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Stability and Instability in Former French Colonies: A Case Study Between Gabon and Congo Brazzaville

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Stability and Instability in Former French Colonies:

A Case Study between Gabon and Congo Brazzaville

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Chapter 1: Introduction

France is notorious for its colonial and neo-colonial endeavors. Many former French colonies are among the most fragile states in the world, including Congo Brazzaville. While Congo Brazzaville fits the model of an unstable former French colony, Gabon, a seemingly similar former French colony does not. Although Gabon is relatively high on the Failed State Index, with a ranking of 99th out of 178 countries and Congo Brazzaville is relatively low, ranking 36th,[1] these states are very similar. The first of these similarities is that they are both former French colonies, colonialism in both states was particularly brutal and destabilizing, and direct rule was deployed in both cases. Moreover, both states are geographically proximate, as they are located in in Central Africa and border one another. They have similar climates, as well as an abundance of natural resources, including oil. Furthermore, both Gabon and Congo Brazzaville produce roughly equal amounts of oil, with each state producing more than 240 thousand barrels per day.[2] Given these similarities, this significant gap in stability begs the question as to why Gabon has been relatively successful in maintaining stability, while Congo Brazzaville has been unsuccessful.

To explain these different post-independence trajectories, it is crucial that the differences between the two states be discussed. The reasons for this gap must be addressed in order to understand why one state was so successful in maintaining stability, while the other was not. Given that many states in Africa suffer from instability, these differences are critical in explaining what states must avoid and follow in order to maintain stability. In order to answer this question, it was imperative to first research all scholarly work on African statehood. This

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[1] "The Failed States Index Rankings." *The Fund for Peace*. The Fund for Peace, n.d. Web. 1 Jan. 2014.
[2] "Congo (Brazzaville)." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Sept. 2013.
[2]"Gabon." *U.S. Energy Information Administration*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Sept. 2013.

built a greater knowledge of the history of the continent as a whole, and the particular problems that have crippled African states. The quality of African statehood laid a general framework, and allowed for better understanding of the problems that African states face in maintaining stability. Next, two cases were chosen in order to highlight a gap in stability and quality of statehood. The constants chosen included: being former French colonies, having similar amounts of oil production, and being close in geographic proximity. After selecting the constants, research was done by examining the Failed State Index. By looking at the index, two different states that satisfied the constant requirement and more importantly, had significantly different scores were chosen. Congo Brazzaville would be the unstable state of comparison due to its low ranking and Gabon would be the stable state of comparison because it ranks much lower on the index (66 places higher).[3] After choosing the states for each case, research was then conducted (each case was researched independently) by looking at scholarly articles and newspaper articles. Once the research on Gabon was complete, work began on Congo Brazzaville. After completing both empirical chapters, an analytic chapter was written which compared and contrasted the two isolated cases.

Upon finishing all research, it is clear, that the reason for failure in Congo Brazzaville is due to the political violence that has plagued the state since the early years of its independence. While Congo Brazzaville suffered from numerous political coups from 1965 until 1997, Gabon's leaders were much more successful in maintaining power, with only one military coup occurring in 1964 (which was later overturned by French military intervention). Although it is easy enough to say that political violence has caused Congo Brazzaville's instability, this explanation is not sufficient. During colonialism, the French exacerbated the divide between the urbanized, Southern Congolese, and the rural, Northern Congolese, by providing better opportunities for the

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[3] "The Failed States Index Rankings."

Southerners than the Northerners. This caused tensions to rise, which ultimately led to the political divide between the two groups after gaining independence. The North-South divide would ultimately result in the first military coup in 1963, which was ignored by the French. The absence of intervention and the reinstatement of the former president set a precedent that militarization of the opposition was not only acceptable; it was successful in changing the state. The result of this was continual military overthrow of Congolese Presidents. Thus, while Congo Brazzaville and Gabon both experienced military coups shortly after independence, France intervened only in Gabon. France's neo-colonial absence in Congo Brazzaville and neo-colonial presence in Gabon significantly impacted the stability of the states and the ability to suppress political violence in Gabon and the inability of Congo Brazzaville.

To answer this central question, certain terms must first be defined. Due to the ambiguity of what a state, an ideal state, stability, and instability are, these terms will be defined to eliminate any misinterpretation of the words. In the succeeding chapter, the specific scores and rankings from the Failed State Index, the Corruption Perceptions Index, the Human Development Index, the Worldwide Governance Indicators, and the Freedom in the World Report will be explained. Each report and index will be explained in terms of their methodology and what the scores and rankings are calculated by. Furthermore, in order to better understand African statehood, prior work on this subject will be discussed. The compilation of scholarly work on pre-colonial African institutions, colonialism, independence, and post-colonialism will help to better understand African statehood and how Gabon and Congo Brazzaville relate to these scholarly developments. The chapter will close with a brief discussion on French colonialism in particular, and the crippling effects it had upon its colonies due to its policies and actions, paving the way for the first case study, Gabon. In order to explain Gabon's success, the history of the

state must first be examined. By looking at pre-colonialism, colonialism, and independence within the state, the empirical information on Gabon will help to understand how the state was able to maintain stability since independence, especially by focusing on the politics of the state. The next case study on Congo Brazzaville will be identical in structure to Gabon's case study. This will allow parallels to be drawn between the two cases, and differences to be distinguished. Congo Brazzaville's history will be discussed, beginning with pre-colonialism, and ending with post-colonialism. The next chapter will then seek to bring these two cases together and explain why Gabon is more stable than Congo Brazzaville from the differences in each case study. And finally, the conclusion brings together all of the chapters, in order to restate the findings and the implications for this thesis.

<div align="center">**Chapter 2: Defining Key Terms**</div>

Given the ambiguity of terms such as the ideal state, the state, stability and instability, it will help to define them clearly. In order to eliminate any confusion on, for example, which form of the word stability is being used in later sections, this term will be precisely explained in this section, along with all other terms.

The State

While many scholars offer their own definitions for the term: "the state", it is clear that among these numerous definitions, there is conceptual overlap. These various definitions can then be applied to formulate a single definition of the state, which encompasses the most fundamental aspects of scholars' different versions. Starting with the idea that there is an "ideal state," Joel Migdal argues that the closer a state fits the ideal definition of a state, the more successful they are in the global system. However, there is considerable variance in how real states fit this ideal definition. According to Migdal, the ideal state is an organization of agencies. These agencies (run by the state's leadership) have the power to make and enforce a system of rules for the people in a territory. He also adds that the use of force is acceptable in enforcing these rules in order to maintain order.[4] A key component of Migdal's definition is the notion of an authority governing over a territory. Although there are some discrepancies in defining the state and its functions, a plurality of scholars agree on including a territory in their definitions.[5]

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[4] Migdal, Joel S. *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1988. Print.

[5] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. "Chapter 2." *Inside African Politics*. N.p.: n.p., n.d. 40-62. Print.

[5] Mentan, Tatah. "Chapter Two: Framing the Problem of the State in Africa." *The State in Africa: An Analysis of Impacts of Historical Trajectories of Global Capitalist Expansion and Domination in the Continent*. Bamenda, North West Region, Cameroon: Langaa Research & Pub. CIG, 2010. 19-44. Print.

[5] Migdal, Joel S.

[5] Thies, Cameron G. "The Political Economy of State Building in Sub-Saharan Africa." *The*

Additionally, the use of force to enforce the rules put in place, establishes a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence by the governing authority. According to Max Weber, a territory must have a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence in order to constitute a state.[6] This monopolization of the use of legitimate physical force comes from social compliance from the people within the given territory. Many scholars agree with Weber's definition,[7] and Englebert adds that through a social contract, the people give up certain rights for a collective good, in order to gain protection from a governing authority. This authority is seen as using force legitimately in enforcing rules, which protects the people.[8] The people within this territory therefore constitute a nation, as Tatah Mentan claims.[9]

Another critical component of Mentan's definition is the mention of international recognition. A territory is not a state until it is recognized by the international community as the sovereign of its territory. Thus, the state comes into being on a specific date when it is finally recognized.[10] Pierre Englebert agrees with this concept, adding that a state must have relations with other states, as well.[11] Consequently, by compiling the most fundamental components of different scholars' definitions, a state can be defined as a territory containing people who are governed by an authority, which has the ability to make rules. This authority, through social compliance, has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, which is used to enforce the rules implemented. This authority must be recognized by the international community as a state and it

Journal of Politics 69.3 (2007): 729. Print.

[6]Weber, Max, Peter Lassman, and Ronald Speirs. "The Profession and Vocation of Politics."*Weber: Political Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994. 310. Print.

[7] Herbst, Jeffrey. "War and the State in Africa." *International Security* 14.14 (1990): 117-39. Print.

[7]Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.

[7]Thies, Cameron G. 729.

[8] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.

[9] Mentan, Tatah.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 44.

must interact with other states.[12]

Stability and Instability

Stability is essential in order to maintain order within a state. Without stability, state apparatuses become weakened and cannot function properly. But what exactly is stability? Very broadly defined, stability refers to "the quality or state of something that is not easily changed or likely to change."[13] However, there are many different forms of stability, political stability being the most relevant in this case. In order to understand political stability, though, Claude Ake argues that it is imperative to understand what "the political" is. The political, beginning with political behavior, includes an act carried out by a citizen, which "affects the distribution of the power to make decisions for that society."[14] Both obedience to the laws and violation of the laws constitutes political behavior, according to Ake. Subsequently, the political is the effect of this behavior within an organized society. When citizens act predictably in an organized society, their behavior is considered a "role" and if it is political, it is a political role. In order to form a political structure, there must be a network of political roles.[15] Traditionally, political stability refers to the maintenance of power by leaders.[16] However, Ake contends that it is specifically, "the regularity of the flow of political exchanges. The more regular the flow of political exchanges, the more stability."[17] In short, it is a political environment that is predictable.[18]

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[12] Ibid.
[12] "War and the State in Africa."
[12] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.
[12] Mentan, Tatah. 22.
[12] Thies, Cameron G. 729.
[13] "Stability." *Merriam-Webster*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 5 Mar. 2014.
[14] Ake, Claude. "A Definition of Political Stability." *Comparative Politics* 7.2 (1975): 271. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Mar. 2014.
[15] Ibid. 271-2.
[16] Arriola, L. R. "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies* 42.10 (2009): 1339-362. *JSTOR*. Web. 5 Mar. 2014.
[17] Ake, Claude. 273.

Therefore, stability is a predictable political environment, in which leaders maintain power. Instability subsequently refers to the likelihood of government changes.[19]

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[18] Shepherd, Ben. *Resurgent Continent? Africa and the World: Political Stability: Crucial for Growth?* Working paper no. SU004. LSE Research Online, May 2012. Web. 8. 5 Mar. 2014.
[19] Alesina, Alberto, Sule Ozler, Nouriel Roubini, and Phillip Swagel. *Political Stability and Economic Growth*. Working paper no. 4173. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Resarch, 1992. Print. Journal of Economic Growth.

Chapter 3: Statistics

Introduction

In order to understand the specific indicators of healthy and unhealthy state apparatuses

and instability and stability, this section will elaborate on what these indicators mean, as well as

outline all relevant rankings and scores. The indices that will be used are the Fund for Peace's

Failed State Index, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, the Human

Development Index, the Worldwide Governance Indicators, and Freedom House's Freedom in

the World Report. The criteria for each index will be explained, and the data for both Gabon and

Congo Brazzaville will be presented.

Failed State Index

The goal of the Fund for Peace's Failed State Index is to serve as an early warning to the

international community of failing states. By studying the pressures resulting in failing states, the

organization hopes to help states address the problems they face. The areas of assessment include

twelve different categories which are scored by the organization's Conflict Assessment System

Tool (CAST).[20] Each indicator is scored on a scale of 1.0 to 10.0 and indicators are broken up

into three different categories: social, economic, and political and military. The first social

indicator: demographic pressures, includes a range of pressures such as natural disasters, disease,

malnutrition, food scarcity, etc. which pose challenges to the government's ability to protect

citizens. Refugees and IDPs is the second social indicator, which includes the pressures that

result from the displacement of the population. The third social indicator is group grievances and

this pertains to any tension or violence between groups, such as ethnic violence or sectarian

violence. The final social indicator is human flight and brain drain, which refers to the migration

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[20] The Methodology Behind the Index." *The Fund for Peace*. The Fund for Peace, n.d. Web. 1
Mar. 2014.

of people from the state - especially those that are educated. The first economic indicator is uneven economic development. This refers to any disparities in income distribution, such as slums. Poverty and economic decline is the second economic indicator and deals with inflation, unemployment, etc. For political and military indicators, the first indicator is state legitimacy. This is determined by looking at corruption, government effectiveness, level of democracy, etc. The next indicator, public services, is calculated by looking at the policing, literacy, infrastructure, etc. Human rights and rule of law is the third political and military indicator and looks at the civil liberties, political freedoms, as well as a number of other factors. Additionally, the third indicator determines the effectiveness of the security apparatus by looking at the number of military coups, rebel activity, internal conflict, etc. The fourth indicator, the rise of factionalized elites, examines the power struggles and political competition within a state. Finally, the last indicator looks at the external intervention, so any foreign presence within the state, whether this be through UN missions, peacekeeping operations, or foreign military intervention.[21] Now that the scoring of the Failed State Index has been outlined, Gabon and Congo Brazzaville's scores and ranking will be more easily understood.

Beginning with Gabon, the state is relatively high on the Index, ranking 99th out of 178 states, with a score of 72.9. This is a particularly good score for an African state, especially since many of Gabon's neighbors are much lower on the Index, including Congo Brazzaville. The individual breakdown of Gabon's scores shows that a number of indicators are not as much of an issue for the African state, as they are for its neighbors. Looking at the indicators, Gabon scores a 6.8 for mounting demographic pressures, a 5.6 for the massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons, a 3.3 in vengeance-seeking group grievance, a 5.5 chronic and sustained human flight, a 7.3 in uneven economic development, a 5.2 in poverty, sharp or severe

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[21] "The Indicators." *The Fund for Peace*. The Fund for Peace, n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2014.

economic decline, a 7.6 in legitimacy of the state, a 7.0 in progressive deterioration of public services, a 6.8 in violation of human rights and rule of law, a 5.4 in security apparatus, and a 7.1 in rise of factionalized elites

Congo Brazzaville, on the other hand, is relatively low on the 2013 Failed State Index, ranking 36th out of 178 states, with an overall score of 90.0. Looking at its individual indicators, Congo Brazzaville scores an 8.2 in mounting demographic pressures, an 8.0 in massive movement of refugees or internally displaced persons, a 6.0 in vengeance-seeking group grievance, an 8.2 chronic and sustained human flight, a 7.0 in uneven economic development, an 8.7 in poverty, sharp or severe economic decline, an 8.7 in legitimacy of the state, a 7.5 in progressive deterioration of public services, a 6.7 in violation of human rights and rule of law, a 6.7 in security apparatus, and an 8.2 in rise of factionalized elites.[22]

Corruption Perceptions Index

The Corruption Perceptions Index specifically looks at corruption within a state and "scores and ranks countries/territories based on how corrupt a state's public sector is perceived to be."[23]States' public sectors are scored on a scale of 0 to 100, with a 0 indicating that the state's public sector is perceived as highly corrupt and a 100 indicating that a state's public sector is seen as highly respectable. In order to determine these scores and rankings, the CPI pulls data from institutions which specialize in analyzing governments. Thus, this indicator specifically looks at the government, and not the nation as a whole. Specifically, according to the 2013 rankings, Gabon ranks 106th out of 175 states, with a score of 34. While it is far from an ideal score in relation to the rest of the international community, it is still a higher score than most other African states. Congo Brazzaville's rank for that same year is much higher than Gabon's. It

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[22] "The Failed States Index Rankings."
[23] "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013." *Corruption Perceptions Index 2013*. Transparency International, n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2014.

ranks 154th out of 175 states, scoring a 22. In addition to receiving an incredibly low score,

Congo Brazzaville's perceived corruption has actually increased since the previous year, as it

scored a 26 in 2012.[24]

Human Development Index

The Human Development Index is a report which compiles statistics on education, life

expectancy, and income, which is then used to rank states in terms of human development.

Education is

> Measured by the mean of years of schooling for adults aged 25 years and expected years
> of schooling for children of school entering age . . . life expectancy at birth . . . is
> calculated using a minimum value of 20 years and maximum value of 83.57 years . . .
> [and] for the wealth component, the goalpost for minimum income is $100 (PPP) and the
> maximum is $87,478 (PPP).[25]

The overall human development score a state receives ranges from 0 to 1.0, with a 0 being the

lowest human development score, and a 1.0 being the highest. For the 2012 HDI report,

beginning with Gabon, the state ranks 106th out of 208 states with a score of .683, which is

much higher than its neighbors, Equatorial Guinea which ranks 136th and Cameroon which

ranks 150th. Congo Brazzaville ranks 142nd out of 208 states, with a score of .534. This rank

places Congo Brazzaville below the Democratic Republic of Congo (which ranks 186th), the

Central African Republic (which ranks 180th), Cameroon, and slightly below Angola (which

ranks 148th), but significantly higher than Gabon.[26]

Worldwide Governance Indicators

The Worldwide Governance Indicators are a set of data that assess the perceived quality

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[24] "Corruption Perceptions Index: In detail." *Corruption Perceptions Index 2013*. Transparency
International, n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2014.
[25] "Human Development Reports." *UNDP*. United Nations Development Program, n.d. Web. 1
Mar. 2014.
[26] "Human Development Index and Its Components." *UNDP*. United Nations Development
Program, n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2014.

of governance, which are based on surveys conducted by survey institutes, NGOs, etc. There are

six indicators, the first being voice and accountability which is determined by citizens' ability to

participate in choosing their government. The second indicator is political stability and the

absence of violence or terrorism and this refers to the probability of the government being

overthrown by illegitimate means. The third is government effectiveness, which is determined by

the quality of public and civil services, as well as the quality of state policy. The fourth indicator

is regulatory quality and this includes the ability of the state to create and implement policy. The

next indicator, rule of law, refers to the obedience to the laws and the quality of the security

apparatus in enforcing these laws. Finally, the last indicator, control of corruption, refers to the

extent of which public officials use power for private gain. Each indicator is scored on a scale of

0 to 100, with 0 being the lowest possible score, and 100 being the highest. According to the

2012 report, Gabon scores a 24 in voice and accountability, a 57 in political stability and absence

of violence or terrorism, a 24 in government effectiveness, a 33 in regulatory quality, a 41 in rule

of law, and a 36 in control of corruption. Congo Brazzaville, on the other hand, scores a 15 in

voice and accountability, a 31 in political stability and absence of violence or terrorism, an 11 in

government effectiveness, an 8 in regulatory quality, a 13 in rule of law, and a 10 in control of

corruption.[27]

Freedom in the World Report

Freedom House's Freedom in the World Report, is an annual report that assesses the

political and civil rights of particular states. These assessments include a 60-point scale for civil

rights and a 40-point scale for political rights, which are then translated into a 7-point scale for

each category. A score of 1 is considered the most free and a score of 7 is considered the least

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[27] "Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2013 Update." *Worldwide Governance Indicators*. The
World Bank, n.d. Web. 20 Feb. 2014.

free. Furthermore, the scores are broken down into the following components: freedom of

assembly, adequate system of rule of law, freedom to participate in the political process, social

and economic freedom, accountable officials, free elections, and freedom of expression.[28]

According to the 2013 report, Gabon was considered "not free", as it scored a 5.5 freedom rating,

a 5.0 civil liberties rating, and a 6.0 political rights rating.[29] Congo Brazzaville received a

similar, "not free" rating and identical scores to Gabon, with a 5.5 freedom rating, a 5.0 civil

liberties rating, and a 6.0 political rights rating.[30]

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[28] "Freedom in the World: Aggregate and Subcategory Scores." *Freedom House*. N.p., n.d. Web.
1 Mar. 2014.
[29] "Gabon." *Freedom House*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Oct. 2013.
[30] "Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)." *Freedom House*. N.p., n.d. Web. 15 Oct. 2013.

Chapter 4: Literature Review

Introduction

What does it mean to be a state in the African state system? With most weak states in the world located in Africa, it is not surprising that African statehood is a highly discussed phenomenon among many scholars. In order to understand why African states face so many problems today, it is critical to refer back to the definitions of the state and the ideal state. After observing the definitions of the state and ideal state in the first chapter and comparing these definitions to African states, it becomes evident that African states deviate from these traditional definitions. From these differences, conclusions can be drawn as to why some states face more problems than others. Since the state has been broadly defined, laying the foundation for African statehood, it is then critical to look at the pre-colonial institutions in place in Africa. Recognizing the complex political systems that were in place before colonization highlights the dismembering effect colonialism had on pre-colonial Africa.

Comparing the ways in which European and African states were created is also helpful in pinpointing the adverse effects of colonialism because African states were created less efficiently than European states. But state creation was not the only inhibitor to African state development. There were many more policies and actions conducted by the colonizers which hindered development. Therefore, looking at these colonial policies will help highlight the detrimental effects upon African society during colonial occupation. Most scholars agree that colonial influence is to blame for the weakness that African states suffer from today, as a result of the type of rule used, the colonizers' ability to disrupt traditional systems, and the introduction of capitalism. Even after colonizers left the continent, they still impacted Africa's development through globalization and foreign aid. Many scholars have focused on the perilous situations still

existing in former French colonies. By looking at that the policies and strategies implemented by the French colonizers, it is clear that these actions were pivotal in producing such dismal conditions in these former French colonies.

Institutions in Pre-Colonial Africa

Historically, Africa has always been perceived as a backwards, underdeveloped continent; however, this is far from the truth. Colonists saw Africa as a stateless, uncivilized, and wild frontier that desperately needed European intervention. People today still believe that Africa was a simple society pre-colonialism. Yet, this was not the case. Although, prior to colonization, one third of Africans lived in decentralized or stateless societies,[31] (due to low population density and large geographic space),[32] viable forms of government existed, including kingdoms and empires. Political organizations emerged in the form of a confederation of villages. These communities of villages typically had institutions and hierarchies, but lacked official boundaries. Power was centralized, but did not extend much further beyond the heart of the community. Additionally, conflict between villages was rare due to the abundance of land - if people could not coexist with opponents, they could simply relocate to another area of land without difficulty.[33] There were even similarities between pre-colonial African and European kingdoms because powers were not separated and the king and his men carried out all governmental functions - executive, judicial, and legislative.[34] Moreover, centralized authority was not necessary for a sophisticated political system. In the case of the Igbo, they lacked a centralized authority. They lived in villages which had no connection to surrounding villages, yet they still had a political system in place, through a headman and a council of elders. The Igbos'

[31] Mentan, Tatah. 22.
[32] Thomson, Alex. *An Introduction to African Politics*. London: Routledge, 2000. 9. Print.
[33] Ibid. 9-11.
[34] Mentan, Tatah. 22.

sophisticated political system existed in the absence of a centralized authority, thereby

reaffirming the complexity of precolonial Africa in the absence of a centralized political

system.[35]

Furthermore, African society was built upon the notion of kinship. Through the

worshipping of ancestors, Africans established strong social bonds with their extended family.

Typically, these families had a "head" that ensured that members obeyed the traditions of the

African tribe. These structures provided not only traditional customs; they ensured the security

and protection of all members. This traditional system in Africa has posed many challenges to

the modern development of Africa, as many African still put their traditional communities before

their state.[36]

The Emergence of the African State System

Although Africa was comprised of numerous complex political systems, European

powers disregarded these institutions and came to Africa to replicate the states they had created

in Europe. In effect, however, they destroyed the complex societies that pre-colonial Africa had

already established. This created a troubling phenomenon: African states could not emulate the

state creation that Europe had experienced before them. Many scholars agree that the way in

which these states were built was entirely different, explaining the gaps in development between

the two continents.

As explained by Jeffrey Herbst, European states were created from war, while African

states were not. As a result of war, states were able to more efficiently collect revenue and states

that did not raise sufficient revenue for war perished."[37] Therefore, state survival depended upon

revenue collection. This allowed the state to build its army and provide greater protection, as

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[35] Mentan, Tatah. 22-23.

[36] Thomson, Alex. 11.

[37] "War and the State in Africa." 120.

well as develop institutionally, in order to provide goods and services to its citizens. This critical development improved state functions, enabling its people to unify under one authority. War allowed "for the establishment and extension of political authority over subject people and foreign territory, and for the organization, maintenance, and reinforcement of that authority."[38] The state gained social control and was able to assert its power in a more effective manner. Thus, Herbst concludes that there is a correlation between nationalism and a state's ability to extract. He argues that with the ubiquity of war, the people felt threatened by external threats and they subsequently paid more money to the state. In addition, a strong sense of nationalism emerged as the people unified in pursuit of common goals. Substantial external threats forced the people to associate with the state.[39] External threats are essential to state formation, as the state is the result of "efficient banditry" according to Mancur Olson and Pierre Englebert. Similar to Thomas Hobbes' state of nature, bandits begin to pilfer villages, but when these bandits realize that they can get more from these villages, they decide to offer protection to villages at a price. This arrangement "give[s] them . . . a sufficient time horizon by continuing to invest in violence and protecting themselves and their subjects from other roving bandits."[40] Bandits' racketeering is ultimately the source of the state, as it capitalizes on external threats to collect revenue from people seeking protection.[41] European states were also incredibly successful in shifting social control from local feudal leaders to the state. As Joel Midgal mentions, once a centralized government formed as a result of war, the state gained predominance over local leaders, allowing for uniform control. There were no competing authorities vying for power over the people. Social control resulted in complete infrastructural power for the state, making it sovereign. This

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[38] Ibid. 121.
[39] Ibid. 120-2.
[40] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 44.
[41] Ibid.

subsequently produced efficient governance.[42]

African states, on the other hand, were not forged through blood and iron. Rather, their borders were drawn by colonizers, who sought to extract as much wealth from the continent as possible. According to Mentan, these states were not "African" because they were created by colonizers. They were not created to be independent or efficient - their sole purpose was to service the exploitative needs of their colonizers.[43] In effect, African states were rendered incapable of collecting sufficient revenue from taxation, which prevented them from establishing adequate governmental functions and services. These states additionally lacked any national identity, resulting in a disconnected population. Therefore, a unified population and extractive capabilities only result from war. Without crisis, it is incredibly difficult to reform state structures and to increase nationalism.[44] Even after the borders were drawn by the colonizers hundreds of years ago, there has been no conflict or border change, leaving African states in a state of perpetual weakness. There are no external threats to their existence, so unlike European state-building, weak states do not disappear.[45]

Another issue African states face is the competition for power amongst local leaders. As Midgal notes, Feudalism was effectively dismantled as European states were created, preventing any competition between the state and local leaders for power. According to Migdal, "social control rests on the organizational ability to deliver key components for individuals' strategies of

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[42] Migdal, Joel S.
[43] Niemann, Michael. "War Making and State Making in Central Africa." *Africa Today* 53.3 (2007): 20-39. Print.
[43]Mentan, Tatah.
[43]"War and the State in Africa."
[44] Herbst, Jeffrey. "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa."*International Organization* 43.4 (1989): 673-92. Print.
[45] Ibid.

survival."[46] The components of social control are compliance, participation, and legitimation. Without these, an official has no predominance. This subsequently results in a struggle for this control in Africa because many African states sought to undermine local leaders' power. In Senegal, state officials constantly denounce the clan, claiming that it is an evil to the state. However, it continues to grow stronger, which has resulted in armed struggle between the state and the clan in order to gain predominance. Without social control, the state is not legitimized and unable to assert power over its people and therefore, cannot function properly.[47]

So what are scholars to make of Africa's future? Given the problems that African states face, Herbst speculates that African leaders could potentially look to the success of European state formation as a justification for the use of warfare to create stronger states. Although many African states find the current, stable state system more attractive than invading other territories, Uganda was invaded by Tanzania in order to oust Idi Amin, showing that "even strong proponents of African norms can be driven to interstate conflict if they believe that the costs of not acting are high enough."[48] Rather than remain perpetually weak, leaders may become so desperate to alleviate poor conditions that they would engage in war in order to build up the state.[49]

While most scholars agree with Herbst's comparison between European and African state formation, Cameron Thies contends that war does not affect the extractive capacity of a state. He believes that access to foreign aid and international credit markets deters states from using war as a source of revenue collection. These avenues to funds were not available to early modern Europe as they are to Africa presently. Thus, war is not required for revenue collection as it was

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[46] Migdal, Joel S. 27
[47] Ibid. 28-32.
[48] "War and the State in Africa." 136.
[49] Ibid. 122-136.

for Europe in the 17th century. He subsequently dismisses Herbst's conjecture that African leaders will resort to war to forge stronger states.[50] Time will only tell what the future holds for African states. One thing is for certain, though; these weak states are not going anywhere anytime soon.

Colonial Africa and Western Rule: Institutions, Policies, and Actions

Before colonial powers even arrived in Africa, they marked their territory. In 1885, the colonial powers met at the Berlin Conference to discuss the demarcation of Africa, more commonly called by scholars as the scramble for Africa. At the conference, colonial powers carved up the continent with the intent of exploiting its lands for its abundant resources.[51] The conference allowed the western world to negotiate which territories they would have control over, and Herbst makes the argument that this conference was effective in preventing war between the European powers in their quest for colonial expansion. They drew up the boundaries topographically, using some natural boundaries to divide territories,[52] with 44% of boundaries containing straight lines.[53] The "ruler straight" borders left Africa significantly disadvantaged economically and demographically, as some states were left with virtually no natural resources and others were grouped with a myriad of other ethnic groups. Moreover, the Somali people found themselves divided between four different modern African states, including, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. This has subsequently caused unrest among the Somali people and a desire to unite. Furthermore, 14 states are landlocked, posing significant problems for trade. Consequently, colonialism "dehumanized" African boundaries and resulted in a number of

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[50] Thies, Cameron G. 729.
[51] Mentan, Tatah.
[52] "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa."
[53] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.

issues plaguing the continent.[54]

Once the colonists landed in Africa after dividing the continent, most pre-existing social and political structures were destroyed. As Tatah Mentan states, Africans had their own institutions in place one day, and the next they were forced into a new system that they had not agreed to be a part of.[55] The "African state" was a European invention, and subsequently bore no resemblance to Africa. These states had minimal infrastructure and institutions in place, as this was "colonialism on the cheap." Colonial powers were not looking to develop Africa; rather, they were looking to extract its natural resources to accumulate greater wealth. Thus, there was no planning for African states' political or economic development, resulting in weak state capacity.[56] The power structure of the state either modeled a direct or indirect form of rule. Direct rule required the colonizing state to establish a centralized government within the African state, to assert power over the population. Colonizers that used direct rule often had little leeway in making their own decisions. Most decisions were made in the colonial state and then trickled down to the colonial administrators. In many cases, countries under direct rule would put African elites in power - not established leaders. This subsequently resulted in the rise of the African elite class because they were delegated with the task of maintaining colonial power over the population.[57] Indirect rule, on the other hand, allowed colonial powers to put local (natural) leaders in power, and they were given much more freedom in governing their colonies than colonizers governing under direct rule.[58] Colonists' policies toward land tenure also had the potential to abolish these traditional, pre-colonial structures. Land tenure refers to the relationship between people and the land. The rules of this policy determine how this land will

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[54] Thomson, Alex. 14-6.
[55] Mentan, Tatah. 23.
[56] Thomson, Alex. 15-6.
[57] Ibid. 17.
[58] Migdal, Joel S.

be allocated, and traditionally, local African leaders were in charge of deciding who was to receive what land, for what, etc.[59]

Depending on whether colonizers were able to effectively shift land tenure to privatized or state ownership of land, colonizers could undermine the power of local chiefs and leaders in charge. Some colonizers were successful in disrupting this pre-colonial structure; however, some colonizers' policies were ineffective in eliminating it.[60]

Postcolonial African States

Once the colonizers left Africa, the expectations for development of African states following independence were high. However, post-colonial Africa had little chance of emulating the success of European and North American development given the long-lasting effects of colonialism. The West was hopeful that African states had the potential to develop into liberal democracies, but this proved difficult, as colonial governments were highly authoritarian and bureaucratic. Unfortunately, "the political culture that these realities underpinned was hardly an appropriate midwife to oversee the birth of new liberal democratic states."[61] The lingering memories of past colonial institutions did not create ideal conditions for democracy in Africa.[62] Furthermore, African states' desire to "emulate" Europe was and still is worrisome. Many scholars argue that the most severe consequence of colonialism in Africa is the imported nature of the European state-system. The nation state has become the source of much turmoil for Africa.[63] Given the differences between European state-building and African state-building,[64] it

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[59] "WHAT IS LAND TENURE." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 1 Mar. 2014.
[60] *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. 190-3.
[61] Thomson, Alex. 21.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.
[64] "War and the State in Africa."

was problematic to assume that a universal state system would work for both continents.[65] This is because Africa did not and still does not fit into the North American and European mold. Africa poses different challenges to state-building than Europe and North America did because there is low population density, large geographical space, and a high level of ethnic and linguistic fractionalization in Africa that Europe and North America does not have.[66] The state system, coupled with slavery and colonialism, contributed to the deterioration of institutions in pre-colonial African and the inability of Africa to develop post-independence.[67] Therefore, the implementation of the state-system did not work in Africa.

Furthermore, the physical drawing of the borders has posed significant problems within the continent. Most scholars agree that the European powers arbitrarily drew the boundaries for African states, leading to many ethnic tensions and conflicts. Yet, Herbst argued that drawing the boundaries based on Africa's topography was the least likely way to cause conflict. Africa is so diverse ethnically and demographically, natural boundaries were the best way to demarcate the continent. He also contended that no boundaries have been redrawn since the Berlin Conference, reaffirming the legitimacy of these borders. According to Herbst, there was simply no better way to draw the boundaries in Africa, and the colonists did the best they could at the time.[68] Englebert agrees with Herbst to a certain extent. He contends that there were certain cases, in which the African boundaries were negotiated through treaties with local African chiefs. However, he asserts that this was likely the case with more politically-centralized governmental systems. While there were some exceptions to the arbitrary argument, Englebert certainly agrees

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[65] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.
[66] "War and the State in Africa."
[67] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 50.
[68] "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa." 683.

that for the most part, African boundaries were not drawn logically.[69] Even Herbst would agree

with most scholars because eleven years after publishing "The Creation and Maintenance of

National Boundaries in Africa," Herbst changes his view of African boundaries in his book titled

States and Power in Africa by arguing that the drawing of the boundaries was in fact arbitrary

(although he never addresses this shift in viewpoint). African boundaries did not encourage

effective states.[70]

This view of African borders is shared by most scholars. The capricious manner in which

the continent was divided paid no respect to preexisting political and social groupings.[71] Each

African state is comprised of a myriad of people who differ ethnically, culturally, etc. and do not

speak the same language.[72] Most borders drawn by the colonial powers "ran through existing

political and social units, resulting in many communities finding themselves split between

different states . . . and caged with new ones."[73] Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja similarly argues that

ethnic and minority conflicts are the greatest challenge to African state-building.[74] Due to these

arbitrary borders, many Africans have negative sentiments toward their states, resulting in

questions of nationality.[75] Moreover, African traditionalism has caused many Africans to view

the community as more important than the state.[76] The disconnect between Africans and their

state has, in effect, caused many problems for state building, as the state must be tied to its

people in order to maintain control over its territory. Without the support of the people, the state

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[69] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 54.
[70] *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. 25.
[71] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 54.
[72] Boahen, Adu. *African Perspectives on Colonialism*. Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. 96. Print.
[73] Thomson, Alex. 15.
[74] Nzongola-Ntalaja, Georges. *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Africa: Essays in Contemporary Politics*. London: Institute for African Alternatives, 1987. Print.
[75] Mentan, Tatah.
[76] Thomson, Alex.

cannot project power, and therefore cannot function properly.[77]

      While it is clear that the demarcation of Africa is to blame for many problems within the continent, these boundaries cannot be changed. Boundary change would throw Africa in complete disarray; therefore, in order to prevent the collapse of African states, an organization dedicated to upholding the integrity of boundaries needed to be created.[78] The Organization of African Unity does just that - it protects African boundaries by prohibiting changes to them. Most scholars agree that the OAU has successfully inhibited interstate conflict; however, Englebert highlights an interesting statistic. While there have been been few border conflicts in Africa, African states have been involved in approximately 57% of territorial dispute cases which were heard by the International Court of Justice. Yet, Africa's borders only constitute 33% of borders throughout the world. Therefore, the more arbitrary the border, the more likely international conflict is to occur.[79] Colonial powers never intended to create strong, independent states in Africa. Through the various policies and actions taken by colonizers, African state structures were completely deformed in order to service the needs of the colonizers. And these actions not only disrupted African infrastructure during colonization – these decisions made by colonizers are still producing serious consequences for African statehood.

      Given these problems, it is apparent that the colonial powers did not think clearly about the future of African states. They were not interested in replicating the success of Europe and North America in Africa; states were simply structured to fulfill their needs. This disregard for African society has in effect, negatively impacted African state formation and development.[80] There was no plan to develop African states and create sustainable infrastructure to ensure strong

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[77] Mentan, Tatah.
[78] Thies, Cameron G. 718.
[79] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 54.
[80] Ravenhill, John. "Redrawing the Map of Africa." *The Precarious Balance: State and Society in Africa*. Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1988. 282-283. Print.

state apparatuses. With the end of colonialism near, "most colonial governments attempted to 'Africanize' their civil service. As a consequence, the numbers of this bureaucratic class swelled, as did the numbers of professionals employed by the state."[81] This has resulted in the unprecedented growth of state bureaucracies in Africa, as the state has become the largest employer of citizens and has additionally led to a connection between political office and personal wealth. Political officials in Africa have become notorious for corruption, as the state is the only means of accumulating wealth (from natural resource revenue) in these impoverished societies. Therefore, officials use the state's revenues as a personal bank account. Once the colonizers left and African states gained independence, the prospect of a developed, liberalized democracy was grim. It would prove difficult for states with such a long history of authoritarian rule, to break from this system, as most African states, post-independence shifted to one-party states.[82] Colonial characteristics remained existent within African society even after the colonists had left the continent.

Once the colonizers left Africa after states gained independence, political entities that were established by the colonizers became "illegitimate" in the eyes of Africans. The effects of direct rule and indirect rule can be attributed to this dilemma. With direct rule, the local elites put in power were often distrusted by the population because they lacked legitimacy.[83] After the colonists left, these elites remained in power. However, strong public resentment grew against those put in power. In states where indirect rule was employed, the colonizers put traditional leaders in power, reinforcing their authority, and thus making it difficult for states to gain

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[81] Thomson, Alex. 17.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Mizuno, Nobuhiro, and Ryosuke Okazawa. "Colonial Experience and Postcolonial Underdevelopment in Africa." *Public Choice* 141.3-4 (2009): 408. Print.

predominance once the colonizers left.[84] Thus many African elites that came to power at the hand of the colonizers were alienated,[85] and traditional leaders were legitimized. This shift in who was recognized by the African people as the legitimate power has hindered states' ability to function properly. States are unable to provide basic goods and services to their people because they are struggling to displace these organizations that compromise their authority. Without the power to assert control over their people, states cannot control their populations, leading to further conflict. Herbst adds that if traditional leaders begin to look like the state, they lose legitimacy; therefore, there is a disconnect between the state and the people.[86] Migdal associates African states' struggle for social control with the disruption of political and social institutions by colonizers. Land tenure laws also worked to disrupt African infrastructure because colonizers did one of two things: either they changed land tenure policies to weaken traditional leaders' power, or they changed nothing. If a colonial power changed the land tenure laws then the traditional leaders would become weaker as a result, and then once states gained independence, power would shift back to the traditional leaders and states would lack social control. If a colonial power did not change the land tenure laws, the traditional leaders would remain powerful, and after independence, the central state would still lack social control. Traditional leaders were able to retain power if land tenure laws were not disrupted because they dictated who was given access to land.[87] Thus, both colonial policies have subsequently left African states in a position of weakness with regard to social control.

As states gained independence during the early 1960s, most of these governments adopted socialist outlooks, in an effort to develop the state and reduce poverty. Most of these

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[84] Migdal, Joel S.
[85] Ibid.
[86] *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control.* 194.
[87] Ibid. 193.

states did not align with the Soviet Union or other Eastern European socialist states; however, there were a few, such as Congo Brazzaville, that did align with these socialist states. With the exception of these few states, most African states adopted what became known as "African Socialism." This form of socialism emphasized traditional African values, arguing against private ownership on the grounds that there was no land ownership before the colonial era; therefore, it must be done away with in order to develop. The framework for this political structure

> Cast the state in a central role not only politically, but also economically and socially. The state would be the engine of development . . . and the state itself embarked on grand development projects of infrastructure and industrialization.[88]

African leaders had high hopes for this system. They truly believed that this would end the developmental problems which Africa faced, but unfortunately socialism was not the answer. Socialism did not work in Africa for a number of reasons, the main being that it could never survive given its interaction with the international economy. The one thing that would emerge, however, after the shift from socialism, was the one-party system.[89]

While many states shifted socialist, post-independence, few states actually liberalized their economies. Gabon is among the minority of African states which encouraged private enterprises after becoming independent. Alex Thomson is quick to say, however, that these economies were certainly far from "laissez-faire." The economy was not simply left up to the free market because there was still, to a certain extent, state involvement in the economy. But capitalism was unsuccessful in bringing about the development desired by all.[90] Capitalism ultimately broke down African states because traditional networks were eliminated by the opening of the economy. States, in effect, deteriorated, which enabled non-state actors to gain

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[88] Thomson, Alex. 39.
[89] Ibid. 38-9.
[90] Ibid. 44-5.

power.[91] States had to eventually "succumb to the demands of international financial institutions."[92] Urbanization also contributed to state deterioration because populations were abandoning villages and rural areas in order to migrate to the cities. Not only did these rural areas become deserted, agricultural production in turn suffered. Currently, more than a third of Africa's 1 billion population lives in cities.[93] Moreover, cities created dangerous spaces and these ungoverned spaces lacked governmental services as poverty increased. With globalization and urbanization, the rich in Africa got richer, as the poor got poorer. As conditions worsen, disgruntled groups seeking grievances rise up and threaten national security.[94]

With the fall of socialism, states began to adopt one-party systems in an effort to consolidate power. Personal rule soon resulted from these one-party states, as leaders centralized all political activity. All power was concentrated to the executive, making the President dangerously powerful. Moreover, leaders sought to eliminate all opposition by limiting opportunities for assembly and organized expression. Co-option was another method that leaders used in order to suppress opponents, which involved incorporating them into the state system so that their grievances dissipated. Many states in Africa began to be plagued by one-party rule, including Ghana, the Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and many more. The defense of this system was simple: extreme consolidation of power was the only way to maintain stability within a state, and ensure that there be no political upheaval, given the ethnically divided nature of many states. According to leaders, "Africans would mobilize along ethnic lines, and political competition of

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[91] Clunan, Anne L., and Harold A. Trinkunas. *Ungoverned Spaces: Alternatives to State Authority in an Era of Softened Sovereignty*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2010. Print.
[92] Thomson, Alex. 45.
[93] "Growth Areas." *The Economist*. The Economist Newspaper, 13 Dec. 2010. Web. 5 Mar. 2014.
[94] Ibid. 46-7.

this nature would simply pull the nation apart."[95] Stability was threatened by coups, schisms, factionalism, etc. therefore, strong leadership and a concentration of power was essential in suppressing these threats. The problem arose, however, that these "strong leaders" abused their virtually unchecked power. Most leaders used the state revenues as their own bank account, since they had control of the state. They then distributed this wealth to their networks (friends, relatives, clients, etc.) in exchange for loyalty, which helps them maintain their power. This system, as Thomson notes, was inefficient because there was no accountability of officials, which allowed states to deteriorate.[96]

When colonizers finally left Africa, Mentan contends that African states began to regain normalcy. That was until the West pressured African states to democratize in the 1990s.

Beginning with Benin in 1989, democracy was officially introduced in Africa. This push for democracy was initiated by the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern European States, as "Africans demanded multiparty political systems, expanded civil liberties, accountable political officials, and free elections."[97] At first, democracy was widely accepted by African states, as this seemed to be the solution to all of their problems. Most political leaders played along with the this democratization effort and by 1997, almost all sub-Saharan African states held democratic elections (36 out of 48). However, these elections did not bring about the civil liberties and freedoms the West and Africans had envisioned, as most incumbents were able to recapture their positions due to their extensive resources. Thus, democracy proved fruitless in opening up the African state. Even after these elections, most states remain "multi-party" states through periodic elections, but these elections are far from free. Leaders used these elections to

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[95] Ibid. 113.
[96] Ibid. 111-9.
[97] Gordon, April A., and Donald L. Gordon. *Understanding Contemporary Africa*. Boulder: L. Rienner, 1996. 57. Print.

cover up the reality of their one-party state because most elections are marred by fraud, low-voter turnout, and voter intimidation. Therefore, many scholars agree that the legacy of colonial authoritarianism still persists in Africa today, despite the democratization of African states.[98]

Africa was forced to transition to democracy, if it did not, then foreign aid would be cut. But democracy did little good for African states because more problems emerged than were solved.[99] Given these problems, most scholars agree that the state system does not fit Africa, as there is no sense of nationality among Africans. The borders drawn have created serious ethnic conflict and tensions among groups that do not wish to be a part of the same collective state. And the struggle for power between the state and traditional leaders continues to pose problems to state control over its territory. Thus, colonialism not only disrupted the quality of African statehood during the period of ruling, it has impeded African states today in achieving the success that so many had hoped for after their independence.

African State Autonomy

Although African states finally gained their independence throughout the 20th century, many scholars still wonder whether African states are truly autonomous. Globalization, they claim, has prevented states from becoming autonomous from the developed world. Foreign aid has certainly created dependency among African states because it has become essential for state survival.[100]According to Jackson and Rothberg, however, foreign aid and non-interference in their affairs, actually inhibits state building, but allows for a higher degree of autonomy.[101] African states can replicate, as Englebert calls it, the "colonial blueprint," which enables them to rule without pressure from the international community. They can subsequently assert their

[98] Ibid. 57-59.
[99] Mentan, Tatah.
[100] "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa."
[101] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 52.
[101]*States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. 52.

power however they choose, while maintaining their weakness.[102] So while some scholars

believe that African states are autonomous because of foreign aid, this assistance allows them to

survive in a state of perpetual weakness.[103] They will never disappear as long as they are entitled

to foreign aid.

African State Weakness

Given the severe consequences of colonialism on African statehood, it is no surprise that

many of these states are incredibly weak. They are weak in the sense that they are unable to

provide basic services to their people, they cannot implement policies, and they have no social

control. This fragmented social contributes to African states' weakness because without

legitimacy, the state has no authority or control over its people.[104] The power the state maintains

is far from absolute.[105] In certain cases, African states even resorted to one party politics in a

desperate attempt to compensate for their weakness.[106] In addition, most scholars note that unlike

European states during state formation, weak states do not disappear. They settle into "nooks and

crannies"[107] of the international system, remaining perpetually weak, without being punished for

their military weakness.[108] Yet, it is important to note that state weakness does not guarantee

civil society to collapse. In the case of Ugandan dairy farmers, after the state deteriorated and no

longer provided subsidies to local dairy farmers, they turned to non-state actors for social action.

Even without the state, dairy farmers will able to maintain profits.[109] Thus, there are still

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[102] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn. 52.
[103] "The Creation and Maintenance of National Boundaries in Africa."
[104] Migdal, Joel S.
[104] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.
[105] Clunan, Anne L., and Harold A. Trinkunas.
[106] *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. 176.
[107] Migdal, Joel S.
[108] Englebert, Pierre, and Kevin C. Dunn.
[108] "War and the State in Africa."
[109] Harbeson, John W., Donald S. Rothchild, and Naomi Chazan. "Strategies of Accumulation

opportunities for the population to overcome state weakness, and in the case of the dairy farmers, avoid poverty.

French-African Colonies

While it is clear that state weakness is widespread throughout Africa, former French colonies in particular, suffer from state incapacities. This can be attributed to the manner in which France disrupted the African societies it colonized. First, Herbst notes that while most African boundaries were arbitrarily drawn, French colonial borders were particularly arbitrary. They were especially unconducive to building capable states.[110] France also adopted the method of ruling its colonies directly, by putting elites with no authoritative legitimacy in power. This resulted in tensions between the ruling elite and the rest of the population, and eventually after gaining independence these elites remained in power. Because these "illegitimate" elites came to hold power through the state, the population turned to traditional leaders whom they trusted. Thus by empowering a politically an unestablished group of elites, French colonizers created tensions among the state and its people, rendering the state inefficient in controlling its population. This was seen in the case of Senegal, as the Senegalese clan continually gained power and challenged state authority, even after being denounced by the state.[111] The state had no social control over its people, as it was competing for authority with more trusted local leaders.

In addition to establishing systems which produced little state social control during colonialism, France was also ineffective in disrupting the pre-colonial system of land tenure. Although France created many laws which sought to undermine land tenure policies, they were

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and Civil Society in Uganda: How Dairy Farmers Responded to a Weakened State."*Civil Society and the State in Africa*. Boulder: L. Rienner, 1994. N. pag. 106-119. Print.
[110] *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*. 176-9.
[111] Ibid. 176.

unsuccessful in producing the necessary changes. Again, in Senegal, France was unable to disrupt these policies, which resulted in the maintenance of power of the Senegalese clan, over the state. It believed that title and registration systems, as Herbst notes, would cause private ownership - dismembering the customary system. However, this proved ineffective, as traditional leaders maintained control over the land.[112] Due to these factors, many scholars argue that former French colonies are much weaker than former British colonies. In particular, R. M. Grier discovered that former French colonies have a significantly lower economic performance than former British colonies because of low education levels, post-colonialism.[113] Therefore, it is clear that France deployed strategies which have helped contribute to the weakness and instability that these states experience to this day. And former French colonies are particularly less stable than other states in Africa.

This fact is particularly interesting and raises many questions about the practices of French colonialism. In order to better understand what French colonialism did to African states, a case study was developed by choosing two former French colonies in Africa. These states would need to bear many similarities, but be clearly distinct in their state capacity and stability. This resulted in the selection of Congo Brazzaville and Gabon. The first case study will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[112] Ibid. 191-3.
[113] Grier, R. M. "Colonial Legacies and Economic Growth." *Public Choice*. 1999. 98. Print.

Chapter 5: Gabon

Introduction

Revered for being one of the most stable states in Sub-Saharan Africa, Gabon's maintenance of security in the otherwise unstable part of the world remains a puzzle to scholars. While its neighbors struggle to resolve interstate and intrastate conflicts, Gabon appears to the world as a somewhat healthy African state. Its relatively low ranking on the 2013 Failed State Index, signals its superior statehood to its neighbors, with Guinea ranking 14th, Cameroon 27th, and Congo Brazzaville 36th.[114] Thus, while its neighbors suffer from all of the factors which contribute to a higher score on the index, Gabon relatively speaking does not. The quality of statehood appears to be much higher than its African counterparts, even though they are all located in the same geographic region, and boast impressive natural resource reserves. Gabon's stability raises the question as to how it has been able to maintain security in such a conflict-ridden region and if the stability is a result of a healthy state apparatus. By looking at the history of Gabon, its economy, and politics, Gabon's maintenance of stability will become clear.

Geography and Demography

Gabon is located in Central Africa, bordering Congo Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and the Atlantic Ocean. Its area totals 267,667 sq. km, making it a little bit smaller than the state of Colorado. While the area is quite large (77th in the world), its population is disproportionately small.[115] The total Gabonese population was a little over 1.5 million in 2011, however, the population density is among the lowest in the world; there were approximately 5.7 people per square kilometer in 2011.[116] Despite its low population and population density, Gabon houses over 40 different ethnic groups. The major ethnic group, the Fang, amount to 34% of the

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[114] "The Failed States Index Rankings."

[115] "Africa: Gabon." *The World Fact Book*. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 1 Jan. 2014.

[116] "Gabon." *UN Data*. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 10 Jan. 2014.

population, the second largest group is Bapounou totaling 27%, next is M'Bete at 14%, Bandjabi at 11%, Bakota at 6%, and Myene at 5%.[117] Most of the population is predominantly Christian (between 55% and 75%) and less than one percent of the population is Muslim.[118] Gabon has one of the highest incomes per capita in Africa; it was approximately $5,469 in 2004.[119] Its GDP, one of the highest in Africa, amounted to $18.66 billion in 2012.[120]

These various demographic and geographic realities in Gabon are coupled with an abundant supply of natural resources as well. The resources that have been discovered in Gabon are petroleum, natural gas, niobium, uranium, gold, iron ore, hydropower, timber, diamond, and manganese.[121] Thus, the small population, ethnic fractionalization, and natural resources have contributed to an interesting state dynamic in Gabon. While many African states have similar characteristics, many of these states have been unsuccessful in maintaining stability. Gabon, on the other hand has become a rare exception to the otherwise unstable African region.

Pre Colonialism

There is little information on the early civilizations inhabiting Gabon; however, there is significant evidence of the presence of Bantu ethnic groups as early as the 14th century. When the Bantu ethnic groups first moved to this region of Africa, they pushed the pygmies out to the jungles and took over the main land. Social order during this time was an important aspect of Gabonese society. Tribal leaders made decisions for tribes and legitimately held the power.[122] Portuguese colonists then settled on the land, marking the beginning of the slave trade era in

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[117] "Gabon." *Nations Online*. N.p., n.d. Web. 14 Jan. 2014.
[118] "Africa: Gabon." *The World Fact Book.*
[119] *Gabon Profile*. Cambridge: Walden, 2006. *Ebrary.com*. Apr. 2006. Web. 28 Oct. 2013.
[120] "Africa: Gabon." *The World Fact Book.*
[121] Ibid.
[122] Migdal, Joel S.

Gabon in the 15th century.[123] By the 18th century, the Orungu Kingdom arose. The Kingdom was incredibly successful in trading with surrounding kingdoms and European traders, and it traded a number of goods, including slaves. Gabon became the slave trading hub in Africa, with European colonists using its port frequently to acquire slaves. This resulted in increasing power and wealth for the ruling Orungu,[124] while simultaneously depopulating the region.[125] It was not until the arrival of French colonists that the prosperous slave trade was halted.[126]

Colonialism

After Gabonese coastal chiefs signed treaties with the French in 1839 and 1841, Gabon officially became a French colony. However, the territory was not called Gabon initially by the French. When it became a French colony, it was lumped with what are now Congo Brazzaville and the Central African Republic, and the territory was called the "French Congo" beginning in 1859. In 1886, the two territories were demarcated into Gabon and Middle-Congo, but this soon changed in 1910 when the territories were once again combined with each other as well as Chad and Oubangui-Char to make French Equatorial Africa.[127] For the purpose of clarity, only the name Gabon will be used to refer to the territory.

France asserted its dominance in Gabon early in its role as the colonizing power. By deploying direct rule, all political decisions were made in Paris,[128] and trickled down to French officials in Gabon. However, France faced difficulties in consolidating power, as it was

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[123] "Gabon: History." *Global Edge*. Michigan State University, n.d. Web. 15 Jan. 2014.
[124] Appiah, Anthony, and Henry Louis Gates.
[125] Saint-Paul, Marc Aicardi De. *Gabon: The Development of a Nation*. London: Routledge, 1989. 7. Print.
[126] Appiah, Anthony, and Henry Louis Gates. *Encyclopedia of Africa*. New York, NY: Oxford Univ., 2010. *Google Books*. Google, 1 Sept. 2009. Web. 10 Jan. 2014. 278.
[127] Saint-Paul, Marc Aicardi De. 10-13.
[128] Hilling, D. "The Changing Economy of Gabon: Developments in a New African Republic."*Geography* 48.2 (1963): 155. Print.

constantly competing with the legitimacy of tribal leaders.[129] Even though there were

missionaries from France and Italy as early as 1776, it was not until the 1840's that their

influence was spreading. Missions in Baraka, the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary, the

Congregation of the Holy Ghost, and the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception provided

elementary education to the Gabonese people. This schooling imparted French ideals to the

Gabonese population, in an effort to transform them from indigenous people to citizens of a

French colony. Furthermore, schooling was entirely in French, rather than indigenous languages,

to ensure that the population would be francophone. This was a tool that the French used in order

to groom the rising Gabonese leadership into the marionettes that would take French orders.[130]

    As colonialism continued, the already small Gabonese population steadily declined as a

result of brutal French-colonial practices. Thus, a nationalist movement was never able to form

as the numbers dwindled, allowing the French to retain their firm grip on the African state.[131]

The repressive nature of French colonialism was beginning to wear the Gabonese down. The

Gabonese at this time had little to no rights and very few political and economic opportunities.[132]

Most politicians during this time were pro-French, with very few opposing colonialism. It was

not until 1900 that Gabonese politics emerged. L'Ecole Montfort was established by the Brothers

of Saint Gabriel, in Libreville, and African professional teachers provided Gabonese boys with

higher education (beyond elementary). While the school was shut down just under two decades

later after its funding from the state was cut (due to the separation of Church and State), it caused

the Gabonese to assemble and form the Ligue des droits de l'homme (LDH); Gabon's first

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[129] *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control.* 176.
[130] Reed, Michael C. "Gabon: A Neo-Colonial Enclave of Enduring French Interest." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25.02 (1987): 287-8. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Oct. 2013.
[131] Ibid. 287.
[132] Rich, Jeremy. "Gabonese Men for French Decency: The Rise and Fall of the Gabonese Chapter of the Ligues Des Droits De L'Homme, 1916-1939." *French Colonial History* 13 (2012): 3. *Project MUSE*. Web. 15 Jan. 2014.

political organization. The anti-colonialist organization dedicated itself to bringing back the schools established by the Brothers of Saint Gabriel, abolishing the indigenat (the French-colonial legal system in Gabon which suppressed its subjects), increasing its autonomy from French Equatorial Africa (AEF), and defending land rights.[133] The LDH was especially concerned with the French system (which was implemented in 1920) of appointing Gabonese men with no political legitimacy, as district chiefs. They did this rather than appointing tribal chiefs and clansmen who were viewed as legitimate authority figures by the Gabonese people, and these new African leaders ignored the former political institutions in place before colonialism. They were oppressive leaders, and did not represent the Gabonese peoples' interests. Their poor representation of the Gabonese people led to worsening social conditions for the Gabonese, including increased segregation of the Gabonese by the French. Thus, LDH members sought to appeal to the French government because they considered themselves to be legitimate French citizens, and thus entitled to equal treatment.[134]

This organization lasted until 1930, when the Gabonese split between pure-blood Gabonese and franco-Gabonese. It was not until 1922 that the first political party in Gabon was established. Known as the Jeunesse Gabonaise, the party devoted its efforts to speaking out against colonialism. This subsequently led to the creation of a petite bourgeoisie and rising Gabonese elite, which applied pressure on the colonists. Mulattoes in Gabon were gaining political power and their increasing privileges led to the growth of opposition groups and more political actors. The slow process of decolonization soon unfolded between 1940 and 1950, as many French institutions in Gabon were eliminated and Gabon became a French "overseas territory" affording Africans the right to vote. The process of decolonization was not popular

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[133] Reed, Michael C. 289-95
[134] Rich, Jeremy. 3.

with all Gabonese, however. Political factions were established in response to decolonization, including Leon M'Ba's leftist organization. When political organizations continued to pop up from the mid 1950's to 1958, the French government realized the support it had from a few of the leading organizations.[135] In particular, the BDG (Bloc democratique gabonais) and the UDSG (Union democratique et sociale gabonaise) both supported the French because

> During the 1950's . . . the new African elite clearly wanted to demonstrate its desire to share responsibility and power, in an amicable and progressive spirit, with the tutelary authority.[136]

Eventually on August 17, 1960, Gabon became an independent state[137] with M'Ba as president. Gabon became independent despite the desire of many Gabonese elites to keep France's colonial presence in the African state.[138]

Independence

The political structure that arose from colonial Gabon placed the Gabonese elite as the ruling class. Once France "left" Gabon in 1960, the elites in support of the French held the power in society. M'Ba became a puppet for the French government to protect its private interests in Gabon since it no longer had a colonial presence. Thus, French colonialism was directly responsible for the pro-French ruling elites that came to power, and France was able to use its influence with them to maintain neo-colonial ties with Gabon. The structure of Gabon during colonialism shaped the political structure of Gabon post-independence.

Gabon's post-independence political structure was very similar to the political structure in its former colonial powers' state. The political framework included a President, a Prime Minister (appointed by the President), and a parliament. Under M'Ba a multi-party political

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[135] Ibid. 293-5
[136] Ibid. 295
[137] Saint-Paul, Marc Aicardi De. 10-13.
[138] Reed, Michael. 287-296.

system existed; however, it created much instability in the newly independent state. The beginning of instability was marked by M'Ba's ousting from power in 1964 because of his unpopularity with the Gabonese. However, France was not going to allow its pro-French Gabonese president to be overthrown by Jean Hilaire Aubame, M'ba's step-brother. In addition to being M'ba's step-brother, Aubame was M'ba's political opponent. Their relationship turned sour after Aubame refused to support M'ba's push for a one-party state, resulting in Aubame's seizure of the presidency in 1964.[139] Shortly after the coup d'etat, French troops intervened, bringing M'Ba back to power. This intervention by the French marked the beginning of the neo-colonialist relationship between France and Gabon, as France reinstated M'Ba in an attempt to "protect French interests, particularly the uranium, which was essential for securing an independent atomic force, and investments in petroleum, manganese, iron, and wood."[140] France knew that if it wanted to remain present in Gabon's affairs, it needed to keep M'Ba in power. Thus, in order to maintain its presence, it acted as a neo-colonial power, reinstating him with force. However, M'Ba's reign came to an end in 1966 when he passed away and was succeeded by Omar Bongo. Omar Bongo's rise to power was yet another neo-colonial act of France, as Jacques Foccart (the French government's chief advisor on African policy) falsified Gabon's Constitution in order to ensure the presidency for Bongo.[141]

France meddled in Gabonese political affairs after leaving its former colony because it knew its fragile state, and wanted to maintain influence even though it no longer its colonial power. The coup d'etat of 1964 exposed the political instability of a multi-party system in a newly independent Gabon, for M'Ba's unpopularity resulted in the opposition ousting him from

[139] Ibid. 296.
[140] Ibid. 296-7.
[141] Ngolet, Fracois. "Ideological Manipulations and Political Longevity: The Power of Omar Bongo in Gabon since 1967." *African Studies Review* 43.2 (2000): 57. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 Jan. 2014.

power. France wanted to maintain its grip on Gabon, and it could only do that through a pro-France President. Although French troops successfully reinstated M'Ba as President, there was a lesson to be learned from multi-party systems in Gabon. This political structure could be problematic in maintaining power, as opposition to the state could result in political overthrow, as seen with M'ba. Multi-party states make it more difficult for leaders to remain in power, if there is room for competition among political actors. Therefore, Omar Bongo, once becoming President, decided that he needed to reform the state system in order to retain his power.

Economy

Given Gabon's extensive supply of natural resources, it is no surprise that France was eager to colonize the African territory. As previously mentioned, Gabon boasts an abundance of manganese, timber, petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, diamonds, etc. Before oil was exported from Gabon, timber was its primary export beginning in 1889, as Gabonese mahogany produced high quality wood, which many European powers came to exploit.[142] Many big foreign companies came in and began extracting large amounts of timber. These companies' dominance of the timber market inhibited any sort of "Gabonization" of the timber sector within the Gabonese economy,[143] making it difficult for Gabon to diversify its economy. Timber was the leading export up until the mid-1950's, as the amount of timber being exported in 1953 surpassed 59,000 tons. The price of timber, however, rapidly declined once oil began to be exported in 1957, dropping 75% in value in 1960.[144] The timber industry continued to fall and in 1979, exports only made up 8.7 percent of the total exports.[145] Interestingly enough, Gabon historically has exported very few products, aside from oil, manganese ore, and timber. It

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[142] Hilling, D. 156-8.
[143] Saint-Paul, Marc Aicardi De. 49.
[144] Hilling, D. 156-8.
[145] Reed, Michael. 307.

imports most of its food, and has a highly undeveloped agricultural sector.[146]

The first major oil discovery was in 1955 in Port Gentil. A year later, production got underway at the Ozouri field, and more oil was found at Port Clariette, which is currently the main producer in Gabon. Due to these oil discoveries, GDP in Gabon skyrocketed. This marked the beginning of Gabon as a rentier state. Rentier states are defined as states that have a large amount of rents (rentals) paid by foreign individuals. The governments exporting the oil benefit from these monopolistic rents, but the revenue earned has little to do with the production process, and more to do with the rents.[147] This began in 1973 as a result of the oil boom, and revenues continued to flourish at its peak in 1976, with 11.3 million tons being produced. While Elf Gabon dominates Gabon's oil sector (the state of Gabon owns 25%), this eventually changed in 1983, as American companies, Amoco and Tenneco surpassed Elf Gabon as the leading buyers of Gabonese oil.[148] As Gabon opened up its exports to the global market, it began the process of globalization and allowed the Western world more involvement in its affairs. While this was good in that it increased oil revenues, the Western presence also meant more scrutiny in its affairs. But Gabon faces many other issues, in addition. Due to Gabon's highly undiversified economy, once oil prices declined in the 1980's, the state was left with no alternative export to keep revenues up.[149] Yet, President Bongo was successful in responding to the drop in the market between 1985 and 1987. Michael Reed even goes so far as to say that

> 'Gabon deserves its reputation for having a well-run economy', because despite low world prices it managed to boost production when the U.S. dollar was strong, almost 90 per cent of its exports being denominated in that currency.[150]

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[146] Hilling, D. 156-8.

[147] Mahdavy, H. "The Patterns and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran." *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Use of Islam to the Present Day*. By Michael Allan Cook. London: Oxford UP, 1970. 428-29. Print.

[148] Reed, Michael. 313.

[149] Ibid. 312-4.

[150] Ibid. 314.

Bongo was able to work around the drop in the market and keep Gabon's revenues up, despite the low price of oil. Yet, this sort of fix is only temporary. Gabon cannot continue to rely solely on its oil exports as its only source of revenue. Since oil dominates Gabon's economy, it has no alternative export it can rely upon if prices drop significantly. Its oil revenues are not sustainable because of the fluctuations of the market. This could have resulted in grave problems in the 80s and will come to be a huge problem in the near future, as oil reserves dwindle.

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of Gabon's oil revenues is the patronage network that arose during President Bongo's reign. Only the elites in Gabon benefited from the high oil revenues, and this subsequently created a sharp gap in wealth. Bongo would use the state oil revenues as his own personal funds, distributing the wealth to his family, friends, and Bateke tribe. He kept everyone in the state happy, and even his opponents walked away with a pretty penny, which ultimately eliminated any opposition.[151]

Maintaining Stability: Omar Bongo's Presidency

Omar Bongo succeeded M'Ba as President of Gabon in 1967. He remained in power for 42 years, with little violence, a feat that has led to much scholarly discourse. Bongo, originally born Albert Bernard Bongo, was a member of the Bateke ethnic group, which was known as a primitive Pygmy group. During his Presidency, Bongo worked with five different French Presidents, beginning with Charles de Gaulle and ending with Jacques Chirac.[152] His reign has caused many scholars to investigate his success in maintaining the presidency and stabilizing a newly independent Gabon. As a pro-French President, Bongo received much assistance from

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[151] Wallis, William.
[152] Rice, Xan. "Papa Bongo Counts up 40 Years in Power." *The Guardian Weekly*. The Guardian, 9 May 2008. Web. 15 Jan. 2014.

France, which ultimately helped to provide stability in Gabon.[153] The friendly relations between

Bongo and France allowed France much influence in the state, ensuring access for oil

companies.[154] Although Gabon did not (and continues to not) spend much money on its security

apparatus, it does not need to because of France's military garrison. The presence of roughly

1,000 French troops,[155] post-independence has provided stability in the fragile state.[156]

Additionally, the military base created the CEDOC, Gabon's secret services, and the Garde

Presidentielle (a 2,000 men force), which intimidated Bongo's opponents.[157]

Furthermore, Bongo was able to consolidate power by legitimizing himself as a leader to

the peasants living in the rural areas of Gabon. Because of his roots as a Pygmy, the Bantus

believed him to be

> A mystical individual, a man capable of seeing the invisible and detecting the
> undetectable, a providential being . . . only an individual of this nature could rule . . .
> [thus] Bongo's leadership was easily accepted.[158]

Bongo was able to secure social control over Gabon, something that many African leaders have

struggled to achieve since their states' independence. He used his Pygmy heritage as a tool to

legitimize himself, reinforcing this by taking control of secret Gabonese societies (such as

Bwiti), which are influential in the system of representation in Gabon. Another secret society,

Ndjobi, has been influential in modern politics in Gabon, and was used by Bongo (in addition to

Bwiti) as a pillar for his political power. Supernatural power is subsequently essential for the

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[153] Ngolet, Fracois. 57-8.
[154] Green, Matthew. "Death of Astute Gabon Ruler Marks End of "Francafrique"" *Financial Times* [London] 9 June 2009, USA 1 ed.: n. pag. Print.
[155] "Gabon Military." *Defence Web*. Defence Web, 24 May 2013. Web. 1 Mar. 2014.
[156] Basedau, Matthias, and Jann Lay. "Resource Curse or Rentier Peace? The Ambiguous Effects of Oil Wealth and Oil Dependence on Violent Conflict." *Journal of Peace Research* 46.6 (2009): 773. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Oct. 2013.
[157] Ngolet, Fracois. 57.
[158] Ibid. 58.

survival of politicians in Gabon, since it reinforces their legitimacy.[159]

However, while Bongo was able to obtain social control and maintain stability, he has also been responsible for draining the Gabonese economy of its revenues. Perhaps his most effective method of retaining his grip on the presidency was corruption. By using the state's oil wealth as his personal bank account, Bongo was able to pay off his opponents, leaving him uncontested. He quickly learned that "money could be more effective than bullets in keeping power."[160] Thus, anyone who publicly spoke out against the President was paid off, and all threats to his power, suppressed. Eventually, as pressure from the international community grew, Bongo implemented a multi-party system to appease the West, but it was only a front. Bongo's Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) maintained its power over its opposition in many flawed elections, winning nearly all seats in parliament.[161]

Bongo also adopted a familial approach to governing, as most high-level officials in the Gabonese government held the last name "Bongo." Although Gabon appeared politically stable because it did not experience violent conflict like its neighbors, the corruption and cronyism that existed during Bongo's reign exposed the unhealthy nature of the Gabonese state. In 2009, Bongo was investigated by Transparency International for embezzlement, due to his extensive estate. Bongo owns 33 properties in France, whose total value amounts to a whopping $227 million.[162] His extravagant lifestyle and personal pocketing of oil revenues has come at price for the Gabonese state. While it was clearly more stable than many other African nations, stability did not guarantee high state efficiency. Although Gabon is one of the wealthiest states in Africa

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[159] Ibid. 59-60.
[160] Rice, Xan.
[161] "Freedom in the World: Gabon." *Freedom House*. Freedom House, 2013. Web. 20 Oct. 2013.
[162] "Omar Bongo; President Treated Gabon as Own Private Estate." *The Calgary Herald*[Alberta] 14 June 2009, Final Edition ed.: n. pag. *The Calgary Herald*. The Telegraph, 14 June 2009. Web. 18 Jan. 2014.

with its GDP at 18.38 billion (in 2009), approximately 32.7% of its citizens live in poverty.[163] The extreme levels of poverty in Gabon expose the problems that the state faces in improving societal conditions. However, in 2009, Omar Bongo passed away at the age of 73, after ruling Gabon for 42 years. Next in line for the presidency: his son, Ali Bongo Ondimba.

Foreign Actors

A key component of Bongo's maintenance of security and power during his reign was his relationship with France. As previously mentioned, France maintained a military garrison that provided added security to Bongo's office, affording Gabon a security apparatus that the state of Gabon was not required to pay for. Bongo's relationship with France was a very invested one: the former colonial power not only remained present in terms of its military troops, but the two states also worked closely together in diplomatic and economic matters. In particular, Bongo gave French companies unrestricted access to its oil. By keeping close ties with Gabon, France was successful in securing its interests in the oil-rich state and was able to take what it wanted from its former colony, without being an official colonial power.

Bongo also brought in other foreign actors, hoping to increase oil revenues in Gabon. In particular, the United States and China have begun to surpass the French in stakes in Gabon. China has invested much of its money and efforts in Gabonese iron ore development, making it a growing ally of the African state. The United States has also sought to increase its influence in the oil-rich state, as it is now the leading buyer of Gabonese oil exports.[164] The United States has also invested money into peacekeeping training in Gabon through the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), which will help to maintain stability in the state.[165] Therefore, Gabon has

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[163] "Gabon." *Data: Gabon*. World Bank, n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.
[164] *Gabon: Country Outlook*. Rep. no. 466386406. New York: EIU ViewsWire, 2010.*Proquest*. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.
[165] Serafino, Nina. *The Global Peace Operations Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress*.

heavily relied on geopolitics to secure itself from conflict. Because big foreign actors have interests and investments in Gabon, they are more likely to provide it with added security to protect their own interests. When Bongo's regime was criticized for corruption, patronage networks, and a lack of political reform, Gabon avoided "the outbreak of conflict and political reform . . . by the assistance of foreign businesses and governments, and political stability prevailed - as did the Bongo's regime's network of patronage."[166] Thus, foreign actors have been crucial in maintaining stability in Gabon.

Gabon Today

President Ali Bongo Ondimba is the current President of Gabon, and was elected into office in August of 2009.[167] Even though he is the son of Omar Bongo, Ali Bongo admitted that he would be making many reforms to the Gabonese state. As Gabon seeks to change its reputation in the international community from a corrupt and unhealthy state, Ali Bongo wants to tackle the challenge of improving the state's infrastructure. If all goes according to plan, Bongo hopes that Gabon will be at emerging market status in 2025.[168] This would include the patronage network ceasing to exist, through centralizing the appointment of people working for the state. While Gabon's contracts with oil companies have remained stagnant even with the change of leadership, Ali Bongo has remained determined to eradicate corruption within the government and work towards improving the political system. Moreover, it spends a minute percentage of its GDP on social programs and subsequently must look to reforming public spending. Additionally, Gabon's relationship with France will likely weaken, as oil reserves decline and Gabon loses its

Rep. Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service: The Library of Congress, 2006. Print.
[166] Basedau, Matthias, and Wolfram Lacher. "A Paradox of Plenty? Rent Distribution and Political Stability in Oil States." *German Institute of Global Area Studies* 21 (2006): 22. Web. 18 Feb. 2014. <http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2009/1582/pdf/wp21_basedau_lacher.pdf>.
[167] "Freedom in the World: Gabon."
[168] Wallis, William. "Battle Builds to Discard Bad Habits of the past." *Financial Times* [London] 6 June 2013, FT Report - Investing in Gabon; Pg 1 sec.: n. pag. 6 June 2013. Web. 17 Jan. 2014.

diplomatic leverage. Yet, Ali Bongo has simultaneously strengthened Gabon's relationship with China and the United States through oil contracts, and investments in other sectors.[169] Gabon continues to try to open up its economy to the global market, as Ali Bongo attempts to geopolitically develop Gabon. Development of Gabon's economy is especially crucial, as oil reserves are declining and people are demanding more governmental services. That is why Ali Bongo wants to wean his state off of its dependency on oil. Gabon's economy cannot be sustained on a finite resource that fluctuates in price with market changes. Therefore, oil cannot continue to make up 80% of Gabon's exports, otherwise the stability that it has been maintained from oil revenues will dissipate along with the oil.[170]

Ali Bongo calls this plan "Emerging Gabon." It is an effort to develop the state of Gabon through industrialization. Once Gabon can establish industries other than its oil industry, it can rely on other raw materials and goods being produced to contribute to its GDP. For example, palm oil and rubber plantations will be developed, which will further the diversification of Gabon's economy. This plan, in total, will spend billions of dollars on airports, railways, ports, housing developments, and roads, and has already sparked interest among Western countries seeking to invest in these projects. It is only a matter of time until the oil runs out in Gabon, and thus it is essential for the Gabonese state to prepare for this, through strengthening the state and diversifying the economy. However, many criticize Ali Bongo for his overly ambitious goals, and are wary that he is simply biting off more than he can chew.[171] Furthermore, if Bongo is serious about dissolving the patronage networks, he will face many obstacles. These networks are incredibly complicated and contain many different interests; therefore, disrupting them will be difficult. Thus, Bongo's goals will not be easily attainable. Although Bongo has called for

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[169] *Gabon: Country Outlook*.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid.

greater transparency and the elimination of corruption, these problems still persist and will

continue to persist unless Bongo seeks to make these goals a reality.

State Institutions

As previously mentioned, Gabon is a relatively stable African state. It has not

experienced significant violent conflict since independence, making it appear as a somewhat

healthy state. But, given Omar Bongo's one party rule and corruption, many are hesitant to argue

that Gabon boasts a healthy state apparatus. However, Bongo was not a total tyrant. Gabon

Although there were some problems with the healthcare system in Gabon, including poor

strategizing and budgeting,[172] during Bongo's presidency, Gabon made headway in the

healthcare sector. Health care during his reign was significantly higher than Gabon's African

counterparts. For example, for every 250 inhabitants, there was one hospital bed, one doctor per

4000 inhabitants, 50 private clinics, and 300 Gabonese doctors. Additionally, Gabon established

the Service de grandes Endemies (SGE) which eradicated smallpox, decreased the incidence of

leprosy, and better screened for tuberculosis and sleeping sickness. The Centre International de

Recherches Medicales de Franceville also played an important role in improving the health care

system in Gabon. It helped the population, trained students, and performed medical research,

such as looking at fertility problems.[173] Another important service that Omar Bongo provided to

his citizens was Social Security. Known as Social Cover or CNSS, the program provided family

and maternity benefits, workers compensation, and insurance for the elderly and sick.[174]

Gabon's health care system has been better in comparison to other African states, but it

has still been insufficient. In 2011, health care only accounted for 3.25 of GDP, even though

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[172] "Gabon: Poverty in a Rent-Based Economy." *Poverty Reduction & Equality*. The World
Bank, 1997. Web. 9 Jan. 2014.
[173] Saint-Paul, Marc Aicardi De. 72-3.
[174] Ibid. 75.

Gabon has one of the highest GDPs in Africa.[175] Looking at its neighbors, Congo Brazzaville

spends 2.5%[176], Cameroon spends 5.1%[177], and Equatorial Guinea spends 4.0%.[178] While

Cameroon has a higher expenditure percentage than Gabon, its GDP is significantly less and it

only spends $128 per capita on health, whereas Gabon spends $512 per capita.[179] Its

expenditures are higher than most Sub-Saharan African states, which average at $84.32 per

capita according to a World Bank Report in 2012,[180] yet the low government spending in this

sector is considered equivalent to a poor state's health care spending.

Things are beginning to change under Ali Bongo's presidency, though. The Caisse

Nationale d'Assurance Maladie et de Garantie Sociale (CNAMGS), which was established in

2008, has brought all Gabonese citizens under one health insurance umbrella, extending health

care coverage to all different socioeconomic groups in Gabon. Since its creation, CNAMGS

began its coverage of the poorest in Gabon and has since spread to public and private sector

workers. Once the program achieves its universal coverage, many are hopeful that this will mark

the beginning of raising health care standards in the Sub-Saharan state. It has experienced many

setbacks and failures with its health care system in the past; however, CNAMGS's success could

be a huge victory for the Gabonese state. Gabon is among the first African states in the Sub-

Saharan region implementing a universal health care system, as many other states struggle to do

so. It has implemented a mandatory health insurance levy (ROAM) in order to provide a budget

for the expansive health care system,[181] showing the world that it is capable of reforming its once

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[175] "Gabon." *WHO*. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 19 Jan. 2014.
[176] Ibid. "Congo."
[177] Ibid. "Cameroon."
[178] Ibid. "Equatorial Guinea."
[179] Ibid. "Gabon."
[180] "Health Expenditure per Capita (US Dollar) in Sub Saharan Africa." *Trading Economics*.
Trading Economics, 2012. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.
[181] "Gabon Gets Everyone under One Social Health Insurance Roof." *WHO*. The United Nations,

poorly-budgeted sector. Without the levies, many are skeptical of the capacity of the universal system. They have been crucial in providing the resources necessary to extend healthcare to the poorest in Gabonese society - a class that never had access to the expensive medical system.

Moreover, the state of Gabon has been incredibly successful in providing education to its citizens, especially compared to other African states. Beginning with Omar Bongo, 21.243 billion francs were spent in an effort to develop the schooling system, which was an incredibly large amount of money spent on education for a developing state. During his time as President, 100% of children went to school and there were over 900 schools throughout Gabon.[182] Between 1995 and 1996, primary school enrollment was 142%, one of the highest percentages in Sub-Saharan Africa.[183] However, Gabon only spent 4% of its GDP on education in 2000.[184] It also has one of the highest literacy rates for its region, with the youth averaging at 97.4% and adults at 87.0% in 2014.[185] Currently, primary school enrolment has increased to 184% for males and 179% for females between 2008-2011. Secondary school enrolment is significantly lower, with 34% for males and 36% for females.[186] Although secondary school enrolment is lower than primary school enrolment, Gabon's education enrolment is still higher than many other Sub-Saharan African states. Most of the funding for higher education in Gabon comes from the state, as it finances approximately 95% of the cost for each student.[187] This is particularly interesting, given the steady cutbacks in education beginning in early 2000, which caused much uproar

2013. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.

[182] Saint-Paul, Marc Aicardi De. 76-7.

[183] "Gabon: Poverty in a Rent-Based Economy."

[184] "Gabon - Public Spending on Education." *Knoema*. N.p., n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.

[185] "Literacy Rate; Adult Total (% of People Ages 15 and Above) in Gabon." *Trading Economics*. Trading Economics, n.d. Web. 20 Jan. 2014.

[186] "Gabon." *UNICEF*. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 14 Jan. 2014.

[187] Bloom, David, David Canning, and Kevin Chan. *Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa*. Rep. N.p.: Harvard University, 2006. Print.

among Gabonese citizens. Since the cutbacks, Ali Bongo has sought to focus on fixing the state's infrastructure, as previously mentioned. This includes working on improving the education systems because there are not enough classrooms.[188] Emerging Gabon will subsequently seek to reform the education sector in order to bring Gabon up to global standards. Gabon is one of the wealthiest states in Africa, bringing in approximately ten times as much revenue as other African states; therefore, it cannot continue to provide minimal services like its African counterparts. It is time for Gabon to move beyond stability, and towards state efficiency.

Conclusion

Gabon is a rare case in Africa. As one of the few states in the volatile Sub-Saharan region to remain stable since independence and remove from violent conflict, it has done what few other African states have. Gabon has maintained stability, but this has certainly come at a cost. President Omar Bongo implemented a one party political system, which put down any opposition; he maintained close relations with France, and it provided security troops to ensure Bongo's political survival; and he used oil revenues to increase his personal wealth and buy off his opponents. His rule was marked with corruption and the state system at the time was not set up to provide any benefits to the people, unless they were members of the elite class. Yet, the state remained stable. While Ali Bongo is a continuation of his father's regime, he has only maintained the oil contracts with foreign states. Ali Bongo, unlike his father, has recognized the problem with Gabon's dependency on oil. As oil is Gabon's primary export and accounts for 50% of its GDP, Gabon is at the mercy of the global market, and when oil prices drop, so does Gabon's GDP. In order for Gabon to continue its prosperity beyond the projected depletion of its oil reserves, it must improve its state capacity. Some progress has already been made through

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[188] Reed, John. "Better Wealth Distribution at the Heart of State Policy." *Financial Times*[London] 4 June 2012, FT Report - Gabon; Pg 2 sec.: n. pag. *Financial Times*. 5 June 2012. Web. 15 Jan. 2013.

the universal health care system that is almost in full effect, which has provided medical services to poor citizens that have never had access before. Ali Bongo has also begun his Emerging Gabon plan, which will build plants, plantations, roads, railways, schools, etc., in an effort to bring Gabon up to global standards.

Therefore, the stability of Gabon in the past had little to do with state efficiency. On the contrary, Gabon was a relatively unhealthy state, due to its high GDP complemented by widespread poverty. The state was secure through the French military presence and political dominance of Bongo. The situation in Gabon has begun to shift, however, with the changes that are to take place through Emerging Gabon. While progress has been made in Gabon, there is still much left to do. Gabon's perceived corruption is relatively high, according to the Corruption Perceptions Index[189] and according to Freedom House's report in 2012 Gabon's status was "Not Free."[190] In early 2013, Gabon was removed from the corruption initiative known as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) for not publishing oil revenue and tax information.[191] With these setbacks, it is clear that Gabon is far from achieving the ideal state apparatus that it needs to, in order to be a healthy state and maintain stability in the Sub-Saharan region. Corruption is its biggest obstacle in entering the global stage. While Gabon has a long way to go, it understands the bottom line. As Louis Gaston Mayila put it, "stability is not enough. Our world is changing, and we need to look to the future."[192] Gabon cannot rely on oil wealth to boost its economy forever. There is a time coming in the near future when Gabon's oil production will sharply decline and it will need something else to protect the state from total

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[189] "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013."
[190] "Freedom in the World: Gabon."
[191] Hollinger, Peggy. "Uncertainty Fails to Deter Majors with Eye on the Main Chance."*Financial Times* [London] 3 June 2013: n. pag. *Financial Times*. 6 June 2013. Web. 18 Jan. 2013.
[192] Rice, Xan.

chaos. Gabon must transition from a rentier state, to a fully functional, healthy state, otherwise, it

will fall trap to the problems its neighbors are experiencing today: instability and conflict.

Introduction

What appeared to be a somewhat stable state in Sub-Saharan Africa post-independence soon became chaotic, conflict-ridden state. Congo Brazzaville has become a model for the modern African state - it is resource rich, yet is incredibly underdeveloped. The economy sector is undiversified, as the state relies primarily on its oil, and there is violent struggle for power. It is relatively high on the 2013 Failed State Index, ranking 36th out of 178 states, thus it fits the model of a typical resource-cursed African state, in the midst of an ongoing political conflict. Therefore, in order to better understand what exactly went wrong in Congo Brazzaville and what can be done to alleviate the instability, it is imperative to look at the history and current situation within the state.

Geography and Demography

Congo Brazzaville is located in Central Africa, bordering Gabon, Cameroon, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and the Atlantic Ocean. Its total area is approximately 342,000 sq. km, which is only slightly smaller than the state of Montana. Like many African states, although Congo Brazzaville's area is relatively big, (it is 64th in the world), and its population in 2013 was estimated at 4,574,099,[193] its population density is highly disproportionate, amounting to only 12.1 persons per sq. km in 2011.[194] The small population is concentrated mostly in the southern region of the state, as the northern region is less-developed and jungle-like.[195] While there are only four major ethnic clusters within Congo Brazzaville, within these clusters are over seventy different sub-ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group is the

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[193] "Congo, Republic of the." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 6 Feb. 2014.
[194] "Congo." *UNdata*. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 6 Feb. 2014.
[195] "Congo (Brazzaville)." *Background Notes on Countries of the World: Republic of Congo*(2011): n. pag. *Political Science Complete*. Web. 5 Feb. 2014.

Kongo at 48%, then the Sangha at 20%, the M'Bochi at 12%, the Teke at 17% and Europeans

and others at 3%. The major religion in Congo Brazzaville is Christianity, as 50% identify,

followed by 48% identifying with Animism, and 2% with Islam. Its GDP is relatively average

for Africa, at approximately 13.68 billion USD in 2012; however, its GDP per capita is

incredibly troublesome, as it was 3,153.74 USD per person in 2012. Its GDP per capita is much

lower than its African neighbors, given Angola's is 5,484.83 USD per person, Gabon's is

11,430.49 USD per person, but still higher than states such as the Democratic Republic of Congo

and the Central African Republic.[196]

In addition to these geographics and demographics, Congo Brazzaville has an abundance

of natural resources. These include petroleum, copper, uranium, potash, hydropower,

magnesium, gold, phosphates, lead, timber, and natural gas.[197] Congo Brazzaville's resource

wealth has done very little in developing the state itself. The GDP versus the GDP per capita

exposes the alarming reality within Congo Brazzaville - there is an overwhelming amount of

poverty even though the state has an abundance of natural resources. Therefore, Congo

Brazzaville fits the profile of an oil-rich state, with large gaps in income equality.

Pre Colonialism

Although there is relatively little research and information on pre-colonial societies in

Africa, some scholars argue that Congo Brazzaville boasted proto democratic practices and

egalitarianism during this early time.[198] The first people to settle in the region were the Pygmies,

but eventually were replaced by the Bantu. An ethnic group within the Bantu called the Bakongo

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[196] "Congo, Republic of the."
[197] Ibid.
[198] Clark, John Frank. *The Failure of Democracy in the Republic of Congo*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008. 46-8. Print.

inhabited modern day Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Gabon in addition.[199]

There were democratic assemblies run through gentocracies, and the societal characteristics consisted of individual autonomy, equality, and a commitment to the community. The "house", was a family, which included a head of the household. These households were not limited to familial relations; any free man was able to choose which house he wished to belong to. Houses were within a larger framework, called the village, which was the summation of all houses. A head was chosen for these villages, leading to the beginning of chiefs within the territory, and this chief possessed quasi-divine powers.[200]

Eventually, villages combined to form kingdoms in the 14th century AD, ending the egalitarian, proto democratic practices. The first kingdom established was the Kongo Kingdom[201] in 1390, which was south of the Congo River. At the head of the kingdom was the king, (who was chosen similarly to chiefs) because he was required to have supernatural powers.[202] While the kingdom was considered a loose federation, it expanded its territory through conquest within the region.[203] The Kongo established close ties with the Portuguese, the first European settlers in the region, beginning to trade with the Western power. Eventually, the Portuguese shifted its focus to the Loango Kingdom, as the slave trade in Africa picked up. The final kingdom in the territory was the Teke Kingdom. In all kingdoms, the power of the kings remained virtually unchecked. The hierarchical natural of the structure allowed for omnipotence of the king. Furthermore, the king could appoint a royal council, which ultimately led to the creation of the noble class. The rise of the ruling class in these societies furthered social

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[199] "About Congo Brazzaville." *Africa.com*. Africa.com, n.d. Web. 6 Feb. 2014.
[200] Clark, John Frank. 46-8.
[201] "Congo." *Congo*. The University of Iowa, n.d. Web. 5 Feb. 2014.
[202] Clark, John Frank. 51.
[203] "Kongo (historical Kingdom, Africa)." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 5 Feb. 2014.

inequality in the region, which has survived in Congo Brazzaville to this day.[204]

Colonialism

While the Kingdoms within Congo Brazzaville maintained their autonomy during their relations with the Portuguese, the territory became a French colony in 1880 after a treaty was signed, giving France protectorate rights of the region. However, its period of rule between 1880 and 1910 was hampered with frequent revolts due to its ineffective control of the territory.[205] The French deployed direct rule within the colony, which was coupled with a struggle for predominance in the region against pre-colonial leaders. The French faced difficulty in legitimizing their authority in the territory, especially since the African-leaders they were hand picking were not seen as legitimate in the eyes of the people. When Congo Brazzaville was consolidated into French Equatorial Africa in 1908, which included Gabon, Middle Congo (Congo Brazzaville), Oubangui-Chari (Central African Republic), and Chad, Brazzaville became the capital, allowing for rapid development and urbanization of the city.[206] However, France's rule in Congo Brazzaville was brutal until about the 1930s. The territory was pilfered by the French, extracting any and all resources it could get its hands on. Moreover, slavery crippled African society, as this led to intercommunal fighting, dehumanization of people, large levels of migration, and increased stratification of wealth. Colonialism effectively destroyed all pre-existing political systems.[207]

Beginning in the 1930s, the resistance to colonialism subsided, as Africans became more political, rather than violent in their opposition to colonialism. This resulted in a movement of charismatic leaders, who openly spoke out against the institution of colonialism. Africans began

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[204] Clark, John Frank. 51-4.
[205] Clark, John Frank. 54.
[206] "About Congo Brazzaville."
[207] Clark, John Frank. 55-8.

to form a nationalistic movement against colonialism, but these efforts were often put down

through French political manipulation. The major leader of the movement was Andre Matsoua,

who appealed to the people because he was seen as a Christ-like figure.[208] The nature of French

colonialism began to change, however, during World War II, as many Africans significantly

aided the French in fighting. The Brazzaville Conference of 1944 reformed French policy in

Congo Brazzaville, as the French abolished forced labor, decentralized power, allowed for the

election of local leaders, and extended French citizenship to Africans within the colonies.[209]

Subsequently, with the victory of the Allied Powers, France extended more political and civil

rights to it colonies, as well as more autonomy.[210] This was not enough for the people, though, as

they demanded more autonomy and rights, ultimately leading to their independence shortly

thereafter.

Independence

The Congo Republic (Congo Brazzaville) officially gained its independence from France

on August 15, 1960.[211] As a result of Brazzaville being the capital of French Equatorial Africa,

Congo Brazzaville post-independence, was marked by its high levels of urbanization and

education. The Southern people had enjoyed civil service and higher education opportunities.[212]

During the colonial era, the Southern Congolese were presented with ample opportunities

through education, while the Northern Congolese had fewer opportunities and subsequently grew

resentful. By the time the state became independent in 1960, tensions between the two sides

began to flare, and the state split politically between the African Socialist Movement Party

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[208] Ibid. 58.
[209] "Congo (Brazzaville)."
[210] Ibid. 58-9.
[211] "About Congo Brazzaville."
[212] Eaton, David. "Diagnosing the Crisis in the Republic of Congo." *Africa* 76.01 (2006): 45.
JSTOR. Web. 4 Feb. 2014.

(MSA) and the Democratic Union for the Defense of African Interests (UDDIA). The stark

differences between the two parties was clear, as the MSA called for weaker ties with France and

state ownership, while the UDDIA called for stronger relations with France and private

ownership.[213] The first president of the newly independent state was Felix Youlou, a man

educated outside of Congo Brazzaville. He was a northerner, with strong socialist beliefs.

Understanding the importance of affirming his legitimacy as a leader within Congo Brazzaville,

Youlou aligned himself with the Lari cult organizations, becoming a Lari priest. In Congo

Brazzaville, political candidates needed to remain loyal to ethnic traditions in order to maintain

predominance in the region. Without political legitimacy, leaders cannot consolidate power. In

Youlou's case, he attempted to seize power by all means necessary, including manipulating the

rules and co-opting his rivals. This led to his reorganization of the districts for electoral purposes,

which helped his party advance further politically. Furthermore, his strategy of arresting his

political opponents, rehabilitating them into society, and corrupting them by paying them off to

consolidate them into his party proved similar to the French way of politics. In 1961, Youlou

dissolved all political parties, except for his, making him the single candidate for the Presidential

election of that year.[214] Congo Brazzaville's new politics became

> The apotheosis of the ethno regional big man in the context of a heterogeneous new polity;
> the struggle for preeminence among such big men at a higher level of politics through the instruments of patronage and co-optation; the manipulation of legal rules to concentrate power in the person of the president in the name of national unity; and the paradoxical extension of social favors to one's own ethnic or regional community.[215]

In order to maintain power within Congo Brazzaville, political leaders sought to manipulate their

control through whatever means possible. For Youlou, his corrupt period of rule ended shortly

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[213] Cordell, Dennis D. "The Republic of Congo." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 17 Feb. 2014.
[214] Clark, John Frank. 58-66.
[215] Ibid. 66-7.

after his rise to power, when he was militarily overthrown in 1963 by Southerners. This marked

the beginning of the militarization of politics within the state. The problem that soon arose was

that the youth of Congo Brazzaville was becoming more radicalized given its higher education

and lack of opportunities. A radical youth cult formed, demanding frequent worker strikes and

political overthrow. Given Congo Brazzaville's history of political upheavals, the youth believed

it to be its right to take control of the state and reform it into the state it desired. Moreover, the

1960s was a radical time for many societal groups, as the state remained unindustrialized, with a

unionized and radicalized workforce, leading to many strikes.[216] Eventually, the perceived-

corruption of President Youlou led to mobilization and subsequent succession.

   After Youlou's fall from power, a provisional government was established, making

Alphonse Massamba-Debat, a Southerner, president. In 1964, Massamba-Debat declared the

Mouvement National de la Revolution as the only legitimate legal party within the state,

solidifying Youlou's push for a one-party political state. However, his reign was short, as he was

unsuccessful in meeting the demands of the radicalized population. He fell from power in 1968

as a result of a special military committee coup. The next in line to the Presidency was Marien

Ngouabi, a Kouyou northern military captain, who declared Congo Brazzaville the first

"people's republic." Although Youlou and Massamba-Debat, both introduced socialist policies

into society, Ngouabi became committed to Marxist-Leninist principles. He adopted a Soviet-

style constitution and a similar governing structure, marking the beginning of a new era in Congo

Brazzaville. His political party became known as the Congolese Labour Party (PCT), dedicated

to furthering his leftist policies. Moreover, he maintained close state control of the economy as

well as ties with China and the Soviet Union. In addition, in an effort to address the demands of

the youth cult, Ngouabi adopted a policy of free education to all between the ages of six and

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[216] Ibid. 68-9.

sixteen. Ngouabi also allowed for the size of the state bureaucracy to grow, as many youth were

virtually guaranteed a position in civil service upon graduation.[217] However, his Presidency came

to a halt on March 16, 1977, when he was assassinated.[218] It still remains unclear as to who was

responsible, but this exposed the growing radicalization of the people and the failure of Ngouabi

to suppress it. Following Ngouabi's assassination, General Yhombi Opango, a northerner,

became President through a presidential mandate, He remained in power for a short period of

two years, as his efforts to shrink the bureaucracy and extravagant lifestyle were disliked by the

population. Moreover, his policies were highly criticized by the PTC and ultimately resulted in

his removal from power by his fellow Northerners. Opango's overthrow in 1979 allowed for

Colonel Denis Sassou-Neguesso to capture the Presidency, which he was successful in

maintaining for the next twelve years.[219]

Economy

Due to Congo Brazzaville's abundance of natural resources, it has remained an apple to

many states' eyes. The resources which the state possesses are petroleum, copper, uranium,

potash, hydropower, magnesium, gold, phosphates, lead, timber, and natural gas.[220] Its

agricultural products consist of sugar, rice, manioc, corn, vegetables, peanuts, coffee, forest

products, and cocoa; however less than 2% of the land in Congo Brazzaville is actually

cultivated. The early stages of Congo Brazzaville's economic development began during colonial

rule. Resources within the territory were extracted by private companies, through France. A

railway was soon built between 1924 and 1934, called the Congo-Ocean Railway, which opened

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[217] Eaton, David. 46-7
[218] "About Congo Brazzaville."
[219] Eaton, David. 47.
[220] "Congo, Republic of the."

up Congo Brazzaville's economy by allowing for greater extraction of oil.[221]

Congo Brazzaville's first primary export was timber during the time of colonization. According to reports, there are 12.7 million hectares out of 21.5 million hectares of the state's forests are able to be exploited.[222] Although logging dominated Congo Brazzaville's economy in the past, it has since been surpassed by the state's oil industry. Currently the forestry industry is under fire, as much of the timber being exported from the Congo Basin, is done so illegally. The timber that is being exported is contributing to the deforestation within the state, causing concern among many states, as the Congo Basin houses some of the largest rainforests in the world and helps stabilize the global climate.[223] Since the discovery of oil, however, timber exportation has rapidly declined, amounting to less than 7% of Congo Brazzaville's total exports in 1957.[224] Initially, extraction of oil from these deposits was slow, only picking up in the 1970s after larger deposits were discovered off the coast of Kouilou. At this point, oil production soared, with only 500,000 tons being produced in 1971, to 2 million tons being produced in 1973. Revenues soon spiked from $25 million in 1972 to $170 million in 1974. During this time, oil represented one third of Congo Brazzaville's GDP, with production averaging about 2 million tons per year. Production continued to increase, with the state exporting about 8 million tons per year by 1989, and revenues exceeding $1 billion in the beginning of the 80s. But Congo Brazzaville was not immune to the dip in oil prices in the late 80s. The state suffered from the falling prices and was unable to compensate for the losses. The state's policy of "borrowing based largely on projected oil revenues inflated the national debt from $1.2 billion in 1980 to $4.5 billion in 1990, and made

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[221] "Congo (Brazzaville)."

[222] "Country Profiles - Congo (Brazzaville)." *Forests Monitor*. Forests Monitor, n.d. Web. 2 Feb. 2014.

[223] "African Countries Agree to Curb Illegal Timber Trade in the Congo Basin." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*. Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, n.d. Web. 2 Feb. 2014.

[224] "Congo (Brazzaville)."

the state the most indebted per capita on Earth."[225] This subsequently contributed to the waning

support of Sassou-Nguesso in the early 90s, and his slipping grip on power.[226] By 1991, there

was a strong push for democracy within the state, and Sassou-Nguesso had no other option than

to concede to the demands of the international community. In 1992, Sassou-Nguesso lost in the

first round of the Presidential elections, with Pascal Lissouba emerging victorious. On August

31, 1992, President Lissouba was inaugurated.[227] More financial problems ensued, following

Lissouba's inauguration. In 1994, France handed over Congo Brazzaville's debt to the IMF,

resulting in the sharp devaluation of the CFA Franc (50%).[228]

The state's inability to effectively deal with the drop in oil prices was and still remains

problematic. Given the fact that the oil reserves within Congo Brazzaville are rapidly

deteriorating, it is only a matter of time until they run out. The economy remains undiversified,

with oil exports amounting to 70% of the state's revenue. The level of poverty within the oil-rich

state is also worrisome, as oil money stays within the hands of the political elite. In 2011, it was

reported that 46.5% of the population lived below the poverty line and 53% of the population in

unemployed. And as previously mentioned, Congo Brazzaville has one of the lowest GDP per

capitas in the world, at $3,153 per person.[229]

Democracy leads to Political Instability

The push for democracy in Africa was not a new phenomenon. The international

community pressured many states within Africa to dissolve the former one-party political system

that plagued their state apparatuses. While there were some more successful cases in this

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[225] Eaton, David. 47.
[226] Clark, John. "Petro-Politics in Congo." *Journal of Democracy* 8.3 (1997): 62-76. *JSTOR*.
Web. 31 Jan. 2014.
[227] "Congo (Brazzaville)."
[228] Eaton, David. 48-51.
[229] "Congo, Republic of the."

transition into democracy, Congo Brazzaville failed to reap the benefits of a democratic society. Rather, the implementation of democracy created significant instability. With new system of government and a growing divide between the Northerners and Southerners, there was much uncertainty which resulted in increased competition for control over resources. Given the Northerners control of the state through Sassou-Nguesso's presidency, the elections provided an opportunity for the South to regain control. The elections "spark[ed] competition for the apex of Congo's patron-client pyramid and giving southern elites a legally sanctioned chance to control the state's oil wealth."[230] The South now had the ability to seize control over oil assets, legitimately removing the Northern, Sassou-Nguesso from power. Once President Lissouba was elected, he faced much opposition from not only the people, but from his political opponents, as well. The 1992 elections subsequently led to the militarization of Sassou-Nguesso and Lissouba's runner-up in the presidential elections of 1991, Bernard Koleas. With an increasing security dilemma, Lissouba established his own security force, known as the Cocoye. Both opponents of Lissouba also formed militias, Sassou-Nguesso's Cobras and Koleas' Ninjas. Much of Lissouba's criticism stemmed from his favoritism of Southerners, as he is from the region. Moreover, his liberalization of the economy, cuts in public expenditures, and decentralization were very unfavorable to the people. As a result of democratization, salaries were not able to be paid, social services disappeared, unemployment rates skyrocketed among an educated population, and the national infrastructure began to crumble. Furthermore, since the bureaucracy had grown so large as a result of oil revenues, most educated people expected to work as a civil servant and were displeased when this opportunity was lost. Simply becoming President "did not

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[230] Englebert, Pierre, and James Ron. "Primary Commodities and War: Congo-Brazzaville's Ambivalent Resource Curse." *Comparative Politics* 37.1 (2004): 64. *JSTOR*. Web. 28 Jan. 2014.

guarantee [Lissouba] ownership over Sassou's former networks of allies, patrons, and clients."[231]

Although Lissouba had legitimized his power and control over the state, many senior army officers stayed loyal to Sassou-Nguesso, and therefore Lissouba had little control over the state's military. Furthermore, foreign allies remained loyal to Sassou-Nguesso, including France, Angola, and Gabon. Thus, Lissouba lacked support from foreign allies and control over the military regardless of his title as President. He had no social control. In a desperate attempt to regain control over the state, Lissouba dissipated the parliament in 1992, which forced new elections to be held in 1993. Lissouba's party won 62 seats, while Koleas and Sassou's parties combined only won 49.[232] Claiming election fraud, violence broke out, causing a civil war between the political militias between 1993 and 1994.[233] These clashes exposed the ethno regional fractionalization of the state; however, the split between ethnic groups had less to do with ethnic grievances and more to do with elite manipulation of the population.[234] These leaders were garnering support from their people (who typically were the same ethnicity), and thus, the divides were along ethnic lines.

Sassou-Nguesso returned to Congo Brazzaville in 1997, after exiling himself for two years. Upon his return, fighting broke out between the Cobras and the Cocoyes. Violent clashes in Owando resulted in an attempted cease fire agreement on May 31, 1997, but fighting continued on June 5th. The violence persisted for several months, claiming the lives of 10,000 to 15,000 people. Many districts within the state, especially those that were loyal to either Sassou-Nguesso, or Lissouba, were being heavily bombarded by shells. Eventually, the fighting came to a halt on October 15, 1997, once Angola intervened in the conflict. Angola intervened on behalf

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[231] Englebert, Pierre, and James Ron. 65.
[232] Ibid.
[233] Bazenguissa-Ganga, Remy. "The Spread of Political Violence in Congo-Brazzaville." *JSTOR*. JSTOR, 1999. Web. 28 Jan. 2014.
[234] Englebert, Pierre, and James Ron. 66.

of Sassou-Nguesso in order to protect its self-interests. Given Angola's 20 year civil war and Lissouba's support of Unita (the Angolan state's opposition), Angola made the move in an effort to cut off support of its opposition, and ultimately end its internal conflict.[235] After sending thousands of troops to defend Sassou-Nguesso, he was reinstated as President.[236] The fighting was far from over, though. Although Lissouba and Kolelas were exiled for three years, violent outbreaks began between the Ninjas and the Cocoyes versus the Cobras and Angolans. This fighting consisted of much more disorganized raids of towns outside of Brazzaville, predominantly in the Southern region of the state. The radical youths within the militias began to act autonomously from the organized groups, causing small clashes on the streets until the end of 1999. In an effort to establish stability, Sassou-Nguesso provided amnesty to all Cocoye and Ninja commanders, allowing for civil servants and soldiers to retake their former positions.[237] This concession was crucial in not only suppressing the rebellion, but also buying off Sassou-Nguesso's political opposition in order to establish long-lasting stability. Buying off his opponents allowed for Sassou-Nguesso to more effectively consolidate power within the fragile Congolese state. Moreover, between 2000 and 2001, Sassou-Nguesso increased the dialogue between parties involved in the conflict in order to further peace within the state. The Ninjas rejected Sassou-Nguesso's call for peace, and continued to engage in low level fighting against the government until 2003. In 2002, Sassou-Nguesso legitimately solidified the Presidency by winning the Presidential election, and securing his claim to power. Finally in March 2003, the Ninjas agreed to a peace accord with the government, and fighting ceased.[238]

Foreign Actors

[235] "Angola Aids Congo to Corral Unita." *The M&G Online*. The Mail & Guardian, 17 Oct. 1997. Web. 1 Mar. 2014.
[236] Bazenguissa-Ganga, Remy. 39-41.
[237] Englebert, Pierre, and James Ron. 66-7.
[238] "Congo (Brazzaville)."

Congo Brazzaville's relations with foreign actors have proved interesting in molding the state. Given its colonial ties to France in the 19th and 20th centuries, the African state has maintained relations with its former colonizer. Even after independence, Congo Brazzaville remained psychologically attached to the French, even though it was no longer an official colony. France maintained its presence in Congo Brazzaville's oil sector, as the French-owned company, Elf-Aquitaine dominated the industry beginning in the late 1980s. Furthermore, France provided significant amounts of aid to its former colony, but this changed in 1991, when France transferred the state's debt to the IMF.[239] Although Congo Brazzaville has sought to maintain close ties with France, the relationship has been somewhat strained, as Congo Brazzaville was formerly socialist. For twenty years, between the 1970s and 1990s, the state was distinguished by socialist, and Marxist-Leninist policies. Moreover, Congo Brazzaville closely aligned with other communist countries - particularly, China, Russia, and other Eastern bloc nations. Relations with these communist countries provided much foreign aid, through education and funding, as well as assistance for the Congolese military.

Since the collapse of communism, however, Congo Brazzaville's relations with these socialist countries have become subdued, and rather, France has increased its role fiscally and influentially. The same can be said for its relations with the United States, as the US kept its distance during Congo Brazzaville's socialist era. Once this period ended, the US became more cooperative and supportive of the state's democratization. As fighting broke out in 1997 and again in early 2000, the US Embassy was closed and its relations were once again broken. When the fighting officially ended in 2003, cooperation was reestablished and plans for a new Embassy went underway in 2004. Diplomatic relations between the US and Congo Brazzaville are

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[239] Eaton, David. 48-51.

currently cooperative.[240] Chinese relations are continuing to grow as well, due to increased

investment within the African state. Currently, China is Congo Brazzaville's biggest partner in

trade. In March 2013, President Xi Jinping travelled to the state, and claimed that "the rapid

development of bilateral ties has witnessed fruitful cooperation in various dimensions and

brought tangible benefits to people of both nations."[241] China has additionally provided much aid

to Congo Brazzaville, including educational assistance.

Congo Brazzaville's foreign relations have significantly impacted the development of the

state. As a result of its socialist tendencies beginning after independence and lasting until the late

80s, it became detached from the Western powers, such as France and the United States, and

closely aligned with socialist countries such as Russia and China. Without Western influence

during this time, Congo Brazzaville was left virtually alone in running the state. Given the

political instability during the time, it appears to have hampered the development of the state,

and furthered the failure of the state apparatus.

Congo Brazzaville Today

Although Congo Brazzaville transitioned to democracy in 1991, the state still suffers

from unfair elections. When Sassou-Nguesso returned to power after the civil war ended in 1997,

he adopted a new constitution in 2002, extending the presidential term limit to seven years. In

2007, legislative elections were held, and Sassou-Nguesso's Congolese Labor Party (PCT) won a

majority of seats due to the opposition's boycott of the election. Furthermore, Sassou-Nguesso

dissolved the post of the Prime Minister, allowing him to be not only the head of the state, but

the head of the government. Sassou-Nguesso additionally placed his son, Denis Christel Sassou-

Nguesso, as a member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau through the PCT, causing

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[240] "Congo (Brazzaville)."

[241] Jiao, Wu. "Xi Hails China-Congo Ties as 'model of Cooperation'" *China Daily: Africa Weekly* [Beijin] 30 Mar. 2013, 1497th ed.: n. pag. *LexisNexis Academic*. Web. 31 Jan. 2013.

uproar among the opposition that he will succeed his father.[242]

Fraud continues to hamper the fairness of elections in Congo Brazzaville, as it is considered "Not Free" by Freedom House and its perceived corruption has increased since 2012.[243] In 2012, Denis Sassou-Nguesso was re-elected as President, but the elections were far from democratic. Observers claimed the elections to be "marred by fraud, low voter turnout, and postelection violence."[244] Similar to many African states transitioning from one-party politics to democracy, the state remains relatively autocratic, under the guise of democratic elections. President Sassou-Nguesso is able to use state resources in order to ensure his grip on power, through election fraud and voter intimidation. Thus, the political situation in Congo Brazzaville is far from ideal. The state remains politically unstable, even with Sassou-Nguesso's attempts at strengthening his grip on power. "Democracy" in Congo Brazzaville has not brought about positive change. Rather, the state continues to suffer from corruption and fraud, and the state has become even less transparent. The lack of transparency stems from the unwillingness of the government to release data on oil revenues, as the President's family controls the state oil company. It is difficult to prosecute corruption cases domestically because the President controls virtually all aspects of the state, therefore, it often goes unpunished. However, France has recently opened an investigation against Sassou-Nguesso for fraud and embezzlement of state revenues.[245]

State Institutions

As previously mentioned, because Brazzaville was the capital of French Equatorial Africa during the time of colonization, Congo Brazzaville's education and institutional capacity

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[242] "Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)." *Freedom House*. Freedom House, n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.
[243] "Corruption Perceptions Index 2013."
[244] Ibid.
[245] "Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)."

was highly advanced. After independence, free education and the bureaucracy continued to expand, until the international community pressured the state to reform these sectors. Thus, Congo Brazzaville has, since its early stages as an autonomous state, been highly developed. This seemingly healthy characteristic has contributed to the decline of the state because the population was highly educated without employment. As the civil sector was significantly scaled back (in the 1990s there were 80,000 civil servant jobs, and in 1994 nearly 8,000 were cut),[246] the educated and unemployed youth began to radicalize, leading to political violence and increased instability. According to reports in 2010, public expenditure on education was approximately 6.2%, making Congo Brazzaville 33rd in the world. While there is certainly a correlation between this high percentage and literacy rates, the average school life expectancy is lower than its African counterparts. The percentage of the total population above age 15 who can read and write is 83.8% and the school life expectancy is nine years.[247]

Although it appears that the education sector in Congo Brazzaville is much more advanced than many of its African neighbors, there are still institutions within the state that have deteriorated. The health care system in Congo Brazzaville is among the worst in Africa, with the state only spending 2.5% of its GDP on health in 2011, placing it 186th out of 190 countries. There is a significant portion of the population that is malnourished, with little chance of obtaining medical assistance. Perhaps the most alarming, is that there is only .1 physicians per 1000 people, which is even worse than its neighbor, the Democratic of Congo (.11 physicians per 1000 people). Additionally, for every 1000 people, there are only 1.6 hospital beds. It is of little surprise then that the life expectancy of the population is a mere 55.6 years and the infant

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[246] "About Congo (Brazzaville)."
[247] "Congo, Republic of the."

mortality rate is the 16th highest in the world at 72.45 deaths for every 1000 live births.[248] The

health care system in Congo Brazzaville is underfunded and subsequently in a perilous state. A

2007 report claimed that

> Many medical facilities lack the means to meet the basic needs of patients . . . 'the lifts
> don't work, windows are broken, there is no drinking water, no toilets, let alone showers'
> . . . neurology, cardiology, and ophthalmology departments lack the basic equipment to
> carry out essential tests.[249]

Moreover, there is a lack of qualified, motivated, and quality personnel.[250] In March of 2012, an

arms depot explosion in Brazzaville neighborhood killed more than 240, and wounded another

2,300, exposing the negligence and inefficiency of the state in dealing with such a crisis.[251] The

health care system within the state is so undeveloped, it does not have the capacity to deal with

crises involving hundreds of patients. The situation in March overwhelmed the system, as it was

inadequate to deal with a crisis so small.[252]

There have been some measures taken to address the disastrous health care situation,

however, most come from NGOs and other local organizations, rather than the government itself.

One initiative taken by the Ministry of Health in 2011 was developing a Performance-based

Financing system (PFB) in order to improve health services in Congo Brazzaville. This plan

seeks to increase patient access to healthcare through funding delivery systems. This will include

extensive training of personnel, in order to promote better quality care. According to the

government, after eight months of implementation, there have been significant improvements,

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[248] Ibid.

[249] "Congo: State Urged to Improve "Disastrous" Healthcare System." *IRINnews*. IRIN, 12 Dec.
2007. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.

[250] "Performance Based Financing of Health Care." *Cordaid*. Cordaid, 2012. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.

[251] "Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)."

[252] "Congo-Brazzaville Rescuers Hampered by More Explosions." *The Guardian*. Guardian
News and Media, 06 Mar. 2012. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.

leading to an expansion of the system.[253] While this is a step in the right direction for Congo Brazzaville, more still needs to be done. Health expenditures must increase in order to meet the growing needs of the people because the current system is insufficient.

Conclusion

The state apparatus in Congo Brazzaville is deeply troubled. Since independence, the state has been plagued with political violence and instability, culminating in an unhealthy state apparatus. The perpetual political uncertainty as a result of the coups between the 1960s and 1990s, has seriously impacted the quality of the state. Political leaders are vying for power in order to obtain control of valuable resources, and doing little for the people. Violent clashes have resulted in this struggle for power, becoming commonplace for the people in Congo Brazzaville. In addition, the economy is undiversified, as it relies solely on its oil exports. Political leaders seek to seize complete control of the state, consolidating their power through corrupt and fraudulent means. And the state lacks sufficient institutions to provide basic security, healthcare, education, and social programs to the population. While the elites in society enjoy the benefits of the state's expansive oil wealth, more than 45% of the population remains below the poverty line.[254]

Although the West believed the solution to Congo Brazzaville's political instability and decaying state was democracy, this system seems to have accomplished little. The economy remains reliant on oil, political actors remain corrupt, instability has not dissipated, and institutional reform has been slow. The people within Congo Brazzaville may have gained the right to vote for their President, but with fraud and frequent boycotting of elections, they have not actually gained civil liberty. Democracy in Congo Brazzaville has been an act. Sassou-

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[253] "Performance Based Financing of Health Care."
[254] "Congo, Republic of the."

Nguesso has used elections as an illusion to appease the Western World, but these elections are

not free and fair. They are dominated by Sassou-Nguesso and his political party, and solidify his

authoritarian rule. If anything, democracy has resulted in more secrecy within the government.

The patronage networks persist, but they are less open about them, less transparent. Thus,

democracy is only a show for Sassou-Nguesso. But this needs to change. Congo Brazzaville will

not produce oil forever. Its reserves are being depleted and are projected to run out in less than

twenty years. Therefore, it must look towards developing new alternative exports because

> Congo [Brazzaville] still needs to overcome a number of obstacles related to its lack of
> infrastructure, as well as governance problems. Just 36 percent of the population has
> access to electricity . . . [and] the role of the private sector (excluding oil) remains very
> limited . . .
> agriculture represents less than 10 percent of the economy.[255]

The state must wean itself off of its dependence on oil revenues in order to prevent the state from

collapsing when oil reserves are drained. Infrastructural reform is crucial in achieving this

because the state is beginning to deteriorate before the people's eyes. With high revenues, but

little public expenditure, poverty persists. The government needs to begin to provide basic goods

and services to the people, such as better healthcare and social programs. Otherwise, the state

will become more radicalized, and violent upheaval will be continued to be seen as the only

solution, since this avenue has been frequently used throughout Congo Brazzaville's bloody past.

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[255] "Congo Must Diversify Its Economy and Think about the Post-Oil Era." *The World Bank*. The
World Bank, 18 Jan. 2013. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.

Chapter 7: Analysis

Introduction

The question remains, as to why Gabon has maintained stability within its territory, while Congo Brazzaville has not. While they are both former French colonies, produce roughly equal amounts of oil, and boast similar geographic climates, there are fundamental historical differences that ultimately result in a gap in stability between Congo Brazzaville and Gabon. There are a number of reasons that have caused this divide between the two states, including geographic location, relations with France, and political violence in one state and not the other, with some factors having a more significant impact than others. Some factors which have resulted in Congo Brazzaville's instability are not the root cause, but simply contribute to the problem. In particular, violence from neighboring states threatens its security, but is not the sole reason for which Congo Brazzaville is so high on the Fund for Peace's Failed State Index. The main reason for instability in Congo Brazzaville and stability in Gabon is due to the actions of the French.

Nature of Transition to Independence

First, French colonial influence affected Congo Brazzaville far more negatively than it did in Gabon. In Gabon, the Gabonese elite, who were empowered by the French, became sympathetic to the French cause - so much so, that they did not want to decolonize in 1960 when the rest of the Gabonese public did. Rather, they wanted to maintain close ties with their French compadres, in order to continue their mutually beneficial relationship. When the state did finally become independent in 1960, the ruling elites remained in power, and maintained close ties with the French. Gabon even modeled its political structure after its former colonial power, with a

President, Prime Minister, and Parliament, as well as a multi-party system.[256]

Congo Brazzaville did not have such a smooth transition. As the Southern city of Brazzaville was named the capital of the French colony, French Equatorial Africa (AEF), the city developed beyond most other colonial towns and cities. Therefore, education of the Southern natives of Congo Brazzaville reached higher levels than most other African states, including the Congolese living in the Northern region of the state. This was especially true in the Kongo and Vili villages which were considered the more privileged villages during the colonial era. A highly educated and privileged population in the Southern portion of the state was born in turn. The uneven development caused a divide between the more developed South and more rural North, increasing Northern resentment against the South. Once Congo Brazzaville gained independence in 1960, its relations with France began to decline, as it began to adopt more socialist policies. Additionally, post-independence, Northern and Southern factions began to emerge, and were pitted against one another.[257] As unemployment rates heightened, tensions continued to flare and the educated, working population became radicalized in effect. The radicalization of the educated youth as well as tensions between Northern and Southern Congolese would ultimately result in the constant political upheaval that Congo Brazzaville was to experience between 1963 to 1997. Therefore, the effect of the urbanization of the South, advanced a population that had very few employment opportunities, forcing it to fuse its skills to mobilize violent opposition instead.[258] In the case of Gabon, there was no radicalization of the population. Gabon's transition from colonialism was essentially a continuation of French

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[256] Reed, Michael C. "Gabon: A Neo-Colonial Enclave of Enduring French Interest." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25.02 (1987): 296-7. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Oct. 2013.

[257] Cordell, Dennis D. "The Republic of Congo." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d. Web. 17 Feb. 2014.

[258] Clark, John Frank. *The Failure of Democracy in the Republic of Congo*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008. 68-9. Print.

colonialism, with more freedom. As most of Gabon was pro-French, its alignment with its former colonial power afforded it greater stability.

Neo-Colonialism

Neo-colonial ties with France have significantly impacted the development of both Congo Brazzaville and Gabon. For Gabon, France has maintained a strong presence within the state's affairs. Beginning with the coup d'etat, ousting pro-French President Leon M'ba from power in 1964, France intervened militarily, reinstating M'ba. Moreover, after M'ba passed away in 1966, Jacques Foccart falsified the Gabonese constitution in order to ensure the Presidency went to another pro-Frenchman, Omar Bongo. Not only did France meddle in Gabon's affairs through empowering leaders who would remain loyal to its former colonial power, it also maintained a military garrison within the former colony. This military presence allowed for Gabon to spend virtually nothing on its security sector, but still be guaranteed ample protection. This included a Secret Service as well as a Presidential Guard, all of which reinforced Gabon's stability.[259] France's presence in Gabon, starting in 1964 sent a message to the Gabonese: the state could not be seized militarily, without the French intervening and reversing actions by the opposition. Thus, France has played a vital role in maintaining stability in Gabon, and ensuring that there be no political upheaval.

Congo Brazzaville has had a somewhat different relationship with France. After Felix Youlou became president once the state gained independence in 1960, Congo Brazzaville began to adopt more socialist policies, shifting further and further left. When Felix Youlou was overthrown in 1963 by a military coup, France did not come to his aid. President Youlou shifted away from the traditional French system through his socialist policies, distancing Congo

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[259] Ngolet, Fracois. "Ideological Manipulations and Political Longevity: The Power of Omar Bongo in Gabon since 1967." *African Studies Review* 43.2 (2000): 57. *JSTOR*. Web. 16 Jan. 2014.

Brazzaville from its former colonial power. This ultimately resulted in France's absence in

restoring stability in Congo Brazzaville when Youlou was ousted from power. Rather than

reinstate a socialist, non-French sympathizer, France allowed the military overthrow to stand.

This action set an alarming precedent for the people of Congo Brazzaville (particularly the

youth): the opposition had the right to take control of the state and reform in the way they

deemed fit. This included taking control through militarization and violent upheaval.[260] What

would follow from this neglect from France would be over 30 years of violent struggle in order

to seize power and control over the state's oil wealth. Congo Brazzaville's isolation from the

West reached its peak between the 1970s and the 1990s when Congo Brazzaville adopted more

Marxist-Leninist policies, through President Marien Ngouabi.

Congo Brazzaville shifted from a state with socialist policies and parties, to a state which

adopted a Soviet-style constitution, grew its bureaucracy to astronomical heights, and aligned

itself with the Soviet Union, China, and other Eastern bloc nations.[261] This drastic realignment

isolated Congo Brazzaville from the West, subsequently allowing for its internal turmoil to

persist without any external intervention. During this approximate 20 year period in Congo

Brazzaville's history, there were three different political overthrows, with the first being

President Ngouabi's assassination in 1977. Stability was rapidly deteriorating, as the next in line

for the Presidency, General Yhombi Opango, was only able to maintain power for two years. As

pressure from the international community was exerted upon Opango to reform the Congolese

state and shrink the bureaucracy, his favorability among the people proportionally faded,[262]

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[260] Clark, John. "Petro-Politics in Congo." *Journal of Democracy* 8.3 (1997): 68-9. *JSTOR*. Web.
31 Jan. 2014.
[261] "Congo (Brazzaville)." *Background Notes on Countries of the World: Republic of
Congo*(2011): n. pag. *Political Science Complete*. Web. 5 Feb. 2014.
[262] Eaton, David. "Diagnosing the Crisis in the Republic of Congo." *Africa* 76.01 (2006): 46-7.
JSTOR. Web. 4 Feb. 2014.

leading to much instability. This resulted in Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso seizing the

Presidency in 1977, which he retained until 1991. Isolation from the West allowed for constant

political upheaval within Congo Brazzaville, as there was no stabilizing power. The state

opposition was able, time and time again, to overthrow the government, and bring a new leader

to power. When this leader failed to meet the demands of the radicalized and divided population,

he was then ousted and room was made for a new leader. Eventually President Sassou-Nguesso

was able to retain his grip on power for 12 years - longer than any other leader in Congolese

history up to this point.

Consolidation of Power

The inability of political leaders to consolidate power in Congo Brazzaville has

significantly hindered the state's stability. Within less than 40 years there have been five

successful coups. Most leaders have fallen from power due to their inability to maintain

predominance over their people. In Congo Brazzaville, in particular, leaders struggle to appeal to

the entire population and put down their opposition given the North-South tensions. Leaders lack

political legitimacy based on this divide because even though they may be legitimate leaders for

their particular region, the other region, likely does not agree. While former Presidents such as

Youlou attempted to appeal to the rural peasantry by associating with the Pygmies, he, as well as

all other Presidents after him were all unsuccessful and were eventually thrown from power.

On the other hand, Gabon's political leader, Omar Bongo, was much more successful in

maintaining his grip on power. Since becoming President in 1966, he was seen by the Gabonese

as a "legitimate" President. This was due to his ancestral roots as a Batake, which traced him

back to the Pygmies. His ties to the Pygmies afforded him "supernatural powers" in the eyes of

the Bantus (rural peasants in the outlying villages) and subsequently a legitimate claim to the

presidency.[263] Thus, Bongo was able to retain social control over all Gabonese people, because he was seen has having a valid claim to power. Additionally, he was much more successful in suppressing his opposition, as he used the state's oil wealth to buy off all of his opponents, leaving him virtually uncontested. While some Congolese leaders made similar attempts, such as Youlou, they ultimately failed to put down the opposition, and were thrown from power. Thus, Bongo was able to do what Congolese leaders could not - consolidate power through legitimizing himself to the people and eliminating any threats to his presidency. Furthermore, unlike Congo Brazzaville, there was no divide among the Gabonese population. His legitimacy was not challenged by an ethnic group, such as the Fang, or a group of Gabonese living within a particular region of the state. Bongo maintained social control because the political community was more unified than Congo Brazzaville's. Therefore, Bongo was able to maintain his grip on power and more efficiently consolidate power.

North-South Divide

As previously mentioned, there is a divide between the Northern and Southern portion of Congo Brazzaville, which was exacerbated by French influence. The French developed most of the Southern region of the state, as Brazzaville was made the capital of the AEF, while the Northern region of the state remained largely undeveloped (and still does). As 70% of the population lives in Brazzaville, it is the most urbanized state in Africa. The North virtually remains uninhabited due to the fact that it is dominated by tropical jungle.[264] By favoring particular southern villages, the French created tensions among Northern and Southern Congolese. Once Congo Brazzaville gained independence in 1960, the North and South split politically, with the creation of the African Socialist Movement (MSA) and the Democratic

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[263] Ngolet, Fracois. 58.
[264] "Congo (Brazzaville)." *Background Notes on Countries of the World: Republic of Congo*(2011): n. pag. *Political Science Complete*. Web. 5 Feb. 2014.

Union for the Defense of African Interests (UDDIA). The North's MSA and the South's UDDIA were fundamentally different in their political philosophies in addition to their ethnic and geographic divide. The first President, Felix Youlou, was a Northerner and his socialist policies caused much unrest among the people, leading to his ousting, and the succession of Alphonse Massamba-Debat, a Southerner. Shortly after his rise to power, the North overthrew Massamba-Debat and replaced him with the Northerner, Marien Ngouabi. Seven years after Ngouabi secured the presidency, he was assassinated for his leftist policies (typical of the Northerners). He was highly opposed by the working and educated Southern class, and this ultimately led to his murder and the rise to power of a more conservative, Northern-born leader. Yhombi Opango became President following Ngouabi's assassination, but was then overthrown by the North's, Denis Sassou-Nguesso because his policies clashed with the North's Congolese Labor Party (PTC).[265] A common trend can be seen from these political upheavals - not only did these leaders fail to consolidate power, they were unsuccessful in appealing to their regional opponents, and this subsequently led to succession after succession of Northern and Southern leaders. Congo Brazzaville, between the periods of 1960 to 1997, was marked by the constant struggle for power between Northern and Southern political elites. Given their political differences, with the MSA calling for a strong bureaucracy and socialist policies and the UDDIA calling for close ties with France and private ownership,[266] clashes between the two was inevitable. The problem, however, was that there was no stabilizing force to subdue the conflict. This ultimately allowed militarization and political violence to occur, without the state being able to do anything to contain it.

By 1991, Sassou-Nguesso had successfully maintained his grip on power for

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[265] Cordell, Dennis D.
[266] Ibid.

approximately 13 years. However, as the West pushed for democracy, Sassou-Nguesso lost the

Presidential elections to Pascal Lissouba, a Southerner. The North-South tensions flared

following these elections, resulting in a full-out civil war in 1993. All candidates from the

election formed their own militias, splitting along North-South ethnic lines. It was not until 1997,

in which the fighting subsided, when Angola finally intervened in support of Sassou-Nguesso,

putting him back into power.

Although a divide between the North and South emerged during colonialism in Congo

Brazzaville, Gabon has luckily avoided such tensions. While there are a number of different

ethnic groups (there are about 40), there are "few of the major schisms by language, family, form

of livelihood, spatial isolation and differing ecologies that divide neighboring countries."[267]

Thus, Gabon does not have any divide among its population, as Congo Brazzaville does.

The Differential Impact of Democratization

Beginning in the early 90s, most African states were under pressure from the

international community to change from the one-party system and to the multi-party system. The

democratization of one party states in Africa had mixed success, however. While the West

believed that democracy was the key to "saving" the perilous states in the underdeveloped

continent, democracy was not the answer for all of these states. Most states, including Gabon and

Congo Brazzaville, in an effort to assuage the West, accepted the demands to democratize by

holding elections. For Gabon, these elections were simply a means of appeasing the West, and in

actuality did little to promote civil liberty and freedom. Rather than giving the Gabonese the

right to vote, elections have been marred by fraud and voter intimidation. Omar Bongo and his

political party won over 90 percent of the vote in most elections during his reign, signifying the

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[267] "Gabon Overview." *Minority Rights Group International*. Minority Rights Group
International, n.d. Web. 5 Mar. 2014.

failure of elections in bringing about democracy to Gabon. Rather, elections have been used to dupe the West into believing that the state is trying to democratize, when it is essentially still a one-party state. But, because of Bongo's ability to maintain power throughout these "democratic" elections, stability was preserved, therefore democracy ultimately did not affect Bongo's rule.

Congo Brazzaville's transition to democracy was not quite as smooth. When elections were scheduled in 1991, the preliminary vote revealed that Pascal Lissouba and Bernard Kolelas were the two candidates that would move to the final round, not the incumbent, Sassou-Nguesso. Being defeated in the first round of elections was a blow to Sassou-Nguesso and exposed the people's dissatisfaction with his corrupt ways. But the bigger problem that ensued was the uncertainty over control of the state and subsequent oil wealth. With Sassou-Nguesso out of the race, there was an opportunity for the South to recapture control of the state's wealth. Ultimately, Lissouba defeated Kolelas and was inaugurated in 1991. Unfortunately, what appeared to be the beginning of a freer Congo Brazzaville quickly turned into a state immersed in a violent struggle for power. While the Congolese were tired of Sassou-Nguesso's corruption and opulent lifestyle, Lissouba failed to offer a better alternative. Lissouba was pressured to cut the size of the bureaucracy and liberalize the economy, all of which proved unfavorable to the Congolese,[268] especially since all educated citizens would work for the state. When this opportunity dissipated, the educated population once again radicalized.

Lissouba could not gain control over Sassou-Nguesso's clientilist and patronage networks because many within the networks still remained loyal to Sassou-Nguesso, and therefore Lissouba was unable to consolidate power.[269] Eventually, the militarization of all political groups

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[268] Englebert, Pierre, and James Ron. 64.
[269] Ibid. 65.

became a reality with Sassou-Nguesso's Cobras, Lissouba's Ninjas, and Kolelas' Cocoyes. The dissolution of parliament by Lissouba marked the beginning of a political fight between the Cobras and Ninjas, which would last until early 2000. When a ceasefire was reached in 1997 with Angola's intervention, Sassou-Nguesso was reinstated as President. The events that ensued as a result of democratization in Congo Brazzaville exposed the fragility of the state, causing political uncertainty. The fighting between the political groups exposed the divide between the North and South and unmasked the problems resulting from these ethnic tensions.

Bordering States

Furthermore, both states have very different neighbors. Gabon borders Congo Brazzaville, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea. While these states are relatively high on the Failed State Index, with Equatorial Guinea ranking 47th and Cameroon 27th, neither currently suffer from violent conflict which threaten to spill over into Gabon. On the other hand, Congo Brazzaville borders Gabon, Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Between these five neighbors, Congo Brazzaville risks the possibility of violence pouring over its borders from not just one state, but multiple. In particular, Angola, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic of Congo threaten its regional security. Historically, Congo Brazzaville has hosted many refugees from these conflicts, with a tremendous influx of refugees in 2000. In 1999 the state hosted over 39,000 refugees, but in 2000, the number skyrocketed to 123,190 as a result of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The number has declined slightly, but Congo Brazzaville continues to have around 100,000 refugees within its borders.[270] In 2009, there were reports of a refugee crisis in Congo Brazzaville, as a result of the violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In December of

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[270] "UNHCR - 2002 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook Country Data Sheet - Congo." *UNHCR News*. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 5 Mar. 2014.

that year, that UNHCR reported that there were 77,488 refugees in Congo Brazzaville and aid

agencies could not meet the needs of so many refugees.[271] Moreover, the violence in the Central

African Republic has very recently begun to spill into Congo Brazzaville, as reports claim that

"fratricidal violence" has returned.[272] Moreover, with conflicts erupting in the Central African

Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo recently, the influx of refugees into Congo

Brazzaville has been equally detrimental. As of 2013, the UNHCR reported that Congo

Brazzaville was home to over 60,000 refugees from these states, as well as Chad and Rwanda.

The situation for these refugees has been dire, as the state of Congo Brazzaville lacks the

capacity to deal with them. There are a number of challenges the refugee crisis poses to Congo

Brazzaville, as stated by the UNHCR,

> The operational environment poses several logistical challenges to providing humanitarian
> assistance to refugees in the north of the country. Challenges include the lack of road access to eighty per cent of the refugee population and changing water levels that make movements by river impossible during six months of the year.[273]

Congo Brazzaville has difficulty providing basic services to its own people, let alone displaced

persons from other African states. Thus, the refugee crisis has caused instability within the

already fragile state. The most destabilizing threat stems from the Central African Republic, as

the recent escalation of violence has displaced between 80,000 and 100,000 persons, most of

them seeking refuge in Congo Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and other

neighboring states, with many more expected in the coming months.[274]

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[271] "In-depth: Congo's Refugee Crisis: DRC-CONGO: Needs Unmet as Refugees Flee from Congo to Congo." *IRINnews*. N.p., 9 Dec. 2009. Web. 6 Mar. 2014.
[272] Bodansky, Yossef. "Chaos in the Heart of Africa: Time for S. Sudan to Act and for U.S.-enabled Rebels, Sudan and Iran to Back off." *World Tribune*. World Tribune, 25 Feb. 2014. Web. 25 Feb. 2014.
[273] "Republic of the Congo." *UNHCR News*. The United Nations, n.d. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.
[274] "AllAfrica." *AllAfrica.com: Central African Republic: Refugee Crisis Hits Central African Republic's Neighbours As More Flee Violence (Page 1 of 2)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Feb. 2014.

Conclusion

Ultimately what has resulted from the instability in Congo Brazzaville and the stability in Gabon is a significant gap in the capacity of statehood between the two former French colonies. Due to the violent struggle for state control within Congo Brazzaville, the state has been unable to deliver basic goods and services to its people. The instability from the violence has inhibited the state's development due to the constant struggles for power. Furthermore, the fighting has physically damaged Congo Brazzaville's structure, particularly within the city of Brazzaville (as well as the outlying towns), where most of the fighting occurred.[275] Although most of the fighting between the Cobras and the Ninjas has subsided, the tensions still exist. Congo Brazzaville is not a free state. Elections still continue to be fraudulent and corruption remains rampant.[276] The economy is still highly undiversified, as the state relies predominantly on its oil exports for its revenues. Oil revenues only benefit the elites in society, as more than 45 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.[277] While education and literacy rates remain relatively high, the healthcare, social service, and security sectors continue to perish. This can be seen with its low score of .534 and ranking of 142nd out of 208 states on the HDI.[278] It is clear that Congo Brazzaville is an incredibly troubled state, with few functioning state programs and institutions.

While Gabon is far from the ideal state, it is relatively more stable than many of its African neighbors, especially Congo Brazzaville. The absence of violent conflict has afforded Gabon far more stability and capacity than its neighbor. Omar Bongo was able to maintain power for 40 years with minimal threats to his Presidency, allowing the state to develop beyond Congo

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[275] "Congo (Brazzaville)."
[276] "Congo, Republic of (Brazzaville)." *Freedom House*. Freedom House, n.d. Web. 1 Feb. 2014.
[277] "Congo, Republic of the." *Central Intelligence Agency*. Central Intelligence Agency, n.d. Web. 6 Feb. 2014.
[278] "Human Development Reports."

Brazzaville. Gabon's health care, education, security, and social service sector are relatively

sophisticated for the African state, thus Bongo was not a total tyrant. It has a relatively high

ranking for an African state on the HDI, given it is 106th out of 208 states with a score of .683.[279]

While corruption and cronyism existed during Bongo's reign, and still exist today, his ability to

silence his opposition was crucial to his success, as well as his well-maintained relationship with

France. The security in which France provided Gabon during its early years as a newly

independent state, as well as Bongo's ability to subdue his opponents and incorporate them into

the bureaucracy, were crucial in maintaining stability within Gabon. Bongo's success in

preventing violent conflict in Gabon has paved the way for his son, President Ali Bongo

Ondimba, to develop the state further. Through the diversification of the economy and providing

universal health care to all Gabonese citizens, Ali Bongo can continue to promote stability within

the state without simultaneously focusing on the threat of internal conflict.

The same cannot be said of Congo Brazzaville. Given its unstable past, violent conflict

has hindered its ability to develop, and still does. Unlike Gabon, the beginning of Congo

Brazzaville's life as a state was marked with growing tensions between Northern and Southern

factions, created by the French during the colonial era. The North's socialist tendencies and

Youlou's rise to power, began the distancing of Congo Brazzaville from France. Thus, in 1963,

when Youlou was thrown from power, the French did not intervene because it was in support of

Massamba-Debat and his more pro-French tendencies. His fall from power shortly after,

however, did not merit a French intervention. By the time that Ngouabi came to power in 1968,

Congo Brazzaville had shifted itself to a socialist state and cut off all ties from the West. By

aligning itself with the Soviet Union, China, and other Eastern bloc countries, Congo Brazzaville

was responsible for its own security sector. The French had no part in protecting the state of

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[279] "Human Development Reports."

Congo Brazzaville should a coup d'etat occur, as it did in 1977, when Ngouabi was assassinated. Congo Brazzaville ultimately prevented any external intervention in its North-South conquest for control of the state. There was no stabilizer that could end the continual battle for power, allowing the North and South's clashes to persist. Therefore, the North and South divide caused by the French resulted in the struggle for control of the state. The isolation of Congo Brazzaville from France, however, is what perpetuated this state of conflict. Without a stabilizer, as in Gabon, Congo Brazzaville's political upheaval continued until Angola eventually intervened in 1997, reinstating Sassou-Nguesso. Since returning to power, tensions between the North and South remain, but Sassou-Nguesso now has the military support to suppress any threats. His plan of incorporating opposition forces into the government has allowed for greater stability, but occasional, small-scale guerrilla warfare still persists. According to the Worldwide Governance Indicators, Congo Brazzaville scores a 31 out of 100 in political stability and absence of terrorism, an 11 out of 100 in government effectiveness, and an 8 out of 100 in regulatory quality,[280] signaling that the state of Congo Brazzaville is in dismal shape. Its instability is high, the government has no capacity, and it is ineffective as well. Thus, the state has been significantly hampered by the fighting. Elections within Congo Brazzaville are not free, and corruption is still a large problem. The Corruption Perceptions Index in 2013 ranked Congo Brazzaville 154th out of 175 states with a score of 22, down four points from the past year. In contrast, Gabon's stability is due to the fact that the French did not exacerbate a divide among the population and it maintained a strong presence within its former colony after its independence. This allowed Omar Bongo to maintain his grip on power, as his opposition could not militarily overthrow him without dealing with the French military. This has contributed to Gabon's higher scores in the Worldwide Governance Indicators, as Gabon scores a 57 out of 100

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[280] "Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2013 Update."

in political stability and absence of terrorism, a 24 out of 100 in government effectiveness, and a 33 in regulatory quality.[281] In comparison to Congo Brazzaville's scores, Gabon has much maintains much more stability and has an overall healthier state apparatus. Subsequently, given France's absence in Congo Brazzaville's political affairs, the opposition in Congo Brazzaville had been allowed to militarily seize power, disrupting stability and inhibiting state development. Military seizures of power became the norm for Congolese society ever since Youlou's ousting in 1963. Thus, France's actions have largely impacted the success of Gabon and the failure of Congo Brazzaville.

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[281] Ibid.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Although there are many similarities between Congo Brazzaville and Gabon, there are additionally many differences which have resulted in a significant gap in stability. The absence of political violence in Gabon allowed for Bongo to maintain his grip on power for more than 40 years, while the political violence in Congo Brazzaville inhibiting leaders' from maintaining power since independence. Gabon was able to avoid a turbulent political history such as Congo Brazzaville's because it maintained close relations with France post-independence. France's neo-colonial presence in Gabon was critical in maintaining stability in the initial years after independence, as it reversed a military coup in 1964. Given its military garrison in Gabon and its 1964 intervention, France sent a message to the Gabonese that illegitimate political succession was not to be tolerated. It was not allowed and it was unsuccessful in bringing about state reform. On the other hand, when President Youlou of Congo Brazzaville was overthrown in 1965, France did not come to his aid. His overthrow was the result of growing tensions between the North and South Congolese (the divide that was strengthened by the French during colonialism), as the two sides split politically. Youlou was a Northern socialist, and therefore France supported the military coup which occurred. However, what it did not anticipate was the precedent this set for the Congolese. Militarization was a legitimate means of enacting political change. This subsequently led to a period of political violence and military coups until the early 2000s, resulting in tremendous instability. Thus, France's actions in Gabon and inaction in Congo Brazzaville have impacted the stability of each state. This fundamental difference

between the two states' history is critical because it explains the failure of one state, while explaining the success of the other. The explanation allows for a greater understanding of what can contribute to a state's failure or success. Therefore, by looking at these two cases, it is clear that France's contributions to Gabon's security sector was instrumental in maintaining security within the state, while, the neglect of Congo Brazzaville resulted in political turmoil for decades. The instability has hindered the Congolese state's capacity in delivering basic goods and services to its people. Thus, the instability in Congo Brazzaville has affected the state's ability to function properly. Gabon, on the other hand, has not been plagued by political violence and instability, and subsequently has a relatively healthier state apparatus, given that it has a universal health care system, high education levels, less corruption, etc. By looking at these two cases, and the different trajectory each case highlights, the international community must recognize the importance of maintaining stability in these states. While Gabon is far from the ideal state, it is still one of the most stable African states, and boasts advanced state programs, which Congo Brazzaville lacks. In order to develop African states, stability must first be present.