

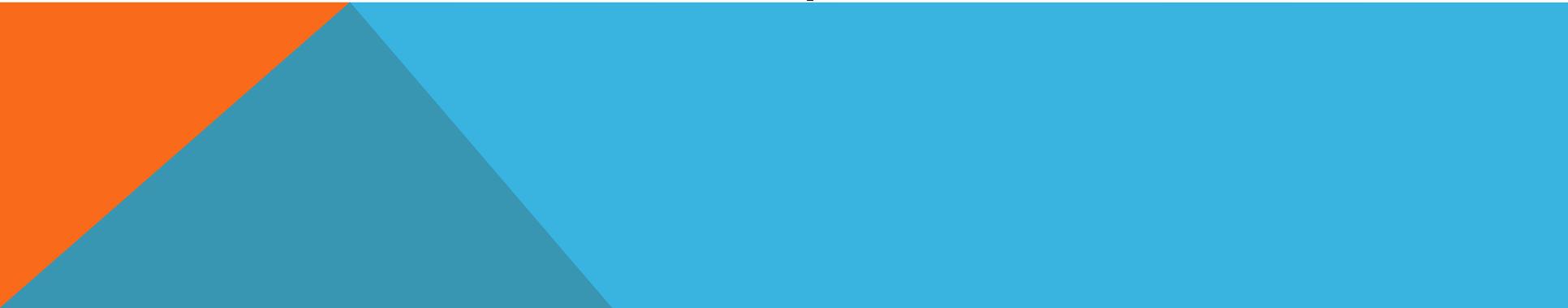


**THE FAILURE OF CONGO'S EXPERIMENT
WITH DEMOCRACY IN THE 1990S**

WHY DID THE EXPERIMENT FAIL? FRAMING THE QUESTION....

- Why does it matter?
(Because democratization will continue)
 - Deep causes versus proximate causes
 - Structures and agents
 - A challenge of many good explanations
 - The INTRIGUING case of Benin
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Seven Interesting Hypotheses

1. Congo's Political Culture
 2. The Nature of Congo's Economy
 3. The Challenges of Identity Politics
 4. The Army and the Militias
 5. Institutional choices for the Experiment in Democracy
 6. Gallic games (ou, les follies Françaises)
 7. The limits of leadership
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CONGO'S POLITICAL CULTURE



Pro-Democratic *Values* are Needed

- Congo had no history of democratic rule, in pre-colonial, colonial, or post-colonial eras
 - Members of the political class were generally unwilling to cede power
 - Access to power more about money than visions
 - Moderate politicians, like André Milongo, got less political support than more hard-line ones
 - Education level of the masses was low
 - Toxic mix of occult beliefs and politics
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The Weakness of the Congolese Economy



Economy and Democracy: Multiple Dimensions

Query: Why does economics matter?

1. Impoverished population less likely to have patience for democracy (and is more likely to be duped)
 2. Small and fragile middle class cannot be bulwark of democracy
 3. Economic growth following a transition is key
 4. The *rentier* (petroleum fueled) economy undermines consolidation
 5. There is an established long-term linkage between economic progress and changes in political culture?
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The Challenges of Identity Politics

LE ROI MAKOKO, 1882



VILI MASK



The Paradoxes of Identity

- Fruitless to deny that the wars of Congo have been ethno-regional, like the voting in the freer elections (1992)
 - Note the layers of identity: North versus South, Nibolek versus Pool, Bembé versus others, etc.
 - Note the level of inter-marriage and trans-ethnic ties
 - Note the social peace in Congo during times of political peace
 - But politicians use identity as a resource
 - Thus: ethnicity does not matter until it is everything (crises)
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Forces In Conflict



The Army and the militias

- Three challenges for the army:
(a) politico-cultural (b) ethnic tensions and (c) insufficient funding
- BUT, many professional military men played a positive role, especially Generals Ngollo and Mokoko (mediation after 1993)
- There was NOT a coup d'état (despite threats)
- AND, many ordinary soldiers refused to fire on civilians
- THUS, Congo's army reflected the society, but did not pose a distinctive problem
- Meanwhile, the militias were *political* creations, not social ones
- Conclusion: the armed forces are not chiefly to blame

Le Fantôme Français, hante-il le Congo?



Was the 1992 constitution at fault?

- Argument stems from idea that the war of 1997 was a continuation of the war of 1993
 - In turn, the war of 1993 caused by “bras de fer” between president and the 1992 parliament
 - BUT, what about Lissouba’s behavior?
 - And WAS the war of 1997 a continuation of the previous war? (no)
 - Nestor Makouzi-Wolo defends his work
 - Courts? Local institutions?
 - Conclusion: Will matters more than institutional designs
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Les Follies Françaises?



Did French Intervention doom Democracy?

- Lissouba was under French suspicion in 1997
 - French government AND Elf supported Sassou after war began? (and before??)
 - BUT, Lissouba *regime* appears to have started the war
 - And AFTER the UNESCO reconciliation achieved
 - Concession: Les Congolais croient que oui.
 - BUT: Lissouba's failure not the failure of democracy
 - Conclusion: French action not the key to the START of the war
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Leadership: Did These Men Behave Well?

