

Understanding Patrimonial Democracy*

가산제적 민주주의 이해하기

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Abstract

There is virtual consensus about the patrimonial character of states/regimes in Sub-Saharan Africa, and much discussion about the obstacles this presents to full democratization. There has been much less analysis of how patrimonial states/regimes have shaped democratic procedures and institutions since the "third wave" arrived upon African shores a decade and a half ago. This paper undertakes a comparative analysis of 'patrimonial democracy,' exploring not how it might eventually lead to more liberal Western forms of governance but rather how it actually works. How are patrimonial democracies legitimized? How do they structure state-society, and society-society relations? Under what conditions are they more likely to consolidate, transition back to previous regime forms, or collapse into conflict? The paper sketches some preliminary answers to these questions, based upon a comparative analysis of Benin, Malawi and Congo-Brazzaville. Each of these countries experienced real political change with founding elections: incumbents were turned out of office. Each also has a traditional three-way ethnic/political divide, which provides an important control in the analysis. Despite these political and societal similarities, the three cases represent the range of possible values on the dependent variable: patrimonial democracy appears to have entered a consolidation phase in Benin; Malawi is reverting to a less democratic form of patrimonial rule; and the transition to patrimonial democracy in Congo-Brazzaville led to civil war and state collapse. The research question to be addressed in this paper is: why? To what extent can we identify structural explanations for divergent outcomes, and how much must be left to contingency?

□ Key Words: Patrimonial, Democracy, Benin, Malawi, Congo-Brazzaville

* Presentation at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington DC, September 1-4, 2005.

초록

아프리카의 서부 사하라 지역에 위치한 국가나 정치체제들의 가산제적 성격에 관해서 실질적인 합의가 존재한다. 그리고 그 가산제적 성격이 그들 국가나 정치체제의 완전한 민주화에 장애가 되는 문제에 관해서도 많은 논의가 진행되었다. 하지만 약 15년 전 “제3의 민주화 물결”이 아프리카 해안에 도착한 이래로 민주적 절차나 제도를 그곳의 가산제적 국가나 정치체제들에 이식시키는 방법에 관해서는 그렇게 많은 분석이 이뤄지지 않았다. ‘가산제적 민주주의’에 관한 비교연구를 수행하는 이 논문에서는 가산제적 국가나 정치체제들을 궁극적으로 서양의 자유주의적 정부형태로 이행시킬 방법을 탐구하는 것이 ‘아니라,’ ‘다소간’ 민주적으로 운영시킬 수 있는 현실적 방안을 탐구하고자 한다. 가산제적 민주주의는 어떻게 정당화될 수 있는가? 가산제적 민주주의에서는 국가와 사회의 관계, 사회와 사회의 관계 등을 어떻게 구조화시킬 수 있는가? 가산제적 민주주의는 어떤 조건에서 공고화될 수 있고, 어떤 조건에서 기존 정치체제의 형태로 퇴행할 수 있으며, 어떤 조건에서 체제 갈등을 초래할 수 있는가? 이 논문에서는 베냉, 말라위, 콩고-브라자빌의 정치체제 비교분석을 토대로 위 문제들에 대한 몇 가지 시론적인 답변을 제시해 보고자 한다. 이들 각 국가는 기존 관리를 축출하는 정초선거의 정치변동을 직접 체험하기도 했다. 각국은 또한 전통적인 3종류의 인종적, 정치적 균열을 갖고 있는데, 그 균열은 이 분석에서 중요한 통제변수를 제공했다. 이 3가지 사례는 정치적, 사회적 유사성에도 불구하고 종속변수 차원에서 가능치의 범위를 드러냈다. 즉 베냉에서는 가산제적 민주주의가 공고화 단계에 접어들었고, 말라위에서는 가산제적 규칙이 지배하는 민주주의 형태로 퇴행했으며, 콩고-브라자빌에서는 가산제적 민주주의로 이행하는 과정이 내전과 국가 붕괴로 귀결되었다. 왜 이런 차이가 나는가? 이처럼 상이한 결과를 구조적 변수로 설명할 수 있는 부분은 어느 정도이고, 우연적 요인으로 간주해야 할 부분은 어느 정도인가? 이 연구에서는 이런 문제를 해명해 보고자 했다.

□ 주제어: 가산제적, 민주주의, 베냉, 말라위, 콩고-브라자빌

Democratization in Africa has forced a rethinking of general theories of democratic transition. Geddes suggests that one of the few things we have learned from twenty years of theorizing about democratization is that it is associated with middle levels of income. This claim was first made by Lipset in 1959, and has been refined by scholars and consistently supported by empirical data into the 1990s (Dahl 1971, Bollen and Jackman 1985, Huntington 1991, Callaghy 1994, Ottaway 1997, Geddes 1999, Lawson 1999). Yet, in Joseph's assessment, the 'third wave' demonstrated little respect for income distinctions (1997, 9). Indeed, now that the dust

has settled, the most successful new democracies in Africa appear to be among the *poorest* (Benin, Mali, Niger). African democratization also challenges the necessity of other commonly accepted "prerequisites" of democracy, such as a strong civil society, and an urbanized, well-educated population. Similarly, transitions from African patrimonial regimes in the 1990s followed a different course from that identified in general theories of transition (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, Solt 2001, O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, Przeworski 1991). Transitions appear to be shaped as much by where a country starts as by where it is going. Van de Walle (2003) takes the analysis one step further, noting that emerging party systems in Africa continue to reflect the region's patrimonial inheritance, retaining strong elements of presidentialism and clientelism (supported by the appropriation of office).

The broad challenge that African experience presents to commonly held understandings of democratization suggests not that existing theories are misspecified, but rather that they rest upon an unidentified antecedent condition. Though states undergoing democratization have varied on any number of characteristics, all (or at least the vast majority) outside of Africa have had a bureaucratic core. Sub-Saharan African states, by contrast, demonstrate varying degrees of bureaucracy, but with few exceptions have a patrimonial rather than bureaucratic core. The goal of this paper is to investigate how democracy works under the condition of patrimonial states. Further research along these lines may very well demonstrate that existing theories of democratization under conditions of bureaucracy are not directly challenged by democratization experiences in Africa.

Bratton and van de Walle's (1997) contribution to our understanding of democratic transitions derives not only from their identification of differences between corporative and neopatrimonial regimes as starting points, but also from their insistence that patrimonialism be understood as an (informally) institutionalized regime type, rather than simply a manifestation of unrestrained 'personal rule.'¹⁾ They note that the defining elements of patrimonialism — personalized authority, appropria-

1) Bratton and van de Walle use the term 'neopatrimonial' regimes. 'Neopatrimonial' generally refers to contemporary patrimonial regimes, which are believed to lack the traditional legitimation that was critical to Weber's original concept of patrimonialism. In my view, the question of 'tradition' and 'legitimacy' is understudied, and the distinction insufficiently supported by evidence. I therefore use the more generic term, patrimonial.

tion of offices, and systematic clientelism -- have persisted through the passing of founding fathers, military coups d'etat, and civil wars. Since Jackson and Rosberg's (1982) highly influential -- and extremely voluntarist -- *Personal Rule in Black Africa*, analyses of patrimonialism (which is often treated as synonymous with 'personal rule'), have tended to understate the extent to which patrimonial practices are institutionalized, beyond the discretion of individual rulers (Callaghy 1984, Snyder 1992, Boås 2001, Brownlee 2002). Bratton and van de Walle highlight that patrimonialism *is* a set of rules of the game, rather than the absence of any set of rules. Even the most powerful president violates these rules at his peril. This represents a critically important corrective, but one that does not go far enough.

Patrimonialism has survived yet another shift -- democratization. Given that democratization is not an event but a process (and a long one at that) one would expect to see practices of the pre-transition regime continue for some time after founding elections. However, patrimonialism continues to shape virtually every democratic process and institution in most African countries. One might object again that this reflects fundamentally flawed transitions and a modal regime that can only be considered pseudo-democratic. Restricting ourselves to best cases, those countries ranked "free" by Freedom House in 2005 (Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, and Senegal), we see democratization proceeding hand in hand with entrenched patrimonial practices in all except Botswana (Decalo 1997, Sandbrook and Oelbaum 1997, Matlosa 1998, Sandbrook 1997, Beck 1998, 2001).²⁾ This is not so surprising if we recall that Weber's (1978) patrimonialism is one of three ideal types of "authority," the other two being bureaucracy and charisma. It is a state form, not a regime type, and one would not expect to see rapid change in the *relatively permanent* institutions of the state in response to adoption of a new set of rules of the game, or regime. Virtually all contemporary states are bureaucratic/patrimonial hybrids, with most states in the developing world demonstrating

2) For reasons that are not well understood, Botswana has demonstrated far less patrimonialism than other countries from the time of its independence in 1966. Also ranked free in 2003 were the island countries of São Tomé and Príncipe, Cape Verde and Mauritius, as well as the newly independent countries of South African and Namibia. The size of the former raise serious questions about their comparability to mainland countries, and the latter two are somewhat special cases because of their double transition - though Namibia especially already demonstrates marked movement toward patrimonialism.

significant elements of patrimonialism. Africa is unique only in that patrimonial elements are predominant there, constituting "the foundation and superstructure of political institutions" (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 62). Specific rules of the game, which constitute alternative regime types, interact with codes of behavior embedded in the relatively permanent institutions of that state (Rothchild 1987). What follows is a very tentative initial exploration of the how patrimonial state institutions and democratic regime rules interact to shape African politics in general, *and* an effort to identify the specific conditions under which patrimonialism and democracy are most compatible.

Patrimonial Democracy

In patrimonial states the line between public and private is blurred, if not entirely absent: authority is personalized, offices tend to be appropriated by office holders for personal use, and legitimacy is sustained through the maintenance of complex patron–client networks funded by state resources. What does this imply for rational political actors? Above all, access to state resources is critical. To the extent that these resources are attached to appropriated executive offices, politicians ideally want to acquire those offices themselves, but as a second best strategy they can succeed by attaching themselves to a patron who has. Having appropriated an office, or made themselves a client of a patron with direct access to state resources, these politicians can then construct a chain of client–supporters and thus shore up their own political bases. Those who can demonstrate an ability to deliver the support of a large client base to the ruling party are more likely to gain greater access to power and resources, by presidential prerogative, in future.³⁾

In Africa the patron–client networks that constitute the sinews of state–society relations are generally ethno–regional in nature. Most constituencies (excluding urban areas) are relatively ethnically homogenous, and contenders for power are generally members of the predominant ethnic group in any given constituency. Thus, a (would be) patron's main competitors for political support (and clients) are gen-

3) Barkan(1979) clearly explicates these dynamics in the context of the single party state in Kenya.

erally of his or her own ethnic group. Intra-ethnic struggles to establish leadership/control of ethnic blocs of voters, at the constituency level and at the regional level, thus precede more inter-ethnic electoral contests for state power, and give shape to political parties. As a result, the modal political party in Africa is largely a vehicle for powerful individual patrons, a patrimonial web of ethno-regional patron client networks rather than a bureaucratic institution.

Intra-party struggles among patrons can lead opposition parties to fracture (as was the case with FORD in Kenya) and ruling parties to become embroiled in internecine conflict (as was the case with the UDF in Malawi). When the ruling Basotho Congress Party (BCP) attempted to overrule its top patron, Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle in 1997, Mokhehle abandoned the BCP and formed the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). Mokhehle and the LCD went on to win every parliamentary seat in the 1998 elections. In more stable and cohesive parties, the prisoners' dilemma facing individual party patrons has been overcome (at least temporarily), and mutual cooperation for mutual benefit generally reigns. (More research is needed into the conditions under which cooperation strategies are most likely to emerge and be sustained in the absence of bureaucratic constraints.)

The basic incentive structures embedded in patrimonial state institutions also have implications for how the electoral game is played. Political parties have little to gain from acting as a parliamentary opposition, with little or no access to state resources. As a result, one sees losing parties playing the role of loyal opposition only in a minority of Africa countries (including Ghana, Benin, Nigeria, Mozambique, and Malawi). For losing parties, there is a relatively strong incentive to reject electoral exercises as fraudulent, or boycott them before they are actually held, as a means of delegitimizing a government and a regime that seems unlikely ever to serve their interests. Democracy works in theory because the opposition has another chance to win in the foreseeable future, and in the few African countries that have experienced alternation in executive office (including Senegal, Ghana, and Benin), loyal opposition does seem to be emerging. But in the modal case, the party that won the founding election over a decade ago, whether it was the pre-transition ruling party or a rising opposition party, has now become the dominant party in a one-party dominant system. This trend follows from the patrimonial state structure: the party in power can appropriate state resources to keep

itself there in perpetuity, with few if any bureaucratic constraints.

Constitutional term limits are intended to backstop this phenomenon, in Africa as elsewhere. Insofar as power, and resource control, remains vested largely in the appropriated office of the presidency in Africa, presidential term limits can be critically important. In those countries where electoral procedures remain largely a facade, term limits have been deleted from the constitution -- by fraudulent referendum (Guinea, Chad) or supermajority vote of ruling party dominated legislatures (Togo, Burkina Faso, Gabon). In Zambia, the presidential initiative to amend the constitution to eliminate term limits was blocked as much by opposing factions *within* the ruling party as by opposition and popular resistance. Powerful patrons seem to have preferred to block the ambitions of incumbents in order to facilitate their own rise to the top patron position: Levy Mwanawasa led the movement to retain term limits, won subsequent election, and finally charged former President Chiluba with corruption, thus preempting any ongoing political threat from him and his network of supporters (much as Chiluba had earlier preempted any continuing threat from former president Kaunda). In Malawi, outgoing President Bakili Muluzi proved too weak to carry the day on removing term limits, but powerful enough to see that a his preferred candidate, a political unknown, be elected in his stead, thus blocking the ambitions of others within the ruling UDF (and leading to the current political crisis in Malawi, in which the president has quit the ruling party before it could vote to expel him, with impeachment proceedings on the horizon). Finally, in some cases presidents have accepted term limitation and left power without initiating a debate on constitutional amendment (Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Tanzania). In Ghana and Mali, term limits led to the loss of power by the ruling party, while in Mozambique and Tanzania, ruling parties oversaw a smooth transition to new leadership within the context of continued one party dominance.

Even when losing parties attempt to play the role of loyal opposition, individual politicians/patrons have a strong incentive to cross the aisle and join the dominant party in the hopes of gaining access to at least a trickle of the resources flowing along patron client networks (e.g., in Zambia, Kenya, and Côte d'Ivoire). In the patrimonial context of personalized authority, constituents tend to be loyal to individual representative/patrons rather than a political party, and their political inter-

ests are largely limited to the ability of their representative/patron to access patronage resources (Barkan 1979, Decalo 1997, Chandra 2004). Under these conditions, defection from a losing party to a winning party may be seen as 'selling out' by urban intellectuals but it generally does not appear to reduce support among voters.⁴⁾ Thus, incentives facing both parties and individuals reinforce the tendency toward one party dominant systems, with little real competition, which is the modal regime type in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa (Van de Walle 2003).⁵⁾

Competitive Patrimonial Democracy

Most of Africa's electoral regimes are classified as less than democratic. Leaving aside small island countries, and those whose regime is considered 'ambiguous,' Diamond counts 10 liberal or electoral democracies (2 of the former and 8 of the latter), 20 competitive or hegemonic authoritarian regimes (11 of the former and 9 of the latter), and seven closed regimes, in which there is not even a façade of electoral competition.⁶⁾ Three of the ten democracies (including both liberal democracies) are one party dominant (South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana), leaving seven (Benin, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, and Senegal) in which

4) The defection of Raila Odinga to the ruling Kenya African National Union, against which he had been struggling for more than a decade, is a particularly vivid example, widely discussed in the Kenyan press. Defection to access state resources also serves the individual financial and political interests of the politician, of course. As van de Walle(2003) notes, relatively little patronage is actually dispensed by cash strapped African governments. Insofar as rural citizens remain largely alienated from government, they generally expect little, and offer only lukewarm support in exchange for modest patronage.

5) Ethnicity matters, but pragmatically. Very few African countries have ethnic majorities, which means that ethnoregional networks must combine into minimum winning coalitions to succeed. Although most parties have an ethnic core, most are also coalitions of patron-client networks reaching into diverse communities. Thus, patrons appealing to clients in a given (sub) ethnic community, will be found in different political parties.

6) Updating Diamond's Freedom House data had little affect on the categories: one of his ambiguous regimes (Djibouti), and one closed regime (Rwanda) would move to the authoritarian categories. Therefore, for simplicity, I use Diamond's original categorization, since it was not based strictly on the Freedom House data.

democratic competition and patrimonial institutions coexist.⁷⁾ In these true multiparty systems, involving real competition and uncertainty, the incentive structures embedded in patrimonial state institutions coexist with, rather than absorbing, democratic competition. While this coexistence has sometimes led to relatively high quality democracy, at other times it has led to instability, and even state collapse (van de Walle 2003). These promising but volatile multiparty systems provide us with the best cases for assessing the interaction of patrimonial states and democratic regimes, since they actually do have to cope with electoral competition in the context of patrimonial state institutions. The seven fragmented party systems considered by Van de Walle (2003) (Benin, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, and Sierra Leone) demonstrate a wide range of success with democratization. One (Benin) has experienced relatively high quality democracy, three have experienced elements of high quality democracy *and* significant instability (Madagascar, Malawi, and Niger), and three (Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, and Sierra Leone) have experienced instability leading to outright state collapse. Can the specific conditions under which patrimonial states and democratic regimes interact help explain these divergent outcomes?

I consider this question in the cases of Benin, Malawi, and Congo-Brazzaville. These three countries were selected because they share many theoretically important attributes, and yet have experienced quite different democratization processes and outcomes. In each case, the military played a significant role in facilitating the democratic transition (by refusing to support the incumbent against the National Conference in Benin, by refusing to be drawn into transitional political battles in Congo, and by actively suppressing ruling party militias and protecting pro-democracy demonstrators in Malawi). All three were among the minority of countries in which entrenched pre-transition rulers were voted out of office in founding elections, thus producing both real possibilities for substantive regime change, and real dangers of instability as networks of personalized authority sustain-

7) South Africa and Namibia would be classified as not functionally democratic on the basis of Przeworski's (1991, 95) assertion that "[n]o country in which a party wins 60 percent of the vote twice in a row is a democracy." Botswana also remains one party dominant in practice - the BDP has been in power since 1966, won more than 60% of the vote in every election before 1994, and since 1994 has continued to hold 75% of parliamentary seats.

ing the state were reorganized. In each case, founding elections (in 1991, 1994, and 1992, respectively) produced three main parliamentary parties, none of which attained a majority of seats. In each case, these parties reflected historical three-way ethno-regional social divisions. All three countries are characterized three ethnic poles, embedded in more diverse ethnic populations, and uneven economic development, with less populous northern regions being less economically and socially developed. Under these broadly similar conditions, Benin achieved relatively stable and effective democracy (despite serious problems in the 2001 presidential election and a subsequent debate about amending the constitution to allow Kérékou to stand for a third term); Malawi has sustained its democratic institutions (thus far), while experiencing greater political instability and sliding into Freedom House's "partly free" category; and Congo-Brazzaville collapsed into civil war, its democratic experiment ending definitely, and violently, in 1997.

My initial findings, based on a comparative review of the secondary literature on each case, suggest that economic resources and urbanized/educated populations, attributes that are generally considered important to democratization, may be important explanatory variables among patrimonial states as well. Interestingly, however, the effects seem to be the reverse of what is normally expected/predicted. Relative wealth appears to decrease, rather than increase, the probability of successful democratization in patrimonial states. A more urbanized and educated population similarly appears to be associated with lower, not higher, likelihood of democratic survival. Finally, although it appears that Proportional Representation and First Past the Post electoral systems produce largely similar ethno-regional/party representation in the three countries, PR appears to be associated with more localized ethnic voting in Benin, which may actually facilitate shifting coalitions better than does FPP regional bloc voting in Malawi. These cases also suggest the value of a two round majority rule, which appears to facilitate shifting coalitions. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these three cases suggest a potentially significant effect of institutional inheritance. (Re) democratization processes appear to reflect not so much the extent to which immediate pre-transition regimes allowed for contestation and participation as Bratton and van de Walle (1997) argue (none allowed for much of either), but rather the experience of the countries with democratization in the 1950s and 1960s (and 1940s in the case of Benin). This may

constitute an independent institutional inheritance effect, or it may indicate that the same underlying social factors tended to produce similar outcomes during the 1960s and 1990s.

Benin

Benin is not the country scholars would have expected to see riding the crest of the third wave in Africa. Matthieu Kérékou's assumption of power by force in 1972 ended a decade of political instability in which weak 'democratic' and military governments fell one after the other. Three ethno-regional power barons, known collectively as the 'triumvirate,' had dominated Benin's efforts at democratic governance since before independence, and Kérékou initially set up a regionally balanced National Revolutionary Council (CNR) to govern what as then Dahomey. Over time however, this governing military cohort was narrowed until it represented only Kérékou's own northern base. At the end of 1975 the country was renamed after the pre-colonial kingdom of Benin, and a Marxist-Leninist ruling party, the Parti de la Revolution Populaire (PRPB), was founded. The CNR was subsequently disbanded, and a single party National Assembly elected (Dossou-Yovo 1999). In 1980 the Assembly elected Kérékou president, and he ruled Benin from this military/ideological/regional platform for the next decade. The 1980s were economically disastrous for most African countries, and Benin was no exception. Per capita income growth was essentially nil in the years preceding Kérékou's assumption of power, falling into slightly negative territory with the oil shocks of 1973, and remaining there through the mid 1990s (World Bank various years).

The fiscal crisis facing the Kérékou government in 1989/1990 is generally cited as the critical element leading to the National Conference. Comprised of representatives of civil society, the National Conference met for nine days in February 1990, stripped Kérékou of his authority and elected Nicephore Soglo as Prime Minister of a new transitional government, which would oversee elections and a return to democracy. Patrimonial networks had run dry and absent financial resources to relubricate them Kérékou could neither buy off opposition, nor persuade his unpaid military to suppress it (Nwajiaku 1994, Houngniko 2000). The transition was thus on its way in Benin before French President Francois Mitterand's an-

nouncement at the La Baule Franco-African summit in June 1990 that continued French support to African governments would be contingent upon democratic governance, including free elections, judicial independence, and 'multipartyism' (This is not to say that France did not play an important role in the inability of Kérékou to manage the political crisis).

Benin adopted a proportional representation voting system for legislative elections, and a two round majority system for presidential elections. Seven coalitions representing 37 political parties contested the February 1991 legislative elections. Most parties demonstrated regional rather than national support, but each of Benin's six districts was represented by more than one party in parliament. The return of ethno-regional voting did not produce the rigid ethno-regional party structure of the 1960s. Interim Prime Minister Soglo, and outgoing Head of State Kérékou contested the first round of the presidential elections in 1991 without party affiliation, finishing first and second. Kérékou dominated in his northern stronghold, as did Soglo in the central districts. The third place finisher was Albert Tevodjre, leader of the southeastern-based NCC (Notre Cause Commun) party. In the second round voting, the southern vote went to Soglo, as one would expect, giving him a 68% of the national vote over Kérékou's 32%. In the second round, Kérékou carried well over 90% of the votes in the two northern districts, while Soglo won 82% in the Southwest and over 90% in the three central and southeastern districts (Creevy 2005).

While civil and political rights were much improved following the democratic transition, the economy showed much less improvement, and army mutinies and student strikes were almost immediately in evidence. Despite his technocratic background, Soglo's response to the pressures on his government was strikingly similar to those of his predecessors. His style became increasingly authoritarian, and he came to rely increasingly upon an inner circle of friends and relatives (Decalo 1997). Parliamentary politics, however, remained promising. A new generation of ethnic and regional power wielders led a more splintered party system, and proved willing and able to form "pragmatic power alliances, transcending the zero-sum game of ethnic politics" (Decalo 1997, 56). Since the presidential term is five years, and the parliamentary term four, subsequent elections have been staggered. This allowed powerful members of the Assembly to run for President while maintaining

their base in parliament, and it allowed presidential candidates to build coalitions based on full information about the composition of the Assembly. Parliamentary elections in 1995, 1999, and 2003 produced largely similar results to 1991, with one coalition of regionally based parties forming in support of, and another in opposition to, the President who was elected as an independent (Creevey 2005, International Foundation for Electoral Systems).

Having been the first African country to see an incumbent president unseated in multiparty elections in 1991, Benin went on to become the first country to have successfully navigated a second alternation in executive office in 1996 (to be followed by Madagascar in 1997, the only other case to date). Kérékou and Soglo again finished first and second in the first round election, with a southeastern-based politician, this time Adrien Houngbedji of the Party for the Democratic Renewal (PRD), again finishing third. The frontrunners again showed dominance in their regional strongholds in both the first and second rounds, but this time Kérékou carried the second round "due almost entirely to the shifting cross-regional alliances he was able to build" (Creevey 2005, 478). The election was decided principally by shifts in votes in the southwest and southeast, outside the strongholds of both Kérékou and Soglo. After the second election, it appeared likely that vote brokers in these constituencies would remain in a relatively good position vis-a-vis the front-runners, especially between the two rounds of the presidential elections. Thus, Benin appeared to be consolidating a democratic regime in which ethnic voting produced multiethnic governing coalitions, and in which presidential elections were decided by votes outside both candidates regional support bases. Both tendencies that hold out significant promise for stable democracy.

Overall, the first decade of the democratic transition saw significant institution building, civil society activity, and some improvement in economic performance. This, together with smooth elections, shifting parliamentary coalitions, and executive alternation made Benin one of the stars of African democratization. Developments since then have been more ambiguous. The March 2001 presidential election took much of the sparkle off Benin's success. In January, President Kérékou appeared on television, accusing militias "of certain parties" of plotting to overthrow him (Freedom House 2001). First round election results then showed Kérékou first, with 47% of the vote, followed by Soglo (29%), Houngbedji (13%), and Bruno

Amoussou of the PSD (4%) (Note the regional representation: north, central, southeast, and southwest, respectively). Opposition leaders claimed fraud, and appealed to the national electoral commission. Soglo and Houngbedji each refused to stand in the second round against Kérékou. After long deliberation, the electoral commission announced that the second round would go forward, with Kérékou and Amoussou, a minister in Kérékou's cabinet, contesting the election. Several members of the commission then resigned in protest citing lack of transparency and poor administration of elections, adding to the perception of fraud and political interference in the electoral commission (Freedom House 2004). Kérékou won the second round with 84% of the vote, with voter turn out rates reported to be three times as high in the North as in the South, where opposition candidates called for a boycott.

The 2003 parliamentary elections were vigorously contested, and free and fair. However, for the first time since the democratic transition, a coalition of parties supporting the president, and led by Bruno Amoussou, attained an absolute majority in parliament. Pro-Kérékou parties also did well in the first local elections, which were held earlier in 2003 (Soglo and Houngbedji were elected mayor of Cotonou and Porto Novo, respectively, suggesting that these municipal offices will stand up to parliamentary and executive power wielders). With the 2003 local and parliamentary elections behind them, Beninese turned their attention to the 2006 presidential election. Two separate constitutional provisions prohibit President Kérékou from standing for president again: a two-term limit, and a maximum age limit for presidential candidates of 70. The second provision also excludes Soglo. After much discussion and debate, Kérékou announced, apparently unequivocally, in July 2005 that he intends to retire at the end of his current term (IRIN 7/12/05). If they are respected, the term and age limits may serve Beninese democracy well, producing a third alternation in 2006.

The structure of the party system appears to be an important part of Benin's success at reconciling patrimonial imperatives and democratic rules of the game over the last 15 years. This structure reflects both the inheritance of the past, and intentional initiatives to reshape that inheritance through institutional design. The age limitation in the constitution was designed to prevent the triumvirate from returning to politics in 1991. In the referendum on the new constitution, voters

had the choice of voting against the constitution, for the constitution as a whole, or for the constitution without the age limit provision. Seventy-three percent voted for the constitution as a whole, with another 20% voting for the constitution but without the age limits (Heilbrunn 1993, 294-295). This step surely had an immediate and significant impact on democratic politics in Benin, since the triumvirate was already in the process of remobilizing its traditional organizations/supporters, and may well have reestablished the regional dominance as well (Nwajiaku 1994). The exclusion of the triumvirate clearly did not reduce the incidence of ethno-regional voting, but together with the adoption of PR rules, in which parties or coalitions of parties were required to present lists in every district, and two round majority requirements for presidential candidates, it probably was important in the emergence of a substantially different party system after 1991, compared to that before 1972.

Creevey suggests that "politics in Benin rests on consociational expectations about the distribution of public goods, expectations that parties help to structure by their organization and articulation of ethno-regional interests and to validate by their success in securing public goods for their ethno-regional supporters" (2005, 472). This seems a reasonable assessment, except that it overemphasizes *public* goods distribution. Wantcheckon's innovative experimental research into the relative appeal of clientelist and public goods promises in the 2001 elections found that "clientelism works for all types of candidates, but particularly well for regional and incumbent candidates" (Wantcheckon 2003, 421). Indeed, Nwajiaku notes that in the founding 1991 elections, parties with a national base won only 5 seats, and that the most successful candidates were those with the most patronage to distribute (1994, 443). She concluded a decade ago: "it is not at all clear whether continued clientelistic practices will allow the recently introduced 'democratic' procedures and institutions to function" (Nwajiaku 1994, 444). It seems clear now that to a significant degree they have, and the explanation may be precisely that clientelist and public goods are very nearly the same thing in a context of localized identity-based parties that are able to gain access to state resources through coalition formation.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the success of the regional parties of the triumvirate was related to their ability to coopt more localized identity groups. The northern based Mouvement Démocratique du Dahomey (MDD), led by Hubert Maga, re-

lied mostly upon a region wide sense of marginalization vis-a-vis the more developed South, but had difficulty forestalling more local intra-northern opposition (Staniland 1973a, 306-307). The southeastern-based Parti Republicain du Dahomey (PRD), led by Sourou-Migan Apithy, was a sophisticated party machine.

The P.R.D. was at the same time a Porto-Novien party, a regional party, and a 'tribal' party. The leadership was overwhelmingly Porto-Novien.... It was regional in respect of its area of operation.... It was 'tribal' in its selection procedure and electoral tactics. It did not try to impose Porto-Novien candidates on constituency branches, but instead sought to maximize votes through paying meticulous attention to the ethnic composition of each constituency.... In the 1952 elections, at least twenty of the twenty-three P.R.D. candidates were natives of the constituencies in which they stood (Staniland 1973a, 306).

The center/southwest based Union Démocratique Dahoméenne (UDD) satisfied regionalist sentiment in the center and southwest, while aspiring to be a national party. "In the course of [the 1956 and 1957] elections, a structure of three-sided competition was established, developed, and entrenched. It provided the basic and permanent dimensions of national politics throughout the complex of changes in regime and party organization occurring down to the late 1960s" (Staniland 1973a, 311).

Relatively small changes in the incentive structures by which local interests are translated into national politics appear to have affected these permanent dimensions of national politics in fundamental ways. Although the design of electoral institutions in Benin was presumably not intended to produce 100 political parties, it may nevertheless have achieved the restructuring of politics it sought, through unanticipated channels. The result appears to be that "complex group morphology and spatial distribution of ethnic groups ... combine with the institutional designs of the electoral system to exert strong pressure for political parties to form electoral coalitions that cut across the characteristic inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic cleavages" (Creevey 2005, 474). Looking at this from the other side, the ease of coalition formation allows more localized parties to be successful, thus increasing their appeal vis-a-vis larger regional parties. In this context, although ethnic voting and clientism are both strong, communal swing voting occurs readily at the point of coalition

formation. As a result, the election is not a "census," despite the fact that the rules facilitate communal politics and the intricate personal networks that continue to link state and society.

Benin has thus far found stability in a system of personalized elite politics resting upon a fragmented urban and peasant electorate. The "intricate strategies adopted by party leaders to maintain electoral support and acquire political power have been carried out in a context where voters and politicians appear to know and accept the rules of the game. This acceptance underpins the success of democracy" (Creevey 2005, 472). But what are the rules of the game? One is that politics is an urban elite game, in which rural communities participate only at election time. The relative distance of the state from local arenas has, if anything, increased since 1991. As a result,

the scope for action enjoyed by the political parties ..., which is regarded as an indicator of the regime's democratic nature by the outside world, is largely restricted to major urban centres.... In small administrative units like villages and urban neighborhoods, party activity is in evidence only at election time and quickly disappears once the elections are over.... Rural political parties do not structure the local political game in the rural milieu (Bierschenk 2003, 164).

Instead, access to the state is integrated into existing local political strategies, which are set in a much more complex system of authority. The state is both feared and expected to provide basic public goods, including health services, education, and public security. "Successive national political regimes are judged by the rural population on the basis of these expectations," and Bierschenk reports that rural judgments about the post 1991 democratic regime is decided mixed.

The formal aspects of democracy that are vital to the positive appreciation of the 'Democratic Renewal' in the eyes of external observers are of scant importance to rural populations, or they represent nothing new to them. Freedom of the press, a multi-party system or a strong emphasis on the rule of law is of little import to rural populations: there is no rural press, the national press hardly ever reports on issues concerning the rural world, political parties have no impact on the local political scene, and the courts and the judiciary are totally

absent from the countryside." (166)

Increased freedom of speech and religious practice are widely appreciated, as is the opening of political space for the reemergence of 'traditional' chiefs and elders and their re-appropriation of legitimate symbolic prerogatives. Perceptions of growing insecurity and economic crisis cut in the other direction (Bierschenk 2003). In short, national democratic politics continues to be highly marginal to the lives of rural citizens. As a result, rural communities participate in democratic rituals when called upon to do so, but remain largely disengaged from national politics. This disengagement contributes to dampening political struggles that are much more intense and high contested in urban areas.

In the urban areas, which contain about half of the voting public in Benin, political parties play a larger role in structuring politics and political participation, as does civil society. The relative strength of civil society in Benin undoubtedly plays a role in stabilizing politics in these arenas (Heilbrunn 1993). However, the enormous pressure that has been brought to bear upon the democratic regime from time to time has also radiated from these groups (Nwajiaku 1994, Decalo 1997). University students and urban workers (mostly civil servants) often play an important role in pushing through democratic transitions, and then immediately become one of the greatest threats to young democracies. These constituencies have greater expectations about the economic benefits of regime change, and less patience when those benefits fail to materialize. And they are more expensive to buy off. The ability of the regime to lean upon less engaged, and less demanding, rural constituents should not be underestimated in our celebrations of 'civil society.'

Malawi

Where Benin's transition began with a bang, the National Conference organizing, meeting, and assuming effective power, all within less than three months, Malawi's transition began more quietly and tentatively, with a pastoral letter from the country's Catholic bishops on March 8, 1992. President-for-life Kamuzu Banda and his Malawi Congress Party (MCP) had held Malawi in an iron grip for its entirely post-independence history. Although demands for 'multipartyism' were be-

ing heard across Africa, and even apartheid South Africa was moving toward democracy, Malawi remained eerily quiet. The political opposition to Banda had long been divided -- and dispersed around the globe. Catholic parish priests read the bishops' polite but direct appeal for greater political accountability to the Malawian people from their pulpits across the country. Sixteen thousand copies were circulated for further discussion (Mitchell 2002, 6). The newly formed United Front for Multi-Party Democracy (UFDM), a coalition of the divided and scattered political opponents of the regime, met in Lusaka from 20 to 23 March. It was attended by one home-based opposition figure, Chakufwa Chihana (Venter 1995, 156). Chihana returned to Malawi on April 6, charged with uniting (latent) pro-democracy forces inside the country. He was, like the bishops before him, immediately detained (The bishops were interrogated and released).

Chihana's incarceration provided a rallying point inside and outside Malawi. There were spontaneous outbursts of discontent in the cities of Blantyre and Lilongwe in May. The Paris Club of international aid donors suspended aid, linking any future disbursements to 'good governance.' The financial crunch, along with the army's refusal to suppress pro-democracy demonstrations and "the gradual realignment of interests within Malawi's political elite resulting from the drying up of political patronage following the downturn of the economic from the early 1980s," finally undermined Banda's apparently unassailable regime (McCracken 1998, 232). New single party elections called in June 1992 did nothing to assuage local and international demands. The churches again pushed the transition process forward, organizing a campaign for a national referendum on multi-party politics in August. In September the Alliance for Democracy (Aford) was formed under Chihana's chairmanship. In October Banda announced his decision to call a referendum on multi-party government. The United Democratic Front (UDF), composed of former politicians and civil servants and headed by Bakili Muluzi, formed to mobilize support for the referendum while distancing itself from the opposition in exile (Venter 1995, 164). In June 1993 Malawians voted for multi-party democracy. Large majorities in favor of multipartyism in the north and south offset a 63% rejection of change in Banda's central stronghold. Parliamentary and presidential elections were held in June 1994.

Malawi adopted a first past the post electoral system, with single member dis-

tricts for parliamentary elections. Muluzi won the presidential poll with 47% of the vote, followed by Banda with 33% and Chihana with 19%. Parliamentary results were similar, with the UDF securing 85 seats (48%), MCP 56 (32%), and Aford 36 (20%) (Posner 1995, 131). The pattern of regional voting was striking. Aford won every northern seat, and only three others; UDF won 71 or 74 southern seats, and 14 others (mostly in the capital and on the border between the central and southern regions); MCP won 51 of 68 central seats, plus one in the far south -- the home district of a coopted southern politician. The presidential vote also bore a clear regional stamp (Posner 1995). Indeed, the parallels between the presidential vote percentages and the demographic breakdown is striking (Kaspin 1995) (The south contains 49% of the population, the center 39%, and the north: 14%). Five seats short of a parliamentary majority, Muluzi initially offered Chihana three minor cabinet posts to form a coalition government. Chihana refused an announced an alliance with Banda's MCP instead(which was difficult for many of his supporters to swallow). Muluzi then offered Aford seven cabinet posts and the second Vice Presidency for Chihana, and the alliance was set (Kaspin 1995). Regionalism had been the pole of Banda's social control, and it would be the pole of democratic politics as well. The regional trend was not a surprise to the parties. Indeed, as regional dominance became clear in the run up to the elections, all three parties added new leadership from outside their regional strongholds, and each of these new leaders contested the parliamentary in his home district. All lost (Posner 1995).

Malawi's economy, like Benin's, showed no substantial improvement following the regime transition, and violent crime and insecurity became a serious(new) problem (Venter 1995, 180-182). Also as in Benin, voters expressed disappointment with what democracy had (not) brought. Muluzi and the UDF, like Banda and the MCP before them, acquired public, private, and international resources, which they then used to consolidate their political power. Corruption became more visible (though likely not more common). Control over such resource streams proved a critical resource in the second elections in 1999, both for attracting additional votes and for buying off opposition candidates. Ruling party leaders also moved to block MCP elites' access to patronage resources, seeking to weaken their ability to maintain their own patronage networks and thus their base (Von Doepp 2001, 234).

In the second elections in 1999, Aford and the MCP made a pre-election pact,

and supported a common presidential candidate, Gwanda Chakuamba, with the expectation that this strategy would produce a narrow electoral victory (Banda and Chihana had won a combined total of 52% of the vote in 1994). After Muluzi replaced the board of the electoral commission, it announced that joint tickets were illegal and would not be recognized (a ruling subsequently overturned by the Supreme Court). Subsequent problems with voter registration were widely perceived to be politically motivated. When it was announced that Muluzi had won the presidential election with 51.4% of the vote (having picked up additional support in the MCP stronghold), violence erupted in the north, as opposition supporters attacked ruling party supporters and burned mosques (Muluzi is Muslim, as is 25% of the Malawian population). The UDF took 93 Assembly seats (out of an expanded total of 193), MCP 66, and Aford 29, with regional concentrations remaining largely unchanged. In alliance with four independent candidates, the UDF held a razor thin parliamentary majority as well. The opposition challenged the election results, but the Supreme Court validated the outcome (the following year). As a result of this election and its aftermath, Freedom House downgraded Malawi's rating from "free" to "partly free."

After a decade of democratic politics, there were hopeful signs that democratic consolidation remained possible, and more disconcerting signs that much had remained the same. The judicial branch throughout struggled to carve and defend its independent authority, and the opposition has had some success in the courts. Absent this, "opposition elites could have been backed into a corner by the Muluzi regime. Acts of desperation — appeals to the military or extralegal behavior — would likely emerge as the 'only option'" (Von Doepp 2001, 237). On the other side, Von Doepp suggests that Malawi's dependence on foreign aid has served to keep Muluzi playing the democratic game, such as it is. Finally, Malawian churches remain engaged in ongoing political struggles, acting as a largely unassailable voice of moral authority (Ross 2004). Among the less hopeful signs are the clear authoritarian impulses of the president, the extensive use of patronage to consolidate ruling party power, and weaknesses in the electoral system. In short, signs that patrimonial practices and democratic competition are proving less and less compatible. All of these factors were at play in Muluzi's effort, beginning in 2001, to amend the constitution to allow for a third term. And, on balance, the hopeful won out

over the disconcerting, at least for the moment.

Unable to push through a constitutional amendment, Muluzi anointed Bingu wa Mutharika as his successor. Muluzi likely calculated that as a relative unknown Mutharika would be pliable, and dependent upon the patronage resources over which Muluzi hoped to retain personal control. Long time Vice President Justin Malewezi left the cabinet and the UDF and took 2% of the vote in the presidential election as the candidate of a small opposition party. Many UDF MPs followed, and successfully ran for reelection in their districts as independents. Mutharika won the 2004 president election with only 36% of the vote, followed by the MCP's John Tembo 27%, and Gwanda Chakuamba (leader of northern-based Republic Party, formed in 2000) with 26%. Aford supported the UDF presidential candidate, while the vast majority of the northern population (73%) switched its support to northern-based Chakuamba. In parliamentary elections the UDF won 49 seats, MCP 56, Chakuamba's RP 15, southern-based NDA 8, Aford 6, independents (mostly UDF refugees) 39. With the northern political elite in disarray, Aford took 6 seats (including one for Chihana), RP 6, UDF 3, NDA 1, and independents 6. The south was also divided, mostly as a result of the disarray within the UDF. The rump UDF secured 39 seats, independents (again mostly former UDF) 27, and others 16. Elections and their aftermath were again associated with violence. The MCP stronghold remained intact. Violence was again a problem, before, during, and after the polls. Mutharika was able to assemble a governing coalition, which included most of the non-MCP opposition parties, as well as virtually all of the errant independent/UDF MPs.

After months of intra-UDF power struggles between party chairman Muluzi and President Mutharika, Mutharika quit the UDF in February 2005, formed the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Since then, he has governed with a shifting parliamentary coalition of small parties and individual personalities (the former being more or less the same as the latter). Personal networks have been shorn of their institutional façade, and it is unclear what the future holds (Parliamentary impeachment proceedings against Mutharika began in June 2005, but were suspended after the Assembly speaker collapsed and died). Will regional bloc parties/voting break down into a more fragmented party system in which ruling and opposition coalitions cross ethno-regional divides and overcome zero-sum political

conflicts? Or will the president (the current one or a successor) consolidate personal control over a fragmented political class scrambling for patronage resources? Malawi's institutional inheritance and its demographics (with the southern region holding almost a majority of the population) make the latter outcome more likely.

Whereas the transition to democracy in Benin meant the potential return of the triumvirate, which invited institutional designed to preempt it, Malawi began its democratic transition in much more of a vacuum (Muluzi did move to ban the nonagenarian Banda from politics after the 1994 election, but Banda died before the second elections). Politics had always been monolithic. The Malawi Congress Party was an absolutist mass party from its inception in 1959, five years before Malawian independence. Opposition politics, political organization, civil society were all crushed before they had really even emerged (McCracken 1998). Thus, there was no history of political opposition, no preexisting political organizations, no civil society (apart from the churches) from which Malawians could learn and/or build in the 1990s. Banda's post-independence approach to 'nation building,' which was a blend of calls to national unity and promotion of the interests and language of his own Chewa ethnic group, have been blamed for creating the regional cleavages that came to structure democratic politics in the 1990s (Kaspin 1995). This may be true, but a tendency toward ethnic and/or regional organization under democracy is very widespread on the continent, even in the absence of such ethnicized approaches to nationalism.

There appear to be other important legacies of the one party (some say one man) regime. Among these Von Doepf (2001) includes an unusually well institutionalized judicial branch, which has increased the incentives of elites to play by the democratic rules. Extreme concentration of power in the person of the president appears to be another. Banda made himself life president of the MCP in 1960, and later life president of Malawi. He held most important ministerial posts himself throughout his reign, and controlled much of the private economy as well. Muluzi, like Banda, sought to consolidate his power by controlling avenues of public and private resource extraction, and then pursuing these out to his supporters while denying access to his adversaries. Even more disturbing is the emergence of the Young Democrats, a youth militia force linked to the UDF and directly reminiscent of Banda's Malawi Young Pioneers. As the elite scrambles for access

to power and state resources, urban civil society remains almost nonexistent. "Critics of those in power, so necessary for the realisation of a healthy democracy, do not survive for long. They are silenced not by state weaponry but by state patronage" (Banda cited in Ross 2004, 105). In the early 1990s, the churches played a healthy role in creating the political space in which opposition and civil society could organization. That they continue to stand largely alone in that space a decade later is another indication that the democratic regime has not (yet) put down roots (Ross 2004, 105-106).

It is unclear to what extent a PR voting system might have made a difference in Malawi. With a two round majority rule for the presidency, Chihana and Aford would have been in the position of kingmakers in 1994. But the pre-second round pact may well have been quite similar to the post election pact. With nearly 50% of the population in his regional stronghold and Banda especially unpopular in the north, Muluzi would likely have won a second round poll standing alone against Banda with or without Chihana's support. The parliamentary balance would have remained the same, and the coalition making presumably largely similar as well. The third election in Malawi demonstrated a tendency toward a larger number of smaller opposition parties, which might create new opportunities for cross-regional alliances both in support of, and in opposition to, the ruling party. If the southern elite recovers from the disarray in which it now finds itself, small opposition parties and independent MPs will always be the incentive ally with whomever controls the presidency (and the real purse strings), as they have with President Mutharika's new DPP party this year. Under these conditions, patrimonial imperatives will continue to eat away at the substance, if not the processes, of the democratic regime.

Malawi is among the ten poorest countries in the world, and among the most foreign aid dependent. At the time of its transition to democracy, per capita GDP was \$180 and foreign aid was 97% of government expenditures (World Bank 1997; Lancaster 1999, 67). Rural smallholders constitute the vast majority of the population. Under these conditions, Malawi was largely swept along by the undercurrent of democratization in the 1990s. Rural voters expect little from government, and get what they expect. Urban civil society remains largely absent. Political parties, always loosely structured by patron-client networks appear to be growing

less rather than more institutionalized. Under these conditions, donor conditionality and a modicum of judicial independence may keep elites playing the democratic game, leaving the door open for the growth of institutional supports that might over time begin to provide some badly needed structure to the game. It is not clear, however, how those institutional supports might begin to cohere in the existing socio-economic environment.

The population is divided among three regions, with the southern regional comprising right around half the population, and the northern region only 15%. If electoral rules and demographics combined to produce an ethnically fragmented but flexible and pragmatic party structure in Benin, electoral rules and demographics appear to have produced a regionally cohesive party system in Malawi in which the southern region can almost dominate (as the center did under Banda in the absence of majoritarian institutions), and the northern region continues to face the prospect of marginalization (as it did under Banda). The design of democratic rules seems to have had little impact on the institutional inheritance (or lack thereof), leaving the democratic game to be decided largely upon the basis of demographics. Elections in Malawi are a (regional) census. Party leaders attempt to head off this outcome in advance of the founding elections, by increasing ethnic diversity within the leadership and among the party's slate of candidates. Those tactics produced no results, perhaps because they were so calculated. Having failed to create more interethnic parties, the northern and central parties concluded a pre-electoral in 1999, which again failed to overcome demographic imbalances. In the third election, Chihana accepted the secondary position to which he and his party were relegated in the democratic system and threw his support to the incumbent. However, he failed to deliver much of the northern vote, and subsequently lost much of the northern vote to a breakaway northern-based party. The breakup of the UDF in the context of intra-party succession struggles may lead to less census-like elections in future. A break up of southern regional voting is necessary but clearly not sufficient condition for democratic peace and stability.

Congo-Brazzaville

In an assessment published in 1997, the year Congo-Brazzaville's democracy finally collapsed into civil war, Clark was cautiously optimistic that "Congo's favorable social features make it a good candidate for membership in the small club of stable, durable African democracies" (1997b, 62). The favorable social features he was referring to include a highly urbanized population, and a relatively high rate of literacy as a result of Congo's well-developed educational system. While recognizing that these social features "sometimes lend a political sophistication to Congolese society that makes governing there difficult," Clark suggested that they might also serve to dampen the (mostly latent) ethnic conflict that had been a central element in Congolese politics since independence. Another factor (not mentioned by Clark) that might have been expected to work in Congo's favor was its relative wealth. At the beginning of the 1990s, its per capita income hovered just under \$1000 (compared to \$380 in Benin, and \$180 in Malawi), and it had experienced an average annual per capita growth rate of over 3% since independence (long term per capita income in Benin and Malawi was nearly flat). Its human development index was also well above similarly situated countries, indicating that government was investing in development (Clark 1997a). In short, Congo in 1990 appeared to be a much better candidate for democratic consolidation than either Benin or Malawi.

While Congo had long been a relatively wealthy, urbanized and educated country, it had virtually no previous experience with democracy, and a history of political violence that was not unrelated to its relatively high level of social development. Congo's first president, Fulbert Youlou, adopted policies that were quite common for young post-colonial governments. He maintained a close relationship with France and adopted high profile economic development projects that contributed little to the welfare of the average Congolese citizen. His support for the secession in Katanga was unpopular with many of Congo's educated urban youth and bureaucrats, as were his plans to make his Union Démocratique pour la Défense des Intérêts Africaine (UDDIA) the sole legal party in Congo. This move toward single party rule, which succeeded in many African countries, was blocked in Congo by popular opposition in Brazzaville, suggesting that urbanization and education

contributed to the survival of the democratic regime. "Les trois glorieuses," which led to the demise of Youlou's regime, began with labor strikes and street demonstrations in Brazzaville in August 1964 and grew into an urban insurrection in which unemployed youth played a critical part (Nugent 2004, 244). The Congolese army then brokered the installation of a new government, headed by a former Youlou minister, Alphone Massamba-Debat. The move to the left was consolidated with the founding of the Mouvement National de la Révolution (MNR) the following year. "The youth wing of the ruling party, the JMNR (Jeunesse de la MNR) quickly became a law unto itself... [I]t began to train and equip its own militia which numbered 1100 by 1968. The JMNR usurped many of the functions of the gendarmerie and ... threatened to eclipse the army as well ..." (Nugent 2004, 245). After a bloody battle with the JMNR in August 1968, Captain Marien Ngouabi, with the support of his northern troops, seized power. After eight years of rule by southern-based politicians, the Ngouabi coup initiated 24 years of rule by northern-based soldiers, even as the legitimating revolutionary rhetoric was maintained. Urban pressure groups, bolstered by the implicit threat of violent urban youth, remained well organized and effective under military rule.

There was an overwhelming demand for free education which no government could resist. By 1979 Congo could boast a 93 per cent school attendance rate, ranking it amongst the highest in the Third World. Students leaving secondary school expected to be able to attend University ... [T]hose who left University expected instant access to state employment, given the limited scale of the private sector. Public sector employment therefore swelled to accommodate the army of graduates.... Urban workers came to expect job security and living wages, and to a large extent they were successful in prising concessions from the hands of governments who were well-aware [sic] that volatile urban youth could easily be drawn into any protests.... (Nugent 2004, 246-247)

The military governments of Ngouabi and his successors, Yhombi-Opango (1977-1979) and Denis Sassou-Nguesso (1979-1992), acceded to the demands Congo's urban until the treasury finally ran dry in the 1980s. Without oil wealth, the showdown may have come much sooner. In any case, structural adjustment hit Congo's large and demanding urban population hard, and urban youth violence

soon reared its ugly head -- with a little help from Congo's new 'democrats.'

Congo's transition began with an opening by the ruling Parti Congolais du Travail (PCT), which announced on July 4, 1990, that it was abandoning Marxism-Leninism and would move toward multiparty democracy. Coming on the heels of the dramatic events in Benin in February, and Mitterand's tying of future French assistance to democratization in June, this opening appears to be very much influenced by external forces. Internal forces soon pushed the process forward, however. The Congolese Labor Federation struck in September, demanding worker benefits and a National Conference. The PCT acceded to its demands, legalizing political parties and scheduling the National Conference for May, and then moving it up to February 1991. Following the lead of Benin, the National Conference declared itself "sovereign" and chose a religious leader as its chair, the military declared its political neutrality, Sassou acceded, and an international technocrat, André Milongo was elected to head a one year transitional government. Legislative and Presidential elections were scheduled for June 1992 (Clark 1997b).

Like Benin, Congo adopted proportional representation and two round majority electoral systems. The elections were contested by two major political coalitions, and many smaller political parties. The Union pour le Renouveau Démocratique (URD) was led by Bernard Kolélas and his Mouvement Congolais pour le Développement et la Démocratie Intégrale (MCDDI), drawing its support from the southern Kongo and Lari populations. The Alliance Nationale pour la Démocratie (AND) was led by Pascal Lissouba and his Union Panafricaine pour la Démocratie Sociale (UPADS), drawing its support from the southwestern regions known collectively as Nibolek. Sassou and the PCT also supported the AND. UPADS secured 39 of 125 seats in the legislature, followed by MCDDI with 29, and PCT with 18, with the remaining 39 going to smaller parties. The AND coalition collective held a slim majority with 64 seats. Lissouba led in the first round of the president elections with 36% of the vote, followed by Kolélas with 20%, Sassou with 17%, and Milongo with 10%. Sassou supported his AND partner Lissouba in the second round, and Lissouba won with 61% of the vote. Ethnoregional voting was again in evidence, but significantly less pronounced than in either Benin or Malawi. Lissouba won between 81 and 92% in the three Nibolek regions, Kolélas took 64% in his Pool region, Sassou won between 42 and 58%

of the vote in the four northern regions. Milongo drew most of his support from Brazzaville, where he finished second behind Kolélas and just ahead of Sassou.

Exactly as in Malawi, Lissouba offered Sassou's PCT three cabinet posts as part of a coalition government. Sassou, like Chihana, switched alliances, giving his support to Kolélas' URD coalition, giving it the parliamentary majority. Rather than upping his offer to Sassou as Muluzi had with Chihana, or working with an opposition controlled parliament, as Soglo and Kérékou have in Benin, Lissouba dissolved the parliament. The Army offered mediation and threatened further intervention to resolve the crisis if necessary. A compromise was reached in which Lissouba agreed to form a government that gave a majority of posts to the URD-PCT coalition, but the dissolution of parliament stood, and new elections were scheduled for May 1993. When the May elections gave Lissouba's coalition, now known as the Mouvance Présidentielle a parliamentary majority, while cutting the number of PCT by half, politics became war by *same* means.

Although efforts to find a stable compromise continued among the politicians during what passed as Lissouba's first term in office, the initiative was largely lost to the young militia forces that had formed in support of each of the three political contenders. As Lissouba and Kolélas moved toward alliance, Sassou was automatically alienated, and the primary source of violence shifted from Kolélas' 'Ninjas' to Sassou's 'Cobras.' In the end, the militia battled it out, until Angola intervened in 1997 in support of Sassou. Lissouba and Kolélas fled the country, as the 'Ninjas' moved out of Brazzaville to prey upon the civilian population of their own Pool region, and occasionally do battle with Sassou's army. Sassou eventually held fresh elections in March 2002, in which he was 'elected' unopposed. Parliamentary elections were scheduled, postponed, and have yet to be held.

Like Malawi, Congo hadn't much of a tradition of political opposition and/or organization to fall back upon, and its experiment with democratization was equally shaped by legacies of its past. Among these were politicized ethno-regional identities, large urban populations that had developed the habit of successfully advancing class based demands in the context of military rule, and the persistent threat of urban youth violence. Absent the latter, elites may well have found their way to a system which served their interests, resting upon the kind of urban/rural tensions that appear to sustain democratic practice in Benin, despite the inherently more

intense political struggles over control of Congo's oil wealth. The spatial distribution of Congo's rural population is more favorable to compromise than that of Malawi, and its regional coalitions demonstrated an inclination to divide further along ethnic lines, especially at times when supra-regional alliances (most notably between the two southern leaders) appeared to be crystallizing (Clark 1997b, 76). Civic associations capable of taming urban demands might have grown in the soil of urban populations less able to assert their demands directly. Without security all of these possibilities were cast into the realm of counterfactual speculation. The army consistently attempted to sooth elite conflicts, but it, and more importantly the police and gendarmerie, failed to control youth violence. Again.

Elusive Lessons

External financial pressure was an important factor in elite cost-benefit analyses in each country. The potential benefits of defection at each turn had to be balanced against the potential cost in reduction or withdrawal of foreign assistance (among other things), upon which the three governments were dependent, to varying degrees. Among our three cases, Malawi's foreign aid dependence was most pronounced, and Congo's least, at the time of the democratic transitions. Congo's oil revenues likely contributed to lower estimates of externally imposed costs of defection, which would in turn have contributed to President Lissouba's almost immediate defection from the rules of the democratic game -- his refusal in 1992 to appoint a Prime Minister from the new parliament, which was controlled by a coalition of this two primary rivals (Clark 2002, 186). Instead he dissolved parliament, and called new elections, the substantially different results of which led to opposition allegations of fraud. Thus began Congo's downward spiral to war. The patrimonial state is *always* an important prize to be won, even in Benin in 1991 when it was largely bankrupt (and even, one might add, in Somalia where it is currently nonexistent). However, oil revenues probably further inflated the value of the prize in Congo, and made elite struggles over access to state resources even more intense than elsewhere. A largely urbanized and relatively well-educated urban population, in the absence of a dense web of civil organizations, also appears to

have contributed to the collapse of democracy in Congo. Easily exploitable oil revenues, insecure politicians, and violent urban youth were a particularly lethal brew in Brazzaville.

On the other hand, a much more rural and much less educated population in Malawi appear to put too little pressure its young democracy, leaving political elites to struggle over the spoils of office, demonstrating their generosity through gifts of public and private goods when elections draw near. State and society remain largely irrelevant to each other, to the detriment of both. By using political power to monopolize important sectors in the private economy, Malawian elites create broader political-economic spaces in which to accumulate resources and clients using smaller and more divisible resources flows. This may diffuse the struggle for resources, making it less intense that it would be where resources are more concentrated, as in Congo. It also allows Malawian elites to adopt strategies that place them just on the 'acceptable' side of foreign aid donors' conditionalities. Dependence on foreign aid flows keeps them playing a democratic game, though not necessarily the one donors' expect.

On almost all of the potential explanatory factors considered Benin falls in the middle. Benin's success to date may rest upon a series of tensions. The demands of urban populations offset by the reliability of the rural vote for the *fiils de village*. But equally, rural disengagement offset by urban civil society. Powerful state elites offset by regional and local vote brokers.

The extent to which institutional designs regulate and/or moderate the pressures inherent in democratizing patrimonial states also remains unclear. PR systems in Benin appear to have created a highly fragmented party system in which elite coalitions are highly pragmatic and reduce the pressure on the system. In Congo they did nothing to reduce an over-pressurized elite bargaining situation, or prevent deadlock. Malawi's social divisions produce similar bargaining situations, despite plurality voting and single member districts.

What stands out most starkly from this initial comparative review is the apparent path dependence of each country. While Benin has had the most success in calming elite struggles over access to state resources, and Congo the least (before its return to strict authoritarianism), all experienced a resurgence of deep-seated political patterns with the opening to democratic competition. In each case, the elites had

to wrestle with these in the context of weak, personalized state institutions in flux. Insofar as the challenges democratization presents to each are significantly different, the lessons to be learned and applied across cases may be quite limited. This is not to say that the course of events was determined by the unpredictable choices of the actors involved. Comparative analysis suggests that in each case the choices made by elites were structured by the particularities of the situation in which he found themselves. Contemporary elites in Benin form more flexible coalitions of ethnic networks, but like the triumvirate and the military CNR before them, they choose to balance. Muluzi, like Banda before him, and Mutharika after him, chose to centralize personal control through patronage resources. In Brazzaville elites resorted to, and were held hostage by, urban youth violence. If agency is the answer, we need to look more closely at the conditions under which elites choose a particular strategy, as well as how those strategies, once embedded in local practice, are adapted by later generations.

- ▶ Submitted : 2016. February. 09
- ▶ Reviewed : 2016. June. 22
- ▶ Accepted : 2016. June. 26

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Bratton and van de Walle use the term 'neopatrimonial' regimes. 'Neopatrimonial' generally refers to contemporary patrimonial regimes, which are believed to lack the traditional legitimation that was critical to Weber's original concept of patrimonialism. In my view, the question of 'tradition' and 'legitimacy' is understudied, and the distinction insufficiently supported by evidence. I therefore use the more generic term, patrimonial.

For reasons that are not well understood, Botswana has demonstrated far less patrimonialism than other countries from the time of its independence in 1966. Also ranked free in 2003 were the island countries of São Tome and Príncipe, Cape Verde and Mauritius, as well as the newly independent countries of South African and Namibia. The size of the former raise serious questions about their comparability to mainland countries, and the latter two are somewhat special cases because of their double transition — though Namibia especially already demonstrates marked movement toward patrimonialism.

Barkan (1979) clearly explicates these dynamics in the context of the single party state in Kenya.

The defection of Raila Odinga to the ruling Kenya African National Union, against which he had been struggling for more than a decade, is a particularly vivid example, widely discussed in the Kenyan press. Defection to access state resources also serves the individual financial and political interests of the politician, of course. As van de Walle (2003) notes, relatively little patronage is actually dispensed by cash strapped African governments. Insofar as rural citizens remain largely alienated

from government, they generally expect little, and offer only lukewarm support in exchange for modest patronage.

Ethnicity matters, but pragmatically. Very few African countries have ethnic majorities, which means that ethnoregional networks must combine into minimum winning coalitions to succeed. Although most parties have an ethnic core, most are also coalitions of patron-client networks reaching into diverse communities. Thus, patrons appealing to clients in a given (sub)ethnic community, will be found in different political parties.

Updating Diamond's Freedom House data had little affect on the categories: one of his ambiguous regimes (Djibouti), and one closed regime (Rwanda) would move to the authoritarian categories. Therefore, for simplicity, I use Diamond's original categorization, since it was not based strictly on the Freedom House data.

South Africa and Namibia would be classified as not functionally democratic on the basis of Przeworski's (1991, 95) assertion that "[n]o country in which a party wins 60 percent of the vote twice in a row is a democracy." Botswana also remains one party dominant in practice — the BDP has been in power since 1966, won more than 60% of the vote in every election before 1994, and since 1994 has continued to hold 75% of parliamentary seats.