based on case studies of specific firms, particularly state enterprises, World Bank proposals note that industrial restructuring is expected to give the country modern facilities, adapted organizational forms and upgrade the quality of services and production (World Bank, 1995). The necessity of industrial restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville plays out through two specific circumstances. First it is recommended as the result of the little success that the industrial development of the 1970s and 1980s has produced. In the context of industrial restructuring and to reverse the cycle of unsuccessful industrialization, many of the larger manufacturing companies, which for the most part, were state-owned, are being transferred to private ownership (Hodgkinson, 2000:385). In some cases, breaking up companies into smaller ones has also been proposed (Derrick, 1990). Government officials see organizational restructuring of state firms to be a necessity or "an inescapable reality." MOUNGOUNGA-NKOMBO, a former

Minister of Finance reinforces the notion of privatization by highlighting the hope it carries for a positive integration of the country into the global economy. He states that “the promotion of private enterprise, both domestic and foreign, is the occasion for the Congo to create and develop new partnerships that we hope may be the departure point for new development cooperation” (Moungounga-Nkombo, 1996:1). Michael Hood makes an analysis of this governmental perception by looking at the negotiations between the Congolese government and the multilateral financial institutions, indicating the country’s efforts to improve the industrial performance of public sector enterprises. He points to IMF-sponsored programs that include government’s commitment to ending state monopoly of industrial management.

Moreover, this analyst goes further by indicating the second circumstance that reinforces the necessity of industrial restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville. This involves prospects of improved interaction with the world economy. Miller makes an observation that confirms positive results stemming from some efforts that the government actually made in restructuring the industrial sector and opening of the country’s economy to the world economy. This has been a new approach embodying structural adjustment compelling the government to seek “pragmatic solutions to economic development” associated with the abandonment of socialist dogma. She points out that the Congo increased its exports in 1989 and managed to keep imports in check. Interaction with the global economy has also been reinforced by investments, particularly in the oil sector where the state has allowed the involvement of private foreign actors (Miller, 1990:40).

Industrial restructuring, however, involves aspects of organization, production and sectoral linkages that adjustment in Congo-Brazzaville has not incorporated.

Increase in exports has been achieved, not so much in manufacturing as extractive activities such as oil and timber, which have been the traditional products of the Congolese industrial sector. For some critics, adjustment in the industrial sector has not led to improvement in manufacturing, competitiveness and the quality of products (Bayonne and Makimouna-Ngoualat, 1999:45).

The lack of sectoral linkages reflects discrepancies in the formulation of development strategies. According to Bayonne and Makimouna-Ngoualat, industrial reforms in Congo-Brazzaville were doomed to fail as long as they were not initiated from a strategic point of view that highlights an integrated economic system including decision making, organizational and managerial skills and production perspectives (Bayonne and Makimouna-Ngoualat, 1999:56). The authors link this point to the existence of sound information systems that allows management and policy makers to elaborate good strategic planning. From Michel Crozier's observation, which underscores the importance of strategy, they note the primacy of strategy over reform, pointing out that the Congolese political economy gives no indication of such prioritizing during the restructuring period. Bayonne and Makimouna-Ngoualat note that, in Congo-Brazzaville, this inefficiency has allowed officials to give false reports on exports and imports, for instance, and at the same time, it impedes the system of recording production. The Economist Intelligence Unit, for instance, in its assessment of the government's timber tax collection, gives an example of distorted recording (EIU, 1999). Industrial restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville should also involve establishing an information system within the enterprise to generate good planning and strategy over time. This view appears in Ngassaki's thinking, which stresses the relevance of

information systems in the process of planning, allowing different levels of the organization to communicate regarding the processes in which they are involved, and thereby allowing the firm to elaborate policies. Ngassaki notes that this requirement of the new technological regime has been absent in the restructuring process launched in the Congolese industrial sector. He states that in the Congolese economy, the lack of information system is coupled with an absence of democracy in organizational management (Ngassaki, 1991:20).

Democratization in Congo-Brazzaville

The process of democratization in Congo-Brazzaville has generated great interest among analysts. The first point dealt with in the literature on democratization in Congo-Brazzaville concerns the notion of transition. The second is on the transformation of the political system resulting in the establishment of new institutions. The third examines the factors and ambiguities that contributed to disrupting the new political order established during the Congo's experiment with democracy.

Transition to Democracy in Congo-Brazzaville

The success of the democratization process is heavily dependent on the dynamics that played out during the transitional period. It is a period during which ambiguities and uncertainties are sorted out, reflecting the compromises and expectations of a diverse civil society and extra-systemic actors. In Congo-Brazzaville, the experience of

transition, initiated in the early 1990s, was an integral part of a whole process of social and political mutations terminating the political traditions of the Marxist-Leninist system while validating new references for the interpretation of political processes and practices. Transition to democratic rule in this country, therefore, was to embody not only the repudiation of the one-party political system, but also the questioning of the ideological principles that inspired political regimes (Breton, 1990). This author's analysis is particularly interesting in the sense that it examines transition in Congo-Brazzaville beyond the formal launching of the National Conference and the multiparty elections of 1992.

The social and political forces whose demands triggered the necessity for democratizing wanted to be the shapers of the new political context while those political actors dominating the old regime wanted to maintain some control over political reforms. It is in this interplay of forces that some analysts find the explanation of the persistent crises that plagued the period of transition in Congo-Brazzaville. They observed that political reforms to be carried out in the context of transition were seriously hindered by the existence of a difficult legacy reflecting conflicting interests, which legacy was to be managed by the transitional government (Ngolongolo, 1993; Nsafou, 1996; Menga, 1993, Baniafouna, 1995).

The opening of the political system gave rise to political alliances, creating what analysts identified as coalition politics (Englebert, 1998). John Clark observes two major political coalitions emerging during the transition. They were the Union for Democratic Renewal (Union pour le Renouveau Démocratique, URD) and the National Alliance for Democracy (Alliance Nationale pour la Démocratie, AND). The former supported the

transitional government, headed by André Milongo, and was led by Bernard Kolelas and his party, drawing support from the Lari ethnic group. The second alliance featured Pascal Lissouba and represented the opposition to the government (Clark, 1997:70). An important dimension of the existence of coalition politics in the context of Congo-Brazzaville is that it reinforced the need for what Weiss and his colleagues observed as political maneuvering, which caused continued shifting of the balance between the government and the opposition (Weiss and others, 1996:8). This political maneuvering played out in the establishment of new institutions and determined the way in which political change took place in Congo-Brazzaville.

The transformation of the Political System

The early years of political liberalization in Congo-Brazzaville witnessed the transformation of a political system, which, in the views of some observers, the ruling elite accepted to lead the country to a pluralist democracy (Gabou, 1990; Breton, 1990; Jeune Afrique Economie, 1997). Gabou explains that the establishment of the new system required a constitutional revision that abolished the role of the party as party-state. The inauguration of the new system and its consolidation by an accompanying constitutional revision presupposed the ruling party's internal mutation requiring that it share the political space and compete for political power with the opposition. This allowed new parties, clandestine and political organizations to emerge. Nsafou (1996) adds to this notion the point that pluralist democracy contributed to rejecting the ruling party's exclusivity in decisions concerning the nation's development and revived the

social environment incapacitated by the confiscation of power by the then-single party, the Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT). Democracy is, therefore, a collective effort to meet the demands for development and strives to build the individual and the general well-being of all. Through this perception, Obenga (1993) criticizes the behavior of Congolese political leaders whose petty and power-thirsty behavior led to the dismantling of the democratic institutions established during the transition (Baniafouna, 1995).

Critique of Neoliberalism

Although neoliberalism has been making headway as the dominant ideology of the global political economy, it has also been the object of intense criticism. Economic considerations tend to dominate all non-economic factors. For Brohman (1995:297), this does not only constitute an omission of non-economic factors, but it is a neglect of the “multifaceted and dynamic nature of development processes.” The author criticizes the theoretical “narrowness of homo economicus” that has led to a reductionist model unable to account for the “interdisciplinary approach to the study of development, one that includes sociocultural, political, and environmental factors as well as those economic.” The implication of such a narrow view has been the relegation of people to a level of “isolated creatures of the marketplace,” and the negation of their history, cultural traditions, political opinions and social relationships beyond market exchanges. This negation has given neoliberal economic conception a universal characteristic, implying that “economic behaviour in all places at all times follows the strictures of economic rationality” (Brohman, 1995:298).

According to Gill (1993), this universal dimension has been reinforced through the expansion of neoliberal ideas by transnational networks extending the notion geographically as well as conceptually (Gill, 1993). This universalization has needed a material basis, typified by capital gaining momentum in the form of direct foreign investment going where political conditions are convenient (Gill and Law, 1988). Gill (1993:260) points out that “the movement of large amounts of capital between countries, in the form of direct foreign investment, short-term capital flows and long-term portfolio investment, acts to condition the behaviour of governments, firms, trade unions and other groups.” Neoliberal dominance, therefore, provides the ideological and political basis for the hegemony of capital. Klak (1998:17) shares this view in his tenth thesis on globalization and neoliberalism, which states that “neoliberal policy is presently hegemonic, but it is also dogmatically imposed, normatively flawed, and therefore unsustainable.” Without reference to the historical circumstances that have determined state formation in each country, the act of imposing uniform policies to all restructuring countries reveals the ideological and scholarly narrowness as well as the weakness of such policies. According to Klak (1998:18), neoliberalism acts with the notion that “one size fits all,” in the sense that “it tends to treat economic issues ahistorically and detached from their political and social contexts.” Neoliberalism is also hegemonic in the sense that it has not relied on local research institutions for policy analysis (Nafziger, 1993: 147). Moreover, there has been a fundamental lack of self-criticism on the part of neoliberal agents when reforms have not yielded expected results. While neoliberal agents have used favorable results to validate their policy prescription, they have attributed unfavorable results to the state’s reluctance to implement neoliberal policies.

Neoliberal dogmatism neglects empirical evidence and underestimates socioeconomic processes (Brohman, 1993; Klak, 1998). Such dogmatism allows neoliberal agents to eradicate what they consider to be obstructionist methods, instead of understanding why particular social conditions generate particular practices on the part of different social groups (Klak, 1998). Neoliberal dogmatic views have reinforced the practices of neoliberal agents forcing diverse societies to adhere to their perspectives, using what could be characterized as disciplinary methods (Lall, 1992; Gill, 1995). These disciplinary methods are “new legal and constitutional practices linked to the reconstitution of capital (and labor) on a world scale,” and they are established to shape social behavior according to the interests of capital Gill (1995:1). Lall (1992:33) adequately describes this societal transformation by stating that it puts “greater emphasis on the productivist techno-economic imperative, now ‘categorical’,” causing “the disappearance of the very idea of an explicit choice of society deriving from democracy.” This social transformation has been the effect of globally homogenizing pressures used by neoliberal agents through reforms (Klak, 1998).

From the point of view of the reforms associated with World Bank and IMF, critics have expressed concern with the slow pace of recovery or the lack therein. A remark by Nafziger (1993:147) is revealing on this point.

Stabilization programs tend to become ineffective before attaining their aims, experiencing the worst of employment losses associated with demand restraint and renewed external crises linked to demand expansion. These programs generate a stop-go policy cycle that emanates from weak capabilities, strong social pressures, and insecure political leaders who target short-term goals and reserve long-term adjustment for their successors.

The doctrine of liberalization has also received mixed review, as is revealed by the caution expressed by Hamilton (1989). He argues that “policies of economic

liberalization may inhibit growth and development in Third World countries.” He warns against a total rejection of government intervention on the basis of promoting private-sector economic activities. “The idea that government intervention stifles entrepreneurial initiative and leads to misallocation of resources is often inappropriate to the institutional conditions and economic structures of Third World countries” (Hamilton, 1989:1523). He concludes that without considering the economic and social conditions of developing countries in formulating economic policy reforms, the notion of economic liberalization is irrelevant. Using the example of regulation as institutional condition showing the difference between developed and developing countries, Hamilton observes that the economic effects of regulation have been different in the West and the Third World. The reason for this difference could be the nature of regulation, which highlights institutional differences that have to be taken into account. It could also be the type of relationship between government and business existing in each country. In either case, liberalization policies require the recognition of each country’s institutional conditions.

CHAPTER II

THE INTEGRATION OF CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE INTO THE OLD TECHNOLOGICAL REGIME

Introduction

Before looking at the way in which Congo-Brazzaville interacts with the new global system, it is important to first examine its integration into the old technological regime. This regime is the mode of regulation transmitted through colonialism, responding to the requirements of the national interest of colonial powers. It operated with specific norms and regulations that subjugated traditional socioeconomic structures in Congo-Brazzaville. This chapter examines the interaction between the norms of the old technological regime and the traditional mode of production in Congo-Brazzaville. The focus is on the dynamics that determined the integration of Congo-Brazzaville into the international system. In other words, the result of the interaction between capitalism and the traditional modes of production was to transform the Congolese socioeconomic structures to fit the interests of the dominant actors of the capitalist system. While analyzing the transformation of the traditional mode of production and the way in which social, political, and economic actors incorporated the norms of the dominant regime of accumulation, the study also highlights the characteristics and evolution of the “modern” socioeconomic structures stemming from this transformation. This aspect of evolution is important to understanding the underlying causes of the inability of current structures to cope with the new techno-economic regime. It stresses the idea that the principles of the

old technological regime have continued to affect Congo-Brazzaville's socioeconomic structures and the socioeconomic development of this country.

The chapter is divided in three parts. The first part highlights the historical circumstances surrounding the integration of Congo-Brazzaville into the international system. The key element of this part is the analysis of the mechanisms used by the old technological regime to achieve change in traditional structures. An important mechanism is colonialism, which operated as an instrument of capitalism and carried the values of the nation-state. This part also shows that the process of transforming African structures was not straightforward because passing from one mode of production to another required a transitional period. The second part analyzes the colonial legacy and its manifestation in the Congolese socioeconomic structures. This analysis is based on the observation of the role Congo-Brazzaville played during the colonial era, examining the way in which this role affected current trends in the structuring of the country's economy. Since Brazzaville was the capital of the French Equatorial Africa, an emphasis was put in urban development, to the detriment of the rural sector and its economic structures such as agriculture. The third part examines the different economic sectors by looking at their performance and possible interrelationships. An important element of this analysis is the imbalance within the Congolese economy, which results from the lack of intersectoral linkages, the emphasis on the oil industry and the neglect of such vital sectors as agriculture. The absence of intersectoral linkages reflects the fact that the Congolese economy has not incorporated some key elements of the new technological regime. This observation is based on the analysis of technology policy in

Congo-Brazzaville, which indicates that the Congolese economy is still based on structures established during the colonial era.

Colonialism as an Instrument of the Old Technological Regime

Colonialism, Capitalism and the Implementation of the State-Centric View

The old technological regime is described as the mode of regulation in which the nation-state played a major role in production, resource allocation and the relationships among nations. Colonialism was firmly implanted in nationalism and was the concrete implementation of national expansionist views. Thompson and Adloff observe that the “the colonial policy of France, like that of other Western imperial powers, was inspired to varying degrees by the profit motive, by the spirit of adventure and conquest and, above all, by nationalism (Thompson and Adloff, 1975:127). Colonialism consolidated the national character of economic and political activities conducted in the colonial territory, and was an essential element of the old mode of regulation. The exaltation of the French cultural values participated in this process of national affirmation, politically, socially and economically.

The integration of Congo-Brazzaville into the mode of regulation of the international system was made possible through colonialism serving the national interest of France. Colonialism led to the transformation of traditional social, economic and political structures in Congo-Brazzaville, making them suitable to the interests of the French nation state. The idea of nation-state, the pillar of the old technological regime,

therefore, conditioned the transformation of the Congolese socioeconomic and political structures. This was largely facilitated by the economic intervention of French trading companies. Both the colonial drive and the investment attempts of trading companies were significant of the expansionist mood that determined France's politics at the end of the nineteenth century after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine to Germany during the 1870 war. Thompson and Adloff explain the connection between the war's effect on France and its colonial expansion. The involvement in wars and their effects on France's socioeconomic formation and political system gave justification for France's intensified activity in the colonies.

The wars of 1870, 1914 and 1939, and the economic depressions of the inter-war years, were the catalysts that changed France's attitude toward its subject peoples, but they brought no loosening of French economic controls over the colonies. Because these events enhanced the colonies' value as sources of manpower and materials for France, a greater effort was made to increase their productivity and the well-being of their inhabitants. The goal of France's successive public-works programme for its dependencies, and of the imperial conference of 1935, was not to make the colonies self-sufficient but to integrate them more closely with the French economy (Thompson and Adloff, 1975:129)

The integration of Congo-Brazzaville into the old technological regime, therefore, meant the penetration of the country by the capitalist mode of production. During that period, capitalism was characterized by a monopolistic tendency that predominated at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. Pino-Santos (1979:77-78) analyzes the evolution into this form of capitalism by stating that "competitive free-market capitalism, through the actions of its own laws, gave way to monopoly capitalism, and this in turn was subsequently converted into state monopoly capitalism. This later development took place through the ever-increasing intervention of the state in the economies of the developed capitalist countries". State monopoly capitalism is "the

joining of the monopolies with the power of the state for the purpose of trying to resolve the contradictions of the system, consolidate the hold of large capital, and augment its profits” (Pino-Santos 1979:77-78). The mode of regulation of this era of capitalism was, therefore, state-centric and this was the system that characterized the behaviors of European political, social and economic actors involved in the colonial territory of Congo-Brazzaville. It also determined the evolution of existing as well as future political and socioeconomic structures during and after colonization.

Despite the initial reluctance of the French government to launch economic investments in the colonial Congo, the first exploratory missions led by Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza in the 1880s, motivated by an expansionist scheme, managed to win public opinion to the necessity of investing in the region. The colonial Congo comprised Congo-Brazzaville, then called Middle Congo, Gabon, and the Central African Republic. In 1883, Brazza’s efforts contributed to paving the way for private economic investments in the territory. The media and nationalist theorists succeeded in creating a favorable public opinion supporting the colonial economic enterprise to enrich the nation. One of the theorists, Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, for instance, declared that “the main purpose of the colony is the commerce of the metropolis” (quoted by Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972:26). The exclusive exploitation of the colony required protective measures.

Monopoly and Protectionism and Other Forms of Accumulation

In the years 1900-1905, with the help of the colonial administration, the French trading companies successfully lobbied against free trade and competition in the

Equatorial African region, a region they considered to belong exclusively to France. This connivance was schemed to consolidate the monopoly that the French State granted to the French trading companies, forcing foreign companies away. Monopoly and protectionism were reinforced by the use of military conquest and direct administration to preserve the national interest and, as Brewer points out, "to exclude other nations from the conquered territory and to ensure unimpeded entry of the conquering power's own goods" (Brewer, 1990:52). Before the establishment of French trading companies, various companies of different national origins traded in the territory of French Equatorial Africa. Among the most notable were the English John Holt, Hatton & Cookson, the German Woermann, the Dutch Nieuwe Afrikaanshe Handels Vennootschap or N.A.H.V., the Belgian Société Anonyme Belge pour le Commerce et l'Industrie, or S.A.B., and Portuguese establishments (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972:238-239).

When difficulties arose from the conflicts of interests between French and foreign companies, in many cases the outcomes were generally in favor of the French companies. French trading companies settling down in the territory at the beginning of the twentieth century received great support from the colonial administration, with the intent to enforce the monopoly of exploitation guaranteed by the state. The colonial administration showed no reluctance in its efforts to eliminate non-French companies from the territory. Following recommendations from the Ministry of Colonies, the administration of the colony had the obligation to ensure the exclusive advantage of French companies to benefit from the areas they were allocated. The enforcement of this policy involved revoking exploitation rights previously granted to non-French companies. Ministerial instructions dictated that the exploitation rights of existing foreign companies would be

rejected as though they never existed. The administration received the order to deny any new permit for commercial establishment to non-French businesses and to encourage the buying out of existing foreign factories. General Inspector Fezouls was reported to have issued the order of not only reinforcing, but also expanding and generalizing the monopoly of French businesses to include contracts for trade and industrial activities as well as land and forest exploitation and agriculture. Foreign companies could not even establish commercial activities and build factories on the lands reserved for indigenous populations, these being state property. French companies, on the other hand, could rely on the institutional support and protection provided by the state. Assuming the role of judiciary police, officers of the colonial administration were to uphold the law and penalize any land usurpation and infringement of the order of the Ministry of Colonies (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972:239).

National interest prevailed over international agreements. Commerce in the region was regulated by rules stipulated in the Act of Berlin of February 26, 1885, promoting fairness of commercial opportunity for all nations involved in the region. With the favor of the French colonial administration governing the region and the French military controlling it, French trading companies suffered no accusations and disastrous consequences when they did not comply with the international trade agreements. The political ambitions of administrators and economic profit-making conjoined in the notion of imperialism, enticing colonial nation-states to support and back up the economic adventures of national trading and chartered companies (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972; Bertrand, 1975).

Accumulation was not limited to monopoly and protectionism. There were other significant forms of accumulation by the French, which exposed its monopolistic dealing with the local population. Three dimensions can be outlined as forms of accumulation that prevailed in the economic relationships between the French system and local populations in the colony, which reflected some characteristics of the old technological regime. All of these were used as means by which France pursued its national interest through the establishment of its colonial empire. They also determined the evolution of the future trade relationships and socioeconomic structures of independent Congo-Brazzaville.

First, monopoly and protectionism led to the creation of exclusivist commercial relations between the colony and the imperial power. Thompson and Adloff refer to a colonial pact that “required the French colonies to export their raw materials to France and to import French merchandise, in a closed economic circuit designed to exclude foreign traders and shipping” (Thompson and Adloff, 1975:128). In the long run, for the colony, this limitation of external trade reduced the possibility of trading with countries other than France. It resulted in maintaining the Congolese socioeconomic structure within the French sphere of influence. When Congo-Brazzaville became independent, its possibilities of diversification of economic activities and partners were conditioned, as France continued to be its privileged trade partner. Consequently, the accent has been put on the economic activities promoting the export of raw materials to France, on the basis of the principles of comparative advantage and resource endowment promoted by traditional theories and the old technological regime.

Second, accumulation by the colonial administration and trading companies included the expropriation of the natives' labor and value creation. One of the many demands that the concession-holders made to the colonial administration was to strip the natives of their property. This expropriation correlated with a *de facto* norm emerging from a general practice sanctioned by the idea that "by virtue of the deed of concession, the companies considered themselves owners of the products (Suret-Canale, 1971:26). This form of accumulation reflected the hierarchical and centralized management structure that prevailed in the old technological regime, whereby workers were excluded from decision making even when it concerned their working conditions and their remuneration. Another consequence is that in this approach one's own labor did not necessarily stimulate private property, a notion that was in stark contradiction with the Lockean perspective, which now gives theoretical strength to the neoliberal perspective.

Third, the behavior of French trading in the colony was mercantile in nature. Suret-Canale notes that "as a general rule, the colonial economy was tied to the principle of an excess in the value of imports; merchandise to be disposed of was sold at exceptionally high prices, and the values given to products purchased were abnormally low" (Suret-Canale, 1971:39). It was the trading companies or French buyers who decided the value of the products they bought from, and sold to, the natives. Embedded in mercantilism, French trading behavior promoted unbalanced trade relationships between the parent country of the trading companies and the colony, which continued even during the independence era. The exploitation of local resources—mineral and agricultural products—at the expense of local populations reinforced this dimension. The organization of such trade relationships relied on considerable governmental regulations

inducing an export surplus resulting from intensive exploitation of the colony, and which was also partly reinforced by the colonial fiscal policy that imposed high taxes on, and low wages for, native populations.

On the whole, all these forms of accumulation left their marks on the socioeconomic structures of Congo-Brazzaville. They affected the evolution of labor and the socioeconomic structures on which labor was grounded. They determined the entire future development of Congo-Brazzaville by creating a structural dependence of dominant sectors of the Congolese economy on export markets for raw materials, which reduced and weakened the production base and did not encourage possible inter-sector linkages. Furthermore, to the dependence on export markets has been associated the extroversion of the economy.

The Transition to the Old Technological Regime

Colonialism played an important role in interweaving Congolese traditional ways of life and capitalism. Based on a study of the impact of the capitalist mode of production on the southwestern regions of Congo-Brazzaville, Rey (1971:472) observes a transformation in the traditional culture due to the predominance of capitalist interests over the lineage way of life. He notes a shift from the lineage system of production and its related socioeconomic relations to a model in which capitalism and traditions interact in a way that shows a subordination of the latter by the first. The capitalist mode of production introduced new means and facilities for the exploitation of territories, leading to the incorporation of these means by local societies and the concentration of populations around the new centers of production. For instance, the construction of the

railways, the existence of new roads facilitated migrations and the creation of villages along the new routes. The capitalist mode of production generated such new working habits as the relationships between the owner of the means of production and the worker and the institutionalization of work time. Rey reports, for instance, that in the early period of the introduction of this mode of production, workers were required to work from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with one twenty-minute break at noon.

The relations of production in the lineage system were based on an interaction dominated by the clan elders, ensuring the distribution of resources in the village. The capitalist mode of production changed all that, by generating an interaction that was no longer based on hierarchical relationships, but to a great extent, on the degree of work capability and the remuneration it induced. Migrations dislocated the social fabric of traditional communities. They reduced the control that the elders had over those leaving to seek employment in Western-created towns and productive centers. According to Rey (1971:436-37), worker migrations constituted the most characteristic phenomenon of the period 1934-1954, which indicates a period of intensified social dislocation due to internal social contradictions resulting from the penetration of Western capitalist values. In general, migrations were the result of the search for salaried employment, from which younger generations drew the capability to challenge the hierarchical structures of the traditional way of life. Moreover, the introduction of money into the traditional economy monetized the traditional marriage dowry, resulting in increased value of the dowry. This made it more and more difficult for young people to stay in the village. In some regions, such as Mossendjo, as early as 1929, migrations had become increasingly voluntary

towards areas where commercial companies and capitalist productive enterprises were located (Rey, 1971).

The idea of voluntary migration is also present in Bertrand's analysis, which argues that it is from the extent to which social relationships within traditional structures have been transformed that the impact of capitalism can be evaluated. The penetration of the capitalist mode of production can neither be characterized by the existence of new techniques nor evaluated on the basis of the contribution of capital. The most indicative element is first and foremost the complete transformation of the relationships between individuals and social groups, that is, the emergence of social relationships of a new kind. Colonial enterprises dismantled the relationships within the lineage system, either through employment, market or labor contracts in which diverse members of traditional society found some advantages. At the same time, colonial administration used its political and particularly military means to change the social configuration to allow and facilitate the infiltration of capitalist means of production (Bertrand, 1975:93; Rey, 1971:364).

The Mechanisms of Transition to the Capitalist Mode of Production

The capitalist mode of production would not have reaped great profits from the territory without a transitional and preparatory period that transformed and prepared traditional structures for the advent of capitalism. One of the forms of preparation was the recruiting of a necessary labor force and the transformation of the Congolese territory into a productive system. Rey distinguishes two distinct phases of the colonial period

leading to the penetration of the Congolese society by capitalism. The first phase is the transition to the colonial mode of production and the second stage indicates the transition to capitalism. The transitional role of the colonial era was mainly characterized by its function of preparing society through forced recruitment of labor force and forced commercialization of products. Rey (1971:364) argues that once these operations of enforcement were accomplished, the mechanisms by which traditional society functioned were apt to almost immediately perform to the service of European despotism. Therefore, the role of forced recruitment of the labor force and forced commercialization of products were two complementary aspects of colonial action preparing the way for the free selling of labor force and the free commercialization of products once society got the habit.

Bertrand (1975:93) points out that tax and forced labor were designed to drive local populations into a system dominated by trade relations. With the emergence of capitalism, free labor market and free trade within society would make obsolete the once necessary coercive and tyrannical approach characteristic of the transitional colonial establishment. Direct political and social subjugation no longer imposed itself with the same vigor. From the point of view of capitalism, therefore, decolonization became an envisioned possibility, since, if conducted adequately, it would not ruin and threaten the interests of the French capital, since cooperation agreements between France and the decolonized country would ensure its preponderance.

The forceful subordination of the traditional modes of production led to a dramatically accelerated mutation of the indigenous ways of life resulting in the complexity of the modern Congolese society. In less than half a century and in a rapid

evolution that transformed the lineage system dominating native social relationships, the Congolese society entered the dominant capitalist mode of production through imposed stages originating in the abusive transition of colonization. As a result, the capitalist mode of production became the basis of social stratification, unsettling the social hierarchy of the traditional lineage system. Its main feature was the foreign origin of both capital and the dominant group owning the local means of production and exploiting the local labor force. During this period, the lineage mode of production did not wither away. Though fundamentally altered, it was interwoven with the emerging capitalist relations (Bertrand, 1975).

Suret-Canale (1971:250) reports an example of recruitment of the labor force taking place following a decree by the colonial administration urging the governors of each colonial territory to tax the divisions they supervised and provide a fixed number of laborers for the private sector. In Congo-Brazzaville, in 1927, for each division of the territory, the administration fixed the level of recruitment for specific needs “ranging from 400, the minimum, for the Pool *circonscription* (which included the capital Brazzaville), up to 2,000 for the district surrounding Upper Sangha and Likouala-Mossaka.” While trading companies needed labor for the extraction of local resources, the colonial administration used it in the construction of roads and railways built for the transportation of extracted raw materials toward seaports, from where they were shipped to France. This system worked to enhance French commerce, in competition with other European nations that were present in other colonial territories. Two railways were constructed during the colonial period in Congo-Brazzaville. The first one, the Chemin de Fer Congo-Ocean line (C.F.C.O.), built between 1929 and 1934, connects the

country's two major cities, Brazzaville, the capital city, and Pointe-Noire, the economic center and seaport. The second line, the Comilog, was constructed for the purpose of transporting Gabonese manganese to the seaport of Pointe-Noire where it awaited its loading and shipping to France.

The methods used by colonialism to transform the socioeconomic and political structures were intended to supplant existing structures and traditions and subordinate them to the unchallenged pursuit of the interests of the French nation-state. The colonial administration forced local populations away from their lands through confiscation and transfer of judiciary rights on lands to colonial trading companies. "The disregard for the traditional rights of the African community over the land was deliberate, aimed at demonstrating the absolute power and consequent 'superior rights' of colonization, untrammelled by any legal restraint" (Suret-Canale, 1971:256). This was the implementation of a colonial decree enunciated on March 28, 1899, which concerned the entire French Equatorial Africa, granting colonial land ownership to the French State. The purpose of this legislation was to grant French trading companies access to lands. In addition to land confiscation, colonialism also provided cheap labor to these companies and public colonial institutions serving and representing the French nation in the colonial territory. The privilege of untrammelled access to land by French trading companies was guaranteed on the basis of the understanding that they were contributing to the pursuit of the national interest and prestige of France through business and mercantilist exploitation of the territory. In sum, colonial methods, as Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff point out "epitomized the view, widespread in France, that by virtue of conquest or by

treaty the colonies were French property and, as such, existed to enhance the metropole's power and influence" (Thompson and Adloff, 1975:127).

Needless to say that these were harsh and authoritarian methods intended to achieve absolute submission to the central authority of France and secure the establishment of the best social conditions for the exploitation of the territory. They were crucial in the establishment and consolidation of the system that caused profound socioeconomic and political transformations in Congo-Brazzaville, associated with advanced forms of dependent, capitalist development. In the absence of feudalism in the traditional system of Congo-Brazzaville, there was a need for a transitional system to allow capitalism to pursue its profit-making venture. Colonialism, therefore, achieved the alteration of traditional modes of production to avail social and economic structures to monopoly state capitalism (Rey, 1971; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972). This state capitalism followed a logic that prevailed in the old technological regime; that is monopoly and protectionism. It was a logic that consolidated a mode of regulation in which the nation-state was central.

The fact that the dominant group and owners of the means of production in the emerging capitalist relations was foreign had consequences. The economic transformation due to capitalist growth was not in tune with the social mutation underway in the Congolese society. The development of trade relations, the new form of socioeconomic exchange and the evolution of the labor market did not translate into a rapid growth of productive forces and material production. For the dominant capitalist group, the indigenous productive forces were nothing more than the link in the chain of international capitalism. The integration of these local forces into the international

capitalist regime took place despite their resistance to the principles external to their worldviews and whose orientation is essentially extroverted. Bertrand argues that this resulted in slow economic growth, which, despite the overexploitation of the local labor force, did not produce a basis for accumulation for the national economy through either the promotion of local entrepreneurship or the consolidation of established socioeconomic structures. Rather, it generated the conditions for a transfer of surplus to Western economies, particularly France (Bertrand, 1975).

The Colonial Legacy and the Congolese Socioeconomic Structures

The prevalence of the structures and institutions inherited by the independent republic reflected the colonial system of direct administration. Suret-Canale (1971:83) identifies this system as “a proof of a policy of assimilation,” embedded in the perspective of “gallicising of the colonies to the point of turning them into simple transplanted copies of the French *départments*.” The self-serving attitude embedded in colonial policy ignored the history of local populations. By inspiring French-style institutions in Congo-Brazzaville, as Suret-Canale concedes, assimilationist ideas

suppressed and ignored the political structures that were truly African and the African culture, replacing them by colonial structures and colonial education—which were indeed ‘French’, but profoundly different from what existed at the same level in France itself. The pretense that colonial policy led to the formation of a ‘*France d’Outre-mer*’ was carefully cultivated. This was mainly for purposes of home policy (Suret-Canale, 1971:83-84).

The conditions that facilitated the implementation of assimilationist perspectives were reinforced in the 1930s. Bernault reports that in French Equatorial Africa, armed resistance against colonial taxing and forced labor recruiting were already almost

definitively crushed in 1930. Even the Matsoua movement, which demanded access to political and civil liberties for Africans, was definitively dismantled in 1942. By the time the electoral system was put in place in the context of the "Loi Cadre," no mass movement managed to impose its own logic and views to the colonial order. In these conditions, the electoral process took place in a context devoid of social resistance and bowed to the rules dictated by the colonial framework (Bernault, 1996).

Trends toward Administrative and Bureaucratic Expansion

For a long period, the socioeconomic structures of Congo-Brazzaville have reflected the place that this country occupied during the colonial period in French Equatorial Africa. This country has heavily relied on the structures predating its independence, even though some of them have been adapted to the new political and socioeconomic reality. The educational system, for instance, continued in the path initiated during the colonial period, with a concentration on preparing people for civil service. The French colonial educational system centered on producing Congolese cadres *à la Française*, without fully adapting education to the needs of the country. The continuation of this tendency during the post-independence period had been evident in the lack of systematic training in technical skills. Most of the educated population had been prepared to find work in administrative environments. A whole new generation has been educated, not only in the aftermath of independence, but also throughout the socialist regimes, following the same pattern. The scarcity of technical and scientific skills contributed to widening the gap between the products of the Congolese educational

system and the requirements of economic development in the era of technological dominance.

The Congolese educational system produces numerous high school and university graduates from social science departments, flocking to the labor market in administrative positions. Available figures of the 1983-84 Yearbook of the Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville shows that 2,046 students were enrolled in the Department of Human and Social Sciences, compared with 881 in the Department of Sciences, 241 in the Rural Development Department and 207 in Physical Education (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1983). The consequences are that Congo-Brazzaville has limited scientific and technical development. For instance, the 1993 United Nations Statistical Yearbook indicates that scientists and technicians engaged in experimental development make up only .03 percent and .05 of Congo-Brazzaville's total population respectively.

During the colonial era, Congo-Brazzaville was the administrative center of the entire French Equatorial African community. This caused a situation in which Congo-Brazzaville almost had no economic viability in terms of productivity, except for its transit position within the region of French Equatorial Africa. The transit operations were managed by the A.T.E.C. (Agence Transequatoriale de Communications). They involved the transportation of primary products from Chad, Central African Republic and Gabon to the Atlantic seaport of Pointe-Noire. The total activities of this sector represented about 20 percent of local revenue.

The administrative aspect has continued to have an impact on the Congolese economy. The colonial administrative system was centralized and this is what Congo-Brazzaville inherited and expended after independence. During the early independence

years, from 1958 to 1962, for instance, regular administrative expenses amounted to 6.1 billion CFA francs. These administrative expenses included the provision of goods and services (1.6 billion), salaries and wages (4.5 billion). Others were for administrative equipment (2.9 billion) and the subsidizing of equipment to public enterprises (0.6 billion).¹ During the same period, other sectors combined, comprising agriculture (crop and subsistence), forestry, industry, transportation, commerce and services amounted to a total added value of CFA 18.7 billion. The evolution of the economy of Congo-Brazzaville suggests that the trends toward administrative expansion continued. In 1968, total administrative expenses amounted to 17.6 billion (Amin and Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1969).

The colonial administration of French Equatorial Africa built three centers from which it operated to control the entire region, and these centers were all located within Congo-Brazzaville. These administrative centers, Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Dolisie, became the major cities of the country in the independence period. Successive governments continued to concentrate their political and administrative operations and economic activities in these centers, which facilitated an increase in urban population.

The Bias toward Urban Development and the Birth of the Urban Problem

This development led to the fact that the Congolese economy concentrated in urban centers. The growth in urban population and the policies of successive governments to reinforce the socioeconomic infrastructures of the cities to the detriment

¹ By that time, between 1958 and 1965, the exchange rate was about \$1=200 CFA francs. It is now \$1 for CFAF550, after the devaluation that has been part of the structural adjustment policies.

of the rural sector created disequilibrium in the overall structure of the economy. As a result, four main urban centers have continued to attract the bulk of the population, all of them located in the Southern third of the country. Table 2.1 shows both real figures and projections of the growth rate of urban population. It indicates that more than half of the Congolese population lives in cities. The entire post-independence period witnessed continued outflow of the rural population into the cities, often forced by the governments' neglect of the rural areas and economy (Tati, 1993).

Table 2.1 Congo-Brazzaville's urban population.

Years	Brazzaville		Pointe-Noire		Other cities combined	
1990	668464	58.5%	351520	30.5%	132540	11.0%
1995	773647	57.8	418947	31.3	145895	10.9
2000	888884	57.2	498832	32.1	166277	10.7

Source: Based on Tati, Migration, Urbanisation et Développement au Congo, 1993.

Since independence, government's socioeconomic policies failed to meet the increasing demands of a growing urban population, whose life has been embittered by the corruption of officials, intensifying the dissatisfaction of workers, youths and the urban unemployed. Coquery-Vidrovitch (1985) comparatively assesses the interaction between urban populations and the political leadership in the early-independence Africa, based on employment in the evolving urban setting. She points out that urban labor constituted the most dynamic source of challenge to new governments in the independence era. In some situations, it was a reflection of popular sentiment toward political leadership. The dissatisfaction of urban labor, resulting from unsatisfactory salaries and poor working and living conditions, could cause general urban agitation. It fueled the urban social malaise that was associated with popular unrest in Kenya, South Africa and Congo-Brazzaville.

In Congo-Brazzaville, the Youlou administration, for instance, felt increasing pressure from the workers whose movement gained more ground as youth began to voice their own disapproval of government conduct. Despite resort to clientelism to assuage the hostility of urban populations by co-opting labor leaders, the Youlou administration was never able to subdue the disaffected urban masses and meet their demands (Gauze, 1973). Unlike in Kenya, where astute political leaders tamed labor unions through inclusion in a single party and the mandatory membership in the national trade union, thus creating a socio-political balance (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1985), the Congolese labor unions and urban population continued to challenge the leadership from an independent stance. An important ground for their protests was the neo-colonial and corrupt character of the administration, coupled with the neglect of socioeconomic conditions of the bulk of the population (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

The urban population was successful in galvanizing public opinion given its demographic importance. In the early 1960s, it already constituted 40 percent of total population, with a remarkable growth induced by its doubling in less than five years. Pointe-Noire grew from 20,000 inhabitants in 1949 to 80,000 in 1963, and Brazzaville swelled 33 percent between 1959 and 1963, when it had 150,000 inhabitants (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1985:367). Employment rate did not follow the growth of the population size. Urban unemployment was striking, as more and more young people lived jobless in the city while many lost their jobs. Devauges (1963) notes that the unemployed constituted a remarkable number in the city of Brazzaville, with nearly 20,000 active people out of job.

Political resentment toward the administration grew in the cities, as people therein were more aware of the political intrigues of the administration and existing political organizations. When the installation of the single party under Youlou's leadership in 1962 induced the repression of the freedom of political expression, the labor unions became the only independent pressure group. The long tradition of salaried labor that colonial conditions created (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1985; Rey, 1971; Bertrand, 1975), had prepared city dwellers to perceive the threats generated by the politics of the administration (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The designation of Brazzaville as the capital of the French Equatorial African federation contributed to enhancing the awareness of the urban population on employment issues. Salaried employment developed under two forms. First, employment in the civil service in the colonial administration required educated personnel. A few Africans worked in municipal functions in Brazzaville, and were seen as the educated cadre of the federation. Others, no less aware of their interests, were involved in the CFCO, the railway construction between Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, which constituted a great attraction for labor from the entire federation. The characteristic of Congo-Brazzaville as the capital of the federation, therefore, generated the dominance of work in the tertiary sector, which continued right to the independence period. Moreover, as Coquery-Vidrovitch (1985:369) points, compared with other territories of the federation, Congo-Brazzaville had a greater salaried labor force, which was so aware as to feel the need to protect its interests. These factors furthered and heightened a distinct identity of the labor force as opposed to the political leadership, the administration and the Western interests it represented. This generated the emergence of

conflicting relationships leading to sharp social antagonisms that exploded in the August 1963 political unrest.

The Rural Problem and Government Policy

The development of urban areas and the poverty of the rural sector are intrinsically related. The economic policies that successive governments formulated gave high priority to investments favoring urban development, leading to continued rural exodus. For instance, the 1964-68 five-year plan, based on CFA 54.3 billion, allocated 46 percent of the amount to industry and research in the field of minerals, 35 percent to the construction of socioeconomic infrastructure, including education, and only 9 percent to agriculture, which, for the most part, involved the peasantry. During the implementation of this plan, the 9 percent allocated to agriculture were reduced to 5 percent, while the budget for the public sector increased from 10 to 13 percent (Nkaloulou, 1983). Consequently, agriculture remained stagnant and the rural sector, which depended on it, continued to plunge into poverty. Peasant agriculture has included both the production of export crops, such as coffee and cacao, and the production of crops for the domestic market.

Carried out individually and characterized by a lack of adequate technology, peasant agriculture has remained backward. The peasants' techniques and tools have not improved, limited to hoe, machete, ax and spade, and their persistent agricultural practices of slash-and-burn have been responsible for the erosion and exhaustion of the soil in the more densely populated areas. These practices have not introduced a regular use of fertilizers or pesticides, and thus, have precluded an increase in productivity.

Furthermore, the roads to rural areas are in bad condition, adding to the depression of the rural sector already depopulated. Analysts have traced the problem of the peasantry to the dramatic depopulation of villages. Desjeux (1987:112) expresses a concern that there will soon be no 'peasant dynamics' to study because there will be no peasants left. Also speaking of a liquidation of the peasant world, Guichaoua (1989:97) notes that agricultural policy in Congo-Brazzaville is to blame for the depopulation of the countryside.

The Congo's Economic Sector

The Congo's Agricultural Sector

During the socialist years, from the 1960s to the 1980s, governments formulated agriculture policies in an attempt to resolve the rural problem and eradicate the poverty resulting from the neglect of agriculture. This effort led to the creation of state farms and peasant cooperatives, which the state reinforced through the nationalization of the offices of commercialization and government's exclusive monopoly for the export of agricultural products. Agriculture was declared 'the priority of priorities' in the 1975-77 three-year Development Plan. This brought agriculture into the public sector. From 1964 to the end of the 1970s, state involvement in agriculture increased as the state invested in administrative, transport and communications equipment. During the 1970s, the importance of agriculture for the country was highlighted, at least in theory, through a strategy for a 'self-centered and auto-dynamic development' (Bertrand, 1975).

To revive the agricultural sector, the Sassou-Nguesso regime convened the 1987 Agricultural Conference, which proclaimed the goal of achieving economic self-sufficiency through agricultural development in the year 2000. This program was intended to develop agrarian research, reactivate the cooperative movement that the government initiated, and launch operation Village-Center, mobilize funds for more efficient commercialization, establish a financial institution to support the agricultural sector and create a social welfare system for the peasants. The government's program sought to provide the agricultural sector with incentives by lowering customs taxes and other fees for agricultural equipment, adapting consumption patterns to national production and maintaining roads for the transportation of agricultural products. This program, with all its ambitious declarations, did not resolve the problems of the rural world. If anything, government intervention served to identify the difficulties experienced by the rural sector, but the formulation of policies reinforced the bureaucratic burden through the creation of more and more committees assigned to deal with rural problems. This simply resulted in absorbing rural revenues and state finances. Bertrand (1975) compared registered peasant incomes with the costs for official project managers and supervisors of state farms and found that the costs for management were increasing while agricultural production was stagnating. There was a dramatic increase of the former between 1970 and 1971; after 1971, the costs for 1,700 civil servants were higher than the income for 600,000 peasants.

In the end, the cooperative movement or state intervention in agriculture did not solve the rural problem, nor did it foster any agricultural development. The absurdity of merely relying on the existence of cooperatives without real political will to resolve the

problem of the agricultural sector was exposed by the persistence of the crisis of the rural areas. The symptoms of this crisis were the accelerating depopulation of villages and the related increase in imported food items. The problem of the agricultural sector was intensified by the politicization of all cooperatives, reflecting the dominance of state officials and the amplification of state structures. The failure of government policies led peasants to get back to their old methods of production, which were characterized by technological backwardness, limiting the potential of their development and the entire agricultural development. Peasants prefer working individually in their own fields, rejecting collective methods that the state introduced because they suspect, on good grounds, that the collectivization of the means of production implied being exploited by the political leadership (Friedman, 1993). Hasty nationalization only worsened the situation of the agricultural sector.

The overall structure of the economy gives cash crops a much less important place as exports than minerals or timber. With the exception of palm products, sugar and tobacco, produced in modern plantations, particularly in the southwestern Niari valley, most agricultural crops are grown by families on small farms. Because of limited production, export crops contribute very little to foreign earnings. In the 1960s and 1970s, sugar cane and tobacco were the most important cash crops, with exports going almost wholly to other Central African customs union (UDEAC) countries. Cocoa, coffee and oil palm are among Congo's export crops, but output for these two products is low, mostly having declined in recent years. Cocoa output fell from 2,305 tons in 1987/88 to only around 300 tons per year in 1991-92 and 1992-93, while coffee declined from an annual average of some 2,300 tons in the 1980s to only 632 tons in 1992-1993

(Hodgkinson, 1998). The closure of the government's marketing agency adversely affected the production of these crops.

The government made some efforts to promote animal husbandry, but these attempts were constrained by the prevalence of the tsetse fly and the importance of the forestry sector restricting the availability of pasture. The increase in the numbers of livestock, however, has not made the country self-sufficient in meat and dairy products. The fishing sector is not well developed but is carried out commercially on a small scale, especially for tuna. The total fish catch was about 35,100 metric tons in 1994, and as table 4.4 indicates, this total increased in 1995 to reach 36,800 metric tons, but declined in 1996 to 33,800 metric tons (FAO, 1997). The table also shows the variety of fish caught, mostly based on FAO estimates.

Forestry

Forests cover more than one-half of the country's total area and constitute an important natural resource. Before it became superseded by petroleum in the mid-1970s, forest exploitation provided the main source of national income because timber was the main export. Until 1987, the state had monopoly over the marketing of timber and control over forests. The state-owned company, the Office Congolais des Bois controlled the purchase and sale of logs. Though the state controls forest exploitation through permit allocation and forest area management, the private sector has carried out 95 percent of production, with foreign companies accounting for 58 percent of the total in

1984 (Hodgkinson, 1993). Exploitation is mostly based on such woods as okoumé, limba and sapele.

Outputs of timber averaged about 393,000 cubic meters in the late 1980s, but the early 1990s witnessed a decline to about 167,000 cubic meters in 1993. Pressure from environmentalists in Western Europe against the use of rainforest timber, creating adverse developments in export markets, affected and reduced production. As table 2.2 shows, in subsequent years, production has vacillated, however with a clear tendency to rise between 1995 and 1997.

Table 2.2 Forestry Products.

	1995	1996	1997
Roundwood removals ('000 cubic meters, excluding bark)			
Sawlogs, veneer logs and logs for sleepers	636	704	969
Pulpwood	505	120	373
Other industrial wood	334	344	354
Fuel wood	2,358	2,426	4,192
Total	3,833	3,594	4,192
Sawnwood production ('000 cubic meters, including railway sleepers):			
Total	62	59	60

Source: *Africa South of the Sahara*, 2000:387-88.

The vacillation of production in forestry can be traced to the restructuring process. Meanwhile, the World Bank and the UNDP have supported a forestry conservation program. The government has been facilitating the implementation of this program by requiring forestry companies to replant and relieve the pressure on virgin forest (Hodgkinson, 1998).

The Industrial Sector

The industrial infrastructure in Congo-Brazzaville has hardly improved since independence. Even after independence, existing industrial structures concentrated on extractive activities, consolidating the Congo's role as producer of raw materials—a status that evokes the notion of comparative advantage of the old technological regime, established in the colonial context. This situation is evocative of the international division of labor that categorized countries as either manufacturers or primary goods producers. Bertrand (1975) argues that the historical international circumstances of the emergence of industry in Congo-Brazzaville contradicted the country's internal economic requirements reflected in the Congolese development perspective, the cultural and socioeconomic conditions and needs. From this point of view, with the exception of labor, a great deal of the factors of production, including technology and technical expertise, has been imported. This has contributed to precluding the development of intersectoral linkages, whereby one industrial or productive sector can produce factors of production for another sector. To some extent, one can refer to a subsistence industry in the sense that productivity gains stemming from industrialization only yield mediocre results in terms of the satisfaction of local needs. For instance, foods and beverage imports have been on the rise every year, indicating the weakness of existing technological capabilities associated with the present import-substitution industry.

Congo-Brazzaville, like many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, followed a strategy of import substitution. Much of the infrastructure for import-substitution

industry was established during colonization. The role Congo-Brazzaville played during World War II as the capital of *la France Libre* gave a new momentum to France's development policy in the colony. The post-war years witnessed the development of industrial infrastructure mostly concentrated in and around cities and major urban centers. Several of these were built from 1946 to 1959. They included a hydroelectric dam on the Djoué river for electric supply in the capital city, Brazzaville, the water supply facilities for the cities and urban centers, the development of tobacco industry (S.I.A.T.), and a brewery company in Brazzaville (Bralima).

Given its importance in the colonial federation of French Equatorial Africa, Congo-Brazzaville inherited industrial capabilities designed to produce such daily consumer goods as beer, soap, cooking oil, matches, and sugar, for the region. However, in the mid 1960s, countries of the sub-region began to establish similar capabilities, which led the decline in exports of Congolese industrial products within the region. Industries of import substitution suffered from the narrowness and disarticulation of the local market and the dubious regional economic integration in Central Africa, in which countries competed rather than creating complementary production structures. The shrinking of the market, combined with the nationalization and mismanagement of enterprises and the expansion of the public sector, reduced the productivity of the existing import-substitution industry.

Beside import-substitution industry, industrialization in Congo-Brazzaville is based on mineral exploitation. However, with the exception of oil for which a refinery exists, the exploitation of other minerals, such as potash, lead, gold, copper, phosphate, zinc, and natural gas, is limited to extraction and export. This implies that Congo's

comparative advantage has remained heavily dependent on the export of primary products and has not evolved to make the economy exchange manufactures for manufactures, which is an aspect of the requirements of the new technological regime. The one mineral for which the country has been able to build the necessary infrastructure for processing is oil, and it has become the dominant sector on which the economy has relied. Heavy reliance on oil has thrown the whole economy into imbalance.

A One-Sector Economy

Fiscal expenditures, private income and employment rose as a result of increased oil revenues, causing in turn a sharp rise in demand for imports. Total imports reached 66 billion CFA francs in 1979 or increased by 77 percent over the 1974 level (Hung, 1987). Oil revenues continued to rise from the late 1970s into the 1980s, and in the 1990s, it has determined the trends followed by the whole economy. Table 2.3 shows that oil production in Congo-Brazzaville is an important economic activity, and its contribution to GDP is over 50 percent. Economic growth, which depended essentially on the oil industry, has fluctuated following the evolution of the oil sector. The mid-and late 1970s saw overall stagnation and regression as output of petroleum declined. However, improved output of oil, from 1979 onwards, coincided with increases in international prices for that commodity, thus stimulating very high rates of investment by both the public sector and the oil companies. Oil wealth accelerated Congo's annual rate of economic growth, and GDP expanded by 21.3 percent in 1981 and by 18.9 in the following year (Hodgkinson, 1991:400).

Table 2.3 Congo-Brazzaville' Oil Production.

	1994	1995	1996	1997
Output in Millions tons	9.5	9.3	10.3	11.6
Oil reserves in Millions tons				215
Oil contribution to GDP in %				51

Source: Secrétariat Général de l'UDEAC, 1998.

Heavy reliance on one economic sector caused serious problems to the economy when international oil prices declined. Since the mid-1980s, the sharp declines in oil prices trapped Congo-Brazzaville in a protracted economic and financial crisis. Economic growth fell sharply, to only 3.4 percent in 1983 and 7 percent in 1984. As a result, public investment was severely curtailed. The decrease in oil revenues, coupled with the need to service a rising debt, caused the government to revise the 1983 budget downwards, to total spending of 358,000 billion CFA francs with development spending of 137,100 billion. The country experienced disequilibrium and deterioration of the overall budget situation. The reduction in current spending was to be achieved by means of a wide range of measures, including a freeze on government salaries and the restructuring of several state-owned companies (Hodgkinson, 1991). Though a surplus of 13 billion CFA francs was recorded in 1981, the subsequent years witnessed deficits. For instance, in 1982, the deficit reached CFA francs 104 million, and rose up to 141,200 million in 1986 (Hung, 1987; see also Hodgkinson, 1991:403). IMF-sponsored programs for economic stabilization, in response to the decline in oil production and the collapse of oil international prices induced further budgetary constraints in 1986. Meanwhile GDP

fell, with the most severe decline of 6.8 percent being experienced in 1986, while it experienced a decline of 5 percent in 1987. Improvement in the oil industry resulted in a modest recovery in 1988, with a growth of 1.4 percent (Hodgkinson, 1991).

Overall, in the 1980s, the economic indicators began to follow the leading oil indicators. Not only government investment behavior, but the structure of trade also changed (Hung, 1991). Seen from the conceptualization formulated in the new technoeconomic regime, this is called the absence of dynamic adjustment, showing the absence of intersectoral creative linkages between the economic sectors. Instead of giving a boost to other sectors, the dominance of oil caused a drag of the entire economy. The oil boom led the state into an expansion of the public sector—a trend that contradicted the transformation that was going on in the global economy under the influence of the neoliberal political economy.

Manufacturing in the Congolese Economy

Manufacturing industry is concentrated mainly in the processing of agricultural and forest products. Most of the industry is in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Nkayi. Many of the larger manufacturing companies are state-owned. However, several, including the cement complex, have been transferred to private ownership, in accordance with the country's obligations to the IMF. Even though, the contribution of industry to GDP reached levels above 50 percent in the 1990s, with the implementation of restructuring policies, the performance of manufacturing was in decline in the 1980s, when the petroleum industry gained importance in the overall structure of the Congolese

economy. For instance, the contribution of manufacturing to total GDP was an estimated 8 percent of the total in 1987 (Hodgkinson, 1991).

The industrial development of the 1970s and 1980s had little success. Many factories performed below expected levels. For instance, the Loutété cement plant, established at Loutété in 1968, reached a peak output of 102,000 tons in 1971, but subsequently showed a fall in output to about one-half of this level, despite strong demand from construction programs (Hodgkinson, 1991:402). The government closed the plant in 1985; but assistance from the German Democratic Republic encouraged the state to resume the activities of the cement factory in 1986. In the end, cash-flow problems led to the interruption of production again in 1987. In 1988 a Norwegian management partly took over the company's assets. An associated project, costing \$8.1 million, involved the construction of cement silos at Pointe-Noire, which were opened in 1985 to store both imported and domestically produced cement.

In 1968, with technical assistance from the People's Republic of China, the government set up a textile complex at Kinsoundi, with a productive capacity of 3.5 million meters of woven fabrics per year. In 1977, the complex experienced financial difficulties, which, accentuated by mismanagement and a shortage of spare parts, led to the closure of the complex. Right in the midst of these difficulties, the government established a textile printing works, in Brazzaville in 1975. This complex used both local and imported cloth, and had an output of 15 million meters in 1980 (Hodgkinson, 1993). Encouraged by oil revenues, the government undertook a long-standing project for the construction of a plant to produce paper pulp, based on the development of eucalyptus, with an annual production capacity of 290,000 tons. This project was abandoned because

of lack of foreign finance, and the eucalyptus that were planted on 15,000 hectares, are being used instead to supply a telegraph-pole factory (Friedman, 1993).

Mining

Until the 1970s, little attention was paid to mining in the Congolese economy, despite the existence of minerals. An important reason for this limited activity is the lack of facilities for exploitation and processing. Moreover, the dominance of the oil industry starting in the 1970s did not encourage the establishment of capabilities for the exploitation of other minerals. Mineral exports accounted for less than 5 percent of total exports in 1969. Exploitation improved in the 1980s, with sales providing 90 percent of export earnings and mining contributing 43 percent of GDP. This was mainly the result of developments in hydrocarbons, which constitute the only significant mining sector for Congo-Brazzaville (Hodgkinson, 1998:360).

In the 1950s discovery of rich deposits of potassium chloride at Holle, near Pointe-Noire led to the establishment, in the 1960s, of facilities to mine, refine and transport the potassium to the Atlantic coast. In 1977, the French consortium, which had an 85 percent share in the company, announced its decision to close down the Compagnie des Potasses du Congo (CPC). In the absence of other private companies to take over, the company, the Congolese government was left with no other choice than to nationalize it. In the midst of negotiations over the transfer, the mines had to be closed because of serious flooding in 1977 (Hung, 1987, Hodgkinson, 1991). The government was forced to put the company into liquidation, leading to the closure of the mine. Despite economic

difficulties limiting the possibilities of reopening the mine, a joint-venture company, the Société des Potasses du Congo (SPC), was formed in the late 1980s, to prospect for potash deposits along the coast.

Lead, zinc, gold and copper are produced in small quantities, and Congo-Brazzaville also owns deposits of high-grade iron ore, phosphate and bauxite. During the socialist years, Bulgaria provided assistance to develop the phosphate deposits (estimated at 4.5 million tons), while the USSR was helping to develop reserves of iron ore in the Zanaga, Bouenza and Banbamba regions. These reserves were counted on to form the raw material base for a steel plant with an annual capacity of 3 million tons. In 1985 Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon signed an agreement for joint exploitation of the High Ivingo iron ore deposits (estimated at some 1,000 million tons). The lack of funds and the uncertain nature of the international market for that commodity, however, limited the implementation of this project (Hodgkinson, 1991).

Fiscal Performance and International Finance

The evolution of the fiscal and financial situation shows the impact of the overwhelming dominance of the oil industry. Fiscal performance has often been marked by the fluctuations that characterized government policies on the use of oil revenue. The main cause of fiscal instability had to do with the expansion of public expenditures, which involved large socioeconomic programs, the expansion of the public enterprise system and a growing civil service sector. Despite a decline in oil revenues in 1975 and 1976, government expenditures continued to rise, adding new investments. These large

increases in government spending caused a heavy overall deficit in the treasury, which reached CFA francs 20.4 billion in 1975, an increase that was three times higher than in 1973. In addition, after 1974, the balance of payments continued to deteriorate causing an overall deficit that reached over 4.5 billion CFA francs during 1975 and 1976. Beginning 1978, improvements in the balance of payments resulted from a growth in oil exports and the deficit was reduced by approximately 40 percent (World Bank, 1997).

In the 1980s, a relief from fiscal difficulties came from the increase in oil revenues, which started in 1980 and continued through 1983 and into 1984. Once again, these revenues were used to feed expenditures. For instance, between 1985 and 1992, public employment rose since the government hired about 25,000 persons. This tendency of public employment and the social expectations it has always generated continued up to the early 1990s, resulting in a total figure of 80,000 employees in the public sector (World Bank, 1997). A direct consequence has been the increase in financial burden through wages and salaries. Public enterprise performance and employment always exerted a heavy weight on public finances. From the late 1970s through the early 1990s, the weakness of the performance of the public enterprise sector in Congo-Brazzaville showed through “low productivity coupled with mounting levels of foreign and local debt of about CFAF 100 billion and 90 billion respectively” (The World Bank, 1995:2). Some progress was expected through a public investment initiative amounting to CFAF 350 billion over the period of 1985-1990, but the sector’s total deficit did not react positively and continued to rise, reaching CFAF 100 billion in 1993. The public enterprise sector has been blamed for lost fiscal revenue that reached an estimated CFAF 10 billion in

1993. As of late 1993, debts of public enterprises were estimated at CFAF 140 billion and on the rise (World Bank, 1995).

Continued deficits have resulted in the exacerbation of the country's external debt burden, which stemmed from heavy borrowing to fund the increased civil service wage bill and service of earlier debt. Successive regimes also borrowed to finance large capital projects throughout the 1970s and during the 1982-86 five-year development plan. Some of the borrowing was done on commercial terms from oil companies, foreign commercial banks and suppliers, using expected government oil revenue as collateral. Congo-Brazzaville ended up accumulating a sizable external debt and debt service burden and important external payment arrears—a situation that has turned the country into one of the most heavily indebted countries in Africa. By the end of 1983, total external public debts were 572 billion CFA francs as compared to 256 billion CFA francs in 1980, and at the end of 1995, external debt reached an estimated US\$5.6 billion, including arrears amounting to US\$1.8 billion (The World Bank, 1997:3). Hung estimated that “on a per capita basis external debts in 1983 reached 341,492 CFA francs or nearly 77 percent the size of per capita income” (Hung, 1987:40).

Technology Policy in Congo-Brazzaville

Technology policies have not resulted in positive and sustainable outcomes, due to the absence of enforcement mechanisms, and also due to lack of strong commitment to technological change. A report by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on Congo-Brazzaville observed an absence of explicit, coherent and ambitious policy for

science and technology, and R&D. This weakness was related to the defective institutional framework whose planning led to inadequacy between the financing of science and technology and the requirements of this sector (ECA, 1994).

In addition to institutional deficiency, the report also pointed to lack of national mechanisms stimulating necessary expenditures in favor of R&D and technological innovation. The National Council for Research and Development has not been able to foster productive linkage between sectors. Often the decrease in industrial productivity has been blamed on labor behavior and mismanagement. Without denying this fact, it is also true that failure to create intrasectoral and intersectoral linkages in industrial structures, and the inability to stimulate the effects of R&D on production have resulted in limited productivity, limiting existing technological capabilities to noncompetitive levels.

The promotion, management and implementation of technological policy have also suffered from the political instability characteristic of the post-independence history of Congo-Brazzaville. Constant and unpredictable change of political regimes has precluded a steady and continuous pursuit of policies elaborated by previous regimes. In many cases, the regime taking over has had a different economic policy from the overthrown government, causing a diversion in the whole process of development planning. Overall, technology policy in Congo-Brazzaville has been characteristic of a lack of continuity in scientific and technological activities and lack of support for scientists and researchers involved in projects that have predated the rise of a new political leadership (ECA, 1994).

Human resources development has been more in favor of social sciences than in fields dealing with science and technology. The ECA report indicates that successive government policies have not made a resolute commitment to encouraging students in fields of science and technology. The decrepitude of school laboratories and infrastructures signifies the flimsy approach to scientific and technological development.

Conclusion

The transformation of traditional structures in Congo-Brazzaville by colonialism resulted in a socioeconomic formation that had been characterized by disequilibrium. This socioeconomic formation emerged in the international system following the implementation of the principles of the old technological regime during the colonial era. Its modern structures have embodied these principles, resulting in an interaction with the international system based on the specialization of the production and export of raw materials. Agricultural and industrial sectors reflect the reliance of the country on this comparative advantage, which reduces the possibility of increasing manufactured exports. This condition also reflects the weakness of technology policies. These structural and institutional deficiencies affect the interaction of Congo-Brazzaville with the global economy. They are an indication of the weakness of the national economy. To strengthen these structures, the political economy in Congo-Brazzaville has to facilitate the incorporation of the requirements of the new techno-economic regime.

CHAPTER III

STATE FORMATION AND POLITICAL ECONOMY IN CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

Introduction

Governments all over the world have expanded since the 1960s, and Congo-Brazzaville was no exception to this phenomenon. The expansion of government functions in Congo-Brazzaville has been related to many factors, some of which reflect the largely observed politics of patronage and personal rule in Sub-Saharan Africa, by which political regimes allowed officials to have greater access to national resources. To achieve this goal, governments reinforced state capacities to satisfy an ever-expanding clientele, giving political leadership reinforced legitimacy. Though political development is seen to justify an increased role of the state, its definition also includes the expansion of political participation and existence of competition among political groups and ethnic groups for power within an evolving framework of law and order maintained by the state (Weiner, 1987). The process of state building, therefore, is geared toward the creation of this framework to provide the conditions for social and political development as well as economic growth.

The strengthening of the state capacities of extraction, coercion and incorporation can be justified in the perspective of creating the favorable environment in which political development takes place. As a process leading to the “strengthening of the relative power of the state vis-à-vis society or the expansion of organizational capacity of the state vis-à-vis society” (Lee, 1988:25), state building focuses on institutional

transformation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, in general, and in Congo-Brazzaville, in particular, state building has involved the reinforcement of the extractive and coercive capacities of power holders. In this sense, the failure of political development has resulted from the exhaustion and weakness of state resources to generate a climate of social growth and economic development.

At the same time, the expansion of government functions in Congo-Brazzaville was justified on ideological grounds by the political leadership that promoted Marxism-Leninism as the country's orientation for socioeconomic and political development. Its social development model has been known for the centralization of the economy and the state control of society. In socialist Congo-Brazzaville, state formation resulted in the negation of non-state paradigms. The survival of the socialist state required the neutralizing or elimination of potential or actual *loci* of contending power outside of the central political organization.

This chapter is about state formation and political economy in Congo-Brazzaville, and it looks at the specific conditions that determined political development and the framework for formulation and implementation of economic policies. It explains state formation in Congo-Brazzaville in light of the Marxist developmental model that dominated the discourse and the regulation of socioeconomic structures in the 1970s. Though the emergence of Marxism was the dominant feature of state formation in Congo-Brazzaville, the early independence period was characterized by different political environment, in which the leaders seemed radically opposed to socialism. The Marxist period is particularly interesting because it presents a contrast between what was going

on in Congo-Brazzaville in terms of state formation and the neoliberal trends emerging in the global political economy.

The chapter starts with a presentation of the Congo's early experience as an independent country. The main characteristic of state formation in this period was the consolidation of personal power by the ruling elite, particularly Youlou. This section also examines the socioeconomic situation of Congo-Brazzaville under Youlou's leadership. The causes of the fall of Youlou's regime and the emergence of Marxism are linked to the evolution of the socioeconomic situation and the political environment that generated it.

The second part of this chapter presents the conditions under which Marxism became the dominant discourse in the political context of Congo-Brazzaville. This is an analysis of the mechanisms that the political leadership used to create a social environment susceptible to Marxist ideology. In the third part, the chapter examines the creation of political structures in accordance with the developmental model inspired by Marxism-Leninism. This involves, among others, the institution of the single party. Also examined are the relationships between the state and non-state institutions and actors, and the relationships with the external world. The fourth part of the chapter presents an analysis of successive regimes in the socialist era, looking at their dominant qualities and their impact on the socioeconomic and political structures of the country.

The Political Context of the Early Independence Era

The Consolidation of Personal Power in the Youlou Regime

In 1962, talks in the national assembly were about how to strengthen national unity to consolidate independence. This led to efforts to grant Youlou extensive powers. The president used these powers to dismantle all associations he deemed harmful to national unity, and in July 1962, all associations were banned. At the same time, Youlou began a battle against the multiparty system, asserting that opposition had become superfluous since their leaders were now serving in the government. Then on August 25, he announced an agreement reached by all the spokesmen for the UDDIA, MSA, and PPC to establish a single party. However, the grounds of such agreement were challenged and contradicted when, at the end of the year, Opangault, the MSA leader, resigned from the government, suggesting his disagreement with Youlou's policies.

While Youlou proclaimed national unity to curtail opposition under the guise of forbidding the propagation of tribalism and regionalism, he was conducting a detrimental policy of filling important positions in the police, customs and educational services with people from his own ethnic group, the Lari. Analysts note that this distorted his efforts to build national unity, betraying his real intention behind the notion of a single party regime. Through such political behavior, "Youlou was aggravating tribal discord and thus disrupting the national unity that he was trying to create" (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:139). His open favoritism toward the Lari further alienated other ethnic groups. As early as June 1960, the northern socialist deputy, Leyet-Gaboka,

had complained in the assembly about the exclusive opportunities that people from Youlou's prefecture of origin had to go study in France. Expressing the concern shared by many, he deeply deplored "this aberrant racism, which our government has implanted in the administration" (Reported by Thompson and Adloff, 1973:139).

Because of his practice of tribal favoritism, Youlou ended up alienating those of his political allies who belonged to other tribes, particularly if they disagreed with his policy. For instance, Youlou fired Tchichelle from his positions as vice-president and minister of the interior, as a result of Tchichelle's frankness and refusal to give the unquestioning obedience that Youlou exacted from all his collaborators. It was also Youlou's political behavior that led Opangault to withdraw from politics rather than hold a purely honorary position. Youlou was unforgiving toward Massamba-Débat for his criticism of the administration's budgetary deficiencies. As a result, in May 1963, Massamba-Débat was compelled to resign as president of the National Assembly.

The establishment of a single-party state and the co-opting of non-Bakongo opposition leaders into the government exacerbated ethnic tensions as this move was seen as the consolidation of Youlou's personal power. Extravagant expenditures and free-flowing patronage emptying the state's coffers contrasted with the scant attention given to the growing social needs of the urban masses. Moreover, Youlou did not disguise his contempt for youth and did nothing to accommodate them in his administration, reinforcing the unpopularity of his rule.

The Economic Situation under Youlou

Youlou's laissez-faire economic policy, promoting economic liberalism, allowed for the continuation of capitalist and colonial interests exploiting society and advancing the privileges of those in power and their clients. With his anticommunist pledge, Youlou secured strong support from French officials and businessmen, in return for a continuation of French nationalist interests in the newly independent country. French advisors conducted the political organization and the ideological training of Youlou's party, and the most influential among them, Alfred Delarue, was in charge of the documentation service in the president's office. Others served as civil servants in the administration. Youlou's extreme docility to French expatriate interests facilitated what opponents in civil society, particularly trade unions and youth, saw as a dependency relationship. This implied, to use Krasner's words (1985:42), "a pervasive set of transactions that conditions all aspects of a society's character and behavior." In the absence of proper clear economic priorities or developmental plans, Youlou relied on a strong French presence for support, investments and businesses.

Under Youlou, the economic situation had been marked by limited economic activity and policies, while chronic trade deficit and a large and growing public debt plagued the economy, despite efforts for an expansion and diversification of the industrial sector. The Bulletin de l'Afrique Noire reported, for instance, that in 1963, sixty-two large companies of all kinds were operating in Congo-Brazzaville, and their capital aggregated about 10 billion CFA francs. Of these, only the Société Industrielle et Agricole du Niari (SIAN) at Jacob had a capital of more than one billion CFA francs.

Next in order of their capital resources were the Kronenbourg brewery and the Foncier de Brazzaville. The capital of the remaining companies ranged between 30 and 200 million CFA francs (Bulletin de l'Afrique Noire, 1964). An apparent improvement was felt due to an increase in customs revenues originating in higher duties collected on bigger shipments of lumber, manganese from Gabon, and contraband diamonds in transit from the Democratic Republic of Congo. At the same time, the local output of agricultural products was declining, as were exports of crude oil (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:151). Youlou had placed great hopes on the construction of the Kouilou dam, to be presented as the greatest of Youlou's economic achievements leading to Congo's large-scale industrialization. However, the project was never implemented during Youlou's tenure, and the limited industrialization that was accomplished remained concentrated in urban areas. Meanwhile the rural exodus continued unabated, causing the expansion of the urban masses in the south where most industrial activities were located.

Since independence in 1960, the establishment of social, economic, administrative and cultural infrastructures in cities had been followed by a remarkable expansion of urban population, which increased about five times between 1960-1984. Congo-Brazzaville's growth rate of urban population in the period 1960-1965 was among the highest in francophone Africa (Tati, 1993:9). Unexpectedly, the problem of urbanization was greatly aggravated by the expulsion of thousands of Congolese from Gabon in the fall of 1962. Efforts on improving the conditions of urban areas, as Gauze pointed out, "sacrificed the peasantry—the backbone of that impoverished country and the only element in its current stage of evolution that could have served as the basis for its economic development" (Gauze, 1973:136). The country would have been in

bankruptcy, had it not received foreign aid, notably originating from France (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:151).

By January 1963, the stagnation of the domestic economy had created so crucial a financial situation that Youlou announced a curtailment of recruitment and promotion in the bureaucracy. This was long overdue, given the social behavior of government officials and employees who led an ostentatious life shamelessly scoffing at the masses (Gauze, 1973; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Government employees then accounted for 0.9 percent of the total population and absorbed more than half the national revenues. Earlier, between 1960 and 1962, the average monthly salary of a government employee rose from 29,000 CFA francs to more than 37,000. The increase in the pay for wage earners during the same period was way below that level. A Brazzaville worker, as of mid-1962, earned slightly more than 5,000 CFA francs for a 40-hour working week, and in the smaller towns only 3,200 (Gauze, 1993). Meanwhile the cost of living continued to rise rapidly. Given the prospect of no pay increase for another year, there was resentment among the civil servants, while the suspension of further recruitment unnerved the increasingly numerous unemployed school graduates. Early in 1963, it was estimated that 31 percent of the adult male population of the country was without remunerative employment (Europe-France-Outremer, 1969). Moreover, despite constant allegations by the masses regarding corruption in the government and the bureaucracy, Youlou and his administration took no effective steps to curb it. This prepared the way for the masses to revolt and topple the Youlou administration.

Youlou's Fall

On August 13, 1963, the arrest of trade union leaders provoked a general strike in Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Dolisie, which resulted in freeing the leaders by force. The government's attempt to regain control led to a proclamation of a state of emergency. However, the strike intensified, as 35,000 workers joined by peasants, students and elite, forced Youlou to relinquish power (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988:196). Meanwhile, the army guaranteed to maintain order during a short transition that instituted a provisional government. The social unrest that brought the fall of the Youlou regime in 1963 took three days, August 13-15, which became known as the "Trois Glorieuses", or the Three Glorious Days. In September 1965 Youlou was sentenced to death *in absentia*.

On August 16, 1963, a provisional government emerged, under Alphonse Massamba-Débat, a former minister of planning. In December, a national referendum approved a new constitution, partly parliamentary and partly presidential. Massamba-Débat became the new president, with a nearly general consensus from the revolutionaries who relied on his political experience, while Pascal Lissouba, an agricultural scientist, was named Prime Minister. Comevin (1991:396) notes that "this government marked the first major departure from colonial policy in central Africa as well as a radical step towards revolutionary paths." A new party was created, the Mouvement National de la Révolution (MNR), in 1964, which followed Marxist-Leninist theories. The MNR included people who had various and divergent political aspirations, but the dominant forces therein were allied to Massamba-Débat (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

The Emergence of Marxist Rhetoric

The Underlying Cause of the People's Protests

The leadership of Congo-Brazzaville embraced Marxism in 1963 as the dominant political and social discourse, and as such, was the first Sub-Saharan African country to declare a formal commitment to Marxim-Leninism (Decalo, 1976; Tordoff, 1993). Marxist rhetoric emerged from a social reaction against the autocratic behavior of Youlou's neocolonial regime. It was an anti-capitalist stance used to convey social dissatisfaction with regard to the corruption and ostentation of political leaders and administration officials in the Youlou regime. Youlou and his administration drew increasing disapprobation for their lack of concern with mounting social problems, increasing poverty related to accelerated urbanization and unemployment. The weakness of the country's economic basis was exposed through growing social needs and demands and through an ever-expanding civil service seen as the only job opportunity. As Decalo (1976:134) noted:

If the root of contemporary political strife in Africa is conceptualized as competition for jobs in a context of economic scarcity, then the intensity and violence of Congolese politics may emerge in proper perspective. With Congo's basic human and economic parameters and with a massive unemployed proletariat, governments may ignore demands for material benefits only at their peril.

At the root of Youlou's fall were, therefore, the neglect of social demands for employment and the lack of financial and economic restraint on the part of the administration officials while the bulk of society was facing economic hardship.

Corruption and autocracy coupled with reactionary economic policies were notable features of Youlou's administration. The regime lost touch with social realities, precipitating its own end as youth and unionists launched street protests on August 13-15, 1963, which toppled it. Popular protests reflected the disavowal of Youlou's option for liberal economic policies inasmuch as these implied neocolonialism and the protection of France's interests. They had a nationalistic character that intended to reject the neocolonial interests and reactionary course of the Youlou regime and heralded the advent of a new era marked by declarations of socialism (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

The Reaffirmation of the Nation through Socialist Declarations

Though the protests leading to the downfall of the Youlou's regime had a social justification, highlighting the socioeconomic needs of the masses, they also had a nationalist meaning. For social actors, Youlou was an instrument of imperialism obstructing the socioeconomic advancement of the workers and youths. Though starting on ideologically uncertain grounds, this social movement, later on, progressively gathered momentum leading to a reaffirmation of the Congolese nation, redefined in line with notions borrowed from Marxist rhetoric. Nationalism and Marxism became the ideological pillars of the movement of social transformation. Two conceptions of nationalism collided, just as two theories of socialism overlapped in the process of redefining the national path to socioeconomic development.

Two Approaches to Nationalism

Two nationalistic tendencies emerged from the movement of social protests. The first represented older generations and the elite that led the movement and the second was mostly supported by the youth organizations. In the category of older generations were union leaders and experienced administrators who left the Youlou administration, for reasons related to ideological divergence. The views of the elite were moderate and still ingrained in a framework that assumed the country's historical and privileged relationships with France. On August 16, 1963, for instance, the new political leadership, dominated by the moderate view, sent a message to Charles de Gaulle to thank him for not interfering in the domestic affairs of Congo-Brazzaville. The message included praise for what was perceived as de Gaulle's "clear vision about the problems of decolonization" (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:91). No expression could better reflect the moderate view than the words from the new president, Alphonse Massamba-Débat, who was reported to have declared "the Congolese and the French 'Siamese twins,' separable only by surgery" (reported by Young, 1991:29). A meaningful interpretation of both these statements would be that leading officials of the new political system were beneficiaries of the colonial assimilationist policies. The diplomatic tone of the moderate message indicated a cautious approach conditioned by the necessity to maintain the ties with France for development purposes while asserting the sovereignty of the Congolese independent state.

On the other hand, the participation of youth organizations in the social protests signaled a desire to radically break away from the colonial past. Their aspirations

implied a rejection of the old politics and thinking associated with colonialism and neocolonialism. The radical stance of younger generations was a refutation of colonialism, its impact and its continued influence in new forms through the Youlou regime. Youth organizations made it clear that they not be left out of the political process as they were in the Youlou regime. The populist form of nationalism promoted by younger generations found support in the views of Sekou Touré who, though guest to Youlou in June 1963, warned the Congolese youth and trade-unionists about the danger of Youlou's leadership in a single-party system. Touré's words had a compelling influence in the context of his own radical rejection of de Gaulle's idea of creating a French African community, which he saw as France's strategy to perpetuate its influence in the region. Toure's famous "no to de Gaulle" became a symbol of anti-colonial resistance and nationalism, and inspired the youth during the August 1963 upheaval (Gauze, 1973).

Both elite and populist nationalism were locked, and operated, within the framework of the old technological regime. Elite nationalism highlighted the importance of a continued interaction between Congo-Brazzaville and France, a relationship that stressed what they saw as indelible historical circumstances. The hope was that this relationship would be beneficial for the new nation they wished to build. On the other hand, populist nationalism stressed the reality of nation on grounds of uncompromising sovereignty and by rejecting the connivance of the imperialist policies embedded in the former regime. Both approaches legitimized the consolidation of a modern independent state, in Coleman's words, "possessing an internal state apparatus and external sovereignty and all the trappings of a recognized member state of international society"

(Coleman, 1994:22). Despite their consensus on the necessity of building a solid independent nation, elite nationalism and populist nationalism diverged in their views of socialism.

The Search for a Socialist Model

Two conceptions of socialism divided the new political leadership. First, the moderate group, representing older generations and dominated by Massamba-Débat and some representatives of the labor movement, promoted Bantu socialism, one that they thought would uphold religious and African values. The basis of the national economy was nothing else than the traditional structures and modes of production. For Massamba-Débat, the village constituted the point of reference in the sense that it represented the community living cell in societies characterized by the socialization of the means of production. Inspired by the legendary African communitarian tradition, the basis of Bantu socialism was not the class struggle, but the spirit of community. It reaffirmed the enduring idea of African socialism, which, as Thiam suggests, “rests on a cosmogony, an explanation of the universe, according to which the being is not individualized, is not an irreducible real presence, but constitutes the cell of a unit into which he is integrated and from which he draws strength and life ” (Thiam, 1977:23).

The second view of socialism was embraced by young intellectuals, many of whom were members of the Association des Étudiants Congolais (A.E.C.), advocating a more radical socialism based on Marxist philosophy. A representative of this view of scientific socialism, Pascal Lissouba, criticized Bantu socialism by denouncing its lack of

scientific character. His explanation conferred a universal dimension to socialism by arguing that its scientific character should allow for an adapted implementation of its principles insofar as these are intelligently applied, with regard to the local situation. The blending of scientific theory and Congolese socioeconomic structures aimed at the rationalization of traditional ways of life and the transformation of the individual not only to suit the goals of the national community, but also to strip the colonial mentality away from the new Congolese man and woman. Scientific socialism was regarded as the condition for liberation and the solution to the colonial problem in its political and economic aspects. The predominance of this intellectualistic approach reflected the ascendance of young intellectuals in Congolese politics. For this category of emerging political actors, scientific socialism provided a sense of freedom from the retrograde views of the former regime and the older generations. They saw it as an ideal reference in dealing with internal social contradictions (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:95).

In the theoretical confrontation of the two approaches to socialism, the version of scientific socialism prevailed and established itself as the guiding principle of the national political economy, formulating a blueprint for foreign policy and nationalization. Despite their differences, however, both theories saw the human person as essentially immersed in a community or a nation, as opposed to the neoliberal individual, which is a self-defining entity around which structures and socioeconomic possibilities intersect (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Moreover, while these socialist theories intended to transform the human being in accordance with national goals, neoliberalism was launching an institutional restructuring to allow for the free expression of individual capabilities. Socialists were aspiring to a

model of political development in which the effectiveness of the state was evaluated in terms of the extent to which the state has been able to transform society for the common good. In this, socialist regimes in Congo-Brazzaville shared the same patterns as the state elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa; that is, they assigned absolute responsibility for development to the state. The first Central Committee of the socialist epoch, in its early years, assigned itself the mission to take all necessary measures to protect, secure the revolution and carry it out to the hinterland (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:90). This state self-assigned goal determined the political development of Congo-Brazzaville under socialism.

State Formation in the Socialist Era

Political and Ideological Centralization

The task of carrying out the socialist ideal to all corners of the nation resulted in an omnipresence of the state in the Congolese civil society. The dissipation of the distinction between the state and civil society led to the subjugation of social life by the dominant scheme heralded by the state, while the politicization of civil society in turn generated greater social expectations from the state. Another distinctive characteristic of the socialist era was the interpenetration of civil-military boundaries, which resulted from the 1966 decision to create a “people’s army (Decalo, 1976:139). Expanding the state exposed its own weaknesses with regard to its capabilities in accommodating social needs and reduced the efficacy of its decision-making organs which were increasingly being

submerged by conflicting pressures. To compensate for the state's institutional weaknesses and deal with the continuous challenges to their legitimacy from semiautonomous groups, the political leadership had to juggle between authoritarian methods instituted to protect their power and trying to please those who were ideologically hard-liners.

Successive socialist regimes adopted a political process that incorporated repressive maneuvering and high politics. The concept of high politics refers to "procedures and practices of government" and rules and patterns of decision-making established by the rulers to "consolidate and entrench their position at the center" and increase their power (Chazan and others, 1992:153). This section examines such procedures in the context of socialist regimes in Congo-Brazzaville. These practices translated into the institution of a single party, the centralization of mass organizations, the "militarization" of politics and the "delegitimation" of non-state paradigms.

The Institution of the Single Party

The institution of the single party in Congolese socialist regimes was a significant process in which the conflict of interests among different organizations and their coalitions played out. For instance, those who perceived themselves as major players in the August 1963 insurrection expected to enjoy a greater share of power to influence the course of political events and socioeconomic evolution in the country. The single party was declared the supreme ruling entity of the country. This background of constant and unsettled bargaining was the basis of continuous structural uncertainties that

characterized the entire socialist era, which in turn caused longstanding political instability for the country. The flow of events that characterized the struggles between different organizations and actors and the inability of the ruling group to deal with the country's socioeconomic problems had led to the firmly entrenched establishment of single-party authoritarianism (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

The struggle was not only related to conflicts of interests, but it also reflected ideological divergence within the ruling group. In the absence of clear strategy and convincing policies, these differences, prone to creating dissension could only be settled, it was thought, by reinforcing the role of the single party. The existence of contradictory tendencies within the state apparatus was suspected of leading to constant crises if no fundamental stance was taken in the direction of socialist radicalization. The emergence of the party-state was a consequence of the tendency to eliminate democratic challenges within the state apparatus. It tangled the institutions of the state with the rules set by the party and proclaimed the predominance of the party over the structures of the state. It was a dissipation of the difference between the party, an autonomous political organization geared toward the assumption of political power and bearing particular interests, and the state, the administrative entity of decision- and policy-making regarding the life of the nation. An important aspect related to the institution of the single party is that the party evolved to supervise and dominate all administrative, governmental and socioeconomic structures. Every structure, including state-owned enterprises and schools operated under the direction outlined by the party, and these structures were not liable to the government, but directly to the party leadership. Figure 3.1 presents the dominance of the party over socioeconomic structures as well as social organizations.

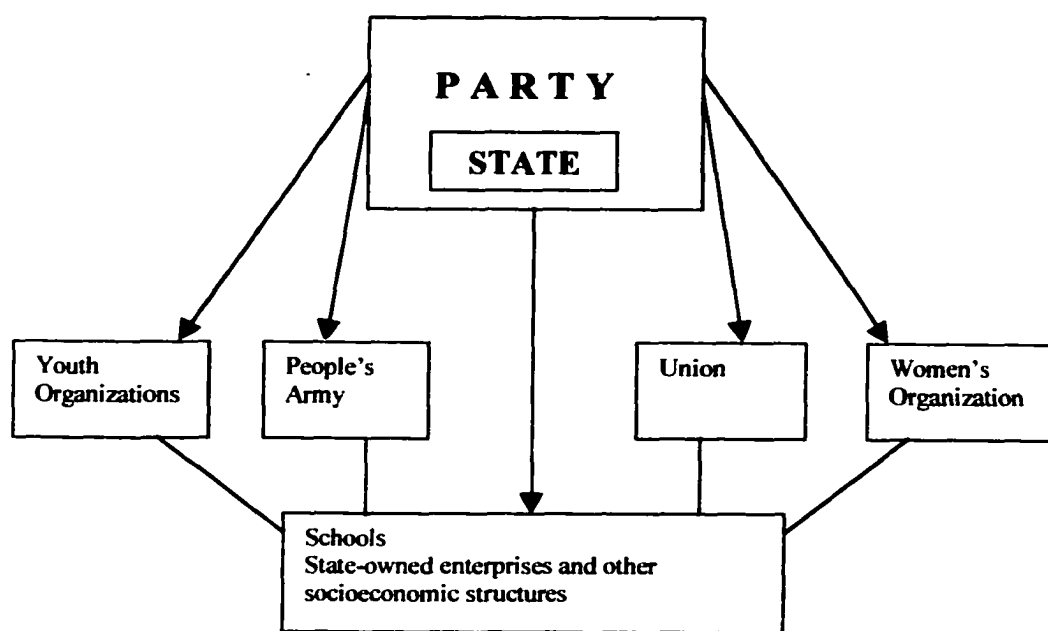


Figure 3.1 Dominance of party over state and socioeconomic structures.

The figure shows that the norms that guided the operations of all structures stemmed from the party. The state, as the administrative body was identified as a party body, which did not operate independently from the party. The party leadership dictated the actions of the government and appointed members of the government and other state positions (Cornevin, 1991:397).

The circumstances leading to the creation of the single party were dominated by the powerful *Basali ba Congo* (Workers of Congo), a strong Marxist network comprising student organizations, workers and leftist intellectuals. This movement constituted the core of the insurrection and organized itself as a radical social basis of political transformation. Their ideological indoctrination comprised important contacts with Chinese organizations and local publications in such a newsletter as Dipanda. This term means independence, and its significance reflected a radical anti-imperialist program.

The *Basali ba Congo* network was strongly represented in the institutional bodies of the single party. With the importance of the single party, individuals or organizations that envisioned controlling, or participating in, the political structures and the administration of the country had to embrace the guiding principles of the party or simply adhere to it.

The single party was, therefore, a dominant feature of all socialist regimes in Congo-Brazzaville from the 1960s to the end of the 1980s. From 1964 to 1968, the Party was the Mouvement National de la Révolution, (M.N.R.), coming into existence as the result of a constitutive congress held in June-July 1964. This was a mass organization based on an alliance between the administrative bureaucracy dominating government institutions, the trade-unionists becoming more and more radical, youth organizations entering the core of authority to assert their growing demands and Marxist intellectuals formulating the ideological backdrop of the movement. On December 31, 1969, after the 1968 overthrow of the Massamba-Débat regime, the M.N.R. was replaced by the Parti Congolais du Travail (P.C.T), an organization that declared itself a labor and vanguard party. It opted for the radicalization of the process of what was thought of as the August 13-15 1963 revolution. The institutionalization of this new party required the eradication of moderate tendencies from the political system. In both parties, the central committee was the center of decision-making while the political bureau constituted the executive branch that implemented the decisions and policies of the central committee, controlled public authorities and the political and economic evolution of the nation. The President was the Secretary General of the politburo. In both cases, the MNR and the PCT, the consolidation of political power required the politicization of all mass organizations to

create a social basis of legitimacy and support (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997; Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

The dynamics underlying the institution of the single party

The establishment of the party as the central and dominant institution of society was followed by a series of conflicts among different organizations. First, it was with the MNR, after it was declared the “supreme organ of the nation” in January 1966, two years after its coming into existence. This declaration caused conflicts between the government and the party, leading to the resignation of Lissouba as Prime Minister in April. The army did not remain indifferent to the increasing dominance of the party, and attempted to curb the power of the MNR. This was the origin of violent incidents in June, which the army hierarchy and the administration used to justify the dismissal of Marien Ngouabi as paratroop commander. Meanwhile, despite discontent from the army, the new Prime Minister, Ambroise Noumazalay continued to take bold initiatives that led to the transformation of the military into a National People’s Army (APN), inspired by the Chinese model (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Second, it was the PCT (Parti Congolais du Travail), which occupied the central place, after the overthrow of the Massamba-Débat regime in 1968, following the coup d’état led by Ngouabi. As Cornevin (1991:397) points out, the PCT “was granted supreme power, but was now more tightly controlled by the political bureau and the central committee.” Challenges to the dominance of the party came from within the party and revealed the ideological divergence between the right wing and the radical left of the

party. According to Wamba-dia-Wamba (1988), in their objective to exert control of the party, the right wing, with Yhombi Opango as the dominant figure, sought to isolate the party from the influence of increasing restlessness of civil society that manifested itself in multiple workers' and students' strikes. Left radicals, under the leadership of Ange Diawara, however, intended to continue to defend the masses' rights to autonomous organization. This analyst relates the emergence of the M-22 movement to this divergence within the party. The M-22 was named after a coup attempt conducted by the left radicals on February 22, 1972. This attempt was the reflection of a disappointment on the part of the left-wing members of the party over their efforts to reform the state from within. Failing to overthrow the regime, the coup leaders adopted guerrilla tactics to challenge the Ngouabi regime and it is this guerrilla movement that identified itself as the M-22.

The Unification of Mass Organizations

The concentration of political power in the hands of party apparatchiks and the consolidation of political institutions required allegiance from society. The unification of social organizations was intended to create a uniform structure of the state, and give the party-state the latitude to engulf all administrative structures and politicize all semiautonomous social organizations and associations. By negating the autonomy of social organizations and associations, it displaced the democratic character of the popular movement that overthrew Youlou's neocolonial regime. It was intended to give the party accrued power to offer a homogenous and indisputable interpretation of the norms

governing the socioeconomic model and political orientation of the country. Outside the official interpretation of the governing discourse, no other meaning was acceptable.

The emergence of socialism in Congo-Brazzaville had a democratic basis in the sense that the August 1963 insurrection was initiated by the claims of independent social organizations such as youth organizations and trade unions. However, the institution of the party-state and the unification of mass organizations and the homogenization they implied, revoked the democratic meaning of the very movement from which the new political system originated. The homogenization of society aimed at creating a well-bounded entity under a unique indispensable ideological principle.

This homogenizing process was actualized through the unification of youth organizations in the Jeunesse du Mouvement National de la Révolution (J.M.N.R.) during the MNR era, and later on, in the Union de la Jeunesse Socialiste Congolaise (U.J.S.C.), during the PCT era. China and Vietnam exerted a great influence in the establishment of the J.M.N.R. For unemployed youths and young school dropouts, the participation in party and state militia activities provided an occupation. Successive regimes under socialism used these youths in paramilitary sections, instigating them into a zealous national vigilance in towns and the countryside, sowing terror and panic among the population (Thompson and Adloff, 1973; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Another example of unification refers to the creation of the Confédération Syndicale Congolaise, C.S.C., as a single trade union, in 1964, against the background of strong opposition from Christian unions, which were dismantled as socialist forces established their stronghold among workers. The establishment of a single union was instrumental in the indoctrination of the workers on the ideas and knowledge pertaining

to the socialist regimes. Later on, in 1965, a women's organization was created, the Union Révolutionnaire des Femmes du Congo (U.R.F.C.), a recognition of the importance of the role of women in the process of socialist development. In all cases, the unification of mass organizations reinforced the ideological ground of the socialist model and extended the reach of the party-state. To achieve this, socialist forces had to crack down all organizations they suspected of reactionary tendency and holding beliefs other than the official views of the party-state.

The "Delegitimation" of Non-State Paradigms

The homogenization of social life meant the elevation of the party-state's ideology to the level of absolute norm to govern individual and social behaviors and cultural life. This approach constituted a threat to already established social and cultural models that determined people's lives and identity before the advent of socialism. The eradication of individual and social diversities and expressions posed the fundamental problem of negating individual freedom and its expressions, while at the same time it also invalidated the value systems that governed individual self-determination. The approach taken by the Congolese socialists bore similarity with the modern view of politics that amplifies the nature of the state and purports the understanding that "the rights of the individual can only be realized in a supra-individual organization" (Weil, 1998:42). The development of politics in Congo-Brazzaville gave the party-state a supra-identity outside which individuals and social actors did not have an identity of their own, since the political world had swallowed up other modes of identification and norms of self-realization. The private world and its cultural and socioeconomic forms, including the

market and the private economic sector, for instance, were denied space, since it was the party-state, and the party-state alone, that acted in full consciousness. It alone organized life in society.

Furthermore, in the Congolese sociopolitical context, the ideological language was not enough to reduce the impact and manifestation of persistent social and cultural references. Ideology was seen as insufficient in generating political synergy around socialist principles. To achieve the ideological persuasion against other preexistent social and cultural models, the party-state relied on coercive methods. Three elements embodied the political strategy of “delegitimation.” These were the nationalization of the educational system, the “delegitimization” of the church and the wrecking of family loyalty. First, the state confiscated schools and nationalized the educational system on August 8, 1965, which implied the invalidation of the social institutions involved in education, notably the church (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988). For the rulers, education would produce the credibility of the regime and it was crucial in creating a new socialist man and woman. Therefore, the imprint of the state’s official discourse through education was expected to reinforce the allegiance of social actors to the programs of the party-state.

In addition, education was an instrument through which the state’s notion of society was made universal. The adoption of compulsory and mass education responded to the perspective of linking society to national purposes and goals established in accordance with the dominant ideology. The primary function of mass education was to carry out the ideological indoctrination that would incorporate new incoming members into the political and social objectives of the state. Thus, ideologically motivated mass

education constituted a vehicle for creating a socialist national identity (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). This model substantiated the understanding of the nation-state as the dominant organizational form and the primary actor of social mobilization to achieve national goals.

Through the centralization of the educational system, the state intended to create ideologically motivated citizens and increase its authority. Mass education was expected to instill loyalty to the nation-state and equip citizens with the relevant skills and ideologically fashioned worldview required for them to be able to contribute productively to national success. The party-state promoted a nationalized educational system to transform all individuals into members of the national community, and its motivation behind the establishment of a uniform system was to build devotion to a common set of purposes, symbols, and assumptions about proper conduct in the social arena. Furthermore, the creation of a nationalized educational system was crucial to the party-state's legitimation. Legitimation was necessary for the party-state not only to maintain itself as the most dominant organization in the country, but also to reproduce the relations of production and the rules of consumption it promoted (Coulon, 1972).

The second element was the anti-religious thrust that motivated the government to take away the legitimacy of the church, its representatives and other religious values. This involved the revocation of the right of religious institutions to operate outside church properties. Protests from Church leaders against the state's policies of homogenization and the violation of individual rights only served to attract stronger repression against religious authorities (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The third dimension of “delegitimation” was the wrecking of family loyalty. With ardor, state’s youth organizations, acting by personal zeal or under the recommendations of their political leaders, acted as watchdogs and perpetrators of the regime’s terror. They were pressed by the government to forgo any sentimentalism and denounce even their fathers or any family members they suspected of plotting against the regime or holding reactionary views. The rule was “to ‘purify’ the revolution and protect it from its enemies” (Decalo, 1976:141). From a sociocultural point of view, the adhesion of young generations to such politics involved the adoption of new principles that contributed to breaching traditional family allegiance (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Not only did politics intensify the tensions between older and younger generations, but it also superseded and wrecked all existing bases of social life. From the political point of view, the creation of state militia to reinforce power extended the means of institutional violence. These institutionalized means of violence were undertaken to concentrate power, neutralize and eradicate internal rival forces. In addition, violence has served to counter the effects of the intrinsic lack of coherence and homogeneity of the Congolese society.

Whether through terror or political marginalization, the political practice of Congolese socialists created a chasm in the social fabric, a fabric that was already wrecked by ethnic enmities and whose destruction was intensified by the rulers’ shortsighted views. The result of this political practice was the deepening of contradictions between political processes and the genuine social aspirations that were embedded in the movement that led to the August 1963 insurrection. The socialist era maintained a Marxist discourse that was emptied of its socioeconomic meaning, and what

the political leadership called “revolution” was nothing but a delusion carefully crafted to ensure social support for a political system that was moribund from the start (Nsafou, 1995). The failure of the socialist decades was unmistakably noticeable not only in the contradictions between the Marxist discourse and the rulers’ political practices, but also through a defective political economy that ignored the fundamentals of government and failed to promote the positive expressions of human liberty (Bourges and Wauthier, 1979). This Marxist discourse penetrated all choices made by socialist regimes, including choices in foreign policy.

The Socialist Foreign Policy

The adoption of scientific socialism implied a new foreign policy for Congo-Brazzaville. The moderate approach did not vanish from the policy-making environment since some in the socialist system insisted on adopting a more cautious attitude in the relationships with France. The radical stance, meanwhile, continued to castigate colonialism and imperialism, from time to time causing tension in the relationships with France. But breaches in these historical relationships were easily and quickly repaired (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

The socialist foreign policy favored partnership with countries associated with the anti-imperialist struggle. In O.A.U. meetings, Congo-Brazzaville moved from the moderate Monrovia Group to the revolutionary Casablanca Group. The same trend characterized Congo-Brazzaville’s inclinations at the United Nations. In addition, between 1964 and 1965, Congo-Brazzaville revised its diplomatic relations with a

number of countries, cutting ties with countries associated with the western bloc. In April 1964, diplomatic ties were broken with Taiwan, in May 1965, with South Korea and three months later, in August 1965, with Great Britain. In the same year, they were suspended with the United States. On the other hand, efforts were made to connect with countries of the eastern bloc. This led to the establishment of diplomatic ties with the People's Republic of China on February 22, 1964, with the U.S.S.R., on March 16, 1964, with Czechoslovakia on March 23, 1964, and Vietnam, on August 31, 1964. Official visits to some of these countries consolidated the political leftist orientation of Congo-Brazzaville in foreign policy (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Congo-Brazzaville became an instrument in the rivalry between superpowers during the Cold War. This could be illustrated by the support that it gave to the Cuban- and Soviet-backed MPLA forces fighting against the South Africa- and US-backed UNITA forces. The international ideological competition determined the evolution of the Congolese state through the ideological antagonism with capitalist countries and support from socialist and communist nations. As Lee points out, "the structural element in the interstate system is political competition and support among nation-states that are its components" (Lee, 1988:39). Supportive activities from countries of the Eastern Bloc included military cooperation, cultural exchange and economic aid. All of these contributed to reinforcing the capacities of the party-state and energizing successive regimes.

The “Militarization” of Politics

The socialist era witnessed the army's involvement in politics. The penetration of the political sphere by the military was ingrained in ethnic politics, in the sense that army officers of northern ethnic groups, particularly Mbochi and Kouyou, that largely dominated the military, evicted civilian rule which was dominated by Bakongos. Even during civilian rule, rulers had to incorporate army representatives in their alliances to counter the increasingly numerous sources of opposition that were entrenched in the army. For instance, the eviction of civilian rule through the 1968 coup was encouraged by leftist members of the Mouvement National de la Révolution who wanted to rid themselves of Massamba-Débat's leadership (Decalo, 1976:155).

The Regimes of the Socialist Era

Massamba-Débat's Regime and the Fragile Political Balance

The MNR inaugurated what the political leadership perceived to be the socialist line. Its emergence and its ideological orientation signified the eradication of the Youlou system dominated by colonial interests. Wamba-dia-Wamba (1988:198) observes the creation of the MNR was felt as a necessity to fill in the vacuum resulting from the absence of a political party. It was the bureaucrats close to Massamba-Débat's entourage, not the people, who dominated this new organization. But efforts were made

to establish a representative party to ensure the balance of social forces that interacted in the popular movement of August 1963. The balance reflected the alliance upon which the existence of the MNR was based, amalgamating the administrative bureaucracy close to Massamba-Débat, which dominated the government, the labor union growing more and more radical, youth organizations and young intellectuals. However, less than a year after socialism was adopted, the party's alliance began to crack, as extremist elements of the party expressed increasingly radical views, undermining the certitude of Massamba-Débat's authority (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:159). It was the need to reinforce his power that led Massamba-Débat to concentrate power and decisions in his hands and reinforce control through terror perpetuated by the JMNR. This regime was autocratic and coercive (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The balance that was supposed to ensure stability included the dominance of French interests in the economy, and this constituted the very reason that reinforced the radical attitude of leftist extremists in the party (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988). Party radicals denounced free enterprise as ineffectual and urged the state to take control of private businesses and industry from foreign European companies. They also called for the revision of the investment code so as to reduce the fiscal advantages enjoyed by foreign capitalists. As Thompson and Adloff (1973:159) comment, these demands imposed an exacting task upon Massamba-Débat "to balance the Congo's closer ties with the communist countries and revolutionary African states by friendly gestures to the Western powers." During the entire duration of the Massamba-Débat administration, leftist radicals continued to assert their influence and strengthen their position in the

party, challenging and urging the government to abide by the socialist orientations prescribed by what they called the August 1963 revolution.

Despite accrued influence by the radical left-wing actors in governmental policies, conflicts between the two forces continued throughout Massamba-Débat's era. For leftist radicals, the internal transformation of the state into a socialist organization implied the eradication of moderate and non-socialist forces from any state institution and social organizations. This approach planted the seeds for centralization, eliminating the distinction between the party and the state. Furthermore, the MNR left-wing elements showed hostility toward any social organization attempting to assert and claim its autonomy vis-à-vis the state and the party. Such organizations as the church and scouts were accused of being reactionary (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988:200; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

From 1966, the Massamba-Débat regime became dominated by hard-core politicians, and Lissouba, a prominent technocrat was replaced as Prime Minister by Noumazalaye, the leader of the radical left-wing labor network, *Basali ba Congo*. The eviction of Lissouba as Prime Minister and his allies in the government confirmed the predominance of left-wing elements, disclosing the tug of war between president Massamba-Débat and the left wing of the party (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:109-113). This tug of war between the radical leftists and the moderates made it more difficult for Massamba-Débat to sustain the balance, and the constant battle within the regime led to the fall of his regime, giving rise to the army in politics.

Ngouabi and the Rise of the Military in Politics

Emerging in 1968, the Ngouabi regime pledged to continue the revolutionary course set by the August 1963 people's revolt. From start, this regime reinforced Marxist-Leninist declarations, and affirmed a determination to eliminate reactionary elements from the new single party, the Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT), as a commitment to pursue what it termed a "policy of permanent revolution" (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:172). No sooner had the new regime been instituted than it was beset by tensions and divisions among socialist forces. Meanwhile many of its policies were met with constant protests and demonstrations (Cornevin, 1991). Wamba-dia-Wamba (1988:201) interprets this incessant social unrest as civil society's means of regaining its autonomy annihilated by statism and militarization that reached proportions never before experienced.

Adding to social unrest was political instability characterized by repeated coups d'état and violent opposition. As Cornevin (1991:398) observed, this instability was rooted in the dynamics of the interactions and expectations that characterized different social and political forces. "Plots and rumors of plots, redistributions of responsibility between the various branches of the governmental machinery and occasional violent outbreaks among the students and schoolchildren of Brazzaville all testified to this instability." Ngouabi was unable to end the conflict within the state apparatus and his close connection with his fellow northern politicians intensified political tension. This regime can be appropriately identified as praetorian. According to Decalo, "a praetorian system is typified by intense intra- and interelite strife, the presence of continuous

jockeying for supremacy within the ruling junta, and a perennial tug-of-war for influence and power between various groups and military factions” (Decalo, 1990:243).

Early in 1969, less than a year after Ngouabi’s rise to power, his administration began to suspect and incriminate army officers of the Lari ethnic group for supposedly attempting to overthrow the regime. Lieutenant Pierre Kiganga, a Lari officer of the Brazzaville garrison, fled to Kinshasa, and Major Mouzabakany was caught while attempting to do likewise. On this occasion, Ngouabi publicly pointed out the discovery of a “vast network of reactionaries organized by Youlist Laris” (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:173). The administration announced that this group’s aim was the “restoration of the American capitalist system” (West Africa, 1969).

It turned out that the announcement was a catchall accusation to serve Ngouabi’s purpose of countering his most menacing adversaries, particularly the Laris (Thompson and Adloff, 1973). The party’s central committee named an 18-member revolutionary court with the sole purpose of trying all those arrested for what the administration called crimes against the security of the state. In August of the same year, Ngouabi attended a congress held by the JMNR, during which he urged youths to the service of the masses. At this meeting, the JMNR was transformed into a Union de la Jeunesse Socialiste Congolaise (UJSC), a socialist youth organization. The radical character of this renewed organization was manifest in the resolutions they passed condemning American and Israeli aggression and supporting the admission of the People’s Republic of China to the United Nations (Thompson and Adloff, 1973).

Observers point out that Ngouabi’s commitment to Marxism-Leninism was more rhetorical than real (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997), although he

created a new party within his perspective of establishing “dynamic revolutionary institutions,” an educational program for training party cadres (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:174). All this was a subtlety to curb the influence of existing factions, particularly the Lari, which the regime accused of being inclined to capitalist policies. After a series of coup attempts in which Lari officers and politicians were incriminated, Ngouabi expressed concern with Lari discontent in a meeting of army officers on February 22, 1969, in Brazzaville. He indicated his new and hardened attitude to combat conservatives who supposedly had taken advantage of his liberal policy to undermine the revolution. This revised approach reflected, as Thompson and Adloff (1973:173) point out, “an evidence of Lari dissidence in the army.” For Ngouabi, this constituted “by far the most serious aspect of the attempted uprising.” To face this situation, Ngouabi reorganized the army by dividing the country into six operational or defense divisions and making Brazzaville an autonomous military zone. Along with this army restructuring came a change in the command that included the appointment of Ange Diawara as political commissar of the army while he also remained secretary of state for defense.

After his efforts to deal with subversive tendencies in the army, Ngouabi was confronted with student demonstrations against the government in 1971, culminating in a massive student strike. For Ngouabi, this was nothing else than a sabotage of the revolution by a hidden opposition favorable to capitalism. He responded with promises of extensive changes in the party, governmental reshuffle, and elimination of ministries. The change led to Diawara’s dismissal as political commissar and secretary of state for defense. Other dismissed ministers included Major Alfred Raoul who was the vice-president, and Auxence Ickonga, the Foreign Minister. Changes in the party led to the

reduction of political bureau of the PCT from nine members to five, which caused the dismissal of the first party secretary Claude-Ernest Ndalla. The central committee was also reduced with the expulsion of a great number of members (Cornevin, 1991).

The removal of Ndalla and Diawara reflected a reversal of Ngouabi's leftist declarations and constituted a setback for the extreme left. Both men belonged to the radical left wing that dominated the political scene since the Congo's adoption of socialist discourse. In Ngouabi's administration, they were implicated in unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the Ngouabi government in February and May 1972, and Diawara was sentenced to death *in absentia*.

The condemnation of leftist representatives implied the resurgence of right-wing elements. After a series of crises within the state apparatus, the political failure of the left to recapture the political system was confirmed. But constant strife undermined the ability of the administration to conduct sound development policies, reflecting the conflict between right and left within the state apparatus between 1973 and 1977. During this period, the self-serving politics of leftists and their distance from the people caused them to lose the support of the masses. Meanwhile, the right, under the leadership of the chief of staff, Colonel Joachim Yhombi-Opango, proceeded to consolidate its stronghold through reinforced statism, centralization and concentration of power in the hands of few northern officers. These methods were used to eliminate any influence from the left (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988). This context of political conflict within the state apparatus led to the end of the Ngouabi presidency through his assassination on March 18, 1977.

Yhombi-Opango and the Party's Military Committee

On April 3, 1977, Colonel Joachim Yhombi-Opango was nominated as the new head of state. Yhombi-Opango announced his new council of ministers. He abolished the constitution and national assembly and transferred legislative authority to the party's military committee (CMP), which became the supreme organ in the nation. The members of the military committee declared that they were Ngouabi's faithful successors, and pledged to continue his revolutionary work and policies (Cornevin, 1991).

Of all the regimes during the socialist era, Yhombi-Opango's rule (1977-79) symbolized the institutionalization of political opportunism (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988). Lacking legitimacy, it engaged in authoritarian behaviors coupled with corruption at the highest levels and coercive methods that submitted the population to an unprecedented authoritarianism. Yhombi-Opango justified his coercive procedures, using Marxist notions, as a way to push the population to hard work to increase labor productivity. In reality, Yhombi-Opango was known for his aversion to Marxism. Political power was concentrated in the hands of a few, making this an oligarchic-coercive regime, in which the dominance of the ruling clique led to the neutralization of the party.

The CMP was an eleven-member collegial structure functioning around a triumvirate made of the president and two vice-presidents. The president was the supreme chief executive, while the two vice-presidents had functions respectively related to the party and the government. The hierarchy of this triumvirate placed the party and the army above the government, as was revealed by the functions of the two vice-presidents. The first vice-president, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, was in charge of

coordinating and controlling the party's activities. He supervised the party's organization, external relations, education and propaganda. He was, at the same time, the Minister for National Defense. The second vice-president, Louis-Sylvain Goma, was the Prime Minister and head of the government. As the coordinator of the ministers' activities and responsibilities, he had the duty to report about them to the CMP. As the head of government, the second vice-president had a legislative responsibility that required him to ensure the execution of laws and presidential decrees and decisions. He was delegated by the head of state to appoint people to government positions (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Yhombi-Opango was known for his opposition to left-wing critics of the Ngouabi regime (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988). Cornevin (1991) notes that because of his inclination toward capitalist views, Yhombi-Opango's emergence seemed to have been warmly welcomed internationally. Under his regime, relations with the USA were restored and a less antagonistic attitude towards France was adopted. It is obvious that this regime sought to create a new political context that attempted to put an end to the influence of left-wing hard-liners and what they continuously, and for political reasons, called the "revolution" (Baniafouna, 1995).

It is not clear what impact and bearing Yhombi-Opango's capitalist economic policies would have had on the nation. His political methods reflected the autocratic behavior that supported a regime of terror continuously intimidating the bulk of civil society while encouraging corruption among his close political associates. His failure to completely dismantle the influence of the left wing created internal conflicts within the party. At the same time, the existence of a military committee becoming the supreme

organ of the nation above the party caused great discomfort among party members who still believed in the importance of Marxist views. The result was Yhombi-Opango's open conflict with many important members of the leadership of the Congolese Labor Party (PCT). For a year, his time and efforts were consumed by a continued manhunt to trace the whereabouts of people he and his military committee falsely accused of assassinating Ngouabi, instead of focusing on the socioeconomic problems of the country. In August 1978 an attempted coup d'état was thwarted, which was an indication of his unpopularity. By early 1979, it was clear that the regime had lost all effective support. In February, the party's central committee reclaimed its supremacy at one of its meetings and forced Yhombi-Opango to surrender his power and those of the military committee.

Following this resignation, the central committee appointed a provisional committee to assume power in the interim and prepare the third extraordinary party congress convened to choose the new government. The provisional committee was a five-member institution led by Colonel (later General) Denis Sassou-Nguesso, a follower of Ngouabi, a long-standing rival of Yhombi-Opango and leader of the militant faction of the PCT. The other four members were Jean-Pierre Thystère Tchicaya who was in charge of political matters, Louis-Sylvain Goma, who supervised the economic commission, Jean-Michel Bokamba Yangouma, who led the social and cultural department, and Raymond-Damase Ngollo, in charge of the commission dealing with the army (Baniafouna, 1995:39). When the congress was held at the end of March, Sassou-Nguesso was appointed head of state, president and chairman of the central committee.

Sassou-Nguesso and the Northern Oligarchy

Sassou-Nguesso's regime reinforced the ethnic divide between north and south by reinforcing the northern dominance of such key political institutions as the party's central committee, political bureau, permanent secretariat and commissars. Table 3.1 shows this dominance, indicating that in all institutions, the number of northern officials is proportionately much higher, and sometimes more than double the number of southern representatives, while in many institutions, populations of the center, the Batekes, for instance, had no representative. Among northern officials, Sassou-Nguesso's ethnic group, the Mboshi, was the most represented.

Table 3.1 Northern dominance of the ruling party's political institutions, 1984.

Party's political institutions	North	South	Center	Total of members
	Central committee	53	22	
Political bureau	7	5	1	13
Permanent secretariat	9	1		10
Commissars	7	3		10
Total	76	31	1	108

Source: Based on Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997).

The new institutional configuration did not give the national assembly its primacy as a legislative body and as an institution representative of civil society. This primacy was rather conferred to mass organizations, such as the Socialist Youth Organization (UJSC), the Organization of Revolutionary Women (URFC), the Labor Union (CSC) (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:260). This reflected the predominance of politics over the

legislature, since mass organizations were essentially political channels through which the party ideology was conveyed to the whole society.

On July 8, 1979, the new constitution was voted in a referendum. This constitution increased the number of members of the national assembly from 115 to 153. Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997:264) observes that while this increase was intended to indicate a wide social representation, it also diminished the power of the national assembly, since the single ruling party and its political affiliates such as mass organizations occupied 68 percent of total seats. Other representatives were from other organizations of civil society, which were not involved in the party and related institutions. The 1979 constitution was approved by 97 percent of total votes. The constitution provided a five-year presidential term and described the government as the supreme institution in the executive power, with the Prime Minister as its head. The national assembly was theoretically presented as the greatest authority of the state. The constitution also showed signs of decentralization, in that it gave regions financial autonomy. The PCT was described as a proletarian party guided by Marxist-Leninist principles, which should lead the Congolese society toward national liberalization and the practice of scientific socialism.

In August 1979, all political prisoners were released, an initiative, which according to observers, was a common strategy following the rulers' consolidation of power. This implies that liberalization and decentralization involved a serious political risk for the ruling class, and it could be undertaken only after such risk has been averted (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). In the Sassou-Nguesso regime, ways of averting the risk included centralization of power, the establishment of personal rule and nepotism. These

methods led to the transformation of the president's native town into an informal political capital. This town sometimes hosted government meetings and sessions of the PCT's central committee and political bureau. The laying of a wreath on the tombs of Sassou-Nguesso's parents became an institutional political ritual executed before all these meetings (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

An important aspect of the Sassou-Nguesso regime was an increasingly pro-Western foreign policy and a correspondingly liberal economic policy that belied official Marxist declarations. At the same time, the president constantly balanced the resurgent influence of some left-wing factions within the PCT with the political aspirations of Sassou-Nguesso's northern personal supporters, many of who had no interest in Marxist ideology. This accommodation required particular talents of a political juggler (Baniafouna, 1995), which Sassou-Nguesso reinforced by increasing his powers (Cornevein, 1991).

The July 1984 PCT congress adopted a constitutional amendment, by which the head of state assumed additional powers as the head of the government. This resulted in a new and enlarged PCT's political bureau and central committee and a reshuffling of the government, leading to a consolidation of the pro-Western faction and the promotion of Sassou-Nguesso's personal supporters. Despite the emergence of a new pro-Western alliance, the main branch of the radical wing of the PCT, the M-22, formerly associated with Diawara, survived both within the party and the government. To assert his control over the conflicting political scene marked by the presence of divergent tendencies in the party and the government, Sassou-Nguesso further consolidated his position by assuming the post of Minister of Defense and Security (Cornevin, 1991).

Political divergence was not the only factor affecting the unity of the Sassou-Nguesso regime. Ethnic rivalries were persistent. Sassou-Nguesso emerged as the third northern president since 1968, while there have been only two southerners as presidents, and this caused resentment among southerners for their being increasingly marginalized from decision-making. In addition to north-south divide, however, observers saw that there was factionalism between northern tribes, some of which felt that they had not sufficiently benefited from northern domination (Cornevin, 1991), and some attempted to launch armed resistance against the Mboshi dominance over northern ethnic groups (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). In July 1987, twenty army officers, of the northern Kouyou ethnic group, were arrested on suspicion of undermining state security. Some Kouyous had held a rancor against Sassou-Nguesso for conspiracy against two former presidents who were of their own, Ngouabi and Yhombi-Opango. A commission of investigation, established by the government, characterized the trouble as a coup attempt. Although a right-wing army group had apparently instigated the plot, the government linked it to some M-22 members, causing the removal of one of them, Camille Boungou, from control over the organization of the PCT in late July.

In the late 1980s, economic difficulties forced the Sassou-Nguesso regime to alter its leftist course with negotiations with Western institutions. Radical factions of the PCT reacted to this initiative by publishing a document accusing the Sassou-Nguesso government of having lost its revolutionary momentum, and criticizing its recourse to the IMF and its dialogue with the South African government. To calm dissension within the party, however, Sassou-Nguesso reaffirmed his regime's commitment to Marxist ideology on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of his accession to power. Sassou-

Nguesso's oscillation between left and right was manifest through his Marxist declarations to please the leftist radicals and his choice of moderate and right-wing politicians for political appointments. During the July 1989 PCT congress that reelected Sassou-Nguesso party's chairman and president of the republic for a further five-year term, elections to the 77-member PCT's central committee dismissed 21 reputedly 'traditionalist' members and promoted 23 new delegates, some of who advocated moderate reforms.

The new delegates included Lieutenant-Colonel Pierre Oba, the director of public security and a close companion of Sassou-Nguesso. This appointment reflected both the new political direction and the consolidation of political power for Sassou-Nguesso through the promotion of a close associate to such an important position as the head of national security. In August, Alphonse M. Poaty-Souchlaty, who had, in the previous month, been elected to the political bureau of the party, was appointed Prime Minister. At legislative elections, held in September 1989, the single list of 133 candidates was approved by 99.19. For the first time, the list included candidates who were not members of the PCT. Sixty-six seats were allocated to youth, women's, religious and professional organizations, while eight nominations were reserved for independent candidates (Cornevin, 1991).

All the juggling of political power by Sassou-Nguesso could not save his regime from the masses' reaction against socioeconomic crisis. The late 1980s witnessed continuous social unrest. This social turbulence reflected dissatisfaction on the part of the bulk of society, which voiced its wishes for political liberalization coupled with demands for improvement in socioeconomic conditions. In some circumstances, through

popular protests, civil society reacted against IMF-sponsored programs. Meanwhile, international factors were favorable for political change, adding momentum to internal social movements. All these conditions forced the regime to launch a series of reforms, which led to democratization and to elections that removed Sassou-Nguesso from power.

The Political Economy of Congo-Brazzaville

The Setting of the State-Centric Approach to Socioeconomic Development

The implementation of state-centric approach to socioeconomic development in Congo-Brazzaville began with the emergence of socialist policies. These policies inspired state control of the economy and social institutions through the confiscation and nationalization of existing structures and the creation of public enterprises. In 1965, the Massamba-Débat administration created the Bureau pour la Création, le Contrôle et l'Orientation (BCCO), an institution established to supervise the public productive sector. The BCCO was to carry out the state's industrial projects, and to implement the policy of nationalization announced by Prime Minister Pascal Lissouba on January 21, 1964. In this declaration, Lissouba explained that the creation of public enterprises and the nationalization of foreign firms would contribute to equal distribution of national resources. Embracing a socialist developmental model would provide full employment and reinforce the autonomy of the state and its independence from the parent countries of foreign companies, which were being blamed for the underdevelopment of the country (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Through the BCCO, the state increased its monopoly in trade by creating two main trade offices to take control over commerce. Thus the Office National de Commercialisation (OFNACOM) and the Office National de Commercialization des Produits Agricoles (ONCPA) replaced colonial import-export companies that survived through the post-independence era. While the first had the monopoly for importing indispensable consumer goods, the second had the monopoly for collecting national agricultural products. A semi-nationalization of recuperating the plantations abandoned by the Compagnie Française du Haut et Bas-Congo, led to the creation of the Régie Nationale des Palmeraies du Congo (RNPC), which took the monopoly for the exploitation of palm tree plantations. Other sectors that the government nationalized included water and power distribution (Bertrand, 1975). With these policies, the government set the stage for a controlled economy.

Under Lissouba as Prime Minister, the governmental team reassured the local business community by promising to practice financial austerity, reduce the rising cost of living and correct the creeping fiscal situation. Lissouba declared his intention to keep good working relations with the private sector through regular consultations. However, this assurance was belied by other Lissouba's declarations in which he foreshadowed a process of "socialization" of the country's resources and transport system, as well as a "selective nationalization" of trade. To reinforce this perspective, the president of the national assembly led his institution into a vote of a series of resolutions on March 17. In these, the legislature asked for nationalization of the three French companies which monopolized public utilities and transport in Brazzaville, the Congolization of all

employment, a revision of the cooperation agreements with France (Thompson and Adloff, 1973: 158; Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

With its revolutionary discourse and the promise of socioeconomic development during the early years of socialist declaration, the Congolese development model sought to rally the peasantry, the urban youth and working class and a new elite emerging with the potential to form a national bourgeoisie. The discourse that promoted such an alliance aimed at creating a national democracy, which was considered as the amalgamation of national social forces into a political and structural control of the state and the economy (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988). The formation of such alliance reflects a characterization of the non-capitalist path. It is an approach “based on a broad alliance of progressive forces,” offering “the best overall revolutionary prospect” (Thomas, 1978:14). Indeed, though the revolutionary movement was launched with the predominance of the working class, in Congo-Brazzaville, it was the elite that assumed its leadership (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988). Thomas observes that advocates of the non-capitalist path “point out that attempts to prematurely assert working-class leadership could split the progressive forces, weaken the working class, and open up the possibility of counter-revolutionary developments (Thomas, 1978:14).

Despite the strong Marxist rhetoric and the leadership’s declaration of a socialist option, the Congolese socioeconomic model was clearly in a transitional phase during the early years, which could more appropriately typified along the non-capitalist path. To the above-mentioned broad alliance, one can add the fact that progressive forces “are not clearly dependent on either major classes’ political organization,” and the heavy reliance of these forces “on the military-administrative apparatus” (Thomas, 1978:14). Wamba-

dia-Wamba (1988) notes that in Congo-Brazzaville, this gave rise to conflicts between the military and civilians during the Massamba-Débat regime and facilitated the militarization of the political system during subsequent regimes (see also Decalo, 1976).

Another element of non-capitalist development in the Congolese political economy is the continuation of capitalist relations as an inevitable transitional phase to socialism. Thomas (1978:11-12) points out that the non-capitalist transition implies, among others, that "capitalism will be the inevitable outcome of developments within the national democracy." In Congo-Brazzaville, the continuation of French economic interests in the economy reinforced this notion. Despite the progressive extension of the state public sector through nationalization of foreign enterprises in the 1970s, (Bertrand, 1975; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997), the Congolese economy was based on an admixture of foreign private and state controlled economic sectors (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988).

Change in government continued this course, under the new Prime Minister Noumazalaye, by establishing more state organizations to expand governmental control and limit private investments by creating companies of mixed economy and allowing only selective specific industries for wholly private capital. The character of funds used to carry out projects was mainly public. For instance, the USSR financed the construction of the Cosmos hotel and a maternity hospital in Brazzaville and irrigation works on the Batéké plateau. China provided aid for the textile plant in Kinsoundi while North Korea financed the establishment of a match factory. Other funds came from Western governments such as France and other countries of the Common Market. Western Germany, for instance, was involved in the Lutété cement plant (Thompson and Adloff, 1973). Cooperation with Western countries indicates the efforts by the

Massamba-Débat to keep a balanced or mixed economic system. However, the Ngouabi regime opted for more radical trends of socialist development.

The Radicalization of State Control

The Ngouabi administration proclaimed a policy of radical “revolutionary” methods, which reinforced the process of nationalization. Under Ngouabi, the expansion of the public sector continued, and the economic policies that the administration implemented caused serious negative consequences for existing productive sectors. Such traditional exports as agricultural products and crude oil showed signs of decrease. The administration wanted to increase revenues from sources other than import duties when in October 1971, it introduced a sales tax on all merchandise sold in the Congo. This measure was followed four months later by a raise in the rate of taxation on local industrial, real estate, and trading companies.

The reinforcement of government’s control was evident through the regulation that forbade the sale of certain goods unless specifically authorized by the Ministry of Trade and instituted price controls for articles of prime necessity (Marchés Tropicaux, 1972). While great efforts were made to draw more revenue through higher taxes and an improvement in methods of tax collection, government expenditures continued unabated. The country’s expanding budgets were proof of this unbalanced policy, and the rising cost of government personnel belied all of the administration’s claims concerning an implementation of a policy of austerity.

Government personnel absorbed nearly half the country's revenues—more than 10 billion CFA francs in 1972. The rising wage bill for government employees—civilian and military—compelled the administration to attempt some reforms of the civil service and state enterprises. Facing its own inability to meet the monthly wage bill, the administration resorted to foreign loans and subsidies. This led to an increase in the public debt, which rose by 100 million CFA francs between 1971 and 1972, seriously taxing the country's budget (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:178). The 1975-77 three-year development plan initiated under the premiership of Henri Lopes, was a response to the need to reform the state enterprises and government employment policies (Cornevin, 1991).

Agricultural policies failed to meet the government-stated requirement to generate self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and more raw materials for the Congo's processing industries. The August 1972 PCT congress recognized the importance of the agricultural sector in the economy. To reverse the neglect of this sector, the party suggested the organization of interregional markets. The party's proposals also included increasing the prices of the farmers' outputs and reforming the traditional structures of production (Thompson and Adloff, 1973:180). Unfortunately, albeit significant, these measures did not bring the transformation they promised. The organization of the agricultural sector through interregional markets was not achieved. For instance, the northern agricultural population seemed unlikely to benefit from the experiments in mixed farming being conducted at the Chinese-sponsored model farm in Kombé, about 12 miles south of Brazzaville.

Management in the public sector cared less about the performance of state enterprises than the employment opportunities that these companies offered. The radical perspective that dominated the administration undermined concern with international competitiveness and the quality of the products state enterprises offered. Thompson and Adloff (1973:183) give an accurate description of the general tendencies prevailing in the Congolese socialist policy-making process.

The Congolese hardliners denigrated an economic policy chiefly directed toward making profits through efficient management. In their eyes, the all-important goals are economic independence and total employment at remunerative wages for the country's active population. If the Congo has difficulty selling its products in the world market, then it should trade only with the communist countries, which operate under government-to-government agreements and not according to the laws of supply and demand. The advocacy of a policy that so defies bourgeois concepts is predicated on the assumption that the Congo can always count on some wealthier foreign country to cover the losses.

An Interval in the Socialist Orientation

Despite the official discourse proclaiming the continuity in the socialist and revolutionary course, Yhombi-Opango did not hide his aversion to Marxist ideology. His idea of development was inspired by capitalism. The Yhombi-Opango regime was mainly characterized by political terror, which the CMP used to impose economic hardship on the people. Terror was used as both the principal means of political control over civil society and the way to impose enormous sacrifices on the population (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997; Baniafouna, 1995).

The country's economic situation had indeed worsened by the time Yhombi-Opango came to power. In 1977, for instance, the accidental flooding of the potash

mines at Holle, forcing the closure of the company was significant of the economic decadence, and constituted a major blow to a Congolese economy that was already in decline (Bertrand, 1975). The CMP took a tough stance in dealing with the decaying socioeconomic circumstances. An example of this attitude was the government's measure to repatriate the majority of foreign workers and traders who were natives of African countries. In October 1977, the CMP forbade all trading by foreigners. Strong measures also affected nationals as the CMP undertook to close down some state companies and arrest some supposedly corrupt and irresponsible heads of several state companies in early 1978. Cornevin (1991:398) points out that this period of harsh policies indicated that preparations were being made for a more liberal management of the economy. But the hardship imposed on the population contributed to the regime's own fall, as greater concerns were being expressed about the use of the taxpayers' money withheld for the fund of national solidarity. The country's economic situation did not improve despite attempts at a new policy orientation. Relief came from the oil boom of the early 1980s, which prompted the formulation of the 1982-86 five-year development plan under the Sassou-Nguesso regime.

Development Planning and the Old Technological Regime

When the Sassou-Nguesso regime launched the most ambitious five-year development plan, technological advances were already transforming the international system, creating a global economy in which neoliberalism is the dominant ideology stressing the role of the private sector and the market. Taking a course that continued to

assert the state-centric developmental model, the Congolese development plan expanded and reaffirmed the public sector. The 1982-86 plan adopted an ambitious target of average growth rate of 10 percent per year, with a strong emphasis on central government investment (Hodgkinson, 1991:403). Using revenues from the oil sector, the plan's important objective was to reduce the economy's dependence on oil exports. The plan aimed at increasing agricultural production, rehabilitating the state industrial sector and allocating resources to social investments in health and education.

The achievements of the plan included, among others, the construction of roads, bridges, new buildings for ministries and for the party conference center, the renovation of Brazzaville General Hospital, the modernization of the state-owned television, the expansion of Brazzaville military hospital and the construction of the military academy. As the implementation of the plan proceeded, public employment increased, government salaries expanded, and the policy of government-sponsored student grants was reinforced.

The government also pursued the stabilization of the financial situation of state enterprises. Marcel Kibondzi (1989) points out that between 1982 and 1986, the Central Committee of the single party, the Parti Congolais du Travail, allocated 400 billion CFA francs to state enterprises. In 1982, the government disbursed 16.1 billion CFA francs to remedy the deficiencies of state enterprises, and 34 billion CFA francs were added to this amount during the same year. As far as the private sector was concerned, Dzaka and Milandou (1995) observe that the growth of this sector was characterized by the emergence of small commercial businesses providing consumer goods to meet the demands boosted by increased salaries and the economic boom.

Bayonne and Makimouna-Ngouala argue that the 1982-86 development plan was formulated with a perspective of economic growth focusing on demand, and its implementation stressed production for immediate consumption, private and public expenditures, instead of establishing the capabilities for creating and adding value, and instilling technological know-how. The revenue from production was used to increase salaries, thereby sustaining consumption, pay the debt and interest. On the whole, production was redistributed in the form of revenue or income between private consumers, firms and the state. The authors criticize a political vision that lacked long-term perspective and strategic planning focusing on the creation of value through technological and industrial creativity. Had investments focused on value creation, they would have enhanced the quality of the output of state industrial enterprises. Investments leading to value creation would have made the Congolese economy competitive, at least through export products, allowing it to interact with a global economy increasingly determined by competition and efficiency. Moreover, the lack of competitive manufacturing precluded an economic growth based on exports. Thus the lack of strategic planning reinforced continued reliance on the production of primary goods (Bayonne and Makimouna-Ngouala, 1999).

The Effects of State Intervention

The policy of state control over the economy reflected the old international regime of accumulation, whereby the nation-state was the primary setting that determined the evolution of the economic system. It limited the possibility of Congo-Brazzaville to

embrace the new trends emerging in the new global political economy, promoting private enterprise, creating a market economy and stimulating the competitiveness of firms and the competence of management. In Congo-Brazzaville, the economic performance resulting from state intervention was dismal. Mismanagement and internal crises within the system derailed the pursuit of national socioeconomic development. On the other hand, employment in the public sector precluded the development of efficient industrial and institutional management by neglecting a system of merit and encouraging favoritism.

The political economy of state intervention has been detrimental to the establishment of technological capabilities. Its policy of nationalization discouraged foreign direct investment, and foreign capital already present in the country had to be withdrawn to find a more favorable investment climate. In the early 1970s, Congo-Brazzaville lost much of its regional economic influence as competing industries were being established in neighboring countries embracing more liberal economic policies. This reduced economic activity, and the most important part of the Congolese industry began to wither away at a fast rate (Bertrand, 1975).

The establishment of state enterprises and farms, though sometimes equipped with modern machines, yielded little results. Nationalized firms became a constant source of private wealth for the political elite. Modern agricultural equipment for state farms was imported from various Western countries and from those of the Eastern Block, but was not used efficiently, and in many cases, was abandoned without being used. Instead of generating income for the state, public sector enterprises constantly needed funding from the state for repair, or to balance their budgets, and for huge wages for an

increasing labor force hired on the basis of their allegiance to the ruling party or kinship and friendship connections (Bertrand, 1975; Friedman, 1993).

In Congo-Brazzaville, the consolidation of the public sector during the socialist years gave the political elite the opportunity to gain economic influence and appropriate the means of production. The political leaders, essentially members of the single ruling party, gained control over national resources and used them for their own convenience as if they were part of their private property. Aware of the political instability of the country, the political elite took all the opportunities to plunder the state while they were still in power (Friedman, 1993).

The economic system of Congo-Brazzaville was not able to achieve the dynamic efficiency that creates dynamic linkages between and within the various sectors of the economy. For instance, one reason for the poor performance in agriculture was the disconnection between agriculture and industry. This discouraged the production of agricultural inputs for industrial processing. Studies show that the value added by the food industry, which uses agricultural products, never reached 5 percent between 1975 and 1980. The highest level was 4.61 percent in 1978 (Bilan Economique, 1984). Not only did this preclude any possibility of manufactured exports, but it also forced the country to import food.

Conclusion

The political history of Congo-Brazzaville made one observer state that the first years of the existence of this country show that “it had got off to a most unpromising

start" (Gauze, 1973:135). The first regime did little to remedy the uncertainty created by the political turbulence of the immediate pre-independence years. Its practices and policies reinforced the conditions that complicated the relationships between ethnic groups. Political processes in the first regime already indicated methods of centralization in the policy-making framework, which was a reflection of the mode of regulation of the old technological regime. In addition, the political system prevailing under Youlou's leadership led to the concentration of power in the hands of a few, separated from the bulk of the population. This tendency continued throughout the post-independence era, and became reinforced by ethnic references, which determined the distribution of political power and the allocation of resources.

During the Marxist era, the concentration of power by the elite resulted in the mixing of state's resources and institutions and the party's interests. One consequence of this process was the reduction of the state's capabilities in resolving social and economic issues. Low state capabilities and the absence of state independence from the party resulted in an institutional deficiency that increased the inability of an already weak state to create a good socioeconomic environment and be prepared to deal with external shocks. Therefore, the most distinctive characteristic of state formation, having a major impact on the political economy in Congo-Brazzaville was the institutional bottleneck created by the overlapping of state and party functions and the ensuing political practices. To this have been associated the expansion of the public sector and its failure, the lack of check-and-balance mechanisms, and the absence of distinction between different sectors of the administration. Because of its integration into the party structure, the state was unable to define its objectives distinctively since it became an instrument carrying out the

party's interests, or more specifically, the interests of those in power and their clientele. In addition, this situation prevented the state for setting standards from which it could monitor the performance of the structures it owned. The dominant standards were ideology and the satisfaction of the private interests of the ruling elite, not efficiency and productivity.

While neoliberalism was asserting its influence, in the 1970s and 1980s, pushing for structural reforms in the global economy, and inspiring efficiency in management, the Congolese political leadership was taking the opposite direction. In all aspects, from institutional configuration and interactions to ideological preferences, from the meaning of the nation-state to the choice of international partners, Congo-Brazzaville was set to embark on a anti-liberal course, which leftist radicals of successive regimes justified in terms of an anti-imperialist struggle. In addition, the leadership's mismanagement and poor socioeconomic policies heightened the negative socioeconomic consequences of this political option. The failure of the developmental models that shaped the Congolese socioeconomic structures compelled social, economic and political actors to push for a new regime. The question is how this change is going to allow Congo-Brazzaville to interact positively with the global economy, or more specifically, how much social and political actors will incorporate the principles of the new techno-economic regime so as to generate a beneficial interaction with the global political economy.

CHAPTER IV
CONCEPT AND CONTEXT
OF THE NEW TECHNO-ECONOMIC REGIME

Introduction

This chapter presents the conceptual and contextual framework of the study. The use of the concept of the new techno-economic regime is justified by the idea that technological change has determined the evolution of the global economy causing a transformation that requires the adjustment of productive systems and socioeconomic formations at the global and domestic levels. In addition, the neoliberal mode of regulation constitutes the ideological reference that this socioeconomic restructuring follows. The first part of the chapter deals with the theoretical framework of the new techno-economic regime. The particularity of this regime is highlighted by first critically examining the old technological regime and its impact on the Sub-Saharan African economic structures. The effect of this regime in Sub-Saharan Africa is that it created a spatial specialization of the economies of the region, which now needs to be transformed into a comparative advantage that promotes exchange of manufactured products, rather than the exchange of primary products for manufactured goods.

This chapter also examines the characteristic trends of the new regime on the basis of such key factors as microelectronics and the dominance of information technology in the new economy. An important element of the analysis is the presentation of the conditions under which this the new techno-economic framework is applicable to

Sub-Saharan Africa. The second part of the chapter is the literature review, which evaluates the discussion on the context and conditions under which change in the global political economy has taken place. The literature review presents the global political economy as the unit of analysis in the sense that the determinants of change at the national level are defined at the level of the global system. In addition, the actors that incorporate change in the domestic socioeconomic structures are influenced by the factors of global change such as neoliberalism and technological change. The process of political liberalization or democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, and particularly in Congo-Brazzaville, takes account of the trends prevailing in the global political economy, even though domestic factors play an important role in pushing for a new political regime and new forms of economic management.

The New Techno-Economic Regime: A Theoretical Framework

Before analyzing the new techno-economic regime, it is important to give a brief presentation of the old technological regime. It emerged in the context of a consolidated classical international economic system that encompassed many differentiated economic structures and productive geographic areas. This international economic system and its related technological regime have distinct features that comprise the political system, the organization of productive structures at the domestic and the international levels, and the modes of regulation.

The Old Technological Regime

Central to the old technological regime is the state providing legal support to the monopolistic behaviors of emerging giant firms, cartels and trusts through regulation and, in some cases, ownership of monopolies and public utilities. At the same time, the emergence of these firms, starting in the 1880s, was instrumental in the expansion of the capitalist world economy. This expansion was associated with the integration of overseas territories into European national economies, thereby creating a stratification of the world economy, and resulting in the development of extended socioeconomic formations. The regulation of these extended systems rested on the importance of the state of the dominant economies, and motivated by protectionism, the regulating state gave a national identity to newly integrated colonies. As Alfredo Robles notes, “while the formation’s material base is not necessarily national, the state’s importance in the superstructure confers on the formation an essentially national character” (Robles, 1993:43). This national emphasis is what induced monopolistic companies to seek support from the state to prevent foreign intrusion in their secured investment territories. Conflicts between firms were resolved by resorting to the state. The classical international system reflected the notion of nation-state and operated as a system of relations between national economies.

The expansion of the capitalist economy to new territories beyond European national structures is at the roots of the rise of colonialism. At the same time, the old technological regime, in which this expansion was embedded, emerged with modernity,

which was a phase indicating the political and economic maturity and a self-confidence that motivated European countries to dominate the world external to them. The metaphor of maturity is reminiscent of Kantian understanding of Enlightenment that constitutes a “way out” from immaturity, whereby no external authority imposes a limit to the use of reason. Modernity underlies capitalism in the sense that the latter entered a phase of new and greater productivity through enhanced capabilities that contributed to economic “maturity” or progress and the exercise of liberty. Technological development is embedded in this perspective reflecting the capability of reason to transcend the uncertainty of human history. It generated new economic possibilities that justified the expansion of European national economies, giving rise to colonialism as both a “civilizing” conquest and an economic necessity.

On the other hand, monopolistic trading companies had a colonial role in connivance with national imperial powers. Jean Suret-Canale points out that “it was through the medium of trade that colonial development took place” (Suret-Canale, 1971:3). Colonialism is tied to this context of the classical international economic system because it reinforced the theory of resource endowment or specialization that is part of the central argument of classical and neoclassical theories. It consolidated an international division of labor reflecting technological determinism, leading to the specialization of European countries in manufactured goods and sub-Saharan African territories and future independent states and other colonized territories in the production of raw materials.

The Old Technological Regime and the Impact of Spatial Specialization on Sub-Saharan African Economies

The technological determinism of the classical international economic system imposed limits to technological diffusion into sub-Saharan African societies. The prevailing modes of regulation on which this system was based relegated sub-Saharan African societies to an exploitative situation from which it was difficult for Africans to initiate decisions affecting technology transfer and learn processes of the transformation of raw materials. Technology diffusion is a function of the active involvement of an economy in processes used to generate technological change. The economic structure that governed the relationship between sub-Saharan African societies and colonial powers, stemming from unequal relations of power, did not allow for active involvement on the part of the region. It prevented Africans from deciding their technological future and constituted an impediment to the spread and use of manufacturing techniques by sub-Saharan African populations. Foreign investment by colonial enterprises, which would have been a mechanism of supply to a technological base, was concentrated in areas that accounted for the extraction and the export of raw materials and primary agricultural products. Thus, mining and agricultural enterprises had a particular significance in introducing a type of technology into sub-Saharan Africa, which worked to the benefit of colonial firms and European economies.

Insofar as only a limited number of sectors were exposed to technological diffusion, for which the primary importance was the interests of European national economies, the overall structure of sub-Saharan African economies followed a pattern of development determined by two different modes of production. On the one hand, the

industrial sector of extractive industry was established and was given an outward orientation with the predominance of export and trading activities. Hence, mining prospects and trading requirements dictated high productivity in the prevailing monopolistic competition and forced sub-Saharan African economies to adopt required, thus limited, technology without really incorporating it in the daily social existence. The result was that, because of their limited scope and the importance of external interests, technological innovations that colonial rule introduced to Africa “failed to provide effective imitation or significant transfer of new methods of production” (Wilkins, 1976:27). It is not by mere chance that the incorporation of some of the technologies created an outward looking orientation of sub-Saharan African socioeconomic formations.

On the other hand, the failure to transform the traditional techniques resulted in the existence of two parallel modes of production that functioned with two different orientations, thereby impeding the creation of a local basis for technological change in the overall structure of the sub-Saharan African economies. There was the dominant mode of production using technological innovation to suit its interests in which local social groups had no say. This led to the emergence of what Thomas De Gregori identifies as “subcultural frontier.” This term points to the dominated category of socioeconomic actors and implies the existence of “a group of people who do not have a full participating role in the culture and are considered outsiders or strangers” (De Gregori, 1969:19). The adequacy of the concept of frontier in the interpretation of the coexistence of modern technology and traditional techniques underscores the marginal character of local social institutions in the process of technology diffusion. This limited

the ability of the institutional base to promote technology transfer. To this is associated the existence of subsistence and informal economy, which is characterized by its marginality from the mainstream of technological trends.

Congo-Brazzaville experienced this general pattern of political and socioeconomic creation, and was formed as the colonial Middle Congo and as part of the colony of French Equatorial Africa, which was the extension of the French national socioeconomic formation. The French colonial administration settled down in the territory and established centralized governing methods through the use of authoritarian political means and the exclusion of foreign powers, giving French trading companies the leeway to uncontrolled economic accumulation and social exploitation. This gave the French concessionaires privileged access to, and monopoly of, land and resources over foreign companies. The French trading companies introduced limited industrial activities confined to the extraction of minerals destined for exportation, with a few exceptions, for instance, in the production of palm oil, which was processed locally. Timber and agricultural products such as coffee, cocoa, rubber were produced for export. Rather than creating manufacturing systems in the territory, French companies favored a trade economy thereby reducing the productive capability of local populations to small individual quantities of agricultural products to be exchanged for very little cash or insignificant imported goods (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972; Suret-Canale, 1971). This limited the penetration of modern manufacturing methods into the local productive habits and did not develop large-scale productive units.

In the independence period, the same trade patterns continued under national management. The end of colonial rule left Congo-Brazzaville with limited and obsolete

manufacturing industry that used a strategy of import substitution. The mining sector continued to exist as extractive industry without the complement of processing and manufacturing capabilities. Thus, the old technological regime persisted and maintained Congo-Brazzaville in the old model of comparative advantage. Moreover, the discovery and exploitation of oil added momentum to the continuation of the old regime since oil and energy constituted the key factors of the old technological model. This shows that the integration of sub-Saharan Africa, in general, and Congo-Brazzaville, in particular, in the international system and the continuation of the technological regime maintained a situation of technological dependence of these societies.

Critique of the Old Technological Regime

An evaluation of the interaction between the old technological regime and Congo-Brazzaville shows that while the colonial mode of accumulation was responsible for some transformation in the traditional modes of production, its policies did not associate such change with the emerging modern productive system it introduced into the country. The establishment of the modern productive system under colonialism and in the subsequent independence era did not replace the decaying traditional organization. Whatever subsisted of these old ways of life was reduced to low or insignificant economic productivity while operating as a parallel economy to modernity. The continued existence of the remnants of old and decaying traditions intensified the difference between the two modes of production.

Technological change was introduced in a disparate manner affecting only few and externally oriented sectors, reflecting the neglect by the dominant actors of the old regime with regard to the systemic resolution of the problem of social and economic weakening of the traditional system. Systemic resolution does not mean the rehabilitation of old modes of production. It involves the matching of new techniques and the transformation of existing modes of production, to create an adjusted, unified, renewed and reinforced socioeconomic system in which these practices might have been used. It posits the idea that technological change comprises adjustment in the long-term behavior of the system. The dominant actors of the old regime, as Freeman would critically say, "have in practice divorced economics from these crucially important processes of change, relegating them to the status of 'residual factors' or 'exogenous shocks'" (Freeman, 1988:2). The result was that only a limited portion of Congo-Brazzaville's socioeconomic system and institutional forms were exposed to technical change and the possibility of adjustment.

The old regime was based on a notion of comparative advantage implying that countries are allocated resources and, on the basis of this allocation and comparative advantage, their place in the international economy was essentially fixed. The main concern was to attain and maintain an equilibrium situation in which the political and socioeconomic evolution of the colonized territories did not challenge the advantage of the dominant actors of the colonial system. This implied that the interaction between Congo-Brazzaville as a colonial territory and the colonial power was established by an exclusive relationship with the colonial power. The notion of exclusivity in this interaction reinforced the idea of stability of the colonial system. The main interest of the

old technological regime was in the performance of productive processes that reinforced the economic benefits of the dominant actors of this mode of accumulation. This limited the concept of techno-economics to production and accumulation.

The Techno-Economic Concept

Techno-economic change affects all structures of socioeconomic, corporate, cultural and political life, causing necessary and important transformations within the system. These transformations are achieved through crises of adjustment, which stem from the incorporation of technological change in production, decision and policy-making structures, and various activities. The adjustment reflecting social and institutional change and adaptation implies the adoption of technologically adapted new ways of conducting politics, business and organizing socioeconomic life. The creation of a new socioeconomic, organizational and political management stems from the emergence of a new regime of regulation associated with a new investment climate and behaviors. New investment opportunities and new incentives for adapted socioeconomic behaviors consolidate the new regime as people begin to enjoy its opportunities and incorporate its determinant factors after a period of learning. The point is that technological innovation and its socioeconomic and political benefits sustain structural and institutional change. The new techno-economic parameters become instrumental in a wide range of sectors that span beyond technological factors.

Technological change is a historical factor. The emergence of new technologies is conditioned by specific industrial, socioeconomic and political conditions. In turn,

particular technological systems have a social significance in the sense that they are a function of social and historical modes of production. Technological systems reflect the dominant socioeconomic and political structures and the regime of accumulation in which they emerge and they bear the mark of their originating context. Freeman and Perez argue that “it matters very much which are the important new technological systems, because they are unique and their effects on private and public R&D and investment strategies, and the government policies, and institutional changes, which are required to advance them, may be very different” (1988:44). Institutional and structural evolution is linked to the development of modes of production. Technological advances enhance the capabilities of institutions to manage social and economic life while economic progress continuously gives a new thrust to technological change.

The techno-economic perspective incorporates the possibility of further developments. Just as technological innovations emerge in the context of already existing technologies, they also relate to a cluster of continuous innovations and transformations, thereby taking particular systemic environments to new levels of evolution. Technological change serves a social purpose as it brings about a mode of production that is characterized by relations of power and ensuing institutions, and evolving socioeconomic formations. By incorporating technological change, these characteristic structures embody the human aspiration to better standards of life. They sustain the emergence of a technology-induced new direction through their improved performance and more adequate problem-solving methods. The incorporation of technological change allows social, economic and political structures to make a shift in

productivity and modes of operation, while it opens up wide range of investments and profit opportunities that foster continuous innovation.

Each technological regime emerges with its set of factors. Regime change reflects the emergence of appropriate key factors within an economic and productive system. Key factors are technological possibilities that constitute the basis for production and use and are associated with the emergence and consolidation of new and growing industrial sectors characterizing a particular swing or long wave in economic evolution. For instance, chips and microelectronics are the key factors of the information and communication technology regime, while energy, especially oil, was the key factor in the preceding, Fordist mass production wave. The consolidation of the change is reflected in the maturity of the key factors. Once a key factor has been identified, the economic system shows signs of transformation through the emergence and rapid growth of new industrial and productive sectors making widespread use of the key factors.

How the key factors are efficiently appraised in social and individual behavior is mostly a matter of the way they contribute to enhancing profitability and a matter of their readiness for use. Freeman and Perez point out three important conditions to be fulfilled by a key factor, in which the new regime finds confirmation and consolidation. First, the costs of the key factor give real signs of rapid decrease. To reflect the transformation of the regime, the relative decline in the costs of the key factor has to be consistent. It also affects not only the use of the key factors, but also the decisions and methods of production, to such an extent that engineers and managers do not feel the need to return to previous modes. The transformation is so great that it reaches the perception and “common sense procedures for engineers and managers” (Freeman and

Perez, 1988:48). The second condition evokes the fact that the system will sustain a continuous production of the key factors over an extended period of time. The key factor will not easily be depleted, but will continue to be available in an almost unlimited manner. For instance, microelectronics, computer chips and software will be continually available as long as these elements are critical in production and contribute to the expansion of the sectors in which they are used. The third condition points to the widespread use of the new key factor affecting the entire economic system “either directly or (more commonly) through a set of related innovations, which both reduce the cost and change the quality of capital equipment, labour inputs, and other inputs to the system.” (Freeman and Perez, 1988:48).

From the standpoint of governing principles, the new techno-economic perspective requires a restructured productive system and organizational setting reflected in an attitude geared toward best practice, while expecting a new skill profile from socioeconomic actors. The competitive edge that the mode of regulation of the new regime imposes and the importance of technological knowledge require that inventors and managers, labor as well as policy-makers adopt a new logic implying the expansion of the scope of operation. Beyond the mere facts of intense productivity, there is, as Freeman and Perez observe, “‘an ideal type’ of productive organization” that unequivocally binds the diverse activities of the actual production wherever they are located in the productive chain and geographically (Freeman and Perez, 1988:58). An important question is whether all geographical regions of the globe present conditions for the applicability of this new techno-economic concept.

Conceptualizing the Trends in the New Techno-Economic Regime

Once the key factor, for instance, microelectronics, has asserted its impact on the socioeconomic and political structures and organizational settings, it becomes obvious that the entire system has begun to move toward a new direction. The demarcation from the previous system is noticeable through the emergence and predominance of new instruments. The acquisition of knowledge helps organizations and social actors to seek new and more efficient practices. The idea of “best practice” goes together with the new necessity of developing the skills of the labor force. Competition compels organizations and individuals to improve their quality of products and service. Improving the quality of labor enhances productivity. Involved in the perspective of efficient productivity is the notion that supports the preference for the low-cost products making use of key factors.

Competition is not limited to strictly economic elements that require the improvement of the quality of products. As techno-economic regimes emerge, the development of products that relate to their key factors reflects a structure of power relations in which dominant actors and producers confront each other. For instance, the ongoing regime of accumulation features conflicts of interests between Microsoft and Netscape, IBM and Apple, and between various Internet providers. Sometimes, the new regime of accumulation promoting competition and *laissez-faire* is challenged by governmental policies that tend to moderate and regulate accumulation.

Another element of the new techno-economic era is the restructuring of the industrial sector under neoliberal precepts. The imperatives of the accumulation process compel capital to locate different branches of industry, R&D, skilled machining and

fabrication, semi-skilled assembly, administration and services in various regions of the globe. The search for the best location of national and international investment reflects the re-organization of many sectors of the economy in the context of a competitive global economy. The location of investment implies the ability of capital to take advantage of the socioeconomic and political conditions, or as Freeman and Perez put it, this new pattern is predominant “as the change in the relative cost structure transforms comparative advantages.” (Freeman and Perez, 1988:59).

The key factors do not operate in a vacuum. They need a set of substructures that sustain the use of the new products to which they give rise. This creates an external environment in which the key factors will be operational. Entire socioeconomic and political structures are required to respond to the emergence of the new factors. Today this can be illustrated, for instance, by investments in human development to enable socioeconomic actors to use the new products based on microelectronics and telecommunications systems. Education in the use of computer and information technology can be understood from this perspective. In this particular instance, this innovative process entails the development of what can be termed as “the human capital concept” (Kiljunen, 1989:113). Organizations, institutions and social actors are required to adapt themselves to the innovative context. In other instances, this context has intensified the development of R&D facilities. By and large, this trend of substructural investments facilitates the diffusion of the new technologies and technological knowledge. Substructural investments are investments made to facilitate and guarantee the widespread use of the key factors and related products. They provide the social basis of the key factors. For instance, without investment in learning or education, consumers

cannot adequately use the key factor of microelectronics. The knowledge aspect is relative to the capabilities of the environments and the agents to endorse the logic and requirements of the new regime. The substructural investments are necessary to consolidate the existence of the new technology.

What happens in the world economy affects national policies and the socioeconomic and political behavior of individuals within a national entity. The new techno-economic regime emerges with new conditions that influence the ways nations deal with each other. Technological change relates to the intensified industrial competitiveness, on the one hand, and to the trends of globalization of the world economy, on the other hand. The location of manufacturing production has changed substantially while a new geographic pattern of trade in manufactured goods and financial markets has developed at a global scale. Thanks to the mobility of enterprises and technology, an important precondition for industrial production has been made accessible to those agents, organizations and nations with sufficient technological knowledge. Multinational institutions and enterprises span the whole world, creating sites of technology diffusion through the decentralizing of production units. This globalization of production sometimes leads to the integration of industrial regions. The survival of national economies and polities depends on their link to global economically and technologically strategic spheres and to such engines of globalization and technology diffusion as TNCs, and on their openness to global opportunities for socioeconomic and political development. The political development of a particular polity is affected by what is being decided and what goes on at the global level. In the era of information technology, no nation remains untouched by the trends of the global political economy.

The task of national institutions and organizations is to create the most appropriate structures and adapt existing ones so that they profitably incorporate global trends.

Information Technology

Information technology constitutes an important trend in the new technoeconomic regime. It is characterized by the development in computer and telecommunications systems with an impact on production. Technology has entered an advanced electronic phase and conceptualization whereby communications can be achieved at an unprecedented pace and rate. The site of emergence of information technology is the electronics industry where changes have propelled telecommunications and computing to the forefront with an unprecedented preeminence in the system of production domestically and globally. Information technology refers to the integration of telecommunications systems and computing capabilities that make the dissemination, storing and processing of data and knowledge possible through technological infrastructures.

The regime that predominated the post-war period, preceding the information technology era, centered around the use of oil and energy as key factors. Its productive base and organization expanded through large-scale and extensive units concentrated in mass production of durable goods. Oil, chemicals and automobile industries constitute the prototypes of this productive organization whereby the structure of production allocated a particular task to workers aligned along an assembly-line to produce massive identical objects. Above this line of execution was a managerial structure. A hierarchical

setting characterized the organization of the factory, and this configuration displayed a sharp distinction between the administrative body and the workers. Freeman and Perez describe this type of firm as a “corporation with a separate and complex hierarchical management and administrative structure, including in-house R&D and operating in oligopolistic markets in which advertising and marketing activities played a major role.” (Freeman and Perez, 1988:60). To connect between different productive units, administrative spheres and distribution systems, this type of organization had to rely on massive, costly and extended infrastructures creating a scattered, albeit organized, system vitalized by the circulation of agents and merchandise from productive units to service stations and other important related locations.

The information technology regime brings about a different way of handling the dispersion of production units through the establishment of integrated links between diverse units. Design and conception, management and administration, production, storage and marketing are all connected through a system that reduces the time and space-induced constraints. The new mode of production is adequately termed as “systemation”, and it is distinguished from “mechanization and automation” prevailing in the former regime. (Freeman and Perez, 1988:61). The transformation of the productive organization indicates what Kenney and Florida refer to as a “fundamental realignment of the forces and relations of production” (Kenney and Florida, 1993:14).

The improvement that the use of the new technology has caused is also felt through the creation of value. Information handling and processing capability through modern microelectronics, and other technologies, such as optoelectronics and artificial intelligence, has enhanced productivity. Not only do new storage and retrieval systems,

new forms of control like robotics and the capacity of analyzing information through computer aided design restructure the system of industries, but they also affect what products are made just as they determine the way the production chain is organized. With enhanced networking capabilities created by the information system, the restructuring of the industrial sector implies that capital can locate different branches of industry, R&D, skilled machining and fabrication, semi-skilled assembly, administration and services in various regions throughout the globe. In other instances, information technology has given a new shape to the world financial market, liberating it from the spatial condition. Wriston notes that “the new world financial market is not a geographic location to be found on a map but, rather, more than two hundred thousand electronic monitors in trading rooms all over the world that are linked together” (Wriston, 1992:61). With enhanced mobility and speed in service activities, vast magnitudes of capital circulate around the globe defying the limitations of national borders and conveying or responding to increasingly rapid transmissions of market signals.

The new focus bears on promoting mental or intellectual abilities over physical skill labor. This development shows a transition from companies whose identity was essentially concentrated on manufacturing material goods to new types of organizations that structure their existence around thinking and generating information (Kodama, 1991). Geoffrey Henderson gives a similar interpretation granting a central place to knowledge in the development of the technologies impacting the global production of high technology (Henderson, 1991). The dissemination of information through an integrated system makes knowledge an important tool and commodity for all. This compels nations and independent organizations to create suitable environments for the

circulation of information to tap into the global pool of knowledge. Adequate knowledge refers to both the availability of information and the skills required for the use of the equipment that analyzes the information and translates it into a useful material. Investment in telecommunications and related infrastructure has become a main focus of economic development and policy making.

The concept of *systemation* evokes the integration of all the components that shape the structure of the creation of value. Such an integration of structure and human creative capability is widely sought because it accounts for growth in productivity. The computerization of productive equipment and organization enhances human ability, causing a shift in the labor profile and in organizational habits. Labor is no longer limited to the manipulation of machines, but it is expanded through the acquisition of abstract mathematical reasoning that facilitates the interpretation of data transmitted through computerized equipment. The dialectical interaction between human labor and the productive organization leads to a synthesis of intellectual and physical or manual applications. The computerization of equipment takes the integration of production and human intellectual labor to full bloom by pushing for continuous innovation. Thomson observes that “the process of inventing augments the innovative potential of the organization” (Thomson, 1993:267-68). This is revealed through the revolutions of telecommunications systems and the incorporation of genetic engineering, computer aided engineering (CAE), computer integrated manufacturing (CIM) within engineering models, and the use of computer aided design (CAD) by many and diverse systems of production. These new developments tend to facilitate the labor process while they contribute to reducing the costs of production and improving the quality of products.

With advanced computerization and the new developments in telecommunications, the transmission of data between different parts of the productive system no longer requires a physical presence. The restructuring of labor also involves the transformation of the office and the creation of a virtual workplace. More than a geographical dismantling of the office, it is the deconstruction of the traditional corporation that is underway to fit the requirements of global competition. More and more corporations are now moving into a virtual space that consolidates what some analysts have termed as the "unreal-estating" of corporate and professional structures (Kenney and Florida, 1993:14). The implication of the moving office is that the traditional corporation of the shop floor is being supplanted and recreated to adapt to the needs of customers. From the point of view of the corporation, the de-linking of spatial ties to the physical workplace means the availability and perhaps the extension of the service wherever and whenever it is needed. The underlying perspective is to enhance productivity and adapt to intense global competition. The use of information technology helps firms reach out to the confines of the universe, while they have outgrown their national boundaries, in quest for more and more profit.

There is a social process involved in the ongoing restructuring of the office and corporation. Corporations cannot adjust to the new productive environment without organizational skills. They are now faced with the need to embark on continuous management and employee training. In addition to organizational capabilities, the new regime requires high-level skills for an adequate use of information technology. Some countries are better off than others are and one can speak of computer illiteracy for the bulk of the population in the developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa in general, and

in Congo-Brazzaville, in particular. In Congo-Brazzaville, the problem of computer illiteracy is coupled with the lack of adequate information and telecommunications and maintenance infrastructures. The development of required skills calls for social policies aimed at creating the necessary infrastructure for learning and adapting the new technology to the needs of society. As noted in the United Nations' initiative for the creation of an African information society, "the emphasis is on the need to support decision making at all levels and provide information and communication infrastructure for government, business and society to enlighten the process of development" (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 1996:1). Social and political options in Congo-Brazzaville have to focus, *inter alia*, on increasing the ability to use technology, also providing a more appropriate working climate given the new environment and requirements. Such choices should not neglect the necessity of adapting technology to social contexts.

Contextual Applicability of the New Techno-Economic Regime in Sub-Saharan Africa

Basic Conditions for an Appropriate Restructuring

Three conditions have to be taken into account both from an analytical and policy-making point of view in the restructuring efforts in sub-Saharan Africa, in general, and in Congo-Brazzaville, in particular. These are the centrality of change, the importance of learning and socio-historical primacy.

First, the new techno-economic perspective brings about a different notion of change that assumes that technological and socio-institutional and political systems continuously evolve in response to both internal and external factors. In contrast to classical analysis, change is perceived as also being endogenous because it has its source and cause partly in the system. It is caused by the development of human aspirations, by the need felt by a society to improve its socioeconomic conditions and political structures, the change in people's economic tastes and political values and the need to have an enabling socioeconomic and political environment. The new techno-economic perspective analyzes technological change as embedded in transformative capabilities of the socioeconomic and political system. Sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Congo-Brazzaville in particular need to create the conditions that facilitate technological and structural change focusing on the improvement of socioeconomic and political conditions.

There is a cognitive dimension, since change in the structure is not possible without knowledge defining the context and the orientation of the system. The knowledge aspect of change reinforces the importance of learning and is relative to the capabilities of the system and its agents to endorse the logic of the new paradigm.

The second condition involves the undeniable importance of learning. The deepest degree of social and political transformation is not attained through the creation of highly structured institutions, nor does it result from the borrowing and implementation of the neoliberal principles in the cultures of Congo-Brazzaville. Doubtless these are instrumental in the process of socioeconomic and political development and their impact on individual and social existence is undeniable. However,

the social, economic and political transformation that reaches the deepest levels of human development is entrenched in microbehaviors whereby individual agents open themselves up to new concepts and modes in search for answers to their existential human needs and aspirations. Socioeconomic and political transformation still is a matter of microscopic variety, and since individuals have needs and aspirations that vary from one to another, it is critical to consider the variability of circumstances and orientations shaping the whole project of socioeconomic and political transformation. There is a conditioning relationship between individual behaviors and aspirations and socioeconomic circumstances of transformation. The restructuring process draws its consistency from the evolutionary principle of adaptivity whereby individuals are transformed by what they learn from external and internal sources, while the quality of organizational and institutional forms is enhanced by the new knowledge and ability that social and economic actors acquire.

The survival of the system depends not essentially on the fact that the system instills its ideological principles or economic mechanisms to create a collective identity, but on the way individuals internalize these principles, mechanisms and external influence. It is important to say that learning does not necessarily take an institutional form often available to a few, but it also depends on the diffusion of ideas and cultures within a given society. There is a natural diffusion of ideas and cultures that reaches to the confines of society, even though the circulation of these ideas and knowledge denotes a degree of alteration in the process of dispersion. Restructuring is sustained when organizational and institutional forms or the system in general have able individuals and,

at the same time, it points to the requirement that the system learn how to make use of acquired and reinforced individual, cultural, socioeconomic and political ability.

Moreover, the reflection on individual and social learning for the sake of socioeconomic and political restructuring pays particular attention to the amplitude of the dimensions that the learning experience can reach. The greater the needs, the ampler the dimensions of socioeconomic and political restructuring and the more compelling the learning experience. If the requirement for restructuring evokes the need for fundamental change, as in the case for Congo-Brazzaville, the learning experience needs to reach back to the foundation of human experience. That is, there is no meaningful restructuring unless individuals, organizational and institutional forms and the system of their interaction institute learning channels that tap into the basic human needs.

To consolidate its restructuring process and create the conditions for stable existence, it is important that Congo-Brazzaville create structures that stimulate learning. Human capital theory deals with this concern and considers the impact of qualitative changes that occur in human resources on the whole economic system. It provides a positive insight by asserting the positive contribution of the development of human capabilities to economic growth. From the point of view of the system, there is an interest in assuming high costs in investing in the development of human resources because of the returns it can expect to reap. Without the development of skills of its population, Congo-Brazzaville cannot compete in the global environment. National policies should reflect the understanding of, and the commitment to, this requirement.

The third condition indicates the primacy of the socio-historical context. The process of social and political formation is determined by the way society incorporates

change as a driving force for its transformation. Change is assured through the adoption of new ideas, new tastes, new worldviews, new modes of production, new socioeconomic and political structures, upgrading or degrading the existing ways of life and socioeconomic and political structures. This dynamic determination reflects the significance that society gives to adopted and new elements and to the way these interact with old ones to sustain the evolution of the system. A sound assessment of socioeconomic and political development takes into account the social and historical circumstances of each society. The meaning that the Congolese society will give to the fundamentals of a socioeconomic and political model is contextualized and particularly adapted to the historical point at which Congo-Brazzaville is in the course of its socioeconomic and political development.

Conclusion

Industrial organization and transformation is a response to technological imperatives that determine production, distribution and the relationship between the firm and the market, as well as the relationships within the firms and between firms. Firms find great advantage in their combination of work organization and the use of technology associated with the development of labor skills, as these elements constitute important sources of industrial productivity.

The transformation of managerial organization is embedded in the necessity of coordinating and accommodating the functional activities deriving from technological innovations. The emergence of new technologies has affected the capacities of

management to control and conduct the affairs of the firm, for example, by making possible new developments in transportation, communication and enhancing the management's capacity to access information relevant to business activity. There is a need for management to incorporate new technological capabilities, not only for the achievements of given goals, but also to secure continued existence in an environment that is marked by competition. The changing circumstances of the market economy can only be beneficial to those enterprises that are ready and able to reinforce their capacities and propensities to conduct business. The market economy is based on the competitive nature of firms that continue to adapt their structures in accordance with the evolution of technology. Schumpeter had already showed the mutual dependence between the development of capitalism and the competitive inter-firm relationships, which rests on the development of new products, as well as the adaptation to new processes. Auerbach (1988:109) hypothesizes that "the almost inexorable tendency for the technical facility of management to increase over time, both in terms of the level of relevant skills and the number of individuals so trained implies a secular tendency for the rate of competitiveness to increase in the capitalist market economy."

Neoliberalism has been pushing for this adaptation to the market economy. Neoliberal forms of political practices and socioeconomic management have had their appeal and influence increased since the 1970s, emerging with the triumph of capitalism and its components of free enterprise and private ownership over authoritarian systems of resource allocation. Moreover, the wave of democratization swept the world in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, partly as a result of the transformation of domestic social and political relationships, and partly because of the transformation of political and

socioeconomic relationships at the global level. The result has been the expansion of neoliberal democratic culture, which has often been interpreted as offering better opportunities for socioeconomic development and for eliciting the best of human capabilities than centralized regimes. This explains why, for countries formerly governed by centralized regimes, such as Congo-Brazzaville, socioeconomic and political restructuring has involved the two interrelated components of political and socioeconomic development.

Neoliberalism insists on the stability of the policy environment. The state is the instrument that creates the conditions for the operation of the market. It is necessary that the state function adequately to fulfill this requirement. The neoliberal state may have components of the Lockean, Benthamine and Hobbesian philosophies. The point is that in the liberal tradition, the state has always been in the service of capital, no matter what ideological tenets are dominant in its form. Under each moment of this tradition, the capitalist state has been able to adjust after periods of crisis, allowing the restructuring of the capitalist system as a whole. That is to say that despite the dominance of the market or capital in the neoliberal order, change in the economic system cannot be sustained without the adjustment of the economic policy environment. The state and the market are mutually reinforcing. Therefore, transforming the state in Congo-Brazzaville involves adopting new rules whereby the state facilitates the functioning of the market economy.

CHAPTER V
POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING IN CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

Introduction

This study is based on the idea that political restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville reflects the worldwide impact of global change and constitutes an adjustment to the global political economy. This adjustment has been determined by such factors as the personal interests of the political leadership, the political conflicts based on ethnic divisions, popular demands marked by the people's determination to benefit from political change, among others. This chapter analyzes the dynamics of the restructuring process and its objective is to show that these dynamics are evidence of interaction between historical conditions in Congo-Brazzaville and global factors.

The chapter is divided into six parts. The first examines the global factors contributing to the restructuring process in Congo-Brazzaville. The second part presents the framework of historicity, implying that the unfolding restructuring process in Congo-Brazzaville cannot be grasped without understanding the historical circumstances, the strategies developed by local actors to participate in the changing society. The third part deals with the first phase of the restructuring process in Congo-Brazzaville, and defines it as regime change. The main characteristic of this phase is political liberalization and the creation of new rules governing political processes. The fourth part examines the dismantling of democratic institutions in Congo-Brazzaville. The fifth part is about post-

conflict reconstruction and the strategies adopted by the new Sassou-Nguesso regime to control the transition. Last is the section that presents a reflection on the way in which the process of political restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville has incorporated neoliberal principles and the motivations behind this effort.

Global Factors and Restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville

The End of Soviet Influence

Change in Soviet foreign policy came with a realization on the part of the Soviet leadership of its incapacity to sustain ideological and organizational hegemony. The “new thinking,” initiated by Gorbachev and his close associates, opened new political options for countries sharing the socialist ideology. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, and the integration of East and West Germany eliminated the very existence of a “socialist bloc” as the sphere of influence for the USSR. The widespread rejection of communism especially in Europe dissolved the international connections through which assistance to anti-imperialist forces would be channeled. In many former communist and socialist countries, as political ardor failed to translate into desired socioeconomic development, it became easy for people to condemn the disillusionment created by socioeconomic policies modeled on the Soviet Union (Brzezinski, 1990:210). Similarly, within the USSR, the Leninist political order experienced a disavowal instigated by aspirations for pluralism, freedom, market values, and the desire to become a modern society (Breslauer, 1992:201). Moreover, domestic disenchanting political

circumstances reflected a rapid disintegration of economic viability and political stability within the USSR. This reinforced the concern on the part of the proponents of the “new thinking” to embrace a different course for foreign policy. Breslauer (1992:201) observes that the socioeconomic uncertainty manifested in the “separation among the national minorities, and an accelerating decline in economic growth and consumer welfare, have led new thinkers to consciously and publicly subordinate Soviet foreign policy ambitions largely to the goal of securing Western assistance to prevent chaos at home.”

The death of socialist internationalism and the collapse of Leninism within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe meant an end to traditional Cold War Soviet activism on the African continent. As Breslauer notes, Soviet foreign policy became more concessionary and isolationist. In response to US pressures, Moscow has agreed to stop supplying weaponry to satellite regimes (Breslauer, 1992:216).

The “new thinking” postulated that replacing military instruments with political and economic instruments would provide Moscow with some ability to maintain global influence. The political turmoils of 1990-91 in the Soviet Union, however, undercut the credibility of this approach. In consequence, Gorbachev decided to withdraw Soviet forces from Afghanistan, pressed Luanda and Havana to compromise, expanded diplomatic ties with South Africa, and began the process of dissociation from the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia. The regimes in these countries and others formerly backed by the Soviet Union, including Congo-Brazzaville, were led by the change of tone in the Soviet Union, to contemplate a less radical stance in foreign policy. For instance, in 1988, a diplomatic marathon in which Soviet and U.S. officials took active part, led to a

series of agreements, including the Protocol of Brazzaville, between ideologically opposed political systems in the Southern African region. The core of these dealings involved “a deal based upon a linked withdrawal of Cubans from Angola and South Africans from Namibia” (Chazan and others, 1992:369). The Protocol of Brazzaville established a Joint Commission that included the United States and the Soviet Union as observers to oversee the agreements. The participation of Congo-Brazzaville in this process reflected the impact of international factors on the country. An interview with Chester Crocker, US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa during the Reagan administration, revealed that Sassou-Nguesso and his Foreign Minister were committed to this process because they saw that the Angolans were as well as the Cubans. In addition, the South Africans were hinting very crudely that it would be profitable for the Congolese to be cooperative. Finally, according to Mr. Crocker, it suited Sassou-Nguesso's sense of ego and amour propre and he may have believed it would lead to better relations with Western nations.

The events in Southern Africa in 1988 illustrate the fact that the “new thinking” ushered in a new era marked by prospects of conflict resolution based on joint US-Soviet or multilateral negotiation. The diplomacy that generated the Protocol of Brazzaville indicated that while the “new thinking” wished to maintain Soviet status as a global power, it showed the desirability of settling conflicts by peaceful means, and through East-West cooperation, indicating a move from military to political means of conflict resolution (Breslauer, 1992:213).

Soviet hopes for a long-term structural relationship with socialist regimes in Africa began to decline. By early 1991, the governments of Benin, Congo-Brazzaville,

Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia had all deemphasized or forsaken their verbal commitment to Marxist-Leninism. They began to move toward the establishment of multi-party systems in their countries, although the regimes in Angola and Ethiopia had acted less decisively in this regard than their counterparts in Benin, Congo-Brazzaville and Mozambique (Albright, 1991:76).

As the full depth of the USSR's economic problems became manifest, Soviet leaders showed a growing reluctance to commit precious economic resources to the Third World. Within the Soviet Union, critical assessment of Soviet cooperation with developing countries became salient, calling for a more effective aid to the developing world, characterized by public accountability both on the part of the Soviet leadership and the leadership of the recipient country. By the time of the 28th CPSU Congress in July 1990, General Secretary Gorbachev indicated that the government "was rethinking our cooperation with Third World countries and making certain adjustments there" (Albright, 1992:82).

Concrete Soviet behavior already accorded with this trend. In 1984-88, Moscow's economic credits to African states dropped both in absolute terms, as compared with 1981-85. In 1984-88, the USSR's economic aid agreements with African countries came to only a little more than \$1.9 billion, whereas the figure for 1981-85 had reached \$3.6 billion. Soviet military deliveries to these states in 1984-88 amounted to \$18.9 billion, while such deliveries had been \$20.3 billion in 1981-85 (Albright, 1992:82). Soviet foreign policy toward Africa showed signs of change when the Soviet leadership made no effort in preventing African allies from seeking support from Western countries. For instance, Soviet leaders did nothing to dissuade the Mozambicans when

they began to turn to the West in the early 1980s. Whether it was a lack of resources or fear of a damaging clash with South Africa or both, the Soviets rather meekly surrendered their earlier preeminence in Maputo (Albright, 1992).

At the same time, Soviet policy makers began to actively work toward diminishing their role in Ethiopia by reducing military and technical assistance to the Mengistu government in the late 1980s, and Moscow expressed its desire to support a political solution to the Eritrean war. The end of the 1980s witnessed a transformation in the Soviet aspirations from instilling revolutionary change in the region to participation in multilateral diplomatic undertakings to resolve conflict in the region (Chazan and others, 1992:409).

The Impact of the Collapse of Communism in Congo-Brazzaville

According to Radu and Somerville (1989:220), the Congolese socialist leadership sought to use its economic ties with the Soviet bloc to boost its ideological orientation, and reduce “dependence upon France or the ‘Western imperialism,’ as represented by the IMF, the World Bank.” However, despite efforts to reinforce economic ties with the communist bloc, “the amount of economic assistance received from communist states has never been very important economically and that obtained from the Soviet Union was proportionally the lowest” (Radu and Somerville, 1989:220). Of all communist states, China’s contribution to economic assistance to Congo-Brazzaville was the most important. China surpassed the Soviet Union in economic assistance to Congo-Brazzaville. Between 1963 and 1974, of a total of \$42 million in communist economic

assistance (credits and grants) extended to Congo-Brazzaville, China provided \$25 million. Of the total of \$163 million received by 1978, \$75 million was provided by Beijing, compared with \$28 million from Moscow and \$60 million from Eastern Europe (Radu and Somerville, 1989:221).

The emergence of the “new thinking” in the Soviet Union and the collapse of the communist bloc brought an end to the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, a solidarity framework for economic support among communist countries. This meant the elimination of aid commitment by former communist countries to Congo-Brazzaville through this channel. Moreover, economic relations between Congo-Brazzaville and countries of the former Warsaw Pact were affected by the necessity faced by these countries to deal with their own restructuring in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet influence. In 1991, the Congolese Ministry of Education reported that many Congolese students left Romania and Bulgaria. Under cooperation agreements, these students benefited from study grants provided by the governments of these countries, through international solidarity between socialist countries. The end of the communist era dissolved the basis of this solidarity and weakened the commitment of Eastern European countries made during the socialist era (Bulletin de l’ACI, 1992).

Though in 1986, Moscow and Brazzaville vowed to continue their ties, as both countries celebrated the fifth anniversary of the signing of their treaty of friendship and cooperation, Congo-Brazzaville could not rely on this cooperation to cope with its economic difficulties caused by the collapse of oil prices. Not only did the Soviet Union warn about revising its commitment to provide resources to developing countries, its economic aid to Congo-Brazzaville also experienced a decline and ended with the

collapse of the Soviet Union. Economic assistance from Moscow declined from \$28 million in the early 1980s to \$17 million in 1991-93 (Centre National de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques, 1994). Despite the collapse of the communist world, Congo-Brazzaville continued cooperation with China, characterized by economic and technical aid. Chinese economic assistance remained important (Hodgkinson, 1993). However, some analysts relate its decline to the political instability that Congo-Brazzaville experienced throughout the 1990s. China's economic aid to Congo-Brazzaville amounted to \$35 million in the early 1990s (Bulletin de l'ACI, 1992).

The Soviet *perestroika* and events in Eastern Europe could not have left Congo-Brazzaville indifferent. In 1989, the political leadership launched a campaign of reflection and debates, which the ruling Labor Party (PCT) controlled and monitored. Initially intended to be a review of the country's socioeconomic situation, the debate gradually became a rejection of socialist economic and political institutions and a demand for liberalization (Breton, 1997:267). In November 1989, President Sassou-Nguesso convened a session of the Central Committee of the Labor Party, to set up a commission charged with a review of events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997; Breton, 1997). The task of the commission was to evaluate the significance of these events by examining the repercussions on Africa and drawing appropriate conclusions for Congo-Brazzaville and to suggest possible options. The commission reached the conclusion that "switch to a multi-party system was inevitable, and that the Congo should go about it" while it "called attention to our need to take into account our people's level of education and the country's general political and economic realities." The recommendations of the commission indicated "a gradual, step-by-step approach, to

prevent the process of democratic transition from getting out of hand” (Sassou-Nguesso, 1997:50). Meanwhile, as the disastrous economic situation of the country was being increasingly blamed on the PCT leadership, opening a session of the National Assembly in May 1990, President Sassou-Nguesso reiterated the theme of searching for proper measures to correct the structural dysfunction of the economy. Although the emphasis was on economic issues, he nevertheless mentioned the wave of popular demands for a more democratic and liberal political system to which the PCT ought to respond adequately (Breton, 1997:269).

The conclusions reached by the 4th Extraordinary Congress of the Labor Party encouraged a democratic opening of the party by widening its membership to all. While it maintained the fundamental values of socialism, it abandoned the Marxist-Leninist reference. The PCT believed that it was necessary to rid itself of its ideological baggage and revise its statutes to invite a wider participation of Congolese in its programs. The Congress decided to separate party and state by eliminating the guiding role of the party within state structures. It proposed the establishment of a multi-party system in the context of pluralist democracy. This was to be preceded by a transitional phase destined to create “necessary objective and subjective conditions” leading to a harmonious democracy (Breton, 1997:271). The process of democratization to be thus established would reinforce mechanisms intended to guarantee fundamental and individual liberties in accordance with the rule of law (Breton, 1997). Other important specific measures of institutional separation between the party and the state involved the eradication of the party’s control over state enterprises and administrative functions. In addition, the new

institutional framework implied that party functionaries were no longer remunerated by the state (Breton, 1997).

The political situation the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s consequently encouraged Congo-Brazzaville to consider more active cooperation with Western countries, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States. Along with the reopening of embassies, cooperation with these countries was contingent on the economic liberalization that the Congolese leadership announced in 1989 (Englebert 1993). In February 1990, Congo-Brazzaville and the United States opened a new phase of cooperation during President Sassou-Nguesso's state visit to the United States. This new cooperation led to extended protection granted to American investors in Congo-Brazzaville (Miller, 1990). In the same vein of extending the orbit of international cooperation, in June 1990, Congo-Brazzaville and the Republic of Korea reopened diplomatic relations, and in 1991, diplomatic ties with Israel were restored (Englebert, 1993). This new situation contributed to diversifying the sources of international aid for Congo-Brazzaville.

The Global Aid Regime and the Emergence of Political Conditionality

Among the factors influencing political change in Sub-Saharan Africa in general, and Congo-Brazzaville in particular, is the aid regime instituted in the 1980s. The aid regime is defined as "the system of principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures governing the regulation of development assistance" (Gibbon, 1993:36). The main development of the first half of the 1980s was a growth in aid coordination and

cross-conditionality of conditions simultaneously formulated by donor countries and multilateral agencies. Gibbon (1993:39) notes that the regulation of economic aid “involved bringing the main bilaterals into line with an agreement already reached between the IMF and the World Bank, to the effect that institutions would not make new commitments to recipients who had sought funding without IMF stabilization programs being already in place.”

In the early 1980s, aid coordination became a function assumed by existing multilateral institutions and donor country consultative groups. Instituting an agreement to evaluate policy implementation, with the assistance of World Bank’s country reports, these groups became institutionalized mechanisms for a formalized review of recipient’s progress with policy reforms. In the early 1980s, the World Bank leadership role in the aid regime was consolidated by its elaboration of a new aid discourse supported by donor countries. This discourse was articulated in its clearest form in relation to Africa, by identifying main areas requiring policy reform. The main issues formulated in the discourse included: 1) trade and exchange-rate policies (held to have overprotected industry at the expense of agriculture); 2) the range of public sector functions relative to actual administrative capacities; and 3) price biases in agriculture (World Bank, 1981). The identification of these structural problems was followed by recommendations that reflected the original agenda of structural adjustment. They suggested the establishment of ‘more suitable’ trade and exchange rate policies, increased efficiency in use of public sector resources and better agricultural prices (Gibbon, 1993).

The discourse of the aid regime also noted that the central problem of less developed countries was not merely a series of individual policy errors concerning prices

and public investments, but rather the absence of a generally-supportive context for broadly-based private sector-led growth. This meant that reforms also implied the redefinition of the role of LDC governments, which would imply creating an 'enabling environment' for free enterprise on the one hand, and helping to supply certain basic social services, such as primary education and primary health care, on the other. The 'enabling environment' comprised infrastructure, some direct assistance to private farmers and entrepreneurs, and a strengthened framework of the rule of law. The World Bank discourse attributed the absence of an 'enabling environment' in most LDCs to flawed forms of general political management, expressed most clearly in a lack of accountability of government officials and restrictions on the freedom of speech (World Bank, 1989).

Although the main aid donors maintained a high degree of autonomy in reaching decisions about aid doctrine, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a decisively coordinated approach emerged. It reflected a tendency that involved discussions between World Bank, IMF and representatives of the G7 countries, leading to key decisions referring to, among others, the formulation of policies, and the general coordination of resources behind policies (Gibbon, 1993). This coordination reinforced the adoption of measures consolidating aid requirements obliging the recipient to formulate a statement of general objectives with regard to policy and institutional change.

The main components of policy and institutional change included sound economic policies, that is, adherence to market principles, competent public administration, open and accountable government and respect for the rule of law and human rights (Robinson, 1993). The reinforcement of aid conditionality through cross-conditionality, as Gibbon

(1993:45) points out, “heightened the political sensitivity of the aid regime to issues of donor unity and consensus and to the frontiers between neoliberal economic policy conditionality.” Political conditionality has been an instrument for the enforcement of neoliberal policy measures. By making aid conditional to institutional change, socioeconomic liberalization and the democratization process in recipient countries, political conditionality propelled the neoliberal agenda that stresses the complementarity of free enterprise and liberal democracy (Robinson, 1993).

The notion of institutional change conjoined with the insistence on the idea of governance in Africa. The issue of governance included a reference to aspects of political representation, accountability and transparency, with the effect of generating effective economic and political management. It became prominent as an intrinsic part of the discourse on ‘enabling environment’ in the period 1986-89, which suggested “less unpredictability and uncertainty in policy and administration, more rule of law, maintenance of judicial independence, and transparency and accountability to representative bodies” (Callaghy, 1991:58). The discourse on governance was tied to political conditionality through the emphasis on creating a favorable political context to ensure that economic aid provided for capacity building would not be wasted. By requiring political renewal, the World Bank’s notion of governance implied “a concerted attack on corruption from the highest to lowest levels,” which could be done “by setting a good example, by strengthening accountability, by encouraging public debate, and by nurturing a free press” (World Bank, 1989:192). Embracing this view, Western leaders “asserted that the distribution of aid should favor countries tending toward pluralism, public accountability, human rights, and market principles” (Callaghy, 1991:58).

In sum, a political conditionality agenda had for long been present to some degree in superpower dealings with LDCs and, in the case of the United States, its content had involved reference to multi-party democracy and human rights (although applied in highly selective ways). Following the breakdown of communism in Eastern Europe and the emergence of 'unipolarism,' it was formally adopted as an aid regime principle by the EC Council of Ministers in 1989, and elaborated in slightly more detail by the French, British and German governments the following year. The new political conditionality agenda typically combined governance issues as enunciated by the World Bank, with calls for reforms in the sphere of political representation, as enunciated by the United States. Invariably, an explicit linkage was also made between economic and political reforms (Gibbon, 1993).

Congo-Brazzaville and the Global Aid Regime

The emergence of political conditionality coincided with the economic crisis in Congo-Brazzaville due to the fall of oil prices in the mid-1980s. In 1986, the economic crisis forced Congo-Brazzaville to accept IMF supervision of the economy, resulting in an agreement for a three-year \$12 million IMF stand-by loan. Later on in 1989, the Congolese government formally acknowledged the failure of the public sector to stimulate economic growth (Hodgkinson, 1991). This led to a reinforced implementation of a new policy of economic liberalization under the supervision of the IMF and an agreement signed by the end of 1989, which was meant to clear the way for a rescheduling of debts with the Paris and London Clubs (Hodd, 1991). Though the

conditions involved in these agreements dealt with economic restructuring, they reiterated the principles of the ongoing global aid regime in the sense that they called for the creation of the 'enabling environment.' The new policy included revised taxation procedures intended to foster private-sector activity (Hodgkinson, 1998). In 1994, after the IMF approved the economic reform program, part of which was the passing in parliament of a law authorizing the privatization of several parastatals, the French government gave FF850 million in aid to Congo-Brazzaville. About half of that amount was to be used to pay off debts to the World Bank, while the other half was intended to boost economic recovery. In addition, the French Development Fund pledged a CFA700 million package, to support a number of economic projects (West Africa, 1994).

In 1993-94, while Congo-Brazzaville was experiencing sporadic fighting due to disputes over electoral results, the international financial community put a halt to all aid intended to service the country's debt. The peace deal between Lissouba and Kolelas in August 1994 was welcomed as a prospect for stability, which might allow the authorities to resume economic reform activities. As a result, the Paris Club rescheduled Congo-Brazzaville's debt, and a CFA francs 12 million debt was rescheduled, a debt mainly contracted through loans from foreign governments. The measure was said to be in recognition of the Congolese government's efforts at economic recovery. The rescheduling was in line with a measure adopted by the Paris Club to set up an extension of repayment deadlines granted to medium-income countries. This resulted in the extension of due dates of debts previously consolidated for the end of May 1995. Debt payments were rescheduled for 20 years for public development aid packages, and for 15 years with eight years grace for trade credits (West Africa, August 22-28, 1994).

The European Union imposed political conditionality on the new Sassou-Nguesso regime, which emerged in the aftermath of the 1997 civil war. EU countries put pressure on the Brazzaville regime to restore democracy. Western countries that have so far maintained a pragmatic line, tolerating the restoration of international aid in exchange for President Sassou-Nguesso's promises for democracy and economic reform, have pushed for a more proactive stance—tying aid or diplomatic recognition to specific measures, such as early elections. The Bretton Woods institutions have also expressed their intention to support Congo-Brazzaville's requests for debt relief if the new regime restores the democratic structures that were scrapped by Sassou-Nguesso in the aftermath of the civil war (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1998).

The Pressure for Reforms in the Franco-African Community

The thrust to establish a democratic regime in Congo-Brazzaville began in the late 1980s, as Western industrial democracies transformed governance into political conditionality. An example of such international pressure was the declaration by President Mitterand to Francophone African leaders, urging them to embark on a democratic path, which includes free elections, multiparty systems, press freedom and an independent judiciary system (Callaghy, 1991:58).

The June 1990 Franco-African Summit reinforced the notion of political conditionality, as President Mitterand announced that France would reduce its aid to regimes that do not accept evolution towards democracy. By tying political conditionality to aid, Mitterand's view was that good political conditions are essential in

the quest for economic development. Thus, he asserted that there could not be democracy without development, and inversely no development without democracy. During this summit in La Baule, France, Mitterand invited Franco-African states to adapt to changing times by adopting transparency in managing the state, embracing an ethical public life and respecting human rights (Le Monde, 20 June 1990).

The call for a commitment to democracy became a constant theme in the relationships between the European Union and African countries. Jacques Delors, on his visit to Africa, as EC Commission chief, urged African countries to show their commitment and responsibilities in implementing democratic rule. Pointing out that “the reinforcement of democracy and economic and social development cannot be dissociated,” he warned African countries that they must work harder to improve their human rights records if they wanted to retain EC good will and support (reported by West Africa, 20-26 May 1991).

The willingness of donors to attach political strings to aid was also motivated by economic considerations. Among the areas identified by the Berg report, a particularly important issue for Francophone African countries concerned the exchange-rate policy. The Berg Report stresses, among others, that many Sub-Saharan African countries have been experiencing severe balance of trade deficits, falling volumes of exports, and hence a diminishing capacity to import the consumer, intermediate and capital goods needed for economic growth. Part of this is attributed by the Report, to overvalued exchange rates (Browne and Cummings, 1985). This led to the devaluation of the CFA franc, which was made necessary by the magnitude of the financial and economic crisis experienced by countries of the CFA zone. The African members of the CFA Franc zone

are Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Niger, Togo, Mali, in West Africa, on the one hand, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea in Central Africa, on the other hand. The Franc zone also includes Comoros. The decision on the devaluation of the CFA franc was also induced in part, by the announcement by France in September 1993, that it would not finance the debt service of countries of the franc zone unless they sign agreements with the IMF. The devaluation of the CFA franc took place under pressures from France and the IMF in January 1994, and was presented as an important step in the restructuring process, which would create conditions for economic growth and stability within the CFA zone. In exchange for devaluation, France was expected to cancel the entire debt resulting from development assistance for low-income countries, and half of the debt for medium-income countries such as Congo-Brazzaville, Cameroon, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire (Le Monde, January 13, 1994). For Congo-Brazzaville, "the CFA devaluation of January 1994 will have pushed the burden of debt service completely beyond the government's means were it not for the compensatory debt cancellation announced by the French government at the same time" (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993-94). France's supplementary budgetary assistance to Congo-Brazzaville came as a measure that accompanied the CFA devaluation (Hodgkinson, 1998).

Given such international pressures, coupled with internal demands, African leaders adopted measures that signaled political liberalization. Transition to democracy was launched in many African countries, as leaders began to legalize opposition parties and free press began to flourish. In some countries, such as Benin, Botswana, the democratic transition was peaceful, while others such as Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo-

Brazzaville, Zaire and Niger experienced a more violent process of political change (Robinson, 1993).

In mid-August 1990, less than two months after his return from the La Baule summit, on the occasion of Congo-Brazzaville's 30th anniversary of independence, President Sassou-Nguesso announced the release of several political prisoners. In September, after long disputes with the labor union over the establishment of a multi-party system, the government resolved to permit the immediate registration of new political parties. In early 1991, Sassou-Nguesso agreed to establish a transitional government, in preparation for the convocation of a national conference on the country's constitutional future (Englebert, 1998). Events in Congo-Brazzaville took a faster pace than Sassou-Nguesso had wished, as opposition leaders felt encouraged by the La Baule Summit. Sassou-Nguesso "soon realized that several political leaders called for a switch to a multi-party system without further delay, at whatever cost" (Sassou-Nguesso, 1997:53).

On the other hand, from his own ruling party, Sassou-Nguesso had to deal with the demands from several members for a National Conference. Sassou-Nguesso "saw no reason for such a conference", since, according to him, the ruling Labor Party had already made decisions leading to political liberalization by establishing a multi-party system, abolishing the Marxist-Leninist character of the Labor Party and opening its membership to all and finally, separating the party from the State. In December 1990, the party's 4th Extraordinary Congress ratified these decisions (Sassou-Nguesso, 1997:53).

Beside political reforms, socioeconomic reforms were also a necessary requirement for Congo-Brazzaville to continue to receive bilateral and multilateral

support. In 1993, France and the World Bank indicated that large-scale long-term aid to help the country sort out the public finance disaster was conditional on the government's effective implementation of reform and job cuts in the civil service and state companies. The framework of conditionality did not eliminate other forms of support to Congo-Brazzaville. France has traditionally dominated aid provision to Congo-Brazzaville, giving largely in the form of project aid, health (particularly the AIDS program) and emergency budget relief. However, mainstream support to economic reform has been on hold recently, pending the establishment of a stable government with a clear economic plan. Since 1991, most aid from France, the World Bank and the African Development Bank was suspended because of Congo-Brazzaville's political problems, such as the conflicts opposing militia associated with various political leaders and constant shifting of balance of power within the legislative branch of government, which caused political instability. This aid to Congo-Brazzaville was also halted because of the lapsing of its IMF-backed structural adjustment program (Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993-94).

Global Restructuring and Historicity

The Meaning and Logic of Historicity

Globalization and the restructuring of the nation-state create a complex world system operating at several levels in which a variety of social actors, economic and political agents confront and interact with each other. The causal relation between macro-level transnational economic operations and national political reconfiguration has

largely been discussed in the literature (Gill, 1995; Strange, 1994; Overbeek and van der Pijl, 1993; Regini, 1995; Cox, 1994). The determinant factors of global change—technological change and neoliberalism—are embedded in transnational organizations operating outside state structures. At the same time, state actors and institutions, in conjunction with non-state agents, have facilitated the evolution and worldwide effect of technological change and neoliberalism.

There is a micro-level that is defined as the degree to which social behaviors have generated the transformation of national political and socioeconomic structures, leading to the reordering of the national economy and politics in accordance with extra-systemic formulas. Looking at the evolution of the state in Sub-Saharan Africa, the statist school created a model of interpretation highlighting the hegemony of politics, diminishing the importance of social determinants in the political arena. As Coulon (1972) suggests, this view saw no connection between political systems and social structures (Coulon, 1972). Against this perspective, it should be stressed that the practices of the state and related political processes in Sub-Saharan Africa reflected a network of social and political interactions based on values operating on the local level (Darbon, 1990). Congo-Brazzaville has been no exception to this general rule, since political development in this country has also been determined by the evolution of social dynamics. For instance, Bayart reproaches Marxist anthropologists for abandoning “their endogenous problematisation of contemporary political arenas, even though they have drawn attention to the repercussion within them of lineage dynamics, particularly in the case of Congo-Brazzaville” (Bayart, 1993:8).

The interaction between the political system and society reflects the way in which persistent Congolese sociocultural dynamics have affected the evolution of politics and induced a related mode of accumulation in the country. The articulation of this creative relationship between traditions and modernity should be taken seriously because it is in this interplay that state formation has been, and will continue to be, entrenched. The enduring effects of sociocultural patterns have been, and will continue to be felt, for instance, in strategies influencing the distribution of political power and the allocation of economic resources. This implies that political development and socioeconomic evolution have not been implanted in an undifferentiated reality. Structural configurations have been based on standards that predated, and have coexisted with, the modern political system that Congo-Brazzaville inherited from the colonial experience.

Moreover, these standards have reflected existential dimensions in which social actors found meaning for their lives, and from which they could not be dissociated, even as they embraced different categories originating in western worldview. Old cultural standards and beliefs have continued to be used as a reference and they have played out in the Congolese history from precolonial to the postindependence age. Balander (1974:189) advises to see the African social and cultural "fabric" as a dynamic system characterized by a creativity through which societies and cultures adapt to new elements. This has helped Africa to stand up "to the tests of history." The development of African politics challenges any attempt to uphold a transcendental standard in state building. Bayart (1993:247) describes the genealogy of the state in Africa as an intricate configuration in which "the endless administrative reforms of the colonial governments and their successors, the local confabulations, the chance events of economic

conjuncture; the oral tradition of local societies belong to the historical memory inherited by social actors.”

Political development in Congo-Brazzaville, as well as elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa, presents a composite field, marked by conflicting interests and precolonial referents that can make the restructuring process at least partially reversible. These referents, coupled with the new values acquired through colonial and postcolonial experiences, have led to the formation of relatively integrated but nevertheless incomplete ensembles operating with somewhat disparate genres of discourses that the competing social actors mix according to their needs. Therefore, it is not safe to typify the Congolese political system “solely by its Marxist-Leninist statements without understanding that the repertoire of the invisible which is very active” in this country “fragments these statements according to location and specific times in the struggle for power” (Bayart 1993:248).

In Congo-Brazzaville, the state is generated by the logic of power in which ethnicity and related conflicts (Yengo, 1997), Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, the corruption of the political leadership (Gauze, 1973) and the continued presence of the interests of the former colonial power (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1988) have played an important role. In addition to these elements, the increasingly growing urban and highly literate population, one of the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, contributed to influencing the existence of the state (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1985). Despite the codification of social and political behavior and economic activities through such ideological tenets as national unity, Marxism-Leninism and neoliberalism, the aspirations of social actors continued to be

rooted in an order of things characterized by heterogeneity and a degree of exteriority vis-à-vis the political system.

In the historical formation of the political space in Congo-Brazzaville, political actors had to deal with the popular resistance embedded in the messianic approach of the Matsouanist movement.² The implantation of this movement among the Bakongo ethnic group highlights two factors that have determined the postcolonial state. First, the Bakongo ethnic group found in the reference to this anti-colonial movement, a political privilege in ruling the country, originating in their struggle for equal rights for Africans during the colonial era (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Many Bakongo leaders, such as Youlou, during the independence era and Kolelas, in the era of political restructuring, used the movement to rally support from the Bakongo ethnic group (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997; Baniafouna, 1995). During the early years of independence, members of the Matsouanist movement refused to pay taxes in reaction to the new state, which they saw as a continuation of the colonial state that arrested their leader, Matsoua. They organized what one observer called a “messianic rejection” of politics, shaping up as a political opposition movement (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:29). The messianic character of this movement was based on the fact that its members did not believe that Matsoua died in prison, holding the belief that he would return to rule the country. Youlou used this hope to present himself as Matsoua’s unique and true representative. Some saw him as the reincarnation of Matsoua. Second, while giving justification for a privilege to rule the country, the implantation of this movement among the Bakongo ethnic group also gave them an ability to resist the political sphere when the state was dominated by actors that did not favor Bakongo interests. In this case, the state had what Bayart (1993:265) calls

an “inherent extraneity” with regard to members of the resistant movement, in the sense that “the national government is freely identified with an exogenous sovereignty.”

The traditional structure of political power and social organization had been reflected in the way the modern political system was organized in Congo-Brazzaville. According to Friedman (1993:228), who analyzed the Marxist State in Congo-Brazzaville, the country’s political system “is, in spite of the segregation between the state and popular sectors, a pyramidal structure,” reflecting the hierarchical clan structure of traditional society. This remark is also true in the new political context in which political restructuring was expected to uphold democratic values. The new political parties have operated in the same hierarchical manner whereby the candidates to presidential elections are not selected through primaries, but by virtue of their being the founders or the faithful successor of the founder or leader. In some parties, such as the MCDDI, Kolelas, the founder and leader was referred to as the elder, basing the hierarchical form on lineage structure (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Nsafou (1996) observes that dissent is rarely tolerated in the parties, resulting in many cases in the purging from the political organizations or a dissociation that leads to the creation of new political parties. The breach in the pyramid between the leader and the popular base and the challenge to the hierarchy of the political organization are clearly experienced as a personal threat to a political life of the party leader or founder.

In postcolonial Congo-Brazzaville, ethnicity has evolved beyond the appearance it received from colonial creation. In the period of political restructuring, a new regional entity called the Nibolek was created based on an alliance of the three geographic and administrative regions of the Niari, Bouenza and Lekoumou. These regions comprised a

² See chapter 1 for a brief presentation of Matsouanism.

diversity of ethnic groups that became politically associated and distinctively assertive in their support for Lissouba's bid for the presidency, his administration and the political conflicts that dominated his regime (Baniafouna, 1995). This confirms Bayart's idea (1993:49) that ethnicity is "constantly being formed and is largely mingled within the phenomenon of the State." The creation of this new politico-regional entity and the related ethnic affiliation between the inhabitants of the Nibolek region did not exist before the restructuring period. This phenomenon is contemporary to the restructuring process. This was a new creation by Lissouba and his political allies. Its significance was to provide Lissouba with a demographically greater political support he would not otherwise have enjoyed, had he relied solely on his small ethnic group from the Lekoumou region. The majority of the members of Lissouba's party, the Union Panafricaine pour le Développement Social (UPADS) was from the Nibolek ethnic groups. According to the results of the 1992 presidential election, for instance, Lissouba obtained 92.70 percent, 91.16 percent and 98.57 percent, from the Niari, Bouenza and Lekoumou regions respectively (Nsafou, 1996:104). Baniafouna (1995:97) points out that support from the Nibolek protected Lissouba from the decision of the National Conference to prevent politicians involved in socialist regimes and suspected of having "dirty hands" from participating in the new political order.

Historicity implies, therefore, that political development in Congo-Brazzaville, and in Sub-Saharan Africa, in general, did not start with the advent of postindependence politics, and the modern analysis of the institutions of the state has not conveyed the historically produced intricacies of political processes and interactions. Historicity is the constitutive framework in which the long-term perspective of political and

socioeconomic development and restructuring accounts for the way in which local methods and practices that conditioned social behaviors in the past, conjoin with contemporary forms of governance to create an adapted political system.

Popular Demands and the Necessity of Restructuring

Popular demands also pushed for political liberalization and the improvement of socioeconomic conditions. They contributed to reinforcing the necessity of restructuring. These demands conveyed the expectations that the people had from the restructuring process. These demands took the form of ethnic alliances, demands for economic benefits, search for inclusion into the center of power, rejection of ethnic marginalization from decision-making centers (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997), pressures for change in economic policy (Nsafou, 1996) and many other activities that people used to express their interest in restructuring.

The aspirations to political and socioeconomic restructuring preceded the actual implementation of reforms urged by global neoliberal agents, in the sense that politically marginalized and socially and economically disenchanted groups yearned to begin a new political era. The opening of the political system induced by the influence of global factors facilitated popular demands for change. For the Congolese people, change was necessary because of a generalized social and economic crisis. In addition, this crisis was easily perceived as being caused by a corrupt oligarchic regime that exercised its power by excluding more competent groups associated with particular ethnic groups.

The largely accepted necessity for restructuring that struck the national consciousness in the late 1980s has not been homogenous. Within the ruling elite, as well as among diverse social groups, restructuring meant different things, all of which reflected interests entrenched in the socioeconomic conditions of social and political actors. Reforms have been carried out against the background of a socioeconomic and financial crisis that reflected the heavy weight of the national external debt and the decline in oil revenues. Some among the ruling elite proposed a reform package that was to deal with these particular elements of the crisis, for instance, scheduling the paying off of the national debt, hoping this would ultimately renew the country's image in international financial circles. Persistent rivalries within the ruling group, reinforced by ethnic divisions, together with disillusionment with the government's response to the country's worsening economic situation contributed to increasing opposition to Sassou-Nguesso's ruling style and entourage in the late 1980s and early 1990s. During this period, popular sectors, such as the labor union and a branch of the youth movement, associated with the single party began to express interest in the liberalization of the economic system, increased participation of the private sector and an opening of the economy to foreign investment. Reform-minded state officials feared that the continuation of centralized economic policies would reduce the country's access to international opportunities (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Other political officials, still immersed in Marxist rhetoric, criticized this approach as a diversion toward bourgeois policies, and proposed a restructuring package that sought to eliminate the possibility of resorting to IMF recommendations (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

Whatever the motivations, the debate within the ruling party reflected the existence of conflicting interests at the level of the administration. Furthermore, these conflicts of interests coexisted with the expectations of the bulk of the population, which brought its demands to the streets to protest against neglect and mismanagement on the part of the political leadership. This mismanagement was blamed for the increasing unemployment among the rapidly growing urban population. In the late 1980s, popular reactions became more virulent when the government tried to encourage unemployed city dwellers to take up farming, as part of socioeconomic reform. With such suggestions, the government faced a serious challenge from a sector of population that has been used to a long tradition of urban living. The problem became particularly acute when many who have worked hard for non-technical university qualifications, expected to take up jobs in the central administration.

In addition to student demands, workers in the public sector also voiced their concerns as salaries were being cut and delayed, due to government's measures to reduce allowances (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993-94). Students and workers claimed that if the government had managed the economy well, there would be no need for the drastic IMF policies threatening them. Street protests by students broke out on November 9-11, 1985, in which high school students protested the way the government mishandled the economy, demanding that government officials be the ones to reduce their salaries and their pompous way of life. In November 1986, university students demonstrated on the streets, stopping people driving luxurious cars, asking them the amount of their monthly salaries to compare with their own study grants and point out the difference. Students rejected the government's decision to cancel study grants for

university students. In May 1989, the labor union protested against the measures lowering the retirement age to 55 for the workers and demanded a better management of public funds (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:285). In 1990, social protests began to associate elements of socioeconomic and political liberalization and demands for improvement of living conditions. As the movement for political and economic liberalization was already underway domestically, further labor unrest was initiated by public-sector workers, demanding higher salaries (Englebert, 1993). Two months earlier, during its congress, the labor union, the Confédération Syndicale Congolaise (CSC) had called for its separation from the PCT and for a National Conference.

In defiance, the government declared the decisions of the congress null and void. This hardened the CSC's attitude, which called a general strike, widely followed in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire. The government was forced to back down and canceled its decisions to invalidate the CSC's resolutions. In October, President Sassou-Nguesso announced the immediate introduction of multiparty political system and subsequently called for the National Conference. The September 1990 general strike was followed by a series of other strikes in many state enterprises in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, in the Oil Company and the Pointe-Noire harbor. Meanwhile, students and teachers of Brazzaville University went on strike in November to demand improvement of their work and study conditions, leading to the closure of the institution (Derrick, 1998).

Sometimes, social reactions were directed against particular reform measures that civil society thought harmful. Social pressures and global requirements put the state at the crossroads. While recognizing the connection of reforms to global situations, Bratton and van de Walle give a general picture of the underlying causes of reforms in Africa, in

which they argue that “African governments introduce governance reforms primarily in response to indigenous political demands” (Bratton and van de Walle, 1992:29). This was true of Congo-Brazzaville, and though social forces did not formulate reform packages, the local has not been peripheral in the process of restructuring, and social dynamics have determined the ensuing institutional configuration. Restructuring has, therefore, also been justified by the political and socioeconomic history of Congo-Brazzaville, a history of social polarization leading to political exclusion and ensuing modes of accumulation. While the institutional restructuring takes a neoliberal direction, the dynamics that characterize the reforms, and affect the functionality of the new institutions will, at least for a long while, reflect the habits ingrained in local cultures. This hybridization of structures and politics is significant of the way the local redefines the new institutional forms.

Strategies for the Control of the Restructuring Process

Competing Views on Restructuring

The implementation of IMF- and World Bank-initiated structural adjustment programs has been affected by strategies by which various actors and social groups sought to redefine the process according to their needs. These strategies involved protests, strikes and fear of loss of political, social and economic advantages. The process of political liberalization inherent in restructuring has facilitated the use of these methods, reflecting social mobilization. This is particularly interesting in the case of

Congo-Brazzaville, where the military regimes were hostile to a political system in which popular protests challenged the authority of the party-state. Garreton speaks of mobilizations that “reflect a loss of fear” in the case of Chile, where the military regimes were hostile to popular social protests (Garreton, 1989:261). The Congolese case bears some similarity with this, whereby anti-state mobilizations were thought to constitute a threat to the stability of the military and Marxist regimes.

The socioeconomic and political evolution of Congo-Brazzaville has resulted in a situation where party-state officials controlled social and economic promotion and advancement, a reality that was significant of clientelism and patronage. These dynamics generated new norms of recruitment and employment formulated arbitrarily to suit the interests of those who controlled the labor market or upward mobility, and to meet the expectations of their protégés. In general, ethnic affiliations superseded political affinities and conflicted with basic norms of professional competence that promoted recruitment based on competition. In this conflict of interpretation of the criteria of social promotion, many political actors who relied on their political affinities with the ruling elite were left out by the predominance of ethnic allegiances. The social and political aspects of the generalized crisis experienced by Congo-Brazzaville reflected the resentment felt by declining political actors who had begun to disapprove of the entire existing political system and its practices altogether. This disagreement, explained in terms of the general interest, was translated into requests for change (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997), and it was a strategy of control constructed from a position where these actors used their knowledge of the political system to dominate the movement of popular protests.

By supporting popular demands, some political actors who were strategically converted to democracy and longtime opponents to the single-party system secured the dominant role that they intended to play in the new political system. Nsafou (1996:74) criticizes such a behavior as opportunistic and not motivated by national interest or a desire to contribute to the establishment of democratic society. He notes that the main reasons for the emergence of these leaders were personal and partisan interests. Moreover, he observes that during the single party system, the ruling PCT limited possibilities of promotion for many while excluding others from power sharing. Political liberalization, therefore, offers these political actors opportunity to emerge in the frontline of the race to power.

This idea is also shared by Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997), who thinks that the confiscation of popular movements and the request for democratization by politicians who had fallen during the single-party regime and its longtime political opponents gave these frustrated political actors a renewed prominence. Politicians using this strategy combined their insider's knowledge of the weaknesses of the political regime, the context of the irreversibility of change based on growing global pressures, and civil society's reliance on their leadership to advance the demands for liberalization and the improvement of life conditions. Bazenguissa-Ganga points out that former PCT members who were expelled from the party or voluntarily left it when the tide started changing, joined public opinion in demanding the establishment of a new order based on democratic rules and technocratic competence.

Among the most prominent politicians leaving the PCT were Lissouba, Jean-Pierre Thystère Tchicaya, a former PCT politburo member, in charge of ideology, Pierre

Nzé, a former Foreign Minister, former president Yhombi-Opango, Clément Mierassa, member of the party's central committee, Ange-Edouard Pongui, a former Prime Minister, and Jean-Michel Bokamba-Yangouma, the secretary general of the labor union, the Confédération Syndicale Congolaise, and member of the PCT Central Committee (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:354). All joined the opposition and some founded political parties. Lissouba started the Union Panafricaine pour la Démocratie Sociale, and later became the country's democratically elected president in August 1992. Tchicaya started the Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social, and was a candidate in the 1992 presidential election. Yhombi-Opango started and is the leader of the Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Développement. Pierre Nzé started and is the leader of the Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Développement, and was a presidential candidate in the 1992 election. Clément Mierassa became the leader of the Parti Social-démocrate Congolais and was also a candidate in the election. Bokamba-Yangouma started the Union pour le Développement et le Progrès Social and was a presidential hopeful in the 1992 election. Ange-Edouard Pongui became the leader of the Union pour le Progrès Social et la Démocratie (Englebert, 1993:290-291; Baniafouna, 1995). Some leaders who had always been in opposition during the single party regime also started other parties. These included, for instance, Bernard Kolelas, the leader of the Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Intégral (Englebert, 1993).

The emergence of a myriad of new political parties and associations (see table 5.3) facilitated by domestic demands for political liberalization, carried out the resentment felt by these politicians, which was manifest in their efforts to generate social

mobilization to achieve political power. Another expression of this resentment was a common open letter that 109 of these frustrated politicians wrote to President Sassou-Nguesso and the Central Committee on July 7, 1990, demanding a National Conference to discuss the political and socioeconomic situation of the country (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997; Derrick, 1998). The increasing uncertainty resulting from the political and socioeconomic crisis forced the ruling oligarchy to elaborate a strategy of its own intended to perpetuate the rules and norms that shaped the political regime it created (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The Strategy of Administrative Reforms

In its initial response to increasing popular protests and demands, the regime wavered between reinforced authoritarian measures threatening political opponents and a series of gradual party and administrative reforms (Bratton and van de Walle, 1992:37) aimed at transforming the regime from within (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). These reforms proved that the ruling oligarchy intended to ignore the idea of radical transformation and the creation of a whole new regime demanded by civil society (Breton, 1990). While rejecting the Western idea of democracy embraced by many opponents, and pointing out that there is no universal model of democracy, the Central Committee declared that its view of political liberalization would rather focus on dissociating the ruling party from the state and abandoning the Marxist-Leninist ideology.³ This ideological shift aimed at creating a broad-based party including all ethnic entities and all ideological and religious beliefs. Some longtime members of the

³ See section on the impact of the collapse of communism on Congo-Brazzaville.

PCT, Jacques Obambe, Claude Ondongo and Pierre Akaba, that we interviewed pointed out that during that time, the party did not see the urgency of establishing political pluralism and a multiparty system. They thought this process would take a long time after a period of transition during which conditions would be created to consolidate democracy and harmony within the Congolese society.

However, prominent opponents to the PCT regime, Marcel Milandou, Evariste Salou and Fabrice Kimbemve, also taking part in our interviews, responded that this option by the ruling party failed to disclose a schedule for the transition it suggested. For them, this reflected a lack of commitment to the process and it was nothing more than the regime's strategy to keep power. By opting for reforms and suggesting a managed political transition, the main objective of the ruling party was not to change the regime, but "to alter the procedures or the practices of the political center" (Chazan and others, 1992:212)

The internal reforms of the party also entailed reshuffles and purges within the party and its dependent institutions of mass organizations to adapt the wages policy to the injunctions of the Bretton Woods institutions, and diminish the increasingly criticized ostentation of the political elite's way of life. This aspect of reform was tackled with the concern not to undermine the continuity of the existing political order. While reshuffling and restructuring the management of these organizations, the ruling oligarchy preserved the positions of already dominant groups in the regime. The ruling elite of the party instituted a system of election within its mass organizations, allowing competition between many candidates. This was intended to counter potential protests from members of these mass organizations against the new restructuring measures that the party had

been implementing within its structures (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). The greater threat to the party's approach was feared from the labor union, the Confédération Syndicale Congolaise (CSC), which had already mobilized workers against IMF and World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment programs.

Restructuring measures affecting the labor union were delicately handled because workers did not accept the restrictions imposed on them while the ruling elite continued to live ostentatiously. Moreover, the reactions of the labor union could easily galvanize popular protests from the bulk of the population ready to express their frustrations. As it happened, strikes by the labor union intensified widespread social mobilizations, which forced the regime to speed up its internal restructuring, resulting in increasing loss of ground and support due to defections and continued internal crisis.

Ironically, in a sociopolitical situation in which the regime was unwilling to legalize political opposition, the labor union operating within the reformed institutional framework of the one-party regime, not only unveiled the contradictions inherent in the party, but also forcibly instituted the existence of opposition to the ruling regime. This proves that restructuring has been mediated by a variety of competing strategies elaborated by various organizations and groups that managed to capture the influence of global factors. For instance, in September 1990, while the government was instituting limited reforms, the Confédération Syndicale Congolaise demanded an immediate changeover to a multiparty political system, and used the opportunity of IMF-sponsored measures for cutting down the wage bill to demand increased salaries for public-sector workers (Englebert, 1993:281). They pointed out that salary cuts should primarily affect party leaders and the government (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

IMF recommendations also included revised taxation procedures to foster private-sector activity (notably through the even application of value added tax) and retrenchment in the civil service. In 1989, a program of early retirement was to affect 10,000 employees—one-seventh of total. This led to more intensified social unrest stirred up by the labor union and an increasingly unstable political climate (Hodgkinson, 1993). The labor union also reacted strongly to the idea of privatization because workers feared reduction in government protection. Government employment policies paid little attention to efficiency and competence on the part of employees, while private-sector management, especially when it is reinforced by foreign involvement, would challenge the hiring process of the public sector, which was based on clientelism (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The unstable political climate continued throughout 1990, as further labor unrest continued to unsettle the government and divide officials on solutions to the country's socioeconomic and political crisis. Toward the end of the year, as social crisis intensified, Alphonse Souchlaty-Poaty resigned as Prime Minister, and his departure was ascribed to a divergence of opinions within the ruling party on the best way to solve the growing national crisis (Hodgkinson, 1993; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). He advocated broad political and socioeconomic liberalization while his opponents, including President Sassou-Nguesso, urged limited reforms, which were intended to induce mostly a different ideological identification of the party and to include more members in it (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The Challenge to the Hegemony of the Party-State

By launching a general strike, on September 14, 1990, the Confédération Syndicale Congolaise (CSC) gave momentum to the demands for political liberalization. In addition to being a reaction to IMF-sponsored programs and the measures taken by the government to accommodate the IMF requirements, the strike also expressed political claims, which the labor union had already made during its eighth congress on September 7-11, 1990. Through this congress, the labor union rejected, among others, the government's measures that set the retirement age at 55 and the freezing of promotions for workers. Political demands included the convening of a National Conference, the independence of the labor union from political parties, including the PCT, and the institution of democracy and a multiparty system in Congo-Brazzaville (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:369).

Not only was the government reluctant to grant these demands, but it also took a firm stance against popular protests. President Sassou-Nguesso ordered the labor union to renounce its resolutions because its congress dealt with issues that were not initially on the agenda. Negotiations between the president and the CSC failed as the president unilaterally decided to put them off, refusing to make concessions. This hardened the attitude of the labor union, deciding to launch its general strike. The army gave a warm welcome to the strike since Chief of Staff General Jean-Marie Mokoko, toured the different city communes to disarm the popular militia, a paramilitary organization of jobless youth that were favorable to the government (Nsafou, 1996). The strike also gave

rise to new alliances, revealing the attitude of diverse political actors and organizations toward the regime (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The support that the army chief gave to the labor union was an indication of such new alliances and of the loss of legitimacy of existing political structures and institutions. From September to November 1990, intense negotiations between the government and the CSC dealt with the revision of the wage chart, and its unsatisfactory results for the CSC caused a crisis within the government. Political actors who left the ruling PCT began to use this opportunity to express their dissatisfaction with the ruling group by supporting the CSC, thereby reinforcing the political dimension to the crisis.

On October 2, 1990, former PCT members created a democratic forum (see table 5.1), a new alliance of political parties. The main objective of this forum was to work for the establishment of democracy and pluralism on the basis of freedom, justice, tolerance, unity and peace. With the emergence of this forum, the opposition to the ruling PCT began to take a distinctive form.

Table 5.1 List of Parties in the Democratic Forum.

Parties of the democratic forum	Leaders
Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social—RDPS	Jean-Pierre Thystère Tchicaya
Parti du Renouveau et du Progrès—PRP	Henry-Marcellin Dzouma-Guelet
Forum Démocratique Congolais—FDC	Jean-Félix Dambenzet
Rassemblement pour l'Unité, la Démocratie et la Liberté—RUDL	Simon Batanga
Rassemblement Démocratique pour le Salut National—RDSN	Aristide Massamba-Mamfuka
Rassemblement National pour la Démocratie et le Progrès—RNDP	Donatien Kebano
Union Démocratique pour la Défense des Intérêts Congolais—UDDIC	Dieudonné Miakassissa
Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès	Pierre Nzé
Union pour le Progrès—UP	Jean-Martin Mbemba
Union pour le Progrès de la République—UPR	Alphonse Foungui

Source: Based on Bazenguissa-Ganga, (1997).

The forum attracted other organizations whose leaders were not former PCT members. Among these, the most notable was Bernard Kolelas, a longtime opponent to

the Marxist system. With the membership of Kolelas and his party, the Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Intégral (MCDDI), the democratic forum began to take a more pronounced and resolute tone, changing its name to the Front Uni de l'Opposition (the United Front of Opposition). Kolelas was firmly opposed to following the pace proposed by President Sassou-Nguesso and the PCT, or the gradual approach adopted by some former PCT members such as Tchicaya and Nzé. This attitude might have alienated some members of the Front Uni de l'Opposition (Nsafou, 1996).

However, the unfolding of the events showed that it was the strong movement of demands that led to a rapid disintegration of the system, as more and more politicians began to leave the ruling party and resigned from government positions. To deal with this unsettling situation, the PCT Central Committee convened an extraordinary session on September 28-30, 1990. During this session, the administration made important decisions reflecting the victory of the opposition. It immediately and without delay instituted a multiparty system, called for the registration of new parties, associations and all other political organizations, proposed a new transition government headed by a Prime Minister and convened a Conference of Parties to take place in May-June 1991. The Central Committee of the ruling PCT also decided to revoke its long-standing policy of freezing workers' promotions. The idea of a conference of parties and other associations was not satisfactory to the hard-liners among the opposition. They saw this notion as restrictive, pointing out that it reflected tendencies of monopolization of power by the ruling party, which alone, will have the ability to create an agenda and appoint participants in the conference. Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997) states that the administration

had already determined who were going to participate in the conference. This supports the reluctance of the opposition to accept the administration's view on the conference and its whole method of launching the liberalization process.

The new political context made it difficult for the administration to halt the impulse and the determination of the opposition. Preparatory meetings held between the government and the opposition gave the latter solid grounds and the opportunity to impose their views and consolidate their position. During these sessions, Prime Minister Louis-Sylvain Goma and the Interior Minister, Célestin Goma-Foutou played the opposition's game instead of affirming the inflexible position that President Sassou-Nguesso and PCT hard-liners had held so far. For instance, the PCT had clearly stated that the conference would be limited to party delegates and would not have supremacy over existing institutions. The Prime Minister, however, authorized a debate on the question of the sovereignty of the conference and the idea of making it a national forum, which gave the opposition a chance to succeed in their determination to make the national conference sovereign and its decisions immediately binding. Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997:375) also points out that the Prime Minister played a double game by publicly defending the PCT's views, while giving assurance to the opposition about convening a national conference during informal discussions. This contributed to diminishing the strength of the views held by the ruling party.

Phase I of the Restructuring Process:
Regime Change

This section examines the process leading to the transformation of the political system and the dynamics and mechanisms that prevailed in the interactions between the dominant political and social actors during the transition from authoritarian rule. The emphasis is placed upon three major themes of political change in Congo-Brazzaville. The first theme refers to the demise of autocratic and authoritarian rule and the establishment of a pluralistic political system. The mechanism that guided this shift was a national forum characterized by open debates on the political history and the future of the country and related socioeconomic developments. The second theme highlights the concept of regime change that stresses the new rules for political practice and behavior. The third element is the inexorable transitional period and its uncertainty.

The National Conference

The National Conference was convened on February 25, 1991. Fierce disputes between the PCT and the opposition over the number and representation of organizations permitted to attend the conference led to its suspension until mid-March. This was resolved in favor of opposition movements, which were allocated 7 of the 11 seats on the conference's governing body, and were represented by 700 of the 1,100 delegates attending the conference (Englebert, 1993:281). In addition to political parties, other

delegates were from non-governmental organizations, religious associations, labor unions, business groups, foreign observers, national and international press organs, scientific and research associations, Congolese embassies abroad, the Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture of the Congo, and the nation's representatives to international institutions (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The Executive Board of the National Conference

The dominant element was the anti-PCT coalition, consisting of longtime and hard-line opponents that managed to impose its rule on the organization of the conference, affecting the election of the board members as well as all the operations. An important objective of this coalition was to secure the entire procedure of the conference by taking it away from the influence of the ruling PCT. No member of the government was allowed to assume executive functions of the conference. To prepare for the election of the executive board, the participants elected a committee of five, headed by Hyacinthe Bakanga, the leader of a Christian political party called the Parti de l'Union Congolaise des Croyants Chrétiens. Analysts point out the importance that the religious factor was beginning to gain in the new political context, which was a reversal of the anti-religious standard that prevailed during the Marxist era. This new direction also implied the redefinition of political management according to moral norms (Nsafou, 1997; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). The recognition of the importance of religious values in politics was confirmed when the participants elected a bishop, Ernest Kombo as president

of the National Conference, and a nun, Sister Brigitte Yengo as general treasurer. (For the list of the entire executive board of the conference, see table 5.2 below).

Table 5.2 The Executive Board of the National Conference.

Positions	Names	Organizations	Regional origins
President	Ernest Kombo	Catholic Bishop	Pool (South)
1 st vice-president	A. Letembet-Ambily	MCDDI ⁴	Cuvette (North)
2 nd vice-president	S. Bongo Nouara	PDRC	Sangha (North)
3 rd vice-president	S.P. Kikounga-Ngot		Niari (South)
4 th vice-president	A. Ondziel	AFJC	Cuvette (North)
General rapporteur	Bernard Makaya	CSC	Kouilou (South)
Deputy general rapporteur	Rémi Bakou	UDDIC	Pool (South)
General treasurer	Brigitte Yengo	Catholic nun	Pool (South)
Accountant	Noel Kouzolo		Pool (South)
Chief secretary	Dominique Matanga	French Teachers Association	Pool (South)
Deputy chief secretary	Léon Bemba	Molidé	Pool (South)

Source: Based on Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997:385-86).

Two dimensions converge in this board. First, the religious factor and the ethical vision it carries symbolized the renewal of the political system. Second, political change was expected to occur through the exclusion of PCT members from the executive board. These two views were generally apparent in the majority of the people we interviewed⁵. In addition, the dominance of southerners in the board was significant of the fact that the South had been excluded from political power during the last twenty-two years of the single-party system. Political change gave them an opportunity to re-emerge and determine the direction that the new political order was to take. Bazenguissa-Ganga (1997:382) observes that during the conference, particularly when the new order was

⁴ MCDDI: Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Intégral; PDRC: Parti pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Congo; UDDIC: Union Démocratique pour la Défense des Intérêts Congolais; AFJC: Association des Femmes Juristes du Congo; CSC: Confédération Syndicale Congolaise; Molidé: Mouvement pour les Libertés et la Démocratie.

⁵ Such as Valerie Makosso, an activist who considered herself an opponent to the PCT; Celestin Pambou, a member of the UPADS, Lissouba's party; Calixte Mampouya, a member of the MCDDI, Kolelas's party; Philippe Kounkou, an independent close to the MCDDI; Paul-Emile Makoumbou, a school teacher in Brazzaville.

beginning to take shape, ethnic allegiance superseded the creation of political consensus. Many southerners had developed an anti-Sassou-Nguesso feeling, which they intended to express during the elections of the conference's executive board by excluding PCT members.

The Status and the Purpose of the National Debate

Opposition leaders succeeded in insisting that the National Conference be sovereign. It was a constitutional forum operating with its own rules independent of the influence of the outgoing regime. This was no easy task because PCT members rejected the notion of sovereignty. Even former PCT members who created new parties or joined new political organizations were reluctant to adopt the concept of a sovereign conference. For this group, the sovereignty of the conference would imply a "civil coup d'état" (Nsafou, 1996). However, the idea of sovereignty prevailed, thanks to the vigor with which the new opposition fought to impose it. Their success was partly due to their numerical advantage, and partly because the desire for change was strongly entrenched in the national consciousness. The National Conference was, therefore, instituted as sovereign by a vote of its participants representing civil society and its resolutions called for immediate implementation of its measures, since it was declared legally binding on all citizens, including the ruling elite. The Sovereign National Conference symbolized the sovereignty of the Congolese people.

Kolelas's party; Philippe Koukou, an independent close to the MCDDI; Paul-Emile Makoumbou, a school teacher in Brazzaville.

The National Conference aimed at renewing the political system through the institution of new rules governing political practice in a democratic multiparty system, respecting civil liberties, human rights, open elections and good governance. The National Conference symbolized a breakaway from the methods and logic of the old order (Nsafou, 1996:79). This implied the rehabilitation of the state and its institutions that were appropriated by the single party, the revival of the rule of law that upholds the national constitution voted by national referendum, and the rejection of arbitrary rule. The new political practice would put the emphasis on competence and it would eradicate clientelism and patronage, while opening the space for the emergence of new political actors. The establishment of good governance was expected to eliminate the old politics of ethnic division, nepotism and political exclusion that ruined the foundations of national unity and national pride.

Participants in the conference pointed out that the old politics caused trauma in civil society and on the national consciousness in general. The renewal of politics in the country entailed a healing process casting out the fear generated by dictatorship and human rights violations. The inaugural speech by the President of the Conference, Bishop Ernest Kombo, carried this message of hope with a religious and idealistic tone, calling for an inclusive process of national political and socioeconomic reconstruction, and inviting all citizens to put the past behind and avail themselves of the opportunity to build a better future for the country. It is not clear whether the participants in the conference shared these perspectives, but an assessment of the conference discloses mixed results, which might stem from the conflicts of interests that even the conference could not weed out.

The Results of the National Conference

The idealism of the National Conference extended its purpose beyond its capabilities. Conference debates featured a limited segment of speakers, the majority of whom was the elite who had dominated the political scene throughout the post-independence regimes. The old elite wanted to continue to play a dominant role in the new political system. The political game may have changed, but it opened the field to the same players, despite their claim suggesting a change of behavior. There were new political actors, hoping to occupy important positions in the new government and other state institutions. Access to political power was thought to be ensured by party membership and through the alliances emerging from party coalition. Moreover, coming out of a single-party rule, was the mentality that a government position was essentially a political, rather than administrative function.

The debates of the National Conference disclosed the personal political ambitions of those who were rejected and frustrated by the ruling party, those who were permanently in the opposition for ideological reasons, and those who hailed the advent of a new regime as an opportunity to gain political power. One of the obvious outcomes of this national forum, which would have a negative effect on the evolution of the political system thereafter, was the revelation that the structural change that resulted from the National Conference was not sustainable without changing the attitudes and values of political actors. The sustainability of structural change depends on a mind-shift of political actors and civil society, which change should translate into behavior, competent

management and respect for law and institutions. The establishment of new structures must be coupled with fundamental change in attitudes and behavior patterns (Klee, 1993).

From this perspective, the structural change achieved by the National Conference was a limited success, despite the expectations for a fundamental change expressed by the participants. Nevertheless, despite its extensive idealistic perspective, the conference issued new parameters defining the distinctive functions of state institutions. This redefinition incorporated neoliberal norms insisting, for instance, on the separation of powers between the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government. This resulted in taking some powers away from the president, notably his function of Commander-in-Chief of the army, while limiting his role to representative of the state and supervisor of the implementation of international treaties and agreements.

Meanwhile, the National Conference reinforced the Prime Minister's role for the transitional period, by giving him the functions of Commander-in-Chief and chief of the government. This arrangement reflected an intentional reaction against the autocratic behavior of President Sassou-Nguesso who, during the single-party rule, combined the functions of chief of government, Minister of Defense, Commander-in-Chief of the army, and President of the Central Committee of the party. Change in the political system also included the dissolution of the existing National Assembly to be replaced by the Superior Council of the Republic, a transitional parliament in charge of legislative matters. The new order proposed by the National Conference also led to the dissolution of the 1979 constitution (Gabou, 1990; Nsafou, 1996).

This new order also saw the reestablishment of some old national symbols cast out during the socialist era. The National Conference restored the name of the country to

the Republic of the Congo or Congo-Brazzaville. The red flag of the socialist period was replaced by the green-yellow-red flag created at independence. This reconstitution of the national history represented the reaffirmation of the liberal and moderate views that dominated the early independence period from 1960 to 1963, during the Youlou regime, in contrast with the radical Marxist rhetoric of the 1970s and 1980s, and this initiative appropriately recognized the neoliberal global influence. A strong liberal and anti-Communist stance characterized the Youlou regime, while the Massamba-Débat regime, inaugurating the socialist era, started with moderate views and a mixed economy that managed to keep capitalist interests unchallenged.

During the conference, opponents of radical Marxist ideology and radical leftist symbols argued that the radicalization of socialist regimes introduced a political economy and incompetent management that were responsible for the country's economic disaster. The rejection of socialist and Marxist symbols and the eradication of what Congolese socialists called the "Revolution" were not only related to the demise of communist ideology. These efforts essentially meant courting neoliberal forces and attracting the socioeconomic opportunities that neoliberal policies would create in the country whose economy was completely devastated by socialist policies. With the advent of neoliberalism and the structural change emanating from the National Conference, Congo-Brazzaville was on the road to regime change.

The Debates at the National Conference

The conference dealt with a number of issues determined by the participants. Among the issues debated were human rights violations by all preceding regimes, particularly during the Marxist era, the embezzlement and personal misappropriation of national resources, and the management of the oil industry. The promulgation of a new constitution pointed to the new order.

Human rights violations occupied an important place in the conference as a condemnation of Marxist regimes, making the gathering a public debate exposing “the assassinations and executions committed by the single party regime” (Weiss and others, 1995:3). Leading the charges against these regimes were Kolelas’ partisans and members of the Molidé party. Many representatives of these organizations did not serve in any administration during the Marxist era and this constituted an asset for them to reprimand the political leadership that dominated the Marxist era. The issue of human rights was a key point in their long-standing struggle against the regime. Some of them, particularly Kolelas, had been imprisoned for their views against Marxism and their participation in coups d’état attempting to overthrow Marxist regimes.

During the conference, critics pointed out the violations of human rights and the assassinations of politicians and other people during the entire Marxist era. Participants expressing harsh words against the Sassou-Nguesso regime used the opportunity to allege that president Sassou-Nguesso and his predecessor Yhombi-Opango were involved in the murder of president Ngouabi, though they declared they would continue Ngouabi’s

work.⁶ Members of opposition parties associated human rights abuses with Marxism. Not everyone, however, took such a radical attitude linking human rights violations to Marxism. For instance, Jean-Pierre Thystère Tchicaya, a former PCT member who was in charge of the ideology of the party put the blame on politicians whose main concern was control and power. Despite Tchicaya's remarks, the conference estimated that a total of 3,000 persons were killed as a result of the intolerance and the political violence of the single-party system under Marxist regimes (Nsafou, 1996:82 and 86).

The conference also examined the question of the personal misappropriation of national resources by political leaders. Public opinion in Congo-Brazzaville linked the economic crisis starting in the mid-1980s to the embezzlement of oil revenues by Sassou-Nguesso and the northern, particularly Mboshi oligarchy he established to govern the country. The conference wanted to know what was done with oil revenues generated when oil prices were high in the early 1980s. The debate on this question was fueled by reports published by the Molidé (Mouvement pour les Libertés et la Démocratie) concerning the economic situation of the country. This discussion was essentially a criticism of the PCT economic strategy (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:358). A commission was created to study how to repatriate the country's money that Sassou-Nguesso and his clique deposited in private foreign bank accounts (Baniafouna, 1995).

Discussions on national resource management focused on oil and the economic crisis experienced by the country despite the oil boom (Nsafou, 1996). André Milongo, who would become the Prime Minister during the transition, criticized the contracts that the Sassou-Nguesso regime had signed with the French company, Elf Aquitaine for the

⁶ Interviews with Jacques Mbanza and Christian Tchimboua, opponents to PCT, and others who declare themselves independent from political affiliation, such as Noel Mabonzo, Constant Ndjombo,

exploitation of Congolese oil. This criticism was welcomed by the participants who saw the exploitation of Congolese oil by Elf as the continuation of colonial domination. As Baniafouna (1995:74) points out, the criticism carried a nationalistic tone mixed with an anti-Sassou-Nguesso feeling because opponents of Sassou-Nguesso had accused him of connivance with French businessmen and politicians in the expropriation of Congolese resources, particularly oil. During the conference, the Commission on Oil alleged that since 1985, Sassou-Nguesso was promised by Elf and the Italian Company Agip, 45 billion CFA francs for future oil exploitation. The commission recommended a revision of all contracts and suggested cooperation with American companies to counter the French influence. As Baniafouna observes, beyond the question of oil exploitation by Elf, it was the whole notion of the Congo's cooperation with France that was addressed.

Two important issues referred to the transformation of the institutional setting. The first was the elaboration of the new constitution (see appendix for the 1992 Constitution), and the second involved the preparation of electoral processes. Other discussions on the establishment of the new political system resulted in the rehabilitation of the country's flag and national anthem created before the emergence of the Marxist system and the change of the country's name to reflect the rejection of communism. Many among the people we interviewed, such as Faustin Missamou, Albert Songo and Julien Sakani, saw this rehabilitation of the past as the country's new independence. Under the leadership of Jean-Martin Mbemba, the Commission on the Constitution was responsible for preparing a text to be submitted to referendum. This text was not ready by the time the conference ended, but participants in the conference, motivated by

Senga-Malongo revealed strong criticism of human rights abuses by the PCT.

political interests, maintained their determination to influence the commission (Nsafou, 1996).

Regime Change in Congo-Brazzaville

Structural transformation involved regime change. The identification of a regime highlights the structural parameters that justify political processes and behaviors, as well as the collective goals formulated through decision-making procedures. A regime constitutes a set of principles, norms, rules and codes governing the interactions between different actors (Krasner, 1985:60; Chazan and others, 1992). A new political regime relates to structural change insofar as it legitimizes new functional capabilities for the system, on the basis of which actors anticipate, assess and recognize each other's actions. When this transformation involves the emergence of a democratic regime, it means that strategies of policy and behavior legitimation and political practice can no longer be unchecked and will be assessed in accordance with rules involving constitutional guidelines to which all citizens have freely given their consent.

The single-party and authoritarian regimes in Congo-Brazzaville allowed leaders to elaborate strategies of legitimation without inclusive political dynamics. The establishment of the new regime through the National Conference imposed the necessity to refer to viable structures for legitimation. These structures were instituted by national consensus, which emerged through a pluralist approach, promoting individual and civil liberties. This does not mean that the political and social restructuring advanced by the National Conference survived the political intrigues of politicians solely interested in

power. The new regime will be analyzed from the point of view of pluralism, the introduction of civil liberties and the demilitarization of politics. These standards of analytical assessment are not the result of random choice. They represent the institutional reconfiguration, social and political environment demanded by the Congolese society from 1989 through 1992⁷. The mobilization for, and reference to, these standards for the establishment of a new political system was loaded with expectations. The incorporation of these standards reflected the end of social and economic isolation from world economic trends, which resulted from the centralized economy. As such, regime change and the ensuing establishment of an open political and socioeconomic system and its basic rules for political practice reflected an attraction to neoliberalism.

The New Regime and Pluralism

The new regime stemming from restructuring efforts gave rise to independent and autonomous organizations emerging in civil society. The existence of these organizations in a polity constitutes the basis for characterizing a political system as pluralist (Dahl, 1982). Dahl's analysis of a pluralist society pays attention to the functioning of "polyarchy" because of its constitutive characteristic of "subsystem autonomy and organizational pluralism" (Chilcote, 1981:353). The coming into existence of independent and autonomous organizations through the establishment of a democratic regime finds justification in the fact that these organizations are highly desirable for the functioning of the political system. The absence of independent organizations turns the state into a centralized structure, paving the way for the domination of the system by

⁷ See section on the challenge to the hegemony to the party-state.

those who control the state, while the presence of these organizations helps “to prevent domination and to create mutual control” (Dahl, 1982:32). Independent organizations are also important because they help political and social actors to organize, influence and determine the way rulers conduct politics. These organizations facilitate political participation in various political processes, such as elections, creating the possibility of influencing the sharing of political and socioeconomic advantages. To the existence of independent organizations is related the necessity of establishing a balance between various social and political groups and interests, to avoid the domination of one group or one set of interests. Furthermore, various groups find it advantageous to form independent organizations because it gives them the opportunity to enforce their rights (Dahl, 1982).

From a general framework of pluralist theories, Chilcote draws three basic concepts that are relevant in explaining political dynamics and processes. These concepts are interest group, power and conflict (Chilcote, 1981). In a polyarchy, independent organizations constitute the channels through which interests are presented. The existence of independent organizations or other channels gives pluralist regimes the structural capabilities whereby political dynamics allow individual and shared or conflicting interests to intersect. Shared or conflicting interests mirror the relationships between different leaders and followers. To the concept of interest or group interest is related the notion of power. It is difficult to sort out a clear definition of the concept of power from pluralist theories. However, the concept refers to a reality whereby the pursuit of group or individual interests leads an actor or a group to condition the behavior of another by a cost-effective measure to draw certain advantages from a position of

dominance. The third concept refers to conflict, and in pluralist analysis, it evokes the extent to which pluralist regimes are capable of constraining groups in conflict.

This analytical framework is useful in examining the pluralist social and political environment to which regime change gave rise in Congo-Brazzaville from 1989 to 1992. The opening of the political system brought about a proliferation of political parties, associations and non-governmental organizations. New labor unions emerged in almost all enterprises, breaking away from the former single labor union that dominated the era of the single-party regime. Opposition parties that existed and were in exile during the single-party regime created local bases in the country. The coming into existence of these organizations demonstrated the transformation from a centralized rule into an open and pluralist regime, operating with significant norms shaping the democratic process leading to the 1992 general elections.

The tumultuous circumstances before the election were characteristic of the political dynamics that characterized the interactions between these emerging organizations and between these organizations and the state. With regard to the interaction with the state, the vigor of the independent organizations was a reflection of the determination of social and political actors to curtail the state hierarchy, which was responsible for political exclusion, clientelism and patronage. Civil society sought to reduce state dominance, for instance, by stressing the importance of technocratic competence and qualities rather than political abilities for the new government (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997). Independent organizations provided social and political actors with a new political process and an institutional setting through which interests could be presented and defended, against, or in alliance to, the interests of other

organizations. The National Conference, for instance, served as a forum that encouraged political parties and associations to express their concerns and define their interests. The Conference institutionalized the habit of open debate between different independent organizations and between civil society and the state. Furthermore, the shift in political process and practice made the struggle for political power more prominent. The creation of political alliances and coalitions constitutes the strategy through which political organizations sought to increase their influence and enhance their dominant position to affect the behavior of other groups and reap political advantages.

The changing political environment not only created a new context of political process and dynamics, but also intensified the plural character of the Congolese society. Lijphart defines a plural society, with reference to Eckstein's words, as "a society divided by segmental cleavages" (Lijphart, 1977: 3). In the case of Congo-Brazzaville, the most relevant and persistent, as well as politically determinant cleavage, concerns ethnic diversity. Regime change intensified the already existing ethnic cleavages. Looking at the evolution of the political situation after the launching of the political restructuring process, one observes that the Congolese political system has never been capable of constraining groups in conflict, and the emergence of the new regime made conflict among the segmented population more and more real. The new regime made existing cleavages more evident while it failed to keep "the pattern of political conflict more or less stable" (Dahl, 1982:42). As a result, organizational pluralism was not sustained. In addition, political leaders have always exploited existing ethnic cleavages in their struggle for power and to serve their various personal interests. It would not have been possible for independent organizations to control the political system if there were no

guarantees for civil liberties. Regime change also introduced these basic rights allowing individuals and civil society to challenge government policy-making procedures without being threatened.

Independent Political Organizations in the Congolese Context

Though global factors influenced politics in Congo-Brazzaville to the extent of inspiring political change, one cannot disregard the impact of internal factors such as popular protests through strikes by the labor unions and students' demonstrations, on the transformation of the political system. These actions pushed the PCT regime to institute democracy. The new context of political liberalization in turn gave rise to many other parties challenging the hegemony of the ruling party. However, the PCT leadership thought that party and administrative reforms and the renunciation of Marxist ideology were enough. Through its own line of reforms, the PCT intended to keep power and control, and the extension of President Sassou-Nguesso's term for four more years was an indication of this managed change (Englebert, 1993).

Faced with increasingly uncontrollable social protests, and motivated by the fear of losing power, in September 1990, the PCT leadership made the decision to institute a multiparty system (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:371). Therefore, the regime launched political restructuring to avoid its own destabilization and loss of legitimacy (Nsafou, 1996). Several new parties emerged on the Congolese political scene, some of which were small organizations of no more than 10 people and disappeared after the euphoria of political liberalization diminished. Table 5.3 presents the dominant parties emerging

when the multiparty system was instituted. Most parties were relatively new organizations. Only the Mouvement Patriotique Congolais existed during the single party system, but operated in exile, in France.

Table 5.3 Dominant Political Parties.

<u>Party Name</u>	<u>Leaders' name</u>	<u>Year of creation</u>
Mouvement Africain pour la Reconstruction Sociale		
Mouvement Congolais pour la Démocratie et le Développement Integral (MCDDI)	Bernard Kolelas	1990
Mouvement Patriotique du Congo (MPC)	A. Moudileno-Massengo	
Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT)	Denis Sassou-Nguesso	1969
Parti du Renouveau et du Progrès (PRP)	Henri M. Doumanguele	
Parti Libéral Congolais (PLC)	Marcel Makon	1990
Parti Populaire pour la Démocratie Sociale et la Défense de la République	Stanislas Batheus-Mollomb	1991
Parti pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Congo	Stephane Bongho Nouara	1991
Parti Social-démocrate Congolais (PDRC)	Clément Miérassa	1990
Parti du Travail	Auguste Mayanza	1991
Rassemblement Démocratique et Populaire du Congo (RDPC)	Jean-Marie Tassoua	
Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Développement (RDD)	Joachim Yhombi-Opango	1990
Rassemblement pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social (RDPS)	Jean-Pierre Thystère Tchicaya	1990
Union des Forces Démocratiques (UFD)		
Union du Centre	Okana Mpan	
Union Ecologique du Congo	Mandzengue Younous	
Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Développement (UNDD)	Pierre Nzé	1990
Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès (UNDP)		1990
Union Panafricaine pour la Démocratie Sociale (UPADS)	Pascal Lissouba	
Union Patriotique pour la Démocratie et le Progrès	Célestin Nkoua	
Union pour la Démocratie Congolaise (UDC)	Sylvain Bemba	1989
Union pour le Développement et le Progrès Social (UDPS)	Jean-Michel Bokamba-Yangouma	1991
Union pour le Progrès	Jean-Martin Mbemba	
Union pour le Progrès du Peuple Congolais	Alphonse Bihoula	1991
Union pour le Progrès Social et la Démocratie (UPSD)	Ange-Eduard Pongui	1991

Source: Based on Africa South of Sahara, 1993:290-91.

The New Regime and Civil Liberties

Pluralism clearly exposes the dynamics that affect the evolution of a political system by delineating the institutional framework through which the interactions between independent organizations and the state take place. The goal is to achieve a balanced polity in which the juxtaposition of control and autonomy breeds the constitutive complexity of a pluralist democracy (Dahl, 1982). Dynamics have a direct link with the process-centered conception of political practice (Chazan and others, 1992), and it is this perspective that gives a plausible interpretation of political practice that centers around participatory and open dialogue. The process-centered explanation presents the purposeful dialogue as “directed to solving problems standing in the way of common goals—a form of practice that accords to its participants the rights and expects of them the obligations logically pursuant to the status of partners in this kind of dialogue” (Spragens, 1990:115). This old rationalist vision of democratic liberalism is being recast by neoliberal reforms suggesting that the redefinition of the state should consider the necessity to “increase incentives for participation in public affairs” and to formulate more inclusive policies so as to make reforms sustainable (World Bank, 1997:11 and 14).

At the heart of political participation are civil liberties that sustain the democratic discourse. In Congo-Brazzaville, the example was the proliferation of newspapers, magazines, journals, radio and television programs that openly discussed the political evolution and the socioeconomic situation of the country. These are presented in table 5.4. Among the newspapers, only La Semaine Africaine had existed as an independent weekly newspaper during the single party system. It is run and owned by the Catholic

Church. Mweti, Bakento Ya Congo (Women of Congo), Combattant Rouge (Red Combatant) were the single-party regime's papers and magazines.

Table 5.4 Publications in Congo-Brazzaville in the 1990s.

Press	Frequency	Characteristics
Agence Congolaise d'Information	Daily	Government-operated daily news
Atlantic Tribune	Weekly	Independent newspaper
Aujourd'hui	Daily	Independent newspaper
L'Eveil de Pointe-Noire	Daily	Independent newspaper
Journal de Brazzaville	Daily	Independent newspaper
Bakento Ya Congo	Monthly	For women, government-operated
Le Choc	Fortnightly	MCDDI-affiliated satirical newspaper
Combattant Rouge	Monthly	Government army bulletin
Congo Magazine	Monthly	Independent magazine
Effort	Monthly	Independent general interest
Enumba	Weekly	PCT-affiliated bulletin
Le Flambeau		Independent newsmagazine
Le Forum	Weekly	Independent newspaper
Le Gardien		Independent newspaper
Jeunesse et Révolution	Weekly	
Le Madukutsékélé	Weekly	Satirical independent newspaper
La Nation	Weekly	Independent newspaper
L'Opinion	Monthly	Independent newsmagazine
L'Océan		Independent newspaper
Paris-Brazzaville	Weekly	Independent general interest bulletin
Le Pays	Weekly	Independent newspaper
Révélation	Weekly	Independent newspaper
La Rue Meurt	Weekly	Independent satirical newspaper
La Semaine	Weekly	Independent newspaper
La Semaine Africaine	Weekly	Independent news paper
Le Soleil	Weekly	RDD-affiliated
Le Songueur	Weekly	Independent newspaper
Le Stade	Weekly	Independent newspaper
Tabou	Weekly	Independent newspaper
Le Temps	Weekly	Independent newspaper

Source: Based on Africa South of the Sahara, 2000, 392-93; Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:382.

Also, broadcasting media had been created as the result of the liberalization process. The only television and radio that operated during the single party system were controlled by the government. New broadcasting media include Canal Liberté, run by supporters of President Sassou-Nguesso, Radio Brazzaville, a new official station, and

Radio Congo Liberté (Englebert, 2000). Many of the new means of dialogue and expression, arising from opposition circles, were critical of government policies. Despite some attempts by government officials to censure some articles and views, the debate continued to affect the way policies were being formulated and to expose government weaknesses. In addition to freedom of speech, the new regime stimulated freedom of assembly and association. These civil liberties were guaranteed by the 1992 constitution.

The Structure and Policies of the Transition Government

The National Conference launched a transitional period during which three distinctive institutions were established to run the country. These were the government, the Higher Council of the Republic and the Presidency. Executive tasks were assigned to a transition government headed by André Milongo. Table 5.5 presents a list of members of the transitional government. The tasks of this government involved the organization of a national census in view of the national referendum on the new constitution, the 1992 legislative and presidential elections, the elaboration of an electoral code and the establishment of a judicial branch (Nsafou, 1996).

Table 5.5 The Transition Government established by the National Conference.

<u>Positions and Ministries</u>	<u>Names</u>
Prime Minister, Head of Government, and Minister of Defense:	André Milongo
Finance, Economy and Planning:	Edouard Ebouka Babacas
Interior and Decentralization:	Alexis Gabou
Foreign Affairs and Cooperation:	Jean-Blaise Kololo
Justice and Administrative Reforms:	Jean-Martin Bemba
Communications and Relations with the Higher Council of the Republic:	Guy Menga
Industry and Tourism:	Herbert Kakoula-Kadi
Labor, Social Security and Human Resources:	François Nguimbi
Commerce, Medium and Small Enterprises:	Clément Miérassa
Transportation and Civil Aviation:	Jacques Okoko
Agriculture and Rural Development:	Célestin Nkoua Gongarad
Public Works, Construction and Urbanization:	Jacques Demba Telo
Public Health:	Paul Ndouna
Higher Education, Science and Technology:	Younous Madzengue
Forestry, Fishing and Environment:	Marcel Boula
Primary and Secondary Education:	Anaclet Tsomanbet
Culture and Arts:	Antoine Letembet Ambily
Youth and Sport:	Jean-Pierre Mberri
Social Affairs:	Clementine Fouti

Source: Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:399.

The Higher Council of the Republic, on the other hand, was the legislative body with the responsibility of making laws and preparing the new Constitution to be adopted by referendum. Table 5.6 gives the list of the members of the Higher Council of the Republic. The third institution was the Presidency, which became distinct from the government during the transitional period. During this period, presidential powers were diminished and the head of state was a symbolic figure representing the continuity of the state (Baniafouna, 1995:70).

Table 5.6 The Higher Council of the Republic.

<u>Positions</u>	<u>Names</u>
President:	Bishop Ernest Kombo
First Vice-President:	Jean-Michel Bokamba-Yangouma
Second Vice President:	Fulgence Milandou
Third Vice President:	Bilongo-Manéné
First Secretary:	Léon Bemba
Second Secretary:	Paulette Yambo-Dussaud
First Treasurer:	Sister Brigitte Yengo
Second Treasurer:	Jacques Kibangadi-Nkodia

Source: Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997:395.

The economic policies of this transitional period were affected by the climate of socioeconomic crisis and political instability. For instance, the transition government had to deal with the increase in public-sector employment created by the Sassou-Nguesso regime in early 1992 “in a vain bid to stave off pressure for reform.” Despite international pressures to shrink the public sector, the Sassou-Nguesso regime had recruited more than 10,000 extra people to the civil service (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993-94:25). In addition, the Sassou-Nguesso regime did not facilitate the task of the transition government by increasing the state salary bill from CFA francs 78 billion to 120 billion in 1990 and 135 billion in 1991. This happened in a context of financial deficit reaching CFA francs 440 billion in 1991. A government’s attempt at resolving the situation by either reducing salaries or massive lay off of employees was a source of social discontent and continuous unrest. In July 1991, young unemployed persons organized a march in Brazzaville to demand employment from the government (Baniafouna, 1995:73). In 1992, the government made efforts to try to reach a level of understanding on the part of the labor union to make it easy to cut civil service staff

members. However, “consent from the labor union has proved evasive,” leaving the government with no power “to force through compulsory mass redundancies.” The financial situation worsened as the government was short of funds, and was forced to raise funds from the commercial sector, secured against future oil revenues (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1993-94:25).

In 1992, the transition government attempted to pursue the structural adjustment program designed with IMF recommendations to stabilize the country’s economic situation. Under this stabilization program, the government was attempting to reduce the public-sector deficit, by imposing further restrictions on spending, and by selling its interests in many parastatal companies. This effort also led to closing companies for which there were no buyers (Hodgkinson, 1998). By the end of 1992, the number of public enterprises had declined from over 100 to 71, of which 27 were mixed-ownership enterprises majority-owned by the state. In fact, only 42 public enterprises were still in operation, of which six⁸ were classified as strategic (World Bank, 1995). The government had no means to continue to manage its public sector, given that tax receipts were adversely affected by political unrest and generally weaker oil prices, debt-service costs continued to rise, and government finances remained highly dependent on foreign aid and the non-payment of liabilities (Hodgkinson, 1998).

⁸ SNE (electricity), SNDE (water), ONPT (post and telecommunications), ATC (rail, port, river transport), HC (petroleum distribution), and CORAF (oil refining).

Political Transition and the Invalidation of the National Consensus

Speaking of political liberalization in Africa, Bratton and van de Walle point out that “in some parts of Africa the disintegration of authoritarian rule may be followed by anarchy” (Bratton and van Walle, 1992:29). In Congo-Brazzaville, this prediction was proven right by the political violence taking place during the transition. Political anarchy finds its source in the factors and the dynamics that dominated the transition from authoritarian rule. More profound, however, is the explanation that emphasizes the way in which the elements of historicity have affected the formation of the new political order.

The transition was set to achieve national goals stemming from the national consensus established during the National Conference. These goals included, among others, the formulation of an electoral law and the organization of an electoral process leading to the referendum on the new constitution, the municipal, legislative and presidential elections, and the establishment of a judicial power distinct from the executive and the legislative bodies. Beside the factors related to historicity, institutional conflicts also caused a great deal of difficulty in achieving the goals of the transition. Problems of inter-bureaucratic struggle persisted from the old political system, as was obvious in the rivalry between the Superior Council of the Republic and the government caused by differences in economic policies. This complicated the pursuit of the objectives of establishing effective institutions. This confusion proves that during the transition, “it is almost impossible to specify, *ex ante*, which classes, sectors, institutions,

and other groups will take what role, opt for which issues, or support what alternative (O'Donnell, 1986:4).

Another confusion arose from the fact that the causes of discord that the National Conference was meant to cast out persisted and interfered with the transitional period and beyond it. These, for instance, were the use of ethnic affiliations and political revenge by the political elite in the pursuit of personal interests (Nsafou, 1996; Baniafouna, 1995). These factors interfered with the pursuit of the national objectives assigned to the transitional institutions, increasing the degree of uncertainty and the chances of delaying the restructuring process. Old dynamics referring to generational cleavages and ethnic divisions constituted the strategies that political actors used to secure advantageous situations in the post-transition political system. Even the political history of the country was subject to an interpretation loaded with meanings that were disruptive of the national goals. This rereading of history characterized the restructuring process as the toppling of northern ethnic groups that dominated the political era leading to the country's socioeconomic and political crisis. Northern ethnic groups, particularly the Mbochi, were blamed for the country's misfortune. The Conference exalted the Bakongo and other southern ethnic groups through the claim that southerners gave the country a relatively good economic start and they were the most capable of leading the country to economic prosperity. This symbolism permeated the proceedings of the National Conference in which the religious and traditional ceremonies introduced during this forum reflected Kongo traditions (Bazenguissa-Ganga, 1997).

The dominant characteristic of the transition was the climate of social and political unrest, caused and intensified by the continuous shifting of political alliances.

This was taking place against the background of a severe economic crisis resonating in increasing social protests. These protests reflected a delusion that people began to feel about political change. The inability of the transitional government to meet the hopes for better economic conditions intensified social unease, which the leaders of different parties exploited by pointing to the inadequacy of government choices and policies. Unpaid public-sector workers, soldiers and impatient citizens put increasing pressures on the transitional government to demand wages and better conditions of life, taxing the government capacity to deal with a disastrous socioeconomic crisis it inherited. Meanwhile, leaders of political parties and organizations failed to support the government in its efforts to consolidate the regime and implement the recommendations of the National Conference. This lack of commitment to the national consensus made salient the leaders' greater interest in the struggle for political power. In other words, while the country continued to sink into deeper socioeconomic and political difficulties, the leaders' attention focused on intense preparations for the 1992 electoral season.

Phase II of the Restructuring Process: The Dismantling of Democracy

Analyzing the democratization process in Congo-Brazzaville, Weiss and his colleagues (1995:3) state that "establishing a functioning democracy has been far more difficult than dismantling a bankrupt Marxist-Leninist regime no longer supported by its foreign patrons." More difficult in fact, has been the uprooting of old habits that dominated the functioning of the single-party system in Congo-Brazzaville. The new regime had been characterized by political behaviors that prevailed during the single-

party system. Such behaviors are, for instance, the pursuit of personal interests leading to disregarding the law and the constitution, the institutional centralization and the concentration of power in the hands of a few. The failure of the first attempts at democratization can be explained partly by the political conflicts that undermined the electoral process (Baniafouna, 1995) and generated coalition politics through which politicians asserted their influence and interests (Englebert, 1998). Another no less important factor that undermined the democratization process is the importance of the oil sector in Congolese politics (Clark, 1997). To understand these dynamics, a review of the transitional period is important.

The Elections and Political Maneuvering

An important element of the transition is the fact that PCT members experienced a loss of power and their frustration added further complication to a process already characterized by uncertainty. This loss of power was coupled by the humiliation that PCT members felt during the National Conference that turned into a stormy criticism of the way the PCT regime governed the country. The transfer of power from PCT members to the transitional government was not smooth. A report by the Council of Ministers of the transitional period quoted by Menga (1993:53-54) refers to the lack of good will on the part of the PCT leadership, which translated into boycotting meetings of power transfer, and mostly into deliberately plundering the state's finances before leaving their posts.

To compensate for the loss of power and to regain power in the new regime, PCT leaders signed a pact with the UPADS, Lissouba's party, in view of the upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections (Nsafou, 1996). This pact reinforced a political coalition, the Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie, which included parties close to Lissouba's party. The pact was an agreement on the modality of power sharing between the UPADS, the PCT and other parties belonging to the alliance, should any of these parties get to form the government after winning elections. The transition was, therefore, a moment when all major parties consolidated their positions in the new political context, since during this period, as Clark (1997:69) points out, after Milongo's installation as the transitional Prime Minister, "the rest of 1991 was spent preparing for Congo's upcoming elections."

The only election that resulted in a peaceful outcome was the referendum on the 1992 constitution, which was endorsed by 96.3 percent of total votes. All other electoral results gave rise to disputes and discord. In general, the series of elections that followed the referendum showed the contours of the post-National Conference political system. For instance, elections to communal, regional and district councils, taking place on May 3rd, 1991, showed the big players among all the parties. These elections provided 1,343 seats, and as table 5.7 shows, five parties emerged as predominant. The UPADS won 34.8 percent, MCDDI obtained 18.1 percent, PCT, 14.2 percent. In all other elections, the contest was dominated by these three political organizations.

Table 5.7 Results of the elections to communal regional and district councils, 1991.

Parties	Total votes obtained	Percentage
UPADS	468	34.8
MCDDI	244	18.1
PCT	191	14.2
RDD	122	9.0
RDPS	89	6.6
Others	299	22.2

Source: Based on Baniafouna, 1995:89.

Elections to the new National Assembly took place in late June and mid-July. The UPADS became the majority party, winning 39 of the 125 contested seats or 31.2 percent, followed by the MCDDI, with 29 seats or 23.2 percent and the PCT with 18 seats or 14.4 percent (Englebert, 1998:357). Elections to the Senate, providing 60 seats, followed a nearly comparable distribution of seats. For the Senate the UPADS obtained 23 seats or 38.3 percent, the MCDDI won 14 seats or 23.3 percent. The RDD got better results than the PCT, with 23 seats or 38.3 percent against the PCT's 2 seats or 3.3 percent (Weiss and others, 1995:5). As these authors note, "the plethora of small parties which had made their appearance during the National Conference lost their significance."

The presidential election took place in August 1992, involving two rounds. The first of these featured 18 candidates whose names appear below. Candidates for the second round were the two winning the largest number of votes in the first round. These were Lissouba from the UPADS and Kolelas from the MCDDI, who obtained 282,000 votes (35.8 percent) and 159,682 votes (20.30 percent) respectively. In the second round, Lissouba was elected president with 61.32 percent against 38.68 percent for Kolelas (Baniafouna, 1995:92).

Candidates to the First Round of Presidential Election (Baniafouna, 1995:92).

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Denis Sassou-Nguesso (incumbent) | 10. Antoine Makangou-Loukami |
| 2. Pascal Lissouba | 11. Pierre Nzé |
| 3. Bernard Kolelas | 12. Gabriel Bokiloua |
| 4. André Milongo | 13. A. Célestin Gongard Nkoua |
| 5. Joachim Yhombi-Opango (former president, 1977-1979) | 14. David Charles Ganao |
| 6. Alphonse Souchalty-Poaty | 15. Paul Kaya |
| 7. Clément Mierassa | 16. Jean-Martin Mbemba |
| 8. Jean-Pierre Thystère Tchicaya | 17. Angèle Bandou |
| 9. Jean-Michel Bokamba-Yangouma | 18. Auguste Corentin Kouba |

At the beginning of his presidential term, in September 1992, Lissouba appointed Stephane M. Bongho-Nouarra as Prime Minister, the leader of the Parti pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Congo (PDRC). The appointment of Bongho-Nouarra as Prime Minister was based on the existence of an alliance of parties, called the Alliance Nationale pour la Démocratie (AND), to which the UPADS and the PDRC belonged. As Prime Minister, he received the mandate to form a government, which Lissouba wished to be a coalition government given the endorsement he received from other parties during the second round of the presidential election. The most notable endorsement came from Sassou-Nguesso and his PCT. Sources say that this support for Lissouba reflected the fear on the part of the PCT and Sassou-Nguesso, "that a Kolelas victory would result in trials as anticipated by the National Conference" (Weiss and others, 1995:8). This point of view also appeared in the interviews conducted for this study, particularly from people who participated in the National Conference, for instance, Brigitte Yengo and Marcel Samba.

The alliance that included the PCT and the UPADS did not survive the crisis that resulted from the sharing of governmental posts. The PCT received fewer posts than it expected or, according to comments through our interviews, Lissouba offered less than he promised. This situation caused a complete about-face in the Congo's democratization

process, which led to the creation of what Weiss and others (1995:8) called an “unnatural” alliance between Kolelas, Thystère Tchicaya and Sassou-Nguesso in September and October 1992. The result was that the new alliance called the Union pour le Renouveau Démocratique, (URD-PCT) led by Kolelas emerged as a new opposition to Lissouba and his government and achieved a parliamentary majority (Englebert, 1998; Nsafou, 1996; Baniafouna, 1995).

Weiss and his colleagues (1995:9) adequately analyze the possibilities and the risks that this situation presented.

With the loss of parliamentary majority President Lissouba was faced with three alternatives; ask his designated prime minister to form a government of national union with opposition support, ask Mr. Kolelas to form a new government, or dissolve parliament and schedule new elections. However, the institutional process was to a substantial degree sidelined with the beginning of urban violence following a call for civil disobedience by the opposition alliance. The “street” gave Mr. Kolelas an advantage since President Lissouba did not have ethnic support among the urban masses.

The URD-PCT alliance, relying on its new majority of seats in parliament demanded the right to form a new government and won a vote of no confidence in the government on October 31, 1992. But Lissouba declared that he would retain Bongho-Nouarra until new elections could be held, despite the opposition’s unrelenting demand to appoint a new Prime Minister emanating from the new parliamentary majority. In defiance, Lissouba ordered the Bongho-Nouarra government to “continue to assume their responsibilities” (quoted by Nsafou, 1996:119), and dissolved the National Assembly announcing new legislative elections for 1993. The opposition declared this dissolution of the parliament illegal referring to Article 123 of the 1992 constitution. This article states that “when the National Assembly has adopted a motion of censure or when it

disapproves of the program or a declaration of general policy of the Government, the Prime Minister shall remit to the President of the Republic the resignation of the Government” (see appendix). Lissouba’s transgression of the Constitution was not limited to his refusal to dissolve the government. Indeed, according to Article 75 of the 1992 constitution, “The President of the Republic shall name the Prime Minister approved by a parliamentary majority of the National Assembly. He shall end the Prime Minister’s functions when the Prime Minister presents the resignation of the Government.” Defiance from both sides caused a standstill in the government’s daily operations. Meanwhile, launching a civil disobedience movement, URD-PCT partisans placed roadblocks and harassed people suspected of being Lissouba’s supporters.

The Use of Oil Revenues in the Electoral Process

Oil revenues have helped the regimes in Congo-Brazzaville to establish political support or curtail potential opposition “on the part of those who did not respond to the incentives offered by the *rentier* economy.” In other cases, the Sassou-Nguesso regime resorted repeatedly to the assistance of the French petroleum subsidiary, Elf-Congo to make up for chronic budget deficits (Clark, 1998b: 68). Oil revenues have determined the outcome of political processes and allowed the survival of political regimes.

The 1993 legislative election took place against the background of continued social turmoil, which was enhanced by growing discontent on the part of workers over the seven-month salary arrears. This raised concern in the Lissouba alliance, fearing a low turnout in the election, which could affect their position in parliament, or a high

turnout in which voters would express electoral support for the opposing alliance. Unable to meet the demands for salary, after being turned down by the French petroleum subsidiary, Lissouba was forced to mortgage future oil revenue to raise money. On April 27, 1993, he signed a contract with the US Oil Company, Oxy, involving the exploitation of the Nkossa and Kitina oil fields to be exploited during a four-year period. He secretly signed this contract mortgaging oil revenues by selling off oil at the ridiculous low price of \$2 a barrel while the international prices were \$16 a barrel (Nsafou, 1996; Sassou-Nguesso, 1997:67). In return, Oxy was to place \$150 million into a personal account at the Union Congolaise des Banques. This allowed the government to pay the wage bill, starting on May 1 (Nsafou, 1996:124; Clark, 1998b).

This conduct precipitated a crisis in relations with France (Clark, 1998b), given that the oil fields in question were being exploited partly by Elf (Nsafou, 1996). Observers, among those interviewed, point out the good relationships that Sassou-Nguesso had been able to maintain with the French Oil Company. Some have indicated the support he enjoyed from the French government and business community in waging the war against Lissouba. The French daily newspaper *L'Humanité* (1999), for instance, points out that contradicting accusations have been made against Elf and some of these have alleged that the company had provided logistic support to Sassou-Nguesso during the civil war.

Internal Conflicts and International Mediation

The confrontation between different political organizations, the armed conflict between the militia of such prominent leaders as Lissouba, Kolelas and Sassou-Nguesso, and the defiance between political leaders over the 1993 election results caused a severe social and political crisis in Brazzaville. In May 1993, the first round of the new parliamentary elections produced a new crisis resulting from charges of fraud by the URD-PCT alliance. The creation of militia by political leaders as a means to resolve their antagonisms resulting from electoral outcomes and the inciting of these militia to fighting and barricading the city also constitutes a direct cause of the crisis ravaging the city (Yengo, 1997; Dorier-Apprill, 1997). This led to the intervention of the army's Chief of Staff, Jean-Marie Mokoko offering mediation and calling for the appointment of a new Prime Minister. Finally following an agreement signed on December 3, Lissouba agreed to form a new government of national unity giving the majority of posts to the URD-PCT alliance. Three days later, he appointed Claude-Antoine Da Costa as Prime Minister who formed the new government allocating 60 percent of posts to the URD-PCT and 40 percent to the presidential alliance (Baniafouna, 1995:107).

In the 1993 legislative election, the presidential alliance won 62 of the 125 seats in the National Assembly, while the URD-PCT alliance secured 49 (Englebert, 1993:357). On the basis of total results, which reflected absolute parliamentary majority for the presidential alliance after securing a total of 69 seats, Lissouba appointed Yhombi-Opango as Prime Minister. In June, the URD-PCT coalition, protesting the

irregularities from the first round, boycotted the second round. Its new call for civil disobedience led to urban violence in Brazzaville (Weiss and others, 1995). This political crisis intensified particularly owing to two factors. The first was Kolelas's decision to resort to a military solution to resolve the issue. The second was the appointment of two rival cabinets, one by Lissouba and another by Kolelas and his allies. An eruption of party militia in the political context resulted from the notion of military solution, stirring up urban violence (Nsafou, 1996). Meanwhile this development had social consequences of great magnitude, such as "the expulsion of citizens from their homes because they had different ethnic backgrounds and/or political affiliations from their neighbors" (Weiss and others, 1995:9).

The failure of the political elite to resolve the crisis they created led to international mediation. Such an initiative came from president Bongo of Gabon, with encouragement from the OAU and France. A meeting was organized between the opposition and presidential alliance between July 29 and August 4, 1993, in Libreville, Gabon (Clark, 1997). The two sides agreed upon the idea of having a committee of impartial international arbitrators examine the disputed first-round election results and the need for a second round of elections. As a result, the Supreme Court annulled the second round already held. International mediation was almost a watershed that renewed the political climate by generating conciliatory moves among the conflicting parties. One example of progress was the acceptance of the results of the repeated second round of legislative elections in October 1993, which gave 65 seats to the presidential alliance while the opposition amassed 57 seats. With these results, the opposition agreed to participate in the new Assembly (Englebert, 1993).

However, the entente among the political elite was not followed by the disarmament of their militia. In November 1993, violence broke out between opposing party militia, causing serious disruption of economic activities in addition to at least 2,000 deaths in Brazzaville. Although a cease-fire was agreed upon between the presidential alliance and the opposition, sporadic violence was continuously reported throughout 1994 and 1995. As violence continued, both sides made efforts to restore peace supported by international organizations such as UNESCO and the OAU (Baniafouna, 1995; Ganga, 1994). Despite these efforts, peace in Congo-Brazzaville remained fragile since the existence of private militia continued to threaten and halt the process of democratization. The three main leaders, Lissouba, Kolelas and Sassou-Nguesso continued to hold on to their private militia while signing peace agreements and promising to disarm.

The existence of party militia was a matter of great concern for the security of people and the economy, as they involved themselves in looting, raping and other disorderly conducts. During 1994-96, efforts to tackle the issue led to the integration of some 4,000 militia members into the defense and security forces. Political and ethnic divisions pervaded the army and the police as the result of this integration, and these divisions were the grounds for mutinies in early 1997, predominantly among newly recruited military personnel affiliated to the presidential alliance. In February, militiamen blockaded the Congo-Océan railway for several days, and disconnected regional electricity supplies, demanding immediate integration into the regular army at the ranks of sergeant and the dismissal of the commander of their training camp. Lissouba granted these demands and failed to reprimand the mutineers. Further demands

included the dismissal of several high-ranking officers of northern ethnic groups installed during Sassou-Nguesso's regime, and by acceding to these demands, Lissouba attracted criticism from opposition politicians who accused him of political and ethnic favoritism (Englebert, 1998). This constituted an obstacle to the reconciliation process.

Reconciliation and the Reconstitution of Alliances

In spite of the difficulties mentioned in the last section, there were signs indicating efforts to pursue the reconciliation process, though occasional attacks continued sporadically to disturb the peace initiatives. A slow rapprochement between the presidential coalition and Kolelas reinforced these efforts. In June 1994, Lissouba and Kolelas made a joint public appearance to consolidate the reconciliation of their two rival camps (Kaptindé, 1994). A month later, Kolelas and Tchicaya were elected mayors of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire respectively. This political climate did not mean endorsement of Lissouba's policies by the opposition. Kolelas and Tchicaya, for instance, reaffirmed their being part of the opposition (Clark, 1997:75). Meanwhile members of the presidential alliance still dominated the government that was formed in the context of peace (Kaptindé, 1995).

Coalition politics revealed that political liberalization generated new strategies of gaining and maintaining power. In many cases, coalitions have been accompanied by schisms. As Clark (1997:76) points out, "these schisms are typical in that political groups often stay united only as long as the threat from a perceived common enemy seems real." Coalition politics could generate unexpected alliances since its basic

principle has been to secure power and influence. For instance, while the Kolelas-Sassou-Nguesso alliance was “unnatural” and was only possible for political reasons, the entente between Lissouba, Kolelas and Tchicaya, for instance, seemed to have an ethnopolitical character since all three politicians were from the south. Clark (1997:75) argues that this must have alienated Sassou-Nguesso who is from a northern ethnic group. Though it was assumed that the URD-PCT alliance still existed, in September 1994, Sassou-Nguesso formed a new coalition of northern-based political parties, the Forces Démocratiques Unies (FDU). This new alliance stood in strong opposition to Lissouba’s presidential alliance, with harsh accusations and bitter words between the two.

In the armed conflicts resulting from the accusations between these two alliances, it was Kolelas who played the mediating role at the national level, aided by president Bongo of Gabon and Muhammad Sahnoun, the joint UN-OAU special representative in the region (Englebert, 1998:358). Tensions continued throughout 1995-96, and escalating into the 1997 civil war, which put a definite halt to the post-National Conference political system. This war broke out as the result of a dispute over the preparation of the 1997 presidential election. On June 19, 1997, Lissouba established a constitutional council, which allowed him to extend his presidential term by 90 days, which was supposed to expire on August 31 (L’Humanité, 1997).

An official of the Lissouba regime, Dieudonné Ganga, argued that Sassou-Nguesso launched armed attacks against the administration because he was not certain of winning the upcoming presidential elections. On the other hand, officials close to Sassou-Nguesso that we also interviewed, argue that the establishment of the constitutional council was Lissouba’s strategy to delay the elections and weaken the

electoral grounds of his rivals. On June 23, 1997, troops loyal to Sassou-Nguesso directed artillery fire towards the National Assembly building, where the constitutional council was due to be sworn in. This gave Lissouba grounds to petition the constitutional court to postpone elections, which would have contributed to extending his presidential term. As Clark (1998:234) observes, “whatever Lissouba’s actual intentions, the resulting confrontation destroyed Congo’s civil peace and its experiment with democracy.” The dismantling of democracy is the consequence of the irresponsible behavior of principal political leaders. In this civil war, Kolelas and Lissouba fought on the same side, as Kolelas held an ephemeral premiership in the last months of the Lissouba regime.

Phase III of the Restructuring Process: Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Did the dismantling of democracy mean a return to authoritarian regime? The civil war ended with a military victory of Sassou-Nguesso in October 1997, which was facilitated by the assistance of Angolan troops. Resistance, however, continues in some areas of the country, where opposition militiamen have hidden in parts of the country, particularly in the south. The political change launched in the early 1990s failed to prevent the use of force as a means of gaining power. The scenario of military coups has been brought back to the collective memory of the Congolese population violently breaking into pieces their dream of peaceful power transfer resulting from democratic governance. The first attempts at democratization, therefore, failed, and a third phase of the restructuring process is underway. The civil war and all the disturbing factors that led

to it are indeed part of the political restructuring. This phase involves, among others, rebuilding the state, reconstructing the country's institutions and socioeconomic infrastructure, creating popular confidence and trust in the political leadership and political processes, guaranteeing security and the respect for human rights, establishing peace and creating the condition for national unity. This constitutes an immense task that Sassou-Nguesso has to tackle since he resumed power.

The Return of Sassou-Nguesso

Sassou-Nguesso resumed power in October 1997, and since then he has been grappling with the question of international legitimacy. Attitudes toward Congo-Brazzaville vary and remain divided. France is broadly sympathetic to the new Sassou-Nguesso regime, while the United States and the United Kingdom have taken a more skeptical stance. The French president, Jacques Chirac is a strong supporter of President Sassou-Nguesso. The United States has expressed concern over the removal of a legitimate, elected government by force. U.S. officials have urged the Sassou-Nguesso administration to make significant steps toward national reconciliation. The United Kingdom remains similarly mistrustful, and it granted a five-year residence permit to former president Lissouba (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2nd quarter 1999).

The search for international legitimacy has not been facilitated by the reports of human rights violations by his regime. In its 1998 report, the independent human rights watchdog, the Observatoire Congolais des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH), reported arbitrary detentions of opposition members, and denounced government forces for

carrying out summary executions of men and youths suspected of involvement with the Kolelas militia. Reports from Amnesty International (1999) also express a similar concern.

Several dozen suspected opponents of the government, including possible prisoners of conscience, were detained without charge or trial. Hundreds of unarmed civilians and captured combatants were extrajudicially executed by government forces and allied militia. Some detainees were tortured and virtually all were held in conditions that amounted to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. (Report published through the Internet).

On the issue of international legitimacy, Sassou-Nguesso's regime has *de facto* established itself. Several countries, such as China, South Korea, Mali, Japan, Russia have resumed diplomatic relations with Congo-Brazzaville (Congo-Brazzaville Report, 2000). Much remains to be done by the Sassou-Nguesso regime to convince the international community of its efforts to establish democracy and dialogue with politicians of the former regime. The division within the regime concerning the attitude toward the Lissouba regime will complicate these efforts. Some hard-liners have opted for a tough stance that rules out any possibility of dialogue and compromise. This approach resulted, in November 1998, in the government's launching of an international arrest warrant against Lissouba and Kolelas, who have taken refuge respectively in the United Kingdom and the United States. The presence of these hard-liners in the regime illustrates the notion that the process of transition features political forces that seek to erect some façade of democratic climate "behind which they can maintain inviolate the hierarchical and authoritarian nature of their power" (O'Donnell and others, 1986: 16).

Since his return, the focus of Sassou-Nguesso has been the creation of the institutional basis for power and political processes. Despite his regime's refusal to negotiate with the leading politicians of the Lissouba regime, President Sassou-Nguesso

has allowed their parties to continue their activities in the country. Although PCT members dominate his government by approximately 85 percent, it also includes representatives of such parties as the MCDDI, the UPADS, the UPDP and the UP (Congo-Brazzaville Report, February 2000). This does not, however, imply that the conditions for democracy exist. According to Mr. Michael Goldschmidt, an official of the Department of State we interviewed, international legitimacy is such an overriding concern that Sassou-Nguesso has been forced to allow participation in political processes and executive functions by his enemies' parties. As the Economist Intelligence Unit (1998) reports,

Given the violent manner in which Mr. Sassou-Nguesso took power last year, Western governments have repeatedly warned the new regime that political and democratic considerations will outweigh financial and economic criteria in determining whether or not they resume aid. They have shown growing exasperation at Mr. Sassou-Nguesso's attempt to portray last year's civil war as one-sided affair for which the ousted president, Pascal Lissouba, must carry most of the blame.

The Forum for National Reconciliation

The Forum for National Reconciliation is hailed as a good initiative, but it also gives rise to many concerns because it has excluded many political actors who may challenge the new Sassou-Nguesso regime. The question lies in the conditions and strategies used to facilitate the return of democracy to Congo-Brazzaville and the extent to which these conditions are determined by the regime's efforts to consolidate its position of power before allowing challenges from the opposition. An important element in this process has been the Forum for National Reconciliation held in Brazzaville on January 5-15, 1998. In some of our interviews, political activists, for instance, Mr. Hervé

Miabilangana, Mrs. Valerie Makosso and Mr. Evariste Salou, remarked that the Forum reflected the manipulation of the political system by the new regime. Control over the political system by the new regime is illustrated by the government's pressure on the media. Critical press reports rarely emanate from Brazzaville since the new regime has emerged, and two opposition newspapers, Le Flambeau and la Rue Meurt had to cease publication after their premises were looted, reportedly by supporters of the government. Local transmission by the independent Gabon-based radio station Africa No.1 has been suspended, because it allowed opposition politicians to air their views on its open-opinion broadcasts (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1999:14).

The Forum for National Reconciliation determined the conditions under which the second transition to democracy would take place. It presents the direction that the regime intends to give to the political transition and new institutions. As the Congolese minister in charge of setting up the Forum indicated, this gathering gave an opportunity to discuss "the future of Congo, the various means of transition, the organization of free and transparent elections, the genocide orchestrated by the previous government."⁹ The Forum defined the principles that should govern the institutional arrangements in which power would be shared by forces involved and how popular demands should be expressed and organizations should operate. It delineates the forms of interaction between these different forces and actors while promoting the interests of the dominant actors of the new regime. For instance, the continuous incrimination of the former regime constitutes an attempt at exempting the new regime from charges of direct responsibility in war crimes. Comments from opposition activists point out that the

⁹ From the Report on the National Forum for Reconciliation, published by the Department of communication of the presidency in Brazzaville. It will herein be referred to as the NFR.

dominant actors of the new Sassou-Nguesso regime understand that settling past accounts in such a way as to incriminate the former regime contributes to protecting their own interests. For them, the National Forum is nothing more than the preparation for an institutional arrangement that secures the interests of the new ruling group.

The debates of the National Forum dealt with the prospect of national reconciliation, defining a “new approach to democracy and the management of political parties, NGOs and other associations,” the duration of the transition, national reconstruction and the main orientation to be given to the new constitution (NFR, 1998:12). With the emergence of the new regime, the 1992 constitution was abrogated. Unlike the National Conference in the early 1990s, which featured opposing views and an opposition that was radically harsh on the ruling PCT, the National Forum was a setting in which opposition to the regime was more conciliatory. The reasons for this conciliatory attitude could be debated. Some in our interviews, for instance, Bruno Itoua and Albert Ondongo, said that it was motivated by the need for peace in a country that was torn by war. More critical views point out that the opposition was rather silent because of threats to their lives in a context that has brought the country back to an authoritarian political system.

Whatever the bias in each of these views, it is certain that a more radical opposition to the new Sassou-Nguesso regime could not be expressed because the actors that would have done this refused to participate in the Forum (Englebert, 2000). These actors are members of a new coalition of parties founded in 1997, after the return of Sassou-Nguesso to power. This new organization called the Espace Républicain pour la Défense de la Démocratie et de l'Unité Nationale (ERDDUN) is an alliance of leaders of

political parties who were active in the Lissouba regime and fled the country during the civil war. Their new political organization consists of breakaway groups from original opposition parties operating in the country. These groups distinguish themselves from their original branches by the fact that they do not recognize the legitimacy of the new Sassou-Nguesso regime, even though their parent organizations have found new ways to survive in the new political context and adapt to it. Through the media and the Internet, for instance, members of this new organization characterize themselves as the democratically elected officials and the only ones with a mandate to represent the Congolese people. Therefore, the leaders of the ERDDUN still consider themselves as the only legitimate government of Congo-Brazzaville, but operating in exile. These leaders include, among the most prominent, Lissouba, Kolelas, Yhombi-Opango and Ganao. This complicates the question of national reconciliation.

National Reconciliation

The National Forum stressed the importance of reconciliation by highlighting the idea of an inclusive decision-making process, which implies that “no party, no group of people can act as sole ruler of the country” (NRF, 1998:12). Even speaking of national reconciliation, the forum continued to incriminate the former regime. This double-standard approach determined Sassou-Nguesso’s views on reconciliation, which claim to herald the “principle of forgiveness” and profess condemnation, as the following statement shows.

In a country like the Congo, which was left for years to the arbitrary mercies of a virtual madman, a nation which for so long has suffered from a regime predicated

upon hatred, ethnic exclusiveness, and violence, is it not time, when peace returns, to bury not only our weapons, but also our grudges? (Congo-Brazzaville Report, September 1999:1).

New Approach to Democracy

The approach specifies the principles that determine the activities of political parties and other organizations of civil society. These principles promote legal rights for political opposition and the abandonment of the limitations imposed on the circulation and movement of political leaders. Embracing a notion of freedom based on individual rights, the participants in the Forum asserted the importance of the freedom of expression of people in spite of their differences of opinion and beliefs.

The idea of eliminating the influence of politicians of the former regime, coupled with a concern with corruption, led the participants in the Forum to call for “a renewal of political representatives, a moralization of political life and the verification of party financing.” The participants in the Forum noted that the reason for the failure of the first attempts at establishing democratic rule lies in the attitude of the political leadership (NFR, 1999:12).

The Second Transitional Period

The Forum approved an immediate three-year period, which would include the organization of presidential and legislative elections in 2001. The transitional period could be shortened or prolonged depending upon the prevailing security situation and

economic circumstances (Englebert, 2000). An important aspect of the transitional period is the establishment of a 75 member National Transitional Council, which is a legislative body. Though dominated by PCT members, this institution does not have the monolithic character that hard-liners of the new Sassou-Nguesso regime had wished. Members of other parties are represented, such as the Union pour la Démocratie et la République-Mouinda (UDR-Mouinda), the Union pour la République (UR) and the Union pour le Renouveau National (URN) (Villepin and others, 1999; NFR, 1998:20-21).

With the abrogation of the 1992 Constitution, the transitional period is being regulated by the 1998 Transitional Fundamental Act. This document specifies “the commitment of the Congolese people to the principles of democracy and human rights” (Acte Fondamental de la Transition, 1998:1). Despite the overthrow of the regime established by the National Conference, the Transitional Fundamental Act establishes continuity with the recommendations of national unity and respect of rights and liberties given by the National Conference. The conditions that caused the collapse of democracy in Congo-Brazzaville have not been forgotten, as the document reveals concerns with intolerance, hatred and violence as serious obstacles in the process of nation-building.

National Reconstruction

An important aspect of the Forum was to identify priorities for the process of national reconstruction (NFR, 1998:13). This led to the formulation of the following tasks:

- Restoration of the security for the people all over the country, and restoration of the authority of the state;
- Restoration of activities in all sectors of national life;
- Regular payment of salaries, pensions and school grants;
- Restoration of mutual trust among the Congolese people, and between the people and social partners;
- Freedom of movement for people and goods;
- Reconstruction of public buildings and offices;
- Training of civil servants for a better administration;
- A national debate on the problem of employment with the assistance and expertise of the International Trade Bureau;
- Creation of a special fund for reconstruction;
- Effective use of national know-how.

Orientations for the New Constitution

The new constitution is expected to provide a presidential regime for the country, and the Forum justifies this option on the basis of the fact that “the political history of the country has always been marked by instability and contrast.” The Forum participants also included an important remark reflecting the need to adapt this system to the realities of Congo-Brazzaville, which implies “setting up entities to counterbalance the powers of the president” (NFR, 1999:16). The new constitution would reduce the parliamentary structure by preserving the National Assembly and eliminating the Senate. Other

structures to be provided include the High Court of Justice, the Constitutional Council, the Social and Economic Council and the Information and Communication Superior Council.

This last element reflects considerations on political and institutional restructuring. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this program will be implemented and the political determination of the new regime to carry it out. Another question concerns the facility the Sassou-Nguesso regime will have to negotiate this implementation with the opposition, since the program seems to reflect the perspective of the leading group. The positive element is that the National Forum for Reconciliation also included members of other political parties and these represented organizations seem to have approved of the main lines of the program (Villepin and others, 1999).

Opposition to the New Sassou-Nguesso Regime

The most ferocious opposition to Sassou-Nguesso is the exiled association of political leaders participating in the Lissouba regime. They are referred to as the Espace Républicain pour la Défense de la Démocratie et de l'Unité Nationale (ERDDUN). This organization claims to defend democracy and national unity, and accuses Sassou-Nguesso of having destroyed the process of democratization in Congo-Brazzaville. Inside the country, the activities of this organization have been mostly carried out by militia loyal to Lissouba and Kolelas, which are represented by the Haut Commandement des Forces d'Autodéfense de la Résistance Congolaise in the negotiations with the

Sassou-Nguesso government. These activities have concentrated in destabilizing tactics in the south and southwest.

The political approach of the ERDDUN has focused lately on finding means of establishing dialogue with the Sassou-Nguesso regime, as is indicated by its communiqué of February 18, 2000 issued at the end of its meeting in Accra, Ghana. This initiative has been rejected, however, by the hard-liners of Sassou-Nguesso's regime, particularly PCT members. While seeking means of "dialogue" and ways of "restoring democracy" in Congo-Brazzaville, this organization has used the same method as the Sassou-Nguesso regime, which consists of blaming the civil war on Sassou-Nguesso. This observation is based on a reading of its press communiqué issued on October 23, 1998, published on the Internet and on interviews with ERDDUN supporters. In this announcement, the ERDDUN characterizes the Sassou-Nguesso regime as barbarian partly because of its human rights violations, and partly for what the ERDDUN considers as the regime's unconstitutional character for "having destroyed democracy."

Neoliberalism in the Congo's Political Restructuring Process

This section examines the impact of neoliberalism on political restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville. The basis of this examination is the 1992 constitution and the 1998 Transitional Fundamental Act, which constitute important documents in which the principles governing the process of democratization have been enshrined. At the same time, these documents have been the reference point for the behavior of political actors who dominated the context of political liberalization. Even in the context of conflict of

interests, each side has referred to either the Constitution or the Fundamental Act, depending on which regime it supports. There is a similarity between the Constitution and the Transitional Fundamental Act in the incorporation of neoliberal ideas, and it testifies to the dominance of neoliberalism and the efforts by all regimes involved in the restructuring period to incorporate it. It is an indication of the fact that political choices made in Congo-Brazzaville during the process of liberalization have reflected the trends of the global system. Firmin Ayessa, the Minister in charge of setting up the National Forum for Reconciliation, for instance, presents the forum as an important step that creates the conditions for the Congo's integration into the global system. He considers it to be "a considerable event, a true historic moment, which constitutes a turning point in our history in the quest of a place in the modern world" (NFR, 1998:3).

The phenomenon of global capitalism has been a fact in the process of political transformation in Congo-Brazzaville. From the very seed of liberalization that neoliberalism has sown through deregulation, sprung social movements through which politically, socially and economically dissatisfied populations and the labor union have challenged the legitimacy of state institutions, toppling persisting centralized, authoritarian or corrupt governments and political regimes judged incapable of sound socioeconomic management. To satisfy the socioeconomic needs of increasingly demanding constituency, the state in Congo-Brazzaville had to abide by the rules of the very external institutions that dismantled the basis of its sovereignty. This has led to the abandonment of the Marxist ideology that the political leadership heralded for nearly three decades.

It is the problem of bad political management and inappropriate socioeconomic policies that the state had been forced to resolve by incorporating elements of the neoliberal system, which some World Bank recommendations (1997:3) specify. The 1992 Constitution, the 1998 Transitional Fundamental Act, and the National Forum for Reconciliation reflect efforts designed to meet neoliberal requirements proposing the reconfiguration of the state within a changing national and international environment. For instance, the 1992 Constitution and the 1998 Transitional Fundamental Act have articles that evoke the decentralization of the state. Article 1 of the Constitution and article 1 of the Fundamental Act define the state as, among others, decentralized. This reflects the neoliberal orientation that has rejected the trends of centralized planning generating the expansion of the state that World Bank recommendations intend to correct.

The goal of World Bank recommendations is to offer “a broad framework for addressing the issue of the state’s effectiveness worldwide,” despite the difficulty of elaborating a universal method suitable to all, given the enormous range of differences among states. The point is that historical, social, cultural and geographical circumstances should not hide the need for efficient institutions. To deal with the complexity and the intricacies inherent in social and global change, as these are manifested at home and abroad, the state must achieve an institutional transformation that matches its role to its capability. The World Bank points out that “many states try to do too much with few resources and little capability, and often do more harm than good” (World Bank, 1997:3). This refers to the need to reduce not the ability of the state to function, but its size. The National Forum for Reconciliation seems to apply this structural component by proposing the abolishment of the Senate through the upcoming constitution.

Congolese restructuring embraces other dimensions of neoliberal ideology. Through the 1992 Constitution, the process had proclaimed the notion of national unity within a pluralist democracy. Article 7 of this constitution recognized the right of political associations, parties and groupings to “freely form and exercise their activities in respect for the law and the principles of national sovereignty, integrity of territory, national unity and pluralist democracy.” The same tenet had been reinforced by the Transitional Fundamental Act through its article 5.

The two documents also use terms that evoke the methodological and ontological foundations of neoliberalism. In identical words, they speak of the inalienable character of human freedom (Article 12 of the 1998 Constitution, and Article 8 of the Transitional Fundamental Act). The neoliberal approach discloses the transcendence of the individual, not only from the point of view of individual inalienable rights, but also through the creation of institutions defined as the extension of individual capabilities. The notion of free enterprise, proclaimed in article 32 of the Constitution, embraces the foundational character that neoliberalism sees in individual freedom. The article states that “every person shall have the right to enterprise in the economic sectors of his choice in respect of the laws and regulations.” Not only does this article imply individual freedom, it also reflects the neoliberal notion of free enterprise. Another social area in which this right is promoted concerns the possibility of creating private schools (Article 37 of the 1998 Constitution).

Neoliberalism and the Failure of Democracy in Congo-Brazzaville

The emergence of neoliberalism in the Congolese political scene coincided with the establishment of a new regime characterized by new institutions, the rule of law, pluralism and democratic ideas. However, the failure of the first attempt at democratization leads to a number of questions regarding the role of neoliberalism in this process. Has neoliberalism stressed the necessity of fundamental change in the political behavior of the Congolese leadership and population? Has neoliberalism reached the depth of the generalized cultural, socioeconomic and political crisis so as to respond adequately to the needs of the Congolese people? Has neoliberalism accommodated the needs of the people for a better economic system? Were neoliberal prescriptions capable of delivering the economic, political and social benefits they promised?

The slow pace of economic reforms failed to reassure the Congolese population. The 1997 civil war and the continuous political instability throughout the 1990s generated reluctance on the part of foreign investment. Neoliberal agents, despite their recommendations for restructuring the political and economic system, have not delivered their promises of economic support to Congo-Brazzaville. The neoliberal justification has been that the country has continued to be plagued by political instability. However, the role of neoliberal agents in the civil war has been ambiguous, and observers pointed out the support offered to Sassou-Nguesso by the French Oil Company, Elf Aquitaine. Critics point out that French authorities showed a biased attitude against the transitional government in the early 1990s, as the government promised to revise the oil agreements

with France (Baniafouna, 1995; Nsafou, 1996). France had promised support to the Congo if reform policies were implemented. However, as Clark (1998:235) notes, “French aid to the transitional regime of Prime Minister Milongo actually declined from the levels of the late 1980s. The main sources of tension were the Milongo government’s attempts to account for “missing” petroleum revenues and to diversify Congo’s petroleum partners, both of which upset French foreign policy officials.”

Despite its urging of political liberalization, France failed to fully embrace the new Congolese regime and its leaders. France’s ambivalence also appeared in the role French businesses played during the conflicts that plagued Congo-Brazzaville in the 1990s. The role of Elf Aquitaine is a case in point. Clark (1998:237) reports that “according to Antoine Glaser and Stephen Smith, writing in the February 4, 1998, issue of *Libération*, a French bank closely linked to the Oil Company was making loans to the Lissouba camp in September 1997, with which it was purchasing arms. Elf, then, was aiding both sides.”

Reforms have also complicated the Congo’s democratization process. The Congolese leadership adopted structural adjustment programs to deal with the socioeconomic crisis. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Sassou-Nguesso was under increasing pressure from within as well as external forces to launch social, economic and political reforms. Internal pressures became even more virulent as a result of structural adjustment programs imposed by the World Bank and the IMF, with workers and students protesting the adverse effects of economic reforms. As these protests continued during the transitional period of the early 1990s, the government lacked popular support to consolidate itself and the new regime it established (Clark, 1997:74). Continued

demands for economic and social benefits forced the government to take a more cautious pace for reforms, causing external forces, such as the World Bank, the IMF and France to point out that the government was not doing enough, thereby limiting their commitment to aid. Overall, in the early 1990s, social unrest made it difficult for the government to embark on a steady path to democratization, while continued unrest and political instability resulting from reforms limited foreign aid from the same neoliberal agents that urged political and economic liberalization.

The establishment of democratic institutions with neoliberal principles did not bring about fundamental change in the political habits of the political leadership. Personal interests continued to prevail over the national interest. Neoliberalism was limited to institutional democracy, and its internal and external agents lacked the necessary insight needed to induce new attitudes to sustain the reforms that they recommended. In addition, neoliberalism failed to provide the government with adequate safeguards to deal with continued social unrest generated by its own policy reforms. Instead, the government was left alone to deal with social discontent.

Conclusion

Political restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville cannot be adequately analyzed without paying attention to historical factors, local references that determine the meaning that social and political actors give to political change, and the interaction between these localized frameworks and global perspectives. This chapter reviewed the dimensions of political restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville by highlighting the dynamics that affected

the process of change in this country. These dynamics were embodied in the different strategies chosen by social and political actors to control and position themselves in the restructuring process. The existence of diverse strategies testifies to the existence of competing views on the process of change, all of which intend to assert the interests of their proponents. From this notion, it is safe, therefore, to infer that the process of political restructuring is not complete until it takes account of these diverse and somewhat mutually exclusive meanings. Does this not constitute the challenge of pluralist democracy? The proliferation of independent political organizations and associations in the context of political liberalization in Congo-Brazzaville seems to meet this requirement.

However, the dismantling of democracy also points to the contradictions within the system emerging as the result of political liberalization. These contradictions are embodied in the behaviors of the dominant political actors and their clients. The political crisis that resulted in the 1997 civil war did not only destroy socioeconomic structures and unity within the Congolese society, but it also led to a degree of isolation from the global political economy. Reviving the interaction with the global political economy required additional efforts at convincing global partners of the determination of establishing democratic rule and adding to the already difficult task of restructuring the state and the socioeconomic institutions. As Englebert (2000:383) points out, "since the 1997 civil war the principal aim of Congolese foreign policy has been to gain international recognition of the legitimacy of the Sassou-Nguesso government, and to ensure the continued support of the Congo's bilateral and multilateral donors."

Post-conflict restructuring is, therefore, a manifold task. It requires the continuation of the structural change that was started with the launching of political liberalization, to enhance the possibilities of a positive interaction with the global political economy, which Congo-Brazzaville needs for its socioeconomic development. Another aspect of the post-conflict restructuring is reflected in the need to rebuild the socioeconomic structures to generate social and economic activities at all levels of society and in all measures that promote development. A third and very important dimension of the post-conflict restructuring is the creation of institutions that reflect the existence of diverse interests. This seems to be a very difficult task because the behavior of hard-liners on both sides of the political conflict precludes the possibility of an inclusive restructuring process. Such behavior contradicts the neoliberal principles of national unity and freedom that the political leadership claims to herald. Unfortunately, the consequences of this behavior are deeper than the contradiction of ideological tenets. They include the possibility of further conflicts continuously reducing the degree of interaction with the global political economy and reinforcing the decline of the Congolese economy.

CHAPTER VI
SOCIOECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING IN CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

Introduction

This chapter examines the adjustment programs that have been implemented in Congo-Brazzaville, mostly with the assistance of the IMF and the World Bank. These programs are intended to adapt the Congolese socioeconomic formation to the new economic order. The underlying assumption of these programs is that Congo-Brazzaville's socioeconomic structures are entrenched in the old technological regime, and this entrenchment has affected the establishment of technological capabilities and the incorporation of the principles of the new techno-economic regime. The adaptation to the new economy is intended to correct structural deficiencies, instill the principles of the new technological regime and make the Congolese socioeconomic formation competitive and integrated in the global economy. The examination of the comprehensive economic recovery program presents the causes of the lack of competitiveness for the Congolese economy and the priorities for generating this competitiveness. The second part is the analysis of specific projects that could allow Congo-Brazzaville to incorporate the requirements of the global economy. This part also focuses on the IMF and the World Bank as dominant actors in the process of restructuring. Their contribution is meaningful in the context of the neoliberal ideology that presents the guidelines for incorporating the logic and requirements of the global political economy. By analyzing social

restructuring, the third part helps discover the importance of such perspectives as decentralization, community participatory methods, all of which indicate the neoliberal notion that the individual is the basis of social formation.

The Comprehensive Economic Recovery Program

The General Perspective

Congo-Brazzaville accepted IMF supervision of the economy in May of 1986, and a three-year \$US 12 million IMF stand-by loan was agreed in July, though half of this was never drawn. Following an ambitious development spending in the early 1980s induced by the oil boom, the IMF and Congo-Brazzaville agreed upon a program that required a commitment to reduce government spending and included a reduction in the budget deficit, and a schedule of reform and privatization for public-sector enterprises. Related to these efforts were the July 1986 agreements with the Paris Club of creditor governments, which duly rescheduled arrears of debt service payments from 1985, and payment due in 1986 and 1987, over a ten-year period, with a five-year grace period (Hodd, 1991:112).

In 1989, implementing policies of economic liberalization became a pressing need after the government of Sassou-Nguesso formally admitted the failure of the public sector to stimulate economic growth. The government also considered the revision of taxation procedures. All of these initiatives were intended to foster private-sector activity. The failure of the public sector was being associated with the question of management.

However, as Ngassaki (1991:24) notes, political considerations limited the extent and the depth of the numerous experiences of restructuring public enterprises. Dynamic management capable of generating productivity could not be achieved unless the government chose to act without complaisance on the factors blocking organizational, structural and institutional reforms. A strong stance had to be taken to avoid the worsening of the socioeconomic situation, and this was facilitated with the systemic transformation of the Congo's political and socioeconomic restructuring, which took place in the early 1990s. This new framework generated a context that carried the perception that economic restructuring was an inescapable reality and it had to be undertaken on a sustained basis (Nkombo-Nguila, 1996:1).

In May 1994, Lissouba's administration and the IMF agreed on this program envisaging the privatization of the major public-sector industries (including rail, air and water transport, electricity, the petroleum and postal services) and a substantial reduction in the number of civil service personnel (Hodgkinson, 2000). In the renewed political context, the government resolved to implement a medium-term Economic and Social Recovery Plan (PARESO) in 1994. Encouraged by a development policy formulated by the Lissouba administration, the IMF approved on May 24, 1994, a confirmation agreement, which put an end to the suspension of international assistance for Congo-Brazzaville. The administration cherished the hope that the promotion of private enterprise, both domestic and foreign, would be the occasion for the country to create and develop new partnerships (Nkombo-Nguila, 1996).

Continuous commitment to reform and actual progress achieved on economic liberalization and budgetary stabilization facilitated further negotiations with the IMF,

which resulted in Congo-Brazzaville being accorded an enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) in June 1996, which involved a three-year loan. The 1997 civil war derailed progress, severely disrupting economic activity in Brazzaville. The new Sassou-Nguesso administration immediately confirmed its commitment to reform, particularly to the privatization of parastatal enterprises. This gave further encouragement to the IMF and in mid-July 1998, Congo-Brazzaville achieved an important breakthrough when the IMF agreed to a special post-conflict recovery credit of SDR7.24 million or \$10 million. For Congo-Brazzaville, this was a step forward in dealing with international donors. A comment by The Economic Intelligence Unit (4th quarter 1998:11) reflects the prospect of positive circumstances that could improve the Congo's plight.

Backed by the IMF, Congo has moved on from emergency support, essentially provided on humanitarian grounds, to budget aid and economic development funding. The Fund's decision to go ahead with a formal programme shows that it believes the government's economic recovery strategy is credible and that its management of national finances meets a certain basic level of competence and transparency.

Priorities in Socioeconomic Restructuring

The dominant element in the socioeconomic restructuring process in Congo-Brazzaville seems to have been the privatization of public-sector enterprises. An IMF's survey of public enterprises in Congo-Brazzaville found a total of about 105 public enterprises in 1995. The report indicates that there were 53 nonviable and inoperative public enterprises for which legal liquidation was under way (Staff Country Report, 1996). In a different survey conducted earlier, in 1987, by the World Bank, of the over 100 public enterprises found in Congo-Brazzaville, 81 were wholly-owned and 15 had

mixed ownership, with the state holding at least 50 percent of the shares. The state also held a minority share in several other mixed enterprises (World Bank, 1995).

Restructuring of the finance sector was considered key to the government's program. It was aimed at returning the economy to a position of liquidity, and it would contribute to the recovery of savings and a sound financial system, including the banks and non-bank financial institutions. A Finance Sector Restructuring Committee was established to formulate and implement the rehabilitation plan for the financial sector. The audits and evaluations necessary in preparing for the restructuring of banks and insurance companies, reform of the legal framework of the finance sector and settlement of the internal debt would be financed by a grant from Japan and carried out as part of a concomitant program. This program also includes reforms of the system and the institutions of social security (World Bank, 1995).

A conversation with an official from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Paul Ndouna, revealed the issues that the government intends to deal with in restructuring the agricultural sector. There is an awareness that the economic crisis experienced by Congo-Brazzaville requires the reviving of the deteriorating agricultural sector whose performance achieved insignificant results for the overall economy. Reforms in this sector would involve resolving critical deficiencies such as rural depopulation, the backwardness of farming techniques, the poor conditions of roads in the rural sector, and the low prices of agricultural products.

Another priority involves the development of forestry. In the development policy formulated by the Lissouba administration, the forestry sector would benefit from a long-term development program adopted in June 1994. The objective of this program was to

reform the sector's management and guarantee the conservation and protection of natural ecosystems. This perspective has given rise to an environmental protection program carried out through the National Environmental Plan of Action initiated in June 1995 (Nkombo-Nguila, 1996). The UNDP and the World Bank have given support to initiatives that have environmental components, and the government has taken steps in regulating exploitation by private companies (Hodgkinson, 2000; Nkombo-Nguila, 1996).

The restructuring of the oil sector has been a priority and the major orientation was the ending of state monopoly of Hydro-Congo, the main national company involved in the exploitation of oil (Hodgkinson, 2000). Change in this sector has also involved the diversification of exploiting companies, which led to the introduction of U.S. companies, such as Apache, Amoco, Arco, Chevron, Conoco and Citizen's Energy into the Congolese oil sector (Corporate Council on Africa, 1996).

This presentation has given a general view of the economic restructuring process underway in Congo-Brazzaville. The commitment made by the Lissouba administration also included social dimensions, particularly in areas such as health and education. The main orientation of reforms in the health system concerned, for instance, the rehabilitation of existing hospitals. On the other hand, priority in the educational system was accorded to the development of human resources to cope with technological evolution.

Some of these priorities have justified the existence and formulation of specific projects. Some of these projects are worthwhile examining, in terms of their implementation and the results and prospects they have generated for the socioeconomic

development of Congo-Brazzaville. Sources of information on the projects to be presented in the next section include World Bank documents and interviews conducted with officials of that institution, information published by the Congolese Ministry of Finance, interviews with officials of the Congolese embassy in the United States. Research on the projects has also involved information gathered from work done by the Corporate Council on Africa.

Economic Recovery Initiatives

IMF-Sponsored Programs in Congo-Brazzaville

The weakness of government's financial performance in the late 1980s could be traced to such factors as the fall in oil revenues in 1986, raising the budget deficit; the rises in the public sector payroll as a result of the oil boom and the poor performance of state-owned enterprises. The government turned to the IMF for support and adopted a structural adjustment program to restore balance to public finances through cuts in both current and capital spending. The reduction in the current spending was achieved by means of a wide range of measures, including a 'freeze' on government salaries and the privatization of state-owned companies (Hodgkinson, 2000).

Some progress was noticeable as a result of a reduction in the wage bill. In addition, the prospect of the 1994 devaluation of the CFA franc led France to provide supplementary budgetary assistance. The reduction in the wage bill resulted in a further decline in the fiscal deficit in 1995, to 87,700 million CFA francs, from 129,900 million

CFA francs in 1994. A considerable increase in oil revenues generated a further reduction in the deficit to 65,300 million CFA francs in 1996. With the structural adjustment program in 1996, the budget was to record a surplus in 1997, through higher oil revenues, a wider tax base (with the introduction of value-added tax at 18 percent) and tighter controls on the public-sector wage bill, including the dismissal of civil servants who falsified qualifications and early retirement (Hodgkinson, 2000).

The Congo also needed to service its debt and backed by an agreement with the IMF, a program of support by external donors, led by France, was initiated in 1990, facilitating the paying off of some debt arrears, notably to the World Bank. This allowed for a resumption of lending. Despite improvement in the early 1990s, foreign indebtedness reached a new high level of \$5 billion in 1995, equivalent to about three times the country's GNP. The situation eased a bit, owing to a rescheduling of \$989 million in liabilities after the devaluation (Hodgkinson, 1998; CIA, 2000).

As mentioned earlier, the IMF has assisted in the launching of restructuring programs in Congo-Brazzaville. Two such programs will be presented in this section. The first deals with a strategic program aimed at restoring financial stability, combined with the perspective of creating conditions for improved growth rate. This program was facilitated by the IMF enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF). The second program is an emergency post-conflict assistance to support the government's economic program for 1998. This is based on a two-stage approach elaborated by the Congolese government to address both the severe economic and developmental challenges exacerbated by the civil war, and the immediate emergency reconstruction needs.

Strategic Program under ESAF

This program was launched in conjunction with an IMF approved loan to Congo-Brazzaville in the period of 1996-99. The loan was equivalent to SDR 69.48 million (about US\$100 million). The program started with a specified limited objective that involved the acceleration of output and employment growth, coupled with achieving sustainable fiscal and external positions by the end of the decade. Though limited to these specific goals, the strategy of the program was also to pursue external public debt sustainability over the long term.

These goals are intended to facilitate the pursuit of the main macroeconomic objectives that were included in the 1996-99 program supported by the ESAF loans. Three main objectives were formulated in this framework. The first consisted in achieving an average annual real GDP growth rate of more than 6 percent. The second objective was concerned with cutting end-period inflation from 5.5 percent in 1995, to 2 percent during 1997-99. The third element had to do with reducing the external current account deficit, excluding official transfers, from 25 percent of GDP in 1995 to about 11 percent of GDP by 1999.

The objectives of the program during its first year from April 1996 to March 1997, were the acceleration of real GDP growth to 6 percent in 1996, and 9.5 percent in 1997, and the lowering of inflation to 3 percent in 1996, and 2 percent in 1997. Another goal was to reduce the external current account deficit to about 22 percent of GDP in 1996, and to about 16 percent of GDP in 1997. The preparation of the 1996 budget incorporated these objectives by calling for a virtual doubling of the primary surplus to

almost 12 percent of GDP, encompassing both an increase in revenue and a decline in spending. Revenues were to be drawn from both the oil industry and non-oil sector. First, the oil sector reforms and a projected increase in oil output were expected to raise government oil receipts from 13 percent of GDP in 1995, to 15.1 percent of GDP in 1996, enhancing the possibility of attaining the specified objectives. On the other hand, the non-oil revenue was projected to increase from the equivalent of 11.8 percent of GDP in 1995, to 13.6 percent of GDP in 1996. This was possible through tax reforms, a broadening of the tax base, and a further strengthening of tax administration. On the expenditure side, non-interest expenditure would be reduced from 31.4 percent of GDP in 1995, to 29.5 percent of GDP in 1996, by reducing the civil service wage bill. Monetary policy by the regional central bank would continue to be directed at validating the parity of the CFA franc vis-à-vis the French franc. The rehabilitation of the banking system was expected to contribute to this effort.

No significant results could be achieved without necessary structural reforms. The IMF recommended the improvement of the non-oil sector, which has enormous potential, and the development of the private sector. In addition to reforms in the civil service and the financial sector, this program entailed a further liberalization of the legal and institutional framework. The public enterprise reforms were aimed at dismantling monopolies and divesting the state from direct productive activities, thus opening up opportunities for private sector expansion; improving the provision and lowering the cost of key services (e.g., electricity, water, telecommunications, and transportation); and reducing the potential financial drain on the budget. The reform program focused on the outright privatization, or the privatization of the management and operations, of public

enterprises. The IMF recommended a sustained policy implementation in order to achieve the objectives of this program and to secure external financial assistance.

There would be social costs related to the implementation of this program. The program included a number of measures aimed at alleviating the impact of adjustment on vulnerable groups, such as the retrenched public sector employees, the unemployed, and the poor. Key measures would include the payment of severance benefits, the resumption of the regular payment for retirement and other social security benefits, assistance in finding new employment, and the improvement of agricultural support services. Social problems were intensified as the war disrupted the continuation of this program, causing the formulation of an emergency post-conflict assistance from the IMF.

Emergency Post-Conflict Assistance

This special program was formulated to address the post-war economic situation. In July 1998, the IMF approved a loan for Congo-Brazzaville equivalent of SDR 7.24 million (about 10 million). The war caused enormous damage to the economy and the administrative, financial, and social infrastructure, and adversely affected macroeconomic stability. With financial policies driven by the civil war, and despite a substantial increase in revenues from the oil sector, public finances deteriorated, and in 1997, the budget deficit widened to 7 ½ percent of GDP, leading to a large accumulation of domestic and external arrears.

The main macroeconomic objectives of the 1998 program were to resume non-oil economic growth, lower inflation, reduce the external current account deficit as a ratio of

GDP, and regularize external arrears. This assistance program projected an increase of real non-oil GDP by 2.5 percent in 1998, while the 12-month consumer price inflation rate was targeted to decline to 1.1 percent in 1998 from 13.1 percent in 1997 (on an end-year basis). The program also aimed at reducing the external current account deficit, excluding grants, to 12.4 percent of GDP in 1998, from 13.2 percent in 1997.

The instruments used in the implementation of this program include the reinforcement of the primary fiscal balance, which was projected at 11.9 percent of GDP in 1998, from 6.4 percent in 1997. This implied that the government had to make the necessary efforts to collect revenue from the oil companies and to improve non-oil revenue collection through, among others, the effective implementation of the measures. Some of these measures include the extension of VAT and the early strengthening of tax and customs administration and collection. On the spending side, a prudent wage policy stance and a strict adherence to expenditure priorities and control procedures were devised.

Social safety net protection in the Congo, most of which had been provided directly by state-owned enterprises and family networks, had been severely eroded particularly during the conflict. In the short term, the emergency program, which accorded priority to the health and education sectors, should help alleviate the serious pressures on the most vulnerable segments of the population, while laying the basis for economic recovery and employment creation. The government also intended to undertake a comprehensive reform of the disorganized and insolvent social security systems, comprising the Civil Service Pension Fund and the National Social Security

Fund. The first steps would be to update the census of pensioners and reconstitute the employer/employee roster.

The Fund recommended rapid progress in structural reforms to activate the strategy with the perspective of establishing the basis for an open, market-based economic system, and creating the best conditions for increased foreign direct investment flows, notably in the non-oil sector. In the long-term, structural reform aims at institution building and rehabilitating damaged infrastructure. In the near-term, priorities focus on the restructuring of the banking system, privatizing public enterprises, opening key economic sectors to competition, and pursuing civil service reform. An assessment by the regional bank supervision agency of the solvency of financial institutions encouraged the implementation of a program of divestiture, which was expected to include the sale of shares in a number of state-owned banks. The idea of divestiture is a constant in the programs that the IMF has initiated with Congo-Brazzaville. It has also been present in World Bank projects.

World Bank-Assisted Programs: Reducing the State Role through Privatization

The World Bank conducted a project with the Congolese government in the early and mid-1990s, in which divestiture and the improvement of the quality of public services were the key elements. The objectives of this project were “to upgrade the quality of public services through improvement in performance, to be achieved by transferring these activities to the private sector, and to restrict the role of government to formulation of sector policies and regulation” (World Bank, 1995:4). Under the privatization program,

Congo-Brazzaville placed the 6 largest state-owned enterprises for rapid privatization, as a pilot initiative. Further privatization activities were to follow, including the divestiture of about 104 parastatals. The initial effort of privatization concerning the largest state-owned enterprises concerned oil distribution, oil refining, telecommunications, rail and water transportation, water distribution and electricity.

The restructuring of some large state-owned enterprises led to a breaking of these firms into separate and autonomous entities. This was the case, for instance, for the Agence Congolaise des Communications (ATC), resulting in three distinct and autonomously managed firms, the seaport of Pointe-Noire, the railways and the navigable waterways. The World Bank project on privatization and capacity building in Congo-Brazzaville introduced the idea of transforming the post and telecommunications services into more commercially oriented enterprises, reducing state monopoly. Under this proposal, the government adopted the principle of minority shareholding by the state and Congolese private sectors, transfer of assets, and development of a competitive sectoral environment (World Bank, 1995).

The state also undertook the restructuring of water and power services (SNE and SNDE). The perspective of increasing competitiveness dominated this initiative, supplementing the intention of upgrading the quality of water and electricity supplies and the concern to lower the cost of services. The restructuring of these enterprises limited the state role to the formulation of sector policy and regulation, while the operation of power and water supply services was being handed over to private investors. The plan terminated state monopolies on production, transmission and distribution and introduced new sets of regulations to facilitate competition. The state promoted and encouraged the

participation of Congolese nationals to buy shares in the capital water and power companies.

Given the importance of the oil industry in the Congolese economy, the restructuring of this sector involved a critical decision. State objectives included restoring adequate supplies of petroleum products to the country at competitive prices and introducing a positive tax flow from the hydrocarbon sector to the treasury. This sector has been dominated by foreign investment, and for this reason, the state was encouraged to promote the participation of the national private sector at different levels of the distribution chain. The plan redefined the role of the state by refocusing on the formulation of sectoral policy, the setting of rate and regulation, handing over to private operators the commercial aspects of the chain. The restructuring of the oil sector involved mostly the subsectors of distribution and importation of petroleum products. Nothing seemed to indicate any change in production activities that were already handled by foreign partners. Where restructuring was necessary, in storage, transport and distribution operations, facilities either were liquidated or sold to private entrepreneurs (World Bank, 1995).

In June 1994, the World Bank introduced a project for economic recovery against the background of economic and social decline experienced in Congo-Brazzaville. Faced with the devaluation of the CFA Franc that year, the government took stringent austerity measures presented in a macroeconomic program. This created the condition for the World Bank's project of economic recovery credit. The main objectives of the economic recovery credit were stabilization of the economy after the devaluation of the CFA franc, the return to sustainable growth path, and a reduction of poverty levels. The project was

intended to support the government's program of economic rehabilitation initiated partly to deal with the effects of the devaluation. One of the key elements that the World Bank incorporated in the economic recovery credit program was the project on privatization and capacity building.

On the whole, the World Bank (1995) Privatization and Capacity Building Project aimed at furthering the capacity of the Government to prepare and implement the second phase of its reform program started under the Economic Recovery Credit. It supported the divestiture of public enterprises, sought to introduce a competitive environment in the utility and petroleum sectors and facilitate private sector development. More specifically, the project was elaborated to help the government prepare regulatory frameworks for the five major public enterprises in control of petroleum distribution, transportation, telecommunications, power and water distribution and open the sectors up to competition progressively. It supported the government in conducting the privatization of these major public enterprises, the liquidation of other non-viable public enterprises and introducing regulation and competition in the financial sector and reforms in banking institutions. To achieve this objective, the project comprised the following four components:

- 1) a regulation and privatization component whereby consulting services would be provided to prepare pro-competition regulatory frameworks and build a minimal level of public sector capacity to regulate the major utilities, as well as to advise the Government on privatization of the five concerned public enterprises;
- 2) a public enterprise sector liquidation in which assistance would be provided to liquidate all non-viable enterprises;

- 3) reform of financial institutions and the public sector financing the development of proposals for restructuring the financial sector; and
- 4) a communications campaign financing a public information campaign to inform shareholders and the public of the benefits and implications of the reform program.

Sectoral Adjustment Programs

Restructuring of the Financial Sector

Congo's inefficient financial sector was also been the focus of reform, and efforts geared toward its restructuring gave rise to a Finance Sector Restructuring Committee, established to formulate and implement the plan dealing with the adjustment of the sector. The reform included the institution of a legal framework of the finance sector and the settlement of internal debt. The Restructuring Committee was also to carry out the reforms of the system of social security. An important component of the restructuring of the financial sector was, for instance, the divestiture of banks. Spain's Banco Central was selected to be the primary shareholder in Congo's Banque Internationale de Développement (BIDC), while the Union Congolaise des Banques handed large shares to a Belgian financial institution (Corporate Council on Africa, 1996).

The Devaluation of the CFA franc

The 1994 devaluation of the CFA by 50 percent was expected to generate positive economic prospects, given the country's export orientation essentially structured around the oil sector, which accounts for about 80 percent of its foreign revenue (West Africa, 14-20 February 1994). But the assessment of the effects of the devaluation should be associated with the social and economic circumstances affecting the country at the same time. These are, among others, the deterioration of the road system and the railroad between Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire and the ethnic conflict that temporarily blocked the railroad in early 1994 (World Bank, 1997b). The resulting increase in transport costs compounded the rise in import prices flowing from the devaluation. In addition, the slowing down of economic activities, particularly in the industrial sector, due to political conflicts, also contributed to undermining the strong position the Congo would have enjoyed from the devaluation (West Africa, 14-20 February 1994).

Rising costs affected consumer prices since the country is not self-sufficient in such items as food and clothing. The consequence of this social cost has been a shift to locally produced goods, which helped the Congolese population to reduce the impact of devaluation (World Bank, 1997b). It was hoped that this initial loss of purchasing power would be compensated when economic activities rebound as a result of political stability in the aftermath of the 1997 civil war.¹⁰ Meanwhile, however, this has not yet occurred, in part because of the high rate of taxation on export crops and in part because of transport

¹⁰ This remark is from President Sassou-Nguesso, published in the magazine Congo-Brazzaville Report, October 1999.

costs. A consequence noted by the World Bank (1997b) reveals that the high rate of taxation reduces the benefits that farmers were supposed to gain from export price of cocoa and coffee to a quarter, compared with about half in Côte d'Ivoire, for instance. Overall the expected positive effects of the devaluation of the CFA franc were not yet obvious. This led the World Bank (1997b:15) to the conclusion that "although the devaluation was a necessary step in economic recovery, it was an insufficient step because it was not supported by rehabilitation of priority roads and rail and by a reversal of tax policies that discriminate against domestic agriculture."

Reforms in the Agricultural Sector

This sector has benefited from privatization since state farms have been dismantled and some of them have been sold to private owners. During 1995-97, about 20 white South African farmers settled in the Niari valley to work for the Niari Valley Industrial and Agricultural Company (SAIVN), which had been created in 1995 by the South African Development Co. in partnership with the Congolese state. These farmers' agricultural expertise was counted upon to reinvigorate bankrupt parastatals in working the 80,000 ha of arable land and pastures in the valley. However, much of this land had not yet been transferred to SAIVN by 1997, reportedly because of local animosity towards the South Africans, and because the land could not be sold at a price that enabled redundancy payments to be made to former employees (Hodgkinson, 2000). In 1995, according to estimates from the FAO, outputs of cassava reached 790,000 metric tons, which is the highest production among all the crops produced in the country.

Export crops make a very little contribution to foreign earnings. Sugar cane and tobacco have dominated the export of cash crops, with exports directed mostly to other countries of the Central African Economic and Customs Union. The state corporation that used to run the sugar industry, the Sucrerie du Congo (SUCO), was replaced in 1991, by a joint venture between the government and a French company. This restructuring also involved the reorganization of sugar plantation to meet domestic demand. As a result of this process, production of raw sugar increased from 20,000 tons in 1991, to an average 39,000 tons a year in 1995-97. Tobacco production showed signs of improvement from the situation in the late 1980s. Through a development by the French-based Bollore group, restructuring was aimed at increasing the output (Hodgkinson, 2000:384).

Restructuring in Forestry

The 1994 devaluation of the CFA franc was a positive element contributing to the improvement in the forestry sector. It stimulated production and in 1998, production of rough timber was estimated at 600,000 meters. Until 1987, the state-owned Office Congolais du Bois retained the monopoly of the purchase and sale of logs. Since the early 1990s, the state has been encouraging the exploitation by foreign investors of forest resources in the north of the country.

The Restructuring of the Post and Telecommunications

The restructuring of the post and telecommunications services has a particular significance in the era of information technology, and it has been viewed as a key element for development in context of the new economy. The World Bank (2000:147) points out that “telecommunications is the core of the information infrastructure for countries to compete in the global economy.” A study has been conducted for the restructuring of this sector in Congo-Brazzaville. The World Bank (1995:5) study on capacity building and privatization in Congo-Brazzaville indicates that the restructuring of post and telecommunications in this country was to create “the modern telecommunications facilities essential for development, and otherwise bring the service up to date in this arena, and attract more private investment.” The study also focused on the organizational form of the sector, which implied the redefinition and specification of different components of the sector, the capability of allocating adequate services and the distribution of shares between private shareholders and the government.

More specifically, under this project, a commercially oriented postal enterprise was to be created, limited to distribution of mail and packages and to philatelic activities. All existing post-office financial intermediation services (postal checks, postal money orders) would be placed in the financial sector, particularly in the banking sector, after this sector had been restructured and privatized. The program also included setting up a privately owned and commercially oriented telecommunications corporation.

Two years after this study, the project was halted by the outbreak of the 1997 civil war. Given the devastation caused by the war, it is not certain that actions have been taken to implement the proposal presented in the World Bank study. It is evident, however, that progress in the area of telecommunications has been limited, if not nonexistent. Technology and infrastructure in this sector are still rudimentary. The World Bank reports¹¹ that in 1995 and 1998, there were only 8.1 and 7.9 telephones per 1,000 people respectively, and Congo-Brazzaville is not connected to the Internet. Multinational corporations, for instance, in the oil and transportation sectors, have their private data communication networks. Key exchanges are only in the main cities of Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire and Dolisie. Existing telecommunications infrastructure includes an international satellite earth station and a primary network consisting of microwave radio relay and a coaxial cable (CIA, 2000).

To move into the information superhighway and harness the potential of telecommunications, restructuring of this sector is necessary for Congo-Brazzaville. It is necessary to take steps to attract foreign investment and related technology to bring the needed telecommunications infrastructure into the country. It takes political stability and political will to achieve the goal formulated in such projects as the one elaborated by the World Bank for the restructuring of telecommunications services.

¹¹ This information is available on the Internet in the World Bank's country data.

Elements of Social Restructuring

Restructuring the Educational System

The educational system has also been liberalized, and this has meant letting other institutions run schools. In the early 1990s, the state returned some schools confiscated from the church during the Marxist era. For nearly thirty decades of Marxist ideology, the educational system was in decline and experienced serious deterioration of facilities and poor personnel management. Reforms in the area of education have involved government's policies of improving the school system and widening access to education, particularly for girls, the poor and students in rural areas. Before the civil war, the Lissouba administration prepared a program to create training programs to improve job skills for students and youths in general and civil servants who have been forced out of work (Nkombo-Nguila, 1996).

The restructuring of the educational system has been an important aspect of the whole socioeconomic restructuring. One of the main orientations of the restructuring of the educational system has been the privatization of some schools to respond to the deterioration of the public educational system. Sister Marie-Therese Nkuka, the Secretary General of Catholic education, that we interviewed, notes that the restructuring of the educational system has implied the return of the schools that the state confiscated during the socialist era and the private sector has now inherited an obsolete and decadent school infrastructure. The Catholic Church has been involved in discussions with state officials of the Ministry of Education to examine the extent to which the Church can

manage freely the schools it has recovered from the state and the formulation of the educational curriculum it intends to pursue in its educational system.

Critics note that there is nothing to suggest that by calling upon the involvement of the private sector in the educational system, the state is responding to the need to transform education in accordance with the new technological regime. The privatization of the school system seems to be the way in which the state sought to rid itself of an insoluble problem it created over the years through its educational policies. The restructuring of the school system needs to take account of the trends of the global economy and privatization alone may not be the solution unless education incorporates technical learning and other elements preparing students to the new economy (Bayonne and Makimouna-Ngoualat, 1999). Indeed, despite government's intentions to give a particular emphasis to technical learning, resource allocations to this sector proves otherwise. From 1994 to 1995, transfer of funds to vocational and technical education declined from CFA francs 66,175,000 to 32,400,000. On the other hand, outside the government, the commitment to tune the educational system to the new economy is being carried out. Sister Nkuka's remarks seem to indicate that concerns with preparedness to the new economy are being taken into account in the Catholic educational system. She points out that Catholic education has opened a school of business and management to give students new skills related the new managerial forms and prepare them for a life of creativity instead of counting on public employment.

The Population, Health and Nutrition Project

A National Health Development Plan (NHDP) was made law in April 1992, and it constitutes a strategy of decentralization for the public health system, promoting community involvement and participation and the integration of services. The strategy also promotes the mobilization of internal resources, improved management and supervision capacity (through management tools such as health information systems and operations research), the establishment of an essential drug supply system, and better coordination of existing foreign aid. This project was launched with the help of the World Bank (1997b).

The project objectives are to: (a) strengthen effectiveness in managing sector resources; (b) provide critical inputs for revamping and expanding primary health care services in selected poor under-served areas; and (c) setting up 30 health districts and integrated health centers within each district. The project was also expected to improve health services while establishing an institutional capacity for efficient management of scarce sector resources. Each health district would serve 100-150,000 people in urban areas and 25-100,000 in rural areas while each center would serve 10-15,000 people in urban areas and 2,500-10,000 in rural areas (World Bank, 1997b:26).

World Bank's support for the Plan involved ensuring the implementation of sector reforms aimed at decentralization of health services management and greater collaboration with beneficiaries and the private non-governmental sector. It would also

strengthen planning and information systems at the district level and improve the central administration's abilities to plan strategically and to manage its human, financial, and physical resources. An important element in the World Bank project concerns the expansion of primary health care coverage through health districts. This component would strengthen the mechanisms for increasing the participation of NGOs and other community-based organizations in the delivery of health services (World Bank, 1997b).

Technological Change and the Socioeconomic Restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville

Along with neoliberalism, technological change is the other key factor that has determined the global economy. Restructuring policies in Congo-Brazzaville have taken into account the necessity of incorporating it. In the absence of innovation and with limited support given to research and development, what activities will promote technological change in Congo-Brazzaville? The United Nations Statistical Yearbook reveals that government expenditure for research and experimental development in Congo-Brazzaville did not exceed CFA francs 25,530,000 or US\$85,100, according to data available in 1992 (United Nations, 1993).

The point of this section is to highlight the notion that the importance of technological change has been reflected in the process of socioeconomic restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville. The socioeconomic restructuring process provides an opportunity for the incorporation of technological change. The most obvious way in which this incorporation is expected to take place is the fostering of an industrial policy that promotes foreign direct investment. Privatization is expected to open the Congolese

economy to foreign direct investment, which constitutes an important channel of technology transfer for a developing country. Manufacturing companies, in the processing of agricultural and forest products, brewing and tobacco industry have been open to privatization. Foreign interests in the non-petroleum mining sector have also been present in recent years, for instance, Ashurst Resources of Canada plans to develop magnesium deposits in Kouilou (Hodgkinson, 2000). Policies leading to the restructuring of the agro-industrial sector could contribute to the incorporation of technological change, as is revealed by the Economic and Social Recovery Plan (PARESO) formulated in 1994. The plan includes the establishment of industrial capabilities for the processing of fruits in the Pool Region and the Niari Valley, and for the processing of such products as yam, potatoes, bananas and cassava.

The Economic and Social Recovery Plan also pointed out the importance of restructuring the educational system to reflect the new trends dominating the global economy and highlighting the significance of technology. The plan aimed at correcting the deficiencies of the educational system, which did not put emphasis on technical training and education. A special place would be given to professional and technical training in high schools and higher learning institutions. In 1995, the Lissouba administration had proposed to redefine the grant policy offered by the government to promote educational orientations that emphasize technological learning. Another important goal set by the plan was the creation of a body of researchers, which was considered indispensable for research and development (Ministère du Plan et de l'Economie, 1994).

Conclusion

In conjunction with the IMF and the World Bank, governments in Congo-Brazzaville have been implementing reform programs to enhance productive capabilities and facilitate a climate of positive interaction between the administration, social and economic actors. Though the recommendations by international financial institutions have insisted on improving macroeconomic performance, they have implied that good institutional foundations contribute to such economic improvement. This functionalist orientation assumes that government institutions can positively affect the levels of performance of the private sector by improving the delivery of public and collective services.

In addition, good social development and the economic functioning of the private sector are mutually reinforcing, while they both depend on the political environment and the capability provided by the institutional setting arranged by the state. The recommendations on promoting economic activities by the private sector have several dimensions. They reflect the neoliberal approach to political economy that redefines the role of the state. At the same time, they intend to transform the political context and the socioeconomic environment to create an investment climate suitable for technology transfer through foreign direct investment. The notions of capacity building and privatization incorporated in the World Bank evoke the principle of efficiency that is a key element in the new technological regime. It implies the quest for an institutional

development that stimulates and increases the competitiveness of the national economy, should the leadership create the necessary conditions for such a development.

CHALLENGES, POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has been a reflection on the relationship between global structural change and the unfolding political and socioeconomic restructuring process in Congo-Brazzaville. Global change is a process of transformation that instills change in the national political and socioeconomic system and leads to the integration into the capitalist mode of production. Political and socioeconomic change in Congo-Brazzaville is interpreted from this framework in the sense that this country's restructuring relates to global structural change. Successive stages and the dominant mode of regulation of the global political economy have had an impact on the Congolese socioeconomic system. For instance, the transformation of the traditional modes of production in Congo-Brazzaville resulted in a productive system fashioned according to the requirements of the international division of labor. Political regimes in this country facilitated the existence and functioning of this model.

Even in the context of Marxist ideology, the political economy of Congo-Brazzaville did not reject the permanence of French interests in the Congolese socioeconomic formation, despite constant criticism of imperialism. Moreover, the option for a centralized policy-making framework was not foreign to the international political economic system, despite the differences in the ideology that supported it. Indeed, before the appeal of decentralization and diversification, the economies of the world followed homogenizing methods and the technological regime that inspired these

managerial and organizational forms generated standardized products reflecting concern with regularity, stability and permanence.

The point is that the evolution of the Congolese socioeconomic system reinforces the idea that despite a politically motivated apparent demarcation between the policies of Congo-Brazzaville and the global economy, the Congolese socioeconomic formation has been affected by the change taking place at the global level. Political change and socioeconomic evolution confirm this relation, and the political anarchy and violence that affected the process of change are no indication of the contrary. It indicates that any form of structural change taking place at the global level is necessarily affected by historical factors that have marked the evolution of individual nations where this change is to be implemented.

This is where this study makes a theoretical contribution to the whole research on democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study highlights the notion that the long-term positive and sustainable impact of the restructuring process depends on the way the country's historical circumstances allow for the incorporation of the factors of the global political economy. The process of democratization has been affected by these historical circumstances, and the pace of socioeconomic restructuring and its embodiment of particular individual and group interests also reflect historical dynamics that are proper to the Congolese society. Historicity affects the people's perception of global dimensions while the factors of globalization generate new principles that social and political actors incorporate in their historical context and to which they tend to give a historically adapted meaning.

Historical factors play an important role in the remaking of the state and the redefinition of the rules of the game that affect socioeconomic development. The effect of these factors and the dismantling of the democratic process reveal the intensity of the underlying dynamics, such as ethnic divisions, political alliances, hierarchical structures of political organizations, beliefs reflected in messianic movement, and economic interests, which determine the process of democratization. These dynamics are the embodiment of the Congolese history, and the way they interact with the factors of globalization is determinant in allowing the internalization of these factors to be decisive, long lasting and positive for the whole society. Restructuring is, therefore, affected by the combination of history, the determination of social and political actors to be integrated in the global economy, the strategies of these actors to secure advantages from the global system and the logic of the global political economy.

For this reason, the dismantling of democracy does not even justify possible doubts about establishing democratic rule in Congo-Brazzaville or in Sub-Saharan Africa in general. Theories supporting such doubts do not pay attention to the meanings of the strategies used by social and political actors, which strategies are mostly the cause of social and political turmoil. These strategies, albeit disruptive, constitute the interpretation that political and social actors make of the rules of the political system. The fact that these strategies exist is not a cultural element. It is rather an inherently political condition.

This study of the political and socioeconomic restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville brings the debate to another dimension that implies a degree of realism. How can we analyze the factors that determine the evolution of a political system without seeing some

of them as residual elements that interfere in a process of transformation? From the point of view of political restructuring, this question allows for an assessment of the way in which neoliberal principles dealt with continued protests and the permanent personal interests of the political leadership. The establishment of new political structures according to neoliberal principles failed to address the issue of fundamental change in the political behavior of the Congolese leadership and population. Continued protests and political instability reveal that neoliberalism did not reach the depth of the generalized cultural, socioeconomic and political crisis experienced by Congo-Brazzaville. The failure of democracy in Congo-Brazzaville is partly due to the fact that neoliberalism failed to deal adequately with continued popular protests, which challenged the existence of the new regime.

In terms of socioeconomic development, this question highlights the notion that the establishment of democratic institutions and socioeconomic or technological capabilities or information systems is not enough unless national historical conditions facilitate the incorporation of the principles that would determine the use of these capabilities in a productive manner. These principles are, for instance, flexibility and efficiency, integration and diversification, organizational and managerial norms. The establishment of capabilities and systems is to be placed into a larger perspective.

The Congolese example shows that the strategies used by social and political actors are not merely artful methods affecting political processes, but they constitute a way in which these actors seek to position themselves in a changing global economy. From this point of view therefore, it is important to revisit the purpose of restructuring and suggest certain methods and policy guidelines that make the interaction with the

global political system more effective. It goes without saying that the purpose of political and socioeconomic restructuring in Congo-Brazzaville is to straighten the functioning of existing political and socioeconomic structures and reinforce the institutions so as to make them competitive in the new global economy. If one takes into account the notion that the incorporation of the principles of the global political economy is the determinant factor that makes institutional change and socioeconomic transformation sustainable, a number of challenges and policy orientations are worth mentioning.

It is important to stress the idea that globalization makes it impossible for Congo-Brazzaville, in particular, and Sub-Saharan Africa, in general, to escape the impact of the changing world. This impact will be felt negatively if the social and economic disparities between Sub-Saharan Africa and the world economy continue to widen or increase. However, the same impact can also be felt positively if Congo-Brazzaville and the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa meet the following challenges.

- 1) Resolving the problem of economic decline and dependence is necessary to achieve a level of economic development that will assure a solid basis of technological diffusion through local and foreign investment;
- 2) Acquiring industrial efficiency, which is so critical in the incorporation of technical change into the process of social and economic development;
- 3) Reconsidering the role and importance of R&D in such a way to encourage its internalization in the process of socioeconomic development;
- 4) Choosing appropriate educational policies to allow for the development of human resources and the acquisition of technological competence;

- 5) **Launching a steady institutional (socioeconomic and political) restructuring to allow for the elaboration of sound development strategies and the creation of enabling environments;**
- 6) **Changing the thinking on aid by orienting international financial assistance toward the empowerment of the population by emphasizing social justice, social development, integrating ethnic minorities into society;**
- 7) **Including cultural adaptation in the process of restructuring.**

Given these challenges, a number of objectives need to be achieved. The first objective is to elaborate and implement sound *educational policies*. The long-term development perspectives necessarily incorporate the role of education in socioeconomic development process. Educational objectives reflect the following orientations:

- 1) **Training of scientists, researchers and engineers.** These groups play an important role in the manipulation and adaptation of technological knowledge. Through R&D undertakings, researchers, scientists and engineers can devote themselves to the creation of appropriate technology. They are also able to perceive and create the linkage capabilities within the industrial sector on the one hand, and between industrial production and the social and economic needs, on the other hand. Researchers and scientists need to be given the necessary incentives for their participation in the process of socioeconomic development without any political interference.

- 2) **The development of technical skills in the labor force through special training that involves seminars, workshops, and exchange programs.** While the education of this particular group does not necessarily involve them in research activities, their

education in technical skills is nevertheless important since it deals with the acquisition and application of skills into the industrial process.

3) Educational policies should not neglect the importance of basic education, which involves the bulk of the population.

The second objective concerns *Institutional Reforms*. The role of institutions is critical in coordinating the process of political and social change and facilitating the incorporation of technological change. Social, economic and political institutions shape world visions in accordance with the interaction between individual societies and extra-systemic environments. This concerns a variety of institutions determining the way of life of societies: educational, financial, political and governmental. The state should be brought back in, insofar as public management is a necessity. In this perspective, it is important to implement measures that make the state more effective for the common good. The stability of the political system depends on the way the state delivers the common good, allocates resources and facilitates democratic governance and participation.

The third objective is *the acquisition of industrial efficiency*. In light of the new techno-economic regime, the acquisition of industrial efficiency constitutes a challenge given the weak performance of the Congolese economy in terms of industrial production and the lack of technological capabilities. The challenge is to increase the level of productive capacity. This involves using the existing capacities efficiently so as to stimulate technical change. With reference to industrialization strategies, a key orientation is the creation of enabling environment for foreign and local investment purposes, but also for the emergence of entrepreneurial capabilities. Another orientation

involves encouraging the incorporation of the principle of dynamic efficiency, which entails linkage between existing technological capabilities. It is now a high priority to develop permanent intersectorial linkages between, for instance, the agriculture and industrial sectors.

The fourth objective concerns *cultural adaptation*. Technological change and the implementation of neoliberal tenets suppose the emergence of a whole new vision, opening new perspectives for the creation of a new socioeconomic and political system. Jean-Marie Albertini (1981:254), for instance, considers development to be a complex process determined not only by economic aspects, but also by the interplay of sociological, psychological, cultural and political factors in building social life.

On the whole, a steady and successful incorporation capable of creating a positive interaction between the Congolese society and the global political economy depends on a good articulation of these orientations in the historical context of Congo-Brazzaville. An important condition for this articulation is that the incorporation of the global political economy requires fundamental change resulting, to a large extent, from political will and strong commitment on the part of the dominant social, economic and political actors of the Congolese society. This is a long-term goal that makes restructuring a long process...

APPENDIX

THE 1992 CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE¹²

Adopted on March 15, 1992

Preamble

Unity, Work, Progress, Justice, Dignity, Liberty, Peace, Prosperity, and Love for the Fatherland have been since independence, notably under mono-partyism, hypothesized or retarded by totalitarianism, the confusion of authorities, nepotism, ethnocentrism, regionalism, social inequalities, and violations of fundamental rights and liberties. Intolerance and political violence have strongly grieved the country, maintained and accrued the hate and divisions between the different communities that constitute the Congolese Nation. The coup d'état has inscribed itself in the political history of the Congo as the only means to accede to power and to annihilate the hopes of a truly democratic life.

Consequently, We, the Congolese People, concerned to:

Create a new political order, a decentralized State where morality, law, liberty, pluralist democracy, equality, social justice, fraternity, and the general well-being rein;

Preserve the sacred character of the human person; assure to the individual and the family the conditions necessary for their harmonious development; guarantee the participation of everyone in the life of the Nation;

Preserve our unity within cultural diversity; promote a rational exploitation of our riches and our natural resources; dispose of ourselves freely and to reaffirm our independence;

Cooperate with all peoples who share our ideals of peace, liberty, justice, human solidarity, on the basis of principles of equality, reciprocal interest and mutual respect, sovereignty, and territorial integrity;

Contribute to world peace as a member of the United Nations Organization (UN) and the Organization for African Unity (OAU); and

Strive for the creation of large sub-regional economic groupings;

Order and establish for the Congo the present Constitution which enunciates the fundamental principles of the Republic, defines the rights and duties of individuals, fixes the form of Government according to the principle of separation of powers;

¹² This text is obtained from the Internet

Declare as an integral part of the present Constitution the principles proclaimed and guaranteed by the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1981 African Charter of the Rights of Man and Peoples and all duly ratified pertinent international texts, relative to the Right of Man, the Charter of National Unity, and the Charter of the Rights and Liberties adopted by the Sovereign National Conference on 29 May 1991; and

Proclaim:

The duty of the State to assure the diffusion and the instruction of the Constitution, of the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of the 1981 African Charter of the Rights of Man and Peoples, of the Charter of National Unity and the Charter of the Rights and Liberties adopted by the Sovereign National Conference on 29 May 1991;

The right of any citizen to seat the Constitutional Counsel for the purpose of annulment of any law or any act contrary to the present Constitution;

The obligation of all the organs of the State to apply the dispositions of the present Constitution and make them respected;

The right and obligation of every citizen to resist by civil disobedience upon the default of other resources, no matter what enterprise to overthrow the constitutional regime, to take power by a coup d'état or exercise in a tyrannical manner.

Title I State and Sovereignty

Article 1

The Republic of the Congo is a sovereign and independent State, decentralized, indivisible, secular, democratic, and social.

Article 2

The National emblem is the tri-colored flag, green yellow, red. Of a rectangular form, it is composed of two triangles of the color green and red, separated by a diagonal yellow band, the green being on the side of the flagstaff.

The law shall prescribe the dimensions, the tones of the colors, and the other details of the flag.

Article 3

The national anthem is "La Congolaise".
The Motto of the Republic is "Unity - Work - Progress".
The Seal of the State and Coat of Arms of the Republic shall be defined by law.
The official language is French.
The functional national languages are Lingala and Munukutuba.
The Capital of the Republic of the Congo is Brazzaville.

Article 4

National Sovereignty shall belong to the people who exercise it by way of referendum and by representatives elected by universal suffrage. No individual nor faction of the people shall attribute to itself its exercise.

The principle of the Republic is: Government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Article 5

Suffrage shall be universal, equal, secret, free, and sincere. In the conditions determined by law and under the reserve of provisions provided for in Articles 68 and 93, all Congolese nationals of the two sexes, having attained eighteen years of age, in possession of their civil and political rights shall be voters.

Article 6

Every citizen shall have the right to take part in the direction of the public affairs of the country either directly, or by the intermediation of their representatives.

Article 7

Political Associations, Parties, and Groupings concur in the expression of suffrage. They shall freely form and exercise their activities in respect of the law and the principles of national sovereignty, integrity of territory, National Unity, and pluralist democracy.

Article 8

Political Associations, Parties, and Groupings of which the goals aim to touch or overthrow the democratic constitutional order or compromise the existence of the Republic of the Congo shall be unconstitutional. They shall incur the sanctions provided for by the law.

Any propaganda or any act aiming to touch the internal security of the State, the national unity, and the territorial integrity shall be unconstitutional and punished by the laws and regulations in effect.

Article 9

The State shall exercise its total and permanent sovereignty over all its riches and natural resources including the possession and the right to use and dispose of them. At all times, it shall guarantee the freedom of private initiative in these domains.

Title II Fundamental Rights and Liberties

Article 10

The human person is sacred and has the right to life. The State shall have the absolute obligation to respect and protect him. Every citizen shall have the right to the free development and the full flowering of his person in his psychological, intellectual, spiritual, material, and social dimensions in respect of the rights of others, public order, and good mores.

Article 11

The State shall assure the equality of all citizens before the law, without discrimination of origin, social or material situation, racial, ethnic and regional origin, sex, instruction, language, attitude vis-à-vis religion and philosophy, or place of residence. It shall respect all the rights and liberties within limits compatible with public order and good mores.

The State shall have the duty to strive for the elimination of any form of discrimination with regard to women and to assure the protection of their rights in all domains of private and public life such as stipulated in the international Declarations and Conventions ratified by the Congo.

Article 12

The liberty of the human person is inviolable. One shall be accused, arrested, or detained only in the cases determined by law and according to the forms which it prescribes. Every accused shall be presumed innocent until his guilt shall be established at the end of a procedure offering him the guaranties of a defense.

Article 13

No one shall be incarcerated except in the cases provided by law.

Article 14

Under reserve of the provisions provided by the present Constitution and for a scrupulous respect for the human person, every exceptional use of judicial power shall be banished.

Article 15

The law shall only establish penalties strictly and evidently necessary, and one shall only be punished in virtue of a law established and promulgated anterior to the infraction and equally applied.

Article 16

Any act of torture, any cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment shall be prohibited. Anyone found guilty of the acts enunciated in the present article, shall be punished according to the law.

Article 17

Any citizen may oppose the execution of an order received when it touches the rights and liberties contained in the present Constitution.

Article 18

Each citizen shall have the right to introduce a written demand to the appropriate organ of the State.

Article 19

Any citizen subjected to a prejudice by an act of the administration shall have the right to judicial recourse.

Article 20

Each citizen shall have the right in any place to the recognition of his juridical personality.

Article 21

Every Congolese shall have the right to Congolese citizenship. Neither it nor his right to change nationality shall be arbitrarily taken from him.

Article 22

Every citizen shall possess the right to freely circulate on the national territory. He shall only be hindered by road blocks in conditions determined by law.

Every citizen shall have the right to freely choose his place of residence. He shall have the right to freely leave the national territory, if he is not the object of judicial proceedings, and to return thereto.

Article 23

Searches, in all forms, shall be authorized only in conditions determined by law.

Article 24

The home is inviolable. Searches shall only be ordered in the forms and conditions prescribed by law.

Article 25

Each citizen shall have the right to create a party, syndicate, associations, or to adhere to them.

Article 26

Freedom of belief and conscience and the freedom of either a religious or philosophical profession are inviolable. The free exercise of religious sects shall be guaranteed within the limits compatible with public order and good mores. No one shall be relieved from fulfilling a civic duty because of religious opinion.

Article 27

Every citizen shall have the right to freely express and diffuse his opinion by speech, by writing, and by image. Freedom of the press and freedom of information shall be guaranteed. Censure shall be prohibited. Access to sources of information shall be free. Every citizen shall have the right to information and communication. Activities relative to these domains shall be exercised in total independence in respect of the law.

Article 28

Secrecy of letters, correspondence, telecommunications, or any other form of communication shall not be violated except in the case prescribed by law.

Article 29

All citizens shall have the right to peacefully assemble, without previous authorization or declaration. Peaceful assemblies and manifestations in the public shall

be regulated. Freedom to have a parade shall be guaranteed. The law shall determine the conditions of its use.

Article 30

Property and the right to succession shall be guaranteed. Transfer and expropriation shall only be allowed under the condition of a just and prior indemnification. In case of contestation, the proprietor shall be responsible for seating the competent tribunals.

Article 31

Work is a sacred right and duty. The State shall guarantee the freedom to work. Every citizen shall have the right to be compensated according to his work and his capacity. For the same work, a woman shall have the right to the same salary as a man. Any discrimination based on race, sex, physical state, regional and ethnic origin, ideology, religion, or philosophy shall be prohibited.

Except for the agents of the Public Force, Congolese citizens shall possess the freedom to unionize and to strike. No one shall be submitted to forced labor, except in the case of a liberty-depriving sentence pronounced by a tribunal. No one shall be reduced to slavery.

Article 32

Every person shall have the right to enterprise in the economic sectors of his choice in respect of the laws and regulations.

Article 33

Every person shall have the right to rest and leisure notably to a legal limitation to the duration of work and periodic paid vacations as well as remuneration for holidays.

Article 34

The State is the guarantor of public health. Every citizen shall have the right to a level of life sufficient to assure his health, his well-being and that of his family, notably food, clothing, shelter, medical care as well as necessary social services.

The right to create private socio-sanitation establishments shall be guaranteed. Socio-sanitation establishments shall be submitted to the approval of the state and regulated by law.

Aged or handicapped persons shall have the right to specific measures of protection coinciding with their physical and moral needs.

Article 35

Citizens shall possess a right to culture and to the respect of their cultural identity. All the communities composing the Congolese Nation shall possess the freedom to use their languages and their own culture without prejudicing those of others.

The State shall have the duty to safeguard and promote the national values of civilization, such spiritual materials as well as cultural traditions.

Article 36

The freedom of intellectual, artistic, scientific, and technological creation shall be guaranteed to each citizen. Intellectual property shall be protected by law. The sequestration, seizure, confiscation, interdiction, and destruction of all or part of any publication, entry, or any other manner of information and communication shall only be performed in virtue of a judicial decision.

Article 37

Every person shall have the right to education. All instruction shall be placed under the surveillance and control of the State. The State shall strive for equal access to education and professional instruction.

Public instruction shall be free. Fundamental instruction shall be obligatory. Scholarship shall be obligatory until the age of sixteen years.

The right to create private schools shall be guaranteed. Private school shall be submitted to the approval of the State and regulated by law.

Article 38

The State shall have the obligation to assist the family in its mission as guardian of the morality and traditional values recognized by the community.

The State shall have the duty to assure the protection of the Rights of the mother and infant as stipulated in the International Declarations and Conventions.

Article 39

Marriage and the family shall be under the protection of the State. The law shall fix the juridical conditions of marriage and the family.

Legal marriage shall only be contracted before the organs of the State. It shall only be concluded with the free and clear consent of the future spouses.

Article 40

Parents shall have rights and responsibilities regarding their children. Children shall have rights and duties toward their parents. Children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall have the same rights.

Article 41

Children shall only be separated from their family, which shall be responsible for their education, in virtue of the law.

The mother and the child shall have the right to aid and assistance of the State.

Article 42

Every child, without a single discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, national, social or ethnic origin, fortune or birth, shall have the right, on the part of his family, society, and the State to measures of protection which stem from his condition as a minor.

Every child shall be declared to the Civil State after his birth within a time period fixed by law and have a name.

Every child shall have the right to acquire a nationality.

Article 43

The State shall protect all children and adolescents from economic and social exploitation.

Child labor of those under 16 years shall be prohibited.

Article 44

The act of employing those under 18 years of age in those occupations of a nature compromising their morality or their health putting their lives in danger or hindering their normal development shall be sanctioned by law.

Article 45

The law shall sanction insufficiencies of parents in the matter of education and the protection of their children.

Article 46

Each citizen shall have the right to a healthy, satisfactory, and enduring environment and the duty to defend it. The State shall strive for the protection and the conservation of the environment.

Article 47

Storing, manipulating, incinerating, and discharging toxic, polluting or radioactive wastes originating in factories and other industrial or artisan units installed on the national territory shall be regulated by law.

All pollution resulting from an economic activity shall give compensation for the benefit of the populations of the exploited zones.

The law shall determine the nature of compensatory measures and the forms of their execution.

Article 48

The transport, importation, storage, concealment, dumping, in the continental waters and maritime space under the national jurisdiction and including the exclusive economic zone, and dispersal in the airspace, of toxic, polluting, or radioactive wastes or any other dangerous product of a foreign origin shall constitute a crime punishable by law.

Any accord relative to these domains shall be prohibited.

Article 49

War crimes, political crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide shall be inadmissible and punished by law.

Article 50

The State shall guarantee the rights of minorities.

Article 51

The State shall accord the right of asylum on his territory to foreign exiles persecuted by reason of their action in favor of democracy, the fight for national liberation, or the fight against racism and apartheid, the freedom of scientific and cultural work, and for the defense of Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples conforming to laws and regulations in force.

Immigration shall be submitted to the law.

Article 52

Foreigners shall possess on the territory of the Republic of the Congo, the same rights and liberties as Congolese citizens except those enumerated in Articles 5, 6, 7, and 25, and conforming to laws and regulations in force. At all times, their right to form apolitical associations and to adhere to them shall be recognized.

Article 53

The Congolese people shall have the right to peace.

Article 54

The Congolese People shall have the inalienable imprescriptible right to possess their riches and natural resources.

Article 55

The Congolese People shall have the right to economic, cultural, and social development.

Title III Duties

Article 56

Every individual shall have duties toward the family and the society, toward the State and other legally recognized units, and toward the international community.

In the exercise of his rights and in the possession of his liberties, every individual shall only be submitted to limitations established by law with a view to assure the recognition and the respect of the Rights and Liberties of others and the goal of satisfying just exigencies of moral, public order, and the general well-being in a democratic society.

Article 57

Every individual shall have the duty to respect and consider his equals without any discrimination, and to maintain with them relations which permit promotion, safeguard, and reinforcement of respect and reciprocal tolerance.

Article 58

Every individual shall have the duty: to preserve harmonious development of the family and to work in favor of its cohesion and its respect, to respect at all times his

parents, to nourish and to assist them in case of necessity; and to preserve, at all times, the social and national solidarity and reinforce it particularly when it is menaced.

Article 59

Every individual shall have the duty to preserve the peace and reinforce the national independence and territorial integrity of the Fatherland and in a general manner, to contribute to the defense of the country, under conditions fixed by law.

Treason, espionage for the profit of a foreign power, aiding the enemy in time of war, as well as all threats to the security of the State shall be reprimanded in conformity with the laws of the Republic.

Article 60

Every individual shall be expected to work in measure with his capacities and his possibilities and to pay his due contribution fixed by law for the safeguard of the fundamental interests of Society.

Article 61

Every citizen shall have the duty, by his work and his conduct, to respect private property, to protect public property, and the interests of the national unit.

Article 62

The public good is sacred and inviolable. All citizens shall have the duty to assure its maintenance and preservation.

The law shall reprimand any act of sabotage, corruption, abuse of a public function, misdirection, dilapidation, and dissipation.

Article 63

Citizens charged with a public function or elected to a public function shall have the duty to accomplish it conscientiously and without discrimination.

Article 64

Every individual shall have the duty:

To strive, in his relations with the society, for the preservation and reinforcement of cultural values in a spirit of tolerance, dialogue, and in concert and in a general fashion;

To contribute to the promotion of the moral health of the Society, to preserve and reinforce the national unity and cohesiveness when they are menaced; and

To contribute to the best of his abilities, at all times and at all levels to the promotion and the realization of African unity.

Article 65

Every individual shall have the duty to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and the preservation of his natural milieu as well as to the protection of the environment. Also, he shall have the duty not to negatively effect his environment nor the well-being of his neighbors.

Article 66

Every citizen shall have the duty to conform himself to the Constitution, the laws, and the regulations of the Republic and to discharge his obligations toward the State and the Society.

Title IV The President of the Republic

Article 67

The President of the Republic shall be the Head of State. He incarnates the national unity and shall strive to respect the Constitution and the regular functioning of public institutions. He shall assure the continuity of the State. He is the guarantor of national independence, territorial integrity, and the respect of international treaties and accords.

Article 68

The President of the Republic shall be elected for five years by direct universal suffrage. He shall be re-eligible one single time.

No one may be a candidate for the Office of President of the Republic if he:

Is not of native Congolese nationality;

Does not possess all his civil and political rights;

Cannot attest to professional experience of at least 15 years; is not in possession of good physical and mental health; or does not evidence good moral character.

Article 69

The President of the Republic shall be elected by an absolute majority of the votes cast. If this is not obtained in the first round of balloting, it shall be followed, the second following Sunday, by a second round. Only the two candidates having received the largest number of votes in the first round shall be presented.

At the end of the second round, the candidate having won shall be elected President of the Republic.

Balloting shall be opened upon convocation of the Government.

The election of the new President shall take place at least twenty days and at most thirty days before the expiration of the mandate of the incumbent President. If in the seven days before the date limit for the filing of presentations of candidature, one of the persons having, less than thirty days before this date, publicly announced his decision to be a candidate dies or finds himself incapacitated, the Constitutional Council may decide to recall the election. If before the first round one of the candidates dies or finds himself incapacitated, the Constitutional Council shall pronounce the recall of the election.

In the case of death or incapacitation of one of the two most favored candidates in the first round, the Constitutional Council shall declare that a new electoral operation will follow; the same shall occur in the case of death or incapacitation of one of the two candidates remaining for presentation in a second round.

In all cases, the Constitutional Council shall be seated in conditions fixed in Article 143 or in those determined for the presentation of a candidate by the law prescribed in Article 68. The Constitutional Council may prorogate the time periods prescribed in Article 71 as long as the balloting shall take place no more than ninety days after the date of the decision of the Constitutional Council. If the application of the provisions of the present paragraph shall have the effect of recalling the election of the present President, he shall remain in office until the proclamation of his successor.

Article 70

In the case of vacancy of the Presidency of the Republic for whatever reason, or incapacity declared by the Constitutional Council convened by the Government and deciding by an absolute majority of its members, the functions of the President of the Republic, with the exception of those relative to referendum and to the dissolution of the National Assembly, shall be provisionally exercised by the President of the Senate. If he is himself incapacitated for the exercise of these functions, by the President of the National Assembly; if he is himself incapacitated for the exercise of these functions by the Prime Minister.

Article 71

In the case of vacancy or when the incapacity is definitively declared by the Constitutional Council, the balloting for the election of the new President of the Republic shall take place, except in the case of force majeure declared by the Constitutional Council, at least 45 days and at most 90 days after the opening of the vacancy or the declaration of the definitive character of the incapacity.

In the interim, the Prime Minister shall not call into question the responsibility of the Government before the National Assembly nor may the National Assembly make use of the motion to censure.

The President of the Senate assuring the functions of the President of the Republic shall neither dismiss the Prime Minister and his Government nor proceed to amend the Constitution.

Article 72

When he enters office, the President of the Republic shall take the following oath:

"Before the Nation and the Congolese People, the only possessors of sovereignty, I ... , President of the Republic, solemnly swear:

To respect and defend the Constitution and the Republican form of the State;

To loyally fulfill the high functions that the Nation has confided in me;

To guarantee the respect of the fundamental laws of the human person and the public liberties;

To protect and respect the public good including the natural resources and riches; to promote peace; to preserve the National Unity and the territorial integrity, the national sovereignty and independence."

The oath shall be received by the President of the Constitutional Council who performs the act before the Parliament, the Constitutional Council, and the Supreme Court.

Article 73

The functions of President of the Republic shall be incompatible with the exercise of any other elective mandate, any public, civil, or military employment, and any professional activity. The mandate of the President of the Republic shall be equally incompatible with any responsibility at the center of a party or a political association.

Article 74

During their term, the President of the Republic and the members of the Government shall not by themselves, nor through intermediary, purchase anything that belongs to the domain of the State.

They shall be required, when they enter office and when they leave, to make upon their honor a written declaration of all their goods and possessions and to address it to the Office of the Comptroller.

They shall not take part in public sales or purchases and adjudications for the administrations or institutions relevant to the State or submitted to their control.

They shall receive special treatment of which the amount shall be determined by law. They shall occupy an official residence.

Article 75

The President of the Republic shall name the Prime Minister approved by a parliamentary majority of the National Assembly. He shall end the Prime Minister's functions when the Prime Minister presents the resignation of the Government.

He shall name the other members of the Government at the suggestion of the Prime Minister. He shall end their terms of office with the advice of the Prime Minister.

Article 76

The President of the Republic shall preside over the Council of Ministers.

Article 77

The President of the Republic shall sign the decrees taken in the Council of Ministers. He shall name high political and military officer of the State in the Council of Ministers.

Article 78

The President of the Republic shall promulgate laws within the twenty days, which follow the transmission to the Government of the definitively adopted law.

At any time, the President of the Republic may, before the expiration of this time period, demand of the Parliament a new deliberation of the law or of certain of its articles. This new deliberation shall not be refused.

Following this deliberation, the President of the Republic shall be obligated to promulgate the amended law or not.

Article 79

The President of the Republic can, upon the initiative of the Government during its sessions or upon the initiative of the National Assembly published in the Official Journal, submit to referendum any bill or proposition of law effecting areas susceptible to have great consequences upon the functioning of institutions or on society.

When the referendum has ended in the adoption of the bill or proposition, the President of the Republic shall promulgate it within the time limit prescribed in the previous article.

Article 80

When the equilibrium of the public institutions is interrupted notably in the case of sharp and persistent crisis between the executive power and the Parliament, or if the National Assembly overturns the Government two times in the time of one year, the President of the Republic can, after consultation of the Prime Minister and the President of the National Assembly, pronounce the dissolution of the National Assembly.

Article 81

After the dissolution of the National Assembly, general elections shall take place within a period of forty five days.

Article 82

The National Assembly shall meet by right the second Tuesday following its election. If this meeting takes place outside of the periods prescribed for ordinary sessions, an extraordinary session shall open by right for a duration of fifteen days. It shall not be followed by a new dissolution in the year that follows these elections.

Article 83

The President of the Republic shall accredit Ambassadors and Special Envoys to Foreign Powers, Foreign Ambassadors, and Special Envoys shall be accredited to him.

Article 84

The President of the Republic is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He shall preside at the High Councils and Committees of National Defense.

Article 85

The President of the Republic exercises the right of pardon.

Article 86

The President of the Republic shall communicate with the Parliament by messages, which he shall have read and which shall not be debated. Out of session, the Parliament shall specially convene for this purpose.

Article 87

The Acts of the President of the Republic other than those relative to the nomination of the Prime Minister, referendum message, and submission of laws to the Constitutional Council shall be countersigned by the Prime Minister and, the case arising, by the Ministers charged with their execution.

Article 88

The President of the Republic and the members of the Government shall be responsible for acts accomplished in the exercise of their functions in conformity with the provisions of Title VIII.

Title V Government and Prime Minister**Article 89**

The Government shall determine and conduct the policy of the Nation. It shall control the Administration and Public Authorities. It shall be responsible before the President of the Republic and the National Assembly in the conditions and according to the procedures prescribed in Articles 75 and 122.

Article 90

The Prime Minister is the Head of Government. He directs the action of the Government. He assures the execution of the laws. He exercises regulatory power. Under the reservation of the provisions of Article 77, the Prime Minister names civil and military employees.

The law shall determine the conditions under which the Prime Minister shall establish his employees.

The Prime Minister can delegate certain powers to the Ministers. He shall supplant, if need be, the President of the Republic in presiding over the Councils and Committees prescribed in Article 84.

He may, in exceptional circumstances, supplant him in presiding over the Council of Ministers in virtue of an express delegation and for a fixed agenda.

When he takes office, the Prime Minister shall present before the Parliament a declaration of general policy. This declaration shall not be debated, the Parliament shall take action according to it.

Article 91

The acts of the Prime Minister shall be countersigned, if need be, by the Ministers charged with their execution.

Article 92

The functions of a member of the Government shall be incompatible with the exercise of any parliamentary mandate, any office of professional representation, any public employment and any compensated private activity, as well these functions shall be incompatible with any responsibility at the center of a political party or association.

Title VI Parliament

Article 93

The Parliament shall be composed of two Houses: the National Assembly and the Senate.

The Deputies of the National Assembly shall be elected by direct universal suffrage.

No one shall be elected Deputy if he has not attained the age of 25 years or if he is not a native born Congolese citizen.

Senators shall be elected by indirect universal suffrage by the Councils and Districts, Regions and Communes. No one shall be elected Senator if he has not attained the age of 50 years or if he is not a native born Congolese citizen.

The Deputies and Senators shall be re-eligible.

Article 94

The duration of the mandate of Deputies shall be 5 years, the duration of the mandate of Senators shall be 6 years. The Senate shall be renewable every two years by thirds. The first third to renew shall be designated by chance.

The mandate shall be unconditional. The law shall fix the distribution of seats, indemnification, conditions of eligibility, areas of ineligibility and incompatibilities to Parliament. It shall also fix the conditions in which persons called to assure in the case of the vacancy of a seat and the substitution of Deputies and Senators until a general or partial renewal.

Article 95

No member of Parliament shall be pursued, investigated, detained, or judged for opinions or votes express by him in the exercise of his functions.

No member of Parliament shall be, during the duration of its sessions, pursued or arrested in a criminal or correctional matter without the authorization of the House of which he is a part, except in the case of flagrante delicto.

No member of Parliament shall be, out of session, arrested or pursued without the authorization of the Bureau of the Chamber of which he is a member, except in the case of flagrante delicto, authorized cases, or definitive condemnation.

The detention or the pursuit of a Member of Parliament shall be suspended if the House of which he is a part requires it.

Article 96

The mandate shall be representative. Any imperative mandate shall be null and of no effect.

The right to vote in Parliament shall be personal. At all times, the delegation of a vote shall be permitted when a member of Parliament is absent for a duly declared provisional incapacity. In this case, no one may receive the delegation of more than one mandate.

Article 97

The Parliament shall meet by right in three ordinary sessions per year. Each session shall have a duration of at most two months.

The first session shall open 2 March. The second session shall open 2 July. The third session shall open 15 Oct.

When the Parliament meets in congress, the Bureau of the National Assembly shall preside over the debates.

Article 98

The Parliament shall meet in extraordinary session at the request of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, or a third of the members composing each of the Houses for a fixed agenda.

The closing shall intervene when the Parliament has extinguished the agenda for which it was convened and at most 15 days from the date of the beginning of the meeting.

Article 99

The sessions shall be opened and closed by the President of each House. Each House shall establish its interior regulations and elect its established officials of at most seven members.

The meetings of the two Houses shall be public. The official record of debates shall be published in the Official Journal.

Each House may sit in closed session at the demand of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, or one third of its members.

Article 100

The Officials of the National Assembly shall be elected for the duration of the legislature. At any time, in the case of change in the majority in course of the legislature, a new President can be elected.

The Officials of the Senate shall be elected after each partial renewal.

Article 101

The Parliament shall have the legislative initiative and alone pass the law. It shall establish taxes and pass the budget of the State and control its execution. It shall be obligated with this task at the opening of the Oct session. It shall have the initiative of legislative and constitutional referendums.

Article 102

The Senate shall concur in the election of the members of the Supreme Court and the members of the High Council of the magistrate in conformity with the provisions of Article 129.

Article 103

The Senate, other than its legislative functions, shall assure the representation of the interests of local units and socio-cultural communities.

It shall play the role of moderator and counsellor of the Nation. The provisions of the present article may be specified and completed by an organic law.

Article 104

It shall be in the domain of the law:

The citizenship, the civic rights and fundamental guarantees accorded to citizens in the exercise of public liberties, the subjugations imposed, in the interest of the national defense, and public security of citizens, in their person and their goods;

The nationality, the state and the capacity of persons, matrimonial systems, successions, and liberalities;

The determination of crimes, misdemeanors, and contraventions of the fifth class as well as the penalties which shall be applicable to them, the organization of justice and the procedure followed before the jurisdictions and for the execution of judicial decisions, the status of the magistrate and the juridical program of the High Council of the Magistrate, ministerial offices and liberal professions;

The base, rate, and manner of recovering impositions of every nature, borrowing and financial engagements of the State;

The program for the minting of coinage; the electoral program of Parliament and Local Assemblies; the general status of the Public Authority; the right to work and programs of social security;

Nationalizations, denationalizations of enterprises, and the transfer of property of enterprises from the public sector to the private sector;

The disposition of free and charge titles of public and private goods and of the public and private domain of the State;

The plan for economic and social development; the environment and the conservation of natural resources; the system of ownership, of real rights, and civil and commercial obligations;

The system of political parties and the press; the approval of international treaties and accords; the organization of the national defense; the administration and disposition of the domain of the State;

The free administration of local units, their areas of competence, and their resources;

The management of the territory; the mutuality, monetary system, and credit; the system of transport, communications, and information; and the penitentiary system.

The law shall equally determine the fundamental principles:

Of instruction, of health, of science and technology, of culture, arts, and sports, and of agriculture, husbandry, fishing, waters and forests.

Article 105

The budgetary act shall determine the resources and the allocations of the State in the conditions prescribed by an organic law.

Planning laws shall fix the objectives of economic and social action of the State and the Organization of production.

Article 106

The declaration of war by the President of the Republic shall be authorized by the Parliament convened in congress.

Article 107

Matters other than those which are of the domain of the law shall be of the regulatory domain.

Title VII Relations Between Parliament and Government**Article 108**

Members of the Government shall have access to the Parliament and its commissions. They shall be heard at the demand of a member of Parliament, of a commission, or at their own request. They can be assisted by colleagues. In the case of the absence of a titled Minister, his intermediary shall replace him.

Article 109

When it appears that an imminent peril resulting in grave results to public order or in the case of events presenting themselves, by their nature and their gravity, the character of the public calamity or national disaster, the President of the Republic may decree in the Council of Ministers a state of emergency over a part or the whole of the national territory.

When it appears an imminent peril resulting either from a menace of foreign character, or an insurrection of the Armed Forces, or grave events occurred despite the state of emergency, the President of the Republic may declare in the Council of Ministers a state of siege. In both cases, the Parliament shall meet by right if it is not in session in order to appreciate the legality of the decision of the President of the Republic.

The extension of the state of siege or the state of emergency for more than fifteen days shall only be authorized by the Parliament.

The law shall determine the manner of application of the present article.

Article 110

The initiation of legislation belongs concurrently to the Government and to the members of Parliament.

Bills shall be deliberated in the Council of Ministers after the advice of the Supreme Court and filed with the office of one of the other Houses by the Prime Minister.

Budgetary acts shall be submitted first to the National Assembly.

Propositions of law which are stopped by Parliament shall be, before deliberation and vote, addressed for information to the Government.

Article 111

Propositions and amendments filed by the members of Parliament shall not be acceptable when the adoption would have in consequence either a diminution of the public resources, or the creation or aggravation of a public obligation, at least when they are not accompanied by a proposition for the augmentation of revenues or corresponding economizing.

Article 112

Bills, propositions, and amendments which are not of the domain of the law are not receivable. Irreceivability shall be pronounced by the President of the interested House after deliberation of the office.

Article 113

The discussion of bills shall occur, before the convened House, upon the text presented by the Government. One House convened to consider a text passed by the other House shall vote upon the text transmitted to it.

Article 114

Bills and propositions of law shall be at the demand of the Government or the House seated to review it, sent for examination to commissions specially designated for this purpose.

Bills and propositions of law for which such a demand has not been made shall be sent to one of the Permanent Commissions of which the number shall be determined by the Internal Regulations of each House.

Article 115

The members of Parliament and the Government shall have the right of amendment.

Article 116

Every bill or proposition of law shall be examined successively in both Houses with a view of adoption of an identical text.

When, followed by a disagreement between the two Houses, a bill or proposition of law cannot be adopted after a reading by each House, the Prime Minister shall have the ability to provoke the reunion of a joint commission charged with proposing a text on the provisions remaining in discussion.

The text elaborated upon by the Joint Commission may be submitted by the Government for approval of both Houses.

If the Joint Commission cannot arrive at the adoption of a common text, the Government may after a new reading by the National Assembly and by the Senate, demand of the National Assembly a definitive decree.

In this case, the National Assembly may take up either the text elaborated by the Joint Commission, or the last text passed by it, modified, if such be the case, by one or several amendments adopted by the Senate.

Article 117

Laws to which the Constitution gives the character of organic laws, except the budgetary act, shall be voted and modified in the following conditions:

The bill or proposition shall only be submitted to deliberation and vote of the first House after the expiration of a period of fifteen days after its filing. The procedure of Article 116 shall be applicable. At all times lacking agreement between the two Houses, the text shall only be adopted by the National Assembly at its last reading by an absolute majority of its members. Organic laws relative to the Senate shall be passed in the same terms by both Houses.

Organic laws shall only be promulgated after a declaration by the Constitutional Council of their conformity to the Constitution.

Article 118

The budgetary act for the year comprising the report and explicative annexes shall be filed and distributed 15 Oct at the latest of the year which proceeds the year of execution of the budget. It shall be immediately returned to a Parliamentary Commission.

The National Assembly shall decide upon the first reading within a period of fifteen days after the filing of the budgetary act.

If the National Assembly has not announced a vote in the first reading upon the act within the period here stated, the Government shall obligate the Senate to an amended initial text. The Senate shall decide within a period of fifteen days on the first reading.

If the Senate does not decide in the period here stated, the National Assembly shall be obligated with the budgetary act. This law shall only contain strictly financial provisions.

If after the last reading of the Senate the budgetary act has not been adopted, the President of the Republic shall convene the Parliament in extraordinary session.

The budgetary act shall be passed 31 Dec at the latest.

Article 119

An organic law shall regulate the mode of presentation of the budget. The Parliament shall regulate the accounts of the State. It shall be assisted in this task by the Comptroller's Office.

The National Assembly can charge the Comptroller's Office with all inquiries and studies coinciding with the execution of the public receipts and expenses or with the administration of the treasury.

Article 120

The regulatory bill shall be filed and distributed at the latest at the end of the year that follows the year of execution of the budget.

Article 121

The agenda of each House shall comprise the bills and propositions in the order of their filing with the Office of the House so charged.

At all times, the bills and propositions of law recognized as urgent may be examined in priority.

Article 122

The Prime Minister, after the deliberation of the Council of Ministers, shall engage before the National Assembly the responsibility of the Government on its program or eventually upon a declaration of general policy.

The National Assembly shall put in question the responsibility of the Government by the passage of a motion of censure. Such a motion shall only be receivable if it is signed by a tenth of the members of the National Assembly. The passage shall only take place forty eight hours after its filing. Only the favorable votes to the motion shall be counted which can only be adopted by an absolute majority of the members composing the Assembly. If the motion of censure is rejected, these signatories shall not propose a new one in the course of the same session, except in the case prescribed in the above article.

The Prime Minister can, after deliberation of the Council of Ministers, engage the responsibility of the Government before the National Assembly upon the passage of a text. In this case, this text shall be considered as adopted; except if a motion of censure, filed in the twenty four hours which follow, is passed in the conditions prescribed in the preceding paragraph.

Article 123

When the National Assembly has adopted a motion of censure or when it disapproves of the program or a declaration of general policy of the Government, the Prime Minister shall remit to the President of the Republic the resignation of the Government.

Article 124

The closure of ordinary and extraordinary sessions shall be by right delayed in order to permit, if need be, the application of the provisions of Article 122.

Article 125

The Government shall be obligated to furnish to Parliament all explanations which are demanded of it on its administration and its activities.

The means of information and control of Parliament over the Government shall be:

interpellation, written question, oral question, commission of inquiry, motion of censure, and audition in commission.

These means shall be exercised in the conditions determined by the Interior Regulation of each House.

Title VIII The High Court of Justice

Article 126

A High Court of Justice shall be instituted. The High Court of Justice shall be composed of members elected at the center of and in equal numbers by Parliament and the Supreme Court.

The President of the High Court of Justice shall be elected by his peers.

The Law shall fix the composition of the High Court of Justice, the rules of its functioning as well as the applicable procedure before it.

Article 127

The President of the Republic shall be responsible for the acts committed in the exercise of his functions in the case of high treason.

In this case, he shall be arraigned before the High Court of Justice by Parliament decreeing by a two thirds majority of its members.

Article 128

The High Court of Justice shall be competent to judge the President of the Republic, the Members of Government, Members of Parliament, Members of the Supreme Court, Members of the High Council of the Magistrate, and the Heads of Courts for reason of acts qualified as crimes and misdemeanors committed in the exercise of their functions as well as in order to judge their accomplices in the case of a plot against the security of the State.

In the case prescribed in the preceding paragraph, the High Court shall be confined by the definition of crimes and misdemeanors as well as by the determination of penalties such that they result from the penal laws in effect at the moment when the acts were committed.

Title IX Judicial Authority

Article 129

Judicial Authority shall be exercised by the Supreme Court and the other national jurisdictions created by law.

It shall be independent of the Executive Authority and the Legislative Authority.

The Supreme Court shall consist of Magistrates elected by Parliament convened in congress in conditions fixed by law.

The members of the Supreme Court shall be irremovable. They shall continue in function until the age of retirement, except in the case of condemnation for crimes and misdemeanors, indignity, insanity, resignation, death, or definitive incapacity.

The law shall fix the organization, the composition, and the functioning of the Supreme Court.

Article 130

The Legislative Authority shall neither decree upon contestations, nor modify a decision of justice.

Any law of which the goal is to furnish a solution to an ongoing process shall be prohibited.

Article 131

The Executive Authority shall neither decree upon contestations, nor impede the courts of justice, nor oppose the execution of a judicial decision.

Article 132

The Judicial Authority shall neither incrementally intrude upon the attributes of the Legislative Authority nor upon those of the Executive Authority.

Article 133

The Judicial Authority shall decree upon the actions born of the application of the law and regulation. Its decisions shall be rendered in the name of the Congolese People. A law shall define the status of Magistrates.

Article 134

The Magistrates shall be instituted by the High Council of the Magistrate presided over by the President of the Republic.

It shall consist of the President of the Supreme Court, Member by right, and the Magistrates elected by the Parliament convened in congress in conditions fixed by law.

Article 135

The High Council of the Magistrate shall be the guarantor of the independence of the Judicial Authority.

On proposition of the High Council of the Magistrate, the President of the Republic shall name the Magistrates to their seats and tribunals. The law shall fix the organization, composition, and the functioning of the High Council of the Magistrate.

Article 136

The High Council of the Magistrate shall decree as Disciplinary Council and as the organ of the carriers of the Magistrates. It is thus presided over by the First President of the Supreme Court.

Article 137

No one shall be arbitrarily detained.

The Judicial Authority, guardian of individual liberties, shall assure the respect of this principle in conditions fixed by law.

Title X Constitutional Council

Article 138

A Constitutional Council shall be instituted.

Article 139

The Constitutional Council shall consist of nine members distributed as follows:
Two Magistrates elected by the High Council of the Magistrate;
Two Law Professors from the University elected by their peers;
Two Lawyers elected by their peers; and

Three members named proportionally one by the President of the Republic, by the President of the National Assembly, and by the President of the Senate.

The members of the Constitutional Council, irrespective of their mode of designation, shall attest to a professional experience of at least fifteen years.

The Constitutional Council shall be renewed by thirds every two years. When they take office, the members of the Council shall take an oath before the Parliament convened in Congress.

Article 140

The President of the Constitutional Council shall be elected by his peers for a duration of two years renewable.

He shall have the deciding voice in the case of an equal division of voices.

Article 141

The functions of a member of the Constitutional Council shall be incompatible with those of a Minister or a member of Parliament. Other incompatibilities shall be fixed by law.

Article 142

The Constitutional Council shall assure the control of the constitutionality of laws, international treaties and accords. It shall be the principle regulator of the activities of public authorities.

Article 143

The Constitutional Council shall ensure the regularity of the election of the President of the Republic, it shall examine contestations and proclaim the results of balloting.

Article 144

The Constitutional Council shall decree in the case of contestation upon the regularity of legislative and local elections.

Article 145

The Constitutional Council shall ensure the regularity of the operations of referendum and proclaim their results.

Article 146

Treaties, Bills, and Propositions of law before their ratification or their adoption by Parliament shall be submitted for advise by the Government to the Constitutional Council which shall pronounce upon their conformity to the Constitution.

Article 147

Organic laws and the interior regulations of the National Assembly, Senate, and Local Councils shall before their being applied, be submitted to the Constitutional Council, which shall pronounce upon their conformity to the Constitution.

To the same end, laws before their promulgation may be deferred to the Constitutional Council by the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, the President of the Senate, the President of the Supreme Court, the President of the High Council of Information and Communication, the Presidents of Local Councils, or a third of the Deputies or Senators.

In the two cases prescribed in the preceding paragraphs, the Constitutional Council shall decree within a period of one month. Always, at the express demand of the initiator, this period may be reduced to ten days if urgency exists.

In these cases, the consideration of the Constitutional Council suspends the period of promulgation or publication.

Article 148

Any person can address the Constitutional Council to the Constitutionality of Laws, either directly, or by the procedure of unconstitutional exception invoked before a jurisdiction in an affair which concerns him.

In the case of unconstitutional exception, the jurisdiction shall delay to decree and give to the initiator a period of one month from the notification of the decision.

Article 149

The decisions of the Constitutional Council shall not be susceptible to any recourse. They impose themselves upon public powers, all public authorities, judiciaries, and particularities.

Article 150

A provision declared unconstitutional shall not be promulgated nor given effect.

Article 151

The law shall determine the rules of organization of functioning of the Constitutional Council, the procedure, and notably the periods within which contestations must be brought.

Title XI Economic and Social Council

Article 152

An Economic and Social Council shall be instituted.

Article 153

The Economic and Social Council shall be, according to its public powers, a consultative assembly. It may upon its own initiative examine any problem of an economic or social character interesting the Republic of the Congo. It may also be seated by the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly, and the President of the Senate.

The Council may equally be consulted on projects of international treaties and agreements, bills and propositions of law as well as on projects and decrees by reason of their economic or social character.

The Council shall be obligatorily seated with any bill, programming project, or plan of development of an economic or social character except for the budget of the State.

Article 154

The office of a member of the Economic and Social Council shall be incompatible with those of a Member of Parliament, Minister, Member of the Constitutional Council, Prefect, Mayor, Sub-Prefect, Head of PCA, and local Councillor.

Article 155

The composition, organization, and functioning of the Economic and Social Council shall be fixed by law.

Title XII High Council of Information and Communication

Article 156

A High Council of Information and Communication shall be instituted.

Article 157

The High Council of Information and Communication shall strive to ensure the respect of rules of professional responsibility guarantee the freedom of information, of the press, and the pluralist expression of public opinion.

It shall regulate the relations of communication between the public powers, organs of information, and the public, give technical advice, and recommendations on questions touching the domain of information and communication.

Article 158

The High Council of Information and Communication shall be composed of eleven members of which three shall be elected from among professionals, two named by the President of the Republic, three by Parliament convened in Congress, and one elected by scientific and intellectual Associations, one elected by civil Associations, one elected by Consumer Associations.

The members shall attest to a professional experience of at least ten years.

Article 159

The High Council of Information and Communication shall elect its office from among its members.

Article 160

The organization and the functioning of the High Council of Information and Communication shall be fixed by law.

Title XIII Public Force

Article 161

The Public Force shall be composed of the National Police, the National Guard, and the Congolese Armed Forces.

The law shall fix their organization and their functioning as well as the special status of Police, National Guard, and Armed Forces personnel.

Article 162

The Public Force shall be apolitical. It is submitted to the laws and regulations of the Republic. It is instituted in the general interest. No one shall utilize it to particular ends. The Public Force shall be subordinate to the civil authority. It shall only act within the order of laws and regulations.

Conditions of activation shall be fixed by law.

Article 163

The National Police shall be a civil force of a paramilitary character. Its action shall be exercised in day as well as night on the national territory of the Republic in respect of fundamental liberties and Human Rights.

Article 164

The National Guard shall be a force of a military and civil nature; its action shall be exercised on the territory of the Republic and in respect of fundamental liberties and Human Rights.

Article 165

The National Police and the National Guard shall have for missions to:

Assure the respect of the administrative laws and regulations of the Police and the Police judiciary; strive for the security and the protection of persons and public goods;

Strive for public tranquility and order;

Assure the maintenance and reestablishment of public order; and

Strive for the security of the State.

Article 166

The law shall determine the division of competencies between the Police and the National Guard.

Article 167

Military defense shall be assured by a National Armed Forces called the Congolese Armed Forces, in short "F.A.C."

Article 168

The Congolese Armed Forces have the mission to defend the integrity of the national territory against any form of exterior armed aggression.

The Congolese Armed Forces shall participate in the economic, social, and cultural development in conditions fixed by laws and regulations.

Title XIV Local Units

Article 169

Local Units of the Republic of the Congo shall be determined by law.

Article 170

The Local Units shall have legal personality. They shall possess administrative, patrimonial, financial, economic, cultural, and social autonomy.

Local Units shall have for deliberative organs, Councils elected by direct universal suffrage which shall name at their center one or several executive offices.

Article 171

The law shall determine the juridical status, the powers, the attributes, and the functioning of the Local Units and their relations with the central authorities.

Title XV International Treaties and Agreements

Article 172

The President of the Republic negotiates, signs, and ratifies treaties. Ratification shall only intervene after the authorization of Parliament notably in that which concerns Peace Treaties, Defense Treaties, Commercial Treaties, Treaties relative to natural resources, or

Accords relative to international organization, those which engage the finances of the State, those which modify the provisions of a legislative nature, those which are relative to the state of persons, those which include cession, exchange, or addition of territory.

No cession, exchange, or addition of territory shall be valid without the consent of the Congolese people called to pronounce by way of referendum.

Article 173

The President of the Republic and the Parliament shall be informed of all negotiation leading to the conclusion of the international Accord not submitted to ratification.

The law shall determine the Accords not subject to the procedure of ratification.

Article 174

With the exception of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, any representative of the Congolese State shall for adoption or authentication of an international engagement, produce clear proof of his appropriate powers.

Article 175

If the Constitutional Council has declared that an international engagement contains a clause contrary to the Constitution, authorization to ratify or approve it shall only intervene in the case of revision of the Constitution.

Article 176

Treaties and Accords regularly ratified or approved shall have, from their publication, an authority superior to that of laws under the reserve for each Accord or Treaty, of its application by the other party.

Article 177

The Republic of the Congo may conclude Accords of association with other States.

It shall accept to create with these other States intergovernmental organizations of common administration, coordination, free cooperation, and integration.

Title XVI Amendment of the Constitution**Article 178**

The initiative of amendment of the Constitution shall belong concurrently to the President of the Republic, the Government, and Members of Parliament. The conditions of initiative shall be determined by an organic law. The bill or proposition of amendment of the Constitution shall be passed by the two Houses convened in Congress by a two thirds majority. The amendment shall be definitive after having been approved by referendum.

No procedure of amendment shall be engaged in or followed when it attempts to touch the integrity of the territory.

The republican form, the secularity of the State, and the number of mandates of the President of the Republic shall not be the object of any amendment.

Amendment shall not have the object of the reduction or the abolition of fundamental rights and liberties enunciated in Title II.

Title XVII Temporary and Final Provisions

Article 179

The institutions of the Republic prescribed by the present Constitution shall be effective at the end of the period of transition conforming to Article 89 of the Fundamental Act. The duration of their mandate shall run from their definitive effectuation.

The President of the Republic, the High Council of the Republic, and the Transitional Government shall continue to exercise their functions until the installation of the new institutions in conformity with Article 88 of the Fundamental Act.

The attributes conferred upon the Constitutional Council by the provisions contained in Title X shall be exercised until the effectuation of this Council by the Supreme Court.

Article 180

The laws and regulations now in force, when they are not contrary to the present Constitution, shall remain applicable so long as they have not been modified or abrogated.

Article 181

The present Constitution which abrogates any of the provisions previously contrary, shall be submitted to the approval of the people by way of referendum, published in the Official Journal as the supreme law of the Republic. It shall become effective at the moment of the definitive effectuation of new democratic institutions.

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