

FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLIC GOODS IN AFRICA:  
ISLAMIC ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR OF THE DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF CONGO

By

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In memory of Donald McCloud Leinweber, my beloved grandfather,  
and in honor and gratitude to the resilient people of the Congo.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFDL	<i>Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération</i> (Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation)
AFILMA	<i>Association des Femmes Intellectuelles et Lettrées au Maniema</i> (Association of Intellectual Women of Maniema)
ALFED	<i>Alliance Feminine Pour le Développement</i> (Feminine Alliance for Development)
APEMA	<i>Association pour la Promotion de l'Éducation au Maniema</i> (Association for the Promotion of Education in Maniema)
APPP	African Power and Politics Program
AWCPD	African Women's Committee for Peace and Development
BAFEMA	<i>Barzza de Femmes au Maniema</i> (Meeting of Women of Maniema)
BDD	<i>Bureau Diocésane pour le Développement</i> (Diocese Office for Development)
BIDH	<i>Bureau Islamique des Droits Humains</i> (Islamic Office of Human Rights)
BTC	Belgian Technical Cooperation
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEFEMA	<i>Collectif des Femmes du Maniema</i> (Collective of Women of Maniema)
CFMUDEMA	<i>Collectif des Associations des Femmes Musulmanes Pour le Développement du Maniema</i> (Collective of Muslim Women's Associations for the Development of Maniema)
CINY	<i>Centre Islamique Nuuru el Yaqiini</i> (Islamic Center <i>Nuuru el Yaqiini</i> )
CNDP	<i>Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple</i> (National Congress for the Defense of the People)
COMICO	<i>Communauté Islamique en République Démocratique du Congo</i> (Islamic Community in the Democratic Republic of Congo)
COMIZA	<i>Communauté Islamique en République du Zaïre</i> (Islamic Community in the Republic of Zaïre)

CONADHI	<i>Conseil National des Droits de l'homme en Islam</i> (National Council for Human Rights in Islam)
CONAFEM	<i>Comité Nationale Feminine de COMICO</i> (National Women's Committee of COMICO)
COPROFEM	<i>Comité Provinciale Feminine de COMICO</i> (Provincial Women's Committee of COMICO)
CSO	Civil society organization
DDRRR	Disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of Congo
DFID	United Kingdom's Department for International Development
E.P.	<i>École primaire</i> (primary school)
FARDC	<i>Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo</i> (the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo)
FAZ	<i>Forces Armées Zairoises</i> (Armed Forces of Zaire)
FBO	Faith based organization
FDLR	<i>Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda</i> (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
ICD	Inter-Congolese Dialogue
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LIFDM	<i>Ligue des Femmes Pour le Développement du Maniema</i> (League of Women for the Development of Maniema)
MDG	Millennium Development Goals

MISCO	<i>Mission Islamique du Congo</i> (Islamic Mission of Congo)
MLC	<i>Mouvement de Libération du Congo</i> (Movement for the Liberation of Congo)
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPR	<i>Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution</i> (Popular Movement of the Revolution)
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
ONUC	<i>Opération des Nations Unies au Congo</i> (United Nations Operation in the Congo)
PPC	People's Power Committees
RCD	<i>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie</i> (Congolese Rally for Democracy)
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SNC	Sovereign National Council
UFMC	<i>Union des Femmes Musulmanes du Congo</i> (Union of Muslim Women of Congo)
UMAMA	<i>Umoja wa Mama wa Maendeleo</i> (Unity of Women for Development)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Economic and Social Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

UPKA	<i>Union Paysanne pour le Progrès</i> (Union of Peasants for Progress)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWAKI	<i>Umoja kwa Wanawake Wakulima wa Kivu ya Maniema</i> (Unity of Women Farmers of Kivu and Maniema)
WFDD	World Faiths Development Dialogue
WFP	World Food Programme
WOPPA	Women as Partners for Peace in Africa

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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In the comparative study of African politics, scholars have devoted significant attention to understanding the set of extremely weak states on the African continent often categorized as “failed”. Much emphasis has been placed on examining the causes and consequences of state failure, but relatively little work has explored how and by whom governance functions, such as the provision of public goods, have often continued to be carried out in the context of state weakness. In fact, increasingly the provision of such goods has become the work of non-state actors, with religious organizations often playing key roles. This study examines the complex interactions of the weak state with non-state actors in public goods provision in Africa, and in particular how faith based organizations are collaborating with or replacing states that are unable to perform these tasks.

In the particular case of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the state has a long history of relegating the provision of education to religious organizations, primarily Catholic and Protestant. This study explores the changing role of Islamic organizations in the Congo from primarily marginalized spiritual institutions to collaborators with the

central state and other religious communities in the operation of institutions of public education. It is based on seven months of comparative fieldwork in four Congolese towns (Kindu, Kasongo, Kisangani, and Kinshasa) during two fieldwork periods in 2008 and 2009. The research methods employed included two hundred semi-structured interviews in Swahili and French, intensive participant observation, and archival research in the libraries of the University of Kisangani.

After describing the proliferation of Muslim associations in post-conflict Congo, especially in the education sector, this study argues that this has been possible because of two primary factors, one internal and the other external. The first explanatory factor is that in recent years there has been an easing of historic tensions within the Muslim community itself. The external factor is the opportunity that this moment in post-conflict Congolese history presents as the state is too weak to govern on its own, yet increasingly democratic and allowing access to previously marginalized groups, such as the Muslim minority.

CHAPTER 1  
HOW ARE PUBLIC GOODS PROVIDED IN WEAK AFRICAN STATES? EXAMINING  
THE ROLE OF FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

On the last weekend of March 2009, the sleepy provincial capital of Kindu was overtaken by an influx of Congolese military personnel. Somewhere between three and six thousand FARDC (armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo) soldiers arrived in town with orders to deploy to the forest area bordering Maniema and South Kivu provinces, near the town of Shabunda. They were there as part of Kimia II, an organized military campaign designed to rout out FDLR (*Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda*) rebels, the remnants of the Hutu groups that perpetrated the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. The group of soldiers that arrived in Kindu was to advance several hundred kilometers eastward, while other troops coming from South Kivu would force the rebels to retreat westward into the forest. However, the demoralized troops that suddenly appeared in Kindu, some with their wives and children in tow, had received no salary for months, had no barracks to sleep in, and were provided with no transportation to get to the conflict zone by the Congolese government, one of the world's most infamous failed states.

So the soldiers did what most rational people would do in such a situation: they used the only assets they had, their weapons, to prey on the local population for food and shelter. The several weeks they were in Kindu were incredibly tense, with international organizations giving their staff sundown curfews, the burglary of the VodaCom cellular phone store downtown, and numerous reports of civilian harassment. It became increasingly clear that the troops had no means of transportation to leave town and fulfill their mission, although a few brave soldiers began to walk toward their destination, while others rode there on bicycles and motorcycles confiscated from

locals. As the situation persisted, the Catholic Church grew weary of threats to the population, and the period of insecurity came to an end when the Bishop of the Kasongo Diocese sent a large lorry truck to transport the soldiers from Kindu to their battlefield.

This anecdote raises a number of interesting questions driving this study. Weber tells us that one of the most defining duties of states is providing security, or having a monopoly of violence in a territory. However, despite having a national army and outlining military objectives, the Congolese state in this scenario made clear its inability to provide this most basic task of governing. It was the Catholic Church, and not the Congolese government, that ultimately provided the necessary means for the soldiers to perform their duty. As such, we are left to ponder the central questions of this study: How do public goods, and which ones, get provided in Africa's weak states? How and why are faith based organizations (FBOs) stepping in to collaborate with or fill in gaps left by a failed or weak state? And what are the political implications for the local population, religious associations, and for the state when FBOs provide governance functions?

Undisputedly, more than a decade of war in parts of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has had an immensely negative impact on the social fabric of communities and on individual lives. However, tales of woe and destruction are not all that have arisen out of the ashes of the Congo wars. This study demonstrates how the minority Muslim community has capitalized upon this historic moment of state weakness and desperate human need to mobilize for the benefit of the larger society. Despite decades of marginalization, discrimination, and withdrawal from political and

development realms, in post-conflict DRC Muslim associations are organizing to provide public goods. Specifically, although Catholic and Protestant groups, with the support of the central state, have been running educational facilities since colonial times, Islamic organizations have increasingly become involved in the provision of education since the formal end of the conflict in 2002.

Therefore, this study first documents how the Muslim community has increasingly taken an active part in the provision of public goods, and then asks why Muslims have been able to do so and why now. There are two other possibilities that could arise from this situation of state weakness in the Congo. One is that neither the state nor other organizations deliver services and that there is no effective education system. The other, and more plausible in the Congo case, is that Christian organizations continue to play a key role in public good provision, but that the Muslim community remains marginalized and uninvolved. However, that is not the case. The Muslim community, despite its historic marginalization, is getting involved in the provision of public goods in post-war Congo.

In order to understand why this has occurred, this study argues that the minority Muslim community has been able to mobilize for two primary reasons. First is the overcoming of internal barriers in the form of conflict within the Muslim community at all levels, and second the external factor of the opportunity available in this unique post-conflict setting where increased demand for services intersects with a weak and democratizing Congolese state unable to provide an adequate supply, thus encouraging the mobilization of a heretofore withdrawn and marginalized minority population.

A key finding of the external opportunity argument is that Muslim provision of education has been possible because of the existing model of hybrid governance in the Congo, where public good provision in the education realm requires the cooperation and resources of both the Congolese state and faith based organizations. This finding thus leads us to argue that the failed state literature, to be examined below, must be nuanced to recognize that non-state actors, such as NGOs and FBOs, do not simply fill a void left by the failed state. Instead, many citizens of failed states in reality live under a form of hybrid governance, where public goods provision is the result of state and non-state collaboration.

### **Theoretical Perspectives**

A World Bank (2005) report on the state of education in the Democratic Republic of Congo at the end of two disastrous wars placed the country as among the bottom five countries in the world for the number of children in school. What is striking about the Congo case is that as the state retreated from providing this public good (education represented only 6% of government expenditure), individual households and voluntary social organizations responded. The report noted that, “households finance between 80-90 percent of total expenditures in public sector institutions,” (World Bank 2005, xviii). The majority of the management of the education sector in post-conflict DRC is provided by faith based organizations whose vocations include not only spiritual tasks but also providing local communities with much needed services that the central state is incapable of providing alone.

As FBOs engage in governance functions, what are the political ramifications? This research question speaks to several topics of current interest in the field of comparative political science, and especially to the literature on religion and politics, and

on African politics. These include the politics shaping the provision of public goods, the factors affecting the capacity of weak states as well as the consequences of state weakness, and the role of faith based organizations in delivering public goods.

In his most recent book, Robert Bates (2008) sought to understand why some African states failed and remained in a state of failure in the late 1900s. One of the important factors, in Bates' analysis, was the decline in public revenue, partly the result of the recession in the global economy, and partly from poor policy choices by African state elites. With fewer state resources, the salaries of public employees suffered, forcing many to make different choices in order to survive. Some chose to spend little time at their public place of employment and seek revenue in the private sector, while others chose to retain their position but make ends meet by selling "services to which the citizenry were formally entitled," (Bates 2008, 105). Soldiers demanded that citizens contribute to their own security, doctors demanded that they pay for medical advice at public hospitals, and teachers demanded that parents augment their meager government salaries. The result was that the burden for providing goods that had been public and provided by the state in the 1960s-70s, increasingly fell on the shoulders of African citizens in the 1980s-90s. This study seeks to understand how one such African society organized to cope with the demands of public goods in the absence of state leadership.

### **Delivering Public Goods in the Developing World**

The academic concept of "public goods" has a contentious history within the economics discipline where it originated, and has been used by other disciplines with a wide range of meanings. In this section we will trace key elements of this evolution, from an original link between economic theory and an attempt to understand

government expenditure, to a more restrictive use of the term from the economics discipline, and finally to its incorporation within political science and its growing popularity in the subfield of African politics.

In this study, 'public good' is used as a theoretical concept most closely associated with that employed in recent years by scholars of African politics and development. As the African Power and Politics Program (APPP), which provided generous funding for this study, began as a research consortium linking scholars from around the world and from multiple disciplines, it faced a difficult task of creating theoretical concepts that could be of use to all. In an early communication, the program director described public goods as, "a large range of outcomes from human activity including both quite concrete things – buses, bridges and lavatories, and health and education services – and relatively more abstract good things: regulations that make buses, bridges and lavatories safe to use; inspections and disciplinary regimes that underpin the quality of health care and teaching," (Booth 2008, 1). By focusing on the importance of the term "good", Booth encouraged us to look at positive development outcomes, something that would be more difficult to accomplish by referring to education and healthcare as "public services", as opposed to public goods (Ibid.).

The original meaning of the term public goods is closely linked with how many scholars, including the present study, use the term today. In "The Pure Theory of Public Expenditure" Samuelson labored to distinguish between private consumption goods and what he then termed collective consumption goods, "which all enjoy in common in the sense that each individual's consumption of such a good leads to no subtraction from any other individual's consumption of that good," (Samuelson 1954, 387). Even though

the term public goods was not presented in this introductory work on the topic, the most important contribution was the notion that the concept is inextricably linked with governmental provision. The following year, Samuelson produced a more detailed discussion of the topic in response to criticism by his colleagues, and formally introduced the concept of a public good. Some of the public goods he listed included an outdoor circus, national defense, education, courts, highways, and police and fire protection (Samuelson 1955). Again, such goods are optimally provided by government for the benefit of any citizen, such that in theory, regardless of how many people make use of them, others are always able to enjoy them as well.

As such, the pure economic theory of public goods that grew out of Samuelson's work defined them as nonrival and nonexcludable. "Nonrivalry of consumption" or "indivisibility of benefits" means that when one person uses the good, that does not take away from another person's ability to use the same good, such as the enjoyment of watching a sunset (Cornes and Sandler 1986, 6). Nonexcludability means that when the good has been provided, such as firework displays, pollution-control, and streetlights, the benefits of that good are available to everyone (Ibid.). However, the following decade led to innovation as economists such as Olson (1965) started to examine impure public goods, and showed that there is a spectrum of goods, as opposed to a simple dichotomy between public and private (Cornes and Sandler 1986, 3). "Gradually, the list of impure public goods expanded to include, among others, recreation areas, schools, highways, communication systems, information networks, national parks, waterways, and the electromagnetic spectrum," (Ibid., 4).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It can be argued, for example, that schools are not pure public goods because there must be a limit on the number of children who can attend a particular school, simply because of the size of the school

In addition, Samuelson's original linkage of public goods with government provision began to be heavily contested. For example, Coase (1974) debunked the necessary linkage between the two by examining the way economists had discussed the lighthouse as an example of something that would benefit all of society, but would be difficult for private companies to provide because of a lack of payment enforcement for those who used it, and therefore was necessarily provided by the government. Coase provided an argument that public provision of lighthouses and other goods was often less efficient than private provision, as well as provided a detailed history of how lighthouses were run in Britain to show that in fact, lighthouses had long been run by private enterprise. Although he concluded that economists should therefore abstain from using the lighthouse as a metaphor for public goods, Coase was also relying on his empirical data to demonstrate that the theoretical connection between public goods and government provision should not be held as a given.

As economic theory oscillated between the extremes of requiring complete provision by government and better outcomes in terms of efficiency if carried out by private enterprise, the most useful definition appears to come from the middle path between the two. In a response to Coase's work on the lighthouse example, van Zandt (1993) demonstrated how British lighthouses actually were managed by private enterprises, but with significant governmental assistance (van Zandt 1993, 48). In an effort to make economic theories of public goods more applicable outside of academia, he argued that, "the stark dichotomy between 'private' provision and 'government' provision of goods and services...is, at best, a useless abstraction and, at worst, a

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buildings, number of desks, and availability of teachers. Others may argue that although a particular school building may not be a true public good, an education *system* can meet the term's definition.

barrier to understanding how goods and services are provided in the real world. The dichotomy veils the great variety of institutional structures in which the provision of goods and services takes place,” (van Zandt 1993, 71).

Like van Zandt, comparative political science is very concerned with how our academic theories work on the ground in real world cases. In recent years, several scholars have sought a more nuanced understanding of the provision of public goods in the developing world, especially in Africa, by acknowledging the important role played by identity-based groups, and particularly the role of ethnicity. For example, Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein (2007, 2009) conducted experimental games with members of various ethnic groups in Kampala, Uganda to determine if and why higher levels of ethnic diversity would negatively impact the provision of public goods, as previous literature in the field had purported. They found that homogenous ethnic groups do better in providing goods because they “possess both norms and networks that facilitate sanctioning of community members who fail to contribute to collective endeavors,” (Habyarimana et al. 2007, 722). Their subject and research site were immensely practical, as the Ugandan government had devolved the provision of public goods in these communities to local councils who were in turn forced to mobilize their constituents in order to provide goods such as security and garbage collection (Habyarimana et al. 2009, 19).

In another recent attempt to understand the relationship between ethnic diversity and public goods provision, Baldwin and Huber (2010) expanded upon the previous study both in terms of breadth of cases and in deepening our understanding that groups differ from one another along two axes, cultural (the primary focus of Habyarimana et

al.) and economic. Their analysis of forty-six nations, one-quarter of them in Africa, revealed, “countries with higher levels of inequality between groups have lower levels of public goods,” (Baldwin and Huber 2010, 645). Their model measured public good provision using variables from the World Bank’s World Development Indicators related to health, education, and infrastructure, including government spending on the entire education sector and specifically for primary schooling (Ibid., 654). Despite their concentration on variation between ethnic groups, in their conclusion they broadened their scope by stating, “it is clear that group-based economic differences do not arise by chance – they are the result of political processes that unfold over time, and that are reinforced or ameliorated by government policy decisions,” (Ibid., 659-60). The following example delves more into the relationship between ethnic groups and governments in the realm of public goods.

Using an in-depth comparison between communities in different African states, the role of ethnicity in public goods provision is further nuanced. One such study revealed that, “ethnic diversity leads to lower public goods funding in western Kenya, but is not associated with poor collective action outcomes in western Tanzania,” (Miguel 2004, 360). In uncovering the mechanisms to explain the differences, Miguel argued that national policies have had a significant effect. By examining Kenyan and Tanzanian state policies, such as national language, educational curriculum and reform of local institutions, he concluded that the nation-building policies of Tanzania encouraged inter-ethnic collaboration and made it possible for diverse rural communities to effectively raise funds to provide public goods. On the contrary, the ethnically divisive state policies of Kenya trickled down to the local level and made public goods provision very

difficult. For the purposes of the present study what is most intriguing about Miguel's work is that it goes beyond a focus on the role of ethnic groups, and addresses the state's indirect role in the provision of public goods by shaping the salience and nature of ethnic identities. This conclusion highlights that a key element of understanding how public goods are provided in African states lies in the interaction of the government with non-state actors.

The recent studies by Habyarimana et al., Baldwin and Huber, and Miguel provide useful examples of scholarship with a focus on the real world relevance of public good provision that is at the heart of this study. Like them, we seek to ask how public goods are provided in failed and/or weak African states. However, instead of focusing on ethnic groups as key non-state actors, this study asks: What are the roles of faith based organizations in the provision of such goods? And in particular, how do the state and Muslim organizations collaborate to provide education in post-conflict Democratic Republic of Congo?

We seek to answer such questions in acknowledgement of the "variety of institutional structures" involved in public good provision (van Zandt 1993, 71). We therefore do not follow a strict economic definition of public goods, but instead follow the political science convention of recent scholars mentioned above, who include education as a public good. In this broader sense, public goods refer to goods or services that states are normally expected to provide to all citizens (once again linking the term to its original use by Samuelson), although we recognize that in reality few, if any, African nations are able / desire to do so without the assistance of other non-state actors.

## The Delivery of Public Goods in Weak States

The theoretical concept of state weakness bears directly on the literature regarding the provision of public goods. A weak state is by definition less capable of providing services for its citizens.<sup>2</sup> In many developing countries suffering from some form of weakened state capacity, if public goods are provided at all, provision is especially dependent on non-state actors, such as international organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious institutions, and grassroots movements. This section discusses the literature on the role of non-state actors in replacing state functions, particularly in weak African states.

In recent years, scholars of African politics have categorized a number of states on the continent as “failed”, “weak”, or “quasi” states.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the various terminology and definitions offered, these distinctions imply that the central state is not sufficiently strong or capable of fulfilling its sovereign duties, one of which is the provision of goods to society. Though these labels are useful, by focusing our attention on the limitations of state capacity, these approaches tend to ignore questions about whether, in fact, other actors are compensating for state weakness in such areas as the

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<sup>2</sup> Joel Migdal (1988) defined state capability as the ability to “penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways” (4). According to him, strong states do this well but weak states have low capabilities to perform these tasks.

<sup>3</sup> For discussions of failed states see Young (1994) and Lemarchand (2003). Young discussed four failed African states in the 1990s, of which Congo was one (2). Lemarchand echoed that the DR Congo was at the top of the failed states list in the 1990s (38). Despite the formal end to the Congo’s wars, according to the Foreign Policy Failed States Index in 2011 the DRC was still ranked as the fourth most failed state in the world, following closely behind Somalia, Chad and Sudan. For a discussion of weak states and state capacity, see Herbst (2000) and Migdal (1988, discussed above). Herbst defined a weak state as one that is unable to prevent the movement of people, arms, finances, rebel groups, wars, and resources within the territory, and is unable to protect its citizens from external threats. For a discussion of “quasi states”, see Jackson (1990), who argued that the process of decolonization brought “into existence a large number of sovereign governments which are limited in the capacity or desire to provide civil and socioeconomic goods for their populations” (9). He viewed many post-colonial states, and all African states, as “quasi” states because they were granted international sovereignty but “by definition are deficient and defective as apparatuses of power” (168).

provision of public goods. That is, what are the consequences of state weakness for other institutions and forms of social organization? This literature has, for the most part, not explored the efforts of non-state actors to fill the void left by formal states that are either unwilling or unable to perform tasks such as providing security, education, healthcare, and humanitarian relief. But, as one scholar acknowledged, “African governments find it difficult even to support a basic health and education system. This crisis of the African welfare state started during the 1970s. Since then, most...have been forced to cut state provision to an absolute minimum...it became the task of NGOs to take over the role of the state as providers of social welfare,” (Weiss 2002, 99).

Bates’ (2008) argument about the burden of providing public goods falling to citizens is insightful, but he did not embellish on how this phenomenon is taking place. Posner (2004) took the argument a step further by discussing how civil society groups are often left to do the work of the state. Traditionally, “governmental performance entails the provision of fundamental public goods like security, basic infrastructure, education, sanitation, and public health,” (Posner 2004, 237). However, when states have failed, they are unable to meet these tasks and civil society organizations are often left to assume the role of “substitutes”. Posner believed that in cases of total state failure, such as the DR Congo, the need for public goods is so strong that civil society groups emerge to fill the void, and he recommended that international donors provide funding to such groups for this purpose. In addition to civil society, the provision of public goods in many countries with weakened state capacity is especially dependent on other non-state actors.

For example, Clapham's (1996) work on the role of Africa in the international system noted the precarious nature of the state on the continent. After the end of the Cold War, relations between African nations and the major powers shifted dramatically and the continent became less important strategically and economically. Therefore, most countries decreased their attention to and relations with African states. Into this gap stepped other kinds of organizations, such as the United Nations agencies and other non-governmental entities. Because of the poverty and suffering in many areas of the continent, a larger proportion of aid organizations became active. As an example, Clapham cited, "several million Africans in refugee camps were effectively governed by the UNHCR, rather than by any state administration," (Clapham 1996, 257).

The following decade Ferguson and Gupta (2002) argued that the increased role of non-state actors in governance was the result of the neoliberal economic order, and in particular the structural adjustment policies imposed by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and other developed world financial institutions on African states, forcing the latter to no longer provide many public goods and services, but rely on non-state actors to fill previously government-dominated functions. "The outsourcing of the functions of the state to NGOs and other ostensibly nonstate agencies," they argued, "is a key feature, not only of the operation of national states, but of an emerging system of transnational governmentality," (Ferguson and Gupta 2002, 990). In his later work, Ferguson proposed the terms "government-by-NGO" and "nongovernmental states" to refer to areas where "modern social and medical services, where they exist at all, are more likely to be provided by transnational NGOs than by states," (Ferguson 2006, 13). He encouraged scholars of African politics to include not just an examination of the

extent to which a state has failed or succeeded, but also a recognition of the role of non-state actors in providing for the needs of society.

Attention must be paid to the formidable institutions that are 'governing' Africa from afar: the transnational financial institutions (World Bank, IMF, foreign banks) and development agencies (USAID, UNDP, UNHCR, etc.), as well as the churches, missions, and so-called nongovernmental organizations. These transnational institutions continue to be very little studied, even though they clearly play a very central role in the de facto governance and administration of the continent today. We will not have a balanced understanding of the actual processes through which Africa is being governed until we move beyond the myth of the sovereign African nation-state to explore the powerful but almost wholly unaccountable transnational institutions that effectively (and often not so effectively) rule large domains of African economy and society. (Ibid., 87)

Various scholars have taken up this task by suggesting that there are functional alternatives to the state such as religious NGOs, agencies of the United Nations focused on peacekeeping or refugees, and groups who profit from disorder such as warlords, mineral extracting entrepreneurs, and drug traffickers.<sup>4</sup> They have shown how such informal organizations have been responsible for many aspects of governance and the provision of public goods in the developing world.

Comparative scholars focusing on other regions of the globe have also taken note of this phenomenon. For example, Jasmine Gideon (1998), in her work examining the

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<sup>4</sup> As will be discussed further in the next section, Bornstein (2003) demonstrated how protestant NGOs have taken over state functions in one African case. Jacobson (1964) detailed how the United Nations Peacekeeping mission in the Congo (ONUC) in the early 1960s carried out many functions that the feeble state could not. Murphy's (2006) description of the UNDP's various programs in the developing world also discussed the organization's role in providing state functions in the Congo in the 1960s. Malkki (1995) described how international organizations help to provide governance for state-less peoples, discussing the example of Burundian refugees living in Tanzania. Reno (1998) described how warlords are performing the task of security, which used to be the monopoly of the sovereign state, and demonstrated his argument in a chapter focusing on the Congo. Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004) detailed how rebel movements, armed militias, and mineral-extracting entrepreneurs vie for power and influence and establish informal governance structures in eastern DRC. Arias (2010) detailed how guerillas and drug traffickers in Columbia excel at providing both security and social services for local populations and how this "reflects a wider trend in Latin America, in which armed groups collaborate with state officials to maintain systems of local governance in exchange for state resources," (116).

role of NGOs in providing social services in Latin America, explained that in the global process of switching from state-led development to neo-liberalism, NGOs in Latin America were increasingly used by developing states and the international community to provide social services. In fact, she noted that, “many NGOs are now directly taking on functions that were previously carried out by the state,” (Gideon 1998, 305). Closer geographically to the subject of this study, a recent work directly addressed the role of NGOs in replacing the state with empirical research from the capital city of Congo. Giovannoni et al. (2004) discussed the explosion of the number of NGOs and community associations in Kinshasa beginning in the 1990s as people needed to find ways to survive as the state withdrew from their lives. They distinguished between local associations, which are formed because of the need to replace services that were formerly public, and NGOs which are motivated by a desire to tap into international funding and created by people searching for jobs. But the proliferation of both types of organizations was directly linked to the failure and withdrawal of the central state and the need of people to care for themselves.

The aforementioned literature has demonstrated that there is an increasing recognition that much of what we traditionally view as the purview of central governments is in fact being carried out by non-state actors. Moving beyond the descriptive, it is also important to understand the benefits and drawbacks of the new system for the non-state actors, for the state, and especially for the people they are seeking to help. As the authors of the Congo case pointed out, the shift toward NGOization did create incentives for opportunism, corruption, non-transparency, and inefficiency. They introduced the term “briefcase NGO”, used by Kinshasa residents to

describe a representative with catchy brochures to market his NGO so as to be able to address the specific intentions of any donor agency (Giovannoni et al. 2004, 110). Their contribution highlighted the need to closely examine the legitimacy, motivations, functionality and effectiveness of newly formed NGOs and associations in the Congo and similar cases.

For example, NGOs can overwhelm governments, especially in times of disaster, and create parallel governments of their own which have exponentially more resources than the sovereign state (Clapham 1996). Such organizations also have their own political agendas that often do not match those of the host nation. These agendas can include human rights, democratization and environmental conservation ideals, or religious goals of various origins: Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, Muslim, evangelical, or fundamentalist. Additionally, many non-governmental organizations operating on the continent have to face the same challenges as sovereign states. For example, they rely on developed countries and citizens for funding and have to struggle for legitimacy and influence internationally as well as within the society in which they are working.

How does the increased involvement of non-state actors in governance affect state agency and local communities? Rejecting the notion that NGOs are just replacing the state, Gideon (1998) explored how the state is actively involved in the process by co-opting NGOs in some circumstances, ensuring that some donor funds reach state coffers, and avoiding accountability to local people because they can work exclusively with the NGO. This in turn means that the original NGO agenda can become distorted due to state pressures, and that they may become more interested in impressing donors than in being accountable to those they seek to assist. In addition, because there were

more donor funds earmarked for NGOs, the neoliberal economy brought with it a proliferation of NGOs rivaling each other to attempt to secure the available international funding.

Overall, these accounts highlight the role non-state actors increasingly perform in traditional governance realms, and of consequences for development outcomes as a result of their involvement. However, this study seeks to add another dimension by focusing on the role of religion in politics. As the editor of a volume on *Resurgent Religion and World Politics* warns, “those who neglect religion in their analyses of contemporary affairs do so at great peril,” (Berger 1999, 18). Therefore, the following section will examine the role of faith based organizations as a particular kind of non-state actor involved in providing public goods in weak states.

### **Expanding Duties of Faith Based Organizations: Replacing the State By Providing Public Goods?**

While there are many kinds of non-state actors involved in the politics of development, of particular interest to this study is the role of faith based organizations (FBOs) in providing public goods such as education and healthcare. This topic is of increasing importance to international politics more broadly, as religious institutions all around the globe are expanding to assume functions previously carried out by sovereign states. However, this is not just taking place because FBOs are stepping in to fill gaps left by weak states in the developing world. In fact, they are doing so in most cases with the support and encouragement of central states and key political actors. For example, in the aptly named volume *Who Will Provide*, the contributors discussed the benefits and consequences of the shift since the mid-1990s to allow federal funding for FBOs engaging in social service provision in the United States (Bane, Coffin, and

Thiemann 2000). In the American context this phenomenon has led to the creation of the White House Office of Faith Based Initiatives and a recognition that “religious communities are able to fulfill their potential only by working in partnerships with other civil organizations and with agencies of government,” which is surprisingly relevant to this study of a failed African state (Ibid., 14).

### **FBOs and development**

In addition to states encouraging faith based organizations (FBOs) to work within their borders, those who are involved in international development, such as the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), and other agencies are promoting the role of FBOs, particularly in Africa, in arenas such as the fight against HIV/AIDS, education, environmental issues, the reduction of poverty, and more (e.g. United States 2006; Belshaw, Calderisi, and Sugden 2001; Haynes 2007). For example, the United Nations World Health Organization has estimated that faith based organizations account for 30 – 70% of healthcare in Africa, and as a result UNAIDS has begun to partner with and build capacity of FBOs to help in their AIDS prevention and treatment campaigns on the continent (PlusNews 2009). In addition, in a speech called the “Modern Development Enterprise” in January 2011, the USAID Administrator paid particular attention to the partnership of his organization and faith communities in providing for people around the world, and noted “in Kenya for example, thirty percent of all healthcare services are provided by Christian hospitals,” (Shah 2011).

Perhaps the most important shift in international development with relation to interaction with faith based organizations occurred when the World Bank embarked on a course of increased cooperation with such institutions. This partnership began at a

meeting between the bank's president James Wolfensohn and the Archbishop of Canterbury and other leaders of faith communities in February 1998 in London (Pallas 2005, 677). In a foreword to the first of two volumes documenting the Bank's interaction with FBOs, Wolfensohn proclaimed that "where faith and development institutions have combined their efforts and work to common ends, remarkable results have been achieved," (Marshall and Keough 2004, xii).

One reason development practitioners have been increasingly interested in working with these groups is the recognition that they have been one of, if not the only, important provider of public goods like education and healthcare in many developing nations (Ibid., 1-2). Another factor encouraging this partnership was the creation in 2000 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which set steep targets for development, such as universal primary education by 2015. As Wolfensohn acknowledged, "the engagement of faith communities in the fight against poverty is vital to success in achieving the Millennium Development Goals," (Ibid., xii). The volume documented the important initiatives undertaken by religious communities, with the support of the World Bank, from various faith backgrounds (Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist) to address a wide range of issues such as conflict resolution, AIDS, gender equality, education, and the environment in countries spanning the globe from Mongolia to Colombia to Mozambique.

In the second volume issued several years later, the editors noted the sustained increasing relations between FBOs and development institutions, and particularly highlighted key conferences such as the first meeting with the World Bank in 1998, the second meeting between the Bank and faith leaders in Washington the following year

that lead to the creation of the World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), a third meeting in Canterbury in 2002, a fourth in Dublin in 2005, as well as the United Nations Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace in June 2005 (Marshall and Van Saanen 2007). In addition to the reasons noted above for this increased interaction, the editors detailed how “the new wave of interest has stimulated real shifts in operational work, with the HIV/AIDS pandemic perhaps the most significant example as faith organizations and issues are increasingly seen as critical to the global response,” (Ibid., 2).

Like the original volume, this one sought to showcase a wide range of FBO – Bank development initiatives all over the world, especially those working in the areas of the fight against HIV/AIDS, health, education, rebuilding after the Asian tsunami, assisting African orphans and street children, improving water and sanitation services, providing dignified housing, tackling corruption, promoting good business practices and microcredit schemes, and assisting in conflict resolution. The examples of the dedicated work undertaken by FBOs of all religious backgrounds came from Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

As this topic’s importance and relevance in diverse areas of the globe has attracted increased interest, more scholars have begun to focus their attention on the role of faith based organizations in development and the provision of public goods. For example, Tyndale’s edited volume compiled thirteen case studies from around the world of religious associations engaging in development work with real impact for local populations (Tyndale 2006). Haynes, a scholar of religion and politics in the developing world and particularly in Africa, noted that because many governments in the

developing world are weak, “there is now widespread acceptance that desired development outcomes can more likely be achieved if the energies and abilities of various non-state actors – including faith-based organizations – can be tapped into,” (Haynes 2007, 3). This new focus on the inclusion of other actors, he argued, is the result of the fact that despite a half century of development programs and strategies, a large percentage of people in developing nations remain abjectly poor (Ibid., 9). His study examined the development role of Muslims, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists across Africa, Asia and Latin America, particularly in the areas of conflict resolution, fighting poverty, the environment, health, and education.

Bornstein (2003) specifically addressed this topic by providing an empirical case focusing on the role of religious non-governmental organizations in Africa. Her research examined Christian NGOs operating in Zimbabwe, and the ways in which these faith based organizations often provide public goods in sectors such as agriculture, health care, and education when the state is unable to do so. However, her analysis highlighted the need to question the ability of FBOs to adequately provide for populations considering their specific motivations and spiritual goals. Of key importance, she argued, is the fact that the aim of such organizations is not simply providing goods to needy populations, but also obtaining religious converts. Through her work, we are introduced to the multiple aims of some international organizations and the mixed impact their provision of government functions can have on local populations.

### **FBOs and education**

Of particular interest to this study is the role of faith based organizations in providing the specific good of education. This sector is often at the top of development agendas because there is an acknowledged link between level of education and

economic development. In an attempt to meet the MDG of universal primary education, the World Bank led the Education For All Fast-Track Initiative in fifteen countries in most need, including the Democratic Republic of Congo. It was created as a partnership between “governments, civil society organizations, including faith-based organizations; and external bilateral and multilateral development agencies. The intention was that civil society would work harmoniously together along with local communities to provide additional or alternative solutions where state provision was inadequate or absent,” (Haynes 2007, 180).

In a special journal volume dedicated to “Non-state Provision of Education: Evidence from Africa and Asia,” the contributors noted the recent increase in the provision of public education by non-state actors, particularly in an effort to meet demand and increase quality. The editor made two important points that are of key importance to this study. First, she lamented that “the role of faith-based organizations in education service delivery remains under-researched,” a deficit this study hopes to address (Rose 2009, 133). Second, as will be argued here, “in reality boundaries between state and non-state provision is blurred,” (Ibid., 132).

Nishimuko’s (2009) article from that volume examined the case of Sierra Leone, a country with many similarities to the Congolese case explored here because despite the end of recent civil war, the government does not have sufficient capacity to provide adequate education or rebuild the many schools destroyed during the conflict. Like Congo, faith based organizations have responded to demands in the education sector, the result of which is that “currently, about 75% of primary schools are owned and managed by FBOs in Sierra Leone,” (Nishimuko 2009, 284). The author highlighted

that an important benefit of FBO involvement in development work is that they often have the trust of the local population because they have worked in the area for a long period of time, while a weakness of FBO provision is that associations may make choices restricting who benefits from their work (Ibid.). Nishimuko's study, like the present one, found "that when the government's ability to provide education is not adequate, collaboration between the government, NGOs and FBOs brings about effective outcomes and their involvement in development projects is vital. This is because local NGOs and FBOs can reach the poor and marginalized," (Ibid., 293).

In a discussion of the role religious communities have played in the education sector in Tanzania, Mallya argued that the FBO-state relationship is a complicated one. On the one hand, the state is weak and unable to provide much needed goods and services to citizens, leading to a potential loss of legitimacy, but on the other hand, it dictates the rules within which FBOs can operate (Mallya 2010, 132). The author created a tripartite typology of these relationships, ranging from intimate development partners to state fear and suspicion of FBO motives and financing, especially if religious associations are able to obtain large sources of outside funding. In Tanzania the partnership has been quite productive since the state requested that religious communities and other NGOs increase their activity in the health and education sectors in the late 1980s. As a result, by 1993, statistics from nine regions of Tanzania revealed that NGOs were providing 61% of secondary schools, 87% of preschools, and 43% of hospitals, with recent studies showing that FBO-run schools have the best rate of exam performance (Ibid., 143). Despite the payoff in tangible services for needy citizens, FBO-state partnerships can also have negative consequences, such as the

undemocratic nature of many FBOs, and the fear that they are shoring up unsavory or corrupt governments.

### **FBOs and Islam**

The above discussion highlights that although faith based organizations are doing an excellent job providing for the needs of citizens, especially in weak African states, the role of religion in development can have both positive and negative consequences. Of increasing interest to scholars and practitioners in the last decade since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 in the United States are the political aims of Islamic associations. The above discussion about the positive aspects of FBO involvement in development applied to organizations from all religious backgrounds, including Islam. The contributors to a volume on *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa* examined a wide range of countries where Muslims are minority or majority populations, have all kinds of relations with their state and with the international Muslim community, as well as conflicts and cooperation within their own ranks. As further evidence that Islamic FBOs are making valuable contributions to development, invariably every chapter in this volume included a discussion of how Muslim organizations have increasingly stepped up to help provide public goods like education, orphanages, emergency relief, wells and access to potable water, healthcare, etc. (Soares and Otayek 2007).

“Although the upsurge of NGOs in Africa may be viewed as a welcome development of a vital civil society, there are some problems connected with the activities of Muslim NGOs,” (Weiss 2002, 100). This statement is very reflective of the tenor of discussions about Muslim FBOs in particular. Despite their efforts to provide much needed goods and assisting Western development agencies meet Millennium Development Goals, many fear the political aspirations of such groups. Looking beyond

the African continent provides us with several examples of extremist and controversial Islamic organizations, such as Hamas and Hezbollah in the Middle East and madrasas in Pakistan.

Harik (2004) explored the political and developmental impacts of Hezbollah, the Shiite Muslim militia in Lebanon, labeled as a “terrorist organization” by the United States Government, which has over time transformed itself into a political party. She argued that Hezbollah has been able to increase its legitimacy and popular support by being the best provider of public services among all the parties in the country. Because of the devastating civil war in Lebanon, there were and remain huge gaps in the state’s ability to provide for its citizens. Hezbollah has stepped into the state’s role by providing much needed schools, hospitals, clinics, water, and sanitation services in Shiite areas. Similarly, another study of an Islamic militant organization in the Middle East with similar tactics, was that of Gavrillis (2006) about Hamas in Gaza. Though this faith based organization was most well known to outsiders for the acts of violence it perpetrates, Hamas also gained legitimacy and support among the local population through its provision of social services and public goods to communities who do not receive such assistance from the Palestinian Authority.

Another perspective on Hezbollah suggested that the service provision that is most beneficial for organizations seeking to obtain a position of authority is policing and conflict resolution (Baylouny 2010, 137). When Hezbollah was a young organization in the 1980s, it began to provide the services of electricity, water, and sanitation in Beirut because the government was not doing so, but over time it expanded to create a justice system that has settled over two hundred conflicts (Ibid., 143). In addition to rebuilding

institutions that have been destroyed by war, providing education, healthcare, loans, transportation, agricultural and veterinary services, and food for the poor, Hezbollah and other militias that control territory were able to establish legitimacy through ideology. For example, they “changed school textbooks, resurrected or outright created a particular version of history, and promoted new cultural rituals to consolidate their position as a legitimate authority,” (Ibid, 147).

These works highlight the importance of public goods provision for gaining legitimacy and support for expressly political purposes. Haynes, when discussing the importance of education, highlights the need to ask: “‘Who controls education and for what purpose?’ Throughout much of the developing world, control of education – whether by a government, a faith-based organization or a secular non-state entity – potentially offers the educational provider a good opportunity both to educate and to instill specific understandings of the world,” (Hayes 2007, 184). In the last decade many have grown to fear the role of Muslim organizations in education, citing as evidence the training of Taliban extremists in madrasas in Pakistan. As a result, many scholarly works have emerged to improve our understanding of the link between madrasa education and the expansion of radicalized Islam (e.g., Ali 2009; Hefner and Zaman 2007; Riaz 2008). In addition to gathering more data about these school systems, some practitioners have attempted to influence change. For example, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy, which is based in Washington, DC, “and founded on the belief that religion is the ‘missing dimension’ of foreign policy,” began a partnership in 2002 with a Pakistani think tank to improve the madrasa system in that country, mostly through teacher training workshops and encouraging an expansion of the

curriculum to include science, social disciplines, religious tolerance, human (especially women's) rights, and the encouragement of critical thinking (Marshall and Van Saanen 2007, 130-1).

*Madrassa* is the Arabic term for school, and as such does not inherently have any connection to Muslim religious education, but in countries where Arabic is not the major language, the term usually refers to schools run by Islamic organizations that teach in Arabic, and often focus on studies of the Qur'an. However, "in fact, Islamic schools vary widely within and between countries, ranging from part-time religious instruction to fully articulated systems encompassing preschool to higher education, and from under-resourced, poor-quality institutions to outstanding centers of learning," (Marshall and Van Saanen 2007, 84).

While questions about the political motives of Muslim organizations and schools have been deeply interrogated in the Middle East and South Asian contexts, they have been little explored in sub-Saharan Africa. In reality FBOs of various backgrounds have been involved in education in Africa for a long time, and have proven very effective educators, seeking more to win converts than to challenge African states. Despite the fact that most Muslim FBOs follow Western and Christian NGO models, the rapid expansion in the number of Muslim NGOs on the continent (from 138 in 1980 to 891 twenty years later) has fueled fears about the potential for terrorism (Haynes 2007, 184-5).

As part of a research program on "Religions and Development" funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, several studies focused on Muslim association involvement in South Asia, as well as a comparative analysis on

Islamic schools from the Nigerian context (Bano 2009). In Kano, the author found that attempts to reform Islamic education through secularization of the curriculum were successful because religious elites and parents also saw the benefits of such changes for students' prospects when they completed their education. Bano argued that state-Muslim association relations were more peaceful and effective in Nigeria because, unlike religious elites in several South Asian contexts, Sufi leaders in Kano did not advocate for political Islam or attempt to wrestle power away from the state (Ibid., 2). Although it would be false to say that Muslim FBO involvement in development and public good provision in Africa is apolitical, the distinction suggested in the above work is very useful – the majority of Islamic associations active on the continent are motivated primarily by the desire to propagate their faith and assist people, often by collaborating with the state, and not by an agenda to capture state power in the name of Islam (e.g., Brenner 2001 and 2007).

### **FBOs in the Congo**

As our discussion thus far has highlighted, faith based organizations have played a paramount role in the provision of public goods in Africa. Most studies exploring the phenomenon from the Congolese case have exclusively focused on Christian organizations, as they represent the majority. Jenkins' (1994) examination of the historical role of missionaries and Christian churches in development in Africa, demonstrated the unique position of such organizations to fulfill public services today. Originally sent to Africa during colonialism to win religious converts, the churches realized the only way to effectively do so was to assist the development of the whole individual in addition to focusing on their spirituality. In colonial administrations unwilling to provide rural services, the church stepped in to become the main provider of

education and healthcare. Jenkins offered the example of churches in Belgian Congo as holding a monopoly over the education system, noting that, “until 1946, the entire school system was composed of mission schools, with the few government-run schools staffed by missionaries,” (Jenkins 1994, 88). Her work demonstrated the need to recognize the historical experience and established infrastructure of such non-state actors, as well as their proven success in providing for local populations, while at the same time acknowledged the underlying motivation of such FBOs in making converts.

In the contemporary post-conflict period, religious associations in the DRC have had to step up their assistance to Congolese citizens. A recent study on the role of religious networks in the country asserted “as the government tries to consolidate its authority and build security, faith-based organizations will continue to find themselves, perhaps, as the only actors that are capable of delivering ‘public goods’,” (Whetho and Uzodike 2008, 73-4). In addition to providing traditional services like education and healthcare, religious communities have been involved in peace building during the Inter-Congolese Dialogue peace process in Sun City, South Africa in 2003 and encouraging an end to violence between supporters of Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba in Kinshasa after the 2006 elections. FBOs played a large role in providing civic education and election preparation prior to those elections. They have been key actors in the rehabilitation of former combatants as well as war-devastated infrastructure like schools, hospitals, and roads. As this data describe, it is very difficult to talk about governance in the Congolese context without acknowledging the paramount role played by religious associations.

Since the formal end of the conflict in the Congo, the eastern provinces have remained in a state of insecurity and are, even more than the rest of the country, home to alternative governance structures. In her work on the role of civil society organizations providing social services in North and South Kivu provinces, Seay concluded, “in a situation of state collapse, civil society organizations step in to substitute for the state’s role as the provider (and, in many cases, regulator) of social services. In the eastern D.R. Congo, that CSO is most likely to be a church,” (Seay 2009, 202). Her research focused on the services provided by Catholic, Protestant, and other Christian organizations in the region. Although Seay’s findings closely resemble those to be presented in this study, there is a key difference. We are arguing here that the failed state approach and literature is inherently valuable and relevant to a study of public goods provision in the DRC, but that it must be nuanced. Religious organizations do not simply fill a vacuum left by the failed state, although it often appears to be so upon first glance.

Instead, this study argues that in the Congo there is a hybrid system of governance involved in the provision of education. This argument echoes the findings of a recent work titled “Real Governance Beyond the ‘Failed State’: Negotiating Education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo” (Titeca and De Herdt 2011). It argued that instead of continuing to emphasize what the central Congolese state is unable to do, according to the failed state paradigm, we should instead focus on the ways governance is manifesting itself in reality. Therefore, “the specific case of the education sector enables a demonstration of how the Congolese state continues to survive and transform itself. As an administrative framework the state has never

ceased to exist, and its role in providing public services has been redefined rather than having evaporated,” (Ibid., 214). The current, in addition to historic, education system in the DRC is primarily managed by religious communities, and in fact 75% of all primary school children attend religious schools (Ibid., 220). But as we will see in the remaining discussion, these FBO-led education institutions operate because of and in conjunction with the Congolese state, and are thus hybrid state-FBO governance structures. This hybrid system is part of the opportunity argument presented here to explain why Muslim FBOs, not discussed in Titeca and De Herdt’s analysis, have increased their involvement in the education sector.

The scholarship on the governance functions of faith based organizations in the Congolese context focuses exclusively on Christian associations. This is reflective of a broader phenomenon where “overall...there is a lack of reliable information on Islamic NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa,” (Haynes 2007, 185). As such, this case study of the role of Islamic organizations in providing education in post-war DRC will provide the opportunity to gain more clarity on the role of Muslim religious non-state actors in public goods provision in weak African states. As will be argued, Muslim associations are not simply replacing the state by providing public goods, such as education, but are in fact working in tandem with the state. Despite their historic marginalization from such realms, it is argued here that Muslim FBOs are involved in the provision of public goods in the Congo at this particular time because they have been able to mobilize for collective action, where they had previously been embroiled in intense internal divisions, and have seized on the opportunity to do so in this moment of post-war state weakness, intense citizen demand for public goods, and increased political liberalization.

Returning to the story of transporting soldiers at the opening of this chapter, we can now echo the reflection that “in the world as it is in the early twenty-first century...the state is joined by a number of other actors, benign and malign, who sometimes compete and sometimes collaborate in providing governance and security,” (Clunan and Trinkunas 2010, 6). The Congolese state is still weak, but it does negotiate with non-state actors in the realm of public goods provision, thus creating hybrid institutions that are run by a combination of state and non-state actors.

### **Fieldwork Methodology**

My examination of the case of Muslim organizations and education in the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R. Congo or DRC) both draws on and addresses relevant scholarly work on the three important issues discussed above: the provision of public goods, the capacity of weak states to serve their population, and the role of faith based organizations in such contexts. In the brief review of these issues, I have highlighted works that sit at the intersection of these topics as well as those that include specific reference to the D.R. Congo. My goal is to suggest the value of examining cases where these three issues overlap, as in the DRC. The Congo has been in a state of failure, collapse, and /or weakness at least since the later portion of the Mobutu regime in the 1990s, and remains at the top of the failed states index two decades later. In addition, there is very little known about the Muslim minority of the Congo. As such, the selection of the Congolese case study is both of theoretical and empirical interest. This section describes the selection of the case study and the methods employed in order to collect data that would speak directly to the research question and engage the relevant theoretical literature discussed above.

## **Why the Congo? And the Importance of Maniema**

One may ask why this study would choose the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo in an effort to understand the role of Muslim organizations in providing public goods. Other countries with larger Muslim populations in Africa might seem at first glance to be a better fit for the research topic. I argue, however, that the D.R. Congo offers a unique case to better understand the intersection of the three primary issues addressed by this study: the role of faith based organizations in the provision of public goods in the case of weak state capacity.

The majority of scholarly work on Islam in Africa has focused on the political role of Muslim majority populations in Africa, but very little has been written about minority groups, such as the Congolese Muslims. Therefore, one aim of this study is to fill the gap in our understanding of the political activity of Muslim Congolese. Reliable estimates of national religious demographics suggest that Muslims constitute 10% of the total Congolese population, while Catholics comprise 50%, Protestants 20% and Kimbanguists (a Christian sect, founded by the Congolese prophet Simon Kimbangu) 10% (U.S. Dept. of State 2010). As will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, beyond the seminal work of Crawford Young in the 1960s, there is virtually no literature examining the role of the Congolese Muslim minority in post-independence national politics.

In order to most effectively observe and understand the Congolese Muslim community, I carried out research in four sites within the D.R. Congo. The majority of the fieldwork, and the location of two research sites, was conducted in the eastern province of Maniema, the historic and present-day home to the majority of Congo's Muslim population. Islam originally came to the area in the late nineteenth century (before the arrival of Europeans) as Swahili traders penetrated the hinterland from the

east African coast. Tippo Tip, the most famous of these traders, not only dominated the ivory and slave exchange in the area, but was also involved politically as the governor of Stanley Falls appointed by Belgian King Leopold II. Tippo Tip has been the subject of the majority of scholarly work on Islam in the Congo, which emphasizes not the role of religious expansion, but the primary interest of the newcomers in ivory and slave trading.

Today, the total population of the Maniema province is around 1.8 million (Ngongo et al. 2007, 20). It is one of the poorest regions of the country. Maniemans regularly state that their largest problem is *enclavement*, or isolation. One reason they feel isolated is that the province shares no borders with other countries, just other Congolese provinces. The other, and most important, reason is that transportation of people and goods is extremely difficult due to the current state of roads, limited and strike-prone trains, few commercial-sized boats facing the river's navigation problems, and expensive tickets for the few planes serving the province. Maniema is primarily comprised of dense tropical forest, thus although it is twice the size of neighboring North Kivu province, it has one third of the population (Ibid., 13).

In addition, Maniema is behind other provinces in terms of development partially because it has only recently become an independent administrative unit. Maniema became a province in 1989, when the large Kivu province was divided into three parts: North Kivu, South Kivu, and Maniema. Bukavu, the current capital of South Kivu, had been the capital of the Kivu province and had thus received the majority of administrative funds and development projects. Goma, the capital of North Kivu, is perhaps today even more developed than Bukavu because it is located on the Rwandan

border and has been home to the majority of headquarters for United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations in eastern DRC since the end of major conflict.

The main site of the dissertation fieldwork was Kindu, the ethnically and religiously mixed provincial capital, with a population of about 254,000 (Ibid., 23) of which Muslims constitute approximately 25%. Kindu was selected as the primary location where five months of research was conducted because, as the provincial capital, almost all governmental offices, non-governmental organizations, and faith based organizations operating in the region are headquartered there. It thus represents an excellent site to examine civil society relations with the state and how governmental policies affect and are perceived by average citizens.

Comparative research was carried out in two secondary locations. The first was Kasongo, the second largest city in the Maniema province, and the historical birthplace of Islam in the country. Kasongo is the capital city of the Kasongo territory, one of the seven territories of the Maniema province. The Muslim community of this southern town constitutes a large majority, most likely between 80 and 90%. However, the number of Muslims employed by local and state bureaucracies or holding a political position is very small and does not reflect their proportion in the Maniema province. Lamenting this fact, the head Imam for the Kindu region noted that of the twenty-four deputies in the provincial general assembly, none are Muslim even though there are representatives from each region of the province, some of which, like Kasongo, are predominately

Muslim.<sup>5</sup> He also noted that at the national level there are over six hundred deputies and senators but only a half dozen are Muslim.

The second research site was Kisangani, the third largest city in Congo located in the northeastern Orientale province, which has the most substantial Muslim community outside of Maniema. Swahili-Arab traders who originally brought Islam to the Congo made their way from Kasongo up the Congo River to settle in the Kisangani area. The primary motives for selecting this research site were twofold. First, Kisangani is home to a minority but substantial Muslim population and can provide a comparative context with which to contrast the activities of the Muslim community of Maniema. Estimates of the Muslim population range from 10 to 30%, but the most reliable sources place the Islamic community at 15% of the Kisangani population. Second, the University of Kisangani is one of the oldest universities of Congo, where archival research was conducted in libraries that house several theses and doctoral dissertations written by local scholars on topics of interest to this study. One month was spent in each of the secondary sites.

The final location of research was the Congolese capital, Kinshasa. The national Muslim organization, *Communauté Islamique en République Démocratique du Congo* (COMICO), is headquartered there. In the several weeks of research conducted at this site, interviews with members of the Muslim community who are very active on the national stage proved paramount for a broader understanding of the Congolese Muslim community and their role in development and education. The motivation behind

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with head Imam for COMICO in Kindu region, Kindu 3/27/2009.

selecting these three additional research sites was to assess the extent to which one can accurately extrapolate from the Kindu case to the broader Congolese context.

## **Methods**

While in each location, I relied on the methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and archival research. These qualitative methods were chosen as the best means to tackle the questions driving this study: the political implications for the local population, religious associations, and the state if faith based organizations provide governance functions.<sup>6</sup> Especially because very little information exists about the Muslim community of D.R. Congo, I needed to spend a substantial amount of time among them observing, participating, sharing, and asking questions to truly understand their history, beliefs, and actions. I documented my observations and interviews by taking meticulous notes.

My first task upon arrival in Kindu was to spend five weeks participating in-depth at several schools in the city. Public institutions in the Congolese education system include schools managed by the government and institutions run by religious organizations, each of which follows the national curriculum and in theory has teachers and administrator salaries paid for by the state. In 1974, President Mobutu Sese Seko nationalized private schools, most of which were run by the Catholic Church, but repealed this action in 1977. In the next several years, the state and the four main religions (Catholic, Protestant, Kimbanguist, and Islamic) signed an agreement requiring religious-run schools to follow state guidelines on curriculum and other aspects of

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<sup>6</sup> In fact, there is a growing literature in political science on the benefits of ethnography as a particular tool of qualitative methodology for political inquiry. See for example *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, edited by Edward Schatz (2009), Lorraine Bayard de Volo and Edward Schatz "From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research" (2004), and Andra Gillespie and Melissa Michelson "Participant Observation and the Political Scientist" (2011).

school and class management. In return, the religious associations are responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the institution and are also allowed to teach a religion course.

I chose to observe at least one school from each of the six categories present in the Maniema province, which are also representative of the country as a whole. The first was a private school, which was created by an Islamic organization in 2004, called *Fondation Zam-Zam* (Zam-Zam Foundation). The second was an Islamic public school, *E.P. Jihudi* (E.P. stands for *école primaire* or primary school). Next, several days of observation were conducted at a Protestant school, *E.P. Matayo*. The fourth school category comprises Catholic public institutions, and two were visited, one for girls and the other for boys, *E.P. Mapendano* and *E.P. Kapondjo*. A Kimbanguist public school called *E.P. Nyota* was the final religiously affiliated institution to be attended. The final category consists of official state schools, and the school visited was *E.P. Kindu*.

An in-depth interview with the director or assistant director was carried out at each institution. At least one course from each grade level (first through sixth) was observed, and in some cases one per class, as some schools have multiple classes per grade level. In particular, the religion course at each kind of school was observed. During each week, elementary students have two thirty minute lessons on religion, or morality if they attend the official state school.

In addition to observing in local schools, the participant observation method allowed me to gain a deeper appreciation of the particular religious, cultural, organizational, and socio-economic context of each of the four sites. My research was greatly facilitated by the fact that I experienced little difficulty in gaining access to

different communities or obtaining the trust of interviewees. On the contrary, I was repeatedly invited to participate in holidays, celebrations, religious ceremonies, and organizational meetings and activities. In fact, especially in the sites of Kindu and Kasongo where I made two visits one year apart, I formed deep relationships with local people and became a part of society in town. When I returned to Kindu after spending one month in Kasongo, as I walked down the main street I was stopped every few feet by friends, acquaintances, or strangers asking either how my trip was or wondering where I had been because they had noticed my absence.

In the primary site of Kindu I was lodged at the Catholic mission because it was the principal functioning hotel in town. This fact granted me access to observe and participate in the Catholic faith community by sharing meals, conversations, and religious rites, while at the same time not negatively impacting my relations with the Muslim community because they understood that it was the only logical place for me to reside. In addition, living at this “hotel” also granted me access to extensive informal discussions with other visitors lodged there who came from all over the country, primarily as government or non-governmental organization agents, working on some aspect of development. The relationships I formed with other visitors staying at the Catholic mission in Kindu turned out to be an important asset, as they provided me with contacts for the other sites I visited later.

I was assisted in most sites by one or more research assistants. My principal research assistant in Kindu was Papa Tenge Tenge, an enthusiastic and educated subsistence farmer. A fellow scholar at the University of Kisangani, who is originally from the Maniema province, recommended Tenge Tenge to me. He assisted me for the

two months of research in 2008, and the bulk of the fieldwork in 2009. His assistance was indispensable because he not only escorted me to interviews when I might otherwise have gotten lost, but his friendly disposition and vouching for my sincerity as a scholar convinced others that it would be safe to honestly share their activities, opinions, and relevant life histories with me.

At the outset of my research in Kindu in 2008, I was also briefly assisted by a prominent Muslim woman, who is president of a local Islamic organization and school, *Fondation Zam-Zam*, as well as executive member of *Collectif des Associations des Femmes Musulmanes Pour le Développement du Maniema*, CFMUDEMA. As a prominent personality, she was indispensable during the initial phase because she was able to set up interviews and introductions with the heads of numerous organizations and provide easy access and acceptance for me into both the Muslim and development communities.

A similar process took place during my time in Kasongo. Through my contacts in Kindu in 2008, I was introduced to the national Secretary General of COMICO, the national organization for the Islamic community in the Congo, which was formally recognized by Mobutu under the Zairian state in 1972. The Secretary General very generously set up important interviews with Muslims throughout the diverse communities of Kasongo, provided me with local understanding, and validated my presence to others who did not immediately understand my research. Though busy with his own work, he enlisted several Muslim men to escort me to scheduled interviews and meetings, and assist in translation when needed. He also arranged for me to visit three towns in southern Maniema outside of Kasongo which are important sites for the

Muslim community: Nyangwe, a small remote village and the actual birthplace of Islam in the Congo; Mungomba, the village which houses the largest and most prominent Qur'anic school in the Congo; and Wamaza, a town similar to Kasongo in size and proportion of Muslims, which is a major town in the Kabambare territory.

As a result of my contacts in Kindu and Kasongo, I had a list of Muslim community leaders to reach out to upon arrival in Kisangani. Having this informal recommendation from prominent and well-respected Muslim personalities provided the entrée I needed to begin building trust with this community. Each person I interviewed subsequently introduced me to others who would be of interest for my research. Though I had no formal research assistant during this phase, during the later part of my stay in Kisangani I was introduced to a sheikh, who is both an imam as well as professor of sociology at the University of Kisangani. His scholarly interests also primarily concern the role of the Congolese Muslim community in politics. As such, we spent much time gathering information from one another and debating ideas that are of primary concern for us both. With his assistance I met even more important members of the Muslim community and gained access to the various libraries of the University where I conducted archival research.

The second method of research was semi-structured interviews, two hundred of which were conducted in either French or Swahili, depending on the preference of the interviewee. Thanks to the assistance of those mentioned above, I easily gained access to interviewees who trusted and understood my scholarly intentions. In addition, interviewees repeatedly shared that they were eager to speak to me because they were excited that I had come from the United States with an interest in talking to them.

Maniema is among the least developed provinces of the Congo and transportation to and from it is limited and expensive. Very few foreigners who come to Congo make it to Maniema. While there are hundreds of international NGOs working in Goma, the capital of the North Kivu province that borders Maniema, there are a handful functioning in Kindu and its environs. In addition, the Muslim community has been marginalized throughout historic and recent times. Congolese Muslims, both in Maniema and elsewhere, expressed their gratitude for my interest in researching their community.

One group of religious leaders in Kasongo expressed their gratitude to me by stating that I am now a part of the history of Islam in Kasongo because I am the first person from outside, besides white Catholic priests with their own agenda, to come meet with them to ask questions about their community. The Congolese I interviewed, regardless of rank, region or religion, stressed to me that they would gladly assist me in my research because I was helping them by telling their story to the rest of the world. In particular, the people of poverty-stricken and cut-off Maniema province and the members of the Muslim minority population throughout Congo asked that in return for the time they donated to be interviewed that I do my best to ensure that their struggles and stories be heard by others.

This study draws on two periods of fieldwork in the Congo. Conducting research in this fashion proved indispensable, as I was able to gain a good knowledge of the area, which was not possible through the meager literature available on the subject, and make contacts during the first visit. The time away from the research sites in between visits allowed me to better process dynamics and formulate goals for the second visit, so that I could follow up on important themes and go deeper in my research. During the

first fieldwork phase, a total of seventy-six interviews with members of civil society and religious organizations in the Maniema province were conducted in a two month time period. The second phase of dissertation fieldwork encompassed over one hundred formal and informal interviews over a five-month period. The people or groups targeted for elite and non-elite interviews included government officials, religious authorities, leaders and members of faith based organizations, civil society associations, and international organizations. Government officials interviewed were primarily involved with the education sector, such as the provincial Minister of Education and bureaucrats working for the Ministry of Education.

The religious authorities targeted included Islamic imams and theologians, Catholic and Protestant priests and bishops, and leaders of the Kimbanguist church. Leaders and members of faith based, civil society, and international organizations were asked how long they have been active, reasons for organizing and becoming involved in the area, relations with the state and international donors, and particular activities, especially those involved with education. In interviews with Islamic organizations engaged in education the particular focus was on how their religious ideology influences their organization, their relations with the Christian community, their relations with state authorities about education policy, and primary motivations for their involvement.

By asking similar questions to different groups of people, I received enough responses that resembled each other that I began to form general hypotheses about my overarching research questions. Also, if one informant offered a compelling argument or response to a question, I checked the broader validity of that argument by asking other informants what they thought of it. Most often they would agree, but if they did not

it would lead to a lengthy discussion where they proposed useful examples to refute the other informant's idea and give me a broader understanding of the topic under discussion.

The final method of fieldwork was documentary collection and archival research, which I conducted by examining and copying archival documents related to the research question that were available among religious and non-religious organizations and communities. Most importantly, in the libraries of the University of Kisangani I discovered two historical texts about the Muslim community of Kisangani, six undergraduate and one doctoral thesis from the Department of Sociology, and three undergraduate theses from the Department of Political and Administrative Sciences which discuss the political thoughts and behaviors of the Congolese Muslim community.

### **Overview of the Argument**

Data gathered during fieldwork in the Democratic Republic of Congo supported the original assumption that faith based and non-state organizations are taking a very active role in providing public goods in post-conflict Congo. Since Christian organizations have been doing so since the colonial era, this study will first document the extent to which Islamic organizations are increasingly involved in the education sector in the post-conflict period. The chapters that follow will then address the questions of *how* and *why* the historically marginalized Muslim community has mobilized to provide public goods at this particular time in Congolese history. In order to answer these questions, we examine the history of the weak Congolese state and the minority Muslim community, as well as the evolution of the education system and the proliferation of Islamic public schools. This study argues that the latter is the result of easing internal conflicts that have allowed the Islamic community to mobilize for

collective action in an historic moment of opportunity arising from political liberalization, the weak post-conflict state, and the existing model of a hybrid school system.

Chapter 2 sets the backdrop for this analysis by detailing the history of political repression and chaos marking the Congo's colonial, dictatorial, and conflict periods. Despite this legacy, Chapter 3 analyzes how the Congolese state continues to persist, first from a theoretical vantage point, and then by describing the proliferation of civil society associations that have emerged in recent times as Congolese citizens came together to provide for their own needs in a weak state. The case study presented focuses on the expansive mobilization of women's groups in the post-conflict period, and thus provides a foreshadowing of the opportunity argument later applied to Muslim associations.

After examining the political context of the D.R. Congo, Chapter 4 has as its focus the historical and contemporary factors defining the status of the minority Muslim community. It details the marginalization Muslims suffered, especially in the colonial period, and explains the process by which this has been largely overcome in the post-conflict period as Islamic associations of all types have been able to mobilize for collective action in previously excluded realms such as politics and development.

Focusing on the realm of education, Chapter 5 describes how the system was ruled by a Catholic monopoly for decades, but then control was taken back by the state during the Mobutu era, which today results in the presence of a hybrid state-religious institutional structure. The chapter also demonstrates the significant increase in involvement of Muslim associations in the education sector in the post-war period after 2002, and provides a description of the resulting Islamic public school network.

Finally, Chapters 6 and 7 tackle the central question of *why* the historically marginalized minority Muslim community has been able to mobilize at this particular moment in Congolese history to provide public goods, especially education. This study argues that the involvement of Muslim FBOs in the education sector of Congo has been possible because of two primary factors, one internal to the Muslim community and the other external. Chapter 6 argues that Muslim collective action has only become possible as the result of the easing of internal conflicts within the Muslim community itself at local, regional, and national levels. After examining the historic legacy of internal conflicts, it details the political process by which a united development agenda has emerged since the national organization elected a single leader in 2004 and local reform-minded leaders in subsequent elections.

Chapter 7 then examines the external factor, namely the emergence of the opportunity in post-conflict Congo for a heretofore-marginalized minority community to mobilize for political purposes. This study argues that the unique political situation of the weak but increasingly democratic Congolese state allowed the minority community to become a partner in the existing model of hybrid state-religious education, in large part because the state and other major religions are unable to meet the demand for services by their constituents.

The conclusion, Chapter 8 then links the lessons gleaned from examining the particular case of Muslim organizational involvement in education provision in post-war Congo with the broader scholarly discussion on the role of faith based organizations in delivering public goods on the African continent in general. It also argues that our understanding of failed or weak states must be further nuanced to examine ways such

states do in fact demonstrate agency by negotiating with other actors to create new forms of governance, most notably hybrid state – non-state structures.



Figure 1-1. Political map of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Source: [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/congo\\_demrep\\_po198.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/congo_demrep_po198.jpg)

## CHAPTER 2 THE HISTORICAL LEGACY OF A POLITICS OF REPRESSION IN THE CONGO

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the second largest country in size on the African continent, with a population of over sixty million. Seven hundred languages and dialects are spoken within the country, but most people communicate using the official language of French or one or more of the four national languages: Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili, and Lingala. The country is located in the heart of central Africa and has borders with nine other countries: Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, and Central African Republic. Its territory is roughly the size of the United States east of the Mississippi River and contains vast mineral and agricultural resources such as coffee, tea, timber, copper, cobalt, tin, zinc, silver, iron ore, uranium, diamonds, gold, coltan, and petroleum. The Congo is among the top three world suppliers of mineral wealth, and its hydroelectric potential is 13% of the world's total, and the resources within it could potentially feed the entire continent of Africa (Afoaku 2005, 2). The reality on the ground was summed up by a representative of the World Bank, who stated that the Congo is "one of the five poorest countries in the world, but probably one of the ten richest resource countries world-wide," (Mills 2002, 3).

Largely due to the squandering of the country's resources by its inept and despotic rulers and invaders, the Congo's vast resources have been of little benefit to its people. Therefore, the history of the Congo to be reviewed here is important to this argument because it demonstrates why the central state is so weak, how a history of repression translated into the marginalization of the Muslim minority, and how the state adapted by relying on other actors to fulfill its governing functions, a model later capitalized upon by

the Muslim community. These crucial points of a politics of repression occurred during the historical periods of colonialism, dictatorship, and war.

### **The Brutality of Belgian Colonialism**

The period immediately preceding colonization to independence in 1960 represents the formation of exogenous power structures and the domination and exploitation of the Congolese population and resources. As we will see, this tumultuous time in the nation's history set the stage for the persistence of rotating absolute hegemony and political chaos.

#### **Artificial Division**

What is unique about the territory today known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, created at the 1884-85 Berlin West Africa Conference, is that it was the only European colony in Africa to be under the dominion of an individual, the sovereign king of Belgium, and not the property of a colonizing country as a whole. What was not unique to the Congo, however, was that as the Europeans drew arbitrary boundaries, disregarding ethnic and tribal considerations and pre-colonial kingdoms, the fourteen pre-colonial states of the Congo become artificially united, while others were separated by new colonial boundaries. Among them were the kingdom of Bakongo and the Lunda empire that had existed since the 1500s (Englebert 2000, 85). Additionally, more than 365 ethnic groups with no prior sense of common nationality were suddenly united in a country designed by foreigners (Englebert 2003, 2).

#### **Leopold's Reign of Terror**

In the late nineteenth century the Congo Free State was ceded as the private domain of the Belgian King Leopold II, who exercised complete dominion over the human and natural resources of his new colony to the detriment of the land and its

people. “During his entire 23-year tenure as the Congo’s king-sovereign, Leopold never put his feet on Congolese soil. He ruled the country as an absentee landlord or the majority owner of a joint-stock company who leaves day-to-day affairs to professional managers,” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 23). In order to secure his reign on the ground, the King sought the assistance of Henry Morton Stanley, a British-born American journalist and explorer.

Stanley obtained signatures of African rulers in the Congo territory by having them make their mark with a thumbprint to show that they were ceding their territory to the Belgian King, even though most rulers were not fully briefed on the significance of the documents they were “signing”. Those leaders who did understand what was being demanded of them and resisted were met with force. For example, in Katanga, the most mineral-rich region of the country, King Msiri was shot by a European officer on December 28, 1891 for his refusal to relinquish his authority over the area (Ibid., 31).

Stanley’s legacy of brutality eventually came to represent the colonial project in Africa more broadly. From his use of dynamite to create a road for those sections of the country not navigable by river, he became known in a local language as *Bula Matari*, “the smasher of rocks” (Ibid., 16). In addition, “Bula Matari came to represent this intrusive alien authority more generally. The metaphor captured well the crushing, relentless force of the emerging colonial state in Africa,” (Young 1994, 1).

Leopold had heavily invested in Stanley’s expedition and needed the Congo to be profitable in order for him to repay his debts. The measures he used to turn a profit were truly horrifying, leading one expert to call this time “the Congo holocaust” because of “the use of torture, murder and other inhumane methods to compel the Congolese to

abandon their way of life to produce or do whatever the colonial state required of them,” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 20). In a true twist of irony, King Leopold was sponsoring anti-slavery conferences in Belgium at the same time he was using forced labor and collaborating with Tippu Tip, the famous slave trader from Zanzibar who features prominently in the history of Islam in Maniema. However, the King and Tippu Tip eventually became competitors for ivory in the region. Therefore, between 1892 and 1894 King Leopold disguised his war against Swahili-Arab economic dominance as the anti-slavery campaign of a good Christian colonial power, even though the cruelty of the Belgian forces inflicted on locals was much more excessive than that of their former collaborators-turned-scapegoats (Ibid., 21).

Additionally, the invention of the rubber tire in Europe led to a large demand for the commodity found in abundance in Congo. A law passed in 1891 required all Congolese to provide labor, rubber, and ivory to the colonial authorities. *Bula Matari* had no difficulty executing this law. When villagers failed to meet the daily production quotas they faced rape, property damage, physical mutilation, and even murder that “resulted in a death toll of holocaust proportions that is estimated to be as high as 10 million people,” (Ibid., 22). Official census data documents a population of 8.5 million Congolese in 1911, down from an estimated 20 to 30 million when the colonial period began (Ibid.). This massive population decline in a short quarter century was the result of the spread of disease and a brutal colonial regime that relied on murder, starvation, and physical exhaustion.

### **The Belgian Congo**

King Leopold’s absolute reign began to crumble as European and American visitors, mostly missionaries and journalists, came to the Congo Free State and were

appalled by what they witnessed. An international human rights campaign was launched against King Leopold known as the Congo Reform Association led by Edmund Dene Morel in England. This campaign was a success, and in 1908 the Congo became the Belgian Congo, a colony of the entire country and no longer the personal property of King Leopold II.

However, Belgium did little on the ground to change the previously established administrative structure of the colony. In fact, “the second Belgian regime in the Congo would rely on the alliance of the state with the Catholic Church and large corporations to continue the triple mission of economic exploitation, political repression and cultural oppression in Central Africa,” (Ibid., 27). Another similarity in the colonial regimes was that both used Congolese resources to provide public services to Belgian citizens and repay loans. Belgium was struggling financially as the result of two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century and relied on Congolese profits to become economically sound. One easy method of ensuring profits was the use of forced labor. When Belgium was not at war, Congolese were required to provide colonial administrators with sixty days of free labor annually, which doubled to one hundred and twenty days of forced labor during wartime. Once again this led to starvation and death for the local population who lacked adequate energy and time to devote to the maintenance of their subsistence livelihoods.

In order to most effectively gain control over a vast territory and population, the colonial government relied on traditional chiefs as intermediaries, who were co-opted into becoming functionaries of the state. This plan had two tangible benefits in that it not only increased the colonial administration’s workforce substantially, but that it also

granted legitimacy by using traditional power structures. Although the legacy of indirect rule, such as the increased democratic deficit between citizen and subject (Mamdani 1996) is true of most post-colonial countries, it was particularly harsh in the Congo. For example, even though the colonial government had complete hegemony, the state still feared popular rebellion and therefore created an army of Congolese known as the *force publique*. This army was hated and feared by the population it was forced to coerce into obeying the colonial authorities. In addition, colonial administrators also relied on force. The *chicotte* was a whip made from hippopotamus hide that was administered publically to prisoners and other offenders near the colonial flagpole at 6 a.m. and 2 p.m. every day (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 37).

In addition to economic and political oppression, the colonial state also relied upon cultural oppression. Through primarily Catholic missionaries, African indigenous religion, music, and art were lauded as inferior and backward. Not only were the foreigners stronger militarily, but Congolese were also taught that God too found them inferior. The repressive tactics of the Catholic Church will be explored in more detail in relation to their treatment of Muslims in Chapter 4. In total, the Belgian Congo was no less repressive for Congolese than had been its brutal predecessor, the Congo Free State of King Leopold.

### **Decolonization**

In the aftermath of World War II, the colonial system began to face opposition amidst cries for the right to self-determination, causing many colonial powers to begin scaling back their foreign rule. The Belgian administration began to allow Congolese bourgeoisie to apply for the status of honorary Europeans. The process of distributing social merit cards began in 1952 to recognize Congolese who behaved in an “evolved”

manner and thus deserved to be treated as honorary Europeans. “The test involved a rather humiliating visit by an investigative commission whose tasks included examining the candidate’s household items such as silverware and linen, and determining whether he ate at the table with his spouse and spoke with his children in French,” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 41). For the most part, the new Congolese elite was western educated and taught to look down upon traditional African ways of life.

As independence became the focus for many African countries, the Belgians began to allow the formation of Congolese political parties in 1957. In an effort to avoid a violent conflict over the granting of independence, the colonial power convened the Round Table Conference in Brussels from January 20 to February 20, 1960. There it was decided that the Congo would gain independence in six months. Those Congolese present, such as Patrice Lumumba, Moise Tshombe, and Joseph Kasavubu, who would remain influential in the country for years to come, negotiated the date of June 30, 1960 for independence and the creation of a strong centralized government. They called for the establishment of a parliament that would be responsible for drafting a constitution, separate provincial governments, and the holding of democratic elections prior to independence.

Despite these plans, the Congo was not prepared for self-rule, and decolonization came very quickly. While ruling the country, the Belgians had further guarded against revolt by barely or not at all educating their citizens. Over 70% of eligible children were in school, but only 9% were allowed to complete the six years of primary education. Therefore, at independence only three of 10,000 civil servants in the country were

Congolese; there were only four university graduates, no lawyers, doctors, or dentists (Gildea 1990,14).

The Congo was left with the formal structure of a modern state by Belgium, but little means and trained personnel to be able to effectively operate it. Most Belgian bureaucrats left the country upon independence. For example, there were 324 telecommunications technicians under Belgian rule, but this number went to 24 after independence. The same trend held for most professions. Of the 700 Belgian doctors before independence, only 200 remained after the transition, and only one post office worker remained out of 250. Although many emerging independent nations around the world shared a similar legacy of few trained or educated citizens to take over the reins of their post-colonial country, the Congo's situation was particularly dire. Its harsh legacy of oppression and extraction had left an administrative infrastructure primarily geared toward controlling the population through force and discouraging political mobilization for fear of rebellion, while ensuring easy access to precious resources. The result in the short-term was that "the Congo faced imminent collapse," (Jacobson 1964, 82). And in the long-term, the country was ruled by Congolese versions of King Leopold who did little to innovate the apparatuses of oppression and extraction that were their colonial inheritance.

### **Secession Crisis and UN Intervention**

The next major development in the history of the Congo was the United Nations intervention in the early 1960s. The severe lack of transition and preparation time between colonial rule and independent government propelled the country into chaos. The withdrawal of the all-powerful Belgian colonial government opened up the space for rebellion, which the Katanga province capitalized upon.

Less than two weeks after Congolese independence was granted Moïse Tshombé declared independence of the Katanga province, the southeast region rich in mining resources, on July 11, 1960. Tshombé had been present at the roundtable conference in Brussels but did not emerge as a national leader because of his insistence on a decentralized government structure. Patrice Lumumba, the newly selected Prime Minister, and the Belgians preferred a strong central government that emulated the Belgian model. At that time, Katanga was a strategic Congolese province because it produced 50% of the country's wealth but only contained 12% of the national population.

The largest mining corporation, *Union Minière du Haut-Katanga*, dominated the economic output in the region. Upon Tshombé's secession declaration, the company paid all its taxes to the provincial government, which provided Tshombé's rebel government with the financial wherewithal to continue their fight. The company not only financed the government, but also hired mercenaries, donated arms and used their railroad facilities to transport military supplies. "According to unimpeachable sources, officials of the *Union Minière* have proudly admitted the manufacture of *gendarmérie* armoured cars and of bombs which have been dropped on the airport and ONUC Headquarters in Elisabethville," (Gordon 1962, 136). Thus, the commercial power of the Katanga province made secession plans a possibility.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Several scholars have noted the importance of a separate economic source for fueling secession attempts and civil wars. Collier and Hoeffler (2002) demonstrated how access to natural resource in the form of primary commodities increases the chances for conflict, which Leonard and Straus (2003) followed up on by arguing that enclave production in weak states provides the means for civil war. Reno (1998, 2002) argued that warlords and rulers of weak states are able to use access to resources not only to finance their military operations, but also to produce legitimacy.

In response to the Katanga secession, the United Nations Security Council met on July 7, 1960 and decided to dispatch a peacekeeping force called ONUC, *Opération des Nations Unies au Congo*. The mandate of the mission was to quell the secession and uphold the country's territorial integrity. Dag Hammarskjold, the Secretary General of the United Nations at the time, believed the organization's mission to include running the country and helping to train a new civil service in order to become self-sufficient. ONUC began with 3,500 troops but was expanded to 11,155 by the end of the first month. Peacekeepers were deployed throughout the country, with the exception of the Katanga province. The mission sought not only to keep the territory of the Congo intact, but also to prop up the fledgling independent state by maintaining infrastructure and performing necessary administration tasks.

In addition to the ONUC peacekeeping troops, the UN Civilian Operations section worked in areas such as agriculture, communications, education, finance, foreign trade, health, training for the national security forces, labor markets, natural resources and industry, and public administration. The United Nations performed numerous infrastructural duties such as maintaining the ports and railway system, providing food and medical supplies, caring for refugees, and seeking temporary work for unemployed citizens. In addition, the UN teams provided technical staff for airports and communications, teachers, medical staff, and legal personnel to fill in the gaps of untrained bureaucrats (Jacobson 1964, 92). ONUC also began education programs in the country and provided scholarships for some Congolese to study abroad with the intention that eventually a Congolese bureaucratic class could emerge to take over the provision of state functions. For example, in 1960 there were no Congolese doctors,

but with the assistance of World Health Organization projects funded by the UNDP, there were two hundred by 1970 (Murphy 2006, 96).

It has been argued that ONUC's civilian operations section should be seen as performing the tasks of "state-preserving and state-building" in the newly independent Congo (Jacobson 1964, 75). Those involved with the mission have stated the following.

Ralph Bunche, the distinguished Under-Secretary for Special Political Affairs from 1955 to 1967, described the Congo Civilian Operations Programme as 'the most massive technical assistance effort in human history, and certainly in the history of the United Nations', and the US ambassador to the UN, Adlai Stevenson, told radio listeners in January 1963 that 'the 1,200 UN experts have been for all practical purposes, the national administration of the country'. (Murphy 2006, 95)

However, despite the presence of the peacekeeping mission and technical staff, the political situation in the Congo continued to deteriorate. President Kasavubu publically dismissed Lumumba as Prime Minister, allegedly because the former did not approve of Lumumba's courting of the Soviet Union for international assistance. In retaliation, Lumumba dismissed Kasavubu as President and accused him of being too connected to the West. Because each refused to recognize his dismissal, the Congo had two active governments. The Chamber of Representatives overwhelmingly voted that the dismissals were illegal. Kasavubu paid little heed and proceeded to appoint a new Prime Minister, but the Senate refused to acknowledge him. In return, Kasavubu dismissed the entire Senate. Consequently, the Senate bestowed all power on Lumumba on September 14, 1960.

That same day, twenty-nine year old Colonel Joseph Mobutu declared that the army was taking over the country because the elected officials had clearly demonstrated their incompetence. Kasavubu backed Mobutu and the West urged the United Nations to recognize the Kasavubu-Mobutu government. This international

request was made because the West, and particularly the United States, feared that Lumumba would align the Congo with the Soviet Union. In the context of the geopolitical situation of the Cold War it is possible that “the UN intervention was probably designed more to curb the expansion of the USSR than to respond to the security needs of Zaire (Congo). Western policy-makers were anxious that the Soviets make no more gains in the Third World,” (Schatzberg 1989, 320).

On November 27, Lumumba attempted to escape from house arrest, but was captured and formally arrested on a warrant for crimes against the state. Upon his removal, Lumumba’s Deputy Prime Minister, Antione Gizenga, re-established the legal government of Congo with the new capital of Stanleyville (today Kisangani). On January 17, 1961, Lumumba and two of his parliamentary associates, Senate Vice President Joseph Okito and Youth Minister Maurice Mpolo, were transported from Camp Hardy to Elisabethville (today Lubumbashi) under Kasavubu’s orders. The United Nations Secretary General demanded his release but soon news came that Lumumba and his colleagues had escaped their place of confinement and been killed by inhabitants of a village. His body was never found, but the consensus was that he was murdered and buried in the dense Congolese bush.

A later UN investigation found that Lumumba and his compatriots had actually been killed shortly after their arrival in Katanga and probably in the presence of Katangese authorities. However, it was well known that the United States and Belgium had supported a permanent solution to the threat posed by Lumumba’s relations with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It has since come to light that United States President Eisenhower had issued the order to have Lumumba assassinated at a

National Security Council meeting in August 1960. That order was transferred to the CIA chief of station in the Congo, Larry Devlin, who then unsuccessfully attempted to carry out the order. In the end, “although the U.S. was responsible for setting the stage and providing the impetus, the assassination itself was endorsed by the Belgian government and orchestrated by the Belgian secret service,” (Gondola 2002, 127). The death of Lumumba angered most Congolese citizens because he was heralded as their first democratically elected leader whose assassination was viewed as the result of the Cold War and Western fears that the Congo’s vast resources would fall into the hands of the Soviet Union (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002). A half century later Patrice Lumumba remains the Congo’s greatest hero and martyr.

In the end, Tshombe’s secession was defeated because of the UN peacekeeping mission and international pressure. The UN Secretary General asked Belgium to pressure *Union Minière* to cease financing the insurgency. Without financial assistance, Tshombe was forced to sign the Kitona Declaration stating that he recognized Kasavubu as Congo’s sole head of state as well as the authority of the central government. In a move to compromise, the agreement allowed representatives from Katanga to join the commission to draft a new Congolese constitution. In January 1962, Kasavubu appointed a new Prime Minister who helped to decrease political tension by including pro-Lumumbists and leaders from numerous provinces in his administration.

However, Antione Gizenga, Patrice Lumumba’s successor, still claimed that he was the true head of government. UN officials encouraged him to meet with Kasavubu at ONUC headquarters, where the two agreed to reconvene parliament. As the political and security situation appeared settled, the United Nations peacekeeping operation left

Congo in June 1964. The following month, President Kasavubu invited Tshombe to become the new Prime Minister as part of a political settlement. Despite efforts at reconciliation, the Kasavubu-Tshombe government was suspended when Colonel Mobutu staged his second military coup, citing once again a power struggle between the President and Prime Minister.

### **The Dictatorial Reign of Mobutu Sese Seko**

After what most scholars acknowledge as the most brutal African colonial experience, under the dominion of Belgium, the Congo re-emerged as an independent state but was almost immediately plunged into political chaos. Mobutu's arrival in power, allegedly to establish order, was in the end to last for thirty-two years, during which he ruled as the dictator of a country he renamed Zaire. His tenure was made possible in large part because of the support and complicity of the international community.

### **The Early Years**

Immediately following his military coup in November 1964, Mobutu declared himself president and expelled all remnants of Belgian rule. He attempted to create a national identity by renaming streets, places, and people. Among other changes, his own name became Mobutu Sese Seko and the country was renamed Zaire. Mobutu's thirty-two year reign has been characterized as an autocracy, with brutal tendencies bordering on tyranny. Mobutu has been classified as an autocrat because he held absolute power, allowed no successful political rivals, and appeared to be the owner of the country, its people, and all its riches (Jackson and Rosberg 1982a). As time passed, Mobutu became more repressive, following in the footsteps of his predecessors

King Leopold II and the Belgian colonial regime, and was able to keep a hold on power through corruption, coercion, and myth making.

Although a constitution had been written upon independence, Mobutu began to rule by personal decree by 1966, with no respect to the separation of powers among the various governmental branches. He cancelled presidential elections, dismissed the prime minister, revoked the powers of the legislature, and personally appointed regional governors. Any opponents attempting to rebel or resist the new regime were either assassinated or driven into exile (*Ibid.*, 170).

Zaire's ruler made every attempt to legitimize his own power, but was very manipulative in doing so. For example, the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR) was instituted as a single-party system in 1967, with obligatory membership for all, absurdly even including one's ancestors and unborn children (Michel 1999). The party did not belong to the people of Zaire, but to the MPR's founding father, President Mobutu. The leader rhetorically stated that his country was not a one-party state, but that it was a nationalist party of all people. Mandatory elections were held every seven years, with Mobutu as the sole candidate. Not surprisingly, he always garnered 100% of the vote and claimed this to demonstrate to the country and the world how much he was loved by his people.

Although the DRC/ Zaire is one of the richest countries in Africa in natural resources, under the autocracy of President Mobutu it witnessed substantial economic decline. Having taken control of the country in 1965 when the world price of copper was quite high, his economic approach in the early 1970s consisted of borrowing extensively from the international community to invest in the country's mineral sector. At the same

time the agricultural sector suffered from a significant decrease in its budget allocation and detrimental state-determined prices. Then, the international price of copper fell on the world market in 1974 revealing “the far-reaching crisis of the state: the destruction of the rural sector, the mortgaging of the future of the society to a costly copper-energy development strategy, and the corrosion of the structures of the public sector,” (Young and Turner 1985, 325).

In 1973, Mobutu launched an authenticity campaign called “Zairianization” in which all foreign owned economic sectors were seized, including commerce, plantations, small industries, construction firms, and transportation. These were then divided among Zairians, although most were given to those displaying loyalty to Mobutu or from whom he needed to gain allegiance. He followed a policy of rotating elites to make sure no one person or group gained too much power. As such, elites learned to exploit the resources of office as much as possible while they could. As a result, the economy drastically declined leading to shortages of food, layoffs, tax evasion, abandoned businesses, protests, and inflation. Coupled with the fall of world copper prices and the international fuel crisis, Zairianization caused untold suffering for Congolese people. By 1976 Mobutu realized his mistake in removing foreign businessmen, and began a process of “retrocession” which offered to return 60% of enterprises to their previous owners (Ibid.).

In addition to stealing the country’s wealth, Mobutu Sese Seko’s regime was accused of gross human rights violations against his people. These included execution of political opponents, violent repression of religious organization members, and imprisonment and/or death sentences for speaking against the President. Not long after

Lumumba's death (in which Mobutu is assumed to have played a large role), Mobutu accused the next Prime Minister, Kimba, and three others of a plot, and they were condemned to death. The "conspirators" were hung in public in front of a large crowd.

In an interview with the President, he stated that the Congolese people are not like Westerners, they are Bantu and have their own moral code under which they must operate. The message that the ruler sent with this action was that any political opponents perceived as a threat to his personal power would be executed. In an interview with a former member of Mobutu's Secret Service, the soldier stated that the helicopter that flew overnight from Kinshasa, which people believed to be conducting border patrol with neighboring Congo-Brazzaville, was actually transporting the corpses of assassinated political prisoners to be disposed of in the Congo River (Michel 1999). Another case involved the execution of thirteen military officers and imprisonment of twenty-nine others in 1978 after an alleged coup plot. In a television broadcast afterwards, Mobutu stated, "I solemnly declare that from now on, I will be without pity against all attempts of that kind. In the past executive mercy has been mistaken for weakness. But now whoever tries again to use the sword will perish by the sword," (quoted in Jackson and Rosberg 1982a, 180).

Despite his attempts at complete control, Mobutu did face some resistance. In 1977 rebels declared the secession of the Shaba province (today Katanga, but was renamed under Mobutu's authenticity campaign). Mobutu's national army was not strong enough to prevent this rebellion, so the President requested international assistance. France and Morocco came to Mobutu's aid and rebel forces were defeated. The following year, another rebel secession, known as Shaba II, emerged

demonstrating that Mobutu was not truly in control of his country. In order to secure international assistance again, Mobutu had French families in the region murdered so that France would intervene on behalf of her citizens. His plot was successful and the French Foreign Legion, with additional support from Belgium and the United States, stopped the rebellion and reinforced Mobutu's power (Ibid.).

Mobutu sought to be an absolute ruler but recognized, as the examples above illustrate, that he did not have complete control of the Zairian state territory. Therefore, he sought other avenues for obtaining legitimacy and power. The President toured China and North Korea and admired how their rulers had created a personality cult, in the case of the former in the form of Maoism. Mobutu's Minister of Information then instituted what he termed "Mobutism," in which the leader was celebrated through songs about his eternal life, his picture as the father of the country displayed throughout the nation, as well as an ad prior to every news broadcast that depicted Mobutu emerging from the clouds. The former Minister of Information noted that Zairian children actually began to believe Mobutu was God as a result of the ads (Michel 1999). The effect of this propaganda campaign was a nation in awe of and devoted to its father figure, while Mobutu increased his legitimacy and held on power (Schatzberg 1988).

As sole ruler of the nation, Mobutu amassed an enormous fortune for himself and those close to him. The Mobutu regime has been referred to as a "kleptocracy," a government based on theft. Mobutu himself became one of the richest men in the world, with his finances coming from the budget allocation of "Presidential Services," to be used personally or to be handed out to loyal clients in order to keep their trust and support. He had palaces in Switzerland, Belgium, France, and eight provinces within

Zaire, one of which housed the largest swimming pool on the African continent. Air Zaire, the national airline, was often used as Mobutu's personal mode of transportation.

In addition to obtaining personal wealth, Mobutu used his access to wealth and state bureaucracies to remain in power. He chose those loyal to him to work at the top levels of government and enterprise, regardless of personal merit, experience, or expertise. In effect, the Zairian government was run by Mobutu loyalists and family members, an extensive patronage system, and administrative corruption. The level of corruption within the office of the President trickled down throughout the ranks of the civil service and military. Massive bribery existed at all levels of government. It is estimated that 60% of the national annual budget was misappropriated by those governing the country. Mobutu claimed that Zairians had learned corruption from the Belgians during the colonial era (Michel 1999). The external debt of the DRC in 2004 was \$15 billion, most of which was embezzled by Mobutu and his cronies (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002).

The Zairian people, once again powerless over how their rulers squandered their resources, turned to an informal economy as the only means of survival in a country with no formal economy. This economy was unregulated and untaxed and consisted of automobile repair, commerce, construction, education, health care, mining, and transportation. No credit was available for small businesses, the banking system collapsed and moved to street corners, and most commerce and payments for services was only conducted in foreign currencies. This early model of Congolese turning their back on a public realm clearly unable to provide for them foreshadows the ingenuity of associations, including FBOs, that will be explored in subsequent chapters.

Mobutu's years of rule can be seen as a continuous process dating to the colonial era of rulers exerting absolute power and subverting the Congolese population. With unconditional international and monetary backing, Mobutu, with the assistance of his MPR party, the authenticity campaign, and his myths, was able to remain an absolute despot for over three decades. However, "the power of a dictatorship lies primarily in the fear its leader is able to instill in the people. Once this fear is removed, as was the case with the DRC, Mobutu lost his means of controlling the population," (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2006, 225).

### **Mobutu's Decline**

Most of the literature on the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko explains his decline in terms of the shifting global order at the end of the Cold War. Since there was no longer a threat of a communist invasion of Africa, Western powers no longer felt compelled to uphold Mobutu's dictatorship. Under such pressure, in 1990 Mobutu announced political pluralism and freedom, allowed the participation of other parties, and the creation of the Congolese Sovereign National Conference (SNC). Mobutu himself resigned from the leadership of the MPR, stating that instead he would act as an arbitrator among newly formed political parties. As a result of this political opening, two hundred political parties registered.

The SNC was convened with almost three thousand participants working toward the goal of a transition to democracy. The SNC was divided into twenty-three commissions and over one hundred sub-commissions in order to investigate the country's past and make policy recommendations for the future. Delegates adopted a Transitional Charter, which withdrew Mobutu's executive powers, but granted him the title of ceremonial head of state for two more years. However, behind the scenes

Mobutu relied on tactics of divide and rule to undercut the main opposition parties, such as buying off members of the opposition.

In August 1992 the SNC delegates elected Etienne Tshisekedi as Prime Minister with 71% of the vote. Unfortunately, the new Prime Minister was only in office for three months before Mobutu sent troops to evict all ministers. Even during his short tenure, Tshisekedi and his government were very limited in their ability to function, as Mobutu would not relinquish control over the central bank, the tax office, customs, and all state revenue generating enterprises.

Mobutu permanently suspended the National Conference in December 1992, and politics returned to their previous condition. "Mobutu's Zaire became the only country in the world where the head of state led the opposition to the legally established government, organized economic sabotage, and directed acts of terror and ethnic cleansing against his opponents and their supporters," (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2004, 10). Not surprisingly, the Sovereign National Conference failed to establish a true transition to democracy. However, it has been argued that the process did help educate Congolese citizens on the realities of their country, the democratic process, and their ability to fight against authoritarianism and oppressive government (Ibid., 11). As the myth of his absolute power began to fade, Mobutu was only able to maintain his position during and after the SNC through coercion and intimidation.

Mobutu controlled his army, the Zairian Armed Forces (FAZ) using corruption, clientelism, and ethnic favoritism. Half of the generals came from Mobutu's home region, Equateur, and one third were members of the same ethnic group, Ngbandi. A soldier moved up in the army hierarchy through patronage and loyalty to the president,

not through merit and competence. The army was allowed to partake of commercial activities like smuggling, selling military equipment, or embezzlement as a way of meeting their economic needs when the government was unable to do so. Mobutu's army was never able to stop regional conflicts, but instead the state depended on troops from foreign governments, such as France, Morocco, South Africa, and other European mercenaries, to stop rebellions (Lemarchand 2003, 40).

Mobutu was able to keep power for three decades through the financial, military, and diplomatic support of the United States, France, Belgium, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. The end of the Cold War led to an end in major donor assistance. Unable to finance his patronage system, Mobutu printed more money, which led to inflation. Large segments of the country refused to accept the new currency that had been given to the FAZ soldiers as their salaries. In response, the FAZ conducted looting and killing sprees in 1991-1993 in Kinshasa and other regions of the country. Inflation was 261% in 1990, but jumped to 6,800% by 1994 (Ibid., 33). The unrest caused by the riots was a major factor in the breakdown and inefficiency of the SNC. Although the conference itself was halted, Mobutu's control over politics, the country, and even his own army was weakening. As one prominent central African scholar stated, "by any of the conventional yardsticks – declining institutional performance, military indiscipline, harassment of civilians, inability to collect taxes, and governmental spending on public services, notably health and education – Zaire in the early 1990s stood at the top of the list of Africa's failed states," (Ibid., 38).

Shortly after the soldier riots and failure of the national conference, a sequence of events took place, after which Mobutu was never again able to maintain his hold on

power. The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 had an enormous impact on politics in Zaire, and central Africa as a whole. The Rwandan Hutu dictator of twenty years, Juvenal Habyarimana, was killed when his plane was shot down on April 6, 1994. What followed was the murder of between eight hundred thousand and one million Tutsi and moderate Hutus, after an elaborate anti-Tutsi propaganda campaign orchestrated by the Hutu regime. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel movement created by Rwandan Tutsi exiles in Uganda, swiftly came to power in the aftermath of the genocide. In the six months after Habyarimana's death, they were responsible for the murder of between twenty-five and forty-five thousand more Rwandans (Prunier 2009, 16). Average Hutu who had participated in the genocide and/ or feared revenge by the new regime, along with the defeated Hutu elites, fled into eastern Zaire, creating a refugee mass of two million people (Turner 2007, 3). An estimated 100,000 of these refugees were armed militia or former Rwandan military members (Lemarchand 2003, 36).

Lemarchand (2003) argued the triggering event that really brought about the end of the Zairian state was the Rwandan assault against the refugee camps in October 1996. The new Tutsi regime in Rwanda justified their aggression as a pre-emptive strike against armed Hutu rebel factions living in the camps. They were unsatisfied with Mobutu, who was both unable and unwilling to prevent rebel groups from organizing within Zaire. But Rwanda was not the only country angered by Mobutu's policies, and soon Zaire's neighboring countries Rwanda, Uganda, Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe formed a coalition with the intention of ousting Mobutu. To do so, they backed the rebel movement forming in the East under the command of Laurent Désiré Kabila.

## **Things Fall Apart: Civil War, Transition, and State Weakness**

### **Kabila's Rebellion: The First Congo War**

Mobutu's already precarious control of Zaire was further eroded by his inability to control the chaos in the east in the aftermath of the genocide. Additionally, he faced protests and political animosity in Kinshasa as a result of the failed Sovereign National Conference. Therefore, Mobutu retreated to his palace near the village of his childhood, far in the forest of the Equateur province. Then, in 1996 he was diagnosed with prostate cancer and underwent surgery in Switzerland. At this time a rebellion had grown out of the chaos in eastern Zaire, led by Laurent Désiré Kabila with backing from neighboring countries.

With the president absent and facing no threat from his national army, the rebels successfully marched across the country and into the capital. Laurent Kabila and his forces, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL), arrived in Kinshasa on May 17, 1997. Later that month Kabila met with Mobutu in the presence of Nelson Mandela to attempt a peaceful transition of power. However, Kabila refused to compromise and the international community no longer came to Mobutu's rescue. Therefore, ill and defeated, Mobutu, along with his family, quickly fled the country. Four months later he died of cancer in Morocco.

Laurent Kabila promptly proclaimed himself President of the country he renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). At that time, there were high hopes that Kabila would reverse the policies of Mobutu, bring the country to democracy, and provide security for the greater region of central Africa. Unfortunately, that was not the case. His inaugural speech on May 29 made clear his intentions were not to usher in democracy. He stated that the SNC would not be allowed to reconvene to create a new

national constitution and that opposition political parties would remain outlawed. Kabila followed in the footsteps of Mobutu, consolidating his own hold on power and creating no program for national reconstruction and development. He did not regularly pay civil servants, which continued the cycle of corruption and administrative ineffectiveness established by his predecessor. The central bank remained under the control of the president, now managed by a committee of ministers Kabila personally selected.

“Citing the war effort as justification, another president unable to differentiate between public and private purse dipped at will in the coffers of the central bank, which printed money frenetically to cover the gap,” (Wrong 2001, 298). Kabila also nationalized a thriving railway company run by South African and Belgian businesses, which in turn quickly disintegrated into bankruptcy (Edgerton 2002, 225).

There was no freedom of the press, expression or right to organize. Civilians were even taken before military courts on charges of violating the ban on political activities or attempting freedom of expression. In the first few months after gaining power Kabila had dozens of civil society leaders and journalists jailed and imprisoned. He dissolved the AFDL, his own rebel movement, and created People’s Power Committees (PPCs) allegedly to give power to the Congolese people, but members, who were allowed to carry weapons, mostly acted as police informants spying on the opposition. As such, the DRC turned into a virtual police state. A United Nations special commission was established to study the deaths of tens of thousands of Hutu refugees allegedly killed by the AFDL and Rwandan troops beginning in October 1996 with the raid on the refugee camps. Kabila prevented the commission from carrying out its investigations in order to protect himself and the Rwandan government.

Kabila, in a surprising move, did not invite Etienne Tshisekedi to any post in his new government. In response, Tshisekedi organized protest marches against the new regime. Kabila, in a Mobutu-era move, arrested Tshisekedi along with his entire family. They were only held captive for ten hours, but released with a fatal threat about what they might face in the future if the former Prime Minister attempted to become active in politics again (Ibid., 224). Tshisekedi was not the only prominent figure to be harassed. A coup attempt planned for October 2000 was found out, and a military tribunal sentenced eight of the eighty accused men to death while thirty-two were given prison sentences (Ibid., 231). The UN said that the trial was not fair since the accused were not allowed legal representation and were subjected to torture while imprisoned. It is apparent through these examples that Kabila, like his predecessor, would stop at nothing to maintain his power.

Kabila's rule was characterized by large-scale corruption, human rights abuses, and warfare. The former rebel leader had neither experience as a statesman, nor any vision for the nation once he gained power. Perhaps this is why Kabila continued many of Mobutu's policies, including a reign of terror by security forces and a personality cult led by none other than Mobutu's Minister of Information who had begun the propaganda campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s. According to one scholar, there was little difference between Mobutu and Kabila:

Mobutu ruled thanks to the support of a mono-ethnic security force. So does Kabila. Mobutu plundered the central bank. So does Kabila. Mobutu destroyed the formal economy. Kabila has gone even further, choking off the informal economy. 'Kabila,' as one European politician astutely remarked, 'has simply replaced Mobutu with Mobutism.' (Wrong 2001, 308)

Kabila, like Mobutu and Leopold before him, maintained power over the state and its people through myth, coercion, intimidation, and the denial of freedom and rights.

However, “what is beyond dispute is that in his three and a half years in office, Laurent Kabila outdid Mobutu in taking his country into the abyss,” (Lemarchand 2003, 51).

### **Africa’s World War: The Second Congo War**

Laurent Kabila, originally thought to be the democratic liberator of Mobutu’s Zaire, has been described as a warlord incapable of leading the DRC. He instituted a new system of personal rule and relied on the support of his intelligence agencies and relatives in the absence of a plan to rebuild the Congolese state (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 243). His government was largely comprised of unqualified family members and Rwandans who had helped him ascend to power. His opponents accused him of being a stooge of Rwanda. To counter this claim, Kabila fired many of his initial ministers and ordered the foreign armies out of the country on July 27, 1998. This act proved to be the most fatal error of his career.

Kabila’s façade of power did not fool either the Congolese population or the country’s neighbors. In the absence of a true all-powerful agent, rebel movements from within and without the nation sprang up to compete for control of the state. The rebel movement RCD, the Congolese Rally for Democracy, primarily comprised of former members of Kabila’s regime who had recently been fired, was created in Kigali, Rwanda in August 1998. This movement was able to get control of several key cities, the hydroelectric dam, and cut off Kinshasa’s electricity and water supply. In response to the new rebellion, Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, along with a Congolese group comprised mostly of youth, came to the aid of Kabila and saved Kinshasa from falling to rebels again.

The “civil war” continued to rage on with Rwandan, Ugandan, and Congolese rebel troops taking over various sections of eastern Congo. The country was then divided

into three semi-autonomous territories including: President Joseph Kabila, with the assistance of Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, controlled Kinshasa and the majority of the south, including the Kasai provinces and part of Katanga, equipping him with oil, diamonds, and minerals; a huge area in the east was controlled by the RDC rebels and the Rwandans, including North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema, and portions of Katanga, the Kasais, and Orientale; and finally portions of the north, especially the Equateur province was controlled by the MLC, Movement for the Liberation of Congo, rebels led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, with the support of Uganda (Turner 2007, 6-7).

In addition to the rebel movements and the international troops present in the conflict, there were other actors involved. One such group is known as the Mai-Mai, a loose faction of local warlords who backed Kabila and opposed RCD and Rwanda. There were also Hutu armed groups from Rwanda and Burundi, as well as a Tutsi-dominant group in South Kivu who opposed Rwandan presence in DRC. The CNDP, the National Congress for the Defense of the People, led by Laurent Nkunda represented Tutsi from North Kivu who felt unprotected by the Congolese army.

While neighboring countries controlled large portions of the country, they plundered the land for natural resources to help finance their military campaigns and enrich elites. Troops in the east fought several times over Kisangani and other areas in eastern Congo that contain substantial mineral wealth in the form of gold, timber, diamonds, and coltan used in cell phones and computers. In 2001, a United Nations report on the illegal exploitation of natural resources in the DRC was conducted and found Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe profiting from their involvement in the Congo war (UNSC 2001). Those that had benefited the most were high-ranking officials and

their families in Rwanda and Uganda, and corporations from all over the world who paid taxes to the rebel groups in charge of particular mineral-rich regions. For example, Rwandan diamond exports in 1997 were 166 carats, but by 2000, they were exporting 30,500 carats, most of which came from eastern Congo (Mills 2002, 30). Mining rights to *Gecamines*, the largest mining company in Congo, were granted to Zimbabwe in return for military help to Kabila's government in Kinshasa, as well as diamond mining rights. It was reported that in the year 2000 five hundred Zimbabwean companies were operating in DRC, and thirty-four non-African companies were exporting minerals from DRC, including thirteen from Belgium, five from Germany, five from Holland, two from England, one from Russia, one from India, and one from Malaysia (Lemarchand 2003, 57).

Despite citing their own security concerns as the impetus for their involvement in DRC, the UN report implied that security was not the only reason outside countries were involved in the DRC, as they could reap economic benefits from exploiting Congo's vast resources. However, in another analysis scholars concluded that even though other countries did receive some financial advantages, they also experienced economic losses due to the high military costs of their involvement in the Congo, but found the effort worthwhile for domestic political goals, such as combating rebel movements that could threaten their own regimes (Koyame and Clark 2002, 220).

With each group having their sphere of influence, the DRC was *de facto* divided into three regions run by various armies and countries. In total, nine outside countries were involved in the war and nine rebel groups with bases in the Congo were fighting to overthrow their respective governments in neighboring countries. By exploiting the

natural resources of the DRC, these armed groups were able to have the means not only to continue to fund their military excursions, but also to offer a semblance of social services in some areas. In these instances, rebel movements were direct competitors to the central state. Though the situation in the DRC was initially referred to as a civil war, it is naïve to disregard the influence of the country's neighbors in the conflict. As a result, most scholars agree upon the international nature of the conflict and it has since been called "Africa's First World War" or Africa's World War.<sup>2</sup>

Like all conflict, the war in DRC had its most significant toll on innocent civilians. From August 1998 when the war began, to November 2002, over three million Congolese died from war related causes such as malnutrition, lack of healthcare, and insecurity that led many to flee to the bush (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2004, 16). Even though the conflict ended in almost all areas by the end of 2002, sporadic fighting and insecurity have continued until the present time in isolated locations in the east, primarily in North Kivu, South Kivu, and eastern Orientale. The International Rescue Committee's (IRC) peer-reviewed survey found that between August 1998 and April 2007 there were 5.4 million deaths, 2.1 of those since the formal end of war in 2002. Only a small percentage of these deaths were caused by direct violence, over 90% of casualties came from the spread of infectious diseases such as malaria and diarrhea, malnutrition, and pregnancy complications which arose because of conflict conditions such as little access to proper health services, food insecurity, and displacement (IRC 2007, i-ii). Poverty afflicted those fortunate enough to survive the war. The United Nations Development Program estimated in 2002 that 70% of the population lived in

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<sup>2</sup> This was first credited to Susan Rice, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, (Turner 2007, 209) and later used by Secretary of State Madeline Albright and others.

absolute poverty. Official statistics from 2000 depicted an inflation rate of 511% with 85% unemployment (Mills 2002).

As news of the human and resource toll in the Congo spread, outsiders including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the United Nations, the Organization of African Union, South Africa, Libya, Belgium, the United States, the *Francophonie*, and various NGOs attempted to facilitate a peace process (Reyntjens 2009, 244). The parties to the DRC war, who were also in a military stalemate, were pressured into signing the Lusaka Agreement in Zambia in July 1999. It included a cease-fire agreement, a road map for political transition, and an agreement that those in power of certain territories within the country would remain in control of them until a transition was successful.

However, all parties violated the agreement shortly thereafter, and Kabila, who risked losing power to a transitional government, posed the largest obstacle to peace by his continuous efforts at sabotage (Ibid., 252). In January 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution to deploy a peacekeeping mission in the DRC. However, they were unable to deploy for security reasons and Kabila's failure to cooperate. Laurent Kabila paid the ultimate price for his refusal to share power with other forces gaining in strength. His short-lived attempt at leading the Democratic Republic of Congo in the fashion of his predecessors came to an abrupt halt with his assassination on January 16, 2001.

### **Kabila *Fils***

Joseph Kabila became president of the Democratic Republic of Congo at the age of twenty-nine, ten days after his father was assassinated. The circumstances of Laurent's assassination are still murky, although the official version is that one of his

bodyguards acted alone or that there may have been an internal coup attempt. However, it has been argued that Angola, whose troops helped secure Kinshasa, was behind the assassination because it desired an end to the war and Kabila presented the primary obstacle to peace (Turner 2002, 87). “There was a general recognition that the murder of Kabila and the succession of Joseph Kabila might lead to peace. Joseph Kabila was warmly received in Brussels, London and Washington and the way appeared open to a settlement,” (Turner 2007, 7).

To demonstrate his willingness to move the peace process forward, at his swearing-in ceremony, the new president promised free elections, a liberalized economy, to allow the UN to deploy troops, and to follow the Lusaka Accord (Edgerton 2002). With the young Kabila’s support, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) troops and observers began to arrive in March 2001. Joseph did more for the peace process in six months than his father had done in three years of being in power (Lemarchand 2003, 59). Since then, the mission has continued to expand, although in July 2010 its name changed to MONUSCO (the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and its mandate was altered. At its peak, MONUC/MONUSCO had a staff of over twenty-two thousand personnel, a budget of almost one and a half billion dollars per year, and is the largest UN peacekeeping mission deployed in the world to date. MONUC’s original mandate consisted of four phases including using force to implement the ceasefire agreement, monitoring the ceasefire, DDRRR (disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration), and helping procure a political transition through viable elections.

The young Kabila's government began a program of economic liberalization, and political negotiations known as the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, or ICD, took place from February 2002 to April 2003 with the aid of South Africa and the United Nations. All parties to the war, Kabila's government, the MLC, the RDC, grassroots armed resistance, and civil society, were involved. An interim constitution was approved in March 2003, which scheduled democratic elections for two years later and established a transitional government to lead the nation in the interim. April 2003 saw the advent of the new government consisting of Kabila as head of state, four vice-presidents represented by the various factions of the war, ministers, deputies, a bicameral parliament made of a national assembly and senate, courts and tribunals. In addition, five institutions supporting democracy were created: an independent electoral commission, a national observatory of human rights, a high authority of the media, a truth and reconciliation commission, and a commission on ethics and the fight against corruption (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2004).

This interim government was to hold office for two years, with elections scheduled for 2005. However, due to constraints such as the need for more time and resources to be able to register Congolese voters, the National Assembly postponed the presidential and senate elections until July 2006. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), an international non-governmental organization, had been working in DRC since 1998, but began electoral operations in 2005. Working alongside the Congolese Independent Electoral Commission, they registered and educated voters and provided resources for civil society mobilization (IFES). In total twenty-five million voters were registered.

The national assembly adopted a new draft constitution that was ratified by 84% of voters in a national referendum on November 27, 2005. The Presidential and Senate elections held in July 2006 elected five hundred members to the lower house of parliament and created a run-off situation for the head of state. Joseph Kabila, heavily supported by the Swahili-speaking war-torn eastern provinces, won 45% of the vote, but not the requisite majority. Therefore a run-off vote was announced between Kabila and one of his vice-presidents, Jean-Pierre Bemba, leader of the MNC, who had won 20% of the vote. After the run-off results were announced, a brief period of fighting took place in the capital between militias of both leaders. This was quickly quelled by international pressure and the presence of MONUC personnel.

The run-off election in October produced 58% percent support for Kabila and only 42% for Bemba. It was lauded as largely free and fair by the international community, including the United Nations and the European Union, who had provided immense resources for process, while the Carter Center and others documented several irregularities, but not enough to invalidate the results. Therefore, Joseph Kabila was inaugurated on December 6, 2006 as President of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The international community hailed this as a huge victory, the end of the transition phase, and therefore the end of the conflict. In reality, “the holding of elections in 2006 is a major element in the restoration of the Congolese state. The elections are not the end but the beginning of the process, however,” (Turner 2009, 175).

It can be argued that Joseph Kabila has been the most effective leader of the Congo since Mobutu. Early in his term as transitional president, he set out to meet with international leaders to discuss the implementation of the Lusaka Accord and

deployment of the United Nations peacekeepers. The young Kabila distanced himself from the regime of his father by keeping only four of the twenty-five members of the former government. He suspended two hundred fifty corrupt managers, most of who had been appointed by his father, from fifty-seven state-run companies. He refused to pose for billboards, thus breaking the chain of leaders who sought power through the creation of myths and propaganda. Many formerly disenfranchised Congolese hailed the announcement that opposition political parties could once again be established.

Unlike his father, Joseph Kabila was well received by the international community, which offered large sums of aid money for the rehabilitation of the nation. His government worked closely with consultants from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on a three-stage plan targeting stabilization, recovery, and development. A World Bank office opened in 2002 to manage a fifty million dollar grant for institution building, infrastructure rebuilding, and HIV/AIDS projects (Mills 2002). According to a World Bank report, many positive measures were implemented during the transitional government years. For example, hyperinflation decreased from 630% in 2000 to only 8.8% in 2001, the exchange rate was stabilized, the government's budget grew, and for the first time in a decade economic growth occurred in 2002 (at 3%) and continued (World Bank 2006a).

Despite these significant improvements, young Kabila's tenure in power also received criticisms on several fronts, which is not surprising given that it is no easy feat to rebuild a Congolese state that was already failed before being devastated by years of war. But the Kabila government can also be seen as continuing unsavory practices of his predecessors such as human rights violations and corruption. In 2002 Amnesty

International accused his police and security services of arresting, jailing, and torturing political opponents (Edgerton 2002). In the run up to a second round of elections scheduled for November 2011, “the opposition has already complained of harassment and violence” (IRIN 2011). In addition, Joseph Kabila has been accused of following in the footsteps of his father who had re-kindled the kleptocracy established by Mobutu (Turner 2009, 190). And although “Africa’s World War” officially ended in 2002 before the democratic era was ushered in, Kabila’s tenure has been marked by sporadic conflict in the eastern provinces by rebels who have yet to be demobilized, while the Congolese army, as illustrated in the introduction to this study, poses a threat to civilians and remains in need of much reform.

Therefore, the situation of the majority of Congolese has not improved substantially since the war’s official end and the ushering in of democracy. The World Food Program estimated that sixteen million people have critical food needs. The World Health Organization and UNICEF reported that most Congolese survive because of informal economic activities and are only able to consume less than two-thirds of the daily calories needed for healthy living. Within the Congo, 80% of the population (almost forty-five million people) does not have access to safe water and 70% of the population has limited or no access to health care. In addition, infant mortality is 1,850 per one hundred thousand live births, which is the highest rate on the continent (World Bank 2006a). A report released in April 2010 offered hope for most of the developing world, stating that for the first time in decades maternal deaths were on the decline. Unfortunately, for the year 2008 there were six countries that together produced half of all deaths worldwide, among them the Democratic Republic of Congo (Grady 2010).

Since the end of the war, governmental efforts have led to strides in several areas to improve the situation of ordinary citizens. For example, the World Bank's World Development Index shows improvements over time in some key areas. The percentage of children who have been immunized for measles was 46 in 2000, and 67 in 2008. The GDP of the Congo in 2000 was 4.3 billion, and in 2008 was 11.67 billion (World Bank 2010). The number of people per one thousand who either had a fixed telephone line or a mobile phone subscription was 0.5 in 2000, and 37.0 in 2004 (World Bank 2006b). These indicators imply that the Congolese state is growing, albeit at a very slow pace, in its ability to assist citizens.

Despite strides in social and political development, the Congolese state remains weak in its capacity to rebuild a vast territory and population devastated by years of dictatorship and warfare. The effort necessary to rebuild infrastructure alone, most of which has not been repaired since its original construction by the Belgian colonial government, is a gargantuan task. For example,

While it takes three days of driving to reach Lumbumbashi (eastern Congo) from Johannesburg (South Africa), the trip from Lumbumbashi to Kinshasa (western Congo), which is roughly the same distance, can take two weeks in the dry season and one month in the wet. Or as one diplomat has noted, "Traveling from Lubumbashi to Kinshasa is like taking a car from Lisbon to Moscow with only ten bridges left". (Mills 2002, 37)

Congolese citizens have suffered since the late nineteenth century at the hands of foreigners and despots who have prevented the state from providing meaningful services and security for them, while at the same time squandering Congo's vast resources for personal gain. Although many have justifiably called the Congolese state failed, it continues to persist today and has been rigorously fought over for the past decade and a half. Therefore, we will next examine how such a state has managed to

persist despite these conditions and how her people have learned to cope without her support.

### CHAPTER 3 THE STATE OF THE CONGOLESE STATE: PERSISTENCE AGAINST ALL ODDS

The state is a core concept for scholars of political science. Max Weber is in many ways the founding father of contemporary notions of the state. His ideal type definition stresses four main criteria of state-ness that include a differentiated set of institutions, centrality, a territorially-demarcated area, and a monopoly over binding rule-making and the means of physical violence (Weber 1978). However, as Jackson and Rosberg (1982b) have emphasized, such a definition focuses on the empirical qualifications of statehood, which several African countries would fail to meet. The fact that these countries continue to exist can be attributed to the juridical statehood conferred upon them by the international community in the form of sovereignty, especially in the wake of independence from colonialism (Ibid.).

As Chapter 2 demonstrated, for at least the last two decades Zaire/ the Democratic Republic of the Congo has been heralded as an example of failed statehood. Despite this fact, the country that did not exist as such until European powers carved it out of central Africa in the late nineteenth century has persisted as a state against all odds. This chapter analyzes how the Congolese state continues to persist, first from a theoretical vantage point, and then by describing the proliferation of civil society associations that have emerged in recent years as Congolese citizens have come together to provide for their own needs in a state incapable of providing for them. A case study of the expansive mobilization of women's groups in the post-conflict period demonstrates the opportunity afforded to previously marginalized segments of the population by the liberalization of a weak state, and thus foreshadows the efforts of collective action by the Muslim community.

## **Theories about How and Why the State Persists**

Expanding upon Weber's typology of the state, in a key work for the systematic study of the African state, Young developed a comprehensive eight-part criterion for what constitutes a state. These include: 1) a territorial entity; 2) a population living within that space; 3) sovereignty – defined as having two faces: externally the state is an international legal person, yet internally the state has unlimited domain over its subjects, and a civil society which checks state sovereignty with rules (such as a constitution) to put limits on the state's power; 4) power, defined as coercive force which can be exercised through an external military and an internal police force; 5) law, such as a judicial system, which binds the state and civil society, and sets rules a state must follow. Laws include criminal code which binds acceptable behavior of citizens, and civil law so that private transactions can be regulated by the state; 6) nationalism, civil society attached to state, culture, language; 7) international actor, independent of other states, which can make war; 8) the state as idea by which Young means its orientation, image, expectations, patriotism, ability to protect citizens from threats, and the creation of symbols such as flags, coins, stamps, and parades (Young 1994, 26-34). An effective state would be able to meet all eight of these criteria. However, most African countries at independence met only the requirements of territory, society, and international sovereignty.

Decades later the DR Congo has not shown much progress in obtaining other key elements of empirical statehood. Thus the puzzle to understand "Why Congo Persists" despite its failure to live up to conventional notions of a functioning state remains relevant. In response, Englebert (2003, 6) argues that, "the incentives of the Congolese and of foreign states and companies collude to keep Congo as Congo." For average

citizens, they prefer the defunct state, which offers the hope of familiarity, to the unpredictability of warlords and other hostile groups. However, examining the motivation of the most politically influential class of citizens, Englebert asserts “for the Congolese elites, state sovereignty is a paramount force, which allows for the transformation of the weak state into an economic resource...Because of several benefits associated with the international recognition of Congo’s sovereignty, political elites choose to pursue their profiteering strategies in the context of Congo itself,” (Ibid.).

In addition to the continuation of the Congolese state because of the will of national supporters, the role of the international community in propping up the failed Congo state is of paramount importance. The international norm of maintaining colonial boundaries at all cost is upheld in the Congo out of fear of what might happen if that can of worms were to be opened (Ibid.). In the geo-political turmoil of the Cold War, the West had the motivation to prop up a supportive Mobutu regime as a stalwart against advancing communist forces in the developing world. In the post-Cold War order, the West may pursue the same policy in order to ensure that Congo meets its international debt obligations (Ibid.). The following section examines in depth the arguments about how international sovereignty and elite motivations may contribute to the persistence of the disastrously weak Congo state.

### **International Sovereignty**

The international community long ago created its own criteria for defining viable statehood. The current notion of nation-states as international actors may have its origin in the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which recognized the sovereign equality of states and the rules of interaction among them. A state had to earn its sovereignty, and

the criteria for doing so included territorial control over the land, an administrative presence in the territory, a population that gave allegiance to the state, and political and economical viability (Young 1994).

Many states have been deemed sovereign by the international community, despite not meeting the necessary requirements. In their attempt to understand “Why Africa’s Weak States Persist”, Jackson and Rosberg (1982b) argue that these countries were granted juridical statehood, in the form of being recognized as an equal in the international community of states upon independence, despite the fact that many failed to live up to empirical standards of statehood, as espoused by Weber and Young. At independence, “a colony simply became a state with its territorial frontiers unchanged,” (ibid., 14). And the colonial legacy bequeathed to the newly independent African nations was one emphasizing the juridical recognition while downplaying the need for empirical control of the territory. At the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 it was decided that to demonstrate their right to claim an African colony, European nations were required to show a minimal administrative presence in the colony, but were not required to expand their presence throughout the large and difficult terrain or receive the allegiance of the native population (Herbst 2000). Therefore, the African states that exist today were created as quasi-viable entities by colonial powers that were granted authority over them without the need to exercise the qualities of empirical statehood.

The United Nations also played an important role in refining the norm of state sovereignty. The General Assembly has been referred to as the “gatekeeper to statehood” in part for its role in declaring African countries sovereign and ratifying their existing borders during decolonization (Herbst 1996, 121). Herbst notes that modern

sovereign criteria have been amended to include permanent populations, a defined territory, and the ability to enter into relations with other countries. The norm established during colonization that the central authority did not have to control or administer its entire territory or be tied to the population was then reinterpreted by newly independent African states as the need to simply control the capital city and be internationally recognized. At independence many African states were turned over to a new elite that had been groomed by the departing colonial power. These states did not revert to pre-colonial state institutions, nor did the colonizers remain to help run the fledgling government. Instead, new elites took the institutions that had been imported from the colonial country, and attempted to make them their own.

### **The Neo-Patrimonial Politics of Mobutu**

In total, the colonial experience in most of Africa lasted about one hundred years. During the relatively short duration of colonialism, the idea of the state in Africa came to resemble the European model. Most newly independent states did little to change the European administrative infrastructure left to them. The concept of colonial patrimonialism became neo-patrimonialism in many new states as those in charge maintained the belief that they had superior knowledge and needed to rule the masses, deemed incompetent to rule themselves. Young (1994) described how this trend in contemporary African politics came from the colonial era in the sense that no civil society was allowed to blossom, and therefore governments were able to rule without facing any opposition.

The new African elite who took over after independence modeled themselves after the Europeans, as an overwhelming majority became personal rulers adopting extensive networks of clientelism. In addition to any state resources, sales from large

natural resource deposits were used to pay the ruler's clients. In some cases, entire industries were nationalized, divided among those with access, and quickly overrun with inefficiency and corruption. In describing the rampant corruption in many African states as the "politics of the belly", Bayart pointed out that for African elites, having power meant having control of or access to the state, often for the purpose of access to its resources, as opposed to a desire to govern (Bayart 1993). Thus, the methods of governing in many newly independent and sovereign African countries did not drastically change after the departure of colonial powers.

Since African territories were created by colonial powers, their boundaries did not reflect demographic, cultural, or political features of the communities living therein. Most newly independent African states were seen as a second public realm in addition to the institutions that already held citizen loyalties, such as kinship and tribal ties (Ekeh 1975). However, the process of state-making usually involves the elimination of institutions that may compete with the state. In most African countries, pre-colonial institutions and allegiances had been badly damaged during colonialism, but not wiped out. Therefore, the new states created by foreigners and not built for or by society faced a problem of legitimacy. Newly independent African nations, Ekeh argued, had not assimilated their people into state institutions, and new states faced contending political institutions, leading to competing claims to institutional sovereignty within the state. This in turn led to the state being either a resource elites fought over, or a way for those in power to dominate other groups. Groups that were not able to gain access to the state often started to oppose the state, which led in some instances to overthrows, secession attempts, civil war, or all three in the case of the Congo.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, at independence the political space known as the Congo only represented negative traits such as violence, domination, and exploitation. The five years after independence were marked by chaos. From this turmoil emerged Mobutu who, despite his many flaws, was able to keep the territorial integrity of the Congolese state in order through the use of authoritarianism, co-optation, and pacifying elites. Many African states attempted to rectify the problem of their legitimacy by forcing a new national identity upon their citizens. Mobutu's efforts in this regard included changing the country's name, forcing all citizens to adopt only African names, and creating a political party with mandatory membership for all citizens. This was an attempt to reduce citizens' allegiances to other institutions, including ethnic organizations. When attempts at this failed, many states began to rely on neo-patrimonial ties. Englebert argued that Congo's leadership, policies, and institutions deteriorated over time because no nation building was taking place. Instead, neo-patrimonialism was used to gain power and legitimacy for a state that had no legitimacy at independence (Englebert 2000, 107).

When rulers created alliances with other elites, such as ethnic or regional, they gained the support of those loyal to them. "In doing so, these loyalties are co-opted for the national regime, which thereby stabilizes its rule and reaches some level of social foundations," (Ibid., 99). The elites were incorporated into the national government through patronage and a multi-level network of patron-client relations that extended from the top governing elites, all the way to the local level. In Zaire, Mobutu basically purchased the collaboration of opposition groups in order to maintain his hold on the state through authoritarianism.

Mobutu sought to unify the nation and gain legitimacy through the creation of a personality cult with himself representing the father of the Zairian family (Schatzberg 2001). His regime changed the existing property rights system and nationalized all land and the largest mining company. This process, known as “Zairianization,” included the confiscation of all foreign owned assets to be re-distributed among the elites. Thus, Mobutu gained the allegiance of his clients through extensive patronage. He followed a policy of rotating elites to make sure that no one person or group gained too much power. As such, elites learned to exploit the resources of office as much as possible while they could. Those on the lower end of the civil services, who were rarely or poorly paid, extracted resources from citizens to make ends meet. Despite the obvious flaws, this system “worked”, in the sense that it kept Mobutu in power for over thirty years, and kept up the idea of Zaire as a country.

Over time people sought to escape the oppressive policies of Mobutu, including the state-sponsored formal economy. For example, in 1992 it was estimated that as much as 72% of gross domestic product (GDP) consisted of informal economic activity and subsistence agriculture (Engleburt 2000, 103). This happened as the result of many factors, including poor governance, inefficient bureaucracy, a lack of trust in institutions, and increased corruption even on the part of citizens who realized that the laws of the state were obsolete. The state lost its ability to enforce rules and invest in services such as education and infrastructure, as the priority was access to money for maintaining the clientelistic network with patronage and salaries. The state was then no longer able to function on its own revenues, and therefore relied solely on foreign aid. The Mobutist state was able to stay afloat and compensate for this lack of legitimacy

through its use of international aid for patronage. Mobutu became the United States' most important ally in Africa through diplomatically playing the anti-communist card. However, as the Cold War and international financial support came to an end, Mobutu and the Zairian state began to unravel. "The inability of the Mobutist state to generate a volume of rewards consistent with its clientelistic ambitions is the key element behind its rapid loss of legitimacy," (Lemarchand 2003, 37).

The example of the Congo illustrates one path rulers can take to retain power over a state that lacks legitimacy. In the end, however, "these strategies of power imply a biased set of policies and a 'highjacking' of state institutions, the capacity of the state, weak to begin with, is further eroded, sometimes until its actual collapse," (Englebert 2000, 116). Economic performance suffered as the state made bad policy choices, had limited governance, and the population resorted to the informal economy, subsistence farming, or illegal trade. The short-term payoffs elites garnered through the use of patronage to gain legitimacy resulted in a vicious cycle that weakened the capacity of the state and the support of its citizens.

Zaire was not the only African nation to be so afflicted. Reno (1998) provides a comparative examination of four African cases: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Zaire, and Nigeria. He describes how the leaders of these countries did not seek to remain in power by developing legitimacy through strong bureaucratic institutions that provided for citizens, but through manipulation of economic assets and strong patronage networks. Fortunately for those leaders, their countries were rich in extractive resources such as oil, diamonds, copper, and gold, which they bartered for political resources. Reno makes the bold claim that "too often, literature on political change in Africa takes

conventional notions of state organizations for granted and applies them indiscriminately to weak-state cases,” (Reno 1998, 10). His case study of how Mobutu managed to stay in power through economic manipulation as opposed to state building provides a powerful argument for how neo-patrimonialism helped sustain the Zairian state.

As the evidence suggests, President Mobutu was able to maintain his hold on the Congolese state by relying on neo-patrimonialism and the political legitimacy gained through his paternal care. However, “the occasional and ‘necessary’ parental discipline – of course undertaken only with the good of the child in mind – can be transformed into vicious and nasty repression when the political ‘children’ repeatedly fail to toe the political line or are insufficiently grateful for all that their father-chief does, and has done, for them,” (Schatzberg 2001, 25). Mobutu’s rule was also upheld through punishment, fear, and intimidation, as detailed in Chapter 2.

Mann (1997) distinguished between two types of state power, despotic and infrastructural. The period of the country’s history under Mobutu’s reign is an excellent example of Mann’s despotic power. “Great despotic power can be ‘measured’ most vividly in the ability of all those Red Queens to shout ‘off with his head’ and have their whim gratified without further ado,” (Mann 1997, 61). Infrastructural power, on the other hand, refers to the ability of the state to penetrate society and implement laws throughout its territory (Ibid., 62). A strong infrastructural state would effectively regulate taxation, have a monopoly over the military, an organized bureaucracy, and a law enforcement system. Similarly, Migdal argued that a strong state has the capacity “to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or

use resources in determined ways,” (Migdal 1988, 4). For example, an effective state is able to utilize an administrative apparatus to penetrate society by performing tasks such as extracting resources, maintaining infrastructure, and creating and enforcing laws that citizens must follow. Zaire lacked infrastructural power during Mobutu’s era and the institutions that had been present before independence actually further eroded during his thirty-two year hold on power. The contemporary DRC state fails in all of these areas as well.

### **The Contemporary Congolese State**

Throughout Congolese history, the various governments in Kinshasa have for the most part failed to gain and retain control of the eastern portions of the country. In this sense, the Congo has very rarely met even the most basic of criteria for defining a state: a monopoly of force over its territory. The Congolese state since at least the 1990s meets Herbst’s (2000) definition of a weak state, given its inability to prevent the movement of people, arms, finances, rebel groups, wars, and resources within the territory, as well as unable to protect citizens from external threats.

This deterioration of governance at the national level had trickled down to change local authority structures as well. “The conflict in eastern Congo appears to have led to the establishment of several informal governance structures,” (Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2004, 22). Armed groups have been able to gain more power than traditional rulers. For example, rural militias have become more powerful in many local areas than customary chiefs. This transition has come about largely due to the fact that armed groups have been sought out for their ability to protect economic interest in return for financial compensation. Militias then gain power, which has led to a decline in the power position of traditional decision makers, such as elders and chiefs. Both

entrepreneurs and militias thrive in this situation, as they make profits and can have a monopoly over the area's market. Governments in sub-Saharan African that have tried to regulate resource extraction in conflict zones have not been very successful. This situation,

could be described as parallel governance structure that function next to the formal state apparatus (and sometimes makes use of it) to foster an independent process of politico-military control, redistribution of economic resources and rights to wealth...In response to the withering state competence in this part of Central Africa, these complexes seem to be increasingly successful in formulating their independent and largely stateless forms of power redistribution. (Ibid., 23)

In this way, rival authority structures continue to operate where the central government has failed to maintain control.

In the power vacuum that remained, insecurity mounted, infrastructure collapsed, and social services became almost non-existent. Under these circumstances, Congolese citizens turned to alternative means of coping, such as the informal economy. Englebert's description of the consequences is striking:

When driving between Congolese cities, one encounters numerous stretches of deeply deteriorated roads, physical expressions of state decay. At the location of significant potholes or some other major obstacle, it is not uncommon to come across virtual roadblocks of local youth, armed with shovels, and demanding payment for their "maintenance" of the road. In fact, far from repairing or providing maintenance work on the road, they symbolically throw a shovel of dirt into the hole as the car approaches, guaranteeing over the long run that the road remains in bad repair, as happens with other dimensions of Congo's decayed but enduring statehood. Durably fixing the road would deprive these local youth of the immediate source of revenue which they derive from this quasi-taxation of travelers. Hence, the road *with its potholes* is a resource to them. (Englebert 2003, 8-9)

The international community, through the United Nations peacekeeping missions MONUC/ MONUSCO, can be said to be propping up the Congolese state. Their tasks range from military excursions, to provision of security, to political and bureaucratic

functions, which can be acknowledged as tasks normally performed by a capable state. In addition to the UN's headquarters in Kinshasa, the DRC capital, there were fifteen field offices throughout the country, five military headquarters, three logistical bases and four regional offices. The current mission boasts an annual budget of almost one and a half billion dollars, while its initial authorization included military personnel numbering almost twenty thousand, over seven hundred military observers, over six hundred staff volunteers, twelve hundred police, and one thousand civilian staff members (MONUC/MONUSCO).

In addition to the duties outlined as part of the four phases of the original mandate, the operation has been responsible for aviation, child protection, civil education, humanitarian objectives, gender-related activities, HIV/AIDS awareness, human rights, media relations, public information provision, and rule of law consultation. Given the number of locations throughout the country, the extensive personnel, and such responsibilities, the mission can be seen as resembling a centralized state with administrative offices located throughout its territory. In most nations it is the national government that is responsible for these kinds of security, administrative, and bureaucratic functions.

From the duties listed above, it is apparent that UN peacekeeping missions have been actively carrying out governance functions throughout the Congo. MONUC succeeded in bringing about elections and thus ending the transition period. Despite the fact that the country has a democratically elected government, it has continued to rely on the UN for numerous governance functions throughout the territory. The eastern regions of the country are still home to massive numbers of internally displaced

peoples, armed groups continuing to fight one another and the central authority, horrific usage of rape as a weapon of war, and a population that lives in constant fear and insecurity. MONUC/ MONUSCO has increasingly been called on to intervene in these areas and has been joined by other non-state actors with pertinent specialties, such as NGOs like Doctors Without Borders, World Vision, and other United Nations agencies like UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, and UNDP. These organizations are providing for the needs of insecure populations throughout the eastern Congo, most likely precisely because the central government is not capable of fulfilling many of its governing duties.

In assessing the United Nations' role in the Congo in the 1960s, Murphy noted that to call it a success was not entirely accurate, because "more than forty years later, the UN is still attempting to help build a state," (Murphy 2006, 96). The arguments and evidence provided by both Murphy and Jacobson (1964) in relation to the earlier UN peacekeeping mission seem to make clear that from the very beginning, the state of the independent Congo has struggled with performing governance tasks. As such, numerous state functions have been undertaken by non-state actors in the country, especially by the United Nations during two historically important peacekeeping missions, ONUC in the 1960s and MONUC/ MONUSCO in the 2000s.

Although this analysis shows how the DRC has rarely, if ever, met the requirements to be deemed a true state according to scholarly standards, the international community has had a vested interest in maintaining the territorial integrity of the state. In the power vacuum of an effective state, the DRC has been kept afloat through various means, such as colonialism, two United Nations peacekeeping missions, the neo-patrimonial network of Mobutu's dictatorship, and the bailing out of

the regimes in power by the international community. The DRC has a long way to go before it becomes an effective state.

### **Deconstructing the State: A View from Below**

A state is more than just security and institutions; it is bigger than governments and regime. “It is because the state is an idea that people display feelings of patriotism and loyalty toward it. The idea of the state allows its institutions to penetrate the conscience of its citizens,” (Englebert 2000, 74). As demonstrated above, the case of the D.R. Congo offers us a unique perspective on scholarly notions of the state. If it fails to meet all conventional definitions of statehood, then how does it still exist? As the above quote suggests, is it just an idea? Why do Congolese people in far-flung remote regions of the country take pride in being Congolese citizens? Why do civil servants don uniforms of a defunct bureaucracy and why do average citizens spend hard-earned cash to register with and acquire administrative approval of such apparatuses? The answers to such questions are elusive, and the traditional political science theories provide only limited insight. Drawing on anthropological literature, however, suggests other answers by deconstructing our notions of the state and examining how average citizens view the state from below.

Anthropological approaches to the state differ fundamentally from those of political science because they do not hold the state as given, but rather unpack and deconstruct the state and theories about the state. Abrams, for example, proposed “we should abandon the state as a material object of study whether concrete or abstract while continuing to take the *idea* of the state extremely seriously,” (Abrams 1988, 75). In the case of the Congo, this study has already demonstrated how the fiction of the state has been reinforced by national and foreign political and economic elites.

Anthropology allows us to go beyond the national and international and look at how the state is maintained on the very local level in quotidian interactions. One way the state does so is through embodiment, the lived experiences of citizens within their physical bodies. “Modern states are not just imagined or discursive cultural regimes but also embodied forms. Political worlds have a visual, tactile, sensory and emotional dimension: the life of the state has a corporal grounding. Modern governmentalities act on and inhabit the body,” (Linke 2006, 206). For example, in *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl* Petryna (2002) examined how survivors engage with and make demands on the state, and at the same time take on the new biological identity of nuclear disaster victims assigned to them by the state’s bureaucratic response to the catastrophe.

Similar to Abrams’ notion of studying the idea of the state, Trouillot emphasized that the state is not just a government or institution but a set of processes, and that we should focus our research away from national bureaucracies and instead on state effects. He noted, “if the state is indeed a set of practices and processes and their effects as much as a way to look at them, we need to track down these practices, processes and effects whether or not they coalesce around the central sites of national governments,” (Trouillot 2001, 131). As such, scholars should not only look at the formal state, but also examine how the everyday lives of local people reflect and reify the state.

Since formerly state-privileged governance functions are being privatized in wealthy nations in the current globalizing era, Rose argued that to fully grasp governance now scholars must look beyond the state at what communities and other

organizations are doing to meet challenges in the absence of the state. The formal state maintains its status and power then, not through centralized politics, territory and bureaucracy, “but through instrumentalizing the self-governing properties of the subjects of government themselves in a whole variety of locales and localities – enterprises, associations, neighborhoods, interest groups, and, of course, communities,” (Rose 1996, 352). The situation in the Congo, upon first glance, appears to be contrary to the move by developed nations to privatize formerly public services, but the response by citizens to the withdrawal of the weak/ failed state is surprisingly similar.

A few scholars have answered these calls by conducting empirical research on how local citizens can continue to reify the state. In *Faces of the State* Navaro-Yashin provided ethnographic evidence that culture in Turkey is constructed and constantly shifting and being re-constructed, and thus not primordial. This is particularly salient in the post 9/11 era where citizens and the state have evoked the discourse of the dichotomy between Islamists and secularists, which mirrors the global debate between Muslims and Westerners. She provided detailed examples of how the everyday lives of Turkish citizens locally reflect and reify the state, far away from sites of the formal state. Echoing the scholars mentioned above, she argued:

Instead of looking for the state in tangible social institutions or stately persona, the sites of everyday life, where people attempt to produce meaning for themselves by appropriating the political, ought to be studied as a central domain for the production and reproduction of the state. There is an everyday life, an ordinariness to the notion of the state. It is through a certain mundanity and banality that the state achieves its effects. (Navaro-Yashin 2002, 135)

These ideas are echoed in a collection of essays focused on Mexico aptly titled *Everyday Forms of State Formation*. Through an examination of various historical episodes of popular contention, the authors demonstrated how culture and the Mexican

state worked in tandem to define the identity of both. The concluding essay provocatively proposed that, “the hegemony of the state is also exactly what is most fragile about the state, precisely because it does depend on people living what they much of the time know to be a lie,” (Sayer 1994, 377). This is not only applicable to the case of Mexico, but is extremely relevant in the Congo where the myth of the Congolese state, regardless of the reality on the ground, is perpetuated by not only international actors and the ruling elite, but also by the actions of everyday citizens. When unpaid government workers continue to show up for work and citizens continue to seek government services, even though they must pay to subsidize workers’ salaries, both groups carry on the idea of the Congo. This is also apparent when religious associations, whether Christian or Muslim, operate *public* schools, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

In sum, in the contemporary era “the state has lost many of the ordering functions that produced the effect of a unitary force such as the organization of health care, education...which are... contracted to private companies...aid organizations, NGOs, private entrepreneurs, security companies, and warlords are acting as state and producing the same powerful effects,” (Aretxaga 2003, 398). The latter types of organizations have been and continue to provide public goods, which the state should in theory produce, in post-war Congo. Although as Englebort and others have suggested, one can explain the proliferation of the Congo central state in terms of the international system of sovereignty-granting and guaranteeing and the role of neo-patrimonial elites in propping up the defunct state, I argue that those factors would not be able to prevail if it were not for the “everyday forms of state formation”. It is individuals and groups of

Congolese citizens who recognize that their state has failed them, but do not react by discrediting or holding the state accountable. Instead they organize to meet their own needs, and in the process continue the reification of the Congolese state. As further evidence of how regular citizens contribute to the persistence of the idea of the state, the next section examines the role of associations, and particularly women's associations, in letting the state off the hook for providing governance and public goods.

### ***Débrouillez-Vous: Taking Care of Ourselves in a Weak State***

The preceding analysis demonstrates the historic and contemporary inability of the central Congolese state to live up to international and academic standards of state-ness. Moving beyond this scholarly debate, what matters most to the citizens of this failed, weak, transitioning, or post-conflict state, is the state's inefficiency in meeting their needs. President Mobutu, in order to effectively cope with his state's increasing inability to provide, told his bureaucrats and the Congolese people at large to *débrouillez-vous*, or take care of yourselves. As Bates (2008) described, when the state did not adequately pay administrative salaries, functionaries were encouraged to make use of their state-granted posts to coax fees from citizens for the services their offices were required to render.

Today this attitude is still referred to as *Article 15*, and in order to survive Congolese skim money off the top of all kinds of transactions for personal use and pay bribes for almost every kind of daily transaction. Knowing that their government is incapable and possibly disinterested in assisting them, the majority of Congolese not fortunate enough to hold an official government job that they can exploit or an NGO position receiving a regular salary, have realized that *débrouillez-vous* for them is only

possible by uniting in solidarity in the form of associations, whether secular, religious, issue-specific, service-oriented, political, or self-help.

### **Proliferation of Associations**

Though very little information exists about the post-war social organization of the remote Maniema province, on the ground one finds a plethora of local, regional, national, and international organizations performing development functions. In numerous interviews with civil society and religious associations, leaders and active members expressed their dismay at the lack of assistance they receive from their national, provincial, and local governments, which prompted the need for citizens to rally together to take care of themselves.<sup>1</sup> Some interviewees even noted that their organizations are stepping up to do the government's work.<sup>2</sup> Many secular organizations have been created since the end of fighting in Maniema, in late 2002, to encourage children to go to school, to take care of war orphans, to assist those handicapped by the war, to rehabilitate ex-combatants, and to assist women victims of sexual violence. Religious associations of Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims are also actively involved in these service-oriented and war reconstruction projects.

Compared to other provinces of Congo, especially North Kivu, which has witnessed the brunt of post-war conflict and humanitarian disasters, the Maniema province is home to perhaps the fewest number of regional offices of international organizations. The handful of international organizations active in the province, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), the Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC),

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<sup>1</sup>For example, an interview with the financial and administrative officer of Caritas, a Catholic relief organization, Kindu 7/2/2008.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with development employee of BDD, *Bureau Diocésène pour le Développement*, a Catholic association, Kasongo 7/7/2008; and Protestant Bishop of Maniema province, Kindu 3/25/2009.

Coopi, Care International, Merlin, and a few United Nations organs, have only been located in the Maniema province in the last few years, even though their organization may have begun development work in Congo decades prior. And of the few organizations to be located in the province, very few of their projects can be extended to areas outside of Kindu, the provincial capital, because of the terrible state of Maniema's roads and the expense of petrol for transportation.

### **Rise of Women's Movements**

The logic of *débrouillez-vous* is vividly illustrated in the increasing involvement of a previously marginalized community in associational life: women. In the aftermath of the conflict that ravaged eastern Congo for over a decade, women who had historically been powerless began to join together in associations to rebuild their communities, gain autonomy and self-respect, and create a safe environment in which their children could prosper. Women's post-war associations in D.R. Congo have proven a springboard for feminine involvement in democratic politics, increased access to education, and the revamping of cultural norms that discourage their participation in these areas, as well as religious rite and public community life more broadly.

*African Women's Movements: Changing Political Landscapes* argued that African women have been more successful in political endeavors in countries where several factors have coalesced: a strong women's movement, the diffusion of international norms focusing on women's rights, new resources for African women's mobilization, and the opportunity for their involvement because of large societal changes, such as the termination of conflict (Tripp et al. 2009, 1-2). The authors argue that this theory applies to women's movements throughout sub-Saharan Africa, but provides detailed evidence

from the cases of Cameroon, Mozambique, and Uganda. This section demonstrates how their framework is also applicable to the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Specifically, this study argues that the opportunity structure of this moment in Congolese history, where increased political freedom intersects with the upheaval of gender norms and the financial and issue-specific support of the international community in the wake of war, has allowed Congolese women to move from a state of historical marginalization to increased political mobilization. However, opportunity alone does not lead to the kinds of involvement we have seen in post-war DRC. Mobilization would not occur without the dedicated involvement of women as individuals and united in associations. As such, examining the case of women's associations not only provides empirical evidence of how everyday citizens contribute to the persistence of the idea of the state, but also foreshadows the arguments of effective collective action and opportunity later applied to the proliferation of Muslim organizations.

In almost every interview conducted formally or informally with women active in development they spoke of the historical marginalization of their sex, regardless of religious affiliation. In Maniema, part of the reason for their low status is the fact that girls' education has not been a priority for parents. A government document describing the Maniema province, noted that at the primary school level the ratio of girls to boys in school is 40%, but at the secondary level this drops to 21.4% (Ministère du Plan 2004, 21). The rate of education in primary school for the province puts it in last place in the nation at 49.5% (Ibid., 7). Statistics for the province also revealed that women are underrepresented in all political posts, which is understandable given that there are only eleven women in Maniema who have completed university (Ibid., 21). For example, of

the twenty-four Provincial Deputies to the General Assembly, there are no women (Ibid., 20). Though these statistics were gathered in 2004 and fieldwork suggests that the percentage of educated children overall and girls especially is increasing, this evidence makes it clear that there is much work to be done to develop and rebuild the Maniema province, and especially the place of women and girls.

### **Early wave of mobilization**

The authors of *African Women's Movements* proposed three primary reasons for increased women's mobilization during the 1990s, which include the role of the international community and the spread of ideas about women's rights, new kinds of resources available beyond state-controlled funds, and the broader process of political openings occurring across the continent as a result of democratization and liberalization (Tripp et al. 2009, 62). In addition to the 1979 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), there were a series of high-profile international conferences on the role of women in the world, including Mexico City in 1975, Nairobi in 1985, and Beijing in 1995. These meetings and conventions influenced women across the world to mobilize on behalf of their rights.

This process was taking place at the same time that many African countries were experiencing moves away from single party and dictatorial regimes. In 1990, amidst mounting domestic and international pressure, Mobutu announced a shift toward political pluralism and political freedom, allowing the participation of other parties, and the creation of the Congolese Sovereign National Conference. The Conference, referred to in shorthand as SNC, comprising almost three thousand delegates representing all of the peoples and classes of Congo, was held in 1992 with the purpose

of paving a way out of the country's "multidimensional crisis – political, economic, social, cultural, and moral," toward multiparty democracy (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 190).

Though primarily male, there were several female delegates to the Congolese SNC who were formally engaging in politics for the first time. For example, two outstanding women leaders from Maniema were delegates to the SNC, one Muslim and the other Protestant. The first had been elected secretary of *Union des Femmes Musulmanes Provinciale*, the Union of Muslim Women for the Maniema province, in 1984. In 1990 she became a delegate to the SNC as the representative of women. After the Conference, she began an active life in politics, as a vice-president of an opposition party, an elected deputy of the *Haut Conseil de la République*, the High Council of the Republic, then returning to Maniema and to be elected *chef de quartier*, neighborhood leader, of a section of Kindu, the provincial capital, and being actively involved in several Muslim women's development associations.<sup>3</sup>

The second, a prominent Protestant woman, was the co-founder of a secular women's development organization called UMAMA in the early 1990s and is the current president of the Protestant Women's organization for the Maniema province. She was selected to be a deputy to the Sovereign National Conference in 1992 as a member of the Congolese civil society for Maniema, an organization that was created during the SNC but has remained politically engaged ever since. After living in Kinshasa for two years during the Conference, she returned to Kindu to continue her work with UMAMA, the Protestant women, and as an active member of the Maniema civil society. She says that those years in Kinshasa as a SNC delegate helped her to see the importance of

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<sup>3</sup> Interview conducted by Research Assistant with prominent Muslim woman, Kindu May 2009.

women's role in politics, "all the resolutions we came up with were not carried out. I also realized that people were not working for their country but for their own interests. So now I am encouraging women to get involved in politics because we are better leaders."<sup>4</sup>

International norms of funding also changed in the 1980s and 1990s as multilateral and bilateral organizations shifted away from providing aid to the state, and instead chose to fund non-governmental organizations, whom they felt were more accountable, to provide social services. Then, "the 1990s saw a shift in donor strategies from a sole emphasis on funding activities related to economic development, education, and health and welfare concerns to an added interest in advocacy for women's rights, as well as promoting women's political leadership and political participation," (Tripp et al. 2009, 74). The case of women's movements in the Congo mirrors this larger process across Africa.

NGOs of all types began to proliferate in the late 1980s and 1990s as the central state retreated from providing services for citizens and international donor funding became available. In Maniema, this also meant the creation of a few women's groups. The first, *Umoja kwa Wanawake Wakulima wa Kivu ya Maniema*, Unity of Women Farmers of Kivu and Maniema, UWAKI, was created in 1982 in Bukavu, the former capital of the Kivu province, which split in 1989 to become North and South Kivu and Maniema. Though originally begun as a co-ed organization working to unite peasants, male involvement quickly dwindled and organization leaders noticed a dynamic of women being more interested in devoting time to development goals, but afraid to come

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with prominent Protestant woman, Kindu 4/6/2009.

forward because of cultural gender norms against it. So the organization began to represent primarily peasant women and help them by encouraging women's rights and focusing on economically beneficial programs such as the extension of micro-credit. Today the organization is among the most respected in the area and has numerous projects running simultaneously throughout the province with the financial assistance of several international donors.<sup>5</sup>

Another women's organization created in Maniema during this early period is *Umoja wa Mama wa Maendeleo*, Unity of Women for Development, UMAMA. Founded in 1993, the organization seeks to assist the Maniema population with food security, promoting the rights of women and children, and health issues such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. Like UWAKI, today it has many international financial supporters and runs numerous development projects throughout the province.<sup>6</sup> However, these are the only two women's organizations encountered during research in Maniema that were created in this early period. Unfortunately before the momentum for organization really took off, the Congo became embroiled in war.

### **Out of the ashes of war**

Though all war knows tremendous suffering, what set the conflict in eastern DRC apart from others was the horrifying element of the use of rape against hundreds of thousands of women. Shockingly, despite these atrocities, it was women who carried their society through the years of war, displacement and fear. Thus, one can say the conflict helped to reverse societal gender norms in some way. In Maniema, as men lay

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with president of UWAKI, Kindu 7/18/2008.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with president of UMAMA, Kindu 6/25/2008 and 4/26/2009.

in hiding to avoid being killed or conscripted into rebel armies, women were the ones to provide a livelihood for their families by selling small objects on the streets and tending to their fields. Tripp and her co-authors echo that, “prolonged conflict also disrupted gender roles, thrusting women into new activities in the absence of men,” (Ibid., 196). This process, born out of the necessity of terrible conditions, ultimately helped women assert themselves when it became time to rebuild their societies. They also theorized that a major change, such as the end of conflict, allows the opportunity for women to successfully mobilize, citing instances of women demanding more political representation in the form of quotas, participation in peace agreements, and a role in the creation of new constitutions in Uganda, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, and Liberia, in addition to DRC (Ibid., 158). Congolese women pressed for peace on the local level and were assisted by the international community at the national and regional levels. In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 so that women can be equally involved in prevention of conflict and peace negotiations.

The Lusaka cease-fire agreement of 1999 called for an Inter-Congolese Dialogue. The African Union, the African Women’s Committee for Peace and Development, AWCPD, and other organizations helped to create a Solidarity Mission to the DRC in December 2001 in part to help Congolese peace advocates prepare for the upcoming Inter-Congolese Dialogue in South Africa. With the assistance of UNIFEM, the United Nations’ Development Fund for Women, over forty Congolese women’s groups met in Nairobi, Kenya in February 2002 to prepare to represent a united front at the peace talks. There they also issued a demand that when the new Congolese constitution was

being drafted it would include the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, as well as a quota of 30% for women in all levels of the Congolese government (Ibid., 214; Fleshman 2003).

Women's groups joined together in an organization called Women as Partners for Peace in Africa, or WOPPA, which successfully advocated for a gender quota for the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (Kapinga 2003). Women were allowed forty of 340 delegates for the formal talks in South Africa (Fleshman 2003). The dialogue was held in 2002, and all warring factions signed a second peace agreement in Pretoria in December with the assistance of the host country and the United Nations. According to one source, women played an important role in this accord becoming a reality. Along with human rights organizations, women formed a lobby group to encourage politicians to sign an agreement. Additionally, they "have spearheaded initiatives leading to coordinated marches, written memorandums, and foreign trips to plead the cause of a war that was being ignored due to its complexity," (Kapinga 2003). For example, in February 2003 three hundred women mobilized for a prayer vigil in downtown Kinshasa, interrupting traffic flows and protesting new reports of conflict coming from Ituri in the east (Ibid.). Although women had advocated for a 30% quota, the number of women elected to the national assembly during the 2006 election was forty-two out of five hundred, or 8.4% (Fallon 2008, 40).

Post-conflict women's mobilization is made easier because women had recently organized to push for peace and advocate to be part of the peace process (Tripp et al. 2009, 196). Congolese women had already begun to mobilize in the early 1990s, but been de-railed during the years of conflict. But the war also provided them with the

opportunity to break out of traditional gender roles and, with the support of the international community, advocate for peace and their place at the table during the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in South Africa. In post-war Maniema, women have organized at an astonishing rate. Many organizations are linked with religion, the most visible being Catholic, Protestant, and Muslim. CFMUDEMA, *Collectif des Associations des Femmes Musulmanes pour le Développement du Maniema*, the Collective of Muslim Women for the Development of Maniema, was created in 2002 and is comprised of eighteen individual Muslim women's development organizations in the province working to "implicate the Muslim woman and others in the processes of development" by intervening in the areas of food security, health, civic education, and micro projects.<sup>7</sup>

There are many local Muslim women's associations in post-war Maniema. For example, in southern Maniema, mostly the territories of Kasongo and Kabambare, over one hundred thirty Muslim women's organizations are actively involved in development, mostly focused around community agriculture projects. In the town of Kasongo, there are three Muslim women's organizations, primarily comprised of the members of the three main mosques. These include *Dawa'tu Islamiyya* organization of women from Mosque 18, *Jumiatu Islamiyya* from Mosque 17, and *Association de Développement Communautaire pour les Mamas Musulmanes* from the Central Mosque. All of these organizations were created in recent years, after the war. In addition to local organizations, several Muslim associations were created at the national level in association with COMICO, the national Muslim organization. These include CONAFEM,

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<sup>7</sup> Translated from the original French from the brochure for CFMUDEMA.

*Comité Nationale Feminine de COMICO*, and its affiliate at the provincial level COPROFEM, *Comité Provinciale Feminine*. There is also the national organization UFMC, mentioned earlier, which also has affiliates in the provinces. *Fondation Zam-Zam* was created on the national level in 2003 and has affiliates in each of the Congolese provinces. In Maniema the dynamic leader of *Zam-Zam* has created a Muslim private primary school named for the organization, which also provides free education to war orphans and women's literacy courses in the afternoons.

Muslim women have more recently joined the associational scene in Maniema, whereas Protestant and Catholic women have been organizing for a longer period of time in religious women's groups. For example, Protestant women have mobilized in the religious organizations *Federation des Femmes Protestants* and *Département Femmes et Familles*. These organizations were primarily focused on evangelism and spiritual advancement, but in recent years have become more involved in development projects, such as assisting orphans and literacy projects for women.

However, there are also numerous organizations that are secular and coalitions that unite religiously defined organizations in order to put the advancement of women above partisan issues. Fallon notes, "women in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Rwanda, and the Congo attempted to form coalitions across ethnicity and class to try to overcome the atrocities they faced," (Fallon 2008, 25). This phenomenon is easy to see in Maniema, as the majority of post-conflict women's organizations are secular. For example, among the secular women's associations created after the war and active in Kindu are *Soutien aux Actions des Femmes Indigènes au Maniema*, *Ligue des Femmes Pour le Développement du Maniema* (LIFDM), AFREM, *Fondation des Rosettes*, *Alliance*

*Feminine Pour le Développement (ALFED), Collectif des Femmes du Maniema (CEFEMA), Association des Femmes Intellectuelles et Lettrées au Maniema (AFILMA), Fondation Femmes Plus, and Barzza de Femmes au Maniema (BAFEMA).*

Women believe that by creating and joining associations, whether religiously affiliated or not, they can increase their power at the same time that they unite to rebuild their lives and society. For example, one woman who is president of LIFDM discussed the marginalization of women and provided the example of the United Nations' programs to provide former soldiers with rehabilitation and support after the war. She complained that women victims of war violence and sexual abuse do not receive the same care and attention but are left hurt, abandoned, and alone with fatherless children.<sup>8</sup> By coming together, women's organizations can address these gaping needs of women and children in post-war Maniema. In another interview, an executive member of *Association pour la Promotion de l'Education au Maniema*, the Association for the Promotion of Education in Maniema, APEMA, again discussed the difficult place of women who are victims of violence and uneducated, but expressed the hope that women can get more power if they become involved in development associations.<sup>9</sup>

Women are not the only ones concerned with their prospects. Increasingly men are also advocating for women's rights. The Imam who holds the highest leadership position for Muslims in the Kindu area expressed how he would like to see a Muslim girls' school created in Kindu to send a message that Muslims in Maniema value the place of women and girls. He noted that times are slowly changing and was proud that

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with president of LIFDM, Kindu 6/18/2008.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with executive member of APEMA, Kindu 7/15/2008.

one of his eight daughters is attending the University of Kindu now and that there are approximately twenty Muslim women at the University, even though in the recent past there were none.<sup>10</sup> The governor of Maniema expressed the importance of girls' education and cited that in 2006 only 18% of six-year-old girls were in school, and by 2009 that number had increased to 50%. Despite this improvement he lamented that there are still too few girls enrolled in secondary school.<sup>11</sup> However, it is apparent in these statistics and the vibrant associational life one witnesses in Maniema now that the plight of women in the post-conflict period is improving.

### **International influences**

Scholars of social movements in developing countries have debated the impact of international norms, funding, and agendas on the organization and functioning of grassroots movements and non-governmental organizations. Some argue that local mobilization is the direct result of the broader international agenda, responding in particular to the ability of receiving external funding.<sup>12</sup> However, this applies to only a minority of NGOs, and possibly none in Maniema. As Tripp and her co-authors point out, "women's groups generally concern themselves with the improvement of their families and communities but also the empowerment and improvement of the livelihood of women and girls. Because of these functions, they have often attracted external support," (Tripp et al. 2009, 22-3). Women in Maniema have organized primarily for the motivation of improving their lives in the difficult aftermath of the post-conflict period, not for attracting international funding. The majority of women's associations mentioned in

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with head Imam for COMICO in Kindu region, Kindu 3/27/2009.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with then governor of Maniema, Kindu 3/30/2009.

<sup>12</sup> See, for example the "briefcase NGO" discussion by Giovannoni et al. (2004) mentioned in Chapter 1.

the previous section receive no outside financial assistance, yet still use their members' meager resources to rebuild their society for the better, since their government is unable to do so on their behalf.

However, the changing international norms supporting women's rights have helped encourage women to recognize their freedom and rights. For example, in an interview with a very active Muslim woman who is the coordinator of CFMUDEMA, she said that she became involved in development mostly through attending seminars that were organized by MONUC, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other international organizations.<sup>13</sup> These seminars encouraged Congolese women to advocate for their rights and work together.

In separate interviews with two Catholic women involved in development associations in Kasongo, when asked why they think there has been an improvement in development, they express gratitude for the arrival of international NGOs.<sup>14</sup> They note how not long ago Muslim women were not allowed out of their home without asking their husband's permission. Their organizations *Commission Diocèsene Justice et Paix*, Diocese Commission of Justice and Peace, CDJP, and *Bureau Diocèsene pour le Développement*, Diocese Office of Development, BDD, with international support, started educational sensitizations about women's rights around 1990, but did not see much of a change. However, since the end of the war these educational seminars continue, and in addition, women from all religious backgrounds come together to talk about important issues for their gender and learn from one another. Today, thanks to

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with coordinator of CFMUDEMA, Kindu 5/12/2009.

<sup>14</sup> Interviews with members of CDJP and BDD, Kasongo 7/4/2008 and 7/7/2008.

these efforts and others, one sees many more girls going to school and more Muslim women active in associations outside of the home.

Women have reached out across religious dividing lines in Maniema to organize to meet critical needs during a difficult time, and as such have demonstrated that gender trumps religion. One dynamic Muslim woman, who is the coordinator of CFMUDEMA, expressed this when she stated that her deep hope is that all women in Congo will be able to advance, and that in 2011 there will be many female political candidates for local, provincial, and national elections. Interestingly, she is more excited about the promotion of women in general than about the promotion of her faith, though she has and will continue to work diligently for both causes.<sup>15</sup>

Though some of the incentive for the advancement of women's rights has come from the international community, such efforts would never have been successful without the support, backing, and encouragement of Congolese women locally. As Tripp and her co-authors note, donor assistance is helpful and important but, "the impetus to advance women's rights and the strategizing and prioritizing of issues have come almost entirely from within women's movements in African countries," (Ibid., 76). And, by working across religious divides in Maniema, the status of women and girls in general is on the rise.

### **Lessons from women's associations**

Women in Maniema, with the support and encouragement of the international community, have come together, despite religious differences, at the end of a devastating conflict period to advance their cause and assist their communities in

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with coordinator of CFMUDEMA, Kindu 5/12/2009.

rebuilding efforts. Following the argument of Tripp, Casimiro, Kwesiga, and Mungwa (2009), this was made possible by the alignment of four important factors. First, women were mobilizing on their own accord in autonomous associations. In Congo this occurred in three waves: 1) the late 1980s and early 1990s, including women's involvement in the Sovereign National Conference; 2) women's advocacy for peace and participation in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue peace process; and 3) the large proliferation of women's associations formed in the post-conflict period.

Second, Congolese women's participation mirrors a broader shift in the international community as a whole as women have gained support and encouragement from one another in diverse areas of the globe and the passing of important legislation for women's rights and international conferences on the topic. Third, there were new resources to support women's movements, especially in the form of international assistance that shifted from funding the central state to more decentralized local NGOs. In the Congo case, this can be seen as extremely relevant in the conflict context, as international organizations assisted women in gaining a place at peace talks and financially supported their organizations' endeavors to rebuild after the war. Women's organizations in eastern DRC receive international funding for running orphanages, rebuilding schools, caring for victims of sexual violence and widows, and teaching women income generating skills and basic literacy.

The fourth and final element is the creation of political openings as the result of some kind of societal upheaval. In several African countries this occurred in the form of political liberalization and democratization, as demonstrated by authors such as Okeke-Ihejirika and Franceshet (2002), Bauer and Britton (2006), Hassim (2007), Waylen

(2007), and Fallon (2008). This was beginning to occur in Zaire in the early 1990s as Mobutu made shifts toward political liberalization, and women's movements began to gain some momentum. Unfortunately, the process was interrupted by a long period of conflict. However, as Tripp and her co-authors suggested, conflict also represents a form of major societal upheaval able to provide political openings into which women can assert themselves. Congolese women mobilized to advocate for peace, but also to be a part of the peace process that would define how new political institutions and rules, such as the constitution, would be shaped.

Thus, we have seen how a convergence of factors has made women's mobilization in post-war DRC possible. On the local level, however, the most important actors were the individual women themselves who work tirelessly for peace, development, and prosperity. Following the *débrouillez-vous* model, they do so with the knowledge that they must take care of themselves, their families, and their post-war communities because the Congolese state will not. Therefore, this detailed example of women's associational involvement demonstrates how Congolese people are responding to state weakness, and by providing governance functions are contributing to the reification and idea of the Congolese state.

More importantly, the example of women's mobilization foreshadows the broader story to be told in this study, that of the Muslim minority community. As Chapter 4 will show, this community suffered from a history of persecution and marginalization, but in the post-war period began to mobilize and create numerous associations, similar to the women's organizations documented here. An area of particular mobilization for the

Muslim minority was education and the creation of a vast network of Muslim public schools is explored in Chapter 5.

Why has this previously marginalized community been able to mobilize so effectively in the post-war period? Do the four factors that explain women's mobilization in Congo and across much of sub-Saharan Africa also help us understand the rise in Muslim associations? Yes and no. Two of the factors aiding women's groups do not help in explaining Muslim mobilization, namely the role of international norms and the influx of international resources. As we will see, the Muslim associations do not receive the international moral or financial support that women's movements have garnered. But the factors of the creation of a strong movement and an opportunity for mobilization apply to both women's and Islamic associations.

This study argues that there are two primary factors that explain Muslim mobilization, particularly in the provision of the public good of education. The first is internal to the minority community itself, namely the history of division at multiple levels, creating a problem for Muslims to engage in collective action. As described in Chapter 6, the proliferation of Islamic associations and schools in the post-war period has been the result of the emergence of a group of Muslims with a strong desire to be more involved in associational life and development efforts, such as education. This parallels the efforts of local, regional, and national women's groups in the Congo and elsewhere. The second factor, as detailed in Chapter 7, is the opportunity provided by the unique post-war period where increasing liberalization intersects with the weakness of the Congolese state, allowing new forms of mobilization to emerge. Muslim associations

were able to seize upon this opportunity, similar to the women's movements documented here.

## CHAPTER 4 BEING MUSLIM IN THE CONGO: THE STORY OF A MARGINALIZED SOCIETY

The majority of literature on the relationship between faith based organizations and the provision of public goods in Africa has focused on Christianity, with very little attention devoted to Islam. This study will begin to address this lack of attention by having the Muslim community of Congo as its focus. The literature on Islam in Africa focuses primarily on those regions that have a significant Muslim majority, such as north Africa and the Sahelian countries. Others have addressed countries where Islam constitutes a substantial minority or has been particularly active in the political sphere, such as in Nigeria and east African nations (Obadare 2006; Constantin 1995). Additionally, there is an historical literature, which describes the spread of Islam into traditional societies on the continent (Robinson 2004; Levtzion and Pouwels 2000). Of particular interest to this project is the penetration by Swahili-Arab traders from the east African coast, especially the historical figure of Tippu Tip, all the way to Maniema in the Congo (Alpers 1975; Brode 1969; Renault 1987).

Additionally, interest in the role of Islam in politics around the world has exploded in recent years, most notably as a result of the terrorist attacks in the United States in September 2001. Thus a significant trend in recent literature on Islam in Africa is to examine “radical” Islamist movements, with relatively little attention paid to how most African Muslims are engaging in contemporary politics (De Waal 2004; Haynes 2005; International Crisis Group 2005). Therefore, this study contributes to the Islam in Africa literature by exploring the case of a non-radical Muslim minority community in central Africa. This chapter details the marginalization Congolese Muslims suffered, especially in the colonial era, and explains the process by which this has been largely overcome in

the post-conflict period as Islamic associations of all types have been able to mobilize for collective action in previously excluded realms such as politics and development.

### **A History of Exploitation**

The history of Congolese Muslims is one of repression and marginalization. Islam originated in eastern Congo in the pre-colonial period as Swahili-Arab traders from the east African coast penetrated the interior in search of ivory and slaves. Their goal was not evangelization, but economic in nature. However, the local communities began to emulate the foreigners and many adopted the new religion. Colonial policy was hostile toward Congolese Muslims, in many cases uprooting outspoken potential “rebellious” leaders and depositing them in far-flung regions of their vast territory. As such, most Muslims learned that it was best to remain quiescent to avoid reprisals. However, according to oral history accounts, this allowed the religion to gain converts in areas that would have remained untouched by Islam.

The more devastating colonial era policy for the minority community was in the realm of education. Most schools were run by the Catholic Church, which practiced a strict anti-Islam campaign. In contemporary interviews with Congolese Muslims, they detail how they, their parents, and/ or grandparents were forced to convert, eat pork, and drink water during the fasting month of Ramadan in order to prove their loyalty to the Church and receive an education. Therefore, most Muslim parents forbid their children from attending school in order to avoid conversion to Christianity, leaving generations of Congolese Muslims uneducated, unable to speak the administrative French language, and therefore marginalized from bureaucratic posts and involvement with state institutions. Traces of this historical legacy can still be seen today in the

underrepresentation of Muslims at all levels of Congolese government and advanced professional posts.

Despite this history of marginalization, the Muslim community of Congo in the recent post-conflict era has begun to shed this legacy. Although in the past the community primarily mobilized for spiritual matters, this is changing in the contemporary period as numerous Muslim organizations have formed to focus on political and development objectives. Therefore, theirs is a story of survival in the midst of historic marginalization.

### **Arrival of the Arabs: The Quest for Ivory and Slaves**

Islam arrived in central Africa prior to the colonial period via trade caravans originating on the east African coast. The consensus from all scholarly accounts on the subject is that proselytizing was by no means the primary motivation for travelers to the hinterland. The real force behind their interior expeditions was economic: a drive for two primary commodities, ivory and slaves. The subject of most scholarly work on the penetration of Islam into central Africa is Tippu Tip, the most famous coastal trader in the late nineteenth century involved with the interior as far as present-day Congo.

Coastal traders created a permanent position in Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika around 1840 (Young 1969, 250). Young, contrary to the opinions of other scholars who described these traders as Arab, referred to them as Swahili because they were in fact from the east African coast with a mixture of African and Arab heritage but a shared Swahili culture. This study refers to the traders as Swahili-Arab, reflecting both identity markers. They branched out from Ujiji in two main routes, one going west, and the other north. On the western route they established two permanent outposts, Nyangwe and Kasongo, in Maniema around 1860. "These two towns quickly came to be nuclear

clusters for the creation in the heart of Africa of the Islamo-African coastal way of life,” (Ibid., 252). Later, European visitors to the area were amazed at how agriculturally advanced these traders from the east had made their interior outposts.

However, there were never many more than a thousand Swahili-Arab traders in Congo. Their principal interest in the area was commerce and the Congo provided the profitable commodities of ivory and slaves. The trade peaked in the 1880s and most ivory tusks were garnered by cheap bartering, plundering, or tribute taxes. Slave trading went right in hand with ivory extraction because able bodies were needed as both raiders and porters, because the journey back to the coast was a thousand miles long. One account estimated that during this period seventy thousand men exported twenty thousand ivory tusks each year (Tata 2003, 51). Young labeled the two outposts in Maniema as city-states because there were no strong political units to rival them in the middle nineteenth century. However, “state formation on a more ambitious scale was the task of an unusual trader-cum-empire-builder, Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Juma el Mujerbi, better known by his African name of Tippo Tip,” (Young 1969, 253).

### **The infamous Tippo Tip**

Tippo Tip was born in Zanzibar around 1840. His grandfather was an immigrant from Oman and his grandmother an African. His father began the family business of inland trading and Tippo Tip joined him on his journeys until he was old enough to branch out on his own. Sherrif noted that most traders from the coast used a route through Itabwa. The leader of this area was known as Chipioka, or “Napoleon of these countries” according to Livingstone, who presented difficulties with passage for the traders (Sheriff 1987, 188). Tippo Tip, however, was instrumental in changing this dynamic because he arrived with a seven hundred-person caravan and many fire arms

in 1867. A short time after foreigners had gained control of the trade there, the amount of ivory began to decrease rapidly. The result was that traders sought to expand their routes to the north. "In the early 1870s Tippu Tip led his large caravan to Uruwa, Utetela, and finally Maniema, which was to become the centre of his 'empire-building' activities in the era of the Scramble," (Ibid.).

According to Young, Tip heard that there was a large supply of ivory in southern Maniema among the Batetela people who were rumored to be easily conquered, so he went to the area in 1872. As the story goes, the local chief, Kassongo Rushie, believed a tale Tippu Tip told him about a blood tie between the two. Rushie then conferred the title of chief upon Tip, who established a Swahili state in central Africa, referring to himself as the Sultan of Utetera, the country of the Batetela. He established control over much of the region and moved his main base to Kasongo in 1875, which became a large trading outpost with thirty thousand inhabitants (Tata 2003, 52; 58).

Sheriff argued that because of the changing nature of the caravan routes and more competition, the traders needed to build an infrastructure to promote their trade. "Zanzibari activities were centered at Nyangwe and Kasongo where many traders settled. Nyangwe was described as 'one of the greatest market places in Africa'; 'all roads', it was said, 'led to Nyangwe'," (Sheriff 1987, 190). Despite this great advance in the interior trade, the Swahilis continued to struggle due to the difficulty of transportation. The trip from Maniema to the coast was not only a very long one, but it was also complicated by the fact that it went through the hostile region that had beforehand been the primary provider for ivory, but had been mostly exhausted by 1870.

Tabora, where Tippo Tip's father Muhammad bin Juma settled, was a major trading center in Tanzania, and from there caravans either went north or west on to Ujiji, and then into the Congo. Sperling (2000) notes that Tippo Tip entered Maniema for the first time from Ujiji when he was eighteen and that it was on his third trip to the region that he convinced the Batetela chief that they were related and became the new chief. His political savvy continued as he negotiated to assist the Europeans in the area, such as Henry Morton Stanley and David Livingstone, and was appointed by King Leopold II as the governor of Stanley Falls (Kisangani today) in 1887. Despite Tip's success at political organization, Tata emphasized that the Swahili-Arabs did not originally come to central Africa with a political agenda, but that they found the most useful way to facilitate their commercial priorities was to establish political-military control of the area (Tata 2003, 57). Young's account agreed that "Tippo Tip's objectives were always primarily commercial; he assumed political authority in the region because his trading aims could be best served in this way," (Young 1969, 254).

### **Islamic conversion**

Despite the commercial nature of Swahili-Arab colonization in the Congo, Tippo Tip and his colleagues have been credited with the extension of Islam into central Africa. Young described this possibility by demonstrating that the process of warfare and commodity extraction led to social dislocation.

In the new Swahili towns the uprooted were quick to emulate a way of life accepted as superior, just as those who sought protection about the Free State posts were shifted to model their behavior on the European example. One of the patterns copied, along with coastal dress and Swahili language, was the basic external ritual of Islam. (Ibid., 255)

Thus, Islam was spread mostly through emulation, since the Swahili-Arab traders were not interested in proselytizing, because their primary objective was commercial. This

account of Islamic conversion in Congo is further bolstered by oral history accounts in Maniema. In meetings with prominent imams and members of the main mosque in both Kindu and Kasongo, they concurred that the Swahili-Arabs came to the area for commerce and not conversion, as evidenced by the fact that they did not create any schools to help the local community, but that local Congolese who worked for them converted to the religion of their employers through emulation.<sup>1</sup>

However, another account based on interviews with the Muslim community in Kasongo revealed local debates about the extent to which the Swahili-Arabs were interested in converting locals. Lazzarato's (2001) informants said that the Arabs did convert their collaborators, such as soldiers, servants, and interpreters, and that oral histories revealed that local chiefs were the first to convert to Islam and once they did so the rest of the tribe followed suit. Thus, the Swahili-Arabs did not force the Congolese to follow their customs, language, and religion, but locals chose to do so because they admired the new way of life they were being introduced to and no longer wanted to be referred to as pagans or savages, but become Muslim and earn respect. Another benefit of conversion was less chance of becoming a slave, so Lazzarato argued that embracing Islam had more benefits than drawbacks. He concluded by stressing that Islam's penetration into Central Africa was not imported by force but thoughtfully adopted by locals who found the religion and way of life superior to their previous traditions (Lazzarato 2001, 30-32).

However, Young discussed how the foreign Muslims also viewed the Congolese as barbaric animals, better suited for slavery than religious conversion. As an exemplar

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with imams and members at main mosque, Kindu 6/17/2008, and Kasongo 4/17/2009.

for how the adoption of Islam was cultural rather than religiously devout, Young pointed out that the language of Islam in the Congo was Swahili, not Arabic. In addition to the claim by Young that Swahili traders looked down upon interior Africans, Sperling also added another possible reason for the non-interest of the explorers for conversion. He states that “many of the Swahili and descendants of Omani immigrants may have had little religious instruction themselves, and the general temper of the age in which they lived did not stress that Muslims had an obligation to spread their religion to other peoples,” (Sperling 2000, 291). Although the intention of these foreigners was not conversion, Islam remained in the Congo, but so did other aspects of Swahili culture such as political and economic structures, agricultural practices, and a new language.

Brode (1969) interviewed Tippoo Tib, whom he referred to as Tippoo Tib, and has thus recorded the trader’s life story in the context of east and central Africa in the nineteenth century. Unlike Young, Brode referred to Tip and his compatriots as “Arabs” and stressed the limited interest they held for hinterland penetration. “The whole history of the Arabs in East Africa shows the same characteristics. They founded their cities on the coast, but made little effort to move inland, and in the rare cases where they did so, as at Tabora and Ujiji, the reason was simply that their slave-raids had depopulated the region near the sea,” (Brode 1969, v). Brode’s emphasis on economic motivation can be seen in his description of the trader’s legacy: “Tippoo Tib’s commercial journeys were in the main plundering expeditions. Anything else, any introduction of law and order, any spread of civilization, was merely subsidiary and incidental,” (Ibid., viii). Regardless of their primary motivation for settlement in central Africa, an important

element of the legacy of the Swahili-Arabs was the conversion to Islam among the local population.

### **Swahili-Arab defeat**

The decision to grant Belgian King Leopold II control of the Congo Free State at the Berlin conference of 1884-5 had a profound impact on the Swahili-Arab empire established in central Africa. Fearing his realm of influence in the interior was being threatened by European colonialism, the Zanzibar Sultan believed Tippoo Tip and other coastal traders to be the last chance for the maintenance of his control over the interior, as illustrated below.

While Tippoo Tib remained in these districts, which were daily falling more and more completely under Belgian rule, he received from Seyyid Burghash letters urging him to use every means in his power to keep the country under his influence. Tippoo Tib replied that he himself was powerless without weapons and ammunition; if the Sultan wished him to do his best for him, he must first supply him with the necessary material. Thereupon Burghash called him back to talk over the situation in Manyemaland with him in person. (Brode 1969, 167)

Although other European countries had bequeathed control of the Congo to the Belgians, they were not unopposed in the area. Arab traders and European colonizers clashed several times in the Congo Free State in the late nineteenth century. The explorer Henry Morton Stanley proposed the idea of appointing Tippoo Tip as Governor of Stanley Falls to the Belgian king, essentially in an attempt to co-opt their opponent. Tip accepted and received a monthly salary in return for raising the Belgian flag in the area and keeping other Arabs in check.

Around 1888 Stanley hired Tippoo Tip to provide porters and protection for a European envoy up the Congo River. The trip proved very difficult and many men were lost. Stanley blamed this on Tip and even accused him of the death of one of his

assistants Major Barttelot. Therefore, in 1890 Tippoo Tip was summoned to Zanzibar to answer for a large lawsuit issued by Stanley in a British court on the island. Stanley was later accused of lying about another incident in central Africa, so the matter with Tippoo Tip was dropped. However, when Tippoo Tip left Maniema in 1890 it was to be his last visit to the interior. Fearing such, he established his relatives as rulers of the region, such as his son Sefu in Kasongo, Munie Mohara in Nyangwe, his nephew Rashid in Kisangani, and other relations in Kirundu, Kabambare, Ngandu, Riba-Riba, and Ujiji (Lazzarato 2001, 20). Therefore, “since that time Tippoo Tib has made no more journeys to the interior; he was spared the spectacle of the complete collapse of the Arab power in the districts he had ruled,” (Brode 1969, 237).

The late 1880s were a period of European consolidation of power in Africa. The Germans took control of the east African coast and interior, but recognized British influence over Zanzibar and Pemba, which were areas under the control of the Sultan. They gained control of the interior hubs of Tabora and Ujiji, while the Belgians continued to extend their rule in the Congo Free State. Tippoo Tip, while in central Africa, performed a key function of being an intermediary between Europeans and Arabs. However, as soon as Tip departed for settlement in Zanzibar, the stronger European powers were able to put an end to Arab reign in the region (Ibid., 243). Kasongo, with an estimated population of thirty thousand, and surrounding areas were taken over by the colonial *force publique* in 1893 (Lazzarato 2001, 18). Tippoo Tip lived out the rest of his life in Zanzibar and heard constant reports of Arab losses to European colonialism on the continent until his death due to malaria in 1905.

Three years of war between the European and Swahili-Arabs in the Congo began in 1892. Few foreigners were physically involved in this dispute, but many Congolese combatants were employed. The largest city in Maniema at the height of the Swahili-Arab trade was Nyangwe, which was founded in 1860 by Abel ben Salim from Zanzibar and from which the Arabs fled Belgian soldiers on March 4, 1893 (Ibid., 16-17). In Nyangwe, the original outpost for Swahili traders such as Tippo Tip before he moved to Kasongo, today one still finds traces of the battle between Arabs and Belgians. Though the town was a hub of commerce in the second half of the nineteenth century with a population estimated at sixty thousand inhabitants (Tata 2003, 58), today it is a desolate rural village isolated from major trade routes and still recovering from devastation during the recent decade of war.

However, the Muslim community of Nyangwe remains proud of its history as the first outpost of Islam in Congo and has even ambitions of attracting tourists to their historical sites. It is still possible to view the tombs of two prominent Swahili-Arabs, Mwenye Tugumbe and Mwenye Mwahara, the brother of Tippo Tip, the location of the original slave market, as well as a large Christian cross erected around 1890 by the colonial administration in honor of the Belgian soldiers buried there who died in the battle to conquer the Arabs and rid the area of the slave trade.<sup>2</sup>

The result of Belgian military advancement was that “by 1895, Swahili power had been totally broken, the main leaders killed or in flight, and communication with coastal Islam ruptured until after World War I,” (Young 1969, 254). In accordance with the writings of other scholars, Sperling argued that, “little permanent residue of Islam

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Muslims in Nyangwe, 7/8/2008.

remained in Manyema once the slave trade was declared illegal and suppressed by the Belgian colonial government,” (Sperling 2000, 290). However, the following section details how Congolese Muslims, despite intense harassment, continued to hold on to the faith they had adopted during the brief period of Swahili-Arab commercial domination of their territory.

### **Marginalization During Belgian Colonialism**

By the mid-1890s the Belgian colonial force had effectively conquered the Swahili-Arabs in the Congo. The new administration touted the benefits this represented for the Congolese population because they had been “rescued” from the Arab slave traders.<sup>3</sup> However, this was not necessarily a saving grace for the Muslim population, as the new regime expressed hostility toward Congolese Muslims, especially when they appeared more active. This was because, “Belgium from the outset was persuaded that Islam was a potential breeding ground of insurrection politically and an obstacle to achievement of complete evangelization of the Congolese populations for the missions,” (Young 1969, 256).

In response, and partly due to their minority status and relative weakness, the Islamic community preferred to maintain a low profile so as not to receive reprisals from the colonial administration. Therefore, “government policy oscillated between complacency, when Islam seemed inactive, to hostility, whenever it appeared to spread,” (Ibid.). Though Congolese Muslims in Maniema were able to practice their new religion and culture without influence for the first decade after the Arabs were

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with imams and prominent members of the central mosque, Kasongo 4/17/2009, recounting being taught a song by the Belgians about being saved from the slave trade.

forcefully removed, this was to change once the first Catholic missionaries arrived in Kasongo and founded the Saint-Charles mission on March 12, 1903.

At the invitation of Inspector of the State Mr. Malfeyt, who wanted the Church to counter the threat of Islam in the area, a certain Monsignor Roelens arrived to run the mission. Ten years later, on the twentieth anniversary of the Belgian victory in southern Maniema, a monument was erected in Kasongo to honor those who died in the battles there and in Nyangwe in 1893 (Lazzarato 2001, 37-42). This establishment of the Catholic mission and scrutiny by the colonial administration began a period of isolation for the Muslim community. Young asserted, “during the three decades which followed the Swahili defeat in 1895, Congolese Islam maintained only a slender foothold and was virtually altogether cut off from the sustenance of outside influence. It is surprising that it survived this period of isolation at all,” (Young 1969, 257). However, this isolation was to be broken beginning with events in the 1920s.

### **Mulidi movement and repression**

Despite its isolation in the decades after the Swahili-Arab defeat, the Muslim community began to grow and increase its proselytizing mission in the mid-1920s as it had more interaction with the outside Muslim world. Qur’anic schools were formed, men were sent to Islamic institutions in other countries to receive education in order to teach upon their return, and the *Qadiriyya* Sufi order made important inroads in the area for Congolese Muslims, who are primarily Sunni. According to one account, the first phase of proselytism was the Mulidi movement, which allowed Islam to spread from Kasongo to neighboring Kabambare. The movement was seen as radical with potential political consequences, so the Belgian colonial regime and Catholic missionaries reacted particularly harsh to it.

Mulidi leaders came to Maniema primarily from Tanzania. One of the main proselytizers was Akida Kangala, who arrived in Kasongo in 1930 and whose parents were born in Kabambare. He was born in Ujiji where his father had been deported by the colonial administration. According to Tata, the Mulidi movement was so successful because it helped create a society for those who had been marginalized under the new Belgian regime and were not able to be educated in mission schools. Islam then became a basis for social and cultural identity in these areas, and was seen as more local and not the result of Arab penetration from the coast. In addition, he argued that Mulidi followers received socio-economic advantages because the community helped to pay for funeral expenses and provide assistance for the poor, widows, and orphans. The main reason why Belgian administrators felt threatened by the Mulidi order was that it seemed to challenge colonial order, especially when Muslim workers began to refuse to work in plantations on Fridays and children were forbidden to attend mission schools. (Tata 2003, 60-63)

In response to the perceived Mulidi threat, the colonial government prohibited Muslim foreigners from entering Congo, especially those Mulidi from Tanzania. In fact, from 1930 to 1940 the regime forced two local chiefs and ten Muslim teachers into exile (Ibid., 63). According to Lazzarato, the main period of relegations was from 1936 to 1940. In January 1936 two leaders, Pene Senga and Lupaya were forced into exile because of their proselytism and hostility toward the colonial administration. Then on April 8, 1936, five Mulidi chiefs were relegated to various areas in the Kivu province. Other Kasongo Muslims also experienced expulsions, and two even died while in exile in Uvira. However, the order for exile was lifted in 1940 and many returned home.

Relegation added to the prestige of imams and as a result, Shabani Baruani became the leader of the Mulidi in Kasongo after his exile. Despite its harshness, this period is often looked upon with nostalgia for the Muslim community because it has been heralded as leading to the unification of the community into one religion. (Lazzarato 2001, 73-74)

Islam was not the only minority religion feared by the Belgian authorities in the Congo. Kimbanguism, a Christian sect founded by Simon Kimbangu, was also the subject of colonial repression. Kimbangu was arrested and sentenced to death for his alleged hostility to the regime, before he was granted life imprisonment but exiled to Lubumbashi, where he died in 1950, far away from the base of his movement in the west. Similar to the argument presented above about the mobilizing consequence of Muslim repression by the Belgian authorities, Schatzberg argued that “despite, or perhaps because of, the colonial state’s hostility, the movement flourished as an illegal, underground religion,” until Kimbanguism was granted formal recognition at independence (Schatzberg 1988, 123).

The Catholic Church also responded to the Mulidi threat by increasing its proselytizing mission in Kasongo and accusing mosques of being places for demons, leading the colonial administration to forbid the building of mosques and even to destroy some of those already in existence (Tata 2003, 64). Another account, however, emphasized that the construction of new mosques was possible on the condition of colonial authorization, but that in 1925-1926 several mosques were destroyed (Lazzarato 2001, 45). A letter written February 13, 1930 by either a colonial administrator or a member of the Catholic mission warned, “here in Manyema we find

ourselves in the midst of a Muslim invasion, of an Islamic movement and development, of a danger which menaces and that one can still shape or stop if one takes positive measures,” (Ibid., 47). Another report from authorities during April and May 1936 detailed the percentages of Muslims suspected to be Mulidi (between 23 and 54) in each of the eleven districts near Kasongo. The report noted, “in the actual state of things, the proselytism of these Mulidi walimu [the Swahili word for teacher] needs to be strongly restrained, it will probably be pursued in secret,” (Ibid., 70-71).

In addition, Qur’anic schools were forbidden and there was an effort to oblige Muslims to send their children to Catholic schools. Few complied in fact, because Muslim leaders told their followers not to send their children to Catholic schools or they would be forced to eat pork and not observe Ramadan. Tata argued that as a result Christian children, who had been well educated, formed a local elite and held positions such as teachers, nurses, and bureaucrats and overall benefited from colonization, while Muslims were “self-marginalized” from Western and Christian civilization, and thus appeared to be second-class citizens (Tata 2003, 65).

### **Oral community histories**

The collective memory of the Congolese Muslim community also places emphasis on marginalization suffered during Belgian colonial rule. In an oral recounting of the history of Mosque 17 in Kasongo, old men described the arrival of five Belgian Catholics in 1885, who chased out the Arabs. After the battle, Catholic priests arrived in Kabambare, but moved near the mosque by the river in Kasongo in 1908. In 1931 the mosque was relocated to the old Arab Quarter in town, which was seventeen kilometers from the original mosque at the river, thus providing the current name. However, in 1953 they were forced to move again because the colonial state wanted to use that

area for the location of a post office and bureaucratic offices. One elderly man was born in 1925 when the Muslims were in their original location, before they had to move to accommodate what is now the large parcel of land owned by the Catholic Church where the mission and seminary are located. In addition to being forced to relocate by the Catholics and then the Belgian colonial administrators, elders note that if a Muslim leader began to gain too much strength, the Belgians would be afraid of organized resistance and reacted by forcefully moving that leader to another province where few or no Muslims lived.<sup>4</sup>

Elders of Mosque 18 recounted a similar story. Arabs had been in Kasongo for thirty-three years before the Belgians expelled them in 1893. The mosque was originally located in the old Arab Quarter, but was forced to move when the Catholics took control of the area around 1925, and then was compelled to relocate again when the Belgian authorities requisitioned the new area for administrative headquarters. Hamisi Yusefu was the first imam of the mosque at its current location when the Belgians forbid the building of the new mosque and the continuation of their religion. The Muslim community persisted in the building of their mosque and following their faith, so Yusefu was seen as a threat and forcefully moved to Uvira in 1936, from which he never returned. Several others mentioned by name were transferred to Uvira, while others were relegated to Kisangani. Those who were moved were allegedly taken in a colonial vehicle with their eyes covered so they could not see where they were being relocated. Oral histories recount that Belgian colonists believed Islam presented a revolutionary threat and some Muslims were beaten in the hopes that they would

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with imams and elderly men of Mosque 17, Kasongo 4/15/2009.

rescind their faith. Some Muslims were even murdered when they defended Islam, such as Mwenye Buhruni in 1922. Despite suffering these atrocities and forced expulsions, today Kasongo Muslims believe that the positive consequence of Muslim leaders relegated to other locations was that they did not abandon their religion, but took the opportunity to spread Islam into previously unreachable areas.<sup>5</sup>

In what is today the small village of Lukungu, about ten kilometers from Kindu, one finds another entirely Muslim community with roots to the original Swahili-Arab settlers. Mwenye Kasili, one of the five sons of Mwenye Tugumbe of Nyangwe, and another relative Mwenye Ali helped found the community and visitors may still look upon their elaborate tombs. The village chief recounts that Lukungu was a base from which Arabs spread into other regions such as Kalima and Punia in northern Maniema, and Kisangani. The location of Lukungu today is actually the third location of the village, and was built in 1936. The chief ironically notes that at the time the Belgians had abolished slavery, but that Muslims were forced to do excessive manual labor by the colonial administration, particularly to help build roads.<sup>6</sup>

### **Colonial education**

Beyond forced exile, mosque burnings, beatings, and murder, perhaps the arena where the majority of Congolese Muslims experienced the most severe forms of marginalization during the colonial years was in education. Young notes that Muslims were almost entirely excluded from colonial and Christian missionary education, thus eliminating their prospects for acceptance into the civil service (Young 1969, 260). In the Belgian Congo education was provided almost exclusively by Christian

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with imams and elderly men of Mosque 18, Kasongo 7/5/2008 and 4/16/2009.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with village chief and elders in Lukungu, 6/21/2008.

missionaries, especially the Catholic Church, and the result was that Muslim children were harassed, forced to convert, or expelled from school. According to a Catholic priest in Kasongo, Muslim leaders encouraged followers not to send their children to mission schools because they would be forced to eat pork and not observe Ramadan (Tata 2003, 64). In an interview with the newly elected head Imam for the Orientale province, he acknowledged that Muslim leaders during the colonial period did forbid Muslim children from attending these schools because they would be forced to be baptized Christian.<sup>7</sup> Older Muslims in Maniema recount that harassment in colonial schools included forced conversion, beatings, being forced to eat pork, snakes, and other forbidden meats, and to drink water during the fasting month of Ramadan.<sup>8</sup>

As such, the majority of Muslims dropped out of school and reverted to trade for their livelihoods, and few were able to speak the administrative French language, thus not being able to become involved with state institutions. However, a few Muslim children attended mission schools and converted to Christianity because “under colonialism, the church was virtually the only avenue of upward mobility for Zairian youth,” (Schatzberg 1988, 118). In the 1950s a colonial administrator reported being surprised during his visit to Kasongo to witness more Muslim children attending Christian schools. He asked why they wanted to attend the religious classes and they responded that, “Islam is just good enough for the old people, if one wants to evolve, it is necessary to become Christian,” (Lazzarato 2001, 91).

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with head Imam for Orientale province, Kisangani 6/10/2009.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with male members of Mosque 18, Kasongo 7/5/2008 and 4/16/2009; Interview with head Imam for Kindu region, Kindu 3/27/2009.

However, informants reported that Muslim children who retained their faith while attending colonial schools were never allowed to move beyond the third year of primary school.<sup>9</sup> Thus young men in Kindu insist that those who did stay in school in order to become educated and have the possibility of obtaining a job in the public sector were only able to do so by converting to Christianity.<sup>10</sup> A Muslim human rights organization noted that if a Muslim child was able to complete primary school, he/she was only able to go to secondary school after being formally baptized Christian (BIDH 2007, 2). As further evidence, a UNESCO report released prior to Congolese independence, which was not focused on Muslims in particular, noted that “blacks in the Congo complain that the missionaries eliminate non-Catholic children,” from education (cited in Gingrich 1971, 153). The phenomenon of Muslim exclusion from education was not restricted to Belgian colonialism, however. In Tanzania, the minority Muslim population was also excluded from attending Christian mission schools under British rule. Similarly, “Muslims shunned the mission schools, seeing them as vehicles to promote conversion to Christianity. As a result, a new African elite emerged in the 1920s that was almost exclusively Christian, often Catholic,” (Loimeier 2007, 138).

Due to their exclusion from colonial schools, the only education most Muslim children received was religious training. Because the Belgians had forbidden Qur’anic schools, education during this time was known as *barza* (coming from the Swahili word for meeting) and was conducted in secret inside the imam’s house. However, some imams were arrested when it was discovered that they were ignoring colonial

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with male members of Mosque 18, Kasongo 4/16/2009.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with the president and vice-president of the Muslim Youth, Kindu 6/18/2008.

sanctions.<sup>11</sup> As a result of their marginalization from education, and thus public employment, Muslims were active merchants, continuing their heritage from the Swahili-Arabs. Particularly in the Kisangani area, the Islamic community excelled at trade, and as such was able to use portions of their profits to build nice mosques.<sup>12</sup> Commerce continued to be a factor in the maintenance of the Islamic community in the Congo during colonial and early post-colonial times, as Muslim traders from Asia and other regions of east and west Africa continued their business in Congo.

### **Contemporary Emergence of Islamic Communities**

Due to decades of often-brutal repression and marginalization, it is not surprising that the Congolese Muslim community learned to survive by distancing itself from state institutions. This process seems to have carried forth into the early independence period as well. For example, Young (1969) found it intriguing that one of the largest post-independence political parties (the MNC-L), as well as the primary seat of nationalist movement, occurred precisely in the regions heavily populated by the Islamic community, yet there were virtually no Muslims involved in these political processes. Adherents of the religion remained marginalized by the Congolese government after independence, while other major religious groups were formally recognized and received subsidies for their schools. Therefore, Young concluded that, “Islam, it would seem, remains as quiescent and isolated as it had been during the colonial period,” (Young 1966, 464).

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with male members of the Mosque 18, Kasongo 4/16/2009.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with head Imam for Orientale province, Kisangani 6/10/2009.

## **Slow Emergence**

Young's observation was perhaps true in the immediate independence period. However, the end of colonial rule marked a big change for previously marginalized Muslims as their situation improved in the independence era. With Congolese independence came freedom of religion, guaranteed by the law of May 17, 1960 and then again in the constitution of August 1, 1964 (Lazzarato 2001, 92). And the first national Muslim conference was held in Kasongo in March 1964 with the purpose of selecting an official representative to interact with the state.

In addition, relations between Muslims and Christians also drastically improved after the Second Vatican Council, and the change in the Church's teachings to insist that Catholics should respect Muslims because they all believe in the same God. In Kasongo, Monsignor Pirigisha began a dialogue between Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants in May 1967 in which he spoke about the Vatican's recent push for mutual peace and respect. In June the Catholic bishop came to speak, at the invitation of the head Imam, to two thousand Muslims gathered at a mosque in Kasongo. In January of the following year, the three religious groups came together for a week of prayer known as the Week of Unity, and from this point onwards the tensions between the Catholic and Muslim communities of Kasongo were greatly decreased (Ibid., 96-97).

During his authoritarian rule President Mobutu engaged in corporatism, a common practice of co-opting important segments of society among most one-party states and personal rulers throughout post-colonial Africa. He ordered all religious communities to create one sole organization to represent them to the state. In this way, Mobutu gained the allegiance of religious leaders, often through bribery. In one example, he gave a Mercedes to all Protestant and Catholic bishops in 1978 (Haynes 1996, 112). Upon

Mobutu's command, in 1972 the Muslim community created the *Communauté Islamique en République du Zaïre*, COMIZA, which is today known as COMICO, and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Speaking in general of African countries with Muslim minority communities, Haynes asserts, "government, through its alliance with the national organization seeks to achieve control of Muslims, a potentially subversive group. Such organizations, then, function primarily as control and surveillance bodies," (Ibid., 123).

Estimates in recent years place Muslims as a minority constituting about 10% of the total Congolese population (US Dept. State 2010). The largest percentage of Muslims can still be found in the regions of historic importance to the Islamic community, particularly in the Maniema province. Kindu, the ethnically and religiously mixed provincial capital, is approximately 25% Muslim. Kasongo, the second largest city in Maniema, is where the Muslim community comprises a large majority of between 80 and 90%, although Catholics in the area, as noted below, provide much smaller estimates. There are also enclaves of Muslims outside of the Maniema province. Kisangani, the third largest city in the country, located in the northeastern Orientale province, has the most substantial Muslim community outside of Maniema, most likely around 15%. Finally, the Congolese capital Kinshasa also contains a substantial Muslim population and is headquarters to COMICO, the national Muslim organization.

Despite the easing of historic marginalization in the independence period, the legacy of colonial repression in the form of under-education for the Muslim minority community can still be seen today when few Muslims are found holding significant posts in democratizing Congo. At the national level, there are only four Muslims in the five

hundred person National Assembly and three out of one hundred twenty Senators.<sup>13</sup> Of the twenty-four deputies in the provincial assembly of the Maniema province, none are Muslim even though there are representatives from each region, some of which, like Kasongo, are predominately Muslim.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to under-representation in the political sphere, further evidence of the difficulty for the Muslim minority to overcome its legacy of marginalization can be seen in the education sector. An investigation conducted by the Catholic mission in Kasongo in September 1999 found that out of four hundred forty-three children in the final year of secondary school, only one hundred were Muslim, which is significantly under-representative considering they noted the overall demographics of Muslims in the area to be 65%. Statistics such as these support the assertion that educational differences “continue to pose a problem for the creation of a Muslim intellectual elite with the risk of persistence of a certain frustration of the Islamic community to be obliged to a gap in the management of public affairs, a cause of tension and conflicts,” (Tata 2003, 67). However, these studies conducted prior to the post-conflict period are no longer reflective of the Muslim minority.

### **Post-War Explosion**

While the early post-colonial period witnessed modest scholarly interest on the topic of Islam in the Congo, since then these communities have received very little attention. The lack of current scholarship on the topic belies the presence of a vibrant and organized Muslim community, especially in Maniema. There has been very little information available about these organizations and the broader Muslim community in

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with COMICO leaders, Kinshasa 6/16/2009.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with head Imam in Kindu, 3/27/2009.

the region for several reasons. The Maniema region where the majority of Congolese Muslims reside is extremely poverty-stricken and remote, making travel difficult. Roads are in disrepair and expensive and risk-prone airplanes remain the primary transportation outlet. Additionally, insecurity in the Maniema and Orientale provinces has been a major factor, as the regions border the volatile North and South Kivu provinces, the primary location of sporadic violence for over a decade that has continued even after the formal end to conflict in 2002.

In research prior to fieldwork in Maniema, the only available news about the contemporary Islamic community came from the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Congo. MONUC, the mission that was charged with securing the demobilization of armed groups and overseeing the post-conflict transition to democracy, had a field office in Kindu. In 2004 they released a news article discussing a three day conference held in the provincial capital by a local group, known as *Collectif des Associations des Femmes Musulmanes Pour le Développement du Maniema* (Collective of Muslim Women for the Development of Maniema) or CFMUDEMA, encouraging Muslim women to become active in development in the region (Bakody 2004). Beyond brief reports such as this, however, there was no literature available analyzing the current development activities of the Muslim community in the Congo.

The contemporary Muslim community boasts a variety of organizations and functions. As noted above, the principal organization for Congolese Muslims is COMICO, *Communauté Islamique en République Démocratique du Congo*. In recent years there have been national women's organizations that have been created in conjunction with COMICO, including CONAFEM, *Comité Nationale Feminine de*

COMICO, and its affiliate at the provincial level COPROFEM, *Comité Provinciale Feminine*. There is also the national organization UFMC, *Union des Femmes Musulmanes du Congo*, which also has affiliates in the provinces, and in Kisangani created the Therapeutic Nutritional Center during the conflict period.

Other important Muslim organizations active in Maniema today include CFMUDEMA, mentioned above, *Ami Santé* which is an association in Kindu working to provide healthcare for Muslims and to the broader Maniema society, BIDH, the *Bureau Islamique des Droits Humains*, which has a provincial office in Kindu and an affiliate in Kasongo, over one-hundred thirty Muslim women's organizations active in southern Maniema which are mostly focused around community agriculture projects, the *Dawa'tu Islamiyya* organization of women from Mosque 18 in Kasongo, and the local branch of CONADHI, *Conseil National des Droits de l'homme en Islam* also in Kasongo. In Kisangani one finds several more active Islamic associations such as, MANUS, *Mamas Musulmanes de Communauté Islamique*, UMDDH, *Union des Mamas Musulmanes pour le Développement et Droits Humains*, CSPDC, *Centre Sociale pour le Développement Communautaire*, *Mapendo*, *Maendeleo*, and *Dawati*.

The national, provincial, and local Muslim associations mentioned thus far focus on a wide variety of tasks, whether spiritual or providing important services for their community that the national state has failed to provide. Therefore, this chapter has documented the history of the Congolese Muslim minority, from the spread of Islam during the pre-colonial period by Swahili-Arab ivory and slave traders, through the period of intense marginalization during Belgian domination, and into the contemporary era. It has shown the remarkable resilience of this community despite the exploitation

of the Swahili-Arabs, and prosecution by colonial authorities and the Catholic Church. Young believed it was unexpected that Islam survived in Congo at all. “Islam in the Congo...has succeeded in establishing permanent roots in unfavorable circumstances,” but has done so most likely by maintaining a low profile because, “Islam has responded to the hostility of the state by indifference and withdrawal,” (Young 1969, 263). This statement held for the majority of the colonial, early independence, and Mobutu periods. Since 2002, however, there is much evidence of a Muslim community awakening and presence.

Today the Congolese Muslim minority is for the first time expanding from discrete spiritual communities to form political and development organizations that collaborate with the Congolese state and other religious communities to help rebuild their war-torn society, provide much needed public services, and engage in democratization. Given the history outlined here, this seems to be a remarkable shift. Therefore, Chapters 6 and 7 will present arguments for why this has been possible. The former argues that the history of intense internal conflicts within the Muslim minority community made mobilization for collective action virtually impossible. However, this impasse has largely been overcome in the post-conflict period when a reform-oriented leadership with a clear development agenda emerged. Chapter 7 then argues that the opportunity presented by the unique post-conflict setting encouraged the partnership of the minority community with the weak Congolese state through the existing hybrid model in education.

A detailed examination of Muslim associational involvement in the education sector is presented in Chapter 5, as perhaps the most apparent example of the shift in

the minority community from marginalization to mobilization. Despite their historic repression and withdrawal from state institutions, in the post-conflict period Islamic organizations are building and running Islamic public schools that aid in the propagation of their faith and ensure for the first time that their children have the necessary skills to compete for jobs in the public and private sectors and participate in politics.

## CHAPTER 5 HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE CONGO AND THE FLOURISHING MUSLIM PUBLIC SCHOOL

As we have seen in Chapter 3, the D.R. Congo state could certainly be understood as “failed” in the recent past, but its more current history suggests nominal efforts at rebuilding. It is nevertheless still very weak in its institutional capacity to provide public goods for Congolese citizens. As developing countries and aid organizations increasingly focus on poverty elimination and the welfare of African citizens, much attention has been placed on the role of education for development. This issue has received all the more attention as it has become progressively clear that many central governments on the continent lack the capacity and institutions to effectively provide education for their population. Education in the Congo has been primarily run by Christian groups since the colonial era, but as this study explores, the Muslim community has become greatly involved in this process in the post-conflict period.

Before moving to an explanation of the reasons for this new Muslim involvement, we need to examine the phenomenon in the context of the educational history of the Democratic Republic of Congo. As mentioned previously, there is a dearth of scholarly work on the Muslim minority population of DRC. In Young’s work (1966, 1969) on the topic in the early years of Congolese independence, he portrayed the community as excluded from politics and education, remaining on the fringes of society. Today, however, this situation is changing. Rising out of the ashes of a decade of war, the Muslim community has mobilized to create a plethora of associations focused not only on spiritual matters, but also on development goals. Following in the footsteps of models provided by other religious organizations, the Muslim community has created an

effective education bureaucracy and begun to actively build, run, and monitor what are known as “Islamic public schools” throughout the country.

In order to explain this remarkable process, this chapter focuses on three important eras in the history of Congolese education. The first details the Belgian colonial system and the remnants of its legacy in the contemporary period, as well as the exclusionary and often brutal realities of educational monopoly by the Catholic Church. It then explores the convention school system that took shape during the Mobutu years. Finally, it delves into a description of rapidly proliferating Islamic public schools as a hybrid institutional form combining a secular state school with the management of the Islamic community. As such the chapter contributes an historical analysis of the importance of colonial legacies, while also showcasing the agency of Muslims in their process to work with the existing system to create hybrid schools that position them to advance in employment and political arenas.

### **Belgian Colonial Legacy and the Catholic Monopoly**

The brutal nature of colonialism in the Congo Free State under the authority of King Leopold II from 1885 to 1908 has been described in detail in Chapter 2, as has the subsequent period of Belgian government control of the renamed Belgian Congo. Although the role of exploitation of Congo’s resources by business interests during this period has already been explored, the Catholic Church also played a key role. In fact, the colonial period in the Congo was characterized as rule by a trinity of the colonial administration, the Church, and large business interests (Young 1965, 10). The domain of education was presided over by the first two elements of this trinity. However, in reality, “from the beginnings of the colonial presence in the Zairian territory until after World War II, the Belgian state assumed no operational control over education but

established conditions favoring the spread of Catholic missionary activity and the gradual emergence of a mostly Catholic school system,” (Boyle 1991, 52). It is to this evolution of religious schooling that we now turn.

### **Mission Schools and Protestant Exclusion**

Education in the Congo was almost exclusively run by the Catholic Church and missionaries were the primary teachers. This was so because the Belgian government had little interest in spending large amounts of money on creating a strong education sector in its colony. Colonial era schools in the Congo could be compared “to the small, essentially religious church schools which dotted the Belgian countryside centuries before,” (Gingrich 1971, 37). Belgian colonists believed this to be the essential kind of education for their colonial subjects:

Finally, there was an even more powerful argument for religiously-based education than missionary expertise and low cost. Whatever their personal religious convictions Belgian colonialists were convinced that Congolese education had to be an essentially moral education. They concluded that state-administered secular education simply could not provide the moral instruction which the uncivilized African needed. (Ibid., 38)

Like most colonial governments, the Belgians believed their primary task in the Congo was a civilizing mission to bring African pagans to Christianity and therefore modernization.

Leopold appealed to missionaries to take on the duty of civilizing the natives in his vast territory. However, even before his mandate in the region began there had been Protestant missions in the area, beginning with the Baptist Mission Society in Bakongo in 1879 (Boyle 1991, 52). And Catholics had begun work in the Congo Basin at the time of the Portuguese explorations of the area in the fifteenth century. By 1905 there were almost ninety permanent and temporary Catholic missions in Congo as well as forty

Protestant missions (Gingrich 1971, 94). In part fueled by the desire to limit the influence of Protestant evangelization in the colony, in 1906 King Leopold II and the Vatican reached a formal agreement regarding the role of the Church.

The agreement was called the Concordat, and gave a land grant to each Catholic mission created in the Congo. The agreement had the effect of excluding Protestant missions because they were not “national missions’, defined as those established by Catholic religious congregations based in Belgium,” (Boyle 1995, 454). The Catholic Church agreed to provide the manpower to run mission schools according to the approval of the colonial governor, and the state agreed to give each mission up to two hundred hectares of land in return. Thus, the missionaries were in charge of day-to-day functioning of the schools, but the colonial government supervised the curriculum, textbooks, and functioning of the schools. We can see this development as the original establishment of a form of the hybrid state-religious education system that is still found in Congo in the contemporary era.

The colonial insistence on a Catholic monopoly over education was the product of Leopold and the Belgian government’s distrust of Protestants. This fear was less religious per se, and more focused on the fact that Protestants were primarily from Britain and the United States and were thus “foreigners”. This fear was confirmed as Protestant missionaries became some of the most vocal advocates for human rights reforms in the colony and made public appalling reports of atrocities committed by the colonial state. In response, during the Catholic party’s control of politics in Belgium “from 1906 to 1914 the government granted more than 23 times as much land to the Catholic missionaries as to their Protestant counterparts,” (Gingrich 1971, 178).

In fact, Louis Franck, the colonial minister in the 1920s, believed that Catholic mission schools would provide the best moral education for Congolese. As such, he decided to only provide colonial subsidies for Catholic mission schools. Conventions signed in 1925 and 1926 stipulated that government subsidies would be provided to missions as long as they implemented the education policy of the state. These conventions were not extended to Protestant missions on the grounds that these were not Belgian national organizations. As a result, “the virtual equality of educational effort in 1920 shifted until more than twice as many children were in Catholic as Protestant schools by 1938,” (Ibid., 180). However, the colonial policy of ostracizing Protestant mission education began to change around the onset of World War II.

Louis Franck, in addition to championing Catholic missions, set up an educational commission in 1922-1924, which led to the outlining of six principles for education of Congolese students. These included: “1) moral education is more important than technical or literacy instruction; 2) schools must be adapted to the native’s environment; 3) native languages have to be used in primary school; 4) the State has to work with the ‘national’ (i.e. Catholic) missions; 5) girls have to be educated as well as boys; and 6) native teachers must be used,” (Gingrich 1971, 98). In 1919 there were 74,000 Congolese students in mission schools, but this number increased rapidly to 400,000 by 1934; and by 1937 the number was 840,000 out of a total estimated population of over ten million Congolese (Ibid., 43). These numbers represented almost entirely rural classes often taught by somewhat-educated Congolese, and usually only a basic education for two years. Thus, as a result of early colonial policy, the ancestor to the current education system in Congo emerged with religious associations shouldering the

majority of responsibilities for schooling, while the government's role included accreditation, provision of subsidies, and general supervision.

### **Education Reform and School Wars**

In the period from the end of World War II to Congolese independence (from 1945 to 1960) there was much discussion about education reform in the colony. This discussion was not between the state and the Congolese people, but for the most part took place in Brussels and was between Belgian politicians. In Belgium the Liberal Party encouraged secular public education financed by the state, while the Catholic Party wanted to keep the Catholic monopoly of private religious schools. The majority of the debates about education in the Congo were specifically focused on what kind of schools European children living there would frequent. As Boyle suggested, despite increased Congolese advocacy for a secular school system, the main reason for post-war education policy change in the Congo was that many Belgian expatriates arrived in the colony after the war and began demanding schools for their children (Boyle 1995, 455).

In 1948 a Belgian Senate budget report commented on education for Congolese children in the colony and lamented that fewer than half (about 44%) of school-age children were attending colonial schools, and that the education received by the minority was still not adequate (Gingrich 1971, 108). Under pressure from Belgian expats, the Colonial Minister in the mid-1940s Robert Godding, created a secular school system for Europeans living in the colony. However, when pushed to expand this system to include Congolese children, he retorted that there were not enough financial resources to do so. He noted that there were twenty-five thousand primary schools training Congolese children that were almost entirely financed by Christian missions and the

colonial state simply did not have the resources to convert these to secular schools (Ibid., 135). However, as a liberal who sought to limit the colonial Catholic monopoly, he was happy to jump on the bandwagon of increased demand for government subsidies for Protestant missions that evolved at this time. Subsidies for Protestant missions were implemented in 1946 and resulted in state assistance to 60-90% of teacher salaries and 50-70% of the cost of school buildings and teaching supplies (Ibid., 184). Godding hoped that the Catholics would face more of a threat to their stature from both secular schools for European children and Protestant schools for the masses.

The Catholics in Belgian parliament were not happy with government subsidies for Protestant missions in Congo, and when they came back to power in 1947 the new colonial minister Wigny did not move quickly to execute Godding's subsidies for Protestants. Eventually Protestant missions did start receiving their promised subsidies, but at a much smaller rate than their Catholic counterparts. In fact, Catholic missions continued to receive almost ten times as much as Protestants even though they were only teaching twice as many students (Ibid., 190). In the early 1950s mission representatives and the colonial administration signed a convention that created a formal policy for subsidized schools. In 1951 the Catholics created an Office of Catholic Education and sought a new agreement with the state to replace the Concordat of 1906. Thus, in December 1953 the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs and a representative from the Vatican signed a new agreement focusing on financial agreements between the church and state (Boyle 1995, 457).

Auguste Buisseret worked for the colonial ministry in the 1950s and had visited the Congo in 1947 and written a report about the education system in the colony asking for

the expansion of secular schools because he found the mission schools to be much more interested in recruiting new Christian followers and much less focused on providing a solid education (Gingrich 1971, 136). He pointed out that the state was already paying 50-90% of the cost of subsidized schools, so Godding's argument about the expense of creating secular schools was not wholly accurate.

Thus, upon his appointment as colonial minister in 1954 (not coincidentally the year that a Liberal-Socialist coalition was victorious over the Catholic-ruled Belgian government), Buisseret ordered the creation of a Pedagogical Mission in which three Belgians spent two months touring the colony and writing an over three hundred page report called the "Reform of Teaching in Belgian Congo". Not surprisingly, the report was very critical of missionary education and justified the minister's policy of creating more secular schools for Congolese students. In fact, "the commission proposed as an antidote the expansion of 'lay' or secular primary and secondary schools in urban and rural areas," (Boyle 1995, 459). Prior to 1954, Congolese students had no chances of receiving a secular education, but Buisseret's commission set a new standard by saying all Congolese students should have the same possibilities as Belgian children in terms of the same kinds of schools, following the same curriculum, and being taught in French and not local languages.

The Catholic missions reacted particularly harshly to this report. Buisseret planned to finance his secular school system for Congolese by providing fewer subsidies for mission schools. When he announced this plan, the Catholics countered by saying they would completely suspend all education efforts in the colony. As such, Buisseret was forced to back down and maintain subsidies for mission schools.

However, he simultaneously ordered the establishment of a few experimental schools. “Eventually a kind of uneasy truce ensued when Buisseret and the president of the Bureau de l’éducation catholique...agreed that the three main providers of schools in Congo should be subsidized according to a new formula: Protestants would receive 10 percent, as against 45 percent for both Catholic and official state networks,” (Ibid., 461).

Boyle argued, “struggles between church and state for control over the direction of education demonstrate that this wing of the triple alliance was much weaker than has been presumed,” (Ibid., 451). The church and the colonial state did have good working relations in the education sector for the majority of the colonial period, but these became strained at the end of World War II. This was largely the result of non-Catholics predominating in Belgian domestic politics. The new colonial minister appointed in 1954 challenged the Catholic monopoly over the education sector, not to mention that there were external pressures from the international community and the Congolese population for reform. The 1950s in Belgium were marked by “school wars” that trickled down to the Congo colony in the form of school battles, to use a more mild terminology coined by Boyle (Ibid., 457). As Young notes, “the ‘school war’ was the metropolitan dimension of the bitter dispute over state v. church schools...Baldly stated, the conflict centered on the extent of use of public funds to assist Catholic schools. The solution found...was through assuring adequate state support for both church and state school systems,” (1965, 148).

With the Schools Pact of 1958 the state agreed to increase subsidies for both kinds of schools. As a result, state spending on the education sector increased from 10% of the colonial budget to 15% between 1954 and 1960, and most of this increase

went to the establishment of sixty-seven new secular schools (Boyle 1995, 464). Thus, at independence there were fifty thousand Congolese students in non-mission schools, but this was only 3% of the Congo's total, as there were over a million students in Catholic schools and over a hundred thousand in Protestant education (Ibid.). Though there have been many criticisms of Belgian colonial education policy, such as the fact that most students only went to school for two years and it is usually acknowledged that children need four years of schooling to become literate, "it is none the less the case that primary-school enrollments in 1960 included over 70 percent of the relevant age group, twice the average for sub-Saharan Africa," (Ibid., 465).

However, as was discussed in the Chapter 4, this almost universal primary education was not extended equally to Muslim children in the Congo. This situation was not rectified at independence either, as the religious school system represented a key area of continuity despite the withdrawal of the colonial regime. Missionary educators and administrative structures remained largely unchanged after independence (Boyle 1991, 50). But political efforts at reform of the education sector were renewed during the authoritarian rule of Mobutu.

### **Creating Partnership: Religious Conventions with the State**

#### **Mobutu's Efforts at Secularization**

In the early 1970s, President Mobutu Sese Seko initiated a process of "Zairianization", as detailed in Chapter 2, in which he nationalized most aspects of the country's economy. By seizing profitable foreign-owned businesses and redistributing them to his extensive patronage network, Zairianization proved politically successful for the regime, but resulted in a devastated economy (Gondola 2002, 145). In a further effort to consolidate his power and contain the threat of the prominent Catholic Church,

Mobutu also sought to take control of the education sector for the state. Thus, in 1974 he nationalized all schools, most of which were run by religious organizations. “In the early 1970s, most primary and one-half of the secondary schools were staffed and managed by religious groups. Their administration was centered in the government’s Department of Education and they received government subsidies,” (Kisangani 2010, 152). This attempt at secularization of education, like other elements of the Zairianization campaign, proved disastrous for the school system.

Not surprisingly, this move met with some resistance from the Church, “but the regime’s nationalization efforts ultimately failed not because of unified, prophetic resistance from the church but because the state had just entered a deep economic crisis. The state could not shoulder the expanded financial and administrative burden it had assumed,” (Boyle 1992). Because the government’s budget was suffering as a result of the declining economy in the late 1970s, these state schools suffered from lack of adequate equipment and teacher salaries being paid several months in arrears. Teachers had to abandon their students in order to search for alternative economic activities, and parents were asked to subsidize salaries. Therefore, after a few years of this experiment, parents requested that the churches be allowed to take back control of schools because, in addition to these complications, they perceived a big decrease in morality and discipline.

### **Origins of the Convention System**

Given the rapid deterioration of the education sector in only a few years, the Congolese government wished to return administration of the school system to the churches, but also retain more control of the sector than in the pre-secularization period (Boyle 1991; Kisangani 2010). Thus, Mobutu agreed to give some control back to

religious organizations, but under the condition that each sign a “convention”, or formal agreement, with the state. Another reading of the situation emphasized the agency of the Church which, “perhaps fearing the state would, when once again strong, reassert control over education, it demanded approval of a new educational convention. Signed in February 1977, this agreement... gave them [Catholic, Protestant, and Kimbanguist churches] more managerial control than they had possessed before the radicalization,” (Schatzberg 1988, 119-20).

Thus in the late 1970s, the state and a representative of each of the four main religions, Catholic, Protestant, Kimbanguist, and Islamic, signed a document requiring religious-run public schools to register and be recognized by the state, fall under the jurisdiction of authorities of the provincial and district teaching offices, allow state inspectors to determine whether they are following national standards and regulations, and teach according to the national curriculum. The religious organizations, in turn, became wholly responsible for the day-to-day running of their institutions, but the state had organizational power over them, at least on paper. This hybrid system of institutions that are simultaneously public and religious-run remains in place today.

What was new about this phase of Congolese education was that the Muslim community was formally included for the first time. However, as several informants insisted, the impetus behind the signing of the convention between the Muslim community (which occurred two years after the state conventions with the other religious groups) and the state was clearly political. According to the former national coordinator of Islamic schools, because Mobutu was facing a financial crisis, he travelled to Saudi Arabia in 1978 to seek assistance. The Saudi government agreed to

assist Mobutu as long as he allowed Muslims in Congo to establish their own schools, which led to the signing of the convention.<sup>1</sup>

In another version of the story presented by the current national coordinator for Islamic schools, the Saudi Arabian embassy in Kinshasa closed in 1977 because of disapproval of President Mobutu's politics surrounding the Israel/ Palestine conflict. Therefore, Mobutu went to Saudi Arabia to talk to the government about their relationship and was asked if there were Muslim schools in his country. Mobutu responded in the affirmative, even though this was not the case, and the king granted him one million dollars for the construction of three hundred modern Muslim school buildings. The money was never used for this end and the Muslim community did not even know of its existence until the COMICO Legal Representative at the time went to Mecca on his pilgrimage and learned about it. Upon his return to Zaire, he questioned Mobutu about the money, which had already been spent elsewhere, and they compromised by the signing of the school convention on August 31, 1979.<sup>2</sup> Although these two stories differ slightly in the details, and the reality behind the reasons for Mobutu agreeing to allow Muslims to create their own schools is likely more complex, they do illustrate the shared history of Muslim marginalization.

Corruption scandals in the 1980s and 1990s led to two periods where the government broke the education convention with the Islamic community. According to the former national coordinator of Islamic schools, in the first instance this happened because the money from Saudi Arabia had terminated. In the second episode,

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with former National Coordinator of Islamic schools, Kasongo 4/27/2009.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with current National Coordinator of Islamic schools, Kinshasa 6/18/2009.

corroborated by numerous informants, the Muslim leadership was putting names of family, friends, and religious authorities on the list of school agents to receive state salaries even though they were not working in the schools. The state conducted an investigation and found that the Muslim community was not capable of managing their schools well, so they took back control of these institutions.

However, the new Islamic leadership petitioned for reinstatement of schools in 1990 and was accepted. Since then there have been no more interruptions in the convention system and community spokesmen assert that the Muslim community has drastically improved its management skills and worked to (re)build its educational infrastructure and a good image for providing quality education. There has indeed been a proliferation of Muslim public schools in the post-conflict period.

### **Evidence from Contemporary Islamic Schools**

Public institutions in the current Congolese education system include schools managed by the government (*écoles non-conventionnées* or *écoles publiques*) and institutions run by religious organizations (*écoles conventionnées*), each of which receive government subsidies. The conventions signed between the state and each of the main religions stipulate that the state will pay teachers and administrators, and it for the most part does so, although usually several months in arrears. However, the amount that each educational employee received from the state in 2009 was a fixed rate of 30,000 FC – that is the equivalent of \$40 or \$60 depending on fluctuation in the exchange rate of the dollar – which is insufficient to provide a livelihood.

The state's ability to fund the education sector was severely limited beginning with the structural adjustment era, when "real expenditure per pupil dropped from US\$159 in 1982 to \$23 in 1987 and finally to around \$4 in 2002. Teachers' salaries dropped from

\$68 to \$27 per month between 1982 and 1987, reaching an absolute minimum of \$12.90 in 2002,” (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, 221). In addition to the effects of structural adjustment in the 1980s, the state’s ability to provide education was further complicated in the early 1990s as Mobutu’s financial resources for state functions and patronage were drying up with the withdrawal of United States support in the wake of the Cold War’s end. The effect on the education sector was profound and teachers began a major strike in 1992, but to no avail, because of the low rate of pay and frequent failure of obtaining salaries.

In 1993, the Catholic Church was the first to demand a stop to the cycle of children not being educated because of teacher strikes and created “conventions” of their own with the parents of their students, in which the parents agreed to pay a monthly fee to support teachers and encourage them to return to work. “Although this was seen as a temporary coping mechanism to compensate for the lack of salaries, it soon became an institutionalized practice,” (Ibid., 222). The other religious organizations running schools quickly followed this trend, which remains in existence even today, despite drastic improvement in the state’s educational budget. The Ministry of Primary, Secondary, and Professional Education had a budget of 20 million dollars in 2003, but largely because of the Congo’s debt being cancelled through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative, in 2007 it had increased to 170 million (De Herdt et al. 2010, 27). Teachers’ unions and the government negotiated the Mbudi Agreement in 2004 which raised teacher salaries from \$13 a month in 2001 to \$35 in 2007 (Ibid., 28). “Though the Mbudi Agreement nearly tripled salaries, they remained below the poverty line: in other words, teachers could not live on the official salary only,” (Ibid.).

Therefore, the system of relying on parental contributions remained paramount to the continued functioning of the school system. For the 2008-2009 academic year, each primary school had an agreement with the parents of its students about the amount parents would contribute to teacher salaries, and in Kindu it was a fairly universal price of 1,000 FC (\$2 or less) per child per month. But the parents' contribution that was initially intended as a stopgap measure to keep teachers from striking, slowly began to evolve into fees to keep the entire school system operational in the absence of state support. New fees were instituted so that a portion of contributions from parents to individual schools was passed along to the school district to finance the religious and state education bureaucracies, and from there to the provincial level, and even on to the national administration (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, 222). About 60% of the parental fees remains at the district level, but one third goes to the provincial level and 6% is passed on to the national level, resulting in a "tax system (that) generates around 4 to 5 million dollars" (De Herdt et al. 2010, 20). Thus, the World Bank found that the parental contributions to public education covered about 90% of the operating costs of the sector (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, 223).

Article 46 of the Congolese Constitution of 2004 stated that "education in primary public schools is free and compulsory", but the Congolese state has clearly been unable to enforce this provision (Ibid., 226). However, this phenomenon of de facto privatization of formerly public services is not unique either to the education sector or to the Congo. As was discussed in Chapter 1, Bates (2008) and others have commented on local responses to the withdrawal of the African state in numerous sectors. In the DRC the system of augmenting teacher salaries not only operates in the religiously

affiliated institutions, but also has extended to the official state public schools. Even though the parents' contribution seems like a small sum, it is often very difficult for parents to find the funds to pay for their children's nominally "public" education, and many children are not in school for this reason. And despite repeated efforts by teachers and administrators, the Congolese state seems to have no plans to increase teacher salaries and rectify this burden on parents. And as will be discussed in Chapter 7, the state appears quite content to allow the education sector to continue functioning in this manner by relying on the hybrid model with religious organizations supplemented by parental contributions.

### **Proliferation of Muslim Schools**

Given the history of Muslim marginalization and over a decade of conflict in the Congo, it is perhaps not surprising that the provision of education by Muslim organizations has been a very recent phenomenon. Even though the community had been running schools off and on since the 1980s, prior to 2003 there were very few schools sponsored by the Islamic community. The increasing involvement of the Muslim community in the provision of education in the post-war period was not only repeatedly confirmed by in-depth interviews with members of the Muslim community as well as other citizens, but it was further bolstered by statistical evidence.

Tables 5.1 – 5.4 at the end of this chapter outline the number of primary and secondary schools in each district of Maniema run by religious, state, and private organizations. Comparing the school year of 2003-2004 with 2008-2009, one can see that the number of Islamic primary schools has more than doubled, from twenty-nine to seventy-six. The same trend can be seen with secondary schools, where the number has increased from nineteen to forty-two.

In addition, this trend is not limited to the Maniema province but reflects a national phenomenon. In the Orientale province, where the percentage of Muslims is not very large, the new coordinator for Islamic schools since 2007 stated that when he began his job there were only ten Muslim schools in the province, but only two years later in the 2008-2009 academic year this number had expanded to over fifty.<sup>3</sup> The national Muslim public school Coordinator in Kinshasa provided the following statistics: for the academic year 2005-2006, there were three hundred sixty-eight primary and one hundred forty-two secondary Islamic schools throughout the D.R. Congo. Only three years later during the 2008-2009 academic year, the Congolese Muslim community was running over eight hundred schools in the country, about five hundred primary and three hundred secondary institutions.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Public Good of Islamic Schools**

It is important to note that these Muslim schools are not *madrasas*, but hybrid state-religious public institutions. Though the Muslim community is a minority population within Congo, the new schools being created are not catering only to Muslim students, and therefore provide a service able to be accessed by any Congolese child, regardless of religious affiliation. In fact, there are many teachers, directors, and other administrators involved in the operation of these Islamic schools who are not Muslim. The Coordinator for all Islamic convention schools in Maniema stated that perhaps 50% of children in their schools are Muslim, and many teachers are also non-Muslim.<sup>5</sup> The primary reason why Muslim schools rely on non-Muslim teachers is that there are

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator of Islamic schools, Kisangani 5/25/2009.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with National Coordinator of Islamic schools, Kinshasa 6/18/2009.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator of Islamic schools, Kindu 3/23/2009.

simply not enough educated Muslims to fill all positions, an artifact of the history of their marginalization from education.

In Kindu, Kasongo, and Kisangani extensive research was conducted at numerous Muslim public schools, as well as institutions run by the other religious confessions and the state. Religious public schools, or “convention” schools, are those that were created through the conventions signed between the Congolese state and representatives of the four main faith communities, such as that signed in 1979 with COMICO, representing the Muslim community. As we have seen, in these conventions the state has agreed to pay teacher and administrator salaries, set the national curriculum, and monitor schools through its inspection bureaucracy. The religious communities in turn have agreed to control the day-to-day operation of the institutions and are granted permission to teach a religion course.

For example, at *E.P. Jihudi*, a Muslim convention primary school in Kindu, and all other schools visited, this translated into two thirty-minute religion lessons per week taught by the class’s regular teacher. If the teacher is not a Muslim, the school director or religious authorities provide instructors with materials about relevant topics to present each week. Therefore, the religious instruction received by primary school students is not very rigorous and most parents encourage their children to attend Qur’anic schools in the evenings and on weekends to augment their religious instruction. This fact also demonstrates that religious conversion is not a primary motivating factor for the Islamic community in running Muslim public schools. Apart from the content taught during religion courses, Islamic public schools presented no discernable difference from public schools run by other main religions or the state itself. In non-convention state public

schools, instead of religion courses, students spend the same amount of class time each week studying morality.

### **Assessing the Quality of This Hybrid Institutional Form**

Evidence suggests that these new Muslim public schools are providing Muslim and children from other religious backgrounds with a high quality education. In 2009, the coordinator for Islamic convention schools in Maniema boasted that for the proceeding two academic years, Muslim schools had the best ranking out of all types of schools for the number of students passing national exams at the end of the year, which was also confirmed by the state educational bureaucracy.<sup>6</sup> In the past the Catholic public schools, which have a long institutional history, as they were the primary schools functioning during the colonial era, were the ones to be distinguished as the best schools. Shockingly, they came in third place in the 2007-2008 academic year in the Maniema province, falling below Muslim institutions, despite their recent origin.

A similar story exists in other parts of the country. Muslim schools in the Orientale province have also demonstrated good performance. In the city of Kisangani, they came in second place with 95% of students passing national exams in academic year 2006-2007.<sup>7</sup> The year before, Muslim schools in the whole province were number one for the percentage of students who graduated, with an exceptional 96% who passed their exams. In addition, the state inspection office conducted a study for the years between 2000 and 2008 and found that *Institut Hodari*, the oldest Muslim public school in Kisangani founded in 1990, was the best secondary school in the provincial capital,

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator for Islamic schools, Kindu 3/23/2009.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics from documentation gathered at the State Provincial Inspection Office, Kisangani 6/12/2009.

based on the number of students who successfully completed their state exams over the eight year time period.

These results further demonstrate that the Muslim public schools, which are fairly young, are very competitive in terms of the quality of education they provide. Perhaps this quick success can be explained by the enthusiasm of the Muslim community and commitment of its leaders to expand and excel in the education sector. Interviews with Muslim members of the education administration were characterized by their enthusiasm and increased momentum for their new schools. On the contrary, interviews with Catholic educators and administrators revealed unhappiness with the amount of support and resources Catholic schools receive from the state and parents, and repeated claims that poor salaries translated into little motivation for hard work and providing high quality education.

### **Increasing Support for Private Schools**

Current statistics demonstrate that 75% of primary school students attend religious public schools (convention schools), and 50% of all Congolese students attend Catholic public schools (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, 220). Although Muslim public schools have greatly expanded in number and quality in the post-war period, there has been huge popular demand for education leading to an increase in the creation of private schools as well. In her work on the Zairian economy, MacGaffey (1992) discussed how the breakdown of the (now Congolese) central state brought about a response from Congolese citizens in the form of a “second economy”. When discussing the public goods of healthcare and education, MacGaffey provided evidence of local people creating private institutions in order to ensure access to vital services that the state

could no longer provide. Boyle (1991) also documents the rise of private education in the late 1970s and 1980s.

In the later part of Mobutu's rule, as we have seen, public school teachers did not receive their salaries from the central state, leading to prolonged strikes and even instances of students resorting to bribes for acceptance into institutions or to pass examinations. This led to a proliferation of private schools in most areas, as "private education is widely perceived by parents as the only solution to the drastic deterioration of the system," (MacGaffey 1992, 253). Although her analysis is based on fieldwork from the late 1980s and early 1990s, and in recent times there are more public (including religious-run) institutions because the state does manage to pay some salaries, albeit irregularly, in contemporary Congo there is still some demand for private education.

This demand has translated into the creation of a few Muslim private schools. In Kindu a Muslim private school *Complexe Scholaire Zam-Zam* is operated by the provincial president of the national Muslim women's organization, *Fondation Zam-Zam*. The national organization has a regional branch in each of the provinces of Congo, but only in Maniema does the branch run a school. *Zam-Zam* is the only private primary Muslim school in Kindu. The complex consists of a pre-school, a primary school, literacy training for women, and sewing courses for women to learn an income-generating skill. In addition, the organization provides free education to fifty orphans from the civil war. Like other private and public schools, *Zam-Zam* teaches the national curriculum and there are two thirty-minute religion classes per week focused on Islam. However, because of a lack of qualified Muslims not all of the teachers are Muslim, so

they receive tutoring or documents to assist them in instruction of such classes. The cost for attending *Zam-Zam* private school is the same as in public schools in Kindu, which provides the for teacher salaries.<sup>8</sup>

A Maniema sheikh trained in the United Arab Emirates returned to his native province to build a private secondary school. Interviewed in his half-constructed school building in Kindu in 2009, he described plans to open a private secondary school under the auspices of his NGO *Solidarité Humanitaire pour le Développement*, Humanitarian Solidarity for Development, with funding from the Islamic Development Bank of Saudi Arabia. His NGO and his school have a strategy to be inclusive of members and students regardless of religion. Therefore, the school will offer an elective course in Islamic religion (with an emphasis on Arabic language), but non-Muslim children will be able to choose to take a different elective, such as information technology. Though a private school, it will follow the national curriculum and courses will be taught in French like all public secondary institutions. The sheikh presents the origins of his ecumenical viewpoint as stemming from a lesson he learned while living in the UAE, that in order for a nation to truly develop, it takes cooperation between all local and international partners, regardless of race, gender, tribe, region, or religion.<sup>9</sup> He may very well hold these values but also seek a broad based strategy of inclusion in an effort to ensure maximum enrollment in his school in a city where Muslims only constitute about a quarter of the population.

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<sup>8</sup> Interview and observation at Zam-Zam school, Kindu 6/13/2008 and 2/18/2009.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with president of *Solidarité Humanitaire pour le Développement*, Kindu 3/17/2009.

In addition to the creation of two Muslim private schools in Maniema, there is also a new Islamic private school in the Orientale province. In Kisangani *Complexe Scholaire Nuuru* began official operation for the 2008-2009 academic year as part of *Centre Islamique Nuuru el Yaqiini*, CINY, which comprises a kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, hospital, and mosque. The president of CINY began his enterprise in 2001 with the opening of the school and mosque. In 2007 his institution received funding from the Islamic Development Bank of Saudi Arabia for constructing modern two-story school and hospital buildings, a work that was still underway in 2009. Once the buildings are finished being constructed, the CINY president plans to have the primary and secondary schools meet in the mornings and have a Qur'anic school use the facilities in the afternoons.<sup>10</sup>

Educational facilities with the support of external Muslim assistance have also recently appeared in the Congolese capital. In a development compound in Kinshasa two international organizations, *Munazzamat el D'aawa el Islamiya* and *Al Maktoum Foundation*, have financed the building of a mosque, a primary school, secondary school, and school for the teaching of the Arabic language. One of the organizations is based in the Sudan and the other has funding from the royal family of Dubai. Both of these organizations aim to aid poor Muslims in many African countries, primarily through education and the building of schools. They have only recently come to help with projects in Congo, most likely because the end of the conflict has permitted them to do so, although Muslim informants suggest this change is related to the ease of working with the Muslim bureaucracy now that internal conflicts have begun to heal.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with president of CINY, *Centre Islamique Nuuru el Yaqiini*, Kisangani 5/28/2009.

As will be discussed in the detail in Chapters 6 and 7, the new united leadership of COMICO, the national Muslim organization based in Kinshasa, has succeeded in increasing the capacity of the Congolese Muslim community to receive support from the central state and funding from external sources. The examples provided here suggest that not only has the Muslim community been granted permission to create many more public schools in the post-war period for which the state has promised to provide funding, but international Muslim organizations are also beginning to provide support for the minority community in the Congo. Therefore, Chapter 6 is devoted to understanding how, as internal conflicts have eased and a Reformist leadership has emerged, the Muslim community of the D.R. Congo has been able to overcome the collective action dilemma within its own group. Then in Chapter 7 we see how Islamic associations have received the support necessary from the Congolese state to rapidly expand Islamic public schooling in the post-conflict period.

Table 5-1. Number of Primary Schools per Administrative Entity in Maniema Province for Academic Year 2003-2004<sup>11</sup>

Territory/ Commune	State Public	Catholic Public	Protestant Public	Islamic Public	Kimbanguist Public	Private Schools	Total
Kasuku	03	06	07	01	01	14	32
Mikelenge	03	02	07	--	01	02	15
Alunguli	04	04	07	--	01	--	16
Kailo	09	19	10	--	03	--	41
Kibombo	17	20	24	--	03	01	65
Pangi	08	52	74	--	01	01	136
Punia	10	14	27	01	02	01	55
Lubutu	09	14	30	--	04	01	58
Kasongo	34	94	38	19	03	--	188
Kabambare	20	71	37	08	--	--	136
Total	117	296	261	29	19	20	742

Table 5-2. Number of Primary Schools per Administrative Entity in Maniema Province for Academic Year 2008-2009<sup>12</sup>

Territory/ Commune	State Public	Catholic Public	Protestant Public	Islamic Public	Kimbanguist Public	Private Schools	Total
Kasuku	03	07	11	02	03	16	42
Mikelenge	03	03	09	01	01	--	17
Alunguli	04	04	10	01	--	--	19
Kailo	24	29	36	--	07	01	97
Kibombo	17	21	36	--	05	03	89
Pangi	15	56	101	02	02	02	178
Punia	11	15	44	01	06	01	78
Lubutu	10	13	29	01	05	01	59
Kasongo	35	97	106	47	21	01	307
Kabambare	32	87	56	21	03	--	199
Total	161	332	438	76	53	25	1085

<sup>11</sup> République Démocratique du Congo Ministère du Plan. March 2004. "Monographie de la Province du Maniema." Kinshasa, DRC. Page 33. The first three entities listed (Kasuku, Mikelenge, and Alunguli) are communes of Kindu, the capital of Maniema province. The other entities are territories of the province.

<sup>12</sup> Chef d'antenne de planification et statistique. Kindu, February 2009. Maniema Provincial Division of Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire, et Professionnelle, EPSP, (Primary, Secondary, and Professional Teaching). The first three entities listed (Kasuku, Mikelenge, and Alunguli) are communes of Kindu, the capital of Maniema province. The other entities are territories of the province.

Table 5-3. Number of Secondary Schools per Administrative Entity in Maniema Province for Academic Year 2003/2004<sup>13</sup>

Territory/ Commune	State Public	Catholic Public	Protestant Public	Islamic Public	Kimbanguist Public	Private Schools	Total
Kasuku	03	04	01	01	01	08	18
Mikelenge	02	--	03	01	--	--	06
Alunguli	01	01	04	--	01	--	07
Kailo	04	04	--	--	01	--	16
Kibombo	08	03	13	--	02	01	27
Pangi	04	15	45	--	02	02	68
Punia	02	03	12	01	02	01	21
Lubutu	02	06	15	--	01	01	25
Kasongo	22	15	22	12	05	--	76
Kabambare	09	20	20	04	01	--	54
Total	57	71	142	19	16	13	318

Table 5-4. Number of Secondary Schools per Administrative Entity in Maniema Province for Academic Year 2008/2009<sup>14</sup>

Territory/ Commune	State Public	Catholic Public	Protestant Public	Islamic Public	Kimbanguist Public	Private Schools	Total
Kasuku	03	04	03	01	01	10	22
Mikelenge	03	--	05	01	01	--	10
Alunguli	01	01	06	--	--	01	09
Kailo	07	06	12	--	04	--	29
Kibombo	12	04	21	--	04	--	41
Pangi	13	17	70	01	04	02	107
Punia	02	03	20	01	05	--	31
Lubutu	02	04	15	01	03	01	30
Kasongo	13	20	57	23	26	--	139
Kabambare	14	28	36	15	03	--	96
Total	70	87	250	42	57	14	514

<sup>13</sup> République Démocratique du Congo Ministère du Plan. March 2004. "Monographie de la Province du Maniema." Kinshasa, DRC. Page 33. The first three entities listed (Kasuku, Mikelenge, and Alunguli) are communes of Kindu, the capital of Maniema province. The other entities are territories of the province.

<sup>14</sup> Chef d'antenne de planification et statistique. Kindu, February 2009. Maniema Provincial Division of Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire, et Professionnelle, EPSP, (Primary, Secondary, and Professional Teaching). The first three entities listed (Kasuku, Mikelenge, and Alunguli) are communes of Kindu, the capital of Maniema province. The other entities are territories of the province.

## CHAPTER 6 THE CHALLENGES OF COLLECTIVE ACTION: INTERNAL BARRIERS TO MUSLIM MOBILIZATION

The proliferation of involvement in the provision of education on the part of the Muslim community in post-conflict Congo presents a fascinating shift from its historical marginalization. The questions this raises are why this has occurred at this particular time and what factors help explain such involvement. As this study has suggested, two key factors can help explain this phenomenon: one internal to the Muslim community, and the other external. This chapter examines the former, arguing that internal division within the Islamic minority community of the Democratic Republic of Congo hindered that community from creating associations that effectively contributed to development, and education in particular, and exploring how and why it has been possible to begin to overcome these collective action problems.

The history of this minority community, as detailed in Chapter 4, from its origins in the pre-colonial era to Belgian domination, can be characterized as one of repression and marginalization. Further compounding the struggles of Congo's Muslim minority have been intense internal conflicts within the community in the post-independence period. Numerous interviewees pointed to how internal conflicts within the Muslim community are key factors that had a devastating impact on their ability to collectively organize and participate in development projects for several decades. Simply put by one informant, "division kills the community at all levels."<sup>1</sup> In the sections to follow we will examine the internal conflicts within the Muslim community of Congo at local, provincial, and national levels.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with provincial Coordinator of Islamic Public Schools, Kisangani 5/25/2009.

## Internal Conflict in Comparative Perspective

The internal division within the Muslim community of Congo is reflective of much broader trends in the Muslim world. Scholarship on Islam in sub-Saharan Africa has focused on a primary cleavage within Muslim communities as between “Sufis” and “Reformers”. The Congolese case presented here provides another example of this classic distinction, but unlike most works on the subject, focuses on a minority community with a long history of marginalization.

Sufism can be defined as “Islamic mysticism, emphasizing the internal dimensions of the faith,” (Robinson 2004, 213). Reformers, sometimes referred to by a variety of other terms – Islamists, Wahhabis, Salafists, or Sunnites – which have also been the subject of much debate, present themselves frequently as more orthodox. In Africa such people have often studied abroad in the Middle East and returned to view “African Islam” or Sufism as an impure mixture of Islam with traditional African spiritual beliefs, and disapprove of Sufi practices such as seeking the healing of traditional healers known as *marabouts*, the creation of talismans, chanting, veneration of saints, etc. In a volume entitled *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, the editors (Westerlund and Rosander 1997) used the term “African Islam” to refer to Sufism, while “Islam in Africa” signified the spread of Islamist or reformist tendencies into the continent.

However, the contributors to the volume, much like the present study, emphasized that the classic distinction is too simple and showed that the internal dynamics of most Muslim groups in sub-Saharan Africa are much more complex. As such, today most scholars recognize “the limitations of the Sufi-Islamist dichotomy and the need to nuance our analyses,” (Villalón 2007, 163). Numerous scholarly accounts exist that

demonstrate these nuances through an examination of the empirical data of internal Sufi/ Reformist conflicts from specific locations in sub-Saharan Africa.

The case of Nigeria as documented by Loimeier (1997) presents many themes relevant for Islamic communities in Africa in general, and contains many similarities to the particular situation in the Congo. The jihads of the 1700-1800s in the region make clear that Islamic reform is not a new phenomenon. In the colonial period there were conflicts both between and within the Tijaniyya and Qadiriyya orders, so that “Sufi brotherhoods therefore cannot be regarded as homogenous blocks of power but ought to be seen as systems of networks and links, subject to a constant dynamic of change due to the permanent process of spiritual renewal as well as the economic and political influences they are exposed to,” (Loimeier 1997, 16). Then, as Nigeria became independent and began experimenting with democracy, there was a call by Muslim leaders for the unity of all Muslims so that they could gain political leverage in the new federation by presenting a united North (Ibid., 9). However, this ideal was not to be very effective, as the ‘Yan Izala, an Islamist reform organization that challenged Sufism, gained momentum beginning in the 1970s. Even though this Islamist movement clearly fractured the unity of Nigerian Muslims (which it must be noted never really existed) it did have the effect of encouraging the Sufis to work together to counter the growth of ‘Yan Izala (Ibid., 17).

Similarly, the case of the internal strife within the Ugandan Muslim community is instructive, especially as it represents a marginalized minority group, as in the Congo. “Further inhibiting Moslem attempts to escape political and social subordination is their own disunity. Moslems have been embroiled in a sterile theological dispute regarding

the Friday prayer since 1924,” (Lowenkopf 1969, 224). This argument ultimately led to the formation of two separate groups known locally as the *Juma* and the *Juma Zukuli* parties (Ibid.). Despite their internal divisions, the situation for Ugandan Muslims began to improve as independence neared because of the expansion of the Muslim community, several members becoming prominent business leaders, and the reception of external aid. In the 1940s such funding had helped establish the Uganda Muslim Education Association so that Muslims could receive a secular education in the hopes that the community might overcome its educational deficiencies stemming from the exclusion of Muslim children by Catholic schools, as also occurred in colonial Congo.

Although the examples of Nigeria and Uganda clearly demonstrate that internal conflicts within African Muslim communities have been present long before the post-independence period, Sufi/ Reformist debate has intensified in the later half of the twentieth century. For example, Weiss’ (2002) work on Ghana, where Muslims also constitute a minority not much larger than in Congo, discussed how most Muslim organizations are reliant on external patronage to support their activities because the local community has been unable to do so from a lack of internal unity (92). Most Ghanaian Muslims were Sufi, primarily members of the Tijaniyya order, until Islamist ideas began to spread in the 1950s and 1960s as a result of exchanges between Ghanaians and Muslims from the Middle East, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

In trying to understand this recent rise of Islamist/ Reformist tendencies in Africa, Westerlund and Rosander (1997) pointed out the economic shortcomings and lack of state support that characterized the post-colonial experience. But despite these obvious “factors of discontent”, Westerlund argued, we also need to look at the appeal

of Islamism to understand why African Muslims have embraced reform movements. One of their greatest contributions has been in the realm of development, as Islamist groups strongly encourage education of both boys and girls, building health clinics, and assisting with other needs of their communities. However, their efforts have not existed in a vacuum, but have encouraged other groups – including Sufi – to adapt as well. “Moreover, by modernizing their own activities...Sufi Muslims have in many cases responded effectively to the challenge of Islamism,” (Westerlund and Rosander 1997, 330). In a more recent volume on *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa* (Soares and Otayek 2007), several contributors demonstrated specifically the developmental role taken on by Islamic groups (of all backgrounds), some with international Muslim NGO support, and others through local efforts, or often a combination of both. For example, Muslim associations are involved in running schools and orphanages in Somalia; in providing mosques, wells, healthcare, and education in Chad; Franco-Arabic and Qur’anic schools in Benin; schools in Tanzania; madrasas in Mali; and education and healthcare in Cameroon.

Again, these empirical studies of specific cases demonstrated that the Sufi/Reformist categorization is conceptually helpful, but that the situation on the ground is often more nuanced. As Soares and Otayek reminded us, “despite such recent scholarship...we would like to emphasize that most Muslims in Africa today are neither members of Sufi orders or reformists or Islamists,” (Ibid., 7). Especially in countries where Islam does not represent a clear majority, such as Benin and Nigeria, Muslim groups may be more interested in presenting a unified front in order to ensure adequate representation in politics and state institutions (Ibid., 131; Loimeier 1997). In some

Muslim minority countries, like Tanzania, the focus has been more on a conflict between Islam and Christianity, although in recent years younger Muslims have begun to hold the older generation accountable for the community's lack of development during their leadership tenure (Loimeier 2007, 150).

In a recent special issue on Islam in *Afrique contemporaine*, the contributors further complicated the distinction between Sufism/ Reformism. Discussing the evolution of the Salafi reform movement in Ethiopia, Østebø demonstrated the internal fragmentation between the old guard of Salafis who had often been educated in the Middle East or were members of the wealthy merchant establishment and a new youth movement calling itself *Ahl al-Sunna*. The latter wanted to combat what they observed as “religious laxity”, especially among the youth, and condemned the close relations of girls and boys, the use of tobacco and alcohol, and pop culture and movies. He concluded, “the arrival of the Ahl al-Sunna movement and the fragmentation of the Salafi movement demonstrates that Islamic reformism is a complex and continual process,” which is “intimately tied to political, social and economic processes,” (Østebø 2009, 59). Bonate's (2009) work argued that the influence of an international Muslim organization, the Africa Muslims Agency, facilitated divisions among the Muslim community in Mozambique, which did not previously exist. Historically both the African and Indian Muslims were Sufi, but as Wahhabism grew in the area, it not only led to divisions within the Muslim community, but also between Sufi Indians and Africans.

As this brief review of recent literature of the Sufi/ Reformist dichotomy and internal conflicts within the Muslim communities of sub-Saharan Africa demonstrates, each country and location has its own characteristics. Although local, regional, and

national conflicts fit the classic distinction, empirical realities on the ground are more messy and complicated. Below we examine the nuances within the Muslim minority of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

### **Internal Conflict among Maniema Muslims**

The internal disputes within the Muslim community in the Maniema province of eastern Congo largely conform to the Sufi/ Reformist dichotomy. However, local manifestations of this vary, as divergent communities sometimes express their conflicts as stemming from ethnic, leadership, origin, or generational differences. But in Maniema the Muslim community's internal conflict existed primarily between two conflicting groups, known locally as "Tariqa" and "Tawahidi". The term *tariqa* means path and is clearly Sufi, while *tawahid* refers to the unity or oneness of God that is a constant theme of reformists/ Salafists. In the Congo, members of the Tariqa often represent the descendants of the Swahili-Arabs, also known as *Arabisés* and non-autochtones. The Tawahidi is comprised of those who insist they are following the correct path of the Prophet Mohammed, and resemble Reformers/ Islamists. In the classic critique of Sufism, the Tawahidi group accuses the Tariqa of *bid'a*, innovation, for the Sufi rituals they follow.

The origin of the Tariqa in Maniema is tied to many other Sufis in Africa: they are a part of the Qadiriyya Sufi order. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, the Mulidi movement made its way from Zanzibar into southern Maniema in the 1920s and 1930s and was received with great hostility by the Belgian colonial regime. The author of a local text described classic Sufi practices: in order to become a member one must go through the stages of training for a *murid*, or novice, and follow the *tariqa*, or mystic road (Lazzarato 2001, 50). Currently in the region, however, some ambiguity exists in

practice, as reflected in one informant's comments. When asked if the Tariqa are Sufi, he said, referring presumably to their practices, that in some areas they are, but not really in Maniema.<sup>2</sup> However, he described how recently some Tariqa members have become more involved in "Sufi" practices, such as a man in Kindu who has begun a Sufi prayer on Fridays, and *zikri*, night prayers, occurring in Kinshasa.

One of the main sources of contention between the two groups has been debate over burial rituals. The Tawahidi say that during the Prophet's time only men accompanied the body and did so in complete silence. The Tariqa allow women to join the procession and for the community to sing. The Tawahidi say that to speak or sing while walking with the dead person is *bid'a*, but the Tariqa counter this by arguing that a *Hadith* (the stories of the Prophet's life) revealed that Mohammed went to three funerals in one day, at one of which they sang the Qur'an and the Prophet said it was okay. Another source of contention between the two groups in Maniema, as with Muslims communities elsewhere, is the celebration of the birth of the Prophet, the *Mawlid*. The Tawahidi say this is unacceptable, but it has remained very popular among the Tariqa.

A third point of conflict between the groups is debate over the language used for Friday prayer. The Tawahidi want the service to be a back and forth immediate translation from Arabic into Swahili, reflecting a broader Islamist desire for local language so that individuals can have deeper religious understanding. The Tariqa, on the other hand, prefer the service to be in uninterrupted Arabic, followed by the prayer, and then translated into Swahili. This reflects Sufi/ traditionalist advocacy for the use of Arabic so that people rely on the local leadership as intermediaries.

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with president of *Bureau Islamique des Droits Humains* (BIDH), Kindu 5/11/2009.

According to an informant who is a prominent member of the Maniema Muslim community, the conflict between the two groups has been going on for a long time, even before the creation of the national Muslim association in 1972.<sup>3</sup> He noted that at some moments the conflict became so intense in Kasongo and Kindu that members of the different groups did not pray in one another's mosques and almost all dialogue between the groups ceased. In his perspective however, relations are improving and people are free to worship anywhere. There are indeed significant suggestions that the long-entrenched conflict among Maniema Muslims is evolving, and that they are moving toward increased collective action as a group, as can be seen in the local cases of Kindu and Kasongo.

### **Internal Conflict in Kindu**

In Kindu, the capital city of the Maniema province that contains approximately 25% Muslims, the community's internal conflicts are between the two religious groups described above. When the conflict was more acute members did not go to one another's mosques. The Tawahidi group primarily frequented the central mosque of Kindu, while the mosque associated with the Tariqa was located in the Baceko neighborhood. A key Tariqa informant shared his personal experience of having to go to Baceko on the other side of town to pray, but describes how in recent years he is welcome to pray at the central mosque again.<sup>4</sup> This example highlights the larger phenomenon of the easing of tensions between the two groups.

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with BIDH president, Kindu 5/11/09.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with BIDH president, Kindu 5/11/09.

This dynamic of reduced tensions in the post-conflict democratizing era may be seen as an effort to rally a minority community together for collective action. Thus, a Sheikh whose organization is building a Muslim private secondary school in Kindu and who studied abroad in the United Arab Emirates, notes that he did not return to Congo to try to change Islam, but to help with development.<sup>5</sup> He laments that the majority of Congolese who studied abroad do not return to help their native communities but instead seek more comfortable livelihoods in Europe or the United States. Although descriptions of Reformers with Arab training from other parts of the continent suggest an emphasis on returning home in order to teach “pure” Islam, the Sheikh emphasized his preference not to get involved with religious debates because of a fear of conflict, but instead puts his focus on his family and development projects like the school. He noted that most local sheikhs and imams in Maniema did not have the opportunity to study abroad, although some did travel to Kigoma, Tanzania for Qur’anic education. Reflecting Islamist critiques of Sufi “traditionalists”, however, he argues that their lack of education is the reason why they do not have an “idea of development”.

In addition to the classic Tariqa/ Tawahidi tension, other local issues, such as ethnic divisions, further complicate internal dynamics. For example, the president of CONAFEM, *Comité Nationale Feminine*, the national organization of Muslim women, described her visit to Kindu from Kinshasa in 2006.<sup>6</sup> She expressed that there had been difficult internal divisions in Maniema, primarily fueled by disagreements among the Muslim men. Therefore, the objective of her visit was to create unity within the Maniema Muslim women’s community. The president saw her visit as successful

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with president of *Solidarité Humanitaire pour le Développement*, Kindu 3/17/2009.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with CONAFEM president, Kinshasa 6/18/2009.

because they were able to create a provincial level organization and select a woman to head it. However, she also noted that the newly elected leader did receive some opposition to her leadership from those who believed the leader should come from Kasongo and not Kindu, and she described this opposition as based more on ethnic tensions than religious beliefs.

Another local issue of concern for Muslims in Kindu is the popular contestation over the leadership of their community. There are complaints about the hereditary nature of granting leadership to local imams. For example a Muslim man who works for a peasant rights group, and describes himself as a researcher and an activist, advocates for his community to fight the corruption of old leaders so that people trained in development and women can also become leaders.<sup>7</sup> As will be discussed in more detail in a later section on national level conflicts within the Muslim community, this is precisely what occurred as the result of the national Muslim association's General Assembly in 2009.

### **Internal Conflict in Kasongo**

The division between the two Muslim groups is most pronounced and documented in Kasongo, the second largest city in the Maniema province after Kindu and the birthplace of Islam in the Congo. It is the community with the largest Muslim majority where Muslims constitute approximately 80% of the population. A work about the local Muslim community of Kasongo described its tensions along the classic Sufi/Reformist dichotomy: one group known as reformists or *wana Tawhid* (people of the Tawahidi) who seek renovation and progress but in returning to a more orthodox Islam, while they label the other group as comprised of "traditionalists"/ "conservatives"/ *watu*

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with president of *Union Paysanne Pour le Progrès* (UPKA), Kindu 6/20/2008.

*wa bid'a* (Lazzarato 2001, 103-4). The Tawahidi seek to get rid of what they pejoratively label as the innovations of the other group, encourage the use of Swahili during prayer, are associated with the Central Mosque and consider themselves “children of the country”. The second group is part of the Mulidi (what others call Tariqa), celebrate the birth of the Prophet, prefer the use of Arabic, and are the descendants of *wazalia* or Swahili-Arabs. In Kasongo the Tariqa are associated with Mosque 18.

In the local context of Kasongo, this Sufi/ Reformist division is further complicated by the historical origins of the Muslim community. In the 1960s there was a quarrel between Mosque 18 and people in other parts of town, so a new Central Mosque was built. A Catholic priest who was raised Muslim described the conflict at the base of the construction of the Central Mosque as one between *wazalia* (non-*autochtones*, non-natives) and *wenyeji* (*autochtones* or natives) (Tata 2003, 68). The *wazalia* are the descendants of those who were directly in contact with the Swahili-Arabs and refer to the neighborhood near Mosque 18 as the “groupement Arabisé”, whereas *wenyeji* are tribes who were located in Kasongo even before the first foreigners arrived. Tata described the *wazalia* as having an air of superiority and claiming that they helped to “civilize” the others. In response to this conflict, the *wenyeji* constructed the new mosque in an effort to detach from what they viewed as the more “orthodox” Islam of Mosque 18.

The former Secretary General of the national Muslim association from 2004-2009, who is a member of the Qadiriyya, sees the internal conflict as one between the

*autochtones* (“natives”) against newcomers.<sup>8</sup> In his account, this division led to the creation of the Central Mosque by the *autochtones*. The other main mosques in Kasongo are Mosques 17 and 18, which are affiliated with the Tariqa, while the newer mosque is affiliated with the Tawahidi. However, the former Secretary General believes these conflicts are not truly spiritual in nature, but revolve around other issues that people claim are spiritual. The true underlying causes are most likely political in nature and reflect leadership tensions and efforts to garner the support of the largest segments of the Muslim population. Nevertheless, the discourse reflects classic critiques of Sufism, such as members of the Central Mosque accusing those of Mosque 18 of *bid’a*.

One of the main sources of contention has been the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday, which the members of the Tariqa at Mosque 18 perform. The controversy became so considerable for a time that people stopped visiting and greeting one another and it even led some couples to divorce. Tata also described many smaller conflicts present in Kasongo, such as the timing of the end of Ramadan (Tata 2003, 68-9). Language represents a source of conflict within the community, as they debate the issue of the translation of the Qur’an into local language and in what order Arabic and Swahili should be used during the liturgy. Debates about the language of the Qur’an are representative of the larger Sufi/ Reformist schism, as the case of the use of Swahili in east Africa has demonstrated (Lacunza-Balda 1997, 95). As mentioned previously, Sufis focus on a mystical search and the role of teachers as intermediaries, whereas Reformists insist on individual agency.

An important source of contention that reflects Sufi/ Reformist tensions but with local variety comes from generational issues, as some Muslim youth of Kasongo have

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with former Secretary General of the national Muslim association, Kasongo 4/27/2009.

gone to study theology in Egypt or Saudi Arabia and come back critical of how Islam is practiced in Kasongo. A twenty-year-old Sheikh whose father runs Mosque 18 in Kasongo describes the division within the Muslim community not in terms of Tariqa or Tawahidi, but as a division between old and young people.<sup>9</sup> He is one of the few Muslim youth in Kasongo who has graduated from secondary school and has also received extensive training in the Qur'an, earning him the title of "Sheikh". In his opinion the Muslim leadership should be drawn from the younger generation, such as himself, who are educated in both the Qur'an and in French and have the ability to help the Muslim community advance. He asks how the current leaders can talk to the governor, foreigners, or other important people when most visitors do not speak Swahili or Arabic? Similar to the sentiments expressed by informants in Kindu, he believes that Muslims need leaders who speak French and are focused on their community's development in order for them to truly evolve. His views reflect a Reformist attempt to modernize the Muslim community.

Local scholars lamented that one result of all of these internal conflicts within the Muslim community of Kasongo is an inability to unite for development purposes (Tata 2003, 69). They cite the absence of a common treasury to be used for development projects and that plans for the creation of an Islamic bureau of development still have not born fruit. As further evidence of this phenomenon, during a meeting with the women of Mosque 18 it became apparent that the divisions within the community do not just involve the male leadership.<sup>10</sup> The women's association, as all other associations,

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with young Sheikh from Mosque 18, Kasongo 4/20/2009.

<sup>10</sup> Meeting with Muslim women's association of Mosque 18, Kasongo 5/1/2009.

requested assistance to find an international organization that can provide financial assistance for their development projects. However, they also stressed that there are three different women's organizations in town, one associated with each of the three main mosques, and that any funding secured should come to them and not be designated for the women of Kasongo more broadly, implying that they do not work well together.

Divisions within the Muslim community of Maniema run deep and are fractured into many points of contention. For example, one scholar documented that there were divisions between the natives of the region and the *wazalia*; the young and the old; traditionalists and reformers or modernists; between the partisans of orthodox Islam (*watu wa Tawhid*) and those who are accused of deviating from Islam through innovations (*watu wa bid'a*), the members of the Mulidi and their enemies; and those who preferred Arabic to those who championed the religious use of Swahili (Lazzarato 2001, 96). These distinctions fit well into the scholarly categories of Sufism and Reformers, but also emphasize local manifestations and how such categories continue to be nuanced over time. For example, the young Sheikh who is from the Tariqa-oriented Mosque 18, and therefore would appear at first glance to fall into the Sufi category, is also well trained in Islamic theology and an advocate of development and a change from the leadership of the older generation, positions one might associate more readily with Reformists.

Tellingly, however, despite providing examples of the tensions within their community, Maniema Muslim informants also argue that they believed such conflicts were on the wane, and instead emphasized the Islamic community's emerging unity.

For example, the former Secretary General emphasized that the conflict is better now largely because mosques are all now what he called more “moderate”.<sup>11</sup> The BIDH president who lives in Kindu and is a member of the Tariqa recounts that he used to be forbidden to go to the central mosque, but that the last time he visited Kasongo he was able to do so.<sup>12</sup> These statements reflect the evolution of a pattern found in other African Muslim communities: the prevalence of Sufism, the rise of Reformism, a period of tension between the two, and the eventual blurring of distinction between the categories. However, in the particular case of the Congo, it also reflects the conscious attempt in recent years to mobilize the Muslim minority for collective action purposes within the broader state context. Evidence from outside the Maniema province reveals similar processes occurring, with their own local essence.

### **Contentious Internal Politics in Kisangani**

The broader phenomenon of internal conflict within the Congolese Muslim community is not only applicable to the Maniema province, but is also present in Kisangani, and the Orientale province more broadly. Kisangani contains the second largest Muslim community in Congo outside of Maniema, at approximately 15% of the city’s population. As in Maniema, the concern with Muslim disunity is strongly felt in the community. In an enlightening interview with a Sheikh who is the leader of Friday prayer at the central mosque and also a professor of sociology at the University of Kisangani, he expressed his views that the biggest problem facing his community and the reason they are behind the other religious communities in terms of growth and

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with former Secretary General of the national Muslim association, Kasongo 4/27/2009.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with BIDH president, Kindu 5/11/09.

development is due to internal conflicts.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, the conflicts within the Islamic community of Kisangani are expressed by local Muslims as primarily a generational dispute. While the dispute in Kisangani is not labeled as one between the Tariqa and Tawahidi as in Maniema, the Sheikh pointed out that the conflict in both is quite similar. At the heart of both is tension between those who want to remain the same and others who want change and development. Thus, in his view, another way to classify the divisions within the Muslim community of Kisangani would be as one between development advocates and those who prefer the status quo. The manner in which he presents this distinction clearly demonstrates Sufi/ Reformist tensions present in the Kisangani region.

According to the Sheikh, there are two distinct groups, and they correspond to the two large mosques, the central mosque and CINY, *Centre Islamique Nuuru el Yaqiini*. Before 2001, there was only one main mosque in town, the central mosque, which was under the management of the older generation. In the 1990s, the younger generation started to demand changes and insist on their community becoming more involved in development. Instead of yielding their leadership positions to members of the younger generation or working out a power-sharing deal, the older generation began construction of a new mosque, called CINY, which was completed around 2003. There was an effort at cooperation after the two groups returned from the COMICO national General Assembly of 2004, where they had been reprimanded by others for their hostility toward one another and encouraged to work together to solve their dilemmas. They formed a new committee in which the top two positions were held by the older

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with sheikh who is a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Kisangani 6/9/2009.

generation but the youth camp was granted some important roles, such as the third most important position.

However, the divisions between the two groups remained and could be seen most clearly in joint meetings where opinions were divided along the two camps. They continued to try to work together for a time, until a new dispute broke out over the construction of new mosques. The older generation refused to compromise, so the youth camp quit the committee and the two groups ended attempts at reconciliation. However, as will be discussed later, the 2009 COMICO national General Assembly elections brought about change in the form of the youth camp gaining positions of leadership. One might fear this power reversal would result in continuation of tension between the two groups. However, the Sheikh noted that the youth also included the older generation in several positions as well. Thus, he believes that this change seems to have brought about a real reconciliation between the two camps in Kisangani and Muslims now feel free to pray in any mosque. This discourse by the Sheikh resembles efforts by Maniema Muslims to emphasize the increasing unity of their minority community.

The coordinator for Islamic public schools in the Orientale province also laments the division among the community, claiming it has been its downfall.<sup>14</sup> Noting that most Muslims in Kisangani are Tariqa, he argues instead that the conflict stems from unspecified interest groups that fight over positions of power within the community. He mentioned that there are two large groups with different interests and that for a long time the Muslim community of the province was ungovernable because the two groups

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with the Provincial Coordinator for Islamic public schools in Orientale, Kisangani 5/23/2009.

were unable to compromise. In speaking about these groups, the coordinator does not describe the conflict in generational terms, but nevertheless suggests that he believes young Muslims feel ashamed because their community has not been able to assist the larger community in comparison to Catholic and Protestant groups which have done much for development. Therefore, the youth's views he expresses are much in line with Reformist critiques of Sufi mismanagement and the Reformist desire to be "modernizers".

When leaders and members of many Muslim associations active in Kisangani were collectively asked why their community seems to be behind others in the development arena, they cited important historical reasons such as the colonial legacy of lack of education, which meant a dearth of Muslim leaders.<sup>15</sup> But in the contemporary era the factor they insisted as having significantly impeded the advancement of the Muslim community, in addition to these historical legacies, is internal divisions within their own community. What is also interesting about these internal divisions within the Muslim community is that they are not just perceived by Congolese Muslims themselves, but are also pointed to by their Christian neighbors. For example, a Christian agent at the state education office for Kisangani schools, who had been a top bureaucrat for the province for three decades, argued that in addition to being a minority population with limited resources, the reason the Muslim community was behind other religious communities developmentally and unable to run schools in the past, was the high level of internal conflict within the community.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Collective interview with members and leaders of Muslim associations, Kisangani 6/12/2009.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the secretary to the chief of the Provincial Division of Primary, Secondary, and Professional Education (E.P.S.P.), Kisangani 5/26/2009.

The new leader of COMICO for Kisangani is a member of the younger generation and was elected as a result of the national General Assembly in early 2009. According to him, the reason the Muslim community did not previously have more development projects, such as schools, was a generational conflict.<sup>17</sup> In his description of the situation, the older generation was not interested in development, but the younger generation has now taken over power and with that will come an emphasis on advancement. He characterizes the conflict as between the elders who never left Congo and the youth who went abroad to study. He notes that these youth, like himself, return with an interest in trying to change local practices. For example, he recounts that it used to be that if someone fell ill and it was believed to be because of bad spirits, then the custom was to pay leaders for healing prayers. Instead the foreign-educated youth advocate that if someone falls ill they should receive prayers for free and be taken to the hospital for treatment. So the returned theologians are part of a campaign against old African traditions, such as paying for healing prayers.

The new leader notes that as a result of the new messages being preached, they have had overwhelming support from younger generations and as such the majority of Kisangani Muslims are no longer supporting the leadership of their elders. Some of the older generation have expressed anger at the new teachings and have said that as a result their livelihoods are being threatened. His portrayal of the situation in Kisangani where challenges to the established historical leadership are met with resistance reflects parallel dynamics of generational divisions among other Islamist movements in Africa (i.e., Bonate 2009; Østebø 2009; Soares and Otayek 2007; Westerlund and Rosander 1997).

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with the newly elected leader of Congolese Muslims in Kisangani, 6/10/2009.

An interesting source providing evidence of the intensity of internal conflicts within the local Muslim community is provided in a set of recent undergraduate theses and dissertations emanating from the University of Kisangani. Thus, in a thesis “The Development of the Muslim Community in the City of Kisangani” the author lamented that Muslims there have not experienced social and political development due to, he argued, generational conflict and a lack of dialogue between the different groups (Abedi 2007, 38). The majority of the long-standing leaders of the national Muslim association had a low level of education and supported themselves with small merchant activities and agriculture. The conflict within the Islamic community “opposed young Muslim Sheiks qualified as intellectuals and...old Sheiks and the representatives of COMICO Kisangani, the non-qualified” (Ibid., 33). Abedi found that the relations between the ruling, conservative faction and the intellectual, revolutionary, and progressive youth to be very complex (Ibid., 57). The youth camp sought to gain control of the Kisangani community and accused the older generation of incompetence in managing mosques, resources, and gifts under the jurisdiction of national association. The younger generation was largely successful at gaining increasing power among the community, which prompted the older leadership to construct a new mosque.

In another thesis on a similar topic, the internal conflicts at the local level in Kisangani are situated within the broader context of conflict at the national level, and the author argued that since its creation the national Muslim association has not been able to realize its objectives because of “egotistical” conflicts of interest among members of the ruling class (Oyoko 1999, 61). The author described the internal conflict among Kisangani Muslims as between, “the class of conservatives in power, composed in

majority by old persons” and “the class of youth who represent the force of change and often translate the profound aspirations of the large majority” (Ibid., 78). The latter are for the most part marginalized from positions of power within the national Muslim association, and instead seek to engage by creating their own organizations. However, these youth often feel frustrated at the little they are able to accomplish, a sentiment also expressed by women’s groups who experience a similar marginalization by the Muslim leadership. Making a Marxist argument, Oyoko pointed out that the leadership maintains its position of power because it controls the means of production in the community, namely the mosques where funds are collected for the greater good of the community. His research highlighted that despite the large sums of money generated at the mosques, especially during the most important religious ceremonies, Muslims did not know how this money was being used.

Oyoko lamented that the Muslim community of Kisangani has not been more of an engine of development for the local population, and particularly in the education sector. He asserted that blaming their underdevelopment in this area on the difficulties of Muslim children receiving a proper education during the colonial period in Christian schools is no longer a plausible excuse because today the Congolese state is secular and allows each religious community the right to run schools (Ibid., 69). However, as evidence that the Islamic leadership is not interested in the development of their community, Oyoko noted that in Orientale province in the late 1990s there was only one functioning Muslim public school. A consequence of the community’s lack of interest in schools has been a low level of educated Muslim children. Oyoko cited a study by Hassan Bin Sefu Mukando in 1997 that found only 18% of students in primary school

and about 9% of children in secondary school were Muslim (Ibid., 71). In conclusion, Oyoko stated, "in effect, the Islamic community of Kisangani is maintained in a situation of non-progress, more precisely in a situation of under-development. This situation is the primary consequence of the exploitation of the victims who are the faithful Muslims on the part of their leaders," (Ibid., 89). These two groups he defined like many others as being distinguished according to generational, educational, and leadership characteristics.

A sociology dissertation (Yuma 2004) about the Congolese Muslim community also addressed the issue of internal conflicts and presents a history that reflects broader Sufi/ Reformist tensions. In this work, the leadership of the Muslim community in Orientale that had been in power since 1987 was accused of poor management and lack of development vision. Therefore, in the late 1990s, several Muslim intellectuals, some of whom had received theological education in universities in Saudi Arabia, while others were Congolese university students, began a movement to denounce the community's stagnation and under-development (Ibid., 275). They organized meetings to educate local Muslims about the problems and the need for a change in the leadership. The group petitioned the leadership for reform of the organization's governance several times, but was continually refused.

When their requests remained unmet, the reformist group along with the majority of Kisangani Muslims demanded that the provincial representative, whose title recognizes him as the spiritual leader of the population, lead a Friday prayer at the central mosque during Ramadan 2001 as a test of his religious education. The leader was forced to acquiesce, but his attempt demonstrated his lack of religious training,

and, according to the author, he was humiliated (Ibid.). This incident was followed by expressions of anger and more attempts at reconciliation. Finally an accord was signed between the two groups that called for both parties to convene a provincial council to tackle demands for leadership change. The older leadership boycotted the meeting that they had pledged to attend, so the reformists used the opportunity to elect a new leadership for the province comprised primarily of Muslim intellectuals. In 2004 at the time of his writing, the contestation for the Orientale leadership between the old committee and the new committee continued, with each group working separately according to their goals. This stalemate continued until the intervention of the 2009 national General Assembly elections to be discussed in a later section.

Finally, a recent thesis specifically on the topic of conflict within the Kisangani Muslim population from 2000 to 2004 found that a major source of tension was the relationship between Muslim preachers who earned a diploma in Islamic theology from an Arab university and other religious leaders who were educated in Qur'anic schools in the Maniema province without earning a diploma (wa Kamwanga 2005). In order to test his perception of the conflict with other Muslims in the community, the author conducted a series of surveys in Kisangani. When he asked the reason for the conflict in their community, the plurality of ordinary Muslims (26%) and elites (36%) said the division was according to tribe, friendship group, or education group (Ibid., 32-4). When asked what they thought to be the cause of conflict within the Muslim organization, the plurality of non-elite Muslims (18%) responded because of material interest, while the plurality of elites (19%) responded because of ethnicity (Ibid., 37-9). Interestingly, few or none responded a conflict of generations, which seems to be the most prominent reason

proposed by scholars of the subject. Out of seventy elites questioned, not one said the conflict was the result of a generational divide, while only three non-elites out of 130 responded thus (Ibid.). Then, wa Kamwanga asked respondents who they believed to be the principal actors involved in these conflicts. The plurality of non-elites (34%) and elites (39%) responded that it was amongst the authorities of the Muslim association (Ibid., 41-4). Again he questioned about the generational narrative and found that 6% each of non-elites and elites said the conflict was the result of elders against the youth (Ibid.).

Thus, wa Kamwanga concluded that the conflict in Kisangani is less a generational dispute, and more of an ethnic dispute. The “ethnic” groups are defined as *Arabisés*, descendants from those close to the original Swahili-Arab colonizers, and non-*Arabisés*. In his search for a logical explanation of ethnic conflict, the author argued that there are two primary reasons for this division. The first was historical dating back to when the Arabs were present and recruited certain members among their domestic servants to be trained in Islamic theology. This caused trouble in the contemporary era when, “faced with a new generation of preachers trained in theological university, the old ruling preachers took a defensive attitude in order to maintain their power,” (Ibid., 49). The second was contemporary issues, including material interest, ethnicity, educational level, and fanaticism. Some of the former leaders do not have an adequate level of instruction, believe they have a mandate for life, and use their positions of power for personal gain and nepotism. As a result, the longtime leadership responded to the threat on their power by creating a new mosque, which solidified the clear division of the community.

These sources clearly demonstrate a local understanding that the Muslim community of Kisangani has experienced a recent history of internal division, particularly since the 1990s, but disagreement on the fundamental basis of the division. However, what is clear is that the division in Kisangani, like that in Maniema and elsewhere in Muslim Africa, is at the core a tension between Sufi/ traditionalists and Reformers. A younger generation of Reformists has demanded a leadership change away from the older generation or *Arabisés*. The younger generation as described here easily resembles the broader Islamist movement, as they are led by local Muslims who have studied abroad, criticize the lack of true Islamic understanding of the older group, and agitate for an increased focus on development projects. Given these local dynamics in Maniema and Orientale provinces, how have such internal conflicts been reflected at the national level?

### **National Discord: The Case of COMICO**

Not surprisingly, these conflicts on the local and provincial level also reflect the larger internal conflicts present at the national level within the COMICO organization. Founded in 1972 at the request of President Mobutu, the *Communauté Islamique en République Démocratique du Congo* is the principal organization of Congolese Muslims, headquartered in Kinshasa with subunits at the provincial and local levels. COMICO has been plagued by internal conflict since its inception, as divergent groups sought dominance in the new unitary organization. The primary source of contention has centered around who should lead, in particular whether the chief Muslim with the title of Legal Representative should be a prominent businessman or a trained Islamic theologian. These debates produced a long period of stalemate from 1988 until 2004, when there were two conflicting groups of Muslims at the national level, each headed by

a prominent personality claiming to be the true head of COMICO. The opposing leaders were Sheikh Gamal Lumumba, who studied Islamic theology in Saudi Arabia, and a prominent businessman, Al Hadji Mudilo.

Although the split with two different leaders of COMICO did not occur until 1988, the underlying conflict that led to such a situation began much earlier. From the organization's inception, there was a debate about how the community would be best served, by a leader who was financially successful and could help the organization grow economically, or by a leader trained in Islamic theology who could benefit the community spiritually. According to one scholar, this cleavage was characterized as a rift between those who supported a political candidate versus proponents of a religious candidate, and was first manifested in the early years of independence as the community met in Kasongo in an attempt to unite (Tata 2003, 69).

In 1961, Muslims began an initiative to create a sole organization for the Islamic community. They met again in 1963 and appointed a provisional committee comprised of Congolese and resident Senegalese Muslims, but the two groups did not get along and it was decided that a Congress would be held in Kasongo in August 1963. There, the Islamic Mission of Congo (MISCO) was created and the leaders selected were Yusuf Lusangi, the vice president of the Muslim Welfare Society, and Amir Jumaine, and three others. However, it did not take long for division to emerge within the community, as a competing faction led by religious leaders Mwinyi Selemani and Shabani Baruani expressed their support of the new association but did not approve of Jumaine in a leadership role, describing him as "incompetent and illiterate" (Lazzarato 2001, 95). Therefore, another meeting was convened in March 1964 in an attempt to

settle the dispute. Selemani was supported by some prominent Muslims and foreign delegates, while Jumaine and Lusangi received the backing of the youth and Kasongo Muslims. The result was the election of Selemani, the dissolution of MISCO, and the rejection of Jumaine because it was argued that the leader should be able to read and write the Qur'an. A new unity conference was scheduled for later that month, but was never held. Although these attempts at organization of the Muslim community ultimately failed, the debate had not been settled, as was later evidenced during elections for the national leader of COMICO.

In December 1971 Mobutu required all religious organizations to create one sole association, reflecting the movement towards corporatist structures that were common at that time throughout Africa. The Muslim community contained over twenty rival associations who decided to meet at a general assembly in Kisangani from February 9-11, 1972 in order to discuss the community's response to the law (Ibid., 99). The new assembly began by dissolving preexisting organizations and creating COMIZA, the Islamic Community in the Republic of Zaire. The organization, which later became COMICO when the country changed its name back to the D.R. Congo, is hierarchical with units at four levels reflecting the state structure: the local community, the region, the province, and the country. They elected Sheikh Amrani ben Juma as the Legal Representative, and five assistants who had been leaders of some of the recently dissolved associations. Not surprisingly, this leadership cohort did not manage to work well with one another. As a result, one of the five assistants, Sheikh Ali Kabonga convoked an extraordinary session of the assembly in 1974 to elect a new leader (Yuma 2004, 73). There, Sheikh Hassani ben Sabiti was elected as the new leader, but

the assembly was neither formally recognized by the state, nor by many Muslims (Lazzarato 2001, 100).

Therefore, the Muslim community convened another assembly in Kinshasa in October of that year, but it ended after two weeks of indecision. Finally, in early December 1974 a group of about two-thirds of the members met and elected Sheikh Hassani ben Sabiti, who came from a long line of Kisangani Muslims dating back to the arrival of the Arabs, as their leader (Yuma 2004, 73). The Muslim community considered him to be very good for Muslim unity, as he worked to improve relations by traveling to other Arab nations, attended the Assembly of the World Muslim League in Saudi Arabia in 1975, received pledges of foreign aid for Zairian Muslims, and assistance for many to go on pilgrimage to Mecca (Yuma 2004, 74; Lazzarato 2001, 100-01). Despite these successes by the first two religious-oriented leaders of COMICO (Sheikh Amrani Djuma from 1972-74 and Sheikh Hassan Sabiti Mafuta Mingi from 1974-78), others were very critical of spiritually trained leaders, whom they accused of wasting funds, lacking rigor in financial management, and the inability to adequately organize the administration.

Therefore in 1978, the disagreement regarding the national leadership led to the convocation of an extraordinary assembly to elect a new chief, this time a Muslim businessman, Al Hadji Tambwe Abedi Kauzeni, who stayed in his role until 1988. According to the Assistant Secretary General, some Muslims believed that Sheikhs experienced a leadership problem because their narrow theological training did not equip them for seeking close relationships with the central state and outside

communities and that they held a small vision for the community.<sup>18</sup> Yuma (2004) noted that Tambwe was elected because the community believed that they needed a businessman to lead since the theologians in charge in the 1970s had been too concerned with religious priorities and did not have management skills. One perspective suggested that Tambwe was elected because of his wealth, and that he proceeded to waste his money on maintaining power, to the detriment of true development of the broader Muslim community (wa Kamwanga 2005, 29). However, Oyoko noted that since the death of the businessman Al Hadji Tambwe, the conflicts between those who prefer a spiritual imam or businessman did not dissipate, and no group was able to win over the other one (1999, 62).

Since Tambwe's leadership did not fare much better, the proponents of religious training managed to secure the passage of a statute stipulating that only those with theological training could become Legal Representative, leading to the election of another theologian (Yuma 2004, 74). Al Hadji Tambwe's term was followed by that of Sheikh Gamal Lumumba, who was the official leader of COMICO from 1988-90 (and again from 1996-2004). In 1990 Gamal's term was suspended and his assistant Al Hadji Mudilo wa Malemba took over the position and was reelected for a second term. Sheikh Gamal did not approve of the situation and sought resolution in the Congolese judicial system. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of Gamal, leading to his return to leadership in 1996. However, members of his cabinet and others refused to recognize Gamal as the true leader and instead continued to follow Al Hadji Mudilo. This stalemate of most Congolese Muslims recognizing Mudilo as the leader, while the

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with Assistant Secretary General of COMICO, Kinshasa 6/16/2009.

outside world and the Congolese government recognized the leadership of Gamal continued until the COMICO elections in 2004.

This extended period of internal leadership crisis meant that the Muslim community experienced very little in terms of unity and development. According to the current Assistant Secretary General, the split within COMICO's leadership directly impacted the community's ability to get involved in development in several ways. For example, the Islamic Development Bank of Saudi Arabia funded many projects for the Muslim population of Congo over the years. However, when the community was divided the Bank decided to stop sending assistance. This explanation, however, may ignore more fundamental causes; one thesis on the subject of the Muslim community noted that the reason the Arabs suspended their aid to Congo was not necessarily political, but the result of the devastating war which started in the country in 1996 (wa Kamwanga 2005, 55).

In addition, the Congolese state did not have good relations with the community during this period either; primarily because it was difficult to know which group they should work with. For example, a Sheikh currently building an educational complex in Kisangani consisting of private primary, secondary, and Qur'anic schools with assistance from the Islamic Development Bank complained that Muslims had been marginalized by the government. He claimed that when Muslims try to speak to Congolese authorities about development projects, the latter do not really listen to the requests, but instead say that because the Muslim community is separated by internal conflicts, they should focus instead on becoming united, and then come back to ask the

state for assistance.<sup>19</sup> These experiences have perhaps reinforced the desire for collective action and to encourage the unity of the minority community in recent years.

However, the Muslim community has also known periods of very good relations with the central state, especially during portions of Mobutu's reign. To a large extent the genesis of better relations was President Mobutu's speech about the tensions between Egypt and Israel at the United Nations in 1973 (Oyoko 1999, 81). Arab countries appreciated Zaire's position of support and responded by providing financial aid to the country, and particularly for the Muslim community. Mobutu then paid for the Islamic leadership to go on pilgrimage to Mecca around 1977. Mobutu's actions during this period fit into his broader plan of consolidating power in the single-party state by co-opting the Muslim community, as well as using good relations with that community to bolster political and financial support for his regime from Arab countries. However, the financial support earmarked for the Muslim community, according to Oyoko, did not reach its intended beneficiaries, with the exception of those within the Muslim leadership whom Mobutu sought to co-opt, ultimately resulting in religious authorities that appeared to care more about national politics than their minority community (Ibid., 82).

The deepening patronage relationship between the Muslim leadership and the Mobutist state provided a key source of mounting division within the Muslim community. As other Muslims sought positions of leadership and benefits from Mobutu's patronage, acts of opposition toward religious authorities sanctioned by the authoritarian state were labeled as acts of defiance to the Party. As a result, several acts of protest by Muslims

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<sup>19</sup> Interview with Sheikh overseeing construction of *Complex Scholaire Nuuru*, Kisangani 5/28/2009.

toward their leadership were stifled by the intervention of state security apparatuses, apparently leading to the sequestering, intimidation, and assimilation of such actors (Ibid.). Therefore what COMIZA accomplished during the Mobutu period was the apparent unity of the community, but brought about by force rather than compromise, while suppressing deeper divisions. Another unintended consequence of the organization in its early years was the extension of clientelism, very prevalent in state apparatuses, into the Islamic community. Writing a decade ago, Oyoko decried the problems of the Muslim community as largely the fault of internal divisions that played out at the national level in leadership struggles.

One of the largest consequences of the lack of unity of the Congolese Muslim community, frequently expressed by informants, is that Islam has had very little impact on development, advancement, and rebuilding of the Congolese community during the decades of state decay and war. The author of a thesis on the Muslim community concluded, “at the national level Islam lost its credibility especially on the plan of development and is almost absent in all activities, first in the institutions ruling the country, in the government, in the institutions charged with the transition, even in the independent electoral commission, and even at the local level Islam is not represented when the other communities are represented,” (wa Kamwanga 2005, 59). However, despite these gripping internal conflicts within the national Muslim organization from its inception in 1974 until 2004, there has been a radical recent change within the Islamic community.

### **The New Muslim Leadership**

The bleak portrait of the Muslim minority of Congo presented thus far in their history of marginalization and deep internal division at local, regional, and even national

levels is in fact not reflective of the community today. In the post-war period, the community enjoys much closer relations with the government and has witnessed much reconciliation from crippling internal conflicts. This change began at the COMICO General Assembly in February 2004, where members from all over the country elected a new leader Sheikh Abdallah Mangala, who was recognized by all, bringing an end to almost two decades of leadership stalemate. The new leader is also someone who has encouraged the role of the Muslim community in development and is both trained in Islamic theology, as well as educated in modern sciences and speaks fluent French. Congolese Muslims have most likely been able to unite around his leadership because he possesses both of the traits they value the most, unlike his predecessors who excelled in only one area. The most recent COMICO General Assembly, which is held every five years, was in February 2009. There the incumbent leader Sheikh Mangala, portrayed by his supporters as a symbol of the community's unity as well as advancement, was re-elected to a second five-year term.

In addition to the importance of having one leader for the community, as opposed to the previous period of division, it is crucial to recognize that Sheikh Mangala is a Reformist. The election of a Reformist to the chief position beginning in 2004 also ushered in a new Reformist leadership at the provincial and local levels. As discussed previously, the two competing groups of Muslims of Kisangani were in a stalemate since the 1990s. However, this was to change as a result of the elections of the national General Assembly in 2009. According to an informant, only two representatives of the older generation of Kisangani attended the national meeting, as contrasted with five

from the younger group.<sup>20</sup> In fact, he stated, this was representative of the delegations arriving from all over the country. Of the two hundred eighty members present for the assembly, two hundred twenty of them were members of the youth/ Reformist camp. His explanation for this was that funding for plane tickets and travel to the capital usually came from Arab countries, but that it did not arrive that year because the Arabs were tired of the internal fighting within the Congolese Muslim community. The older generation reportedly continued to wait for funding to arrive, while the youth camp mobilized personal resources to make the trip. As a result, they were a clear majority and used their votes to elect young development-oriented leaders to positions within the COMICO organization all over the country.

Of course this victory by one segment of the Muslim community has been met with some opposition from the Sufi/ traditional/ older group. However, because the new leadership was elected through democratic means, they have a chance to regain prominent positions at the next assembly in five years time. Opposition was most apparent in the Maniema province, where although Kindu is the capital for governmental purposes, because of its religious majority and heritage Kasongo is the provincial capital for the Muslim community. The former Secretary General expressed his concern that because of the controversy over the new leaders selected by the national assembly in Kinshasa in 2009, there was a chance that the internal conflict, which had seemed to be diminishing, would resurface.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with sheikh who is a professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Kisangani 6/9/2009.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with former Secretary General of the national Muslim association, Kasongo 4/27/2009.

Prior to the General Assembly, a provincial assembly was held in Kasongo as usual to elect representatives to attend the national meeting. However, as recounted by the BIDH president, this proved very complicated.<sup>22</sup> The former provincial leader, who had recently passed away, had an assistant whom he did not care for and had appointed someone else to become his successor, but the assistant contested this move. When the Muslim community of Kasongo tried to organize its assembly, the assistant refused to come, stating that those who opposed his candidacy were organizing the assembly. Since certain members had boycotted the provincial council, its resolutions were annulled by the national assembly who, in the absence of accredited input from the provincial council, elected the assistant to become the new leader.

Several months after the General Assembly meeting, the five representatives for the Muslim association in the Kasongo area met to give their trimester reports.<sup>23</sup> There was debate and concern expressed about what was happening in the organization at all levels with a substantial leadership change. However, there was consensus that regardless of what was happening in the organization at provincial and national levels, the local representatives had a responsibility to continue their work. Those presenting these fears and disillusion with the 2009 elections in Kasongo were primarily members of the older generation who had been in power for a substantial amount of time, and it makes perfect sense that they would not be overjoyed by this uprooting of their power.

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with BIDH president, Kindu 5/11/2009.

<sup>23</sup> Observations from attending COMICO meeting, Kasongo 4/20/2009.

There is much hope that because of the new leadership of the Reformist elements of the Muslim community, a development agenda will emerge. The proliferation of Muslim public schools has coincided with this change in leadership and conforms to larger Reformist agendas of modernization and engaging with state structures. Overall the Muslim community is much more able to unite for collective action as a result of the decisive victory of a new leadership at national and provincial levels. Members of Muslim civil society and development associations in Kisangani said that they have noticed a big change since the last General Assembly because the newly elected Muslim intellectuals are encouraging the community's involvement in development.<sup>24</sup>

The new Muslim leader for Maniema is a Tariqa member, but also represents reform because he is from the younger generation and well educated, and hence has more support. In the perspective of the president of a Muslim women's association headquartered in Kindu, a lot of good will come from this change in leadership.<sup>25</sup> She viewed 2009 as the year of young Muslim men gaining positions of power, and views this as a positive change because these new leaders are educated both in a secular system and speak fluent French, also have good Qur'anic training, and are advocating for the advancement of their minority community.

We have now traced the historical evolution of the Muslim minority community in the Democratic Republic of Congo, from its experience of colonial brutality, to the intense internal conflicts that manifested themselves in divergent ways in various locations, and finally to emergence of a Reformist leadership and the resulting

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<sup>24</sup> Meeting with leaders of Muslim civil society and development associations, Kisangani 6/12/2009.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with president of CFMUDEMA, Collectif des Femmes Musulmanes pour le Développement du Maniema, Kindu 5/12/2009.

engagement of the community in politics and development in the recent post-conflict period. The proliferation of Muslim associations and public schools, this study argues, would not have been possible without the collective action made possible through the clear victory of this motivated leadership at local and national levels.

Beyond the national context, internal conflicts within Muslim communities are prevalent both in minority and majority groups throughout the African continent. In particular, Islamist/ reform movements have encouraged the expansion of Muslim education systems and attracted disenfranchised younger generations (Westerlund and Rosander 1997; Soares and Otayek 2007). Many of these youth focused on social mobility argued that their Sufi traditional leaders did not have adequate training in Arabic and European national languages, which made collaboration between their Muslim communities and international organizations virtually impossible (e.g. Bonate 2009, 67). Reformers created Muslim schools throughout Africa so that Muslim children not only received proper training in Islam, but also the skills they would need to succeed and get jobs in the local context. So in countries like Congo where Islam is a minority, the Muslim schools train children in French, in conjunction or instead of Arabic.

We began the discussion of internal conflicts within Muslim communities by examining some recent literature on the topic from across the continent, and this study seeks to further nuance our understandings of Sufi/ Reform debates. In the Congolese case, the recent leadership change within the COMICO organization reflects the growing importance of Reformists in the form of the younger generation of Muslims and those advocating for the Muslim community to actively engage in development. In Kisangani this group most clearly resembles Islamist groups in other countries, as those

educated in the Middle East returned with a vision to rally the local younger generation to change the status quo of rule by the less educated older generation. The internal fissures within the Maniema Islamic community, including divisions between older and younger generations, Tariqa and Tawahidi, and natives and Arab descendants, demonstrate that local dynamics greatly impact the expression and nature of classic Sufi/ Reformist divides. The example of the Tariqa recently coming to power in the province on a reform platform provides another example of the increasing blurring of our categories.

Conflicts in the Congolese Islamic minority reflect both a classic Sufi/ Reformist distinction with its divergent local manifestations, as well as the particular case of a minority community that experienced historic marginalization, then intense internal conflicts, but has recently attempted collective action in order to more effectively mobilize as a minority population. However, it must be acknowledged that regardless of the internal state of the Muslim minority, effective collective action would not have been possible without a sympathetic external political environment. As such, the Chapter 7 argues that the partnership between Muslims and the state in education is in large part possible because of an opportunity provided by various factors: a national political opening at the end of President Mobutu's thirty-two year autocratic rule, the formal end of two devastating wars in 2002, the beginning of a democratic transition, and paradoxically the state's continual weakness and lack of capacity to meet the needs of its citizens alone.

## CHAPTER 7 SEIZING AN OPPORTUNITY: EXTERNAL FACTORS FACILITATING MUSLIM MOBILIZATION

The recent strides of the Muslim minority of the Democratic Republic of Congo in the realm of public goods provision, and education in particular, represent a significant shift from the marginalized and quiescent community described in Chapter 4. This study argues that there are two primary reasons to explain the sudden emergence of Congolese Muslims in the public realm in the post-war period. The first, as detailed in the Chapter 6, is the overcoming of the collective action problem posed by a history of internal divisions within the community. This chapter discusses the second, or external, factor affecting Muslim minority mobilization, namely the opportunity for mobilization at this historic moment in Congolese history.

Beginning with the work of Tarrow, scholars of social movements have argued that their involvement is directly related to “changes in political opportunities and constraints,” (Tarrow 1998, 7). In their article “Making Sense of Religion in Political Life”, Wald et al. (2005) argue that scholars of religious movements should examine such organizations along the same theoretical guidelines as other scholars of social movements more generally. One of the key elements to such theories is the notion of opportunity, meaning that religious movements have a better chance of success when the opportunity for mobilization arises. This study argues that the post-war period in the Congo provided the opportunity for the Muslim minority to engage in development activities because of the confluence of a number of factors: the end of historic marginalization, increased freedom and liberalization, the weakness of the Congolese state, and the extension of the hybrid school system.

## **End of Historic Marginalization and Increasing Liberalization**

The history of the marginalization of Muslim minority in the Congo, as documented in detail in Chapter 4 of this study, has come to an end. The most significant marginalization occurred during the Belgian colonial rule, but for the most part, Muslims remained disengaged from political and developmental arenas throughout the thirty-two year dictatorship of President Mobutu as well. The latter's reign was very restrictive for most Congolese, and not only for minority Muslims. The end of Mobutu's career coincided with the beginning of years of war, in which most Congolese living in the eastern provinces focused on daily survival.

Given this history, it is easy to observe that the post-conflict period of increasing attempts at liberalization and democratization presented the first discernable opportunity for the Muslim community to publically engage in collective action with the blessing of the central state and other key actors such as the Catholic Church. Members of the Muslim community in and near Kasongo stated that the reason their community is involved with development is that they now have the liberty to create associations and get involved in various arenas, which they did not have before.<sup>1</sup> The Muslim community demonstrated its agency by seizing upon this historic opening. As one scholar noted, "the impressive expansion of Islamic NGOs in Africa...has been due to Islamic NGOs both taking advantage of and responding to the various political, social and economic crises on the African continent," (Salih 2001 as cited by Weiss 2002, 87). The Muslim community of Congo was able to respond to this unique opportunity as new leaders

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with staff members of *Institut Nengo*, a Muslim public secondary school, Kihongo 4/23/2009. Interview with members of Mosque 17, Kasongo 4/15/2009.

emerged and the community built an effective educational infrastructure in an effort to enhance its spiritual, financial, and political potential.

### **Emerging Leaders and the Creation of an Effective Bureaucracy**

An important resource that is now available to the Muslim community, which greatly enhances their development activities, is an educated leadership. As has been discussed previously, historically the Arabs, Belgians, and Catholics excluded the Muslim community from education. For example, during the colonial era Muslim children were harassed, forced to convert, or expelled from Catholic schools. As such, the majority of Muslims dropped out of school and reverted to trade for their livelihoods, were unable to speak French, and thus not involved with state institutions.<sup>2</sup> As these repressive regimes came to an end, there was the possibility of freedom for Muslim children to attend school. A new cadre of intellectual Muslims has slowly replaced generations that were unable to get a good education, and subsequently find formal employment. The former are now in leadership positions in Islamic organizations and are using their skills to better organize the community and get involved in arenas previously ignored, such as education.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The president of CONADHI, a Muslim human rights organization, described how his community was unable to advance because for a long time parents would not let their children attend Catholic schools for fear of harassment, so their community had no intellectuals to lead them, Kasongo 4/28/2009. Interview with leaders of Muslim development associations, Kinshasa 6/22/2009.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the Coordinator for Islamic public schools at the national level expressed how his community now has intellectuals who are well educated and able to use their gifts for the development and advancement of the Muslim community, Kinshasa 6/18/2009. Members of Mosque 18 described how there are more Muslim intellectuals who want to see the Muslim community become involved in development, Kasongo 4/16/2009. The director of *Institut de la Cité*, a Muslim public secondary school noted that there are many Muslim intellectuals who speak French now, who can help the community become involved in development, Kasongo 4/24/2009. Interview with director of Muslim public primary school *E.P. Hodari*, Kisangani 5/25/2009.

The coordinator for Islamic public schools in Maniema described the process of Muslim expansion in the education arena as an evolution that began with the leadership, such as himself, advocating the importance of Islamic public schools among the Islamic community and beginning to build a good infrastructure to implement their projects.<sup>4</sup> The provincial office for the coordination of Islamic public schools at Kindu was only begun in 2005 and received government recognition and funding in 2008. But it was a Muslim man who was a long-time civil servant in the education sector who laid the foundation of this expansion in Maniema.<sup>5</sup> He was approached by the community in 1990 and asked to leave his position in the state bureaucracy and move to Kasongo to manage the Muslim schools there. He agreed and held that position for six years, during which he worked diligently to change the community's perception of the previously malfunctioning Islamic schools by creating effective institutions. However, he noted that this process was a gradual evolution and that it took time and effort to change the mentality of the community by erasing the old image of Muslim schools as the new schools slowly produced positive results. The former counselor also cited the augmentation of Muslim intellectuals as an important resource for the expansion of Islamic public schools in the region.

The former Secretary General of COMICO is another example of an important leader for the Muslim community.<sup>6</sup> He was born to Catholic parents in the Katanga province and reports that as a young boy he wanted to become a priest. After deciding against that vocation, he attended teacher training school in Kisangani where he also

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator for Islamic public schools in Maniema, Kindu 7/21/2008.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with former Counselor for Islamic public schools in Kasongo (1990-1996), Kindu 5/14/2009.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with former Secretary General of COMICO, Kasongo 4/27/2009.

converted to Islam. He was a teacher in Kisangani, but then moved to Kasongo where he was elected secretary of the Muslim community for the Kivu province (before it split into three provinces including Maniema) and worked in a palm oil company. When he was fired from his job, he moved to Kinshasa where he held numerous positions within the COMICO organization and became involved in politics until Mobutu was ousted from power. He then pursued a university degree in management before being nominated as the national coordinator for Islamic public schools from 2002-2004, when he was then elected Secretary General of COMICO. He was one of the key intellectuals within the Muslim community to advocate for their involvement in post-war development, and the expansion of the education system in particular.

In fact, the coordinator for Islamic schools in Kisangani, expressing his frustration with the lack of interest and involvement of the Muslim community there, noted that the reason there are so many schools in Maniema is because of the personal efforts of people like the former Secretary General, whereas the Orientale province lacked the charismatic leadership to advance development work.<sup>7</sup> However, this situation may be changing in Orientale, as the new head Imam for the province elected during the 2009 General Assembly expressed his goal of advocating development to the Muslim community.<sup>8</sup> Since beginning his new position, he had preached at each mosque in Kisangani about the importance of development and began a census of the community. He calculated that if there are approximately 100,000 Muslims in the city and each gives one dollar a month toward development, they would have a sufficient budget for building

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator of Islamic public schools in Orientale, Kisangani 5/29/2009.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with head Imam for COMICO in Orientale province, Kisangani 6/10/2009.

schools, health clinics, meeting places, and running community agricultural fields. This same message of hope appeared in a discussion with various leaders of Muslim organizations in Kisangani, who described how their community was behind in development for a long time because of a lack of leadership, but that since the last General Assembly there had been a growing consciousness of the need for intellectuals to get involved.<sup>9</sup> They predicted that because of this mentality shift in two more years' time one would see a significant amount of change and a much more vibrant and active Islamic community.

Individual Muslim elites have helped make important strides for their community outside of the public sector, such as the Sheikh who is responsible for the creation of a Muslim private secondary school in Kindu.<sup>10</sup> He grew up in southern Maniema but left Congo at the age of fourteen to pursue Islamic theology and ultimately earned a degree in the United Arab Emirates. He then returned to his home province with outside funding for the construction of a new secondary school that he hoped would benefit the community. The role of influential leaders has not only benefited the Muslim community, but was also cited as an important influence on the involvement of the Kimbanguist religious minority. The Kimbanguist leadership in Maniema detailed that the reason a Kimbanguist University has been instituted in Kindu is not because there is a massive Kimbanguist population in the area, but because the local leadership worked to make it possible.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with leaders of Muslim associations in the Orientale province, Kisangani 6/12/2009.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Sheikh overseeing construction of *Institut Mulumbi*, Kindu 3/17/2009.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with leaders of the Kimbanguist church in Maniema, Kindu, 3/17/2009.

But it is not just a new cadre of Muslim leaders that makes the Islamic community's success in education possible; it is also that they have a newly united leadership working toward a common goal. As argued in the Chapter 6, Muslim involvement in development in post-war Congo has been in large part possible because of the emergence of a Reformist leadership, beginning at the national level within the COMICO organization, which has encouraged such activity.<sup>12</sup> For example, in 2009 the COMICO General Assembly affirmed their desire for leaders to make important strides to get their community more involved with management of public institutions, such as education, as well as increase their involvement with the democratic movement by proposing several Muslim candidates for the 2011 elections.<sup>13</sup> At the national level, leaders in the office for coordination of Islamic public education have worked to obtain state authorization and recognition for a growing fleet of Muslim public institutions throughout the country.<sup>14</sup>

In a comparative study of the rise of Muslim associations in Cameroon, the author noted the importance of a growing educated Muslim leadership. "Eventually, in the mid-1990s, Muslim elites, university-trained in French, English, or Arabic, could distinguish themselves from the two prior types of leadership, traditional religious leaders (or marabouts) on one hand and arabophone ulama on the other. Their aim was to modernize Islamic associational structures..." (Adama 2007, 240). A similar effort at mobilization has been spearheaded by a new cadre of Muslim intellectuals in Congo through the creation of an effective administration.

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<sup>12</sup> This sentiment was also echoed in an interview with a Catholic priest from Kasongo, Kindu 4/08/2009.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with president of BIDH, *Bureau Islamique des Droits Humains*, Kindu 5/11/2009.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with staff of the Islamic public school office for southern Maniema, Kasongo 4/14/2009.

These new Muslim elites are focusing their attentions in part on the creation of an effective Islamic education bureaucracy able to carry out the tasks necessary for the rapid creation of Muslim schools. But the creation of these effective institutions to monitor Muslim education has taken time. In 1979 the Muslim community signed the convention with Mobutu's Zairian state to be able to run Islamic public schools. However, they lost control of their schools in the 1980s because of poor management and very slowly began to reclaim them in the 1990s. According to one community leader, the primary reason the state took back control of the Muslim schools in the earlier years was that there were no competent leaders, but the substantial expansion of such schools in recent years has occurred because now there are good leaders who are able to manage them well.<sup>15</sup> Organizational advancement was further complicated by the years of civil war from 1996 until 2003. Therefore, as the coordinator for Islamic public schools in Maniema noted, it was only in 2005 that the Muslim community was able to establish the provincial office in Kindu, and they still need more time to improve their organization.<sup>16</sup> However, in just a few short years the community has greatly advanced its work in the creation and maintenance of Muslim public schools. With more time and better organization, the new cadre of Islamic leadership will undoubtedly further develop the Islamic school network.

### **Enhancing the Community's Spiritual, Financial, and Political Potential**

Through the creation of a substantial system of Muslim public schools, the minority community hopes to ensure the capacity of their youth to take on important posts in the

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<sup>15</sup> Interview with president of BIDH, *Bureau Islamique des Droits Humains*, Kindu 5/11/2009.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator for Islamic public schools in Maniema, Kindu 7/21/2008.

future. They have recognized that because of their lack of education, Muslims have been excluded from important domains. In particular, members of the Islamic community lament the lack of Muslim representation in the political arena.<sup>17</sup> By providing Muslim children with a good education that follows the national curriculum, teaches in the official French language, and provides religion classes on how to be good Muslims, the Islamic community is hoping to improve their social, political, and economic position in the future.<sup>18</sup> For example, the director and other staff of a Muslim public secondary school, *Institut Nengo*, outside of Kasongo, claimed that their community observed how Christians were able to advance because of good education, so they became active in Muslim public education in order to advance their community and overcome their long-time marginalization.<sup>19</sup>

In another example, the Sheikh who is spearheading the construction of a private Islamic school complex in Kisangani stated that his motivation for creating the school was the need for such institutions so that Muslim children do not convert to other religions. In addition he hopes that his students can in the future become governors, ministers, or soldiers in the army and retain their Muslim faith and work for the development of the entire Congo. He added that the schools can teach Muslim morals which can help in the management of the government if students later become

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with members of the Muslim youth of Maniema, Kindu 6/18/2008. Interview with the Muslim community at Mosque 18, Kasongo 7/5/2008. Interview with head Imam for Islamic community in the Kindu region, 3/27/2009. Interview with members of Muslim women's development organizations, Kisangani 6/5/2009.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with the secretary of *Fondation Zam-Zam*, which runs an Islamic private primary school in Kindu, 2/18/2009. The secretary noted that one of the objectives of the school is to elevate the level of Muslim boys and girls through education.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with director and staff of *Institut Nengo*, Kihongo 4/23/2009.

politicians and have learned values such as not to steal.<sup>20</sup> Similar interests have been documented as part of the “Madrasa Early Childhood Program” operating preschools in traditional madrasas in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in the morning when such institutions are vacant. These schools are “designed to address communities’ concerns that their children understand their local culture and religion while also improving their chances for access to and success in formal education,” (Marshall and Keough 2004, 183-84).

Here again we must raise the distinction between various kinds of Islamic education. Qur’anic schools (often called madrasas) are primarily focused on religious education with usually limited exposure to secular subjects. But in many Muslim majority states that are relatively weak or lack the financial means to provide secular education for all citizens, such as Pakistan and Nigeria, there has been a concerted attempt to reform this “traditional” Islamic education by combining it with secular training. These efforts have not just been in the interest of the state, but also are increasingly what parents desire for their children so that they can be more competitive upon graduation. Again this process goes back to colonial legacies of secular education:

The main explanation of educational reforms...is that colonial expansion and the state-supported Western education system of schools and universities that was established under colonial rule gradually eroded the political and economic relevance of madrasa education. While under the Muslim states, officials were trained in madrasas, under colonial rule certificates secured in Western educational institutions became the route to securing employment in both the bureaucracy and the formal private sector. (Bano 2009, 3)

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Sheikh overseeing construction of *Complex Scholaire Nuuru el Yaqiini*, Kisangani 5/28/2009.

While Bano's study focuses on madrasa reform in northern Nigeria, where the majority of society is Muslim, it is relevant to the rise of public Islamic institutions in the Congo. Though the institutions in the Congo are not the result of reforming Qur'anic schools to include secular content, the impact of colonial education and administration has similarly resulted in parents who desire to have their children attend schools that not only prepare them to be good Muslims, but also provide them with the secular skills necessary to be competitive on the job market. For example, in discussions with a group of Muslim women at a mosque in Kindu, they noted that because of the limited number of Muslim schools before, many children went to Christian schools where they were able to learn French, get a diploma, go to university, and ultimately find gainful employment.<sup>21</sup> But in the process many of the students converted to Christianity, so the hope of the community now is to have Muslim schools that will provide their children with the same opportunities without losing their faith.

In a contrasting case of Islamic education in Lebanon, Al-Shamat argued that because the Ottoman state institutionalized Islamic law, the demand for graduates of Islamic schools remained high, so parents continued to send their children to traditional Muslim schools. "The cumulative effect of these features was that Muslims did not express a demand for new education and continued to rely on their Islamic schools to meet the needs of the labour market they faced," (Al-Shamat 2009, 350). The situation in the Congo, Nigeria, and other African countries colonized by the West was the opposite because the state created a job market that demanded the skills acquired through secular education, thus discouraging the need for religious schooling.

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Muslim women at the main mosque, Kindu 6/20/2008.

In a comparative work on Muslim NGOs in Ghana, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, Skinner described how their efforts to run dozens of schools provides various benefits to the community. “In the process of these endeavours the organizations produce jobs for builders and maintenance persons, teachers, administrators and other workers. In turn, they help to educate the subsequent generations of Muslims for positions in education, public service and community leadership,” (Skinner 2010, 103). In another study of reformed schools that combine secular and Islamic education in Benin, Bregand (2007) argued that the new Franco-Arabic schools offer employment opportunities for members of the community who are graduates of Islamic universities.

As suggested by the above examples, by creating Islamic public schools, Congolese Muslims are also creating employment opportunities for teachers and educational authorities, the majority of whom are members of their community. In the post-conflict society of Congo, finding gainful employment is extremely difficult. In fact, a 2007 study provided the statistic that only 4% of potential workers in the DRC held salaried positions (Lukoki 2007, 5). The largest economic sectors are NGOs and the state bureaucracy, including the education system. One third of public positions in the DRC are in the education sector (De Herdt et al. 2010, 29). It is not surprising then that from 2001-2007 the number of officially recognized schools increased by 65%, while the number of newly enlisted teachers rose by 61% (Ibid.). Therefore there is a direct incentive for new schools and teacher positions to be created and seek government accreditation. Statistics revealed that one third of Congolese teachers are still not recognized by the state, but “until they are officially recognized, these teachers have to

count on parents' contributions and on the expectation that they will be paid officially one day," (Ibid.)

Therefore it is not just Muslim organizations that are seeking to create jobs through their development efforts. In an interview with the leader of a women's organization in Kindu, she described her organization's creation of a primary school in 2000 as an effort to help children receive an education as well as to provide employment for teachers.<sup>22</sup> When administrators at the Protestant Education Coordination office for the Maniema province were asked about the rapid rise in the number of their schools in recent years, they described the phenomenon as a response to the large demand for schools as well as assisting teachers in obtaining employment.<sup>23</sup>

The Catholic Bishop for the Kindu Diocese of the Maniema province echoed the economic argument of other informants when he provided his reasoning for the increase in the number of schools in the post-war period. He cited four primary motivations for the additional institutions: a larger population, the encouragement of parents to send their girls to school in addition to their boys, the desire for increased proselytism on the part of religious organizations, and the lucrative nature of new schools.<sup>24</sup> A similar response was obtained from a member of the Maniema provincial assembly who is also an academic and who has published extensively on ethnic politics in the province. Professor N'Sanda argued that the desire for Muslims to create more schools is twofold,

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<sup>22</sup> Interview with President of AFILMA, *Association des Femmes Lettrées au Maniema*, Kindu 7/1/2008.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with the Provincial Coordination Office for Protestant public schools in Maniema, Kindu 3/25/2009.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Catholic Bishop of Kindu Diocese, Kindu 3/26/2009.

for proselytizing and as an effort to make money through salaries paid for teachers and school administrators.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, the rapid increase in the number of Muslim schools has ensured a large number of salaried positions. Although there is clearly an economic incentive for Muslim mobilization, “it would be highly problematic to reduce the *raison d’être* of Muslim associations to their attempt to tap into national patronage structures and transnational networks of religious sponsoring, or to dismiss their endeavour as being guided by short-term materialist considerations,” (Bompani and Frahm-Arp 2010, 90). Obtaining salaries for members of the community is just one of many benefits for Islamic involvement in education provision.

Another important benefit of Islamic education is expanding the faith. Several informants expressed their desire to propagate Islam through the teaching of religion courses in school.<sup>26</sup> Although very few non-Muslim children have converted because of their education in Islamic schools, this goal is primarily geared toward ensuring that Muslim children retain their faith.<sup>27</sup> In religion courses at Islamic public schools, the community hopes to instill Muslim values in their children and prevent them from leaving the faith, a phenomenon that was prevalent during the colonial era if Muslim children attended Catholic schools.<sup>28</sup> Again we can find similar processes unfolding in a

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Professor Léonard N’Sanda Buleli, Kindu 5/12/2009.

<sup>26</sup> For example, interview with head Imam for COMICO in Kindu region, Kindu 3/27/2009. Interview with former Coordinator of Islamic public schools in Maniema province, Kindu 5/14/2009.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with head Imam for COMICO in Kindu region, Kindu 3/27/2009.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator for Islamic public schools in Maniema, Kindu 3/23/2009. Echoed in interview with president of *Centre Islamique Nuuru el Yaqiini*, in process of constructing *Complexe Scholaire Nuuru*, a Muslim private primary and secondary school and health clinic, Kisangani 5/28/2009.

comparative case. In Benin, where the Muslim community is also a minority, although a bit larger at 20%, Bregand argued that, “the growing success of Franco-Arabic schooling reflects the belief that it guarantees Muslim morality, whereas public or Christian schools presumably lead students away from the faith,” (Bregand 2007, 127).

The Muslim community was not the only one to express the importance of religious schools to prevent children from converting. In an interview with teachers at a Protestant public school in Kindu, they said one reason Protestant children choose to attend their school is because they would get in trouble at Catholic schools for not performing the sign of the cross.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, leaders of the Kimbanguist church in Maniema described a motivation for expanding their religious school system to be providing a safe place for Kimbanguist children to study because previously their children had been expelled from other schools for their religious beliefs.<sup>30</sup> However, increasingly the largest threat for religious communities is the rise of Pentecostal churches. As a Muslim leader of a peasant union noted, these new churches are gaining converts from Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants.<sup>31</sup>

The relationship between Christians and Muslims has also greatly improved in recent years. In particular, during the years of war religious leaders came together to work toward a peaceful resolution of conflict and to provide much-needed services for their communities. These partnerships have continued after the wars, and several members of the Christian and Muslim community have acknowledged how important the interactions between the religious groups have been and particularly how examples

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<sup>29</sup> Interview with teachers at *E.P. Matayo*, Kindu 3/2/2009.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with leaders of the Kimbanguist church in the Maniema province, Kindu 3/17/2009.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with president of UPKA, *Union Paysanne pour le Progrès*, Kindu 6/20/2008.

set by Christian organizations in the development sector, and education in particular, have influenced recent Muslim activities.<sup>32</sup>

A recurrent theme in interviews with Muslim leaders was the desire for their community to make a contribution for the advancement of their country. Numerous actors involved with Islamic associations or the growing education sector described how they observed Christian organizations making important strides for the betterment of the Congolese population, and often felt ashamed that Muslims were not doing their fair share of development work.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, through observing and interacting with other religious groups, Muslims have realized that one of the best means for advancement, not only of their community, but for the population as a whole, is to engage in the current system by emulating the educational and developmental infrastructure of their peers. As Weiss argued, “as elsewhere in Muslim Africa, the rise of Muslim (or Islamic) NGOs in Ghana has been to a large extent a reaction to Christian missionary activities and their capacity to combine religious, educational, health and social activities,” (Weiss 2002, 83). However, as argued here, the primary reason why the Muslim community has been able to mobilize to create Islamic public schools is because of the unique opportunity present at this moment in Congolese history where the end of historic

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with a Catholic priest from Kasongo, Kindu 4/8/2009. Interview with Provincial Coordinator for Catholic public schools in Maniema, Kindu 4/10/2009. Interview with staff of the Islamic public school office for southern Maniema, Kasongo 4/14/2009. Interview with Professor N'Sanda, Kindu 5/12/2009. Interview with administrator at the Office of Primary, Secondary, and Professional Education for the Orientale province, Kisangani 5/26/2009. Interview with Sheikh overseeing construction of *Complex Scholaire Nuuru el Yaqiini*, Kisangani 5/28/2009.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with president of BIDH, an Islamic human rights association, Kindu 5/11/2009. Interview with former Provincial Coordinator of Islamic public schools in Maniema, Kindu 5/14/2009. Interview with Provincial Coordinator for Islamic public schools in Orientale, Kisangani 5/25/09. Interview with director of *E.P. Hodari*, a Muslim public primary school, Kisangani 5/25/2009.

marginalization intersects with increased liberalization and a state too weak to provide for its citizens alone.

### **Weak State and Hybrid Institutions**

The weakened, post-conflict Congolese state is not capable of fulfilling all of the needs of its citizens, thus relying on non-state actors, such as religious groups and local and international organizations, to fulfill some governing tasks, especially the provision of social services. This is not unique to the Congo case, however, as one overview of religious non-governmental organizations detailed how “some have provided extensive relief and social services in regions of the world, where because of lack of governmental will or capacity, no alternatives existed,” (Berger 2003, 16).

But the Congo offers a unique example in that it is much more than a weak developing nation, it is in the top five on the Failed States Index and has suffered the devastation of two recent wars. In the eastern-most provinces of North and South Kivu that have suffered the brunt of war devastation and are outside the reach of a weak central state located in the far west, scholars have observed how non-state actors, and particularly religious organizations, are de facto replacing the state in service provision.

In a situation of state collapse, civil society organizations step in to substitute for the state's role as the provider (and, in many cases, regulator) of social services. In the eastern D.R. Congo, that CSO is most likely to be a church. The state's perpetual weakness in the region has always required the state to 'partner' with churches in providing health care and education. However, the collapse of the state and the wars of the late 1990s changed the relationship between the churches and the state from a partnership to one in which the state was essentially absent and the churches were essentially free to operate as they pleased. The state's collapse also opened the door for other civil society organizations to enter the health and education sectors. (Seay 2009, 202)

In the Maniema province, which borders the Kivus to the west, a similar situation exists. The Protestant Bishop of Maniema explained that education and healthcare are

not the responsibility of the church, but the duty of the state.<sup>34</sup> But since the Congolese state is unable to perform these duties, he said that the church cannot ignore the needs of the population and should also step up to help the state. Similarly, a member of the Muslim community of Kasongo expressed his belief that the war actually helped unite his community.<sup>35</sup> Because there was no effective government or strong traditional power, the Muslim community started to work together to take care of themselves, forming associations to tackle the myriad issues affecting their community.

Another factor complicating state provision of services is that much infrastructure, such as school buildings, was destroyed during the years of civil strife. In addition, there was a mass influx of people moving from the rural regions of the province to the capital Kindu because of insecurity caused by roaming militias during the conflict years. Demand for education has been further augmented by the increasing number of girls enrolling in school, which will be discussed in more detail below.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the number of children in towns needing an education is much larger than prior to the war, requiring new schools to be built and managed. In fact, statistics demonstrate that “between 2002 and 2007 the number of children attending school increased by 11 percent per year,” (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, 221).

The needs of the Congolese people are so large in the post-conflict period that other faith based organizations, such as those run by Catholics and Protestants, are unable to meet all needs, thus creating a unique opening for Muslim organizations to become active. One might think that the increasing involvement of the Muslim

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Protestant Bishop of Maniema province, Kindu 3/25/2009.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with president of CONADHI, an Islamic human rights association, Kasongo 4/28/2009.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Catholic Bishop for Kindu Diocese, Kindu 3/26/2009.

community in such sectors has displaced other religious associations and created tension. However, that is not the case as representatives of the Muslim and Christian communities affirmed that their associations are not in conflict in the education realm because there are simply too many children needing an education and not enough schools.<sup>37</sup>

A similar situation of government – faith based organization collaboration in education has occurred in Sierra Leone after the civil war from 1991 to 2002. Almost 90% of primary schools in that country were severely damaged after a decade of war and both NGOs and FBOs play a significant role in the education sector since the “government’s capacity to provide public services remains weak” (Nishimuko 2009, 281-2). As is the case in the Congo because of the lack of adequate school buildings, many schools in Sierra Leone run a double shift, with some classes attending in the morning, while others meet in the afternoons. Another similarity between the two post-conflict nations is that there are three kinds of schools: those that are strictly run by the government, those that are run by other groups (usually religious) with government assistance, and private schools. As in Congo, the government assistance includes paying teacher salaries and providing some learning materials, although it does not have enough resources to meet its obligations and parents are asked to pay fees in order to ensure their children’s schools can function. The author concluded by emphasizing that “this study showed that when the government’s ability to provide education is not adequate, collaboration between the government, NGOs and FBOs

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Provincial Coordinator for Islamic public schools in Maniema, Kindu 3/23/2009. Interview with staff at the coordination office for Protestant public schools in Maniema, Kindu 3/25/2009. Interview with Catholic Bishop for Kindu Diocese, Kindu 3/26/2009.

brings about effective outcomes and their involvement in development projects is vital,” (Ibid., 293).

One factor that must be taken into account when examining the state’s increased willingness to work with faith based organizations is the role of the international community in encouraging such a partnership. In particular, “realization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for achieving universal primary education by 2015 in the world as a whole, and for Africa, in particular, requires concentrated attention on the Democratic Republic of Congo, one of five countries in the world with the largest number of out-of-school children,” (World Bank 2005, ix). International donors hoped to increase school enrollment from 50 to 70% in post-war Congo by providing funding to reduce the school fees contributed by parents (De Herdt et al. 2010, 23). Despite international aid and the increased Congolese education budget, one study finds that “the impact on the school costs paid by parents was non-existent, since the reduction in school-level functioning costs was offset by an increase in the ‘taxes’ to be paid to higher administration levels,” (Ibid., 26). However, despite no reduction in the amount of money paid by parents in the form of school fees, whether for augmenting local teacher salaries or to be sent to fund other levels of the education bureaucracy, increased international assistance has elevated the number of Congolese children enrolled in public schools, as well as increased the number of officially recognized schools and teachers.

But in a post-conflict context of a weak state with limited financial resources, perhaps the best way for Congolese officials to attempt to achieve such high education levels as desired by the international community is through encouragement of the

expansion of the fairly effective state-religious education sector. Though the state had actively partnered with Catholics and Protestants for decades, it could perhaps hope to expand the system dramatically by engaging the minority religious communities of Kimbanguists and Muslims.

The international community has also had a profound effect on demand for schooling as well, particularly through efforts to educate parents to send their girls, and not just their boys, to school.<sup>38</sup> In Maniema this effort has been particularly aimed at the Muslim community, which had historically not sent many of their young girls to school. For example, a study conducted by the Catholic Church in Kasongo in 1999 found that of the 443 students in their final year of secondary school, only 100 were Muslim, and only 38 of the total were girls (Tata 2003, 67). Throughout the province one could see numerous posters of a young girl in a school uniform hopping toward school carrying a load of books. The posters, distributed primarily by UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, read "*Tout jeunes filles à l'école*" (All young girls to school). These were later replaced by posters portraying both boys and girls headed for class. The Islamic community also expressed their own internal push for Muslim children to go to school. In an interview with members of Mosque 18 in Kasongo, they described how the Muslim community also waged internal campaigns to encourage parents to send

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<sup>38</sup> The important role of the international community in training efforts on women's rights and sending girls to school was discussed during an interview with staff of the Diocese's Commission on Justice and Peace, Kasongo 7/4/2008. The president of CFMUDEMA, the Maniema Muslim women's collective, described how attending seminars supported by the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other international organizations helped to encourage her interest in development work, and particularly in the area of women's rights, Kindu 5/12/2009.

both boys and girls to school after the war, including during Friday prayer services at the mosques.<sup>39</sup>

This study argues that the Muslim minority has been able to accomplish so much recently because of the opportunity structure of this moment in Congolese history where the state is weak and unable to meet the demands of a post-conflict society, and therefore willing to compromise with the Islamic community in the creation of Muslim schools. However, we must acknowledge that the role of the state in the rapid expansion of the Islamic community in the education sector is complicated. On the one hand, the state is too weak to provide education for the growing population of children interested in attending school and must rely on religious organizations to help it fulfill this task. Even the current number of schools, which is much larger than several years ago, is insufficient for the number of school-aged children, which means that there is still an inadequate supply for the amount of demand. And according to several informants and the history of education in the Congo, even if the state did have the capacity to be the sole provider of education, it may not be interested in doing so, and possibly still lacks the necessary management skills.

On the other hand, the state has exercised its strength in the education domain as well, first by the creation of the convention system, and currently by imposing a national curriculum and providing an inspection bureaucracy ensuring that non-state institutions are operating according to state regulations. In order to operate these schools, the Muslim community and other religious organizations must seek accreditation from the national government. In short, as Mallya (2010) noted, the state dictates the

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with members of Mosque 18, Kasongo 4/16/2009.

parameters and rules within which faith based organizations can operate. There is significant evidence for such a claim, as described below.

According to one informant, the explanation for why there are so many Islamic schools now was the concern of the state about the growing monopoly of the Catholic Church in the education domain.<sup>40</sup> He recounted that in 2000-2001 he was in Kinshasa working for COMICO and was present at a meeting between leaders of his organization and the Minister of Teaching, Ndom nda Ombel. The minister came to see them to complain about the continuing strikes by teachers in Catholic schools. Since the Catholic Church ran the majority of schools in the country, he said that the government had decided to take measures to decrease the Catholic monopoly on education. In order to do this, the Congolese government had decided to allocate a large number of schools to be run by Muslims and the Kimbanguist church. The informant insisted that this political and top-down explanation was the primary cause of the huge increase in the numbers of Muslim schools in the post-war period.

Although this is a very persuasive story and theory, another prominent Muslim leader, the current Coordinator of Islamic public schools, refuted it by saying the decision had nothing to do with the Catholic Church.<sup>41</sup> In his opinion, the reason the state had been increasingly interested in collaborating with the Islamic community is that they realized that by working together they could overcome the old injustices of the state against the Muslims. He proceeded to describe a meeting in which the national minister granted Muslims control of schools they had previously run but lost because of

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with former Secretary General of COMICO, Kasongo 4/27/2009.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with National Coordinator of Islamic public schools, Kinshasa 6/18/2009.

mismanagement. The meeting he referred to most likely took place in 1990, long before that described by the former Secretary General. Therefore, it is possible that both versions are true. Regardless, several informants professed their belief that the original signing of the school convention between the state and the Islamic society was the direct result of external demands by Saudi Arabia in order for the Mobutu regime to receive much needed financial support.

A leader within the Muslim community of Kisangani echoed the importance of international pressures on the Congolese government.<sup>42</sup> He argued that the increase in his community's involvement with development is in part the result of the Congolese state being criticized by outsiders, though he did not specify to whom he was referring, for working closely with only three religious communities and marginalizing the fourth, Islam. Thus, despite our continued discussion of the Congolese state's weakness, it must be acknowledged that the state's desire and willingness to cooperate with faith based organizations is a paramount factor for explaining the increase in the number of Muslim schools in the post-conflict period.

The Muslim community has profited from the state's willingness to incorporate their religion into the hybrid system of schools that operate on a state – faith based organization partnership. As a result, the community has opened many new primary and secondary schools throughout the country. They have the financial resources to do so because the convention school system is such that in theory the national government pays teacher salaries, but when they do not or this amount is inadequate the burden on

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Sheikh overseeing construction of *Complex Scholaire Nuuru el Yaqiini*, Kisangani 5/28/2009.

providing teacher salaries comes from parents, just as it does at schools run by other religions or the state itself.

There are numerous factors that explain the increased interest and involvement of the Muslim community in providing education at this moment in time. The first, as documented in the Chapter 6, is the easing of intense internal divisions within the Islamic community itself at various levels. However, this chapter has argued that an important external factor of opportunity also helps explain their effective mobilization. Historically the various foreign rulers marginalized the Muslim community from education. As these repressive regimes have come to an end, the community experiences political, economic, and educational freedom. As a result, a new cadre of intellectual Muslims has slowly replaced the generations that were unable to get a good education, and they now hold leadership positions in COMICO and the education bureaucracy. Institutions modeled after those of their religious peers are being rehabilitated or created to carry out the tasks necessary for the rapid creation of Muslim schools. The space for the Muslim minority to become involved in this sector has occurred because of a huge demand on the part of children and parents, coupled with the inability of other religious groups, and especially the central state, to produce an adequate supply of education. However, though weak, the state does play an important part in the mobilization of the Muslim community in the education sector through the hybrid state – religious organization system.

CHAPTER 8  
RELIGION AND THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC GOODS IN AFRICA: LESSONS FROM  
THE MUSLIM MINORITY OF D.R. CONGO

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the fourth most failed state in the world (Foreign Policy 2011), and as such one should expect there to be a total breakdown of order and no functioning institutions, as in Somalia. Yet the public education sector of the Congo as described here is flourishing, which presents us with a unique puzzle: How is this possible? The Congolese state remains incredibly weak and unable to provide public goods for its citizens, yet the Congolese population is not fleeing the state by creating private institutions, as one would expect. In fact, 75% of Congolese students receive an education in public schools, albeit those run by partnerships with religious organizations (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, 220). Through the convention school system linking the state with religious organizations for the operation of public schools, the state is responsible for the financial aspects of such institutions. However, the state does not hold up its end of the bargain, and 90% of financing for these public schools comes from contributions made by parents to not only pay for the functioning of their child's local school, but provide fees to be sent to district, provincial, and national level bureaucracies to ensure the proper functioning of the entire sector (Ibid., 223).

Why then would citizens continue to approach the state and express demand for public schools when they could easily use their resources to create private institutions? In the Congo the state-religious organization hybrid model is still aggressively pursued not only by the religious associations, but also by average citizens themselves. And why would Muslim organizations, which had previously little involvement with the public education sector, also aggressively pursue this model when they could be creating private institutions with more flexibility to include more rigorous religious education?

The answers, this study argues are to be found in the legitimacy the state as an idea still holds in the minds of Congolese citizens. As described in Chapter 3, the *idea* of the Congolese state still persists against all odds, despite the state's clear inability to earn that legitimacy by providing for her subjects. State education bureaucrats and inspectors who continue to don uniforms and report for duty despite not being paid or receiving inadequate salaries reinforce the "face" of the state in diverse localities. And parental contributions and demands for their children to receive a *public* education, despite the fact that they are the primary financial contributors that keep the system afloat, reify the idea of the state. De Herdt et al. affirm this logic when they suggest that we should "be impressed by the efforts of non-state actors...to contribute to the reproduction of the state at the meso-level. Given the dismal record of the Congolese state in recent decades, one might have expected a much greater inclination to opt out of the state's framework, but the contrary seems to be the case," (2010, 23).

Perhaps the non-state actors most involved with the reproduction of the idea of the Congolese state are FBOs who continuously step in to provide public services for citizens in the form of running public schools and health clinics, rehabilitating war combatants and victims, and even ensuring that the rag-tag Congolese army arrives to the battlefield in a timely manner (as illustrated in the example at the opening of this study). And most shockingly, the historically marginalized and long-suffering Muslim minority of Congo has chosen in recent years to also mobilize to create public schools that reinforce the legitimacy of the Congolese state.

But despite its continued status as failed, the Congolese state does exert its agency. "The specific case of the education sector enables a demonstration of how the

Congolese state continues to survive and transform itself. As an administrative framework the state has never ceased to exist, and its role in providing public services has been redefined rather than having evaporated,” (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, 214). By promoting the state-religious association hybrid model, the state is able to maintain control over the education sector because “the various actors involved continue to look at the state as the primary actor responsible for organizing and financing the sector,” (Ibid., 223). These findings therefore have significant implications for scholarly discussions of failed states.

In the early stage of this research, it was hypothesized that in the modern context of failed statehood, Muslim organizations have expanded from primarily religious enterprises to informal institutions *replacing* the state in addressing the basic needs of citizens’ everyday lives. Although fieldwork revealed that this is largely the case, this must nevertheless be nuanced. The “failed state” approach suggests a total lack of institutional capacity, where non-state actors such as FBOs are seen as in direct competition with the state for authority in a given area. As one example, “instead of chaos in spaces where state sovereignty is sparse or absent, alternative authorities arise. New actors and institutions fulfill roles previously considered the preserve of the state. Gangs, militias, thugs, local men of influence, and religious political parties...establish authority through services to the community,” (Baylouny 2010, 136).

However, the findings of this study show that the state is in fact not completely absent. Though not very functional, the Congolese state does have a national education curriculum and attempts to oversee this sector. Therefore non-state organizations – and namely religious institutions – which wish to create and run schools, whether

private or public, must seek accreditation from the national government. These new schools are what might be considered “hybrid” institutional forms because they are public schools run by various faith based organizations. Therefore, FBOs do not so much replace the state by providing public goods as they *collaborate* and *negotiate* with the formal state in these sectors. In the post-war Congolese context, the negotiations between the central state and the Muslim community have resulted in more children from any religious background receiving a quality education at *hybrid* Islamic-state institutions. This is an important finding for the theoretical framework scholars use to address governance in failed or weak state contexts.

The aims of this study have been to examine how and why public goods have been delivered by faith based organizations in weak states, particularly Islamic associations in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Provision of public goods, especially education, has been carried out by Catholic and Protestant organizations for decades in Congo. What is new and requires understanding is why the Muslim community has been able to mobilize to run Islamic public schools in the post-war period. Given the history of marginalization of the Muslim minority population, it is even more remarkable that Islamic faith based organizations have begun to play an increasingly important role in the Congolese education system. This study has argued that it has been able to do so for two primary reasons. The first is that intense internal conflicts within the Muslim community itself, which made collective action virtually impossible for several decades, have been replaced by the emergence of a Reformist leadership with development aspirations. The second explanation comes in the form of the opportunity available for mobilization at the particular historic moment in the Congo where increased

liberalization and the end of dictatorship and war combined with a weak central state unable to provide the services demanded by its citizenry.

During fieldwork in Maniema, Kisangani, and Kinshasa, informants from both the Muslim community and other religious communities repeatedly discussed how there appears to have been an awakening in the development mentality of Congolese Muslims in recent years, especially since the end of the war. Historical texts and interviews describe the community as having always been marginal to Congolese state institutions in the past. This is no doubt directly related to the exclusion and suffering the Muslim community endured during the colonial era by both the Belgian regime and the Catholic missionary community. The education provided by the latter group harassed Muslim children, and offered the choice of forced conversion or expulsion from the only education available. As such, the majority of Muslims relied on trade for their livelihoods, do not speak the administrative French language, and were thus ostracized from state institutions.

This seems to have begun to change as a direct result of the external influences of globalization, liberalization, and development assistance. In the 1990s in Congo, as well as most other African nations, the state was forced to scale back even more its meager services. International donors were increasingly discouraged by poor governance and corruption and opted to instead provide funds to local non-governmental organizations to carry out development projects. Thus, all over Congo there was a large proliferation of NGOs seeking external backers. The Muslim community has also followed this broader trend, as evidenced by the creation of numerous Islamic NGOs.

Additionally, the devastation of the two wars in Congo left many people struggling to find a means to survive in a defunct economy at the beginning of the new century. The most attractive sector at this time was development because it held the possibility of extensive funding from international donors eager to help rebuild the post-conflict society. In order to attract external backers, projects must be well written in French and follow certain criteria. What is truly interesting in this scenario is that the Muslim community's actions confirm that they are now willing to be incorporated into mainstream Congolese institutions, following the Belgian legacy. In interviews with members of Muslim NGOs throughout the country, they proudly displayed their statutes written in French and conforming to the main model, outlining not only their goals and objectives, but also their administrative structure consisting of the usual posts. A proper national education and fluency in French is essential in order to participate in NGO development work.

By providing Islamic public schools, the Muslim community not only can ensure that their children have the skills necessary to compete in the future, but Islamic associations who run schools procure salaries for teachers and administrators through funds received from the state or parents. The economic motivation is one factor explaining why the Muslim community is increasingly becoming involved in public education. Other important factors presented in this study include the motivations of propagation of the faith and preparing the next generation to be more active politically; the creation of effective institutions run by emerging Muslim leaders; and the opportunity structure of this moment in Congolese history where increased religious and political freedom intersects with the weak capacity of the central state. Regardless of these

external factors, the Islamic community of Congo would not be rapidly increasing their involvement in providing the public good of education had it not recently experienced a leadership change and calls for unity of the minority after decades of internal conflict at the local, regional, and national levels.

Although at this time most Muslim schools are in the early stages of their evolution and it will take many years before the data exist to draw large-scale conclusions about the role they have played in Congolese society, we can nonetheless mention some initial observations at this stage. First, it is apparent that by creating new schools, the Muslim community is providing an important service to the Congolese community by increasing the supply and hence the potential access to education for children of all religious backgrounds. Even with the significant proliferation of Muslim schools, there is still a substantial need for more institutions because of the population of school-aged children and increased demand. These schools also provide an additional option for Muslim parents who may question the environment of schools run by other religious communities, for historical reasons, but may now choose to send their children to receive a good education in an environment more closely aligned with their values.

As this study has suggested, the increased organization of the Muslim minority community of Congo does not end with the provision of education. Islamic associations are being created all over the country with numerous objectives, some spiritual, service-oriented, or political. It seems highly likely that this mobilization will translate into increased involvement in the political sphere in the future. This represents a drastic disjuncture from the past where the minority group was disengaged from such processes. If the Muslim community is incorporated well into the burgeoning

democratic institutions of post-war Congo, this will indeed be a positive outcome. If, however, well-organized Muslim groups feel marginalized from political processes, this could prove dangerous.

Although the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 have resulted in an increased fear of Muslim political activity, this fear need not apply to the Muslim minority of the Democratic Republic of Congo. There has been a significant awakening on the part of the community, which now boasts a wide variety of associations active in all areas of public life, including education. And there is desire on their part to also become increasingly involved in the political sphere. But this desire appears to be one of democratic equality, recognizing their minority status and hoping to be represented fairly. As members of Islamic associations in Benin asserted, “they want Muslims, whom they consider to be underrepresented in politics and in high-level administrative positions, to catch up to the rest of the country,” (Bregand 2007, 131). As this study demonstrated, the historic marginalization of the Muslim minority of Congo contributed to the community’s lack of representation in such areas, but their recent mobilization had demonstrated their desire for change. This parallels observations of the Islamic community in Cameroon where “the gradual movement of Muslim agents, literati, and intellectuals into the political sphere, using associational structures... demonstrates that these actors are no longer content to restrict themselves to the traditional roles of teacher and prophet. They are seeking to participate more actively in the political arena,” (Adama 2007, 227).

An important policy question that arises out of this study is whether the Congolese Muslim community has created a substantial organized network able to

receive international funding in order to perform more development projects from the ground-up as opposed to top-down state approaches. At this preliminary stage the response is “yes”. Some international funding has already been obtained by various organizations in Maniema and Kisangani. The World Bank has helped to fund the rehabilitation of school buildings and the Muslim community has proven that they can provide quality education. Muslim women’s organizations in all field sites had received international funding to operate an orphanage for children abandoned after the war, rehabilitate victims of sexual violence, provide literacy and income generating skills for widows, or run a malnutrition center. They had proven very effective in doing so until international donors pulled out or changed their development objectives. In the words of a colleague studying a similar phenomenon in Sierra Leone, “donors need to recognize the FBOs contributions and comparative advantages and strengthen links with FBOs,” (Nishimuko 2009, 293).

In discussions with the Muslim majority community of Kasongo, they complained that some international projects in their area had arrived with a pre-determined project implementation plan, and when informed that their plan conflicted with the values of the Muslim community, refused to alter their course. The result was that such projects wasted many donor dollars and did not produce the intended results because they did not take into account the importance of Islamic values for the people they were trying to assist. However, had they respected cultural values and worked in conjunction with the now well-mobilized Muslim community, they would have likely witnessed better development outcomes.

Finally, this study aims to make contributions in several realms. It addresses research questions of interest to both scholars and practitioners. The project directly engages the literatures on public goods, faith based organizations, and weak states and seeks to demonstrate how they intersect to provide a better understanding of the complex nature of politics in certain cases. Also, the study adds much needed contemporary knowledge about the virtually ignored case of the political involvement of the Muslim minority of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

As regards the academic literature on public goods provision, this study contributes empirical evidence from the DR Congo on the specific good of education. It shows how not only the state or non-governmental organizations can spearhead the provision of these goods, but how non-conventional actors can also become involved when the need arises. This research has endeavored to understand how, why, and how effectively faith based organizations can provide education, with a particular focus on Islamic associations.

Additionally, for scholars of Islam in Africa, the work provides an example of the political involvement of a minority community. As mentioned above, the Islamic community in Congo is choosing to follow national norms and standards in their process of mobilization. They are engaging the political system as it currently exists, as opposed to creating new or different institutions. The organizational structure of Muslim associations is identical to those of their religious or secular counterparts. The Islamic “convention” schools are the same as those run by Catholics, Protestants, Kimbanguists, and the state, with the exception of the content discussed during religion class. By working with the existing model, the Congolese Muslim community provides a

direct contrast to Islamic associations in other African contexts who create alternative institutions to those currently in existence. However, in the Congo new Islamic schools are not competing with or supplanting the state or other religious institutions, but helping to provide a much needed public good that otherwise would reach many fewer Congolese children.

In addition, this study is of interest to those studying the dynamics internal to African Muslim communities, particularly with regard to Sufi/ Reformist debates. These debates have been salient in the Congolese context, even among a small minority community. In the Maniema province the conflict has been primarily between Tariqa and Tawahidi groups, while other factors such as generation and origin (natives vs. descendants of the Swahili-Arabs) have also been salient. In Kisangani the tensions have primarily been generational reflecting a clear divide among older, “traditional” Sufis and younger, foreign-educated Reformists. But the Congolese case also demonstrates the importance of delving deeper into the realities in particular locations to showcase the numerous nuances present in Sufi-Reformist divides. The emerging Tariqa leaders advocating for Reform and modernization in Maniema are a case in point.

And finally, for scholars of African Politics, the discussion of empirical versus juridical statehood first presented by Jackson and Rosberg in 1982 remains relevant when examining the contemporary failed Congolese state. The Congo has been repeatedly supported/ reified/ propped up by the granting of external sovereignty (juridical statehood), especially by the international community in the form of numerous attempts by the United Nations at peacekeeping and state building (ONUC in the 1960s and MONUC/MONUSCO since the early 2000s). Congolese rulers and elites have also

shown a vested interest in maintaining the state, particularly since access to the resources of the state has proven so lucrative. Somalia also possesses juridical statehood and attempts by the international community and local elites to keep up the idea of the Somali state. But Somalia remains a basket case where institutions do not function and daily life remains precarious for her citizens.

The Democratic Republic of Congo, despite also failing to meet the majority of the criteria for empirical statehood, does have functioning institutions, particularly in the education sector. How is this possible? This study proposes that the primary difference between Somalia and the DRC is that individual Congolese citizens, in addition to the international community and elites, believe in and prop up the idea of the Congo state. They do so by continuing to work in state bureaucracies without receiving salaries and by increasing demands for public services, such as education, even if that means financing it themselves. Therefore, in a way, the average Congolese citizen not only believes in the juridical statehood of the Congo, but also contributes to the increased functioning of the Congo empirically<sup>1</sup>. However this important distinction cannot be understood without an examination of how the Congo state *does* function, as opposed to how she fails.

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<sup>1</sup> As was discussed in Chapter 3 and has been suggested by scholars such as Englebert (2009).

APPENDIX:  
LIST OF INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATION, AND ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

**Summer 2008 Field Research**

Kindu, Maniema

- 13 June President of *Fondation Zam-Zam*, a Muslim women's development organization.
- 14 June Organization members of SAFI-Maniema, *Soutien aux Actions des Femmes Indigennes au Maniema*.
- 14 June Organization members of CFMUDEMA, *Collectif des Femmes Musulmanes pour le Développement du Maniema*.
- 16 June Head Imam of all Muslims in Kindu region, and other important men at Kindu's main mosque.
- 17 June Provincial Minister of *Ministère Provinciale pour l'Environnement, Tourisme, Culture et Arts*.
- 17 June Provincial Minister of *Ministère Provincial en charge de la Santé, Éducation, Genre Famille et Enfant, Affaire Sociale, et Travail*.
- 17 June Muslim theologians at Kindu's main mosque.
- 18 June Imam President, Vice President, and other members of *Jeunesse Islamique du Maniema* at the main mosque.
- 18 June Director of *Orphelinat Mungu ni Mapendo*, a Protestant orphanage.
- 18 June President and other members of LIFDM: *Ligue des Femmes Pour le Développement du Maniema*.
- 18 June President and other members of AFREM, a women's development organization.
- 19 June Hospital Director and other staff of *Ami Santé*, a Muslim healthcare association.
- 19 June President of *Fondation des Femmes Islamique AN-NOUR*.
- 19 June Executive Secretary of *Lycée Tulia*, orphanage and education association.
- 19 June President of *Fondation des Rosettes*, a women's development organization.
- 19 June Executive Secretary of ALFED, *Alliance Feminine Pour le Développement*.

- 20 June President of UPKA, *Union Paysanne Pour le Progrès*, member of the Muslim community, and political researcher.
- 20 June Group of Muslim women at main Kindu mosque.
- 21 June Meeting of Muslim community of Lucungu village, an important site in the history of Islamization of Maniema.
- 21 June Organization members of PIMA, *Programme Intégrer au Maniema*, in Alunguli.
- 21 June President and other members of *Comité Communal pour les Mamas Musulmanes à Alunguli*.
- 21 June President of *Femmes Volontaire Pour la Reconstruction de la Paix* in Alunguli.
- 22 June Consult book by GTZ-Kindu. 2007. *Bref Aperçu Historique du Maniema des Origines à Nos Jours*. Kindu: GTZ.
- 23 June President of BIDH, *Bureau Islamique Pour la Defense des Droits Humains*.
- 23 June Staff of *Bureau Provincial des Églises du Christ au Congo: ECC/Maniema*.
- 23 June Office Chief for Province of Maniema, MONUC, *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unis en RD Congo*.
- 24 June Provincial Coordinator for Illnesses and Vaccinations, *Ministère Provincial de la Santé*.
- 24 June Office Chief of *Bureau Provincial pour l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire, et Professionnel*, the state educational bureaucracy.
- 25 June Expert and Member of *Bureau d'Etudes, Assemblée Provinciale*.
- 25 June Executive Secretary of UMAMA, *Umoja wa Mama wa Maelendeo*, women's development association.
- 26 June President of COFEMA, *Collectif des Femmes du Maniema*.
- 26 June *Animateur-Formateur* of CTB: *Coopération Technique Belge*.
- 26 June Director and staff member, GTZ: German Technical Cooperation.
- 26 June President of *Action Pour la Protection des Personnes Vulnérables en Afrique*.
- 30 June Participant observation of Congolese Independence Day celebration.
- 01 July Coordinator and Promoter of AFILMA, *Association des Femmes Intellectuelles et Lettrées au Maniema*.

- 01 July National Consultant for FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- 02 July Financial and Administrative Officer of CARITAS, a Catholic development organization.
- 02 July Provincial Counselor for Reinsertion for UNDP, United Nations Development Program.
- 02 July Project Chief of COOPI, Italian international organization.
- 11 July Director of *École Premier Juhudi*, a Muslim public primary school.
- 11 July Prefect of *Institut Juhudi*, a Muslim public secondary school.
- 12 July Executive Director of United Front Against Riverblindness.
- 14 July Bureau Chief of MERLIN, a British humanitarian organization.
- 14 July Project Chief of CARE, an American development organization.
- 14 July Provincial Director of *Femmes Plus*, a women's HIV/AIDS organization.
- 15 July Organization Staff of APEMA, *Association Pour la Promotion de l'Éducation au Maniema*.
- 15 July Chief of Statistics for *Bureau de la Coordination Provinciale des Écoles Conventionée Catholique au Maniema*, the Catholic education bureaucracy.
- 15 July Executive Secretary of CRONGD: *Conseil Regional des Organisations Non-Governmental du Développement*.
- 15 July Member of Maniema civil society organization.
- 15 July Coordinator of JUP, *Jeunesse Unie Pour la Paix*.
- 16 July Managing Directors of Africa Alliance.
- 17 July Director of DFF: *Département Femmes et Familles de l'Église du Christ au Congo*, a Protestant women's organization.
- 17 July Division Chief of *Division Provinciale du Genre, de la Famille et de l'Enfant*, a government organ.
- 18 July Executive Secretary of UWAKI, *Umoja kwa wanawaki wakulima wakivu ya Maniema*, a women's development organization.

- 18 July Antenna Chief of CONADER/DDR, an international organization for post-conflict intervention.
- 19 July Consult document *République Démocratique du Congo: Mon Beau Pays*. Mediaspaul, 2007.
- 21 July Provincial Coordinator of *Coordination Provinciale des Écoles Conventionnées Islamique au Maniema*, the Muslim education bureaucracy.
- 21 July Rector of *Université de Kindu*.
- Multiple Dates Founders of Heal Africa; and head of Heal Africa for Maniema, an organization that runs hospitals in Kindu and Goma.

Kasongo, Maniema

- 04 July Local organization members, COMICO, *Communauté Islamique en République Démocratique du Congo*.
- 04 July Animator for *Commission Diocésane Justice et Paix*, a Catholic association.
- 04 July President and other members of *Juma'ati Islamia*, a Muslim women's development group.
- 05 July Community members of Mosque 18.
- 05 July Community members of Mosque 17.
- 05 July President and other members of ADCMM, *Association du Développement Communautaire des Mamans Musulmanes*.
- 06 July Financial Administrator of GTZ, Kinshasa-Kasongo.
- 06 July Project Chief of Caritas- Kinshasa.
- 06 July Consult book: Joseph Bouchaud. July 1956. *L'Islam*. Libreville: Bibliothèque de l'Étoile, No. 112.
- 07 July Animator for BDD, *Bureau Diocésane pour le Développement*, a Catholic association.
- 07 July Secretary General of National COMICO organization.
- 07 July Staff of BIDH, *Bureau Islamique des Droits Humains*, Kasongo office.
- 08 July Director of *Radio Sauti ya Mkaaji*, the radio station of southern Maniema.
- 08 July President of Muslim women's development organization, and all Muslim women of Nyangwe village, the birthplace of Islam in Congo.

- 08 July Meeting of Muslim men at the mosque of Nyangwe village, the birthplace of Islam in Congo.
- 09 July Organization members, *Committee Islamique pour la Construction et Rehabilitation des Infrastructures Communitaires*, of Kabambare town.
- 09 July Organization members of AFMUD, *Association des Femmes Musulmanes pour le Développement*, of Kabambare town.
- 09 July Organization members of *Mwangaza*, a Muslim association of Kipaka town.
- 09 July Organization members of *Umoja*, a Muslim association of Kipaka town.
- 09 July Organization members of CIDECA, *Coordination Islamique pour le Développement Communautaire*, of Samba town.
- 09 July Organization members of ADEIM, *Association de Développement Integral des Mamas Musulmanes*, of Samba town.
- 09 July Muslim women from the town of Maringa Sud.
- 09 July Organization members of AFMED, *Association des Femmes Musulmanes pour le Développement*, of Kasenga town.
- 09 July Organization members of ASCOM, *Association Communautaire des Mamas Musulmanes*, of Nonda town.
- 09 July Organization members of AFMUD, *Association des Femmes Musulmanes pour le Développement*, of Kihonga town.

## 2009 Field Research

### Kindu, Maniema

- 14 Feb. Research Assistant and President of *Projet d'Electrification de la Commune d'Alunguli*.
- 15 Feb. Consult document "Monographie de la Province du Maniema." 2004. Kinshasa: Ministère du Plan.
- 16 Feb. Registration with *Direction Generale de Migration*.
- 16 Feb. Bureau Chief of *Division Provinciale de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire, et Professionnel*, the state educational bureaucracy.
- 17 Feb. Governor of Maniema province.
- 17 Feb. Vice-Governor of Maniema province.

18 Feb. Secretary of *Complexe Scolaire Zam-Zam*, a Muslim private primary school.

19 Feb. Observation at *Complexe Scolaire Zam-Zam* school.

20 Feb. Active member of Muslim community.

20 Feb. Political researcher for Maniema Province, CARP Afrique, political research organization.

21 Feb. Participant observation at meeting of *Femmes Protestantes au Maniema*.

21 Feb. Political journalist.

23 Feb. Assistant Director of *École Primaire Jihudi*, Muslim public primary school.

23-25 Feb. Observation at *E.P. Jihudi*.

24 Feb. Bureau Chief of Maniema province, MONUC, *Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unis en RD Congo*.

27 Feb. Participant observation at meeting of *Femmes Protestantes au Maniema*.

01 Mar. Staff of *Direction Générale de BCECO, RDC Ministère des Finances, Bureau Central de Coordination*.

02-04 Mar. Observation at *E.P. Matayo*, a Protestant public primary school.

04 Mar. Director of *E.P. Matayo*.

06 Mar. President of AFILMA, *Association des Femmes Intellectuelles et Lettrées au Maniema*, about planning for International Women's Day.

06 Mar. CARP political researcher.

07 Mar. Professor of Political Science, University of Kisangani.

07 Mar. Development Consultant of BCECO, *RDC Ministère des Finances, Bureau Central de Coordination*.

08 Mar. Participant Observation at celebration of International Women's Day.

08 Mar. Chinese Businessman for TTT Mining.

10 Mar. Assistant Director of *E.P. Mapendano*, a Catholic public primary school for girls.

10-11 Mar. Observation at *E.P. Mapendano*.

12 Mar. Assistant Director of *E.P. Kapondjo*, a Catholic public primary school for boys.

- 13 Mar. Observation at *Complexe Scolaire Zam-Zam* school.
- 16 Mar. Director of *E.P. Nyota*, a Kimbanguist public primary school.
- 16-17 Mar. Observation at *E.P. Nyota*.
- 17 Mar. President of *Solidarité Humanitaire pour le Développement*, an organization in the process of constructing *Institut Mulumbi*, a private Muslim secondary school.
- 17 Mar. Provincial Representative and other leaders of the Kimbanguist Church of Maniema Province.
- 18 Mar. Director of *E.P. Kindu*, a state public primary school.
- 18-19 Mar. Observation at *E.P. Kindu*.
- 20 Mar. Antenna Chief for Planning and Statistics of *Division Provinciale de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire et Professionnel*.
- 21 Mar. Assistant Principal Inspector of *Bureau d'Inspection Provinciale*, the state education inspection agency.
- 21 Mar. Office Chief of *Division Provinciale de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire, et Professionnel*, the state educational bureaucracy.
- 22 Mar. Quality Director for Water Program of *Cooperation Technique Belge*, Kinshasa.
- 23 Mar. Provincial Coordinator for *Coordination Provinciale des Écoles Conventionées Islamiques*, the Muslim educational bureaucracy.
- 23 Mar. Assistant Director of *Institut Jihudi*, a Muslim public secondary school.
- 24 Mar. Chief of Pedagogical Services for *Coordination Provinciale des Écoles Conventionées Catholique*, the Catholic Church's educational bureaucracy.
- 24 Mar. Provincial Coordinator for *Coordination Provinciale des Écoles Conventionées Kimbanguist*, the church's education bureaucracy.
- 25 Mar. Provincial Coordinator and other bureaucrats for *Coordination Provinciale des Écoles Conventionées Protestants*, the church's education bureaucracy.
- 25 Mar. Protestant Bishop of Maniema province.
- 26 Mar. Catholic Bishop of the Kindu Diocese.
- 27 Mar. Head Imam for Muslims for COMICO in the Kindu region.

- 27 Mar. Observation of prayer at main Friday mosque in Kindu.
- 28 Mar. Informal dinner with Governor of Maniema.
- 30 Mar. Governor of Maniema province.
- 30 Mar. Provincial Minister of *Ministère Provincial en charge de la Santé, Éducation, Genre Famille et Enfant, Affaire Sociale, et Travail*.
- 30 Mar. Consult book by Diangienda Kuntima. 1984. *Histoire du Kimbanguisme*. Kinshasa: Éditions Kimbanguistes.
- 31 Mar. Prefect of *Institut Lukunda*, a Muslim public secondary school.
- 31 Mar. Observation at mosque in Mekelenge, quartier Lukunda.
- 31 Mar. Observation at Qur'anic school at main Kindu mosque.
- 01 Apr. President of Société Civile, Maniema's civil society organization.
- 01 Apr. President of AFILMA.
- 02 Apr. Observation of Plenary session of Provincial Assembly.
- 03 Apr. Statistics officer of Kindu Mayor's office.
- 06 Apr. President of *Femmes Protestantes au Maniema* and Executive Secretary of UMAMA, *Umoja wa Mama wa Maendeleo*.
- 08 Apr. *Vicaire Général du Diocèse de Kasongo*, Assistant to Catholic Bishop.
- 10 Apr. Diocese Coordinator for *Coordination Provinciale des Écoles Conventionées Catholique*, the Catholic Church's educational bureaucracy.
- 11 May President of BIDH, *Bureau Islamique des Droits Humains*, who is also Permanent Assistant Secretary of COMICO for Maniema province.
- 12 May Professor Léonard N'Sanda Buleli of *Université du Moyen-Lualaba*, who is also a Deputy in the Provincial Assembly of Maniema.
- 12 May President of CFMUDEMA, *Collectif des Femmes Musulmanes pour le Développement du Maniema*.
- 14 May President of Maniema provincial chapter of YMCA.
- 14 May Former *Coordinateur des Écoles Musulmanes*, Muslim education bureaucracy.
- 14 May Governor of Maniema province.

18 May Staff of GTZ, *Coopération Technique Allemande*.

Kasongo, Maniema

11 Apr. Project Chief of GTZ-Kasongo.

13 Apr. Documentation at *Direction Generale de Migration*.

13 Apr. Introductions at *Territoire de Kasongo*, the local government bureaucracy.

13 Apr. Former Secretary General of national COMICO organization.

14 Apr. Counselor Chief and other bureaucrats of *Bureau de Conseilierie Resident des Écoles Conventionée Islamiques du Sud-Maniema*, the regional Muslim education bureaucracy.

15 Apr. Male community members of Mosque 17.

15 Apr. Women community members of Mosque 17.

16 Apr. Community members of Mosque 18.

16 Apr. Director of Qur'anic school of Mosque 18.

16 Apr. Women of Mosque 18 and members of *Dawa'tu Islamiyya* organization.

17 Apr. Community members of Central Mosque.

17 Apr. Women community members of Central Mosque.

17 Apr. Observation of Friday prayer at Central Mosque.

20 Apr. Participant observation at meeting of local COMICO organization members.

20 Apr. Sheikh from Mosque 18.

21 Apr. Director of *E.P. Nasibu*, a Muslim public primary school.

21 Apr. Director of *E.P. Nuru*, a Muslim public primary school.

22 Apr. Teacher from *E.P. Kasimu*, a Muslim public primary school.

22 Apr. Teachers of *Institut de la Cité*, a Muslim public secondary school.

23 Apr. Prefect of *Institut Nengo*, a Muslim public secondary school in Kihongo village.

23 Apr. Members of the Muslim community of Kihongo, a village near Kasongo.

- 24 Apr. Prefect of *Institut de la Cité*, a Muslim public secondary school.
- 27 Apr. Former Secretary General of national COMICO organization.
- 28 Apr. Officers of *Société Civile*, the civil society organization.
- 28 Apr. President of the city of Kasongo's *Société Civile*, who is also president of CONADHI, *Conseil National des Droits de l'homme en Islam*.
- 29 Apr. Women community members of Mosque 17.
- 30 Apr. Documentation collection on the subject of the history of Islam in Kasongo.
- 01 May Women community members of Mosque 18.
- 03 May Director and Staff of the largest Qur'anic school in Congo located in the village of Mungomba.
- 03 May Member of the Muslim community of Wamaza town.
- 03 May Director of Qur'anic school in Wamaza town.
- 03 May Women community members in Wamaza town.
- 03 May Muslim community members of Wamaza town.
- 05 May International Logistician of *Projet Routes de Dessertes Agricoles*, CTB, *Coopération Technique Belge*.

### Kisangani, Orientale

- 23 May Observation of masters thesis defense at University of Kisangani.
- 25 May Provincial Coordinator of *Bureau Conseillerie Resident des Écoles Conventionées Islamique pour la Province Orientale*, the regional Muslim education bureaucracy.
- 25 May Director of *E.P. Hodari*, a Muslim public primary school.
- 26 May Secretary to the Division Chief of *Division Provinciale de l'Enseignement Primaire, Secondaire, et Professionnel*, the state education bureaucracy.
- 27 May Member of Kisangani COMICO, who is also President of UDEMOS.
- 27 May Prefect of *Institut Hodari*, a Muslim public secondary school.
- 28 May Sheikh president of *Centre Islamique Nuuru el Yaqiini*, in process of constructing *Complexe Scholaire Nuuru*, a Muslim private primary and secondary school and health clinic.

- 28 May Regional President of UFMC, *Union des Femmes Musulmanes du Congo*.
- 29 May Assistant Provincial Principal Inspector of *Bureau d'Inspection Provinciale*, the state education inspection office.
- 29 May Observation of Friday prayer at Mosque CINY.
- 30 May Give interview to journalist from Islam F.M.
- 31 May President of COPROFEM, *Committee Provinciale Feminine de COMICO*.
- 01 June Muslim women community leaders of UFMC, *Union des Femmes Musulmanes du Congo*, MANUS, *Mamas Musulmanes de la Communauté Islamique*, *Alkaslani*, *Dawati*, *Zam-Zam*, *Femmes et Familles*, *Yaswaburu*, *Udaibiya*, CINY, *Mapendo*, and *Ya Latwifu*, at UFMC's *Centre Nutritionelle Théraputique Bambo*.
- 02 June Prefect of *Institut Umoja*, a Muslim public secondary school.
- 02 June Imam and leader of Friday prayer at Mosque CINY.
- 02 June Visit *Mosquée Centrale*, Qur'anic school, and Islam F.M.
- 03 June Director of *E.P. Umoja*, a Muslim public primary school.
- 05 June Muslim women community members of COPROFEM, *Comité Provinciale Feminine*, composed of fifteen associations, meeting at *Mosquée Commune Kabondo*.
- 06 June Professor in Department of Sociology, University of Kisangani, who is a scholar of local Muslim politics and a Muslim theologian.
- 06-10 June Archival research at the libraries of the University of Kisangani.
- 09 June Professor in Department of Sociology, University of Kisangani.
- 10 June Head Imam of COMICO for the Orientale province.
- 11 June Statistician of *Division de l'Enseignement Primaires, Secondaires, et Professionel*.
- 12 June Secretariat staff of *Bureau d'Inspection Provinciale*.
- 12 June Muslim leaders of numerous development organizations at a community leader's home.

### Kinshasa

- 16 June Assistant Secretary General of national COMICO organization.

- 16 June Imam Legal Representative, the top leader for national COMICO organization.
- 18 June National president of CONAFEM, *Comité Nationale Feminine de COMICO*, who is also president of national *Fondation Zam-Zam*.
- 18 June National Coordinator of *Écoles Conventionées Islamiques*, national Muslim education bureaucracy.
- 19 June Visit new mosques, schools, and Arab development initiatives with Imam Legal Representative of COMICO. Regional Director of *Munazzamat el D'aawa el Islamiya*. Resident Representative of *Al Maktoum Foundation*.
- 19 June Reception at Imam Legal Representative of COMICO's home.
- 20 June General Secretary of *Renouveau de l'Action Syndicale*.
- 22 June Muslim women community leaders of national development organizations.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ashley Elizabeth Leinweber was born in Victoria, Seychelles in 1979 to Elizabeth Russ Leinweber and Paul Douglas Leinweber, who were stationed in the island nation for their work with the U.S. Peace Corps. Ashley was valedictorian of the 1997 class at Bishop Sullivan High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She then attended Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi double majoring in political science and French. During her Millsaps career, Ashley spent the fall 1999 semester studying abroad with the School for International Training in Geneva, Switzerland, where she was also an intern for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She graduated from Millsaps in May 2001 Magna Cum Laude, with Honors in political science, and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. From 2002-2004 Ashley was a community health agent volunteer with the U.S. Peace Corps in Niger, West Africa. The year after her return, she began the doctorate program in the political science department at the University of Florida, where she received her M.A. degree in 2008. With generous funding from the African Power and Politics Program supported by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Ashley conducted seven months of field research for this dissertation in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2008 and 2009.