

**THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL IDENTITY:
CONSTRUCTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS
WITH A CASE STUDY ON MOBUTU'S ZAIRE**

By Sunita Menon



A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Political Studies
Department of Political Studies
University of Cape Town

February 2016

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Declaration

I know the meaning of plagiarism and declare that all of the work in the dissertation (or thesis), save for that which is properly acknowledged, is my own.

Signed by candidate

Signature Signature Removed

Sunita Menon

MNNSUN001

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Dr Zwelethu Jolobe for his guidance and support. To Dr Sally Matthews from Rhodes University, thank you for sparking my passion for the DRC and always pushing me to question the narrative. I am also deeply indebted to Gloria Castrillon, who in the last and most challenging phase gave constructive comments on my thesis draft and the confidence to submit it. Finally, without the support of my friends and family, especially Uma Dhupelia-Mesthrie, Raj Mesthrie and Sapna Mesthrie, this work would not have materialised. I am forever grateful to them. To my parents, Sunil and Kirti Menon for believing in me and picking me up when it seemed impossible, words cannot express my love and gratitude.

Abstract

This paper is in response to the stereotypes perpetuated around Africa. Much like other post-colonial spaces, Africa has fallen prey to Western assumptions and stereotypes. While the continent is diverse and has multiple narratives and voices, the notion of barbaric backward Africa has lived on. The shift to independence from Belgian Congo to Zaire marked the reclamation of not only an African identity but the African voice. While his rule was characterised by patronage politics and corruption, Mobutu effectively developed a counterhegemonic discourse on the Congo through the twin processes of authenticité and Zairianization. Mobutu created an authentically African state with a common national identity while still attracting foreign investment and financial aid. It is through Edward Said's Orientalism that the “othering” and subsequent exploitation of Africa can best be understood. Orientalism has been used to explain the systematic oppression and exploitation of the Orient and has called for discourses on this from within the region. Although Mobutu has been touted as a puppet of the West, he applied the core tenets of post-colonial theory and Orientalism in his reimagining of the “the Congo”.

This thesis looks at the postcolonial discourse surrounding Africa and Mobutu's role in redefining the Heart of Darkness. The significance of this study is in translating Orientalism's applications to the East and the perceptions and assumptions held by the West to Africa and particularly “the Congo”. Mobutu subverted the traditional colonial narrative by inventing a new Zairian identity that asserted control over the dominant colonial discourse. In a sense, what Mobutu did was to control the narrative and ensure that it was experienced by the West as an authentic African vision while transacting with the West for his own personal benefit and ensuring that he remained in power.

Table of contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Declaration..... | ii |
| Acknowledgements..... | iii |
| Abstract..... | iv |
| List of acronyms and abbreviations | vii |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1 OBJECTIVES | 2 |
| 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION | 3 |
| 1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW | 3 |
| 1.3.1 National identity..... | 4 |
| 1.3.2 Postcolonial theory..... | 6 |
| 1.3.3 Zairianization | 9 |
| 1.4 RESEARCH METHODS AND LIMITS..... | 11 |
| 1.4.1 Orientalism: A Method..... | 11 |
| 1.4.2 Mobutu's Zaire: A case study..... | 11 |
| 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE | 15 |
| 1.6 ORGANISATION..... | 16 |
| CHAPTER 2: THE DECOLONISATION OF THE CONGO..... | 18 |
| 2.1 INTRODUCTION..... | 18 |
| 2.2 A COLONIAL SETTING..... | 19 |
| 2.3 THE DECOLONISATION OF CONGO..... | 21 |
| 2.4 INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA..... | 24 |
| 2.5 CONGO'S SYMBOLIC VALUE..... | 28 |
| 2.6 CONCLUSION | 33 |

| | |
|---|---------------|
| CHAPTER 3: DECONSTRUCTING AFRICAN DISCOURSE..... | 35 |
| 3.1 INTRODUCTION..... | 35 |
| 3.2 THE POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD..... | 36 |
| 3.3 MBEMBE’S PERSPECTIVES..... | 40 |
| 3.4 AFRICA: A COLLECTION OF CONSTRUCTS | 44 |
| 3.5 THE EMERGENCE OF A TRUE AFRICAN STATE | 46 |
| 3.6 THE CREATION OF ZAIRE AND AUTHENTICITÉ | 49 |
| 3.7 CONCLUSION..... | 50 |
| CHAPTER 4: ZAIRE FOR EXPORT | 51 |
| 4.1 INTRODUCTION..... | 51 |
| 4.2 THE EMERGENCE OF A TRULY AFRICAN LEADER | 53 |
| 4.3 ZAIRE FOR EXPORT | 54 |
| 4.4 WESTERN CONSTRUCTS | 59 |
| 4.5 CONCLUSION | 62 |
| CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION..... | 63 |
| 5.1 COUNTER-DISCOURSES | 63 |
| 5.2 KEY FINDINGS | 65 |
| 5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS | 67 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 69 |

List of acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| AU | African Union |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CONAKAT | Confederation des Associations Tribales du Katanga |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of Congo / <i>République démocratique du Congo</i> |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| Three Cs | Commerce, Christianity and Civilisation |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Following independence in Africa in the 1960s, Western rhetoric saw many African states as chaotic, failed and an indication that Africans could not rule over themselves.¹ To some extent, the rule of Mobutu Sese Seko led to representations of a noble savage ruling over the Heart of Darkness.² As Kevin Dunn put it,

*This (re)constructed trope has become known as the “New Barbarism” thesis and has been applied to numerous African contexts, including Sierra Leone and Liberia. The basic tenet of this thesis is that Africa is an inherently wild and dangerous place, plagued by politically meaningless violence brought about by culture and the environment.*³

Mobutu, however, also came to signify an authentic African leader, with Zaire’s seismic shift from colonial legacies to reclaiming African traditions and identity through his invention of Zaire and his rhetoric of authenticity. Mobutu effectively developed a counterhegemonic discourse on the Congo.⁴ Mobutu became the president of Congo in 1965 and maintained power until 1997. His regime was characterised by an extremely centralised state in which he amassed great power and wealth through patronage, nepotism and corruption. Through the twin processes of authenticity and Zairianization, Mobutu created a state that was wholly African, eschewing any Western conceptions of state and power while still attracting foreign investment and financial aid by aligning himself to the US and other European allies – essentially creating a version of the state for export.

It is a given that Africa is a continent that has historically been exploited, colonised and plundered; it is equally the case that it continues to fall prey to the discourse of the West. It has often been a contested issue as to why such a large continent with immense mineral wealth has been susceptible to the control of former colonial powers – the West. While the reality is that colonisation was driven by overt economic pursuits, in Africa this became synonymous with a

¹ Dunn, K. (2003). *Imagining the Congo: The international relations of identity*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 8

² Newbury, C. (1988). *The Cohesion of Oppression: Citizenship and Ethnicity in Rwanda 1860-1960*. New York: Columbia University, 76.

³ Dunn, 166.

⁴ Dunn, 107.

level of dehumanisation of the colonial subject previously unprecedented. Untangling the narrative of Africa by Africans from the Western narrative is one way of reclaiming its history and also potentially provides us with new ways of understanding its history. It is through Edward Said's Orientalism that the “othering” and subsequent exploitation of Africa can best be understood. Orientalism has been used to explain the systematic oppression and exploitation of the Orient and has called for discourses on this from within the region. Although Mobutu has been touted as a puppet of the West, we can argue that he applied the core tenets of post-colonial theory and Orientalism in his reimagining of the “the Congo” as an authentically African state, Zaire.

Following independence and before Mobutu’s rule, “the Congo” epitomised the quintessential failed African state, a microcosm of all that plagued Africa. While Mobutu’s rule did little to help the people of Zaire economically or politically, he nonetheless effectively created a national identity that would be palatable to the West in order to garner political and financial support through military and humanitarian aid and revenue from the export of resources.⁵ During Mobutu’s rule, there was a steady annual decline of 2.2 percent of per capita income and by the 1980s, 70 percent of the population were living in extreme poverty⁶ while Mobutu’s personal assets were estimated at \$4 billion.⁷ According to Leonce Ndikumana and James K. Boyce,

*The US\$ 14 bn external debt accumulated by Congo under Mobutu's rule brought few tangible benefits to the country's poor majority. Instead, external borrowing helped to sustain a corrupt and oppressive regime. Part of the money flowed into personal accounts of Mobutu and his associates; part was used to finance the patronage and coercion on which the regime's control over the nation's internal resources rested.*⁸

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are as follows:

⁵Ndikumana, L., & Boyce, J. (1998). Congo's Odious Debt: External borrowing and capital flight in Zaire. *Development and Change*, 29(2), 207.

⁶ World Bank (1992: 218); The United Nations (1994: 165).

⁷ Burns *et al.*, 1997.

⁸Ndikumana & Boyce, 214-215.

- A. To explore the extent to which Said's conception of the Orient can be applied to Mobutu's creation of an African identity;
- B. Whether Mobutu's assertion of an African identity provides a counter discourse to Western interpretations of Zaire;
- C. Whether the identity created by Mobutu is one that can challenge the dominant Western discourse on Zaire.

I am not arguing that this was moral or ethical, or making a value judgment about the actions Mobutu took or the wealth he amassed. The objective of this thesis is to argue that the conceptions of Mobutu as a particular kind of African leader are not complex enough, and do not do justice to the ways in which he was able to use the West's conceptions of himself, and African rule and colonies in general to serve his own personal and political ends. He was not the puppet but rather the master.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

In light of the objectives of this thesis, the thesis answers the following research question.

How did Mobutu create a Zairian national identity?

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature available indicates there are, broadly, two distinct groupings of analysis. The first group of readings outlines the various theories on the formation of a national identity with a focus on creating a national identity in a postcolonial context.

The second set of readings looks at the policies of Zairianization. These readings move the voice to the African subject. By changing the locus of control of the storytelling position, the story is changed. The understanding of power is shifted, and notions of control cannot simply see the West as the perpetrator and Africa as the defenceless, self-defeating victim of the West. Postcolonial literature outlines the development of a counterhegemonic discourse and provides an understanding of Kevin Dunn's concept of reimagining the Congo as Zaire.

1.3.1 National identity

National identity is the attachment towards a national group and a collective sense of belonging.⁹ Belgian Congo had not developed a national identity. Throughout the rest of the continent, there was a semblance of a national identity and support base. In Congo, the lack of structure was attributed to the various tribal groups and the political organisation of the colonial state. Belgian rule had ensured that there wasn't a homogenous culture and one could not be forged as these groups were separated according to territory and thus saw themselves as fundamentally distinct. The various tribes differed and because of the lack of unity and communication and the sheer size of the Congo, they competed for resources.¹⁰ The government divided and consolidated various districts which were then further divided into several territories. There was an understanding that the various territories were created based on tribal divisions which reinforced the idea that there were distinct entities in the state and that a national identity could not emerge. The focus was on tribal concerns rather than the nation, thus nationalism did not emerge.¹¹

There are four central debates surrounding national identity, namely primordialist, constructivist, instrumentalist and institutionalist. What is common is the understanding that national identity is a constructed identity based on solidarity, attachment and a set of common values.¹² National identity is created through the invention of tradition and the inclusion of various aspects of pre-existing cultural traditions.¹³ In the case of Zaire and particularly the process of Zairianization, Mobutu's objective was to create a national identity.

Crawford Young identified a framework for the understanding of identity based on primordialist, instrumentalist and constructivist approaches. Primordialist understandings of identity assume

⁹ Doosje, B., Branscombe, N.R., Spears, R., & Manstead, A.S. (2004). Consequences of national ingroup identification for responses to immoral historical events. *Collective guilt: International perspectives*, 95-111.

¹⁰ Purcell, J.P. (n.d.). *Decolonisation: Congo 1960-1961*, 2 Retrieved May 20, 2014, from <http://www.eceme.ensino.eb.br/cihm/Arquivos/PDF%20Files/37.pdf>.

¹¹ Purcell, 3.

¹² Weber, M., Gerth, H.H., & Mills, C.W. (1948). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (by Max Weber) translated, edited and with an introduction by H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press, 175-6.

¹³ Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University; Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities 1983*. London and New York: Verso; (Hobsbawm, E. (1983). *Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870-1914. The invention of tradition*, 215.

that identities are fixed notions. Based on this theory, individuals have a single fixed ethnic identity. The origins of these identities are understood to be biological or natural.¹⁴

Constructivist debates understand identity as being fluid. One's identity can shift according to the social, economic or political context. Constructivist theory allows for an understanding of identity based on multiple identities. Gellner, Anderson, Hobsbawm, Breuilley, and others attributed the development of an identity to the process of modernisation.¹⁵ As Wimmer, Posner and Nagel iterated, institutions define group identification. Institutionalism can be understood as an offshoot of constructivist approaches and is based on construction and choice.¹⁶ Posner explained with a case study on Zambia, that ethnic identities can be affected by the state and institutions. As he argued, one-party rule provides a justification for ethnic identification.¹⁷ This applied to Zaire under Mobutu as the state was under one-party rule. State formation creates boundaries which promotes an identity choice based on these boundaries.¹⁸ With preformed boundaries in Zaire, Mobutu shaped an identity around these boundaries.

Nagel identified the way external forces shape ethnic boundaries and how identity is defined by political parties and institutions. The state becomes the central institution and shapes ethnic boundaries and ethnic identification.¹⁹

Ascriptive identity, which is an instrumentalist theory, is a function of the modern nation state and is used as a tool for political elites. Ascriptive identity refers to race, ethnicity, tribe language and religion – all of which are shaped by the state and the political elite.²⁰ In this instance, Mobutu's implementation of authenticité and Zairianization created a national identity. These

¹⁴ Young, C. (1993). *The rising tide of cultural pluralism: The nation-state at bay?* US: University of Wisconsin Press; Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. Vol. 5019. New York: Basic Books.

¹⁵ Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, E.J. (1990). *Echoes of the Marseillaise: Two centuries look back on the French Revolution*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press; Breuilley, J. (1995). *Reflections on Nationalism*, 137-154. London, UK: Routledge.

¹⁶ Wimmer, A. (1997). Who Owns the State? Understanding Ethnic Conflict in Post-Colonial Societies. *Nations and nationalism*, 3(4), 631-666; Wimmer, A. (2008). The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: A multilevel process theory. *American journal of sociology*, 113(4), 970-1022; Posner, D.N. (2005). *Institutions and ethnic politics in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Nagel, J. (1994). Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social problems*, 152-176.

¹⁷ Posner, 2005: 7.

¹⁸ Miles, R. (1993). *Racism after 'race relations'*. London: Routledge; Hobsbawm, 1990; Tilly, C. (1996). *European Revolutions: 1492-1992 (Making of Europe)*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

¹⁹ Nagel, 1994: 156-7.

²⁰ Toffolo, C.E. (2003). *Emancipating cultural pluralism*. Albany: SUNY Press, 3.

identities are usually formed in response to political policies and state structure.²¹ As Tilly and Hobsbawm argued, nationalism is created from the top down which generates bottom up nationalism based on incentives to adopt a particular identity which can be understood as primordialist or constructivist. As identities can be shaped by political elites and the state, national identity is a construct. Instrumentalist thought supports the idea that national identity is created by political elites in order to achieve political ends.²²

1.3.2 Postcolonial theory

Postcolonial theory is an alternative discourse that enables analysis of the legacies of colonialism. Postcolonial theory outlines the relationship created by the continual control and exploitation of a region and its populace. The theory as a whole seeks to understand the social and political power dynamics that have created the climates necessary for both colonialism and neo-colonialism. It is within this realm that Mobutu formed a national identity in Zaire. Decolonisation evokes the process of developing a postcolonial identity. This identity is based on cultural interactions based on the various types of identity – cultural, national or ethnic identity and social relations.²³

The emphasis on identity in postcolonial theory is understood through the concept of hybridity which explains the difficulty associated with reconstructing one's identity in a postcolonial setting. Hybridity is best understood as the emergence of a multicultural identity in a formerly colonised region as the cultures of the colonised and the coloniser merge. The difficulty arises because the identity of the colonised becomes integrated to an extent with the coloniser's culture, resulting in the fusion of a traditional African identity and a Western identity in what is referred to as "cultural fragmentation and multiculturalism". Moreover, the prevalence of globalisation and global interdependence exacerbates this cultural fragmentation. The idea of the nation becomes replaced with Homi Bhabha's concept of the "dissemination" which implies

²¹ Barth, F. (1969). 'Introduction' and 'Pathan Identity and Its Maintenance'. in Barth, F. (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget; London: Allen & Unwin, 9-38; 117-134.

²² Cruz, C. (2000). Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Futures. *World Politics*, 52(3), 275-312; Dragović, M. (2005). Competing Institutions in National Identity Construction: The Croatian Case. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11(1):61-87; Handler, R. (1984). On Sociological Discontinuity: Nationalism and Cultural Objectification in Quebec. *Current Anthropology*, 25(1), 55-71.

²³ Chibber, V. (2014). *Postcolonial theory and the specter of capital*. US: Verso Books, 2.

transference of ideas between the colonised and the coloniser. This idea of globalisation and the “dissemination” is viewed as a continuance of Western imperialism.²⁴ What hybridity does succeed in is challenging the notions of barbarism and backwardness associated with former colonial states as it implies that the colonised were able to adopt certain aspects of Western culture and thus have made strides towards a greater semblance of civilisation.²⁵ However, this still remains problematic as the assumption of Western superiority is still latent in this theory and the colonised are only redefined due to their acceptance of Western culture.

The colonial period was defined by the process of redefining non-Western societies into European constructs. Colonialism was defined by the attainment, domination and subsequent exploitation of the territory, the alteration of the colonised subject's mental space as well as the transformation of society politically and economically in line with a Western ideal.²⁶ These processes often meant that the coloniser had to resort to brutality particularly to maintain control over the region through punishment and reward, thus beginning the process of creating a paradigm shift in the minds of the colonised.

Postcolonial theory is not a single theory but a set of different theories. The literature, therefore, shows consensus in using the concept of postcolonialism to cover all practices used after formal decolonisation.²⁷

*Postcolonialism denotes a range of critical perspectives on the diverse histories and geographies of colonial practices, discourses, impacts and, importantly, their legacies in the present.*²⁸

Postcolonial theory is widely contested as its use is dependent on the context.²⁹ There is debate over the elastic nature of the theory, which spaces and identities are deemed postcolonial and whether the theory only applies to the period immediately after the end of formal colonialism.

²⁴ Basaglia, 76.

²⁵ Basaglia, 77.

²⁶ De Boeck, F. (2011). *The Last Post: Congo and Postcolonial Theory*, 4 Retrieved 5 August 2013 from: <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/bitstream/123456789/319799/1/The+Last+Post22310.pdf>.

²⁷ Nash, C. (2002). Cultural Geography: Postcolonial Cultural Geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 26(2): 219-230.

²⁸ Nash, 221.

Postcolonial theory has been shaped largely by the French ‘high’ theory of Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault and Jacques Lacan which has informed the work of Said, Spivak and Bhabha. The critiques of postcolonial theory are based on traditionally conservative historians and critics from within postcolonial spaces.³⁰ Conservative historians such as Russell Jacoby and John MacKensie have critiqued postcolonial theory for being politically radical without taking into account imperial history and historiography. Jacoby cited in Moore-Gilbert in particular critiques postcolonial theory’s departure from literary studies into sociology, political economy, anthropology and history which lack engagement with both history and culture.

Aijaz Ahmad views postcolonial theory as conservative and in some instances neocolonial in both its central tenets and effects. Ahmad’s critique is that many postcolonial critics are based in the West and are thus disconnected from the realities of the third world and is reproduced in an academic context and thus primary material from the third world is manipulated and creates a new platform for the West’s traditional cultural authority. Tiffin argues that postcolonial theory becomes a new method for ‘othering’ people rather than challenging it as it detaches itself from popular political struggles.³¹

Ranger interprets three different meanings of postcolonial theory.³² Firstly, postcolonial theorists arrive in the first world and expand knowledge of the reality in the third world and essentially shows that the third world is projecting its realities on the first world. Secondly, postcolonial theory is viewed as a reflective research method that reflects on the researcher in conjunction to the context. The criticism is that this methodology undermines imperial science’s rationality. Thirdly, postcolonial theory is understood as the contemporary context of former colonial states.³³ This refers to states that have experienced formal decolonisation and independence.³⁴

²⁹ Blunt, A. & McEwan, C. (2002). Introduction. In: Blunt, A. & McEwan, C. (eds.) *Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: Continuum. 1-6; Quayson, A. (2000). *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* Cambridge: Polity Press; Williams, P. & Chrisman, L. (1994). (eds.) *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press.

³⁰ Moore-Gilbert, B. (1997). *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London: Verso.

³¹ Moore-Gilbert.

³² Ranger, T. (1996). Postscript: Colonial and Postcolonial Identities. In: Werbner, R. & Ranger, T. (eds.) *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*. London: Zed. 271-281.

³³ Ranger.

³⁴34

Simon similarly defines postcolonial theory as three separate understandings. Postcolonialism is viewed as an epoch, research method or form of identity. Through monuments, flags or place-names for example, postcolonialism can be understood as a national identity or as national symbols. This thesis is based on postcolonialism as the creation of a new identity. According to Young, postcolonialism tricontinentalism exists to question economic imperialism, the histories of decolonized states and signifies an engagement with a reformed political and national identity.³⁵

1.3.3 Zairianization

The process of Zairianization forms the basis of the national identity created by Mobutu.³⁶ Dunn stated that discourse has led to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) being represented as the “Heart of Darkness” which has severe political consequences on the DRC as these representations directly influence the political policy within the DRC. According to Dunn, the central reason why the Congo was originally colonised by Belgium was that the Belgian King, Leopold II, wanted to bring order to this chaotic state. By representing the Congolese as savages, the West felt justified in exacting brutality against them. Following 1960, Congolese independence was seen as fundamentally chaotic.³⁷ He stated that,

*The long term implications of these discourses are now evident. The extent to which the people within Congo now find their country violently fragmented, preyed upon by external actors, and marginalized by international inattention can be directly tracked back to historical constructions of their identity.*³⁸

The symbolic value has evolved over time and led to different political implications and power structures.³⁹ Zaire’s symbolic value as an asset to the West both economically and strategically ensured Mobutu’s longevity. Dunn's text analyses the discourse surrounding the Congo and the political implications of these perceptions; however, his study encompasses the region in its entirety and simply alludes to the representations of Mobutu himself.

³⁵ Young.

³⁶ Dunn, 19.

³⁷ Dunn, 141.

³⁸ Dunn, 142.

³⁹ Dunn, 142.

William Reno analysed the success of Mobutu in state building. Reno argued that Mobutu managed to shift Zaire from a collapsed state to a seemingly successful model. While his rule was undoubtedly flawed, Reno praised Mobutu for adapting a state-building model to Zaire in light of the region's turbulent past. He received significant support from the United States ensuring that his state-building models were accepted. Reno alluded to the West's perception of Mobutu based on Zaire's significance and the backdrop the Cold War. While Reno did not analyse the representations of Mobutu and Zaire, he suggested that the United States' perceptions of Mobutu ensured the longevity of his political rule.⁴⁰

Kevin Dunn investigated Mobutu's reinvention of the Congo, following independence, into Zaire. Aside from the name change, Mobutu reimagined Congo's identity. As Dunn termed it, Mobutu effectively reinvented the Congo. Dunn's assertion and the assertion of this paper is that the process of Zairianization which created a new national identity indicated a counterhegemonic discourse that followed the tenets of postcolonial theory.⁴¹ A national identity was created on the tenets of nationalism inherent in Third World discourse, colonial imagery, Western philosophy and the intricacies of the Cold War. Mobutu subverted the imagery that had been created around Congo and introduced imagery from within the state.⁴² Through the appropriation of Third World discourses on nationalism, Western philosophical rhetoric, colonial imagery, and the discourses of Cold War competition, Mobutu was successful, to a limited extent, in altering the dominant image and introducing new images of the Congo/Zaire.⁴³

Aimee Mackie argues that the form of Zairianization introduced by Mobutu ranged from symbolic name changes of cities, towns, his own name and dress codes. The name change denoted a defiance of the Catholic Church and was viewed as an assertion of power by Mobutu as opposed to an erasure of colonial ideologies. According to Mackie there was more interest in developing an Africa that the West could buy into as opposed to developing a unique national identity with the interests of the people being central. While this position may not be entirely accurate, it is within the bounds of what other writers from the west have surmised. The author

⁴⁰ Reno, W.R. (2006). Congo: From State Collapse to 'Absolutism', to State Failure. *Third World Quarterly*, 27(1), 43-56.

⁴¹ Dunn, 19.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

further elaborates on Mobutu's nationalisation project which contrary to the expectation that industry would be handed over to the people; Mobutu used this to endear himself to the bourgeoisie. The author is of the view that Zairianization bankrupted the country and did not reverse the trajectory of colonialism.⁴⁴

1.4 RESEARCH METHODS AND LIMITS

This mini dissertation is qualitative in nature and is based on discourse analysis. Zairianization and authenticité have been analysed as a discourse in order to understand the creation of a national identity – and this analysis is presented in this thesis. Zairianization and authenticité have contributed to the reimagining of Zaire from a neo-colonial space to a state based on counterhegemonic discourse. This section outlines the particular research methods used for this study.

1.4.1 Orientalism: A Method

Postcolonial theory provides an alternative discourse that enables analysis of the legacies of colonialism. It inverts the usual gaze from that of the coloniser to that of the colonised, or from the constructed “self” to the other. Postcolonial theory outlines the relationship created by the continual control and exploitation of a region and its populace. The theory as a whole seeks to understand the social and political power dynamics that have created the climate necessary for both colonialism and neo-colonialism. Post colonialism is focused on understanding the cultural perceptions from the West and seeks to reinvent these perceptions by creating an understanding from within the former colonial states.⁴⁵ It is within this realm that Mobutu could create an identity that challenged the existing norms by reclaiming an identity based on African tradition and culture.

Orientalism emerged through a new wave of discourse that sought to challenge the notions that colonialism and neo-colonialism were based on. Orientalism argues that the us- and them-binary created through colonialism and neo-colonialism are merely social constructs and as such are dependent on the relationship between the West and former colonial states. The focus of

⁴⁴ Mackie, A. *The Utility of Darkness: Figments of a State Called the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Dissertation, Macalester College, Minnesota, United States, 52.

⁴⁵Basaglia, I. (2012). The contribution of post-colonial theory to the construction of identity in international relations. *Cross-Sections*, 8, 71.

Orientalism within postcolonial theory is to challenge the cultural perceptions that have emerged from the West. Orientalism is theoretically a powerful counterforce to challenge the existing discourse and perceptions.⁴⁶ The dismantling of colonial rule in each country was accompanied by the inherent need to challenge the often ignorant assumptions and stereotypes that had emerged. With new found independence, former colonised states began to forge their own identity based on lived reality by creating discourse from within these states rather than based on colonial discourse.⁴⁷

This paper argues that Mobutu's policies of authenticité and Zairianization effectively reinvented the perceptions of the Congo and the "Heart of Darkness" by creating an authentically African state based on Mobutu's policy of authenticité.⁴⁸

Authenticité has made us discover our personality by reaching into the depths of our past for the rich cultural heritage left to us by our ancestors. We have no intention of blindly returning to all ancestral customs; rather, we would like to choose those that adapt themselves well to modern life, those that encourage progress, and those that create a way of life and thought that are essentially ours.

In this context, Zairianization is equated to Orientalism. "Resorting to Authenticity" (Recours à l'authenticité) or Zairianization advocated the carving of a new identity that included nationalisation of key institutions. Accompanying this move were daily radio broadcasts of messages from Mobutu which were aimed at the citizens. These messages restated the idea of a utopian state through political education in different languages to indoctrinate all Zairian citizens regardless of their class.⁴⁹ While this could be viewed as an overt form of decolonising the mind, Mobutu-style, by 1972 Mobutu had advocated the changing of all subjects' names to authentic African and in some cases tribal names. This move rapidly affected the renaming of the currency and the adoption of a new name for the country, Zaire. Of course, the latter choice was contrary

⁴⁶ Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Random House, 1.

⁴⁷ Basaglia, 74.

⁴⁸ The authenticité campaign aimed at reclaiming the nation's African traditions. Name changes, political and economic policies and the policy of authenticité were justified on the grounds of overcoming the colonial legacy, making the country more authentically African, and removing the negative baggage associated with the "Congo".

⁴⁹ Jackson, N. & Shapiro-Phim, T. (2008). *Dance, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Dignity in Motion*, p. 54. UK: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.

to his celebration of the African state as it was a legacy of the first Western explorers who found the Congo.⁵⁰

It is argued in this paper using the concept of Orientalism, that Mobutu re-imagined the Congo as the West re-imagined the East. Deriving from Said's postcolonial theory on "Orientalism" which explains the "othering" and resulting subordination of the colonial subject, Zaire under Mobutu has been subject to a conflicting discourse that has allowed for the systematic manipulation and exploitation of the state and its power structures. This has cast the region in a negative light, and the perception has been that this allowed the region to be dominated by the West even in a postcolonial period. What has been explored and which is presented in this paper is the manner in which contradictory perceptions of Mobutu and Zaire have been used to serve continued Western imperatives in Africa. Postcolonial theory and orientalism challenge Western thought and seek to create a discourse from within the state. Mobutu did just this, by introducing the twin policies of authenticité and Zairianization; he reclaimed African traditions and culture and brought Western colonial structures into question. The renaming of the state, cities and people signified a rejection of colonialism and the emergence of a national identity inverted the gaze from Belgian rule to the Congolese people and challenged colonial discourses in the state.

Edward Said's work on "Orientalism" proved prolific in identifying the stereotypes surrounding the Middle East and the consequences this had. I believe an in-depth discourse analysis of the perceptions of Africa, and particularly Zaire, can lead to similar conclusions about the characterisation of Africa and Africans. In focusing on the discourse that surrounds Zaire under Mobutu, I was struck by the similarities between the representations that arose and Edward Said's conception of the Orient. Imagery of backward and uncivilised people is used in depictions of both Africa and the Orient. Western discourse comprises of patronising attitudes and blatant racism towards the "other", chastising these regions as the antithesis of Western superiority. Orientalism, I will argue, thus becomes the standard model we can use as the basis for an understanding of the implications of Western discourse on colonial spaces. It is within this framework that Mobutu's policy of authenticité emerged as a counterhegemonic discourse that challenged Western conceptions of national identity in Zaire. Said argued that,

⁵⁰ Devisch, R. (1998). Colonial State Building in the Congo, and its Dismantling. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 30(42), p 233.

*Ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force or more precisely their configurations of power also studied.*⁵¹

It is pivotal to understand why knowledge is created and disseminated and how this relates to power structures. The goal of Orientalism is to challenge Western discourse and rhetoric; Mobutu achieved this through the creation of a Zairian national identity.

This jaundiced view of Zaire and Mobutu, however, will be refuted by analysing Mobutu's policies and his desire for support from the West. It could be argued that the inherent danger of the "superpower" discourse is that all discussions on Africa signal the one as the "dominant" and "good" with the commencement of "othering" in its most pejorative manner borne out by actions and assumptions of absolute power. Mobutu challenged the idea of the other by creating an identity that emerged from within the state and stood apart from perceptions and stereotypes created by the West. While Mobutu still relied heavily on the West's support, the argument in this thesis is that Mobutu was not a pawn of the West but rather that he manipulated the West's interests in the region in order to benefit himself and his party through the assurance of continual support and the mass accumulation of personal wealth.

1.4.2 Mobutu's Zaire: A case study

Arguably, Zaire's transition to independence was still marred by colonialism. With the argument in prevailing discourse that Mobutu was a puppet of the West accompanied by increasingly racist discourse, the region was on one hand cast again as "The Heart of Darkness". However, Mobutu was able to unify a state after a long history of inter-tribal conflict and districts that forged an inherently fragmented state. He created an identity exclusive of Western influence. This is the central reason why this discourse analysis is conducted with a case study on Zaire under Mobutu's rule as it emerged as the first instance of an authentic African state under an authentic African leader.

Robert Yin emphasised the importance of using a case study when analysing a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context.⁵² This paper looks at the emergence of authenticité and Zairianization and the power structure that Mobutu created based on these policies. I have

⁵¹ Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Random House, 5.

⁵² Yin, R.K. (2002). Case Study Research: Design and Methods. *Applied Social Research Methods Series*, 5: 5.

chosen Mobutu's dictatorship as it presents a challenge to Western discourse on the stereotypes of Africa that became the norm. In particular, the focus is Mobutu's power structure based on his interactions with external actors and political policies. A case study serves as an empirical inquiry into this phenomenon and in this context essentially serves to understand the impact that these policies had on reimagining Zaire.⁵³

The research methodology of case studies is to firstly specify a problem and research objective. In this case it is to find the connection between "Orientalism" and Zairianization. This is based on a disciplined configurative case as the established theory of "Orientalism" and "othering" are being used to explain Mobutu's counter to Western discourse. Once the research problem is identified, it is imperative to develop a research strategy with a specified set of variables. In this case the dependent variable is Mobutu's dictatorship and the independent variable is Zairianization which will be held constant. The third aspect of this methodology is case study selection. This case study is based on Zaire and particularly Mobutu's dictatorship because it emerged as an authentically African state following colonialism and essentially challenged the notion of the "other". This is compared to "Orientalism" as Said sought to challenge the notion of "othering" through postcolonial theory from the perspective of the former colonial subjects. Following this, George and Bennet stated that it is imperative to find the variance within the variables which in this case is limited to a specific period in the Congo's history, Mobutu's dictatorship – specifically the creation of Zaire. Finally, the case study methodology focuses on formulating various questions – How did Zairianization create a national identity? How did the identity differ to Congo's national identity? How did Zairian national identity emerge as counterhegemonic discourse?⁵⁴

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE

Orientalism's applications have been to the East and the perceptions and assumptions held by the West. While the application of Orientalism to Africa is not a new concept and has been done by the likes of Achille Mbembe, the focus has been on Africa as a whole. In this case, the

⁵³ Yin, 5.

⁵⁴ George, A.L. & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Boston, MA: The MIT Press.

contribution made to knowledge is the analysis of a paradoxical form of Orientalism pertaining to Zaire and Mobutu specifically.

While recognising that Mobutu was a dictator, there is an understanding that his rule of three decades was only possible with the support from the West. It is firstly through his adoption of authenticity and Zairianization that he amassed great public support from within the state as he outwardly eschewed any traces of colonialism and any influence from the West. He inherited an inherently fractured and divided country. He subverted the traditional colonial narrative by inventing a new Zairian identity that asserted control over the dominant colonial discourse. In utilising Said, who argued that the construction of the “other” was a way of the West asserting control and power over the narrative that would shape our understanding, not just of world events but the course of history. In a sense, what Mobutu did was to control the narrative and ensure that it was experienced by the West as an authentic African vision while transacting with the West for his own personal benefit and ensuring that he remained in power. While one could argue that the Cold War necessitated the West’s utilitarian value of Mobutu, this thesis demonstrates that Mobutu’s control of the region was so powerful that even though the facts presented were proof of Zaire being a high risk country, loans were being approved. The question that the author of this thesis has explored is whether the dazzle of Mobutu and his forging of an African identity were so overwhelming that organisations like the World Bank, the IMF and the UN failed to understand that he was a political tyrant, that the country remained underdeveloped and that funds were being siphoned into Mobutu’s coffers.

1.6 ORGANISATION

This thesis is organised into five chapters. This first chapter has outlined the objectives of this paper based on the concepts of authenticity and Zairianization and challenging the discourse of the West. Moreover, this chapter has explained the research methods and limits as well as the significance of this analysis. The second chapter outlines the process of decolonisation and the history of Congo’s transformation from Belgian Congo to Zaire and how Mobutu created a national identity. Chapter 3 broadly outlines the discourse on Africa, thus translating Orientalism to an African context. It outlines the stereotypes and assumptions that have been made about the continent in order to provide perspective for the way Mobutu challenged existing stereotypes and emerged as an authentic African leader. This chapter juxtaposes the representations of Africa

against Mobutu using postcolonial theory. Chapter 4 explains Mobutu's relationship with the West and how he manipulated this relationship to accumulate his personal wealth. It outlines the way he presented the state in order to export Zaire and garner more support and aid. This chapter deals with the Mobutu the West perceived and how he used this to his advantage. Finally, Chapter 5 is the conclusion and provides an overview of the arguments made and the possibilities for future research.

CHAPTER 2:

THE DECOLONISATION OF THE CONGO

And you can be sure that this birth of a nation out of the ashes of colonialism, out of the ruins of tribal separatism and fratricidal wars, in spite of the long and sad series of divisions and grievances, this building stone by stone of the great edifice of nationalism in Zaire, is the work of which I shall always remain proud (Mobutu: Dignity 75).

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a brief, working background on the Congo from King Leopold II to the Belgian colonial rule through to the short-lived rule of Lumumba and then to Mobutu Sese Seko. Prior to Mobutu's rule, Congo became synonymous with all that the West perceived to be wrong with Africa. Congo was perceived as an inherently chaotic region with inept rulers. In reimagining the Congolese/Zairean state, Mobutu shifted this perception and created a state that went back to Congo's roots before colonialism and portrayed the country as unified under Zairian nationalism. Notwithstanding the corruption that accompanied his rule, there is merit in critically subjecting to scrutiny his insertion of an alternate discourse on the Congo into the conversations with the West. In order to understand the process of reimagining Zaire, it is imperative to understand how deeply fragmented and chaotic the country was prior to Mobutu. Thus while it is contextual information, the pre-Mobutu period provides us with a historic lens through which to understand some aspects of the rule of Mobutu. The brief recounting of history is aimed at moving towards both an understanding of the rise of Mobutu but more importantly, his intervention to develop an authentic Zaire and the rationale behind his actions. Thus it is acknowledged that this chapter should not be seen as a history of the Congo or Zaire. Events and the chronology presented have been selected in order to probe the unique identity carved by Mobutu. In order to understand the context of Congo and the circumstances leading to Mobutu's attempts to create an authentic African state, the writings of Nkrumah and Fanon have been used to gain an understanding of the decolonisation process from 1960 onwards. It will be demonstrated in the following sections that factors at play in the Congo are ongoing conflict, struggles for resources, a destabilised state, authoritarian rule, the Cold War and neo-colonial interests of international countries.

This chapter commences with the colonial setting of the Congo, followed by a discussion on independence from Belgium and the rise of Mobutu.

2.2 A COLONIAL SETTING

The significant value of the Congo has shifted over time and led to different political implications. The fate of Africa with delineated territories was decided by the European imperial powers in Africa at the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference.⁵⁵ Historians have detailed accounts of the impact of the imposition of artificial boundaries on Africa. The Congo was claimed by King Leopold II who ran the country as a personal fiefdom with deaths of citizens that could be termed a type of genocide.⁵⁶ The Congo differed from other colonised states in Africa as it was colonised towards the end of the 19th century in comparison to other African states, and was unusually claimed by King Leopold II as an individual, rather than by Belgium itself.⁵⁷ Nzongola-Ntalaja chronicled the processes which led to Leopold's appropriation of the Congo as his own personal property⁵⁸. It can be stated that it was probably the only country in Africa that privately belonged to an individual. King Leopold II had a limited time to establish imperial control in the region with the added advantage that they could build on existing models of colonialism that had proven to be successful in other African regions. This heralded a period of economic exploitation of the Congo. At the end of the 19th century, the Congo was perceived as a trading paradise for the West due to its vast mineral resources but soon fell prey to King Leopold II's greed as he colonised the Congo and monopolised the trade sector.⁵⁹ King Leopold II justified bringing order to the region and his brutality against the people, by presenting the Congo as inherently chaotic and the Congolese people as savage and barbaric. Dunn chronicled the exploitative excesses of King Leopold II and traced the events preceding the handover of ownership to the Belgian state in 1908 for a sizable amount of money.⁶⁰ Henry Morton Stanley, an explorer who journeyed through the Congo on behalf of King Leopold II, in effect overwrote the socio-political practices and forms of knowledge with Western ideologies and practices such

⁵⁵ Thompson, A. (2010). *An Introduction to African Politics*, 12. London: Routledge.

⁵⁶ White, M. (2003). *Wars, Massacres and Atrocities of the Twentieth Century*. Retrieved June 28, 2015, from <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/20centry.htm>.

⁵⁷ Nzongola-Ntalaja, G. (2002). *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*. New York: Zed Books, 16.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 22.

⁶⁰ Dunn, 52.

as sovereignty, the Western state construct and modernity – all the features that the Congo was seen as lacking.⁶¹ King Leopold II's rule resulted in the change of name from the Congo Free State to the Belgian Congo. There was no significant difference for the indigenous people with the transition of power shifts and it is argued that the Belgian rule entrenched notions of the colonised as “other” in contrast to the European self.⁶² Thus, both Young⁶³ and Dunn⁶⁴ are in agreement that Belgian rule was characterised by the creation of the “other” with no vision of any political independence present. There are two key events that are pertinent in this period: firstly, the Belgian government purchase of Congo from Leopold in 1908 and the death of Leopold in 1909.

Hochschild documented the economic exploitation of the country under Leopold's rule with a close documentation of the sequence of events preceding the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885.⁶⁵ The Berlin Conference has been described as a demonstration of European assertion of colonialism in Africa. Nilsson, for example, argued that the Conference enabled the creation of “spheres of influence” in Africa for the Europeans, fuelled and prompted by Livingstone's “three Cs” – Commerce, Christianity and Civilisation.⁶⁶ Hochschild and Nilsson both argued that Leopold's quest for a piece of Africa was disguised as philanthropy. Behind this disguise, the real motive (cited by Pakenham) is evident in Leopold's writing to his ambassador in England that “I do not want to miss a good chance of getting us a slice of this magnificent African cake”.⁶⁷ Leopold wanted to research and civilise Africa but he also wanted the largest piece of Africa possible. In 1876, he founded the International African Society and in 1878 he formed the International Congo Society based on economic goals. He bought off the other investors so that he would be the sole owner of Congo while the African Society served as a philanthropic justification. King Leopold II differed from other colonial powers, which were states, in that he “owned” Congo in his personal capacity and used the wealth derived from that ownership to fund his lifestyle and amassing of wealth in Belgium. It is peculiar that in a sense Leopold and

⁶¹ Dunn, 141.

⁶² Dunn, 141.

⁶³ Young, C. (1979). *The politics of cultural pluralism*. US: University of Wisconsin Press, 138-144.

⁶⁴ Dunn, 30.

⁶⁵ Hochschild, A. (1999). *King Leopold's ghost: A story of greed, terror, and heroism in colonial Africa*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

⁶⁶ Nilsson, D. (2013). Sweden-Norway at the Berlin Conference 1884–85: History, national identity-making and Sweden's relations with Africa. *Current African Issues*, 53. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 8.

⁶⁷ As cited in Pakenham, T. (1991). *The scramble for Africa: 1876–1912*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 22.

Mobutu are similar in their use of the Congo for personal enrichment. Leopold amassed great wealth from the exploitation of the Congo's natural resources.

This brief account of the Congo's history provides some insight into the complexities of power shifts and the absence of a voice from the colonised in terms of governance, power or telling their narratives. The distinctive feature of Leopold's rule was that he as an individual owned a country and this in effect ensured that the people and the resources of the country belonged to him. There is an interesting nexus between Mobutu and Leopold in terms of moral reprehensibility. The key distinction that is critical to this thesis is the strong voice of Mobutu which asserted an African identity.

Over the period Leopold owned the Congo Free State, he became known for gross human rights violations, he restricted foreign access to the state and exploited the local population as labour. His rule was characterised by high death tolls, mutilations and beatings. Facing international opposition, the Belgian parliament compelled Leopold to relinquish his rule over the Congo Free State in 1908 and the state became the Belgian Congo under parliamentary rule.⁶⁸

2.3 THE DECOLONISATION OF CONGO

The Belgian's limited efforts at reform were based on the following assumptions that drove Belgian policy between 1958 and 1960. Firstly, the Belgians assumed that independence was not imminent and thus there was no urgency to introduce any reforms or contingency plans for transformation. Secondly, they assumed that there would be a long period following independence that would require a transitional government and a state that still relied heavily on the Belgians. These assumptions proved to be unrealistic and decolonisation and independence comprised a tumultuous road for the Congo.⁶⁹

Purcell argued that during the 1950s, and prior to independence, the Belgian Congo had not developed a national identity. Throughout the rest of the continent, there was a semblance of a national identity and developing support bases. However, in the Congo the lack of structure was attributed to the various tribal groups and the political organisation of the colonial state rooted in an administrative system that excluded people of the Congo from any form of participation.

⁶⁸ Hochschild, 1999.

⁶⁹ Purcell, 6.

Significantly, however, Belgian rule from 1908 onwards ensured that there was no homogenous culture and that one could not be forged as groups were separated according to territory, identifying themselves as fundamentally distinct from one another. The various tribes differed and, because of the lack of unity and communication combined with the sheer size of the Congo, they competed for resources. Purcell further argued that a combination of these factors stood in the way of national unity and the creation of a homogenous state.⁷⁰ When Belgium was handed power and control over the Congo by King Leopold II in 1908, the government divided and consolidated various districts which were then further divided into several territories. There was an understanding that these territories were created based on tribal divisions which reinforced the idea that there were distinct entities in the state and that a national identity could not emerge. The focus was on tribal concerns rather than the nation, and consequently no recognisable form of nationalism emerged.⁷¹

By 1960, however, the Congo was in crisis. The Belgian government had done little to prepare Congolese people for independence, most of whom had primary education with a select few continuing to secondary or tertiary education. What emerged as a result of this was a state over-reliant on the colonial administration for doctors and engineers.⁷² In fact, the first doctors and civil engineers from Congo only graduated in 1961.⁷³ The lack of intellectual capital within the country made reliance on the coloniser a continuing necessity.

By the end of the Belgian rule, the Congolese citizenry had not been integrated into the administration of the country and thus there was no basis for Congolese governance. African politicians could not be appointed to a post held by a Belgian until they were equally qualified, and the low levels of education created difficulties, resulting in a continuous discrepancy between Africans and Belgians in administrative positions. A native elite was thus unable to emerge as there were no Congolese trained or experienced as public servants.⁷⁴ In 1950, the colonial administration had created a ten-year economic and social plan. This plan was exclusionary of political reform and failed to include the Congolese in governance or

⁷⁰ Purcell, 2.

⁷¹ Purcell, 3.

⁷² Ibid, 3.

⁷³ Ibid, 4.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 4.

administration and independence. The plan essentially discouraged self-governance.⁷⁵ Without a postcolonial administration or civil service in place, Congo had little hope of a successful transition to independence. Further hindering the success of a transition was the lack of political environment with parties standing for the will of the people. Under Belgian rule, the development of political parties was stunted. Congo during the 1960s was without any political parties as the two conditions needed for them to develop were not in place.⁷⁶ The two conditions are:

*(1) the devolution by the imperial government of a sufficiently meaningful and attractive measure of power to induce or provoke nationalist leaders to convert their movements into political parties and (2) the introduction or refinement of institutions and procedures, such as an electoral system, which would make it technically possible for parties to seek power constitutionally.*⁷⁷

In summary, without the foundation for governance in place, any possibility of a successful transition to independence was doomed. There were no political parties till 1958 as the Belgians feared that radical political ideas emerging from neighbouring countries would influence the Congolese. However, following 1958, there was no contingency plan by the Congolese for when the ban was lifted. While the British and the French encouraged political parties to develop in their colonies, the Belgians feared it and actively set out to prevent it. By 1958, various small parties had been created, each attributed to a specific tribe, which served further to entrench tribalism and ethnic identity. Despite a multitude of small parties there was little political unity between them. Intra-tribal loyalty translated to the political sphere, making it difficult to negotiate with the Belgians and a representative of the majority.⁷⁸

The drive for independence effectively began in 1944. It was clear that Belgium had neither prepared itself for independence nor anticipated its initiation. While the Belgians predicted a five-year timeframe before independence in 1958, the Congolese were fighting for reform. This began with General Charles de Gaulle's visit to Brazzaville in 1958, in which he outlined his offer of either immediate independence or the opportunity to join the French community. This

⁷⁵ Ibid, 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 5.

⁷⁷ Coleman, J.S. (1955). The emergence of African political parties. In Haines, C.G. (Ed), *Africa Today*, 228-234. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press.

⁷⁸ Purcell, 5.

was followed by a petition from Leopoldville demanding complete independence and the formation of the MNC (Mouvement National Congolais) headed by Lumumba. In 1959, the Leopoldville riots signified the possibility of a colonial war. Soon after, King Leopold II alluded to independence in his 13 January 1959 speech which secured the idea of independence for the Congolese while the extent of independence and the duration of the transition had still not been outlined. While the Belgians were prepared for a transitional government and a slow shift in power, the Congolese were set on complete independence with immediate effect.⁷⁹

At the start of 1960, a Round Table Conference was held with the issue of independence on the table. Congolese representatives from various militant nationalist groups united into a single negotiation unit with an immediate transition to independence plan on the table. A transitional government and period was a compromise that no Congolese group was prepared to make. The Belgians conceded and independence took effect in June 1960.⁸⁰ Hoskyns wrote “it was clear that the promise of independence had been won by Belgian weakness rather than by Congolese strength and that this was by far the most risky grant of independence yet made in Africa.”⁸¹ The rapid propulsion of the Congo into independence in the unplanned form that it took has been argued to be one of the key reasons for the state of turmoil the country experienced post-independence.

2.4 INDEPENDENCE IN AFRICA

Independence in Africa was a period characterised by a shift from colonial rule to neo-colonial rule. The context of neo-colonialism is important if we are to distinguish how Mobutu created a self-sustaining, authentically African state.

Following independence, most African states adopted various political and economic reforms in order to move away from their colonial pasts to be on par with the standard global model. The failure of Patrice Lumumba to unify the Congo could be attributed to continued Belgian interference and remote Western assertions of power in regions with mining rights.⁸² Joy

⁷⁹Ibid, 7.

⁸⁰Ibid, 8.

⁸¹ Hoskyns, C. (1965). *The Congo since Independence: January 1960 to December 1961*. London: Oxford University Press.

⁸² Dunn, 142.

Asongazoh Alemazung, for example, argued that governance in the postcolonial era was problematic because the new African leaders were working on a colonial model that they did not fully own and often consequently perpetuated past colonial practices.⁸³ Basil Davidson speculated that the Belgians hastened an unprepared Congo towards independence, using inexperience and conflict as a means to perpetuate “the underlying colonial structure”.⁸⁴ The shift from colonialism was thus not a smooth transition, bedevilled as it was by the undue influence of multiple Western powers and internal tribal and ethnic conflicts. Following five years of civil war, Mobutu obtained power through a military coup. It could be argued that the conflict between the Lumumba and Mobutu periods was a consequence of the abrupt processes of decolonisation. The effects of decolonisation were detrimental to economies and political structures in former colonial states. The transition from colonisation to independence was anything but smooth.

*On departure, colonial administrations left Africa with weak, malintegrated, distorted economies... African countries entered independence ill-equipped to staff either the agencies of government or private business and development organisations.*⁸⁵

Both the period leading up to Mobutu's rule and the period of his dictatorship were characterised by neo-colonialism. Kwame Nkrumah, the Ghanaian leader, wrote prolifically on what he termed neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism is a theoretical lens that enables a more nuanced understanding of the African state post-independence. Neo-colonialism is defined as the practice of using capitalism, globalisation, and cultural forces to control a seemingly independent country.⁸⁶ Neo-colonialism, it is argued, provides the enabling conditions for conflict, and some take the view that the neo-colonial condition has been largely tied to the presence of conflict in Africa.⁸⁷ According to Nkrumah, neo-colonialism takes a state that is perceived as independent and internationally sovereign, and places an external power over the political policy of the state,

⁸³ Alemazung, J.A. (2010). Actors marring African socio-economic and political development. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(10), 62.

⁸⁴ White, G. (2005). *Holding the Line: Race, racism, and American foreign policy toward Africa*, 114. Washington: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

⁸⁵ Gordon, D.L. (1996). African politics. In April A., & Gordon, D.L. (eds), *Understanding contemporary Africa*, 58. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

⁸⁶ Nkrumah, K. (1995). *Neo-colonialism: The last stage of imperialism*. London: Nelson, ix.

⁸⁷ Nkrumah, ix.

and particularly over the economic system.⁸⁸ Nkrumah argued that neo-colonialism uses foreign aid to exploit a state's resources. In this model, social conflicts in a region are extorted by backing certain factions in the state over others.⁸⁹ In Nkrumah's view, neo-colonialism's main goal is to prevent the optimum development of the African state through the control of key economic and political conditions. Thus by implication any state that is susceptible to neo-colonialism needs to be subservient in order for the neo-colonial power to effectively take control of the political and economic landscape. In this way, the neo-colonial state continues to dominate the region.⁹⁰ The inherent value of neo-colonial theory lies in its ability to provide an analytical tool through which the politics of power in Africa may better be understood. In this paradigm, and although Lumumba had worked to prevent the former coloniser from exerting control over the Congo, it is clear that the rule of Mobutu and his neo-colonial dictatorship had far reaching consequences for the country as a whole.

Franz Fanon, writing as early as 1961, noted how:

*[t]he formerly colonized territory is now turned into an economically dependent country. The former colonizer, which has kept intact and, in some cases, reinforced its colonial marketing channels, agrees to inject small doses into the independent nation's budget in order to sustain it. Now that the colonial countries have achieved their independence the world is faced with the bare facts that make the actual state of the liberated countries even more intolerable.*⁹¹

Thus it is possible to understand what happened in the Congo's move to the DRC from within the paradigm of the neo-colonial analysis offered to us by key authors such as Fanon and Nkrumah. However, an alternative view is also clearly possible. Such a view is represented by the work of Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, who argued that although the neo-colonial powers and the Cold War were contributing factors in the continued instability of the Congo, the role of Congolese leaders in raiding the resources of the country should not be overlooked.⁹² While Nkrumah and Fanon would advocate an active delinking from the economic controls of the West and the pursuit of improvement of the conditions of the people through forms of socialism, it will

⁸⁸ Nkrumah, ix.

⁸⁹ Nkrumah, x.

⁹⁰ Nkrumah, xi.

⁹¹ Fanon, F. (1986). *White skins, black masks*, 60. London: Pluto Press.

⁹² Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2002: 2.

be demonstrated that Mobutu's rule actively perpetuated the neo-colonial state, despite apparent stance taken against the approach in the varying and contradictory statements of authenticity.

In a further development, at the end of Belgium's colonial reign over Congo in 1960, the United States (US) began to take an interest in the Congo – an interest that had arisen subsequent to independence in 1960.⁹³ The minerals within the Congo had to be defended at any cost both during the Cold War and after it. The most important consumers were mainly industrial players like the US, Japan and Europe, amongst others.⁹⁴ Dani Wadada Nabudere argued that,

*The combination of these colonial relics and the globalisation process that fragments societies, has ensured the continuation of conflicts which are being exploited by the new, "free-for-all", mineral conglomerates.*⁹⁵

In 1884, the US became the first country to recognise the claims of King Leopold II on the Congo. The US's interests in the region spanned from the Congo Free State to the current period. Congo's value during the Cold War and the United States' vested interest in the state provide a historic context into which Mobutu and to some degree Lumumba entered the scene. The dominance of the industrial countries with their vested interests in the Congo would have been difficult for any leader to counter.⁹⁶ Being a resource-rich state, Congo was a target for both the United States and the Soviet Union with the US looking to gain a monopoly over the region's resources.⁹⁷ However, this was not the focus for this thesis. The rise of Mobutu and his calls for an authentic African state often as a counterpoint to the othering have been explored. While Mobutu did not consistently use this as a counter to the West, it will be demonstrated that he used it strategically to his own advantage. This has been examined in more detail for discussion in this paper.

⁹³ Nabudere, D.W. (2004). *The Political Economy of Conflict and War in the Great Lakes Region*. Cape Town: IJR, 40.

⁹⁴ Nabudere, 2004: 41.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ What is of significance is that early speeches of Lumumba call for rejection of the colonial identity and the assertion of the Congolese identity in the face of the embedded notions of othering that had taken place.

⁹⁷ Marriage, Z. (2011). Divisive 'commonality': State and Insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Third World Quarterly*, 32: 1895.

2.5 CONGO'S SYMBOLIC VALUE

From 1960, the Congo began a process of nation building following decades of colonial rule.⁹⁸ The immediate post-independence state was handed over to Patrice Lumumba. Lumumba was elected as prime minister on 23 June 1960, just a few days before the Congo was declared officially independent. The military was however still under the power of the Belgians and a revolt began on 5 July 1960. What transpired was The Congo Crisis which led to violent conflict resulting in the deaths of 100 000 people in a six-year period. On 14 September 1960, Mobutu Sese Seko overturned the democratically elected government through a coup that was backed by the United States, and seized power. Lumumba can be seen as a lens through which the international players and their respective priorities are understood.

George White documented the United States' and specifically the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) interference which he demonstrated focused specifically on the period of transition during which Lumumba took control.⁹⁹ White's work highlights the complexities of independence, the short-lived rule of Lumumba, and Mobutu's ascent to power. An additional layer, of course, and as mentioned above, was the lack of preparation for the transition to autonomous rule. Thus, despite Lumumba's calls for national unity post-independence, his rule was soon to end. There are several opposing and contradictory accounts related to the assassination of Lumumba and the intent underpinning his demise. There is the version of historian Ludo de Witte implicating the Belgians and the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, in the death of Lumumba.¹⁰⁰ De Witte argued that the Belgians were protecting their neo-colonial interests in the Congo and eliminating Lumumba would serve this purpose. At the centre of the involvement of the UN is de Witte's account of the UN's dispatch of troops to the Congo and the wrestle for dominance by the Belgians in Katanga province which was copper rich. Washington Okumu stated that the Congo would continue to be "the continent's linchpin" and "Africa's great mineral heart and politico-strategic gateway".¹⁰¹ The richness of minerals made the Congo a natural target for economic exploitation. De Witte's account utilised the Belgian archives and presented a detailed account of the actual assassination

⁹⁸ Marriage, 2011: 1895.

⁹⁹ White, 2005: 114.

¹⁰⁰ De Witte, L. (2001). *The Assassination of Lumumba*. London and New York: Verso.

¹⁰¹ Okumu, W. (1963). *Lumumba's Congo: Roots of conflict*, 132. New York, NY: Ivan Obolensky.

and the surfacing of President Joseph Kasavubu. Its value is in its focus on the role of Belgium and the UN, although it ignored the internal tensions amongst the people of the Congo.

An alternative view is offered by “Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba,” by Emmanuel Gerard and Bruce Kuklick. In their view, we need to take into account what could be summed up as an international conspiracy including the Belgians, the UN, and the Eisenhower administration who were convinced of Lumumba’s communist sentiments. More importantly, this study highlights the forces within Congo in terms of local politicians who were clearly against Lumumba.¹⁰² The utilitarian value of the authors’ insights into the Lumumba massacre is that it is not a reductionist view and offers an explanation involving both international and national players painting a very real picture of the complexity of the internal political tensions within the Congo and extraneous forces that had vested interests in controlling the political fate of the country. Their account views the assassination as a process that was linked to the Eisenhower administration’s distrust of Lumumba’s independence and what they deemed to be communist leanings. They further document Eisenhower’s instruction that Lumumba should be assassinated. While the account provided by the authors is expansive, it relies on the CIA archives and does not exclude the UN’s complicity; it nonetheless takes a narrow and ahistorical view of the politics of the Congo. In fact, in some parts of the book the question of Lumumba’s fitness or lack thereof to rule or any African leaders for that matter is asserted forcefully.

The United States' agenda relied on maintaining its economic power and exploitative social as well as political relations that had been cultivated during colonialism. Based on Cold War tactics, the United States had grown wary of Lumumba's alliance with the Soviet Union and thus facilitated the coup. Belgium and the United States retained control over the mining companies, with the economic agenda becoming a military affair when Katanga, the mineral rich province, was seceded from 1960 to 1963. Katanga was supported in its efforts by the Belgian political elite, intent on maintaining ownership of the resources. Melvin A. Goodman wrote an account based on recordings of meetings held by Eisenhower and an analysis of official communications

¹⁰²Gerard, E., & Kuklick, B. (2015). *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

at the time, and confirmed that there was a perceived instruction from Eisenhower to the CIA to eliminate Lumumba.¹⁰³

Léonce Ndikumana and Kisangani Emizet focused more narrowly on civil wars in the Congo and have provided an historic account of the tensions within the country.¹⁰⁴ Regionally within the Congo, the Katanga province which accounted for 75 percent of the country's mineral output¹⁰⁵ was the home to dominant ethnic groups like the Lunda, Baluba and Bayeke and was also home to a significant percentage of urban wage earners. Ndikumana and Emizet attributed the latter characteristic as being a contributory cause for the political mobilisation that took place within this region. Crawford Young¹⁰⁶ demonstrated that parties were drawn along ethnic lines unlike Lumumba's Movement National Conglais which had an articulated position of national unity. Ndikumana and Emizet outlined the development of the Confederation des Associations Tribales du Katanga (CONAKAT) formed in 1958 purely to defend the interests of "authentic Katangans".¹⁰⁷ This perspective offers a more inclusive understanding of the internal dynamics and political players within the Congo.¹⁰⁸ The danger with their study is that it has underestimated the spheres of influence exerted by the United States of America (USA), Belgium and political events of the time. Thus in the midst of Katanga advocating and declaring autonomy, Lumumba was caught betwixt and between the Belgians who supported Katanga though did not recognise it as independent, and the UN that ignored his appeals for assistance. Scholars are agreed, however, on one thing: that there was a systematic undermining of Lumumba's regime by Belgium, the USA and the UN. They have further described the post Lumumba period and the peace efforts spearheaded by the UN, with a new government formed by Adoula.¹⁰⁹ However, as documented by the authors, the national unification message of Adoula's government was to fail and instead it once again became "a vehicle of recolonisation of the Congo by Belgium via military occupation and control of the economy".¹¹⁰ The value of

¹⁰³ Goodman, M. (2013). *National insecurity: The cost of American militarism*, 72. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Publishers.

¹⁰⁴ Ndikumana, L., & Emizet, K. (2003). *The economics of civil war: The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Young, M.C. (1965). The Congo Rebellion. *Africa Report*, 10(4), 6.

¹⁰⁷ Ndikumana & Emizet, 2003: 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 3.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 10.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.12.

Ndikumana and Emizet's work is that it is unlike other researchers in the field who have largely written narratives from a Western perspective which limits the reader to a view of the activities, interests and archives of the West. Interestingly, what emerges is that Mobutu's initial rule advocates for nation building not unlike Lumumba who called for the rejection of the colonial identity and the assertion of the Congolese identity in the face of the embedded notions of othering that had taken place. Lumumba's desire to gain full independence was not welcomed by the international community and gaining full control over the state's resources to improve the lives of Congolese citizens was a direct threat to Western interests.

After a period of short-lived governments, Mobutu seized power once again in 1965 and became a neo-colonial ruler till 1997 when Kabila once again changed the name of Zaire to the *République démocratique du Congo* (DRC). Into the diverse mix of the Congo that ranged across both urban and rural settings, religion, ethnic divisions, Mobutu shifted to a single party autocracy in 1965. Thus, while authors like Young and Turner¹¹¹ acknowledged the continuation of patterns of governance in postcolonial periods that stemmed from the colonial period, the struggle for a national new identity emerged whilst Cold War politics dominated the international world. Of fascinating interest in Mobutu's quest for a national identity is the dislocation between his presentation to the West of his adherence to Western traditions and his assertion to his own people that he was one of them. Some of his statements in this period reveal a cunning and Machiavellian strategy as he motivated for a one-party country to the West through asserting that he would not buy into the Soviet one-party system. Despite the advocacy for nationhood, Mobutu maintained the boundaries between his subjects and himself. Using rhetorical devices such as communiqués, slogans, and homilies to transform the populace and by the same token maintain the totalitarian state, Mobutu had commenced on a wave of political brainwashing. The semi-schizophrenic split in Mobutu's public utterances was continuously at odds with his actions.

¹¹¹ Young, C. & Turner, T. (1985). *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 323-324.

Mobutu stated that:

*Mobutism is the sum total of the nationalist ideas embodied in our institutions, the whole forming a coherent philosophy which imposes itself as a doctrine....legitimise nationalism drummed into every Zairese, starting with the civil servants.*¹¹²

Accompanying this explanation of Mobutism was the policy of authenticité. Authenticité argued for the manipulation of the reality of Zaire for the purposes of advancement of his own agenda. Mobutu outlined his philosophy with the expectation of being received by the world as following in the footsteps of Nkrumah of Ghana.¹¹³ Interestingly, the publication of authenticité was preceded by public hangings, the violent closure of any dissent, and the assassination of a rebel leader and enhanced autocratic behaviour. Adoption of his policy by citizens was propelled by a belief that Mobutu had brought stability after the civil wars that had wracked the country.¹¹⁴

For the purposes of this thesis, the focus is on authenticité in demonstrating to the Western world that Mobutu was in control of the state but susceptible to the West's influence. Authenticité served as an economic policy ranging from nationalisation of industries to transfer of ownership of businesses from foreigners to Mobutu's people. As an imposed form of nation building, the discourse he promoted was aimed at wooing the West at the expense of treating his own nation as subjects.

“Resorting to Authenticity” (Recours à l’authenticité) advocated the carving of a new identity that included the nationalisation of key institutions. Accompanying this move was the daily broadcasts of messages from Mobutu which were aimed at the citizens. While this could be viewed as an overt form of decolonising the mind, Mobutu style, by 1972 he advocated the changing of all subjects’ names to authentic African and in some cases tribal names. This is covered in more detail in the next two chapters. The reclamation of an African identity rapidly affected the renaming of the currency and the adoption of a new name for the country, Zaire. Of course, the latter choice was contrary to his celebration of the African state as it was a legacy of the first Western explorers who had “found” the Congo.

¹¹² Mobutu, 1989, 95-97.

¹¹³ Dunn, 2003: 149.

¹¹⁴ Grice, C. (2011). *Happy are those who sing and dance: Mobutu, Franco, and the struggle for Zairian identity*. Doctoral thesis, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina, United States.

While Young has argued that 1990 was the end of the postcolonial period¹¹⁵ in Africa, there is no alternate term that can be used to describe the current state of the continent. The contribution to the discourse on postcolonialism can be deepened with drawing on the work of Edward Said's Orientalism.¹¹⁶ Said's contribution pertinent to this thesis focuses on the discussion of the myths and stereotypes perpetuated by Western colonisers about the East that over time become the authoritative "truth". Orientalism demonstrates that the perpetuation of these myths and stereotypes led to a form of binary thinking with the resulting juxtaposition of civilised (West) and uncivilised (East). Said argued that the discourse produced dominated the relationships between the coloniser and the colonised. In this theses, it is argued that Mobutu worked to assert control over the narrative of Zaire which, though an admirable exercise, had limited influence. His approach was ground-breaking in that it asserted control of the discourse on Congo, inserting the people of Congo/Zaire as architects of the narrative and celebrating the history. An evaluation of authenticité concurs that Mobutu's intentions were undermined by his bankrupting of the country. While authenticité was a pivotal message in a postcolonial context in that it sought to reclaim a national identity from within in lieu of a national identity imposed by the West, Mobutu's motives benefitted him personally over the state and provided a platform for him to amass both power and wealth.¹¹⁷

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the rise of Mobutu within the historical context of a high-level history of a specific period in the Congo. It is acknowledged that the complex history of the country requires greater elucidation; however, for the direct purposes of this thesis, historic events and power transitions have been outlined solely to provide the socio-economic and political milieu of the country that provided the backdrop to Mobutu's rule.

In the following chapter, the work of Kevin Dunn is used to understand the evolution over time of the reimagining of the Congo. The contention of Dunn is that the history of the Congo must be understood against the stereotypes and "other" perceptions of the people of the Congo as a

¹¹⁵ Young, C. (2004). The end of the post-colonial state in Africa? Reflections on changing African political dynamics. *African Affairs*, 103(410), 23-24.

¹¹⁶ Said, 1978.

¹¹⁷ Ikambana, J.L.P. (2006). The end of the post-colonial state in Africa? Reflections on changing African political dynamics. *African Affairs*, 103(410), 25.

means to more fully understand its history. On the one hand, the perceptions of the Congo, such as those in which it is seen either as the “Heart of Darkness” or the unimaginable “other” do not alone account for the turmoil and instability that ravaged the country. On the other hand, it is precisely this that has informed a perspective central to this thesis: it is through Mobutu’s struggle to exert control over the discourse on the Congo or his renamed Zaire, that we are able to more effectively understand his status as an African ruler.

CHAPTER 3: DECONSTRUCTING AFRICAN DISCOURSE

Our concern with history, so Hilary's thesis ran, is a concern with ore-formed images already imprinted on our brains, images at which we keep staring while the truth lies elsewhere, away from it all, somewhere as yet undiscovered (W.G. Sebald, Austerlitz).¹¹⁸

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Africa finds itself continuously between conflicting identities, both internally and externally deigned and imposed. The dominant discourse in the West is that of an Africa that is a continent historically exploited, colonised and plundered. "Africa" is homogenised, and despite the fact that the fates of individual countries within Africa are often significantly different, in the 21st century there remains a widespread view that referring to "Africa" is synonymous with any specific country in Africa.¹¹⁹ The "scramble for Africa" has been ascribed to many reasons ranging from economic to cultural or political,¹²⁰ but a detailed study of the colonisation in the different countries reveals that the reasons for colonisation are as varied as the country, time and foreign power present. Despite the reality that colonisation was linked to economic pursuit, the case of Africa is particularly difficult especially in the postcolonial period as described and analysed by so many.¹²¹ Alemazung referred to the "exploitative and asymmetric character" of these relationships that have had significant consequences for each country in different ways.¹²²

In the previous chapter, the focus was on the rise of Mobutu and the implications of the renaming of Zaire with regards to the discourse on Africa. Untangling the narrative of Africa from the Western lens is one way of reclaiming the history as well as puzzling through the history. Mobutu's reimagining of Zaire reclaimed the state's history and promoted an identity from within the state. This chapter explores the demonisation of Africa through the constructions and representations disseminated by the West through a Eurocentric history. As a counter to this, how Mobutu created a Zairian state in order to subvert the stereotypes and perceptions created by

¹¹⁸ Sebald, W.G. (2013). *The emigrants (Austerlitz)*. New York: Random House, 31.

¹¹⁹ Thomson, 2010: 3.

¹²⁰ Ibid 12.

¹²¹ See Young, 2004, Alemazung, 2010 amongst others.

¹²² Alemazung, 2010: 63.

the West is assessed. It is argued that in some ways, Mobutu's Zaire served as the personification of postcolonial theory which he used to create a Zairian national identity.

3.2 THE POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD

Postcolonial theory is an alternative discourse that enables analysis of the legacies of colonialism. Postcolonial theory outlines the relationship created by the continual control and exploitation of a region and its populace. The theory as a whole seeks to understand the social and political power dynamics that create the climate necessary for both colonialism and neo-colonialism. Post-colonialism is focused on understanding the cultural perceptions from the West and seeks to reinvent these perceptions by creating an understanding from within former colonial states. The dismantling of colonial rule in each country was accompanied by the inherent need to challenge the often ignorant assumptions and stereotypes that had emerged. With new found independence, former colonised states began to forge their own identities based on their lived realities by creating discourses from within these states rather than based on colonial discourse.

123

We can hardly think of the Congo, without thinking of Conrad's journey into the Belgian colony, the provocatively named "Heart of Darkness" which has entered the annals of history.¹²⁴ Chinua Achebe called into question the literary canon including Conrad's work which focused on the dehumanisation of Africa and Africans, and while Conrad was certainly not the first, his hugely influential text perpetuated the dehumanised and dehumanising image of Africa.¹²⁵ Thus the myth of the "darkness" of Africa or the "horror" of the continent has gained currency in Western discourse. Africa is often equated to barbarism and tropes of the beast or animal. *Heart of Darkness* emerged as testament to the stark contrast between Africa and the West. The contrasting imagery of light and darkness with one denoting good and the other evil has tended to define Western views on Africa. The West emerged as a saviour, the flicker of light in a heart of darkness, civilisation amongst chaos and disorder. These discursive constructions of Africa result in perceptions of either barbaric Africa or Africa as the object for Western experimentation.

¹²³ Basaglia, 2012: 74.

¹²⁴ Conrad, J. (1899). *Heart of Darkness*. Edinburgh: Blackwood's Magazine.

¹²⁵ Achebe, C. (1977). *An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.'* Retrieved May 11, 2014, from <http://kirbyk.net/hod/image.of.africa.html>.

Mobutu challenged the very premise of these constructs even though some scholars have viewed this as a diversionary tactic and little more than propaganda to appease the citizens.¹²⁶ Western observers have dismissed Mobutu's process of nation building and creating a national identity as having been used to justify his dictatorship.¹²⁷ Through renaming cities, the state and encouraging citizens to adopt more African names, Mobutu began reclaiming an African identity and challenging stereotypes. He made African names and identities the norm in contrast to colonial legacies. Mobutu stated that the central element of authenticity was,

*Being oneself and not how others would like one to be, thinking by oneself and not by others, and feeling at home in one's culture and country.*¹²⁸

An alternate view is that in 1971 Mobutu began to create an identity for Zaire as a process of reclaiming constructions of African identity.¹²⁹ Central to Mobutu's exposition on authenticity was the need to reassert ideas of indigenous beliefs and practices over the imposed Western views. The idea was to remove the stereotypes associated with Congo and to create a new space that overcame the state's colonial legacy. Mobutu encouraged citizens to reclaim local cultures lost during colonial rule.¹³⁰

Alemazung argued that constructions of the West emanated from a justification of the flourishing slave trade and the assertion of political control over Africa by Europe and America.¹³¹ One of the outcomes of the colonisation of Africa is the construction of narratives and interpretations of Africa that reflect bias and prejudice. The control of the political, social and economic systems in multiple countries has led to a relationship which could be characterised as "stronger partners" and "weaker partners". Alemazung referred to the "evangelisation" of Africa by the West during the Cold War as a pre-condition to supporting the rule of tyrants for economic reasons.¹³² The intention of this chapter is to provide a context for the distorted discourses on Africa which have resulted in labelling in the form of pejorative terms like chaotic or stereotyping Africa as a

¹²⁶ Bechtolsheimer, G. (2012) *Breakfast with Mobutu: Congo, the United States and the Cold War, 1964-1981*. Doctoral thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom.

¹²⁷ Dunn, 2003: 109.

¹²⁸ Dunn, 2003: 111. Quoted in Salongo, 5 November 1973, 9.

¹²⁹ Dunn, 2003: 111.

¹³⁰ Dunn, 2003: 112.

¹³¹ Alemazung, 2010: 73.

¹³² Alemazung, 2010: 73.

continent in need of rescue.¹³³ This chapter shows that the narrative controlled by and emanating from the West provides moral credence to the involvement of the West in the continent. It is argued that Mobutu's dictatorship challenged these notions or as he stated,

*By the policy of authenticite, the return to our sources, I hope to mentally decolonise my people, that is to say, to modify the ...structures left by the coloniser.*¹³⁴

Colonialism essentially implemented the ideas of territoriality and boundaries based on the imperial partition of Africa.¹³⁵ These boundaries had little to do with ethnicity or shared culture but were rather formed arbitrarily around areas that were deemed to have both social and economic significance to the colonial authorities.¹³⁶ King Leopold II for example wanted to have control over the biggest possible state in Africa. These borders were drawn up at The Berlin Conference. Colonial rule was predicated on the European state model but expressly excluded three ideologies in ways that ensured that Africans neither revolted nor protested the established system. Colonial rule thus excluded notions of constitutionalism, civil liberties and any semblance of liberalism. It is these three ideologies that essentially make up a democracy.¹³⁷ In addition to this, and although a limited system of education and local governance were implemented, African leaders were never truly afforded any real power or provided with any lessons in Western-style governance. While governance is not foreign to African states or communities, these systems were simplified, reduced to their bare minima, reviled and belittled so that African leadership and governance was of no value in the context of the imposed colonial rule. The systematic exclusion of African participants from self-governance for the period of imperial and colonial rule means that there is no indication of what African political systems would have looked like had they been left to flourish instead of decimated by colonial rule. Consequently, it is Western-style democracy that they lacked training in and, measured against

¹³³ According to Michael Mahadeo and Joe McKinney, the dominant images of Africa are of starving children, Aids, poor traders, illiteracy and populations who have no agency. This "reinforces a power relation between the west and Africa that, by prioritising aid, masks the gross inequalities that keep a majority of the world's population in poverty" (Dodd, 2005, p.26 cited in Manzo, 2006, p.11). While this imagery is a reality, the media has a bias for these representations and often fails to show Africa as diverse and multifaceted. For example, South Africa's tourism industry was affected by the Ebola outbreak in spite of it mainly occurring in the tropical regions of sub-Saharan Africa.

¹³⁴ Dunn, 2003: 111.

¹³⁵ Young, C. (1982). Patterns of Social Conflict: State, Class and Ethnicity. *Daedulus*, 111(2), 74.

¹³⁶ Young, 1982: 75.

¹³⁷ Young, 1982: 75.

this standard, did not manage. Thus when African nations were granted independence and sovereignty in the 1960s, there was a distinct lack of order as the rural economies began to deteriorate which resulted in a brain drain as the youth left the countryside. In addition to this, countries that were formerly self-sufficient found themselves in dire need of food imports while non-oil producing states found themselves facing grossly inflated energy costs. The effects of independence had in essence paradoxically sown the seeds for social conflict.¹³⁸ Alemazung outlined the effects of transitioning from colonial rule to rule by nationalist leaders and concluded that post-independence did not mean emancipation from the clutches of the colonial rulers, and leaders like Mobutu continued to rule as though the country was his personal property.¹³⁹

“Orientalism” has been defined as the Western form of dominating, controlling, restructuring and maintaining authority over the regions that make up the “Orient”.¹⁴⁰ Arguably, the emphasis is on “Orientalism” as a discourse that aids in explaining the dissemination of European culture in the “Orient”. Thus, the dominant view of the Orient that gained currency in the West was negative, replete with stereotypes and characterisations of the East as uncivilised. Thus Said’s contribution to our understanding of the “other” assists in debunking Western views. It provides us with an alternative view to interrogate the superiority of the West and as such a postcolonial narrative that assigns control to the “other”.¹⁴¹ Fanon, using psychology as a reference point, analysed the inferiority complexes and linked these to the oppressive nature of colonialism which persisted even if independence was attained.¹⁴² To adequately translate this into an African context, Frantz Fanon explained that the Black subject has a divided self-perception as they begin to lose their native cultural origin which leads to a distinct inferiority complex as they try to imitate the culture and norms of the coloniser.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Young, 1982: 71.

¹³⁹ Alemazung, 2010: 65; Young, 1982: 71.

¹⁴⁰ Said. "Orientalism" 3.

¹⁴¹ Said, 1978: 3.

¹⁴² Fanon, 1986: viii.

¹⁴³ Fanon, 1986: viii.

3.3 MBEMBE'S PERSPECTIVES

Various academics have outlined the effect that such negative discourse on African has had on political factors. The consequences of the discourse can be seen in the forms of governance and leadership discourse surrounding Africa and which has led to the continent continuously being labelled "other" by the West to yet still assert its superiority. These discursive constructions of Africa result in perceptions of either "barbaric" Africa or Africa as an object for Western experimentation. Saartjie Baartman is a key example of how African people were perceived and objectified for being different when she was taken to England in 1810 to be a subject for medical and anthropological research. Exhibited as an "anthropological freak" and displayed as a sexual curiosity, she was made to parade around London naked so that people could see how different she was to them as she was made out to be a "sexual freak". When she died she was displayed like an animal, and dissected by George Cuvier, as a museum took a death cast of her body, removed her skeleton and pickled her brain and genitals in a jar in order to be displayed.¹⁴⁴ She became the archetypal image of the African for most Westerners. Baartman's narrative demonstrates the dehumanisation of the African and furthermore the entrenchment of the African as an object to be studied. This phenomenon found itself into the textbooks of history, anthropology and sociology.¹⁴⁵ Africa has been viewed through Western eyes for decades and as such the discursive constructs are shaped through a Western perspective which portrays Africa as a continent that desperately needs a Western saviour which basically means that political interference from the West is an assertion of dominance over Africa. Thus, the devaluing of Africa can be analysed through the lens of Orientalism which though it has limitations, offers an alternative view of the distortions present in writings of the West on either the Orient (the East) or Africa.

Achille Mbembe focused on understanding the lived experience of Africans. He understands power dynamics based on the "othering" of the continent which in a sense dehumanizes African subjects and asserts the West's superiority.¹⁴⁶ This perception has become deeply entrenched in both social and academic discourse. Mbembe explained the way in which African discourse has been shaped, saying:

¹⁴⁴ Qureshi. 2004. Displaying Sara Baartman, 'The Hottentot Venus'. *History of Science*, 42, 233-257.

¹⁴⁵ Qureshi, 234.

¹⁴⁶ Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony*, 1. Berkley, NJ: University of California Press.

*Africa is never seen as possessing things and attributes properly part of human nature. Or, when it is, its things and attributes are generally of lesser value, little importance, and poor quality. It is this elementariness and primitiveness that makes Africa the world par excellence of all that is incomplete, mutilated and unfinished.*¹⁴⁷

This view is perpetuated in, for example, arguments made for continued involvement of former colonisers in Africa either through continued financial support, aid or interference.¹⁴⁸ This provides the opportunity for Western powers to politically intervene in Africa. Mbembe argued that:

*It is now widely acknowledged that Africa as an idea, a concept, has historically served, and continues to serve, as a polemical argument for the West's desperate desire to assert its difference from the rest of the world.*¹⁴⁹

Political interference from the West is an assertion of dominance over Africa.¹⁵⁰ Africa cannot move past assumptions of Africa made by the West as the continent continues to be described in the stereotypes disseminated by the West and thus constantly relies on the West for any form of intervention. Africa is still categorised by social formations of simple and traditional societies and is thus perceived to be unsusceptible to progress.¹⁵¹ In addition to this, the West justifies its heavy presence in Africa as it has become a representation of the West's obsession with difference and the “other” that fundamentally defines African discourse.¹⁵² The “othering” of African people lies in the fact that the concept of human nature or a common humanity between the West and Africa does not bode well for Western consciousness. In comparison to the “Orient”, the concept of “otherness” has been stretched to “absolute otherness”.¹⁵³ Whereas Oriental peoples were seen as being in complete opposition to the West in terms of nobility, Africans are seen to have fallen beneath that mark such that they are perceived much as they

¹⁴⁷ Mbembe, 1-2.

¹⁴⁸ Alemazung.

¹⁴⁹ Mbembe, 3.

¹⁵⁰ Mbembe, 4.

¹⁵¹ Mbembe, 5-6.

¹⁵² Mbembe, 6.

¹⁵³ Mbembe, 2.

were during the days of the slave trade: as subhuman. The combination of imagery of the beast or savage remains associated with the peoples of Africa.¹⁵⁴

In *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe identified the paradoxes implicit in any writing on Africa. Africa is viewed as the “other” with the Western world used as reference point. This leads to a deficit model as “difference” and the “other” dominate and a fractured lens is turned onto Africa.

*The colonised belongs to the universe of immediate things – useful things when needed, things that can be moulded*¹⁵⁵

Images of Africa as “other” continue to occlude narratives of Africa with the bias or prejudice colouring the narrative. It can be argued thus that the vast canon of literature on Mobutu intrudes upon the writer's consciousness. While Mbembe wrote about “authentic” African writing, there is no prescription provided as to how this occurs. There are some lessons offered by Mbembe, however, who suggested that the compartmentalisation of African identity is the first crime and that there has to be a conscious rejection of this identity.¹⁵⁶

Africa is continually portrayed as a hopeless abyss because there is limited discourse that emerges from the continent itself. Mbembe attributed this phenomenon to the simple and traditional societies that are commonly formed in Africa. These traditional societies have three distinct attributes. Firstly, their "facticity" and "arbitrariness".¹⁵⁷ Facticity suggests that "the thing is"; it is and exists because it is. This means that traditional societies have always been there and thus require no justification for their existences which are merely attributed to their facticity.¹⁵⁸ Mbembe's concept of arbitrariness refers to the contrast between the West which represents reason and Africa's traditional societies which represent myth and fable. This once again reinforces the superiority inferiority dichotomy through “othering”. Secondly, traditionally constructed societies are often resistant to change and progress simply does not occur unless it is an absolute necessity. Finally, societies are viewed by the West as whole entities wrapped in a

¹⁵⁴Seay, L. & Dionne, K.Y. (2014). The long and ugly tradition of treating Africa as a dirty, diseased place. Retrieved November 20, 2014, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/08/25/othering-ebola-and-the-history-and-politics-of-pointing-at-immigrants-as-potential-disease-vectors/>.

¹⁵⁵ Mbembe, 187.

¹⁵⁶ Mbembe, 271.

¹⁵⁷ Mbembe, 3.

¹⁵⁸ Mbembe, 3.

fantasy of magic and myth. Because of this stark contrast between Western society and a traditional African society, Africa represents the pinnacle of nothingness, of lacking and of negativity. The difference between the two is not simply viewed as not alike but rather as being so different that they are viewed as nothing.¹⁵⁹ Thus Africa is defined such:

*That the continent becomes the very figure of what is null, abolished, and, in its essence, in opposition to what is: the very expression of that nothing whose special feature is to be nothing at all.*¹⁶⁰

It is unfathomable to think of Africa as a continent that could be generalised as it is made up of so many different and often competing facets. In generalising “Africa” and stereotyping it to such a reductionist notion, there is little room for anything that falls outside of this. The truth, however, is that Africa is no less a continent than Europe or the Americas, and is made up of a range of people of different racial, cultural, sexual and religious orientations. There cannot be no generalisation which deems all the characteristics of Africa "unAfrican", when in reality they define segments of African populations. Furthermore, one can hardly begin to categorise various African countries together as they have different cultures, languages, political climates and landscapes. Africa is not a generalisation – the whole is an insufficient reflection of its parts. Chimamanda Adichie's concept of the danger of the single story comes into play here.¹⁶¹ One cannot define a place through a single story because Africa and the countries within it are multifaceted.¹⁶² Although certain stereotypes have been created based on certain identifiable realities, these stereotypes are not able alone to define an area, to define Africa or indeed any of its countries or peoples. Africa is generally presented as this problematic continent that needs a Western saviour because in large part, it is written about by Western scholars who, wittingly or unwittingly do so from a particular worldview.

¹⁵⁹ Mbembe, 4.

¹⁶⁰ Mbembe, 4.

¹⁶¹Adichie, C.N. (2009). *The danger of a single story*. Retrieved September 10, 2013, from http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html.

¹⁶²Adichie.

The problem with discourse on Africa is that the continent is represented as a single geo-political unit rampant with political instability and corruption.¹⁶³ Moreover, Africa is the only continent that is described with such broad generalisations and as such any negative connotations of any state have severe implications on the perception of the continent as a whole.¹⁶⁴ Edward Bickham argued that:

*At the moment Africa is overwhelmingly perceived as a continent where warring factions and armies are ravaging starving people. That stereotype is so heavily ingrained that people do not see the continent as being about enterprise as well.*¹⁶⁵

3.4 AFRICA: A COLLECTION OF CONSTRUCTS

Inevitably, the media too contributes to the continuing discourse surrounding Africa as it is rampant with cultural and ideological assumptions about Africa which are produced and disseminated by the West.¹⁶⁶ This imagery constructed by the West reinforces the idea of Africa as “other”.¹⁶⁷ The failed power structures often associated with Africa are constructed by the West resulting in them trying to find ways to aid Africa with the stated focus on bringing democracy to a continent apparently inherently defined by dictatorship and political corruption. The West, however, is rarely to be held accountable for colonialism and the conflicts that arose due to the Cold War, or for the fact that much of the money from financial corruption goes to the Western banking system. In addition to this, Africa has become synonymous with poverty and owes a large debt to the global financial system. However, debt relief is argued to have become the new demeaning term signalling the need for Western financial intervention and aid for social problems identified and constructed by the West. Once again, the focus is placed on warlords, dictators and corrupt politicians as the blame is shifted away from exploitative multinational

¹⁶³ Robert Mugabe’s rule in Zimbabwe is often seen as indicative of the whole of Africa despite there being democracies and hybrid regimes with politically stable nations across the continent.

<http://www.economist.com/node/21551494>.

¹⁶⁴ Manzo, K. (2006). An extension of Colonialism? Development education, images and the media. *Development Education Journal*, 12(2), 2, 11.

¹⁶⁵ Manzo, 11.

¹⁶⁶ The dominant themes informing the reportage of Africa are based on certain recurring tropes and stereotypes. Africa is presented as wholly having political and financial corruption, as being synonymous with poverty and defined by incessant tribal wars (<http://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue4-focus2>).

¹⁶⁷ Mahadeo & McKinney, 14.

corporations and the Western economy.¹⁶⁸ Finally, Africa is cast in such a negative light that it is portrayed as a continent unable to take the collective initiative needed to better itself. The perception of Africa being inherently unable to better itself assists in helping the West justify its neo-liberal agenda through the political discourse about Africa. The inherent absence of positive stories on Africa leads to the ignorance, distortions and biases of the political discourse in Africa, as they state that Africa is generally only shed in a positive light if there has been Western intervention of some sort. In essence, these constructed discourses are a continuation of colonial ideologies.¹⁶⁹ The persistent negative discourse presents the idea that the African Union (AU) and most groupings in Africa are inherently weak. The AU and other regional organisations falter in their failure to deliver which is in turn attributed to the weak and inefficient nature.

Africa's history indicates that the continent has been affected by Western constructions. These constructions have influenced the ideas of traditional and simple African societies that need political and economic reforms implemented by external actors. The idea behind this is to bring African states in line with a perceived globalised “standard”. The irony lies in the fact that Western intervention has enhanced the problems of African states, thus bringing about the false conclusion that further intervention is needed. Moreover, there is no globalised standard in the West. The systems in England, Ireland, Finland and Sweden for example are as different from each other as they are from Africa.¹⁷⁰

Postcolonial theory advocates for the creation of theory within the colonial space rather than from a Western perspective. The proponents of postcolonial theory vehemently oppose the Eurocentric notions of discourse and challenge the stereotypes created by these Eurocentric perceptions by forging an identity within the colonial space itself. The danger, of course, is that much of Western academia and the discourse within International Relations are deeply entrenched as is evident from the body of work on, in this case, the Congo. Postcolonial theory's focus is to rewrite history and analysis of any postcolonial state from within. Redeeming identity is difficult as it requires erasure of words that acquire authority by virtue of the power vested in them. The shifting of beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and ideas is easily problematised as the theorists very skilfully describe what needs to be done; however, there is obviously no template

¹⁶⁸ Mahadeo & McKinney, 16.

¹⁶⁹ Mahadeo & McKinney, 16.

¹⁷⁰ Ferguson, J. (2006). *Global Shadows*. Durham: Duke University Press, 49.

for the reversal of damages. A pessimistic view would be that the kind of reversal referred to in this thesis is optimal though decades of parochial perspectives peddled by Western scholars may prove to be insurmountable. The existing perceptions of the Congo and of Africa allow for the West to impose ideologies, political systems and societal structures which permit the West to retain superiority over former colonial states which thus creates the platform for further neo-colonialism. There has been no end to “othering” and the domination of the West continues, though contested from the fringes by worthy opponents.

3.5 THE EMERGENCE OF A TRUE AFRICAN STATE

Mobutu's goal was to shift the perception of the Congo through “authenticité” which sought to bring the nation's African traditions to the fore. As a response to years of colonial rule, the assertion of the dignity of the African culture was remarkable and analogous to Mbeki’s “I am an African” speech in 1997 where he called for an African renaissance. In some respects this heralding of authenticité by Mobutu can be characterised as an evocation of a form of renaissance. As opposed to public perception of a region wracked by rebellions and political unrest, Mobutu deliberately created an image of postcolonial Africa which grounded itself in its pre-colonial tradition while creating a narrative that militated against Western perceptions and discourse. There is consensus that Mobutu's rule was characterised by the exploitation of internal divisions, usage of political appointments and economic/political trade-offs with the USA and while capitalising and playing his cards into the external fears.¹⁷¹

Kevin Dunn argued that discourses are complex in terms of production and interpretation. This assertion makes a distinction between the production of text and the interpretation by the individual. Through a tracing of Congo/Zaire leadership, he asserted that Mobutu through his discussion on his rhetoric of authenticité¹⁷² developed a counterhegemonic discourse on the Congo within international relations. Dunn further argued that “the production of discourses (rhetoric, representations, and actions) is ‘encoded’ with meanings based on specific frameworks of knowledge. When these discourses are consumed and reproduced, their meanings are ‘decoded’ through the framework of knowledge held by the consumer”.¹⁷³ Using this

¹⁷¹ Dunn, 106.

¹⁷² Mobutu’s ideology of rejecting western and colonial constructs and asserting a new Zaire identity.

¹⁷³ Dunn, 107.

understanding of discourse, the purpose of this study has been to examine Mobutu's counter to Western interpretations and representations of specifically the Congo through the creation of Zaire. In keeping with Dunn's assertion, the "decoding" approach adopted for this thesis has been to identify the parallels between Orientalism and the political period in Zaire under Mobutu. Dunn further added that the dominant narrative of the West was the failure of decolonisation as exemplified in Zaire and translated further into "all that was wrong with postcolonial Africa"¹⁷⁴ and further personified in representations of Mobutu.

Dunn stated that discourse has led to the DRC being represented as the "Heart of Darkness" which has severe political consequences on the DRC as these representations directly influence international political policy as applied to the DRC. The Congo was originally colonised by Belgium as the Belgian King Leopold II wanted to bring order to this chaotic state. The characterisation of the country provided the legitimisation of the presence of Belgium and the denigration of the subjects primarily for economic reasons. By representing the Congolese as savages, Leopold and his representatives felt justified in their exacting brutality against them. Following 1960, Congolese independence too was seen as fundamentally chaotic.¹⁷⁵ Dunn stated that,

*The long term implications of these discourses are now evident. The extent to which the people within Congo now find their country violently fragmented, preyed upon by external actors, and marginalized by international inattention can be directly tracked back to historical constructions of their identity.*¹⁷⁶

"The Congo" as an idea has essentially become over-textualised; a representation and conceptual marker for "Africa" for the West. Its symbolic value has evolved over time which has led to different political implications and power structures.¹⁷⁷ Dunn's analysed the discourses surrounding the Congo and the political implications of these perceptions; however, his study encompasses the region in its entirety and simply alludes to the representations of Mobutu himself.

¹⁷⁴ Dunn, 133.

¹⁷⁵ Dunn, 141.

¹⁷⁶ Dunn, 142.

¹⁷⁷ Dunn, 142.

William Reno analysed the success of Mobutu in state building.¹⁷⁸ Reno argued that Mobutu managed to shift Zaire from a collapsed state to a seemingly successful state model based on patronage politics and state-building projects such as the reclamation of a homogenous national identity. While Mobutu's rule was undoubtedly flawed, Reno praised him for adapting a state-building model to Zaire in light of the region's turbulent past. He received significant support from the United States, thus ensuring that his state-building models were accepted. Reno alluded to the perception of Mobutu by the West based on Zaire's vast mineral wealth and their strategic position in Africa and the backdrop the Cold War. Reno suggested that the United States' perceptions of Mobutu ensured the longevity of his political rule.¹⁷⁹ It could be argued that this perception that Mobutu was a puppet of the United States relates to Mobutu's trade and economic transactions with the USA which stands in stark contradiction to his assertion of an identity that was truly African without the presence of the West. It is clear, however, that Mobutu strategically used the US's presence to accumulate personal wealth and to ensure the longevity of his rule.

Mobutu's Zaire produced an identity external to the identity that the West created and was created for consumption within international relations. While there are competing discourses from external actors, Mobutu's implementation of *authenticité* was created through "third world" discourses on nationalism, Western philosophy, colonial discourse and imagery and the politics and alliances within the Cold War.¹⁸⁰ The combination of these elements ensured that Mobutu played into Cold War tactics ensuring support from the West while still maintaining a state that was authentically African by eschewing the stereotypes that were created during colonialism. Through colonial discourse, Mobutu was able to create a state that reclaimed an African identity while the adoption of Western discourse and the strategic positioning of the state in Cold War tactics ensured that the state was not alienated from the United States and would still garner support.

¹⁷⁸ Reno, 43.

¹⁷⁹ Reno, 43-56.

¹⁸⁰ Dunn, 106.

3.6 THE CREATION OF ZAIRE AND AUTHENTICITÉ

Following independence, Congo came to signify the “Heart of Darkness” once again. Mobutu's ascension into power marked the creation of an authentic African state. Mobutu amassed public support and began to create a national identity.¹⁸¹ The creation of discourse from within the region ensured that the Congolese could define their own national identity within the context of international relations. A combination of renaming Congo, introducing authenticité and the political and economic policy of Zairianisation signified a paradigm shift and the creation of an authentic state imagined by postcolonial theorists.¹⁸²

In 1966, Mobutu began the process of changing the names of major cities from colonial names to African ones. Streets were renamed, statues were torn down and citizens were required to adopt more African names. In 1971, the Congo became Zaire, the flag was replaced and a new national anthem was created. This signified a complete rejection of colonialism and the negative connotations that it carried, it rejected the “Heart of Darkness” label and the tropes of barbarism, savagery and the “simple African”.¹⁸³

The authenticité campaign became a significant ideology in the decolonisation process. It rejected the ideas imposed by colonialism and brought local identity, beliefs and values to the fore. Mobutu believed that it would mentally decolonise the Congolese and dismantle the remains of colonial structures. Mobutu stated that the central element of authenticité was: “Being oneself and not how others would like one to be, thinking by oneself and not by others, and feeling at home in one’s culture and country”.¹⁸⁴

The imagery created during colonialism was inherently racist and these stereotypes dominated the discourse on the region. In contrast, authenticité created positive imagery.¹⁸⁵ The campaign was more than simply reverting to pre-colonial policies and thinking but rather a renewal of culture. Discourse and political thought were created from within the state. Authenticité was the creation of Zairian nationalism as a form of both developing national cohesion but advancing a

¹⁸¹ Dunn, 108.

¹⁸² Dunn, 109.

¹⁸³ Dunn, 110.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ Dunn, 111.

new international narrative on Congo/Zaire. However, Congo was still a fundamentally fragmented state largely based on geographical boundaries and ethnic identities. This form of nationalism had to serve the purpose of inventing a national identity as well as influencing the Western narrative. Authenticité which focused on restoring traditional cultures was problematic as the state was fragmented, unstable and was inherently multicultural due to the misguided delineated territories created during colonialism. While it espoused a national Zairian identity, it could not bring complete cohesion to the state and the people.¹⁸⁶ “As both the author and symbolic representation of what it meant to be and dress like a Zairian, Mobutu became the physical embodiment of Zairian national identity”.¹⁸⁷

It is through authenticité that Mobutu was perceived as a worthy third world leader, on par with leaders from the first world. While the focus was on creating an authentic African state, in doing so Mobutu validated Zaire’s existence on an international stage. The creation of Zaire for export and consumption is discussed in the next chapter.

3.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, Dunn and Reno’s analyses have demonstrated how Mobutu’s introduction of authenticité and assertion of the Zairian identity challenged dominant colonial discourse as imagined by Fanon and other postcolonial theorists. The trade value of Mobutu’s Zaire as a counter to views expressed that he was being stage managed by the West, is that he successfully manipulated the West for his own purposes at least until the end of the Cold War.

¹⁸⁶ Dunn, 113.

¹⁸⁷ Dunn, 113.

CHAPTER 4: ZAIRE FOR EXPORT

In the years before independence, the Congo was viewed from abroad as a symbol of the mysteries of Africa, of the perils of Tarzan's dark jungles, of cannibalism, crocodiles and bewildering and bitter rivalries between backwards people with names like Lulua and Baluba. In the years just after independence, she became a terrifying symbol of all that could go wrong in a new land, of tribal savagery and vicious anti-white violence. Now, at the end of a decade of turbulence, many observers in this vibrant capital city [Kinshasa] are saying that those days are past, and that, finally, the time has come for the Congo to become a new kind of symbol for the world.¹⁸⁸

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter traced the contribution of Mobutu to shifting the discourse on the Congo specifically and on Africa in general. There is an acknowledgement by authors such as Dunn, Ndikumana, Léonce, and Boyce and Askin amongst others that Mobutu manipulated the West for economic reasons and presented a carefully orchestrated image of the Congo and then later Zaire that served as a counter-discourse to the dominant Western discourse. As Dunn argued, the version presented by Mobutu was one that could be deemed palatable to the West.¹⁸⁹

The focus in Chapter 4 is to critically analyse Mobutu's relationship with the West. Nzongolo-Ntjala has described it as being a classical textbook case of the propping up of corrupt African leaders both financially and militarily by the West.¹⁹⁰ This chapter will assert that Mobutu played into the international market and exported the state in order to accumulate his personal wealth. In this context, the export of Zaire refers to the way in which Mobutu presented the state to the West as a strategic ally in the Cold War and a vast source of mineral wealth. His policy of authenticité for example was announced in 1971 in Dakar, Senegal at the National Congress for Senghor's Union Progressiste Sénégalaise.¹⁹¹ These policies were to create a palatable

¹⁸⁸ Hartley, T. (2012). *The Rumble in the Jungle*. Retrieved May 1, 2014, from <http://newhistories.group.shef.ac.uk/wordpress/wordpress/the-rumble-in-the-jungle-mobutu%E2%80%99s-knockout-blow/downloaded>.

¹⁸⁹ Dunn, 118.

¹⁹⁰ 2003.

¹⁹¹ Mobutu, S.S. (1975). *Discours, allocutions et messages. Two volumes*. Paris: Éditions J.A, II, 99–111.

international image alongside a national identity.¹⁹² While he maintained an authentic African state, he marketed Zaire and himself in a way that would attract military and financial aid and ensure that he received loans.

During this time, Mobutu's regime employed Western popular discourses to construct an identity of "Zaire" that was acceptable to the West... By employing Western, mainly Belgian, knowledge of the Congo, Mobutu was able to present the West with an image it already understood and accepted as "authentic".¹⁹³

Citing World Bank Reports of 1992, Ndikumana and Boyce pointed to the decline in Zaire's per capita income at an annual rate of 2.2 percent from 1965-1990 and further estimates by the United Nations (1994) report which indicated that 70 percent of the country's population live in absolute poverty.¹⁹⁴ Through all the different rules of the Congolese leaders post-democracy, the tribal and ethnic conflict that was rooted in the geography of the country persisted. An evaluation of the Mobutu regime depicts a leader who, similarly to Lumumba, articulated a vision of an African state while using extraneous political influences to bolster his power and control. Viewed as an ally by the West – especially in the face of the Cold War – the Mobutu rule is characterised by his complicity in opening the doors for investments and resource extraction by the West.¹⁹⁵ The beneficiaries of these actions were Mobutu and his associates primarily, and not the people of the Congo generally.¹⁹⁶ The export of the idea of Zaire as a state that played into Western interests was a manipulative ploy by Mobutu for self-enrichment and a further exploitation of the Congolese people.¹⁹⁷

This chapter traces Mobutu's emergence as a truly African leader, followed by the way he presented Zaire to the West in order to garner support and finally, the Western counter constructs that subsequently emerged.

¹⁹² Dunn, 117.

¹⁹³ Dunn, 118.

¹⁹⁴ Ndikumana & Boyce, 195-217.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 195.

¹⁹⁷ Ndikumana cites Burns *et al.* (1997) as estimating Mobutu's wealth in the mid-1980s as being \$4 billion.

4.2 THE EMERGENCE OF A TRULY AFRICAN LEADER

While Dunn's work focuses on multiple interpretations and creations of the Congolese identity over the years, the relevance of his work to this thesis is the attribution to Mobutu of the creation of an identity that was African, yet acceptable to the West in its relative similarity to the African “Other” perpetuated by the West.¹⁹⁸ Dunn went as far as elaborating on Mobutu's appropriation of the African other as the “authentic” African in terms of governance, clothing, music and framing of authenticity drawing on philosophical traditions that were akin to the existential traditions.

Mobutu was perceived as a formidable third world leader from attending summits, hosting the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU's) summit and addressing the UN.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, authenticity was adopted in Chad, Togo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. Zaire embodied the authentic African state and Mobutu represented the ability of African leaders to govern themselves, refuting the very stereotypes on which neo-colonialism was based. Mobutu's position was accepted by third world nations based on the constructed Zairian national identity while Western audiences accepted Mobutu based on his strategic role and positioning in Cold War policies.

For example, the *Washington Post* spoke of Zaire's “excellent position to influence the course of events throughout central and much of eastern Africa”.²⁰⁰ Reporting on Mobutu and the future of the Congo at the time appeared to be based on the strategic significance of the country for Western interests. These interests have been outlined in Chapters 2 and 3. Zaire's strategic position in Africa and vast mineral wealth meant that the state became a playground for mining corporations who vied for contracts and attempted to tap into the unexplored mineral riches.²⁰¹

While he created a persona of the authentic African leader, Mobutu's amassed wealth and instances of nepotism and patronage were excused by his ability to shift Zaire from a failed state to an emerging leader in Africa.²⁰² Dunn argued that:

¹⁹⁸ Dunn, 119.

¹⁹⁹ Dunn, 125.

²⁰⁰ Dunn, 193.

²⁰¹ Dunn, 126.

²⁰² Dunn, 124.

*This was not a nation until he took over, only an amalgam of bickering regions and tribes. Now there is a national identity that never existed before. The masses don't begrudge Mobutu his luxurious life-style. In fact, they seem to take pride in it.*²⁰³

What is evident in representations and the literature of the period, is that Mobutu was propped up as a leader for a sustained period by the West and discarded once it was deemed not essential. His rule is incontrovertibly linked to global events like the Cold War and the interests of the UN, Britain and Europe in securing him as an ally. However, Mobutu played a consummate game of chess as he advanced a representation of Africa that was acceptable and close to Western representations of Africa. The vision of Congo/Zaire presented by Mobutu was one of a unified authentic African state, while the reality as outlined by Dunn, Young and others was one of fragmented tribes and a targeted accrual of wealth by Mobutu with little or no concern for his people. Nationalisation of key structures, while seen as a reinforcement of African/Zairian identity, was also strategic for exerting direct control over assets like banks for his benefit.²⁰⁴

4.3 ZAIRE FOR EXPORT

As Schatzberg asserted, Mobutu's 32 years of rule was only possible through the sustained support of the US, Belgium, France and the United Kingdom (UK).²⁰⁵ The argument put forward by Schatzberg is that Mobutu was perceived by the West to be the "glue" holding this complex country together. Thus despite the absence of democratic structures and policies, the question has to be posed as to why the West supported a dictatorship for a period of 32 years. The response to this could only be for vested interests that included economic and financial gain as well as maintaining a military presence and substantial footprint in Africa, and more specifically the Congo. It can be argued that while historic accounts such as those by Young, Dunn, Nzongola-Ntjala convey the extent of Mobutu's rule, there is a concerted attempt to describe the complexity and vested interests of the West in the Congo.

Post-independence, many foreign governments had a vested interest in the state. Before Mobutu's rule, the state had been represented as a country at war with itself in its transition from

²⁰³ Dunn, 124.

²⁰⁴ Nzongola-Ntalaja, 3.

²⁰⁵ Schatzberg, M.G. (1991). *Mobutu or chaos? The United States and Zaire, 1960-1990*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

a colonial state to a postcolonial state and thus the West took this as a justification to intervene. During the period from 1960 to 1964 the Congo was seen as an intrinsically fragmented state. However, there was still a high prevalence of foreign government interests. Western European governments such as Belgium had corporate and governmental stakes in the Congo.²⁰⁶ The Belgian government and certain conglomerates such as the Societé Generale de Belgique which was a national bank directly and indirectly controlled 70 percent of the economy and a large segment of the mining industries. Steven Weissman stated that,

*Societe Generale's empire had been built with the collaboration of the Belgian government, which traditionally provided administrative structures and military forces. Even without the political influence of the most important financial group in Belgium's highly centralized economy, Brussels would have had a substantial vested interest in the Congo economy.*²⁰⁷

Moreover, the USA held strategic economic interests in the Congo as well. Their interests lay mainly in maintaining access to mining resources which was their most important material incentive as by 1960, three quarters of the cobalt and half of the tantalum mined in the Congo were imported to the USA. The USA also had large investment stakes, as by 1960 they had \$20 million of direct investment in the Congo and had commercial trading interest in the state as well.²⁰⁸ The USA's agenda relied on maintaining its economic power and exploitative social as well as political relations that had been cultivated during the colonial period. Mobutu played into the interests of the West by making various political decisions that included outlawing any political activity for the first five years of his rule and fulfilled their strategic interests in the region. Mobutu's rule was defined by the fact that the West was nurturing dictators as a part of Cold War tactics in order to protect their economic interests. The Congolese bore the brunt of the West's security requests which made nation building a liberal process as Mobutu's stance in the international community became based on the services he rendered to his patrons, thus creating a web of patronage. This type of power became a breeding ground for corruption as state officials and military personnel began to exploit their positions for both political and economic gain to the detriment of the general population. The Congolese population felt the political and economic

²⁰⁶ Weissman, S. (1974). *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 23.

²⁰⁷ Weissman, 24.

²⁰⁸ Weissman, 29.

costs through violence as the West continued to support and provide aid for Mobutu's government.²⁰⁹

According to Leonce Ndikumana and James K. Boyce, Mobutu set himself apart from other dictators on the continent because of his drive to amass huge personal wealth. He mirrored King Leopold II who had governed the region for his personal gain.²¹⁰ Askin remarked, “*Many people view Mobutu's regime as the classic example of a military coupmaker transformed into a civilian ruler. In fact, he might better be seen as a rogue accountant who used military means as one of many tools for achieving his financial ends*”.²¹¹

In this sense he almost mimicked colonial rule but from within the state. Instead of an external actor plundering the state, he acted in his own interests and used the state's resources. However, he did this in the name of *national* interests even as he accumulated personal wealth from foreign loans and aid as well as from Zaire's national resources. Mobutu's regime exercised monopolistic control over the key sectors of the economy. He exported the state in such a way that the revenue made from exports were channelled into his private accounts. His wealth was accumulated from the export of copper, cobalt and diamonds. He maintained strong trade ties and personally benefitted from the West's interest. Creating an identity for Zaire for international consumption and export thus aided his quest to amass his personal wealth.²¹²

The motivation behind creating a state for international consumption and export was to simultaneously hold onto political power while growing his personal wealth. Political power ensured that Mobutu had power over Zaire's internal economic resources, while he siphoned money through aid offered both bilaterally and multilaterally. With a favourable relationship with the West, gifts and military aid were often given to Mobutu by Western governments.²¹³

²⁰⁹ Nzongola-Ntalaja, G. (2004). *The international dimensions of the Congo crisis*, 3-4. Retrieved May 24, 2013, from <http://www.worlddialogue.org/print.php?id=319>.

²¹⁰ Ndikumana & Boyce, 206.

²¹¹ Askin, S. (1990). *Mobutu's Wealth: How He Got It, How He Spends It*. Paper presented at the African Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, 1-4 November, 8, 11.

²¹² Ndikumana, L., & Boyce, J. (1998). Congo's odious debts: external borrowing and capital flight in Zaire. *Development and Change*, 29(2), 195-217, 207.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 208.

Zairianisation, however, soon led to a debt crisis. Mobutu's strategic relations ensured that “The London Club”, a collective of commercial creditors was formed in 1976. As the debt accumulated, Mobutu was offered bigger loans. Coupled with military aid, Mobutu agreed to various reforms and an introduction of expatriate teams.²¹⁴ The Zairian political elite were able to follow their own economic interests under the guise of international legitimacy. However, it soon became clear that the amount of aid and support that Mobutu and the state were given would not be recovered by creditors.²¹⁵

Zaire was a country racked by a serious underdevelopment crisis: a widening socioeconomic disparity, political de-participation, repression of human rights, and abject dependency on the West. The state was able to sustain itself, however, by continued, massive contributions in the name of foreign assistance, that were justified under Mobutu’s promises of reform but also due to the region’s strategic place in the continent and Mobutu’s pro-West, anti-Communist dogma.²¹⁶

Zaire's external debt went from \$4,8 billion to \$10,3 billion from 1979 to 1990. However, debt to private creditors fell from \$2,1 billion to \$900 million. Following this, in 1981, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) provided Zaire with a loan of \$1 billion which effectively became the largest loan to an African country. This was accompanied by a financial and military aid increase from the United States and France.²¹⁷ “At a 1987 meeting of the Consultative Group for Zaire, the World Bank acknowledged that economic development and growth were “severely constrained by a system, evolved over the years, which has fostered rent-seeking rather than productive activities”, a situation compounded “by the unwillingness of Zairians to repatriate their holdings of foreign exchange from abroad”.²¹⁸ However, no further actions were taken or pressure exerted on Mobutu to change policies for the benefit of the country.

In spite of this, the World Bank recommended that Zaire maintain full support from the international community under the guise of foreign investment. Pressure from the US ensured

²¹⁴ Ibid, 209.

²¹⁵ Ibid, 209.

²¹⁶ Gould, D.J. (1980). *Bureaucratic corruption and underdevelopment in the Third World: The case of Zaire*, xiii. New York: Pergamon Press.

²¹⁷ Ndikumana, L. & Boyce, J. (1998). Congo's odious debt: External borrowing and capital flight in Zaire. *Development and Change*, 29(2), 210.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 211.

that Zaire's loans from the IMF were complied with. Mobutu allowed the US to use the region as a base for action within the continent – particularly against communist activity in Angola.²¹⁹ “The IMF's Trade and Finance Department to decry ‘the intrusion of political factors’ into the Fund's decision-making; balance-of-payments assistance, he warned, was in danger of becoming ‘indistinguishable from political support’”.²²⁰ The end of the Cold War brought the political rationale for supporting Zaire into question. In 1992, all further aid was suspended. It was clear that Mobutu had used Cold War tactics to his advantage and thus created a climate for export.²²¹

The loans provided to Zaire were part of Cold War tactics on a larger scale. Mobutu expertly played into the Cold War as an ally to the United States. Based on the region’s strategic position on the continent and vast mineral wealth, the West provided aid, loans and grants out of moral obligation, political motivation, a Capitalist symbol in Central Africa and the key to overcoming contradictions in the North-South conflict. The sheer support from the West and Mobutu’s willingness to accommodate their interests allowed him to retain power while causing economic and political ruin.²²²

Zaire for export essentially entailed that Mobutu was aware of his power and used it to effectively manipulate the global political arena. He forged relationships with various leaders of international financial institutions and effectively treated the loans he was given as disguised grants that he had no intention of paying back.²²³ Mobutu was able to maintain this because of the immense support for his regime and thus could indefinitely reschedule the repayment of his loans.²²⁴

More than solely Cold War tactics, Zaire's vast mineral wealth ensured that the West remained interested in the region. Zaire was the top exporter of cobalt, copper and diamonds. Mineral concessions by foreign investors were established through corrupt relationships with keen

²¹⁹ Ibid, 211.

²²⁰ Finch, D. (1988). Let the IMF Be the IMF. *The International Economy*, January/February, 127.

²²¹ Ndikumana and Boyce, 211.

²²² Blumenthal, E.M. (1982). ‘Zaire: Rapport Sur la Creadibilite Financiere Internationale’. In Emmanuel Dungia Mobutu et l'Argent du Zaire: *Les ReÂveÂlations d'un Diplomate Ex-Agent des Services Secrets* (Annexe 2). Paris: L'Harmattan, 142.

²²³ Ndikumana and Boyce, 211.

²²⁴ Blumenthal, 140.

government officials.²²⁵ While Mobutu and his regime benefitted from their contributions to national security from financial aid, grants and loans that were born from Western taxpayers, the vast majority became poorer and were deprived of resources. The \$14 billion debt accumulated by Mobutu increased his personal wealth and his patronage links while doing little to benefit the poor majority. The ongoing military and financial aid coupled with loans sustained Mobutu's corrupt and oppressive regime. A large portion of the money went straight into Mobutu's and his associate's personal accounts while another portion was used to finance the patronage links to sustain Mobutu's control over the national resources.²²⁶

Mobutu's regime has to be understood in the context of the legacy of Leopold and the Belgian administration, as well as the inheritance and reality of a Congo splintered by multiple factions. The making of Mobutu is not the subject of this thesis exclusively, but there can be no denying that the complicit behaviour of the IMF, the World Bank, US and Western forces bolstered his regime. Historical evidence suggests that there was awareness that Mobutu was stripping Zaire of wealth for his own ends. No attempts were made to stop him or effect governance reforms within the country to halt the ransacking of the country. Like Leopold, Mobutu controlled the destiny of the country, plundered and amassed wealth. The distinctive feature was firstly, the long period during which he was accepted as an authentic African leader and secondly, his attempts at forging an African identity for his country and his people.

4.4 WESTERN CONSTRUCTS

The contradiction between pro-West dogma and nationalist rhetoric was well balanced by Mobutu who played into both. Mobutu was seen as being firmly under the West's control based on neo-colonial rhetoric. On the other hand, it was perceived that he had transformed Zaire into a unified state.²²⁷ Alemazung and others have questioned whether it really was a unitary state.²²⁸

From biographies on Mobutu written during his rule, there is an interesting dichotomy created as on the one hand Mobutu is presented in a positive light in order to promote America's support for

²²⁵ Ndikumana and Boyce, 212.

²²⁶ Ibid, 215.

²²⁷ Dunn, 105.

²²⁸ Alemazung, 62.

his regime. In this regard, Mobutu's human rights abuses are severely underplayed in order to place America's support in a grandiose light. On the other hand, there is the imagery of a nation unable to effectively rule itself which became dominant to such an extent that it fell prey to the whims of external actors through the implementation of leaders that followed a Western ideal of governance that in turn ensured that the West benefitted from the resource-rich region. Mobutu and Zaire are presented as corrupt, incompetent and failing in order to present America as the saviour. Support increases for America if the public is under the impression that it is a noble act of diplomacy and support and that America has a relationship with Mobutu's regime. These representations served as justifications for the immense wealth that Mobutu had accumulated over his 30 year rule. By presenting the West as a saviour and Mobutu as the “noble savage”, there was no sense of accountability required for both parties and the United States and Mobutu both enjoyed popular support.

In the first decade of his rule, Mobutu's dynamic with the West was volatile as he frequently went against Western interests. His relationship with Belgium was often strained while the US viewed him as a puppet. The West, based on African discourse, expected Mobutu to be docile and complacent as he was an African leader. Thus there was a paradox between the national identity created and the assumptions of Western audiences²²⁹, while American biographies assert that the presence of the West in Zaire was an act of domination. For a leader who asserted himself as truly African, Mobutu's relationship with the West and America in particular suggests that Mobutu was manipulating the West.

Gould argued that the dynamic created was that Mobutu was still supported by America; however, the instability that emerged as a result of his regime and the West's continual military aid into the region ensured that Mobutu remained dependent on the West. Gould emphasised Zaire's and Mobutu's reliance on America²³⁰ and affirmed the continual domination of the Zairian economy by the US under Mobutu's rule. The provision of loans and military support to Mobutu's regime in fact exacerbated the domination of the Zairian economy. Gould's argument is that the systematic manipulation of postcolonial Zaire and Mobutu's regime formed part of a strategic plan to safeguard resources for the international community while bypassing any outcry

²²⁹ Dunn, 127.

²³⁰ Gould, 1980, 183.

from within Western states. Corruption was an effective technique during Mobutu's regime as African leaders were easily swayed. The explanation offered fits the stereotypical perceptions of Africa. What this implies is that political interference from the West is an assertion of dominance over Africa, and continual aid to Mobutu's regime asserts America's superiority over the region. Gould argued that corruption is based on the alliance between the international and national bourgeoisie that exacerbates the exploitation and oppression of states like Zaire by military dictators such as Mobutu.²³¹

Gould focused on Zaire's role in Cold War tactics. Zaire is characterised as politically and economically inept and continuously deteriorating. While this is often attributed to external theorists from a postcolonial perspective, Gran and Gould argued that Zaire's problems came from within the state. "Mobutuism" is attributed to the political decay in the state as well as the ongoing economic deterioration. The regime itself was responsible for the problems that plagued Zaire which was seemingly unaffected by external pressures. Mobutu systematically placed political authority as well as control over economic resources into an elite group, thus falling into the governance in Africa stereotype of patronage and clientelism which creates a ground for corruption.²³²

Thomas Callaghy²³³ partially echoed Schatzberg's²³⁴ sentiments as Mobutu's regime is characterised as patriarchal absolutism. However, Callaghy defended Mobutu as he argued that Zaire had developed in line with pre-modern Europe rather than following the generic trajectory of third world and postcolonial nations. He argued that pre-Modern Europe was flawed in that the focus was to extract wealth from the civilians. This leads to notions inherent in Orientalism of underdeveloped and chaotic Africa as Mobutu benefitted from the regime at the expense of citizens. The notions of modernity were absent in Zaire and as such America's involvement echoed a civilising mission as by reclaiming an African identity, Mobutu presented Zaire as the stereotypical simple and traditional Africa to the West. Mobutu's authoritarian regime is seen in stark contrast to local interests based on class dynamics and external pressures. In his 1984 work,

²³¹ Ibid, 183.

²³² Gould, p183.

²³³ Callaghy, T. (1984). *The State-Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press, 560.

²³⁴ Schatzberg, 1991.

Callaghy did however argue that Zaire was the pinnacle of modernity in Africa and that the rest of the continent as well as other postcolonial states would follow suit.²³⁵

In 1973, Mobutu made a state visit to China and announced Zairianisation, his new economic policies which nationalised the foreign-held interests in the country. These moves, however, were not seen as a threat to the USA. Zairianisation began to fail in a short period. The move was initially hailed as a victory against neo-colonialism. Dunn argued that Mobutu was able to challenge the USA and implement new policies because of the assertion that he was firmly under Western control which is echoed through neo-colonial literature.²³⁶

While much of the literature points to Mobutu as a mere pawn of the West, it is clear that he nonetheless had agency over his regime and the state apparatus he headed. Many of his policies were in direct opposition to Western interests and, while not all of the policies he implemented were successful, they were an indication of his ability to assert his agency.²³⁷

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the complex relationship that Mobutu had with the West and the US. It has outlined Mobutu's creation of a unified authentic African state as being a mythical construct used strategically to manipulate Western perceptions, beliefs and truths about the country. Thus the paradox of Mobutu's authentic state was that it was bonded to the US and the West in a way that was not radically different from the time of Leopold.²³⁸ However, the subversion of stereotypes and constructs of African identity by the West is what distinguished Mobutu from any of the predecessors who ruled post-independence. Mobutu's deliberate construction of the Zairian identity was one that reclaimed the "other" by a careful utilisation of that which would be acceptable to the West. He managed to refute Western stereotypes while effectively playing into them in order to benefit himself; he amassed great personal wealth and had the support of the West, allowing him to maintain power for over three decades.

²³⁵ Callaghy, 560. The reclamation of names and an African identity has rung true for other post-colonial states. For example in South Africa, the Rhodes Must Fall campaign in 2015 which has tackled colonial statues to renaming cities and streets, there is a trend similar to authenticity.

²³⁶ Dunn, 127.

²³⁷ Dunn, 127.

²³⁸ Hochschild, 1999.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The construction of identity [. . .] involves establishing opposites and "others" whose actuality is always subject to the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of their differences from "us". Each age and society re-creates its "Others". Far from a static thing then, identity of self or of "other" is a much worked-over historical, social, intellectual, and political process that takes place as a context involving individuals and institutions in all societies.²³⁹

The question that this thesis set out to answer is how Mobutu created a national identity. The objective of this thesis was to understand a complex historical figure who is acknowledged widely as being a tyrant and a looter; the complexity of Mobutu holding together a fragmented Zaire; keeping the West as an important political and economic ally; and finally his assertion of an African identity that had different functions. Firstly, in a similar way to the South African notion of a rainbow nation, authenticité tried to create integration and a national identity for a fragmented country. Secondly, the policy of authenticité and the process of Zairianization was a construction of a discourse that he largely controlled as opposed to the imposition of a discourse by the West. Thirdly, the trading value of Zairianisation and authenticité had benefits in terms of how it was received by the West.

5.1 COUNTER-DISCOURSES

This thesis has focused primarily on the rule of Mobutu from an evaluative perspective. It has been demonstrated that while studies on Africa are dominantly from a Western perspective, the case of Zaire provides an alternative narrative given Mobutu's own constructed national identity. The identity of the people of the Congo is marred and shaped by years of colonial rule with iterations of rule imposed, further excluding the indigenous people. This thesis has not focused on the psychological impact of a dominantly colonial discourse which characterised the narratives of Zaire; instead it has traced the colonisation of the country and the complexity of post-independence Congo. This thesis recognises that Mobutu's crafting of an African state and his ideology were shaped by the history of the country. The sketching of the history is important in terms of understanding that Mobutu's rule and identity evolved over the years.

²³⁹ Said, 332.

This research draws on debates in the field of postcolonial theory²⁴⁰ which offers a perspective on constructions of the *Other*, relationships of power and the influences on narratives of history. The Western idea of Africa has been dominantly characterised by 19th century interpretations challenged only recently by decolonisation and subsequent postcolonial discourses. These, it is argued in this thesis, challenge conventional constructions of Africa. With the decline of the influence of Europe and Britain, the dismantling of the empire, there has been as Mbembe passionately articulated, a need for an alternative construction of Africa's history. Mbembe noted that:

It is now widely acknowledged that Africa as an idea, a concept, has historically served, and continues to serve, as a polemical argument for the West's desperate desire to assert its difference from the rest of the world. In several respects, Africa still constitutes one of the metaphors through which the West represents the origin of its own norms, develops a self-image, and integrates this image into the set of signifiers asserting what it supposes to be its identity (Mbembe 2001: 2).

In Chapters 1 and 2, this thesis has drawn on the work of Said who argued that the “occidental” (meaning the West, US and Europe) constructions of history through academic works, the literature produced and dominant representations of “others” imprint and assert prejudice against those who are not of the West. The assertion is that by controlling the narrative of the “other”, dominant control over the political and economic was also asserted. This thesis has focused on what Kevin Dunn²⁴¹ referred to as the “discursive landscape” of a Congo that has been subject to Western representations. Mobutu’s brand of identity politics and the development of authenticité, renaming of the Congo to Zaire, and the attempt to control the narrative of the country have formed part of the discussions in Chapters 3 and 4. Identity politics as detailed in the history of Zaire continued to permeate the micro and macro politics. While the Lumumba rule was also characterised by calls for forging of new identities and national unity, Mobutu's rise and crafting of the vision of the authentic African state has been the subject of research. Bechtolsheimer²⁴² in fact went as far as saying that the legacy of Mobutu has contributed to the sustained vision of Congo as Africa’s Heart of Darkness. The validity of this observation may not be relevant in the current day but demonstrates the extent and impact of Mobutu’s legacy. Bechtolsheimer’s view

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Dunn, 2003.

²⁴² Bechtolsheimer, 2012.

is limited in that the analysis fails to understand the value of this intractable tension – Mobutu who perpetuated the myth of the Heart of Darkness and Mobutu who constructed a unique and distinctive African identity. To dismiss Mobutu as a tin-pot dictator and plunderer without analysing the contribution of his attempts to develop this identity is reductionist. This thesis has not focused on the reasons for Mobutu’s unceremonial ousting as a leader – as this was not the intention of the thesis. The intention was to explore the inherent value of the alternative discourse that was posited.

5.2 KEY FINDINGS

There have been three components to this thesis:

Firstly, there has been the narrative tracing the history from colonial rule under Leopold to Mobutu. In each period that has been discussed, a salient feature has been the lack of a homogenous national identity for the people of the Congo. The myriad tribal groups averse to forming a national identity competed for national resources originally held by the coloniser while during the Mobutu rule he continued to amass wealth.²⁴³

Secondly, the narratives of the Congo/Zaire are dominantly representations of an Africa that play into stereotypical representations of darkness, corruption, low developmental levels and a dehumanising of the people. Congo had long been plagued by "the heart of darkness" label, an inherently chaotic semblance of a state too wracked with conflict to be functional. "Orientalism" has been attributed to the West as a form of dominating, controlling, restructuring and maintaining authority over the regions that make up the "Orient".²⁴⁴ Postcolonial theory calls for a challenge to this notion. These discursive constructions of Africa result in perceptions of either barbaric Africa or Africa as an object for Western experimentation. Africa has been viewed through Western eyes for decades and as such the discursive constructs are shaped through a Western perspective which portrays Africa as a continent that desperately needs a Western saviour which basically means that political interference from the West is an assertion of dominance over Africa.²⁴⁵

²⁴³ Ndikumana & Emizet, 2003.

²⁴⁴ Said, 3.

²⁴⁵ Mbembe, 2.

Thirdly, Mobutu offered up a vision of what he termed as the African authentic state and the forging of a national identity for the country of Congo renamed as Zaire. Dunn argued that a national identity emerged from within Zaire and that Mobutu essentially challenged the idea of the heart of darkness. The symbolism of his actions rests on this identity being acceptable to the West. While he maintained public support based on authenticity and Zairianisation, he also made himself a valuable ally in terms of Cold War tactics and foreign direct investment into the region. He ensured that the West would be able to export resources while receiving military and financial support. Thus despite the corruption that persisted throughout his 32-year rule, he offered a strategic partnership for the West both in economic terms but also as a buttress location for the Cold War initiatives. He created an “other” in terms of a Zairian identity that was beneficial to him financially as well as politically.

The question that has been interrogated in this thesis is whether Mobutu’s formation of the self in relation to the “other” is what had been envisioned by Mbembe, Fanon, Said and theorists. Mobutu’s discourse presented a counter-discourse to the dominant canon, a Eurocentric perspective, in existence and what exactly his crafting of authenticity and a Zairian national identity did mean. An acknowledged limitation of this thesis is the focus on writings of Mobutu in translation and a reliance on research undertaken of the Congo in English. There is an acknowledgement that this study has had a narrow focus primarily due to the language barrier. A second limitation is that it would be worthwhile for future research to be undertaken to ascertain whether Mobutu created a counter-discourse successfully and whether it posed a sufficient challenge to the dominant discourse on Africa and the Congo specifically. This has been explored partially in this thesis but not fully. The question as to whether Mobutu’s discourse on authenticity served as a form of subversion has not been covered fully and is clouded by the tyranny, corruption and influences of the West that characterised his rule. A third limitation is the writing of the history of the Congo which has been dominantly a colonial perspective and Eurocentric.

This study was conceived of as an exploration of the contribution of Mobutu in terms of challenging Eurocentric assumptions of Africa more generally and the Congo. To this end, it has been the assumption of this study that to understand Mobutu requires the context of colonised Congo, independence and the 32 years in which he remained as the ruler. The works of Dunn,

Young, and Nzongola-Ntalaja have been used as secondary resources that have provided multiple perspectives on the Congo as a colonised state, transitioning to independence and then the Mobutu period. There is acknowledgement in this thesis that these authoritative resources in themselves construct a reality of the period, the events, the characters and the players in the field, placing emphasis on interpretations based on a selection of readings. This is the perceived limitation of the reliance on the resources and the limitations embedded as they are dependent on other texts and not free from ideology. A final limitation is the absence of a detailed exploration of the influences that played a role in the development of Mobutu's counter-discourse.

5.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper sought to answer the following question,

The stereotype of the simple African leader dependent on the West has long been attached to Mobutu Sese Seko. Postcolonial theory seeks to identify how the West views former colonial spaces and how this amounts to control over these regions as notions of primitive and underdeveloped regions exacerbate unequal relationships between “the West and the rest”. By introducing policy changes through the implementation of authenticité and Zairianisation, Mobutu created a collective national identity and market Zaire for export. Mobutu's dictatorship served as an interesting power dynamic for the USA. On the one hand there was wide support for the regime and its position in Cold War tactics and on the other hand it was criticised as an indication of the Africans' inability to rule themselves. In analysing Mobutu's dictatorship and his relationship with the West, how did Mobutu emerge as an authentic African leader?

This paper has demonstrated that while Mobutu created a unified national identity in Zaire through the twin processes of authenticité and Zairianisation, he created a state that was authentically African but still palatable to the West. By eschewing any influences from colonial rule and asserting a discourse from within the state, Mobutu effectively countered the idea of “othering”. He reimagined the state as the West had once reimagined colonial spaces. Mobutu essentially created the idea of Zairian Nationalism. This allowed him to garner and maintain popular support within the state. He then marketed the state to the West in a way that maintained the persona of an authentic African state but that would be palatable to the West. The relationship between the West and Mobutu has long been presented as an unequal power dynamic with Zaire and Mobutu acting as pawns of the West. However, in spite of Zaire's

strategic involvement in Cold War tactics in Africa and the vast mineral riches, Mobutu manipulated the West for his personal gain. His relationship with the West ensured that his regime was supported and that he could maintain power while receiving a steady influx of loans that were part of his personal wealth. As the IMF later noted, Mobutu saw these loans as donations and thus amassed great personal wealth at a cost to the West.

Mobutu effectively created a counter-discourse that had been imagined by postcolonialists in their understanding of the colonial space following independence. He subverted the perceptions and stereotypes of the West by creating a state from within and, although palatable to the West, it emerged as truly and authentically African.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities 1983*. London and New York: Verso.

Barth, F. (1969). 'Introduction' and 'Pathan Identity and Its Maintenance'. In Barth, F. (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Culture Difference*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget; London: Allen & Unwin, 9-38; 117-134.

Blumenthal, E.M. (1982). 'Zaire: Rapport Sur la Creadibilite Financiere Internationale'. In Emmanuel Dunga Mobutu et l'Argent du Zaire: *Les ReÂveÂlations d'un Diplomate Ex-Agent des Services Secrets* (Annexe 2), 136-55. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Blunt, A. & McEwan, C. (2002). Introduction. In: Blunt, A. & McEwan, C. (eds.) *Postcolonial Geographies*. New York: Continuum. pp. 1-6.

Breuilly, J. (1995). *Reflections on Nationalism*, 137-154. London, UK: Routledge.

Callaghy, T. (1984). *The State-Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press, 560.

Chibber, V. (2014). *Postcolonial theory and the specter of capital*. US: Verso Books.

Coleman, J.S. (1955). The emergence of African political parties. In Haines, C.G. (Ed), *Africa Today*, 228-234. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press.

Conrad, J. (1982). *Heart of Darkness*. Edinburgh: Blackwood's Magazine.

De Witte, L. (2001). *The assassination of Lumumba*. London and New York: Verso.

Deutsch, K. W. (1953). *Nationalism and social communication: An inquiry into the foundations of nationality* (pp. 209-222). Cambridge, MA: MIT press.

Dunn, K. (2003). *Imagining the Congo: The international relations of identity*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fanon, F. (1986). *White skins, black masks*. London: Pluto Press.

Ferguson, J. (2006). *Global shadows*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. Vol. 5019. New York: Basic Books.

- Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University.
- George, A.L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Boston, MA: The MIT Press.
- Gerard, E., & Kuklick, B. (2015). *Death in the Congo: Murdering Patrice Lumumba*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Goodman, M. (2013). *National insecurity: The cost of American militarism*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Publishers.
- Gordon, D.L. (1996). African politics. In April A., & Gordon, D.L. (Eds), *Understanding contemporary Africa*, 61-114. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Gould, D.J. (1980). *Bureaucratic corruption and underdevelopment in the Third World: The case of Zaire*, xiii. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Hobsbawm, E. (1983). Mass-producing traditions: Europe, 1870-1914. *The invention of tradition*, 215.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. (1990). *Echoes of the Marseillaise: Two centuries look back on the French Revolution*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Hochschild, A. (1999). *King Leopold's ghost: A story of greed, terror, and heroism in colonial Africa*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Hoskyns, C. (1965). *The Congo since Independence: January 1960 to December 1961*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Ikambana, J.L.P. (2006). *Mobutu's Totalitarian Political System: An Afrocentric Analysis*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Jackson, N. & Shapiro-Phim, T. (2008). Dance, Human Rights, and Social Justice: Dignity in Motion, 54. UK: The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony*. Berkley, NJ: University of California Press.
- Miles, R. (1993). *Racism after 'race relations'*. London: Routledge.
- Mobutu, Sese Seko. Dignity for Africa. Interview by Jean-Louis Remilleux. Paris: Albin Michel, 1989. Print.
- Mobutu, S.S. (1975). *Discours, allocutions et messages. Two volumes*. Paris: Éditions J.A.

- Moore-Gilbert, B. (1997). *Postcolonial Theory: Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London: Verso.
- Nabudere, D.W. (2004). *The political economy of conflict and war in the Great Lakes Region*. Cape Town: IJR.
- Nash, C. (2002). Cultural Geography: Postcolonial Cultural Geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 26(2): 219-230.
- Nkrumah, K. (1995). *Neo-colonialism: The last stage of imperialism*. London: Nelson.
- Nzongola-Ntalaja, G. (2002). *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*. New York: Zed Books, 16.
- Okomu, W. (1963). *Lumumba's Congo: Roots of conflict*. New York, NY: Ivan Obolensky.
- Pakenham, T. (1991). *The scramble for Africa: 1876–1912*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Posner, D.N. (2005). *Institutions and ethnic politics in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Quayson, A. (2000). *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice or Process?* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Ranger, T. (1996). Postscript: Colonial and Postcolonial Identities. In: Werbner, R. & Ranger, T. (eds.) *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*. London: Zed.
- Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Schatzberg, M.G. (1991). *Mobutu or chaos? The United States and Zaire, 1960-1990*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Sebald, W.G. (2013). *The emigrants (Austerlitz)*. New York: Random House.
- Thomson, A. (2010). *An Introduction to African Politics*. London: Routledge.
- Tilly, C. (1996). *European Revolutions: 1492-1992 (Making of Europe)*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Toffolo, C.E. (2003). *Emancipating cultural pluralism*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Weber, M., Gerth, H.H., & Mills, C.W. (1948). *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (by Max Weber) translated, edited and with an introduction by H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Weissman, S. (1974). *American Foreign Policy in the Congo, 1960-1964*. New York, NY: Cornell University Press.

White, G. (2005). *Holding the line: Race, racism, and American foreign policy toward Africa*. Washington: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Williams, P. & Chrisman, L. (1994). (eds.) *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Yin, R.K. (2002). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Applied Social Research Methods Series, 5. Singapore: Sage Publications.

Young, C. & Turner, T. (1985). *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Young, C. (1979). *The politics of cultural pluralism*. US: University of Wisconsin Press.

Young, C. (ed.). (1993). *The rising tide of cultural pluralism: The nation-state at bay?* US: University of Wisconsin Press.

JOURNALS

Alemazung, J.A. (2010). Actors marring African socio-economic and political development. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(10), 62-84.

Basaglia, I. (2012). The contribution of post-colonial theory to the construction of identity in international relations. *Cross-Sections*, 8, 71-79.

Cruz, C. (2000). Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Futures. *World Politics*, 52(3), 275-312.

Devisch, R. (1998). Colonial State Building in the Congo, and its Dismantling. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 30(42), 221-244.

Doosje, B., Branscombe, N.R., Spears, R., & Manstead, A.S. (2004). Consequences of national ingroup identification for responses to immoral historical events. *Collective guilt: International perspectives*, 95-111.

Dragović, M. (2005). Competing Institutions in National Identity Construction: The Croatian Case. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 11(1):61-87.

Finch, D. (1988). Let the IMF Be the IMF. *The International Economy*, January/February, 126-8.

Handler, R. (1984). On Sociological Discontinuity: Nationalism and Cultural Objectification in Quebec. *Current Anthropology*, 25(1), 55-71.

Mahadeo, M., & McKinney, J. (2007). Media representations of Africa: Still the same old story? *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review*, 4(2), 14-20.

- Manzo, K. (2006). An extension of Colonialism? Development education, images and the media. *Development Education Journal*, 12(2), 9-12.
- Marriage, Z. (2011). Divisive 'commonality': State and insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Third World Quarterly*, 32, 1895.
- Nagel, J. (1994). Constructing ethnicity: Creating and recreating ethnic identity and culture. *Social problems*, 152-176.
- Ndikumana, L., & Boyce, J. (1998). Congo's odious debt: External borrowing and capital flight in Zaire. *Development and Change*, 29(2), 195-217.
- Ndikumana, L., & Emizet, K. (2003). *The economics of civil war: The case of the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts.
- Newbury, C. (1988). *The Cohesion of Oppression: Citizenship and Ethnicity in Rwanda 1860-1960*. New York: Columbia University.
- Nilsson, D. (2013). Sweden-Norway at the Berlin Conference 1884–85: History, national identity-making and Sweden's relations with Africa. *Current African Issues*, 53. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Qureshi, S. (2004). Displaying Sara Baartman, 'The Hottentot Venus'. *History of Science*, 42, 233-257.
- Reno, W.R. (2006). Congo: From state collapse to 'absolutism', to state failure. *Third World Quarterly*, 27(1), 43-56.
- Wimmer, A. (1997). Who Owns the State? Understanding Ethnic Conflict in Post-Colonial Societies. *Nations and nationalism*, 3(4), 631-666.
- Wimmer, A. (2008). The making and unmaking of ethnic boundaries: A multilevel process theory. *American journal of sociology*, 113(4), 970-1022.
- Young, C. (1982). Patterns of social conflict: State, class and ethnicity. *Daedalus*, 111(2), 71-98.
- Young, C. (2004). The end of the post-colonial state in Africa? Reflections on changing African political dynamics. *African Affairs*, 103(410), 23-49.
- Young, M.C. (1965). The Congo Rebellion. *Africa Report*, 10(4), 6.

INTERNET SOURCES

Achebe, C. (1977). *An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness.'* Retrieved May 11, 2014, from <http://kirbyk.net/hod/image.of.africa.html>.

Adichie, C.N. (2009). *The danger of a single story.* Retrieved September 10, 2013, from http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html.

De Boeck, F. (2011). *The Last Post: Congo and Postcolonial Theory.* Retrieved August 5, 2013, from <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/bitstream/123456789/319799/1/The+Last+Post22310.pdf>.

Hartley, T. (2012). *The Rumble in the Jungle.* Retrieved May 1, 2014, from <http://newhistories.group.shef.ac.uk/wordpress/wordpress/the-rumble-in-the-jungle-mobutu%E2%80%99s-knockout-blow/downloaded>.

Nzongola-Ntalaja, G. (2004). *The international dimensions of the Congo crisis.* Retrieved May 24, 2013, from <http://www.worlddialogue.org/print.php?id=319>.

Purcell, J.P. (n.d.). *Decolonisation: Congo 1960-1961.* Retrieved May 20, 2014, from <http://www.eceme.ensino.eb.br/cihm/Arquivos/PDF%20Files/37.pdf>

Seay, L. & Dionne, K.Y. (2014). The long and ugly tradition of treating Africa as a dirty, diseased place. Retrieved November 20, 2014, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/08/25/othering-ebola-and-the-history-and-politics-of-pointing-at-immigrants-as-potential-disease-vectors/>.

White, M. (2003). *Wars, massacres and atrocities of the Twentieth Century.* Retrieved June 28, 2015, from <http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/20centry.htm>

RESEARCH PAPERS

Askin, S. (1990) *Mobutu's Wealth: How He Got It, How He Spends It.* Paper presented at the African Studies Association, Baltimore, MD, 1-4 November.

Bechtolsheimer, G. (2012). *Breakfast with Mobutu: Congo, the United States and the Cold War, 1964-1981.* Doctoral thesis, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London, United Kingdom.

Grice, C. (2011). *Happy are those who sing and dance: Mobutu, Franco, and the struggle for Zairian identity.* Doctoral thesis, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina, United States.

Mackie, A. *The Utility of Darkness: Figments of a State Called the Democratic Republic of the Congo.* Dissertation, Macalester College, Minnesota, United States.