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# Democratic Transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo After The Cold War

*Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Désiré Kabila's Leadership Scrutinized*

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# Abstract

This thesis has investigated the prevailing understanding of poor leadership as a major impediment to the democratization of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Analytical studies found evidences on the correlation between the authoritarian regimes installed in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the abortive process of democratization under the leadership of Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Désiré Kabila. It therefore raises attention on how the two leaders battled to cling on to power and obstructed the democratization of this country from 1990 to 2001.

The investigation is based on a case study method with two units: Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Désiré Kabila, and has used the leader's conversion theory heralded by John Evans professor of political science, Richard Joseph. The process resulted in the findings that Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Désiré Kabila hindered a successful democratization by short circuiting any democratic reform while consolidating their own respective powers. Noticeably, other factors beyond these two leaders' control, mainly external involvements in domestic political realm, have also proved to have obstructed the democratization of the Democratic Republic of Congo under this period.

***Keywords:***

*Authoritarian Regime, Democracy, Democratic Transition, Leadership, Neopatrimonialism.*

Words: 10 000

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

- AFDL — Alliance des Forces Démocratique pour la Liberation du Congo/Zaire  
*(Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire)*
- AMFI — American Mineral Fields
- CEZ — Conférence Episcopale du Zaire *(Episcopal Conference of Zaire)*
- CNS — Conférence Nationale Souveraine *(National Sovereign Conference)*
- DRC — Democratic Republic of Congo
- DSP — Division Spéciale Présidentielle *(Special Presidential Division)*
- FAO — Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- FPC — Forces Politiques du Conclave *(Conclave's Political Forces)*
- GACI — Garde Civile *(Civil Guard)*
- GDP — Gross Domestic Product
- GFW — Global Forest Watch
- HCR-PT — Haut Commissariat de la République-Parlement de Transition  
*(High Council of the Republic-Parliament of Transition)*
- MPR — Mouvement Populaire de la Revolution *(Popular Movement of the Revolution)*
- OECD — Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
- PALU — Parti Lumimbiste Unifié *(Unified Lumumbist Party)*
- PDSC — Parti Démocrate Social Chrétien *(Democratic Social Christian Party)*
- SARM — Service d'Action et de Renseignements Militaire  
*(Service for Action and Military Intelligence)*
- UDPS — Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social *(Union for Democracy and Social Progress)*
- UFERI — Union des Fédéralistes et des Républicains Indépendants  
*(Union of Federalists and Independent Republicans)*
- UNEP — United Nations Environment Programme
- WB — World Bank

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# 1 Introduction

The end of the Cold War, denoted by the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of communism in the late 1980s (Burgan 2008 p.17), brought about what has been considered by many to be a second era of independence across Africa. Many African nations began, during this period, to reformulate themselves in the hope that, without the interference of competing superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, African nations could move into a new era of democracy and economic development. Moderate political leaders rose to tackle the old generation, and groped to create enduring democratic societies. The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo were to comprehend this inexorable process of transition, as their country raced forward toward an uncertain destiny.

However, the democratization of the Democratic Republic of Congo has evidently failed. The Congolese mayhem raises numerous questions on why and how peace and democracy became elusive during the reign of Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Désiré Kabila. Leadership, as a trend directly affecting a state's political, economical, and social gears, is indeed a significant subject in coherence with the political scientific aspect of this research (Teorell and Svensson 2007 p.18). In exploring the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Congo, whereby autocracy and dissident have prevailed in an ambivalent political realm, this research has investigated the cause of a failed democratization as seen through the basic tenures of two former Presidents: Mobutu and Kabila. The investigation set out to analyze and reveal these two presidents potential impact in the failed democratization of the Democratic Republic of Congo, by scrutinizing their leadership.

Chronologically this country has been known under different names: Free State of Congo, Belgian Congo, Congo Leopoldville, Congo Kinshasa, Zaire, and Democratic Republic of Congo. In order to avoid probable confusions, the name Democratic Republic of Congo, or simply its abbreviation, DRC, is the appellation used throughout this thesis.

## 1.1 Disposition and structure

The architecture of this investigation is divided into five main sections. Chapter one is the introductory section. This part presents all the standard segments accounted in methodology of a political science research. It also reflects upon previous researches on the democratic transition in the DRC, and motivates the choice of my target as a potential site for conducting a political science research. Chapter two frames a brief presentation of the two leaders that are involved in this

research. Thereafter, in chapter three (empirical analysis), I have identified different compartments and tenets in which the two leaders were engaged during their respective leadership. This analysis is embedded with the theoretical framework that leads the research. Empirical analysis describes and explains the unsuccessful democratic transition by using relevant sub variables that emanates from Joseph's theory. This has given room to outline the challenges that the DRC has accounted in its evolution due to the superposition of the democratic principles crossing up with the dictatorial and neo-patrimonial principles. Chapter four is analysis and discussion where I have constrained the two leaderships and provided possible similarities and differences between the two leaders in order to deduce common flaws in their leadership. Chapter five, the conclusion, is the last portion of this thesis where I have summed up the main points of my research. In this part, I have provided a relevant answer to my research question, and with my ambition of theory-using, I have contrasted and demonstrated how, according to Joseph's theory, these two leaders have evidently failed to suit their leadership conveniently in order to successfully impart democracy in the DRC. Furthermore, I have even opened up and highlighted the possibilities for further researches based on my findings for what I believe can shed more light on my research question.

## 1.2 Background and motivation

It is evident to outline what makes the Democratic Republic of Congo an interesting target for carrying out a political science research (Teorell and Svensson 2007 p.18). The DRC is perhaps the richest country in the world in terms of natural resources. However, this country's dismal circumstances and standard of life does not correlate with its immense potentiality.

Famous anti-colonialist activist, Frantz Fanon, once claimed that: Africa is shaped like a revolver, and the trigger is located in the DRC (Clark 2002 p.13). Whoever controls the trigger controls Africa. The DRC is the largest country in Sub-Saharan Africa, and its basin rainforest is the second largest contiguous rainforest in the world (WB 2005 p.2; GFW 2000 p.9). The DRC owns 80 000 000 hectares of arable land that are sufficiently enough to feed close to half a billion people (FAO 2011; FAO 2009). Congo River, 4670 km long, is the deepest river in the world and the second largest river in the world by volume of water discharge (UNEP 2010 p.41). Scholars have estimated that the DRC basin accounts for approximately 13 percent of global hydro-electric power. This makes the DRC capable of providing electrical power to the entire African continent (McColl 2005 p.206; Guannu 2010 p.86). Belgian imminent geologist, Jules Cornet, once declared the DRC as a geological scandal (Nzongola-Talaja 2007 p.28), due to its varied and numerous minerals. It was from Shinkolobwe gold mines in Katanga province, South of the DRC, that the USA extracted the uranium that served in Manhattan project to fabricate the first atom bomb. This

was the bomb used to strike Japan (Hiroshima) on August 6, 1945 during the Second World War (Kisangani and Scott 2010 p.536; Parker 2002 p.117). The minerals of the DRC, including 80 percent of world reserves of coltan (Vázquez-Figueroa 2009 p.51) and the world largest reserve of cobalt, is evaluated to 24 trillion US dollars, equivalent to the combined GDP of the United States of America and Europe (News about Congo 2009).

However, paradoxically, the DRC is unable to feed its 71 712 867 inhabitants (CIA, “DRC”, 2011). Residents of all the provinces trespassed by the River Congo do not have access to clean drinking water. 90 percent of the population is always drowned into constant problems of electricity (Mbendi 2011). More surprisingly, with an unemployment rated over 80 percent (OECD p.270), and a socio-economical status profoundly dilapidated, the DRC is today ranked as the poorest country in the world (Global Finance 2011).

Considering democracy as a precursor of economic growth and development of a country (Feng 2003 p.273; McKay et al 2009 p. 962-963), and in order to understand the DRC’s abortive democratic transition, the Congolese parody, in no correlation with the country’s enormous potentiality, as displayed above, raises curiosity fitting to scrutinize the leadership of president Mobutu and Kabila; since the two presidents have led the DRC under a period during which expectation for the democratization of this country was at its highest stance.

### 1.2.1 Previous researches

When searching for previous publications in the field of democratic transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I could barely find other studies about the connection between the Congolese leadership and the prevalent unsuccessful democratization of this country. Much of the researches and publications that I have found concerning the democratic transition in the DRC slightly focused on leadership. Though all these published materials cannot be reviewed in this thesis, I took into account the most illustrative documents that connect to the democratic transition in the DRC: *Ainsi sonne le glas! Les derniers jours du maréchal Mobutu*, and *La transition au Zaïre: le long tunnel*. Both written by Ngbanda Nzambo Ko Atumba, former minister of defense, diplomatic and security advisor to Mobutu (Ngbanda 1998; Ngbanda 1995). The other document is *de Mobutu à Kabila: avatars d’une passation inopinée*, written by Dieudonné Wamu Oyatambwe, doctor in political science and scholar in Brussels’ centre of African studies (Oyatambwe 1999). These documents explore the democratic transition initiated from April 24, 1990 by Mobutu. They highlight also the carelessness and the failure of a Congolese political class tailored to suit the former dictators’ desires. These are analytical works that have explored many avenues in order to illuminate the public opinion about the turmoil the DRC has experienced during the transition to democracy, under both Mobutu and Kabila's regime.



## 1.2.2 Hypothesis

It appeared to my perception that influential factors which have constantly prevented the democratization of the DRC are not only of political culture dimension. The perennial dilemma of a successful democratization of the DRC are more likely bounded to features rooted in a military ruling tradition adopted soon after the country acceded to independence. This is a fact that has ruined the structure of the ruling system in the DRC so deeply that, in the long run, it turned to become the basic source of obstruction to the emergency of any possible sequel of democratic ruling system in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

## 1.3 Purpose and issue framing

The goal of this thesis is to explain the unsuccessful democratic transition in the DRC under the leadership of Mobutu and Kabila. The time considered in this investigation is shortly after the end of the Cold War, in early 1990s, until January 2001 when Kabila was murdered. Joseph portrays that African leaders seemed to merely feign conversion towards moderate reforms as a tactical move to hold on to power (1991 p.374). In order to explain the failed democratization of the DRC under the leadership of these two presidents, I have borrowed topics like the national conference sovereign, empowering a single political party, consolidating their own powers, making insignificant reforms, censorship of the Media and modifying the constitution at their favors, from Joseph's assumption to use as independent sub variables. The process in my research focuses in investigating the veracity of Joseph's statement and explaining it in the context of the DRC.

A part from sub topics borrowed from Joseph's theory, I have even examined factors like external involvements in the domestic political affairs of the DRC. As an outsider to Joseph's statement, I assumed that external facts would create room both for leveling the reliability and weighing the strength of the theory used in my research. Hollis claims that social scientists should position themselves methodologically, ontologically and epistemologically (1994 p.19), and focus on explaining the general public laws, or seek instead an understanding of society's structure and human beings (1994 p.159-162). In the necessity to identify issues that make up the thread of this investigation, the research question in this thesis ought to suggest a more positivist epistemological basis, which answers to the unsuccessful democratic transition stems of the DRC from facts and observations of the two leaders (Hollis 1994 p.5).

*How can Professor Richard Joseph's theory explain the unsuccessful democratic transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo under the leadership of Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Désiré Kabila?*

Other than the goal concisely stated above, an additional goal of this research is to contribute to the scientific cumulativity on top of the already existing researches

on democratic transition and leadership in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in particular, or elsewhere in the world in general (Esaiasson et al 2007 p. 18-19).

## 1.4 General delimitations

The DRC is still under its long journey of democratization. However, due to the limitation of both time and space allotted in this thesis, and considering the immensity of the topic chosen, the time framed taken into this research ranges from April 24, 1990 when multi-party system was introduced in the DRC by president Mobutu (Nelson 1995 p.80), to January 16, 2001 when Mobutu's successor, Kabila, was murdered (NU 2008 p.105). Nevertheless, by ricochet, I may permit myself to refer to an event or phenomenon out of this interval of time, in case the issue can be allied to the transition era. Despite many independent variables that can be involved in such a research, I have opted to concentrate my research on leadership as the major independent variable. The current regime in the Democratic Republic of Congo has intentionally been excluded from this research, because it is still operational. My focus targets the two previous leaderships that have already ended.

## 1.5 Theoretical framework and analytical tools

In defining a causal mechanism between the DRC's leadership and its failed democratization, the first requirement is to label an operating theory of democracy that is suitable for the task at hand (Badersten 2011 09 23). Political stance in the DRC has often created difficulties even for the sturdiest theoretical frameworks of political and social science (Schatzberg 2001 p.129). Many of the theories of Democracy that have been developed to discuss democratic ideas and institutions in the West do not seem to be applicable in the DRC's context. This is either because the DRC does not have the same cultural values, or because with its colonial history, the institutions that are required to make Western-style democracy work, are not and have never existed.

The democratic theory that was weighed in order to drive this investigation is the *leader's conversion theory* by Joseph. He explains that the fact that African leaders pretend to impart democracy while in reality they maintain the status quo of their authoritarian regime is the major impediment to a successful institutionalization of democratic reforms (1991 p.374). Framing up a theory exists in all empirical investigations. However, the scientific aspect of a credential research requires an explanation of the phenomena that enlighten the research. It is, therefore, important to construct an analytical tool that captures the essential aspects of the social phenomenon to be explored (Esaiasson et al 2007, p.155). Democracy requests the leaders to be identical to the people who are giving them

the responsibilities to govern the state. Leadership is the influence that occurs among people of a given society who intentionally desire significant and tangible changes. These changes are not dictated by a leading force, but indeed reflect purposes shared by leaders and the people (Daft and Lane 2007 p.4).

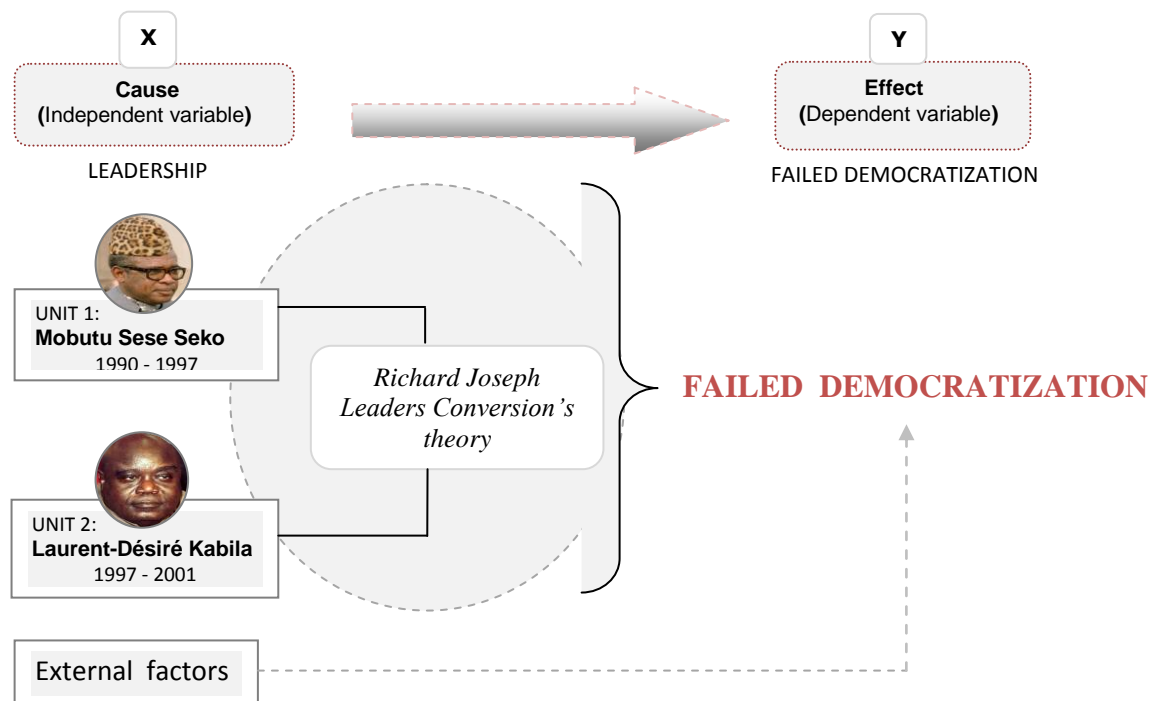
In *authoritarian regimes* people have insignificant power in the ruling process of their society. Central authority is not maintained by free and competitive democratic elections. Leaders shape communalism to their advantage, and tie the fortunes to their hold on to power (Joseph 1991 p.366). As an incarnation pole of their power, authoritarian leaders, in some cases, use even the principle of *divide et impera* (divide and rule) in order to prevent the raise of any probable coalition that would challenge their leadership, and the use of terror as a prevalent asset to suffocate any democratic aspirations. Furthermore, in Joseph's perception, the *transition to democracy* is seen as a process of political changes that involves a struggle to reform institutions towards a more open and competitive system. It is a procedure that should lead to the impediment of an authoritarian regime by domestic opponents (1991 p.376). In order to achieve that legislative power, the judiciary and the executive power must not be concentrated in the hands of one strong man. Joseph emphasizes that with the rise of democratic reform, it was critical for such leaders to accept moderation in order to allow reforms to push forward. *Democracy* combines both deliberative and liberal elements. It is a political system that allows citizen self-rule, permits the broadest deliberation in determining public policy, and constitutionally guarantees all the freedoms necessary for an open political competition (1991 p.365). However, many African leaders simply seemed to pretend to impart democratic changes, but have instead incorporated some restrained reforms as a tactical move to maintain the status quo of their leadership (Joseph 1991 p.375), and adopted neo-patrimonial, nepotism, and cronyism tactics in their ruling system in order to retain and concentrate their power. Joseph argues that democratic reforms were short-circuited by some leaders as most of the democratic reforms such as the termination of single-party dominance, re-legalization of opposition parties, restored freedoms of association, assembly, expression, and constitutional reforms leading to competitive elections were cornered (1998 p.3).

### 1.5.1. Neopatrimonialism, nepotism, and cronyism

The political system of the black parts of Africa around the late 20th century is identified as neopatrimonialism. This was a political tactic based on a profound abuse of office and confusion of the public and private goods. There are two concepts that are linked to this term: nepotism and cronyism. Nepotism is seen in authoritarian regimes whereby power and wealth are favored to the family members of the head of the state regardless of their merit (Bratton and Van de Walle 1994 p.457-459). Cronyism was a common tactic in the African ruling system of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Non democratic governances are based on personal rulership in which the ruler (patron) dispenses offices and other benefits to subordinates (client) in return for loyalty, support and services (Ikpe 2009 p.62).

## 1.6 Method

A case study method is purposely used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one easily researchable topic (Gustavsson 2011 10 28). Units involved in a case study ought to be clearly identified (Esaiasson et al 2007 p. 121). My two units in this case are president Mobutu and president Kabila. I have, therefore, used Joseph's theory coated in my case about how these two Congolese leaders have failed to successfully democratize the DRC. Like David Hume's parable of billiard balls (Teorell and Svensson 2007 p. 60), in order to find the cause, the effect, and the causal mechanism, it was in my task, to find the factor which, although applied under leadership of different presidents, Mobutu and Kabila, have however, led to a similar result: unsuccessful democratic transition. Dependent variable (Y) being the function of the independent variable (X), implies that X influences the variation of Y.



A case study method has the advantage of providing more realistic responses (Gustavsson 2011 10 28). Evidently, the flexibility of a case study method might lead to some unexpected results on the course of the research. Consequently, that would lead the research to open up for new orientations (Bryman 2008 p.54-55). This is a fact that may, hopefully, enable a researcher to strengthen theory and hypothesis, while ignoring other explanatory factors. The units in this case study: Mobutu and Kabila, were not chosen randomly, but indeed because, as explained earlier, they both led the DRC at a time during which aspiration for the democratization of this country was significantly enormous.

I am aware regarding claims that a case study is such a narrow field that its results cannot be extrapolated to fit an entire issue (Bryman 2008 p.54-55). I understand this prevailing disadvantage of a case study. To demonstrate a relation

with only a single case can indeed be problematic since different cases can be unique in their historical context. However, it enhances the validity of the concepts since they are presented in ways that fit more closely with the contextual specificities of the unit or units used in the case. More specifically, there is no mean to generalize when the ambition is to use a theory, as it is in this research (Teorell and Svensson 2007 p. 47-48).

## 1.7 Materials

The Congolese leadership related to the process of democratization is certainly a delicate issue. This was perceived during the search for relevant and credible materials. Both primary and secondary materials have been used in this research.

Primary materials include reports from international organizations. I have also consulted both Mobutu and Kabila's mini biographies in order to depict from scratch their personalities. Since this thesis investigates a case of Congolese leadership, there was evidently need to resort to the state-published materials. I have, therefore, read publications from both Mobutu and Kabila's regime, like presidential speeches, governmental newsletter, and reports. However, being aware that such sources can be subjective and biased, in some cases, and in order to avoid jeopardizing with both the validity and the reliability of my research (Bryman 2008 p.30-32), I have cautiously done a critical source analysis constituted by both external and internal audit as emphasized by Bell. The external audit was done in order to examine whether the sources were genuine, authentic, and give a true picture of what it portrays. The internal audit was related to issues such as the type of source and its content, qualification of the author, sequels of probable tendencies and under what circumstances the texts were created (2000 p.97-101). An important goal of the critical review was to assess whether a particular document is mainly characterized by the facts or opinions.

Books constitute the basic of my secondary materials, but I have even consulted some articles. Since my research is a theory-using investigation, I realized that there was a risk that I could only have searched for my indicators and ignore other relevant parts of the topic. Thus, I have adequately tried to be as objective as possible in my attempt to verify or falsify my hypothesis.

## 2 Leaders' Profiles

Prior to getting a better understanding of the unsuccessful democratic transition under the leadership of Mobutu and Kabila, it is evident to short portray a curriculum vitae of each one of these two leaders. Information provided under this stance traces a better understanding of their personalities.

### 2.1 Mobutu Sese Seko

He was born Joseph Désiré Mobutu on October 14, 1930 at Lisala, in the Northern part of the DRC (Haskin 2005 p.50). Mobutu was a brilliant and fairly educated Congolese who has respectively worked as an accountant, sergeant-major, journalist, secretary of state to the prime minister's office, and army's chief of staff (Lipschutz and Rasmussen 1986 p.275).

Backed by the CIA and the Western powers, especially Belgium, Mobutu respectively eliminated the charismatic Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, in 1961, and later on he ousted the first president of the DRC, Joseph Kasa Vubu in 1965. Mobutu took over power and self-proclaimed president of the DRC on November 24, 1965. Lumumba was seen as a pro communist, and Kasa Vubu was simply considered incompetent (Waters 2009 p.67-70). Once in power, Mobutu outlawed political parties spotting them as the root of the chaotic situation the DRC had experienced until then. On May 20, 1967, Mobutu founded the only legal and unique national political party, the MPR (Malu-Malu 2002 p.158). He took complete control of the media and easily imparted his ideology, *Mobutism*, which later on turned to become like a national religion in the country. He developed the doctrine of authenticity, abolished Christian surnames, and obliged Congolese to adopt Bantus' names. His own name was changed from Joseph Désiré Mobutu to Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa za Banga (Lipschutz and Rasmussen 1989 p.275), meaning the all-conquering warrior who goes from triumph to triumph and leaves fire in his wake (Leuchak 1998 p.54).

As the wave of democratization shook the African continent, in early 1990s, Mobutu felt coined to accept multi party system in the DRC. He resigned from the presidency of the MPR but continued to serve as the president of the state (Lumumba-Kasongo 1998 p.44). He was overthrown on May 17, 1997 by AFDL rebel forces led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, and died in exile in Morocco on September 07, 1997 (Mahncke et al 2004 p.322; Waters 2009 p.173).

## 2.2 Laurent-Désiré Kabila

He was born in Likasi, on November 27, 1939, in the Southern part of the DRC (Kisangani and Bobb 2010 p.251). Kabila studied political philosophy in France, and was a heavily indoctrinated communist who, for many years, battled against Mobutu's regime. Inspired by Marxist ideology, Kabila had a fervent dream of transforming the DRC into a Chinese-style society (Ugarizza 2007 p.25-27).

Supported by Western countries, the United States in particular, Kabila's rebel faction, the AFDL, teamed up with Rwandan and Ugandan's army, and launched an offensive that overthrew Mobutu on May 17, 1997 (Clark 2002 p.57-58). Very affectionate with terms like: our Congo, sovereignty, nationalist, and like his role model, Patrice Lumumba, Kabila in many occasions, spoke bluntly (Malu-Malu 2002 p.212). The diplomatic formulas were not his strong side. He monopolized power by obstructing opposition from operating plausibly in a serene environment. Soon, his favoritism towards his Rwanda allies, in the governance of the DRC, tarnished his relationship with his fellow Congolese. Many accused him of letting the Eastern part of the DRC to neighboring Rwanda (Haskin 2005 p.82; Kisangani and Bobb 2010 p.84). In order to polish his relation with his people, Kabila felt forced to expel his Rwandan partners. Hence breaking, among others, the famous *Lemera agreements* he sealed with his partners. The breaking of this accord, which had promised Rwanda tremendous rewards from the DRC's resources (Ngoy 2007 p.40; Sindjoun 2002 p.48, p.70), ignited hostilities between the DRC and Rwanda that lasted for many months. Kabila was murdered by one of his bodyguard, Rashidi Mizele, on January 16, 2001 (Turner 2007 p.193; Clark 2002 p.88), leaving in power a controversial son, Joseph Kabila, whom many Congolese consider as a marionette leader manipulated by both Rwanda and the USA (Stearns 2011 p.87).

## 3 Empirical Analysis

According to Joseph's theory, the upheavals in most of African countries in the 1990s can be referred to as the second independence. This claim can be seen as true since most African countries that have had their resources looted by colonial powers before the 1960s era, have still been exploited by independent governments that have succeeded the colonial leadership. With most African countries embracing multiparty politics in the late 80s, there have been changes of power from the old guard of the 1960s to a new crop of new African leaders. Unfortunately these leaders fail the electorate by perpetuating the same old tactics of stealing from the public coffers. Consequently, most African citizens have been confined into living in deplorable situations as most of their resources benefit only a few individuals who cling on to power, become *dictator perpetuo*, and will not relent, unless they are forcefully removed or die in power (Joseph 1991 p. 363). It is evident to notify that from 1963 to 1990 Africa has experimented approximately eighty attempted coup. This is equivalent to almost three attempted coup per year (Segui 1998 p.149).

The feigned conversion's theory that this research has traced by showing how both Mobutu and Kabila short-circuited democratic reforms in the DRC, is delineated and measured in some subtopics inspired by Joseph (1998 p.3). In Joseph's theory, the most effective instrument aiming to dislodging authoritarian rulers in the French-speaking Africa after 1989 in the hope of effectively stepping towards democratization was the sovereign national conference (1991 p.375).

### 3.1 The national sovereign conference

Following the example of many African countries that have introduced the process of democratization by a national conference, the Congolese regime decided also to taste the same experience.

With *perestroika* and *glasnost* shaking the international politics at the end of the 1980s (Nelson 1995 p.80), and aware of the changes in the policies of international development assistance that became keen to promote good governance and respect for human rights in developing countries, Mobutu realized that his role as the West's fortress against the spread of communism in Central Africa was expiring. The *Panem et circenses* time has indeed gulped as Congolese became fiercely aware of the deplorable governance of their nation. Furthermore, the execution of his political friend, Nicolae Ceausescu, in Romania, due to the same high demand of democracy, was evidently a shocking event that promptly



pressed Mobutu to accept engaging the DRC in the process of democratization. In January 1990, Mobutu launched the project of a great national debate in which his people had to express their views regarding the DRC's political institutions, and share their opinions on how the development of the DRC should be handled (Lumumba-Kasongo 1998 p.45).

The Congolese National Sovereign Conference opened August 7, 1991 at the Palais du Peuple in Kinshasa and was chaired by Prime Minister Crispin Mulumba Lukoji (Pongo 2001 p.26). Nearly 2842 delegates from registered political parties, the Congolese civil society, the Congolese army, and even delegates from the presidency took part in this conference (Nzongola-Ntalaje 2004 p.9; Winsome 1993 p.172-173). Few weeks later on, the Archbishop of Kisangani and President of the CEZ, Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, was appointed as the chairperson of the National Sovereign Conference and the HCR-PT in order to lead the conference (Nzongola-Ntalaja and Lee 1997 p.18). However, in January 1992, under Mobutu's instructions, Prime Minister Nguz-a-karl-i-bond suspended the National Sovereign Conference. This led to mass mobilization and protests. The most remarkable demonstration was la marche des chretiens, held on February 16, 1992. It was a great demonstration of all the religious group of the DRC in a common public demonstration, in Kinshasa, to demand the reopening of the National Sovereign Conference (Nzongola-Ntalaja and Lee 1997 p.61). Mobutu's regime felt once more cornered and was forced to reopen the CNS on 6 April 1992. Etienne Tshisekedi was elected Prime Minister of the transitional government, on 14 August 1992, in order to lead the country towards elections. This conference ended on December 6, 1992, having established a transitional constitution, a transitional government, the High Council of the Republic, and the Electoral Council. Besides, The CNS drafted even a constitution and an electoral calendar (Malu-Malu 2002 p.197-198). The Conference had a purpose of bringing all Congolese together in order to discuss and analyze the situation of the country, and find out relevant solutions to the terrifying and destructive political and socio-economic situation the DRC was plunged in. This goal was successfully achieved and was settled through the resolutions and achievements of the national sovereign conference. However, President Mobutu Sese Seko succeeded in negating true power exchange, consequently and significantly delaying the process of democratization in the DRC (Joseph 1991 p.375). He resisted the expected changes. He formed a parallel government so he could cause chaos and have the legit government on his side. Mobutu successively used three different Prime Ministers within only six weeks, from October 16, 1991 to November 25, 1991; respectively, Etienne Tshisekedi, Mungul Diaka, and Nguz-a-Karl-I-Bond (Kabambi 1998). He therefore derailed the reforms process and was reinstated as the president of the country. As emphasizes by leaders' conversion theory, Mobutu further played a role in preventing the elections from taking place so he could not compromise his power. In this, the necessary decisions opted and amended by the CNS were not applied for implementing democracy as expected by the entire DRC.

After five years of unproductive constitutional debates and redesigning of the opposition's structure, the Congolese political class seemed to be discredited by

the people of the DRC. As President Mobutu nursed a cancer in the prostate, in Switzerland, a rebellion broke out in the Eastern part of the DRC. Kabila was the leader of this movement.

Once in power after self proclaiming the new president of the DRC, Kabila simply suspend and eradicate the decisions and measures that were democratically adopted by the Congolese people through their representative in the CNS. Besides, Kabila dissolved the High Council of the Republic Transitional Parliament, and implemented his own theoretical plans and strategies (Malu-Malu 2002 p.222). This interruption was evidently an early sign of an authoritarian leadership of the new Congolese leader as seen in Joseph claims. This was eventually in order to avoid democratic elections within short, so to enable him to hold on in power as long as possible.

## 3.2 Rulership by a single political party

In the African context, the single party was viewed as a mean of promoting national integration, while the multi-party system was perceived as a set of disintegrating national unity (Venter and Johnston 1991 p.161). In many African countries, the institutionalization of the single party was legalized through the constitution.

### 3.2.1 The MPR as a national political party

Joseph outlawed the mono party system, and requires its termination in order to open the ruling system for democratization (1991 p. 364). Democracy emphasizes free election whereby many political parties deliberately challenge each other. According to Mobutu's political ideology, *le mobutism*, the MPR was not a unique political party, but instead a national political party. The basic tenet was to avoid opposition and opt for juxtaposition in order to enable Congolese to solve the problem of their nation under the same political platform. However, due to both internal and external pressure, Mobutu felt coined to reintroduce the multiparty system in the DRC (Nelson 1995 p.80). This led the Congolese people to believe that he had finally accepted to drop the national political party and open for a balanced system in which opposing political parties would operate plausibly as democratic trends request. Nevertheless, the MPR still remained the most powerful political entity. Mobutu empowered his MPR by systematically corrupting many emerging political parties. This resulted in the upcoming of FPC, also known as *mouvance présidentielle*. The FPC was indeed a coalition of many political parties loyal and supportive to Mobutu's MPR. This coalition was structured in order to challenge the opposition block called *Union Sacrée de*

*l'opposition* (Ngbanda 1998 p.146; Pongo 2001, p.26). The *abertura*, or Africa's political opening, as outlined by Joseph (1998 p.3), was systematically hindered and unbalanced. Mobutu's MPR remained strong while the opposition's efforts towards a democratic leadership were weakened and shaded (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007 p.188).

Some months after Mobutu has introduced multiparty system in the DRC, the Congolese political sphere accounted close to one hundred and thirty political parties in the opposition. UDPS, UFERI, and PDSC were the most influential. However, affiliations were relatively unreliable and not trustworthy within this alliance. Members shifted regularly from one party to join other parties within the opposition's block. To some extent, opposition members or an entire political party could shift to join Mobutu's *mouvance présidentielle*. This was the case of UFERI in 1994 (Balagizi 2000 p.11). Hence, as emphasized by Balagizi, the Congolese opponents have tangibly proved their lack of public interests. They privileged their own selfishness, in accepting to ally with the dictator, provided that they personally gain materials and financial means from Mobutu's regime (2000 p.11). *Divide et impera* has proved to be a successful tactic used by Mobutu in order to weaken the raise of strong coalition against his leadership.

Furthermore, in order to make his MPR an absolute leading national political party, Mobutu created a psychological climate of constant fear among his proponents. He demobilized, decentralized, and even closed some universities to prevent further formation of larger and influential political parties that could emerge to challenge his MPR (Lumumba-Kasongo 1998, p.47). To some extent, Mobutu resolved to the massacre of university's students. The most tragic was the one perpetrated on May 12, 1990 at the campus of the University of Lubumbashi in the actual Katanga province (Nelson 1995 p.80).

### 3.2.2 The AFDL as the sole authorized political party

Kabila outlined all aspects regarding political party affiliation in order to strengthen his power base. Under Kabila's regime, the freedom to join any political party other than the AFDL was simply abolished. Kabila's AFDL was institutionalized as the only legal political party in the DRC's political realm. The political parties of the opposition were officially banned. In a national communiqué, Kabila's interior Minister Mwenze Kongolo, made public the prohibition of all activities of opposition political parties, and anticipated even the banning of wearing in public distinctive signs of other political parties like: badges, hats and various inscriptions (Tochalo 2009 p.98). As highlighted by Joseph, in order to strengthen their political assets, authoritarian leaders squeeze and minimize freedoms of their citizens (1991 p.366). This visible autocratic behavior paved the way for empowering Kabila's political party, the AFDL as the sole legal political party in the DRC.

Not only Kabila obstructed opposing political parties and showed no compatibility to their existence, in some cases, Kabila incarcerated and expelled

even leaders of these parties. UDPS charismatic chairman, Etienne Tshisekedi, was forcibly relegated to his native remote village of Kabeya-Kamwanga. Tshisekedi was given a tractor, some soy seeds, and was told to put his leadership's skills to the service of the DRC's agriculture sector. PALU's veteran leader, Antoine Gizenga, underwent also humiliating threats from Kabila's regime (Haskin 2005 p.83; Kisangani and Bobb 2010 p.141; Stearns 2011 p.169). By suspending the activities of the opposition and other political parties, by repressing opposition leaders and members of their political parties, the unspoken ambitions of Kabila was to discourage and threaten his opponents, mainly the UDPS. As a result of that deplorable repression, Kabila managed to isolate opposition's leadership; consequently, making them politically absent and unpopular both domestically and internationally. This concentration of power in Kabila's hand was accompanied by the institutionalization of his unique political party, AFDL, as the sole political party during his reign.

### 3.3 Power consolidation through neopatrimonialism

Mobutu was aware that his time was running out and the democratic election was not the best option for him. In order to trustfully guarantee his personal security, he consistently tried to maximize and consolidate his power by making use of neopatrimonialism, nepotism and cronyism as some major parts of the engine of his system. Mobutu mitigated the emergency of democracy by surrounding his leadership with close friends and relatives (Renton et al 2007 p.120-125).

To be promoted as a high ranked officer in the judiciary functions, and other key governmental positions like the defense, interior security, diplomacy, and finance, depended on the degree of militancy a person had within the MPR (Pongo 2001 p.16-17). These positions were placed under direct control of the president through the most loyal to him, basically close friends and family members. As a fervent adept of nepotism, his power obsession led him to disorganize, privatize, and tribalize the army by enhancing some security guards like the DSP, SARM, and GACI. Each one headed either by generals of his Ngbandi tribe or simply by his close relatives. These three security organs were respectively under meticulous control of General Nzimbi Ngbale Kongo wa Bassa (Mobutu's cousin), Bolozi Gbudu Tankiparna (Mobutu's brother in law), and Baramoto Kpama Kata (Mobutu's brother in law). Mobutu's DSP, in particular, was exclusively constituted of Mobutu's Ngbandi soldiers (Stearns 2011 p.155; Pongo 2001 p.216-217).

Furthermore, the omnipotence of the president comes naturally from the denial of human rights, which often results in violence. The interference of the executive in the judiciary has led to impunity because justice was not an independent authority longer. In these setbacks, even the president's progeny, Kongulu Mobutu, became a terrifying figure under this period of transition to democracy (Malu-Malu 2002 p.235).

A systematization of insecurity known as *Hibou*, was also experienced, mostly in Kinshasa. These night raids patrol operated in vehicles driven by gun and masked men harassing and kidnapping people sow a constant climate of fear in the capital. This has enabled the president to suffocate all possible senses of freedom and to extend his days in power as he attenuated the expansion of the expected democratization (Mwayila 2000 p.65). He has, hence, ruled out basic civil liberties that are central values in a democratic system as Joseph highlights (1991 p.375).

Kabila in his loyalty towards his Rwandese partners provided to them many key positions in his government. The most illustrative are James Kabarebe: Kabila's army chief of Staff, Deogracias Bugera as secretary of AFDL, Moise Nyarugabo, Azarias Ruberwa, Bizima Kahara as Kabila's foreign minister (Nzongola-Ntalaje 2004 p.14; Gondola 2002 p.169), his son, Joseph Kabila, the actual DRC's president, and his cousin Mwenze Kongolo as the minister of interior, hold key positions not only to secure Kabila long lasting leadership, but even in order to tackle democratic reforms to take place in the DRC. In her book titled *l'enjeu Congolais: l'Afrique centrale après Mobutu*, Belgian renowned journalist, Colette Braeckman, highlights the clientele tactics and behavior of Kabila, as she postulated that: "Kabila managed state's financial means very personally in order to fulfill his personal agendas" (1999 p.319). Kabila's misappropriation is also seen by his incompetence to manage state's investment contracts. The case of the deal signed with the AMFI turned to become his personal lucrative activities and private requisites (Basedeau and Mehler 2005 p.156).

### 3.4 Piecemeal reforms in a co-opted transition

Joseph pointed out constitutional changes leading to free and competitive elections as the most significant change expected to open up for the democratization in the African context (Joseph 1998 p.3). Mobutu promised tremendous changes in order to restore and improve the destructed social, economical and political tissues of the DRC. In reality this has, within time, shown to be only empty promises and robbed reforms of real bite. Nevertheless, in pretention to act as willing to impart democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mobutu allowed some insignificant liberation which had no influence in the context of the true democratic reforms awaited in the country. Apart from granting Congolese the right to adhere to a political party of their choice, Mobutu granted even men the freedom to wear ties and suits, and women got also their freedom to put on like democratic countries' women do. All these freedom were banned before this historical speech held on April 24 1990. Denomination within government sectors have also changed: the First State Commissioner and Commissioners of State became Prime Minister and ministers. Legislative council and the commissioners of the people become the National Assembly and

Honorable Members of parliaments, as it is in several democratic countries (Sese Seko 1990 04 24).

Kabila renaming the country Democratic Republic of Congo was, for many Congolese, a great sign of his commitment to guide the country objectively towards the greener pasture of democracy. Zaire became the Democratic Republic of Congo (Nzongola-Ntalaje 2004 p.5). In pursuing his piecemeal reforms, Kabila changed the name of the national air transport's company, and changed even the country's currency. Air Zaire became Hewa Bora, the name of his native village, and Mobutu's currency, Zaire, was replaced by the newly adopted currency called Congolese franc. He brought back the old national anthem, *debout Congolais*, and erased the Mobutu's version: *la Zairoise* (Bisanswa 2010 p.80).

### 3.5 The media and the constitution in a guided transition

The people are the engine of any idea of democracy. The respect for their rights is the sine-qua-non condition of the democratization process (Freeman 2011 p.77). The concentration of political power in the hands of these two mighty leaders made them simultaneously dominate the executive, the legislative and the judiciary power. This including high control of media bodies in order to obstruct relevant and trustworthy information from attaining the people. The adjustment of the constitution for derailing any susceptible theories for a sustainable and efficient democratization of the DRC was another prevailing obstacle. Constitutionalism plays a leading role in the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. This is to entrench significant sorts of freedoms, civil rights, political rights, and enhance the rules applied in the constitutions of each state. The motive to this is in order to ensure compliance by making them amendable to legal institutions established by the constitution (Morin 1999 p.11).

During his term in power, Kabila deliberately shaded the media and human rights organizations rather than letting them operating freely in a plausible environment. Human rights organizations were suspended; their leaders fled the DRC, or ended up in prisons. Journalists were intimidated and arrested. Within the first few months of Kabila's regime at least twelve human rights advocates were arrested and questioned for criticizing Kabila's regime. Even nongovernmental leaders were arrested, warned, molested or banned for criticizing the regime and its institutions (Stearns 2011 p.169-170).

Besides that, Kabila tempered with the DRC's constitution. He tactically amended and modified the DRC's constitution so that it would buy him more power and more time in power while delaying the process of democratization (Nzongola-Ntalaje 2002 p.1). Kabila could not stand the idea of his leadership being questioned. He therefore wanted a new constitution to be structured

whereby elections have to be held under his meticulous control in order to enhance him with some scale of legitimacy (Furley and May 2006 p.101).

There is need to recognize that Mobutu has significantly loosen tight on Media restrictions after his national speech held on April 24, 1990. Mobutu and his MPR could openly be criticized on public debates held on TV and radio. The opposition News papers could even draw Mobutu in caricature and write sensitive articles on Mobutu without receiving any reprimand from the regime. Even human rights activists got some freedom to openly criticize Mobutu's repressive regime. Non-governmental organizations have flourished within the DRC without receiving open threats from Mobutu's regime (Stearns 2011 p.169). Indeed the Media has seen a blink of light toward a freedom of press as it is in the democratic countries.

The constitution is a mean of regulating and limiting the power of leaders in order to guarantee the freedom of the people. To pave the way for democracy, the constitution of the DRC was to be amended in order to enable reforms leading to competitive elections (Joseph 1998 p.3). However, under Mobutu's regime, the constitution was drafted for the sole purpose of perpetuating the power of the head of state by reducing the fundamental freedoms of citizens. Mobutu was to be stripped of his executive power, although he was still to be allowed to be in power for some more times (Nzongola-Ntalaje 2002 p.1). Controversially, fundamental texts of the nation have instead attributed to Mobutu, both legislative and executive power to such an extend that he was not only the head of the Congolese state, but he still remained at the same time the master and the head of the government, and the head of the armed forces. He appointed and dismissed members of government, ambassadors, senior military officers, senior leader in the public sector, governors, and others (Kisangani and Bobb 2010 p.467).

### 3.6 External involvement in domestic political realm

The history of the DRC is that of civil unrest, dictatorial leadership and vested foreign interests in domestic politics. To extend a more open discussion in this thesis, it ought to outline external involvement in the Congolese domestic affairs. This aspect has more or less been a potential element beyond Mobutu and Kabila's autocratic leadership and control, but that has also significantly impacted the democratization of the DRC under the chosen period in this investigation.

A balance of power beyond a country's borders determines the chances of the democratization of this country (Rueschemeyer et al 1992 p.7). It is therefore evident to acknowledge the role of external actors in either favoring or impending the democratization of a given country. The impact of external forces may evidently affect results of the process of democratization. The African case in

general, and the DRC's in particular, when cautiously examined, should considerably contribute to one's understanding on how, when, and why democratic systems have been inflicted, facilitated, obstructed, or handled with benign neglect by external actors. Dahl pointed out that "dictators and oligarchs are not easily beguiled by foreign assistance into destroying their regimes" (1971 p.12). In the beginning of the 1990s, as local citizens consistently opted for a democratic transition, they evenly seldom decided to initiate political reforms independently. However, as emphasized by Joseph, there was a dynamic interplay between external and local forces that determined particular results along a range, from renewed authoritarianism to different degrees of liberalization and democratization (1991 p.370-371).

### 3.6.1 The influence of Western countries

The colonial legacy initiated by the European scramble for Africa has established a dissident African politics and continues to shape the future of Africa (Gordon and Gordon 2007 p.60). The indirect effects of colonialism on African political institutions like democracy still linger on. Coradetti explains that Africa's main challenge to a successful transition to democracy must be seen as a side effect of colonialism. He emphasizes that colonial power left many African states with system of authoritarian values and norms which has weakened the public administration that would have been essential for effective democracy-building (2012 p.255). These sequels have been spotted both under Mobutu and Kabila's authoritarian leadership, whereby people had insignificant power in the ruling process of the DRC (Joseph 1991 p.366).

At the end of the Cold War, international financial agencies demonstrated great impact in the early stage of the democratization of the DRC. These influential donors aimed at redesigning their policy in order to restructure the ruling systems in the Third World, and promote democracy. Paradoxically, that seemed to have led to some machinations and manipulation by local political actors. Staged elections with falsified and predetermined results, have even been reported (Whitehead 1996 p.45). Ngbanda claims that most of the foreign interventions in the domestic political reforms of the DRC have been hypocritical in nature. Foreign actors pretended to promote democracy in the DRC, but in real sense, they fuel civil unrest so as to create conducive environments that open rooms and facilities for them to exploit massive natural resources of the DRC. This has been seen by many Western countries' Multinational Corporations, mainly from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium (1998 p.74; Tochado 2009 p.123). The climate of hostilities created by these foreign forces had weakened the political stability, and created an unbalanced structure in the good governance of the DRC (Ngbanda 1998 p.88). This has evidently distorted the process of democratization in the DRC under the leadership of Mobutu and Kabila.



### 3.6.2 The impact emerging from the African Great Lakes region

The political map that Africa inherited from the Berlin conference has created huge differences among various African countries in their potentials for nation-building, economic development, ethnicity, and political stability (Gordon and Gordon 2007 p.60-61). Some countries were too big and too disproportional for their neighbors, and some ethnicity which are intolerable to each other were constraint to cohabit. This has, in long term, led to remarkable unrest and political instability both within and around these particular countries.

The political instability in the Great Lakes region of Africa has negatively influenced the democratization of the DRC. Involvement of neighboring countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and Angola in the DRC's internal system, have certainly weakened significant attempt to the democratization of the DRC.

The Rwanda Genocide is perhaps the genocide of the century. This calamity had had a lot of impacts on the democratization of the DRC (Ngbanda 1998 p.79-80). During this genocide, the Hutus immigrants in the DRC were very instrumental in launching attacks against Rwanda. In response to that, Rwanda paved the way and supported AFDL rebel movement that has, consequently, ousted Mobutu. This was achieved by logistic support of the United States and its allies who supported Kabila as the next leader of the DRC (Ngbanda 1998 p.130).

Neighboring Uganda got also involved with all the needed support in terms of troops and military bases. Kabila's AFDL received full backing of president Museveni. Even Burundi, Tanzania, and Angola melted in. During the reign of Mobutu, Angola was undergoing civil unrest characterized by a clash between the Angolan government led by president Eduardo Dos Santos, against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola led by Jonas Savimbi. Hence, the Angolan regime found a prejudice of fuelling hostilities in the DRC in order to overthrow Mobutu's regime (Ngbanda 1998 p.207). This external affluence deactivated and destroyed any possible path leading to the democratization of the DRC (Clark 2002.p.146). Kabila came into power with a promise of spearheading democracy in the DRC. Though he had his weaknesses in enhancing democracy, external influence also contributed a lot in the inhibition of democracy in the DRC.

## 4 Analysis and Discussion

In May 1997, the defeat of Mobutu ousted by an army framed to be of children soldiers, but in reality backed up by the mighty America (Ngbanda 1998 p.120-121), was extolled by the large majority of Congolese. It was a relief and a victory against a well structured kleptocratic regime ingrained for decades. Criticism had reached such a crescendo that most Congolese would have not even acquiesced in any probable Mobutu's mea culpa. Mobutu left as the entire DRC hoped to see in Kabila the trends of a revered democratic leader.

However, the expected democratic transition turned instead to be a dictatorial transition (Kabuya 1998 p.44). Indeed Mobutu and Kabila, as two perpetual dictators, had many similarities in their respective leadership. Once in power, Kabila began to display mobutist tendencies, including misappropriation of public funds, oppressing the opposition, tribalism, regionalism, cronyism, and nepotism of the state apparatuses (Afoaku 1999). Neither Mobutu nor Kabila was close to deserve the mandate of heaven.

Both Mobutu and Kabila set back the democratic result provided by the national conference sovereign and obstructed the opposition. On one hand Mobutu had his warhorse, the MPR. This intransigence as a strategic option with a single powerful ruling political party was also adopted by Kabila, who on the other side had his AFLD. Like Mobutu's MPR, the AFDL means the most powerful political party within the Congolese political sphere. The idea of holding on to power as long as possible has even haunted Kabila as much as it was for Mobutu: no room for free and democratic elections.

Both Mobutu and Kabila gave promises and hope of sharing power and implement significant reforms in order to impart democracy. However, they lured with ineffective and insignificant changes that were far from being suitable in the expected context of democratizing the DRC. Indeed many changes have occurred without efficiently changing or improving anything in the structure of the ruling system. Both Mobutu and Kabila adopted a system of patronage and surrounded their key positions with corrupted close friends and family members in order to secure and consolidate their respective powers.

Despite the fact that Mobutu and Kabila were both authoritarian leaders and shared a number of similarities in the way they ruled the DRC, it is however, noticeable that each one had also his particular characteristics in his leadership. As it can be deduced from the previous lines of this investigation, diplomacy is a major characteristic that distinguishes these two leaders. Mobutu was a tactical manipulator who, like a skilful diplomat, handled political situations with both soft and hard power. He ironically allowed other political parties to be operational within the DRC, but he tactically fought them with bribery, corruption, secret assassination and kidnapping. Even tough the civil society, mainly human right's

activists and non-governmental organizations were granted sufficient freedom of the press, Mobutu still had the media under his control. Besides, Mobutu constantly wrangled with all democratic tendencies that was put in place and attempted to draft a new constitution in order to oversee the organization of elections (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997 p.120). Kabila, on the other side had no diplomatic and any cover up tactical strategies whatsoever. He acted openly to eradicate individuals, institutions, organizations, or event that he perceived as a disturbance to the fundamental orthodoxy of his leadership.

## 5 Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to explain the unsuccessful democratic transition in the Democratic Republic of Congo under the leadership of Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent-Désiré Kabila, from 1990 to 2001, by using the leader's conversion theory of Joseph. Prior to conducting this investigation, my pre-understanding was that the unsuccessful democratization of the Democratic Republic of Congo was a result of a military culture in the leadership of this country, which was a significant impediment to the creation of credible democratic institutions. However this research has elucidated more avenues over my assumption.

I can summarize this investigation and conclude that poor and lack of efficient leadership's skills that resulted from selfish ambitions of Mobutu and Kabila has been a basic impediment to democracy and a key element to the failed democratization of the Democratic Republic of Congo. I therefore consent that Joseph's leader's conversion theory has successfully explained the failed democratization of the Democratic Republic of Congo. This was achieved with the fact that the using of Joseph's theory has enabled this research to demonstrate and explain how both presidents feigned conversion toward democratic reform, but short circuited actual reforms by denying legitimate actions such as competitive elections. Instead they monopolized power, sidestepped the democratic reforms of institutions, manipulated the media, and amended the constitution to suit their prerequisite leadership.

Though the national sovereign conference was undoubtedly a real democratic trial for the Democratic Republic of Congo, and despite the fact that this conference ended up having drafted a democratic transitional constitution and an electoral calendar, nor Mobutu neither Kabila resolved to apply the outcome of this conference. Instead, as emphasized by Joseph's feign conversion theory, the conference was simply accepted in pretention to impart democracy, but in reality the leadership kept the nation's democratic reform efforts from coming to fruition. They denied all the worthy progress structured by the conference towards a free and fair multiparty and competitive election.

Moreover, the concentration of power within a single political party and the consolidation of the two leaders' respective power through neopatrimonialism are seen as defections against the expected democratization of the DRC. Under the lenses of Joseph's theory, the acceptance of multiparty system, during Mobutu's leadership, was simply a cover up to embark the DRC towards democratization. In reality, other political institutions were systematically demystified. They could not be operational according to democratic norms and values, as power was indeed monopolized within a single political party.

In understanding Joseph's assumption, this investigation has discovered that some liberalization made by Mobutu like the freedom of the press, freedom to

wear any type of garment, freedom to adhere any political party, and the changing of some appellations done by Kabila, like converting the country's name from Zaire to the Democratic Republic of Congo were simply pure malignance and tactical pretention to lure the Congolese people towards democratization. They both mostly succeeded in manipulating the media and amending the country's constitution in order to suit their everlasting leadership's prerequisites. Consequently, the use of Joseph leader's conversion theory led this research to discover how the Congolese leadership's goal was to control the transition in order to maintain the status quo, preserve their interests and dominion, but not to allow the democratization of the DRC. The two leaders strategically and tactically kept the DRC far from the expected democratization, which could have been a significant turning point towards the development of this country, considering the enormous potentiality in terms of natural resources that this country possesses. The use of Joseph's feigned conversion theory has enabled this thesis to find reliable explanations which cover considerable aspects behind the context of a failed democratization in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The theoretical model and the analytical tools in this thesis have succeeded in describing the flaws of these two leaders, which has led this investigation to a reasonable inference and explanation approaches.

However, one would most likely err if he or she has to point out the DRC's unsuccessful democratization exclusively in the sole leadership of Mobutu and Kabila. It is credential to outline the existence of external involvement in the Congolese domestic affairs. The West implication through neocolonialist tactics in the DRC has not opened ways for democratic leadership. The massive flow of refugees from Rwanda to the DRC that resulted from the Rwandan genocide has created an unbalanced demographic trend in the Eastern part of the DRC. This has obstructed possible attempts to democratization as it favored the infiltration of Rwandese militia who, later on, ignited some hostilities that has created a climate of insecurity and instability in the DRC. These facts have been beyond Mobutu and Kabila's power, control and pretention, but have indeed negatively contributed to fail the democratization of the DRC. Joseph leader's conversion's theory presents, therefore, some shortcomings for a broader explanation of the mechanisms behind the failed democratization of the DRC. How external forces have influenced the internal Congolese political realm and obstructed the process of democratization in the Democratic Republic of Congo cannot be explained by Joseph's feigned conversion theory.

The exploration of politics and policy is a quest without end (Friedrich1967 p.6). As the feigned conversion has shed more light, and based on the observations updated on this research, further research can be made on the results realized above. Besides, a more detailed approach can be used for collecting information from those who experienced some of the Congolese democratic problems in order to see if it may lead to the possibility of stretching for an empirical theory.

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