CONSUMING DEMOCRACY

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Consuming democracy

Local agencies & liberal peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Acronyms

AFDL	Alliance des Forces Démocratiques de Libération
AMP	Alliance pour la Majorité Présidentielle
AWEPA	Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa
BdK	Bunda dia Kongo
CAF	Country Assistance Framework
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEP	Centre des Etudes Politiques / Centre for Political Studies
CIAT	Comité International d'Appui au Transition
CNDP	Congres National pour la Défense du Peuple
CNS	Conférence National Souveraine/ National Sovereign Conference
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc.
DDR	Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EISA	Electoral Institute Southern Africa
EU	European Union
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FDLR	Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération de Rwanda
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJP	Institut pour la Justice et Paix
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
MLC	Mouvement de Libération du Congo
MP	Member of Parliament
MONUC	Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo
MPR	Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAJ	Politique, Administrative et Juridique (Parliamentary Committee)
PALU	Parti Lumumbiste Unifié
PPRD	Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie
PRGSP	Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie
RCD-Goma	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie - Goma
RCD-K/ML	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie – Kisangani/ Mouvement de Libération
RCD-N	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie - National
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UDEMO	Union des Démocrates Mobutistes
UDPS	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UpN	Union pour la Nation / Union for the Nation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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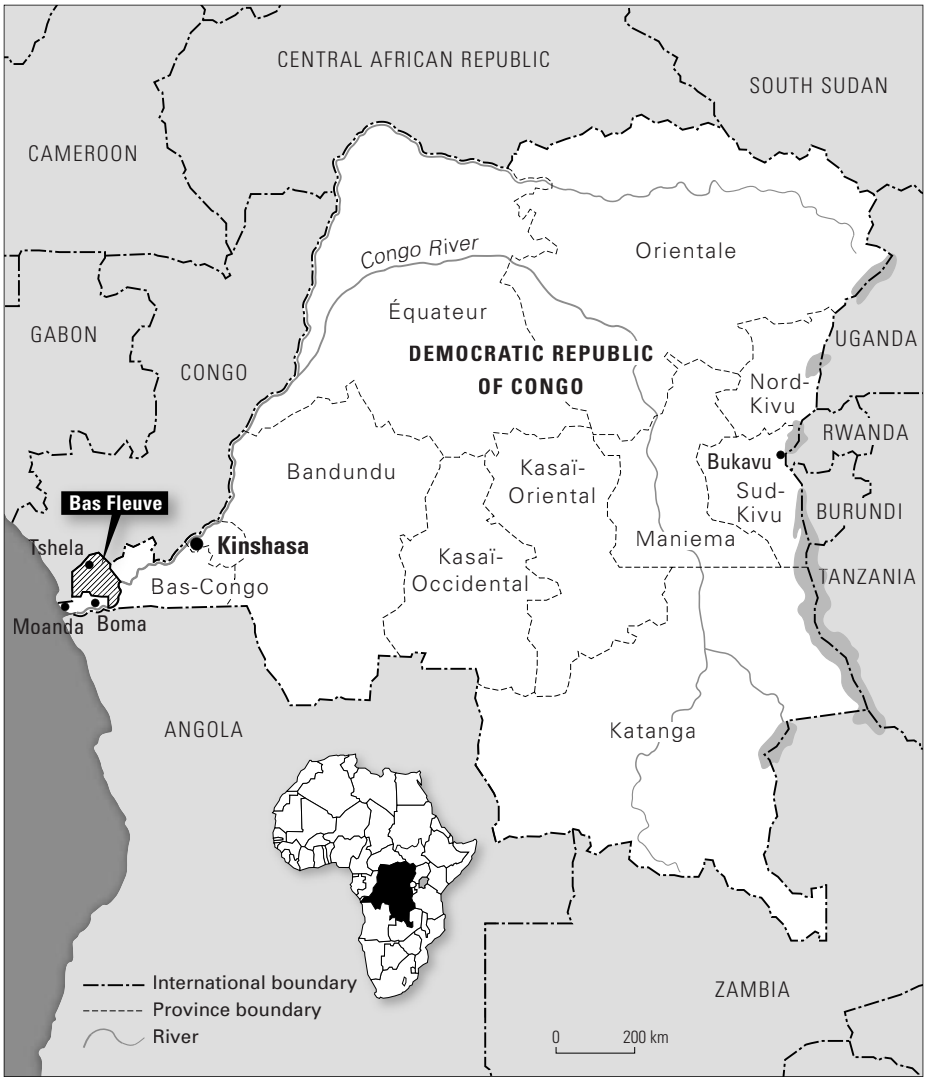
Abstract

This thesis focuses on liberal peace building in the DRC. The thesis takes a critical approach which emphasises local agencies and their engagements with liberal peace building. However, it seeks to bring this critique back to the institutions with which liberal peace building is preoccupied, by focusing on the hidden local that operates within these institutions. This approach seeks to give new meaning to processes of institution building without rendering institutions irrelevant as a top-down approach.

Focusing on the first legislature of the Congolese Third Republic (2006-2011) this thesis provides a case study of how local agencies consume liberal democracy within the National Assembly, and make it their own. It discusses current liberal peace building practices as a process of mutual disengagement, in which both the local and liberal intervention seek to disengage from each other. Although this results in a lack of legitimacy of the peace building project both locally as well as with liberal interventions, it also creates hybrid space in which local agencies consume liberal democracy.

The thesis conceptualises these local agencies as being convivial, in other words, they are enabled by people's relations. The thesis therefore focuses on MPs relations with their electorate, as well as with the executive and other MPs in their party or ruling coalition. In through these interactions local agencies consume liberal democracy – it is accepted, rejected, diverted, substituted, etc. The thesis concludes that through these practices of consumption local agencies negotiate liberal democracy. The liberal democratic framework is kept intact, but it is not enabled to function as foreseen, because local agencies are responsive to a moral matrix of the father-family. However, the liberal democratic framework itself provides new tools through which local agencies also renegotiate the unwritten rules of the moral matrix of the father-family.

Map 1.1 Democratic Republic of Congo



1

Introduction

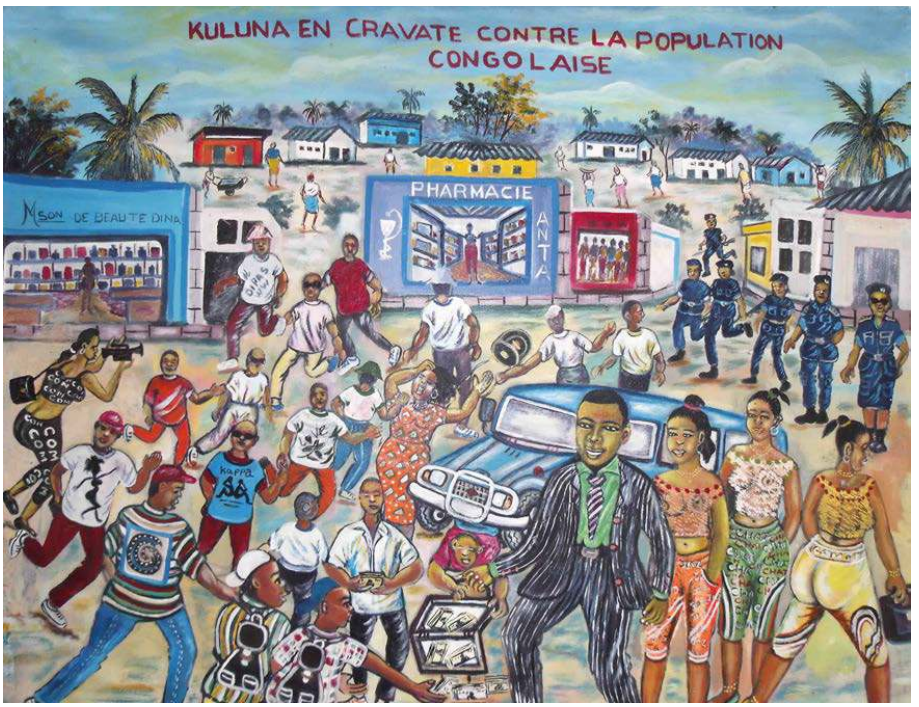


Photo 1 "Gangsters in a tie against the Congolese population", by Pepe Mpunga, 2011 *– author's picture 2011*

This thesis is about democratisation as a central pillar of liberal peace building in the Congo and focuses on Parliament and parliamentarians in this process. The picture above captures many of the themes that will be discussed in the chapters that follow: that of the interaction between Members of Parliament (MPs) and

their electorate, the self-perception and popular perception of MPs in the Congo, and the roles of MPs as providers that redistribute. The picture shows a painting made by a popular artist from Kinshasa that criticises MPs and by extension Parliament as an institution. When I bought it the painter explained to me what he intended to express by this image. '*Kuluna en cravate*' is a reference to MPs used by Kinois and refers to the recent phenomenon of *Kuluna*, violent and thieving youth gangs. The MP is a *Kuluna* in a tie (*cravate*). He gives money to some people. He has three ladies by his side, 'because he is very rich', and the media is present to record his well doing and expose the MP as a provider for the people. But the painter also expressed a critical reflection on these practices by mockingly referring to the MP as a *Kuluna* in a tie. Although the MP appears to do something for the people, he has in fact stolen his wealth from the people and he is acting against them (*contre la population congolaise*).[1]

Liberal peace building in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Liberal peace building in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, the Congo) started after the signing of the Sun City Peace Agreement (2002). The 2006 general elections marked the end of a transitional period and in November 2011 the Congolese electorate went to the ballot box to elect a President and Parliament for the second time. Until then, results of liberal peace building interventions in the Congo have been disappointing and discouraging. Nearly a decade of peace building has had a limited impact on people's daily lives. Freedom House consistently ranks the Congo as 'not free' with political rights and civil liberties marked six out of seven (one being most free and seven being the most unfree). In 2011, the country was ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world and has sunk to the bottom of the Human Development Index.[2]

During the first term of his Presidency, Kabila has firmly established his regime and taken control over the state and its institutions. This has on the one hand brought some stability after the turbulent past decades, while on the other hand it has been cause for concern. People feel that the regime is developing dictatorial tendencies. It swallows all power and leaves little space neither for the opposition nor for state institutions such as the courts or the security forces to be non-partisan. Particularly in the pre-electoral period of 2011 the Kabila regime has shown a concerning side of itself, that of violence, and intimidation, and sometimes magnificent strategies of political and electoral manipulation. Within five years after the celebration of the country's first elections as the launch of a new democratic era for the country people already speak of a return to 'Mobu-

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1 Author's conversation with artist, Kinshasa 23 July 2011.

2 www.freedomhouse.org; http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011; http://hdr.undp.org.

tism-without-Mobutu'. The country is as corrupt as ever, the state is malfunctioning and there are little signs of any improvement. The armed forces continue to be a source of insecurity to an already battered population, and poverty and human suffering aggravates instead of reduces. The liberal peace seems to have derailed and lost its momentum, right under the noses of its agents (the donor community, the international community), and with their financial support.

The liberal peace is founded on the idea that liberal market democracy fosters domestic and international peace. Political and economic liberalisation is therefore employed as a means to end and prevent violent conflict (Paris 2004, 40-42). It thus 'combines and conflates' democracy with peace. This has resulted in a project of social transformation which aims to transform dysfunctional societies into peaceful societies by including them in the liberal world order (Duffield 2001, 11). This project of social transformation comes in different graduations – conservative, orthodox, emancipatory – reflecting graduations in the balance between coercion, top-down intervention and externalisation on the one hand, and local ownership, bottom-up peace building, consensus and social justice on the other (Richmond 2005, 214-15).

Liberal peace building involves democratisation and liberal market reform (Richmond 2006, 292). This thesis is concerned with post-war democratisation in the Congo, as one of the central pillars of liberal peace building. Democratisation in liberal peace building terms prioritises a rights based approach which focuses on elections, the institutions of democratic governance, civil society building, the rule of law, and human rights. This thesis focuses on the Congolese National Parliament as a site of democratisation. Although democratisation as part of liberal peace building in the Congo only started after the signing of the 2002 peace agreement, the efforts for democratisation in the Congo date back more than 20 years. The past two decades have been extremely volatile in the Congo. In the early 1990s Mobutu's dictatorial regime crumbled and a process of political change towards democracy was launched. Since then the Congolese population has been awaiting elections, while undergoing various phases of democratisation. They were insecure and turbulent times. The democratic transition of the 1990s failed eventually and was overtaken by a civil war. The first Congolese war (1996-7) had its origins in the disintegration of the Zaïrian state, the genocide in neighbouring Rwanda followed by a security crisis in Zaïre and the inability of the Mobutu regime to respond adequately to these developments. Under these conditions of weakness of the state, the challenges posed by the crisis in neighbouring Rwanda easily spilled over to Zaïre to become a Zaïrian crisis. With support from Rwanda and Uganda, an alliance of four rebellion or opposition parties known as the *Alliance des Forces Armées pour la Libération du Congo*

(AFDL), under the leadership of Laurent-Désiré Kabila, launched a successful war against Mobutu in September 1996, accessing power on May 17 1997.

However, it was not long before the Kabila coalition fell apart. In August 1998 a new war was launched by RCD (*Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie*), a new rebel movement with the support of Rwanda, shortly followed by MLC (*Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo*), which was supported by Uganda. The Second Congolese war involved many neighbouring countries. While Uganda and Rwanda were fighting on the anti-Kabila front, Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Chad continued to support Kabila. On the side of the resistance another three movements developed in due course: RCD-K/ML (*Kisangani/Mouvement de Libération*) (also backed by Uganda) and RCD-N (*National)* split away from what now became known as RCD-Goma. In addition, the Mai Mai, groups of armed fighters that have existed since the 1960s, became involved in the war, as well as various rebel movements from neighbouring countries that were operating from in the Congo. In addition, several African countries sent their armies in support of Kabila's regime. Within a short period of time, the war had become a complex patchwork of armed rebellions and foreign armies roaming around Congo.

Although the government remained in control of the western part of the country, the country was de facto divided into several territories controlled by different belligerents. The war has never been characterised by heavy combat between the belligerents; the tragedy of the second Congolese war has rather been the plunder of the Congo's wealth by Congolese factions and neighbouring states, the extreme brutality towards the civilian population (rape, massacres) and the rise of local ethnic conflict in the context of civil war with increasing poverty and a deteriorating humanitarian situation in parts of the country.

Efforts to make an end to the second war had started almost immediately after it had broken out. The peace process started with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of July 1999 (République Démocratique du Congo 1999, Rogier 2003). Apart from heavy international pressure, the agreement was made possible because the belligerents realised that this war could not be won militarily, and they therefore sought a political solution that could bring political benefits. Some have argued that the Ceasefire Agreement was the result of opportunistic calculation of the belligerents rather than a commitment to a political settlement (Rogier 2004). The ceasefire agreement changed little on the ground, as fighting continued as before, but it was nevertheless an important step on the road to peace. Firstly, the agreement separated the internal dynamics of the conflict from the external dynamics of the conflict. The agreement was signed by Congolese belligerents (DRC government, MLC, RCD-K/ML, and RCD-G) and foreign countries involved in the war – Angola, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. It

called for the withdrawal of foreign troops and for addressing the security concerns of these neighbouring countries. The Agreement thus (intended) to deal with the regional dimensions of the conflict (Davis and Hayner 2009, 12). It took, nevertheless, another few years before foreign troops would finally leave the Congolese territory. It was only when the peace process became a reality that neighbouring countries decided to withdraw (Prunier 2009b, 285-90).

Concerning the national dimensions of the conflict, the Ceasefire Agreement called for an Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), in which belligerents, but also non-armed political opposition and civil society – *les forces vives* – were invited to participate. The inclusion of not only political parties that had not actively participated in the war, but also of civil society marked the inclusive character of the ICD. The Dialogue process was in that sense more than a peace negotiation process, and shared characteristics with a National Conference (Robinson 1994b). The Ceasefire Agreement also called for a UN Peacekeeping mission to monitor and observe the implementation of the agreement. It meant the birth of MONUC (*Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo*), a peacekeeping mission that would develop from a mere observation mission into an enormous military and civil peace building mission. The agreement may have been hardly implemented, but it did lay the fundamental foundations for a peace process.

The ICD itself was a troubled process, mainly because of obstructions the then President of the DRC, Laurent-Désiré Kabila (International Crisis Group 2000, 79-82). This all changed with the installation of Joseph Kabila as President, when his father was assassinated in January 2001. The young and politically inexperienced Joseph Kabila was eager to win legitimacy and support with the international community and the Congolese people, and sought to achieve this by restarting the preparation for the ICD. It was a difficult process, which after several failed attempts to come to an agreement resulted in the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement, known as the Sun City Agreement of December 2002 between the belligerents, political opposition and civil society actors (Apuuli 2004, 73-74, Mbata B. Mangu 2003, 164-65). By giving civil society and the international community such a prominent role in the transition process, the agreement won legitimacy as being more than an elite pact among belligerents, but rather a roadmap for the a new DRC. The transitional constitution was adopted in April 2003 and a transitional President (Joseph Kabila), transitional Government and transitional Parliament were sworn in (Mbata B. Mangu 2003, 168). Political positions were shared among the signatories according to a power sharing formula. All signatories were represented in the transitional institutions. The Accord created a Presidency structure that was both a necessity and a challenge: all 3 main belligerents and the political opposition were included in a model that has been called the "1+4" (one President and four Vice-Presidents). The general elections

of 2006 completed the post-war transition process. The elections were a landmark to end this troubled phase in Congolese history and marked a new beginning. Despite the euphoria of the successful elections– successful in the sense that they were declared free and fair, and did not trigger a relapse into war as was feared by many – it was only a first step in a process of liberal peace building.

Research problem

The query that stands at the beginning of this PhD research rose during that initial post-electoral period in 2006-7 when I was living and working in the Congo. Everybody was talking the talk of peace, democracy and development, but somehow, already early on in the post-war process, it became evident that these discourses were little more than a pretence that seemed to cover something we either did not want to see, or pretended we did not see, or perhaps we never saw at all. I am not referring to the extensive accusations and problems of corruption that hamper development projects and the rebuilding of country and state nor of the infamous interests of the international community in the Congo, both of which are often brought up as reasons for why the Congo seems to be stuck in cycles of violence and underdevelopment. What I refer to is the notion that despite the mutual talk of democracy and development, there appeared a disconnect between the international and the local engaged in these processes, and by consequence, that the labels of 'democratisation' and 'peace building' seemed inadequate and incapable to capture the ongoing processes.

To speak of peace or the liberal peace in the Congo is paradoxical considering the ongoing violent conflict in some parts of the country. The term 'peace' is seldom used by Congolese people to describe the current situation in their country. Perhaps it may not be adequately described as liberal democracy or peace, but it would be unfair to argue that nothing has changed since the signing of the peace agreement. How can we define this process, and how can we understand it without resorting to the overtly easy and cynical perspective of a return to 'Mobutism-without-Mobutu'? But if we are witnessing the installation of a new Mobutist-type regime, how is this possible to occur under the watchful eyes of the agents of the liberal peace who even largely fund this process? If the blueprints of the liberal peace cannot capture de process the Congo is currently undergoing, how can we learn to understand these local processes?

This thesis aims to explore ways to understand these processes and focuses on the National Assembly as a site of liberal peace building. The National Assembly is an important site of liberal peace building, but also a site that receives much critique for being part of the problem of the failures of democratic governance in the country. Besides its important role in the functioning of a democratic political

system, it is an interesting institution because of the importance that is given to legislative elections in democratising and post-war states. However, despite all the attention from donors, INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations) and academia for elections, democratisation and post-war institution building, there is surprisingly little academic interest in the legislature as an institution itself (with the exception of Barkan 2009b, Lindberg 2010c). The legislature in newly democratising countries is a much under-researched institution. My research will therefore also add to our understanding of an institution that is considered to be of prime importance for a new democracy, but of which functioning in the case of the Congo and other African countries we know very little.

Liberal peace building has received much criticism as a top-down elitist project. This research focuses on the National Assembly in recognition of the importance of governance institutions, while avoiding reproducing the top-down and institutionalist focus of peace building. Engaging with peace building critique that will be discussed in chapter one, this research focuses on individuals that make the institution of the National Assembly function in the way it does, and the local agencies that are hidden within. The research therefore engages with MPs and their agencies. They are agents not of the liberal peace or of any other defined process, but as agents that steer an undefined dynamic of political (re-)organisation towards an undefined objective, in the context of the liberal peace. This outcome is referred to as 'democracy' by international donors as well as local actors, but the meaning that this term democracy entails is undefined. The objected outcome thus also remains undefined.

I use a critical lens that emphasises local agencies to focus on the insights of how the processes I am interested in take shape and which hidden agencies exist beneath and next to the discourses of the liberal peace in the Congo. Being interested in these local agencies, I have chosen to focus on practices and the discursive frames that shape these practices. It is a query into local agencies in the liberal peace and asks how these local agencies 'consume' democracy – how they use it, negotiate it, manipulate it, instrumentalise it, but also reject, resist and adopt it, and make it their own. It is thus a study in the use of democracy by looking at the processes and practices of consumption, not on the 'outcome'. This is a deliberate choice both for practical and ontological reasons. On the one hand this 'outcome' has not materialised yet, and perhaps will not materialise in the near future, or perhaps at all. This study concerns the period 2006-2011, the period of the first legislature of the Third Republic. The period is labelled post-transitional because it followed the transition period (2003-6) but it is in fact anything but 'post'-transitional. It is itself a period of transition, a time of instability, uncertainty and quest towards re-establishing the political. It is inadequate to speak of 'democracy' as if it is (semi-)stable and thus possible to analyse it as a

phenomenon. Instead, we should recognise the instability of the political situation, the practices of which I seek to analyse. On the other hand, it is an ontological necessity to focus on process and practices instead of outcome. Any 'outcome' that may or may not occur in the DRC at some stage can only be meaningfully understood through understanding political practices of its agents. An in-depth study of these practices in this so-called 'post-transitional' situation can thus provide meaningful insights in the processes of the adoption or installation of liberal democracy as part of a project of liberal peace in a post-war country.

Such an approach demands a consideration of the concepts of the West and the local which are used as each other's opposites. I will use the term 'local' to refer to that what is Congolese. The term 'local agencies' thus refers to Congolese agencies – agencies performed by Congolese actors. Although I chose to use such a generic term, this does not mean that I do not recognise that the local is a multitude of diverse agents and agencies. Although I underline Richmond's concern with the 'local' and its representation of a more authentic local that lies beneath the often externalised civil societies and other agencies, I will maintain the term 'local' (Richmond 2011b, 13-14). Instead of distinguishing a local from a local-local, I use the term local while recognising its ambivalence. This ambivalence with respect to its externalisation, co-optation or authenticity is an implicit issue in the analysis of local agencies and their engagements with liberal peace building. As will be further developed in chapter two, I understand these agencies as being relational and therefore both temporal and situational. The local and local agencies can thus be urban, rural, elitist, popular, mass based, and various relational combinations possible. I also use the terms Congolese, the Congo and the DRC as if it represents a coherent entity. Evidently, it does not. Each locality or region has its own dynamics due to its situational circumstances, its socio-economic reality, and its political dynamics. Despite this great diversity among different regions, I have teased out commonalities in political practices that have emerged in the different places I have conducted research. Nevertheless, when I speak of 'the Congo' and 'Congolese people' it should be taken into account that this concerns diversity as well as that the scope of my research was limited to Kinshasa and the provinces of South Kivu and Bas Congo. However, my observations have been confirmed in other localities in the country to which I have travelled in the context of other projects.

The West or the liberal is more difficult to define because not only do I use the term myself, but so did my Congolese respondents, and not necessarily always with the same meaning. Particularly in chapters three and four does the term 'the West' occur regularly in the narratives of my respondents. The West in this sense has meaning as the non-local. Both terms 'the West' and 'the local' are thus only meaningful as each other's other. My Congolese respondents often referred to the

'West' to refer to European and American actors, as well as international agencies (UN, IFIs) and locally co-opted actors that represent ideals and pursue the liberal peace. In this thesis I will use the term 'the West' following Congolese parlance when representing Congolese narratives. I will use the term 'the liberal' instead, to refer not so much to an actor or group of actors but to refer to an interest, namely that of the pursuit of liberal peace building by a variety of actors, while recognising that this is far from a unified group of actors or a coherent agenda.

Some comments on the use of the term '*le pouvoir*' are also necessary. In my discussions with people in Congo about politics, people often spoke of '*le pouvoir*' (power), often making a sign with their hands indicating something that can best be described as 'up there'. When I asked to what or to whom the term *le pouvoir* refers for them, I would get a vague answer. *Le pouvoir* in general refers those in power, but who or what institution this is, is left undefined. In some contexts it means the President, in others it refers to the infamous invisible presidential clique; but it could also refer to the President's twin sister, the ruling party, the governing coalition, or more broadly the block where power and wealth come together. Often people do not actually know, and just refer to that almost mythical centre of power that is both mysterious and appealing, as well as terrifying. Although in the eyes of many members of the electorate MPs are part of the circles of power, they are in general themselves not part of *le pouvoir*. However, individual MPs can be part of *le pouvoir* for their specific roles and relations they might have beyond being an MP. For instance, some members of the presidential clique are also MPs, some high party representatives are MP, and some MPs have specific close relations with the Presidency that gives them access to certain circles and more gravitas than their fellow MPs. '

The common use of the notion of *le pouvoir* means that the concept of power is opaque – people do not know who or what institution holds which powers. They do not know who speaks when certain messages are given and orders are passed, and it confirms a real and present distance between people and their rulers. But what it also tells us is that it is not considered relevant whether *le pouvoir* refers to the President or his powerful clique, the party or the executive, because it is all considered to be one and the same. Power may just be opaque, but the term also signifies general ignorance. I will use Congolese parlance and speak of *le pouvoir* instead of forcibly trying to define who or which institution it refers to on each occasion and 'translate' *le pouvoir* into those terms. Doing so would be inappropriate, and it would alter the meaning of peoples speech and understandings significantly.

Research design and methods

Some comments on research strategy and methodology are in place. In order to centralise local agencies I have chosen for an approach that focuses on people and their practices. In order to do so, I have borrowed ideas from institutional ethnography. Institutional ethnography perceives institutions (i.e. institutionalised practices) as ethnographic objects that are discursively produced and can be ethnographically analysed (Escobar 1995, 107, Smith 2006). This approach thus enables an analysis of political practices performed by local agencies that occur within the context of the liberal peace. The research thus looks at these practices – either performed or discursively constructed – as agencies through which democracy is consumed by MPs and by MPs in their relations with others.

Before starting field research in the DRC, I identified and analysed practices, and their concepts, repertoires and processes, based on secondary material. This was complemented by interview material, observation material, and additional (primary and secondary) textual materials collected during field research. A process of gradual development of the research was anticipated. The research was in this sense an 'open ended enquiry' in which the point of departure and the case under investigation was clear, but the direction of the research would unfold gradually following threads during the research process (DeVault and McCoy 2006, 23).

In order to further navigate through the vast field of political practices, I have identified a number of events or cases that I felt were both politically relevant as well as rich cases to explore political practices in response to different political questions. Although it may have been potentially restricting my data, the rationale behind this choice was that it would enhance the depth and quality of information I would gather, although be it on a limited number of cases and events. Based on previous experience with conducting interviews with a variety of respondents on political issues in the Congo (2006-7), I foresaw that it would be difficult (or impossible) to acquire the kind of responses I am seeking if I asked direct questions. Cliché as it may sound, I was aware of respondents' (particularly Congolese politicians and civil society) tendency to give politically correct answers, i.e. speak in an official discourse and say what they would think I wanted to hear (Chabal 1996, 46). I also foresaw a problem in the case our discussion would move to that politically correct discourse because it would be very difficult to move to the subjective practices of consumption. Secondly, I expected that many of my respondents would be uncomfortable talking about their own political practices and opinions directly. Because I had limited time on the ground and with the individual respondents, I could not take an ideal ethnographic approach and slowly but surely win my respondents' confidence and trust. I

therefore needed a more focussed approach while maintaining as much of the open ended nature of my approach as possible. Working with cases provided this focus.

Another advantage of discussing cases and events was that by asking respondents to give their interpretation of the events, political practices were indirectly discussed. These practices were thus not discussed as such, but featured in the context of an event in which they acquired meaning and sense. Also, by discussing the same events with different people, and different groups of respondents, it was easier to compare their take on occurring practices and reflect on them with respect to those of others in the field. Finally, it allowed people to talk about how they themselves participated in these political practices, without being (feeling) directly under scrutiny. It enabled them to talk about others, their colleagues, those in power, the electorate, civil society, the international community, as well as themselves (albeit often covertly). Some of the cases I identified seemed very relevant beforehand but brought up little material, whereas other cases came up during the research in the field. The case study chapters that follow will not discuss these cases individually, although the case material will be clearly visible throughout the text.

I have spent six months doing research in the DRC, divided over three research visits between October 2009 and September 2010. During the last ten months of the writing-up process I was also based in the DRC. Most of my research was done in the capital Kinshasa, where Parliament is based and where most international support for democratisation as well as (I)NGO activities are located. I have conducted interviews with MPs, Political Party representatives, cabinet Ministers, local authorities, local and international NGOs, and members of the international community, as well as with villagers and unorganised individuals in a '*micro trottoir*' setting. I have also been able to participate in political party and NGO activities of various kinds – capacity building workshops, mock parliamentary sessions of the youth wing of a political party, political campaigning, open air discussion forums. After I was granted access as a researcher, I was able to do much observational research in the Parliament itself. I have been able to sit in the audience during parliamentary debates and I have spent several weeks working with the parliamentary staff from their offices in Parliament, studying documents in the parliamentary archives and learning about the inner workings of the institution.

To research practices of consumption by MPs in their interaction with their constituencies, I have selected three sites. South Kivu province (the Capital Bukavu and surrounding villages), a province which has overwhelmingly voted for Kabila at the 2006 elections and where MPs are all members of the ruling coalition. Secondly, Bas-Congo province (the cities of Boma, Moanda, Tshela

and the villages of the Bas-Fleuve area), a province which has largely not voted for Kabila in the 2006 presidential elections although its parliamentary representatives have joined both opposition as well as majority. Finally, a third site I have researched is Kinshasa itself. Kinshasa has overwhelmingly supported the opposition in the 2006 elections, although a sizable part of its population supports opposition party UDPS (*Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social*) and subsequently boycotted the elections.[3] President Kabila and its ruling coalition has little support in Kinshasa, and as with many other capital cities, people are politically much more vocal than in most other parts of the country.

The individual and group interviews I have conducted were of a semi-structured character in which a number of topics and issues were discussed with the respondents, aimed at letting the respondent express himself freely without being restricted by questionnaires or my own preoccupations. I have approached interviewing in the broad sense of 'talking with people', which includes a variety of forms of exchange, such as formal and planned one-on-one interviews, to informal 'on the spot' discussions, discussions during observation work, as well as talking with more than one person at the same time (DeVault and McCoy 2006, 22). In agreement with respondents I have anonymised my interviews in the references. Interviews of an informal nature have been an important source for the research process itself. For example, in the reception areas of offices or in public transport there are often lively discussions about the news, recent events, or any other topic related to the work of the office. Participation in such discussions – during the often long waiting time before an official interview – was often a wonderful opportunity to gain insights, leads and threads. Although such collected information and data may not be directly used in the thesis itself, it has been an invaluable source of information to help roll the research along.

Observation also has been a valuable source of information. As with information collected from informal interviewing, observations feed further interviewing, and vice versa: 'Experiential data, whether from interviews or observations, (…) inform a method, allowing researchers an entry to social organisation for the purpose of explicating the experiences', i.e. 'to write back into the account of experiences the social organisation that is imminent, but invisible in them' (Campbell 2006, 95). Campbell's argument is that observations can be given a formal place in research strategies and data collection. By actively seeking to use them when applying other techniques (interviews, text analysis), that is, by following-up observations with other research techniques, they can be an important resource and have a place in research techniques beyond a mere field diary.

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[3] UDPS boycotted the 2006 elections and asked its supporters not to register themselves as voter and boycott the elections.

Observation is continuous, during interviews, travelling in public transport, just walking around in the city, sitting in the audience at parliamentary sessions, etc. I have kept a field log in which I have transcribed my observations and to which I will occasionally refer in my referencing. I have used a 'generous conception of work', the understanding that work can include doing all kinds of things, including doing nothing (Diamond 2006, 51). This concerns the researcher (field research and ethnography in particular is ongoing, as long as you are in the field you are always observing, questioning, thinking, and gaining insights) but also the people under study. The in Congo common situation of people sitting in offices with empty desks, reading newspapers, or proverbially (or even literally) stare at the ceiling is significant part of work in the Congo that is 'generously understood'. Such a generous conception of work is important because it enables a broader conceptualisation of the practices under study than merely one that focuses on people and their formal functioning. MPs that linger in the entrance hall of Parliament building are thus performing their identity as an MP and are working.

Positionality and reflexivity

My research in the DRC has thus been a combination of making use of secondary sources and a variety of primary sources – data from interviews, observation, talking to people, personal experiences. Although such a research method greatly enriches research data and analysis, it is not without problems. In November 2009 I visited a Street Parliament in Kinshasa, where people discuss current political affairs on the street corner. A Congolese friend and former street parliamentarian himself had arranged the visit and went with me. I was welcome to visit, listen, observe, and speak with them during their daily street-corner discussions. Although we had made efforts to arrive as inconspicuous as possible (by public transport and casually on foot, carrying no camera or other equipment) we had attracted much attention since our arrival. I was a white woman in a part of the city where white people are a rarity, talking to a group of only men. A crowd had curiously gathered to see what I was doing here, and what I was talking about with these political activists. The street parliamentarians did not seem afraid to talk to me. They spoke openly about themselves and their activities, and the problems they and the country in general faced. Then all of a sudden there was some commotion and the talk switched directly from French to Lingala, thereby completely shutting me out of what was happening. One of the leaders of the group was pulled away by a few people in civilian clothes. My friend whispered to me 'we're leaving'. Although I realised quickly that I should really leave before things could get out of hand, and that Congolese are better capable of sorting these situations out when I do not interfere then when I do, it did not

feel right to walk away from this situation. Two street parliamentarians followed me while my friend was dragging me away. I thanked them, shook their hand, and asked what had happened, and whether their colleagues would be ok. They said they were arrested, but that they would be freed either in a few days or a few weeks. They said this happens all the time. My friend insisted, 'we should really go now'. He looked concerned. I decided to trust his judgement. It was the sensible thing to do, even though it felt morally wrong to me.

The event was a clear case of direct unintended outcome of my research activities on my research subjects. They had been arrested. Although this also happens regularly without my presence, I felt that this time it was directly linked to me. My visit was well planned with the research subjects in advance. My interlocutor had, as a former member, good connections with the group and trusted access. I had asked them whether they would be willing to meet me, and asked them to suggest a location where they would feel safe and confident to speak with me. I followed their assessments. During the weeks that followed I was very concerned and torn apart by feelings of guilt and the urge to do something. My friend said there was nothing I could do, nothing I should do and that I was in no way implicated in this. It felt different for me and I insisted that he would find out what happened to the people concerned, speak to them on my behalf. I knew I should not visit again in an attempt to 'do something' and get them in even more trouble. A week or so later my friend said he had spoken to the street parliamentarians, that all was well and that I should stop worrying now. I could not get any more details out of him.

As this example shows, engaging with respondents in their daily activities in public makes ethical issues about unintended and uncontrollable outcomes of research more pressing than when doing just interviews (Eckl 2008, 188). In the events described – visiting the respondents' activities, observing them and speaking to them on location instead of setting up a more formal interview away from the site of action – the issues of positionality of the researcher that always exist in research relations, as well as the issue of unintended outcomes, became more pertinent and painfully evident. It emphasises the insurmountable distance between the researcher and his research subject. Although I was participating in the Street Parliament and observing events, the notion of participant observation is problematic. It presumes that outsiders can become temporal insiders (Bourdieu 2003, 281). I cannot escape representing the Liberal in my engagements with my respondents, irrespective of my personal or political views or my research approach regarding the liberal peace (Kapoor 2004, 628). Having open relations with Congolese friends, and being able to have open discussions with my respondents, elaborating my critical approach and my interest in local agencies does not liberate me from this complicity with the Liberal or the West. It is ines-

capable, if not because of my nationality and skin colour, than in any case because of the academic tradition I have been educated in and in which this PhD research is contextualised. The described events emphasise that becoming an insider was impossible in the context of my research in the Congo and that my presence became problematic. There are certain parameters and levels of asymmetry which prevent this – skin colour, gender, being a foreigner, not speaking the street language, relative wealth, being looked-up at because of (perceived) social status based on skin colour, etc. There is thus always a distance between the researcher and his research subjects which cannot be overcome (Bourdieu 1996, 19). The events were a direct consequence of my 'outsiderness' on the street corner.

The events with the Street Parliamentarians developed more complexity regarding my positionality when, by coincidence, I met a member of the group a few weeks later in the entrance hall of the National Parliament building. He said he was very pleased to see me, because he feared I had not understood what had happened that morning in November. I said I had understood that people were arrested, and I asked him how they were. The gentleman said that nobody was arrested that day. All that had happened, he said, was that some political differences exist within the political party of the activists.[4] An argument had risen over the issue among the street parliamentarians, and somebody had attacked one of the speakers. When my friend had pulled me away, there had been some fighting, but nothing serious. The gentleman asked me when I would come back again, emphasising that I was always very welcome.[5]

It was a puzzling turn of events. Although I was pleased to hear that nobody was affected by my research in a way I had feared, many questions rose in my head. Through the interaction with my (politically marginalised, excluded and silenced) respondents of the Street Parliament, I had become an actor in my own research. Reflecting on the encounter with the gentleman in the Parliament building made me question my own ability to represent them and the implicit political tension that comes with it. For those that knew me, it was well-known that I spent my days in the Parliament building and that I could often be found in its corridors talking to MPs and staff. The street parliamentarian had no business there, and there was no plenary that day. How coincidental was our meeting in the Parliament building? Was it true what he said, or did he just want to make me believe that nobody was arrested in the same way as my friend had tried to ensure me there was nothing I needed to worry about? Did the man want to make me believe that things were not as bad as they were; an attempt to hide their

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4 In that period, the political party concerned was internally heavily divided over the question whether to participate in the elections of 2011.

5 Field notes, 20 November 2009.

shame and embarrassment about the situation in his country? Or did he want to take away my concerns hoping I would come back and that my work could be a platform for them as an opposition party? Perhaps there had indeed merely been a clash among members and I was lead away only because they did not want me – an outside observer – to see this, fearing the repercussions it could have for the legitimacy of the party. Does everything become politics for me because I am seeing everything through my 'research lenses' and is the daily reality perhaps more banal? And what is the significance of the location? On that chaotic street corner where people were shouting in Lingala and pushing each other around things looked very different than when reflecting on events in the entrance hall of the Parliament building. Why did the man speak to me now and here, and not then and there?

Although I was on the one hand an outsider vis-à-vis my respondents, as an outsider I had become an actor in my own research and thus become an insider in the research. The complexity of the positionality of the researcher in his research goes much further than merely the issue of unintended outcomes. Bourdieu has emphasised the importance of recognising the positionality of the researcher vis-à-vis his research field and subjects and argues for a reflexive approach (Bourdieu 1996, Bourdieu 2003, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, Wacquant 1989). Instead of eradicating the position of the researcher (so one can pretend to be a participant observer), or being apologetic (a direction in which Spivak pushes (1988)) it is important to recognise and acknowledge the distance between the researcher and his research subjects and his simultaneous complicity. It is thus important to recognise the complicity of the researcher in his research because such distancing is both impossible as well as undesirable (Brigg and Bleiker 2010, 274).

Spivak has emphasised the problematique of the general neglect of the complicity of the researcher. Her concern is that by neglecting the central role that the researcher himself plays in speaking for and speaking about the research subject, the researcher tries to distance himself from the research topic but instead he privileges himself (Spivak 1988, 272, 92). By consequence, the researcher's conceptual codes are also silently privileged. Fabian has argued that anthropological research is inherently autobiographical, because the observations and statements about the people the researcher is writing about are paired with the observers' experience. The researcher's own experience is a necessary referent for his ability to represent the other (Fabian 1983, 88-91). Bourdieu therefore proposes the opposite of eradicating and ignoring the researcher himself from the research, a practice he finds false. Instead he suggests centralising the researcher by objectifying the self. To 'objectify' the self means to pursue a constant critical reflexion on the self, the context that has shaped that self, and the hidden structures that

define the self (Bourdieu 2003, 282-3). This enables a more objective, honest, perspective on the research (which is ultimately a product of the researcher), the questions and views that have shaped and defined the research, and the rapport between the researcher and his research subjects. It means a recognition of the fact that there remains an unsolvable intellectual distance between the researcher and his research subjects, because research questions, interests and analytical frames are those of the researcher and not of the research subjects. The researcher should thus 'avoid putting the problematic that (he) construct(s) about them and the theory (he) elaborate(s) to answer it in their heads' (Bourdieu 2003, 283).

This does not only concern the more obvious aspects of the impact (intentional or non-intentional) a researcher has on his field. My meeting with the street parliamentarian in the Parliament building highlights that there is another level of complexity here as well. Not only should the researcher be aware of his own presence and the impact it has on the research process. He should also be aware of the reflexive capacity of his research subjects. They are not merely passive respondents shaped in the discursive frame of the researcher and as a referent to researcher's experience. They also have the ability to act and to manipulate, to respond and be reflexive to the researcher, his work and themselves as participants in it. When asking questions the respondents have not asked themselves before, it triggers them to reflect which has an impact on them and possibly their future actions (Amborn 1993, 136). I am in no way inclined to overestimate the impact of my research or of myself as a researcher, but it is important to acknowledge the reflexive capacity of the respondents not just with respect to the topic of the research, but also with respect to themselves and their encounters with me or other researchers.

In recognition of my own positionality as an outsider in the field I am researching, as well as my complicity as an actor in my own research and the impact this has on my engagements with respondents, I have strived to be reflexive about myself, my respondents, and about our interaction. What is the impact of my presence on people's behaviour and what they say? Why are some people very keen to speak to me, while others aren't? How do my respondents perceive me, and how does that impact our relation? What is being said, and what is not being said, and why? What shapes what I consider to be interesting and relevant, and how does this differ from what my respondents find relevant? I have constantly asked myself reflexive questions with regard to my research experiences, data collection and analyses as an additional layer of analysis. Like with observational data, I have fed these reflexive data back into my research and it has been a very important source that shaped my research and helped me identify relevant themes and leads.

I would like to make two additional comments about myself vis-à-vis my research field. A common reflex when thinking about the Congo is the notion of 'doing something to help'. I have often been asked the question how my work will help the Congo, or heard the suggestion that it is good that I am working on such research issues because there is the assumption that it will help. Let me straight away make it clear that I do not intend to help. I do not consider this an appropriate expectation of academic research as such, although if people that work in the business of 'helping' find my work useful to improve theirs, I would of course consider that a positive outcome. I am personally not convinced that Congolese people need 'us' and our (well-intended) help. My research is driven by curiosity, and intends to shed some refreshing light on things we in general do not understand well. Whether this 'helps' anybody is another matter. This notion of 'helping' is part of what Spivak is concerned with when she talks about the epistemic violence and violence to the subaltern as an unavoidable effect of social research (Spivak 1988, 280). One would then almost feel guilty about researching a country like the Congo. Kapoor however emphasises that the arguments from Spivak can help improve research practice without denouncing research as a whole. He emphasises the need to 'learn to unlearn', that is, learning to listen and to establish an ethical relationship with the research subject (Kapoor 2004, 641-2). This is my intention when rejecting the reflex of feeling the need to help. By not positioning myself as somebody that has something to give (help, either financially or in the form of ideas and knowledge), my engagements with my respondents were not corrupted by the notion of help. And more importantly, it meant that there is no need to listen to me, but that I should to listen to them. In other words, I did not have to speak, I had to listen, and learn how to listen.

Finally, I have spent some time in the Congo before I started my PhD research, am currently based in the DRC as a practitioner and have been able to travel extensively through the country. I have noticed in my own reflections how my conceptual understanding of and engagement with the people I am studying have grown and developed over time as a result of growing insight, more experiences, but also of events, personal experiences, meeting new people and deepening friendships. This experience emphasises Fabian's concern with the epistemological significance of time which enables for the researcher and researched to (to a certain extent) become part of each other's past (Fabian 1983, 90). I can only emphasise how valuable a longer engagement with a country of study is, and hope that I will be able to continue to build on my experiences in the future.

Outline of the thesis

The thesis has a conventional structure. The first chapter is dedicated to a review of literature. Situating the liberal peace in the Congo within liberal peace critique, the chapter discusses these critiques and explores routes to analyse peace building interventions in a more meaningful way. It discusses the liberal peace as a hegemonic structure, and as a top-down and elitist practice. It further discusses literatures that have emerged in response to these critiques, which have focused on local forms of peace building, local agencies and the emergence of hybridity.

The following chapter brings the critique of the liberal peace as a top-down and institutionalist project and the demand for a primary concern with the people in whose name liberal peace interventions take place to Parliament as one of the institutions at the heart of liberal peace building. The chapter develops an approach that enables a perspective on what goes on beyond the institutional focus of mainstream approaches and that centralises local agencies in peace building processes. However, as opposed to most liberal peace critique, this focus on local agencies does not mean the deeming irrelevant of institutions and the elite level. Instead, the chapter develops an approach for the study of local agencies that are hidden within these institutions as a meaningful way to engage with these sites of liberal peace building. It develops the concept of convivial agency in processes of the consumption of democracy, and establishes an interest in agents' practices as a level of analysis for engaging with questions of the local consumption of the liberal peace.

The third chapter is a history chapter that continues the line of argumentation developed in the second chapter. It does not narrate history based on western produced historiographies on the Congo, instead it allows for Congolese to narrate their own historiographies. Using the concepts of myth and mythistory, the chapter describes two narratives, that of the heroic victim and the tragic victim, as two central themes in Congolese reflection on their own history in respect of the present. In the chapter that follows (chapter four), the meaning of these narratives for the present is emphasised. Through these narratives Congolese seek emancipation not from their own political leadership but from the West. The narratives produce disengagement from the liberal peace. The chapter also engages with a disengagement from the local which is implicit in the discourses of the liberal peace. These mutual narratives of disengagement produce what I, following Homi Bhabha, call 'hybrid spaces'. It is in these hybrid spaces that local agencies consume democracy and reinvent a political, within or outside the liberal peace.

The final two chapters are analyses of these practices of the consumption of democracy in these hybrid spaces. The focus is on the National Assembly as a

site on which different actors come together either directly or indirectly (electorate, MPs, Executive, IC). As such, it is a site of interaction, where convivial agency occurs. The chapters discuss the political practices performed by MPs as practices of a moral matrix of the father-family. Chapter five is concerned with the consumption of democracy by MPs and their electorate. It discusses the expected role of MPs as providers for their constituencies, and the preference for the informal in this interaction. By consequence, formalised and institutionalised practices of liberal democracy are irrelevant, and MPs parliamentary tasks are marginalised. Chapter six looks at the consumption of democracy at the internal organisation of the National Assembly and through the practices of the consumption of democracy between the legislature and the executive. Using the father-family logic and the rules of the political family, the chapter discusses the functioning of the National Assembly and MPs relations with *le pouvoir* in terms of the rights and obligations of the political family. Both chapters emphasise a process of the negotiation of the liberal peace through local agencies, while simultaneously the liberal peace provides new means and tools for the renegotiation of these local practices.

2

The liberal peace and critique – a literature review

Despite its global dominance, the liberal peace is not without problems. Whereas Ikenberry agrees that the liberal global order is in crisis, he argues that the crisis is one of the governance of this order, not of the liberal order itself because it is as such not contested by any major powers nor do its members seek to overturn it (Ikenberry 2010). Critical perspectives on the liberal peace have argued the contrary and that the liberal peace is in crisis because of its underlying assumptions and praxis (Cooper 2007, Jahn 2007b, 227). The liberal peace is based on the assumption that enduring and self-sustaining peace can be achieved through political and market liberalisation (Paris 2004, 6, Richmond 2006, 292). Originating in a western tradition of utopian and apocalyptic thought and the belief in social engineering (Gray 2007), the liberal peace is thus highly idealistic. Liberals believe that they represent the better world that can be created (Williams 2006, 5). Because it intends to transform states, governance and whole societies, it is a political project that requires deep intervention at state as well as society level (Duffield 2001, 11, Richmond 2006, 295). Through what Duffield calls the 'radicalisation of development' development aid has become an important strategic tool in this project of liberal idealism (Duffield 2001, 39, Duffield 2002). Because underdevelopment has come to be understood as the main cause for conflict – itself a contested understanding (Cramer 2006) – development has become a peace building strategy that enables intervention at every level of state and society, much beyond its original intervention levels of the stimulation of economic growth (Duffield 2001, 32).

The liberal peace prioritises state- and governance institutions (Richmond 2006, 299) – 'building states to build peace' (Call and Wyeth 2008). State building as a peace building practice works on the assumption that sustainable peace and development requires a functioning state in terms of 'capable, autonomous,

and legitimate governmental institutions' (Paris and Sisk 2009, 1-2). The argument is that peace building often fails because the institutional foundations that can manage conflict and maintain peace are not in place. The political and economic liberalisation processes as part of the liberal peace can themselves be disruptive for vulnerable post-war states (Paris 2004, 168). The weakness of the state and its institutions is understood as a factor in the failure of peace building strategies (Call 2008, 12). Elections as a post-war transitional mechanism were particularly seen as problematic, such as the experiences in Angola (1992), Liberia (1997) and Rwanda (1994) confirm (Lyons 2005, 61, Snyder 2000). The argument thus is that post-war peace building depends on a functioning state (Paris 2004, 173, Paris and Sisk 2009, 3). State building seeks to reinstate state authority and build effective state institutions that can execute the core tasks of a liberal state (Fukuyama 2004, 135). Liberal state institutions have to be depersonalised, formalised and rationalised to perform their tasks (Chesterman *et al*. 2005, 2). Building effective state institutions is expected to make the state receptive for development and peace building strategies (Duffield 2007, 176, Whaites 2008).

Although many studies regarding the liberal peace concern technical aspects of intervention strategies to achieve peace (Richmond 2005, 156), a more fundamental critique is concerned with its western ethno-centrism, its top-down and institutionalist approach and its subsequent disregard for the local context and the people in whose name liberal peace interventions take place by depoliticising interventions, silencing local voices and prioritising institutions over people and local agencies.

The liberal peace as a hegemonic project

The liberal peace has been criticised as a hegemonic project that (re-)produces power relations and seeks to discursively dominate the recipient post-war or failed state. It is a framework for relations of power between the West and the developing world in which the liberal democratic West dominates in terms of knowledge and morality over the developing world which only aspires to be liberal democratic like the West. This global hegemony is performed through norms, political and economic structures, culture and ideology which originate in the West but which penetrate and dominate the rest of the World (Abrahamsen 1997, 148). Peacekeeping, conflict resolution and –management are practices aimed at reproducing and enforcing this hegemony (Brigg 2008, 58, Pugh 2004, 41, Zanotti 2006). It assumes superiority and practices hegemony over the 'Other' which it deems inferior, and which needs to be converted to adopt the liberal democratic identity and to become part of the liberal community. It has an inherent sense of self-superiority and intolerance of difference (Hughes 2006).

The liberal peace, and the liberal idealism on which it is founded, assume that a better (safer, more peaceful and prosperous) world can be constructed. It is founded on European knowledge systems and history which it aims to export and repeat in other parts of the world (Darby 2006a, 6, see also Mudimbe 1988) to 'save it from itself' (Harrison 2006). Although the liberal peace is itself a fairly recent phenomenon, it is founded on the same underlying assumptions that have defined Western intervention in the non-western world throughout most of the twentieth century. The liberal peace should be understood in its historic context of a long tradition of practices to modernise and westernise non-Western countries since the colonial period. The liberal peace and its core element of democratisation and peace building-as-governance (Richmond 2006, 299) follow the same assumptions as modernisation policies did a few decades ago (Jahn 2007a).

Following independence in Africa, countries have been expected to reproduce a European experience of modernisation and development. Political modernisation was seen as the only way forward by African political leadership of the independence era, as well as by the former colonial masters that had become donors for development. It meant the incorporation into the western dominated political and state system (Davidson 1992, Huntington 1968, Meredith 2006, 143-45). Post-colonial regimes failed to bring political and economic modernisation to their countries and instead turned the dream of independence into economic crisis, conflict and the establishment of authoritarian regimes. Structural Adjustment Plans were introduced as a response, but failed and thereby further weakened the state and its legitimacy. It was an attempt to force Africa to adopt western economic values, enforced by disciplinary measures. The historical narrative of economic development is paternalistic, arguing that (pre-modern) Africa should learn from the (modern) West and follow the economic development path that the West has already experienced, as if there exists only one modernity and one route towards it (Kapoor 2008, 25-29). After the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War, the Third Wave of democratisation in Africa made dictatorial regimes fall, making place for (nominal) democracies. It did nevertheless not result in stable liberal democracies on the continent. On the contrary, many countries found themselves either in renewed dictatorship or in civil war, or a combination of the two (Huntington 1991, Ihonvbere 1996, Young 1999).

The good governance agenda that followed expanded moralistic and paternalistic thinking over economic development in Africa to the level of governance and politics. It is built on ideal typical or romanticised (Richmond 2009c) notions such as that of 'state' or 'civil society', and has little attention for how such concepts are socially embedded and given meaning (Chabal & Daloz 2006, 43). Moreover, what 'good' governance is, is not determined locally, but defined in the West. It thus not only implies that the West is the model, but also that the

West is the arbiter (Abrahamsen 2000, 32-36, Kapoor 2008, 29-31). The same counts for international treaties that set standards for respect for human rights. They emphasise western (cultural) notions of individual rights that are presented as universal and hegemonic (Kapoor 2008, 33-37). Such norm setting was also characteristic for colonial domination, that functioned simultaneously as authority and morality by introducing a totalitarian understanding of what was right (the colonial norm, its morals, its authority) and what was not-right (anything that did not recognise the norm) (Mbembe 2001b, 26).

Postcolonial[1] critique emphasises power in the practices of western intervention in the non-western world and the inter-dynamics between the interveners and the intervened, with a perspective that is concerned with the centrality of the periphery and its agencies (Slater 2004, 20). Using Foucault's notion of discourse and power, Said has argued that the West uses orientalism as a practice of domination over the non-Western Other (Said 2003).[2] He argues that the Orient has for the West been ontologically stable. It has no authority over itself because it only exists in the way the West knows it. The West thus owns the Orient and exercises power over it. This western knowledge has changed only at the surface, but its 'principle dogmas' and 'attitudes of cultural hostility' have essentially always been the same (Said 2003, 3, 300, 290). Postcolonial emphasis on continued patterns of domination should not be mistakenly seen as essentialising the experience of colonial domination (Bayart 2010, 6). Instead it is an emphasis on patterns of cultural domination (Jabri 2007, 159). Said has emphasised that there is much more continuity in the relations between the West and the rest of the world than can be captured by the simple parameters of the colonial era (Said 2003).

Following Said's critique on the discursive ownership of the non-western world, Spivak speaks of the 'epistemic violence' of the attempt to create the 'Other' as the shadow of the self (1988, 280). The identity of the West as being modern requires an opposing identity of the other that is not modern. Modernisation theory thus translated a historical condition into a geopolitical one, and vice versa, i.e. the historical condition of pre-modernity is being projected on, and equated with, a spatial condition of the non-West or the Global South (Fabian 1983, Ferguson 2006, 178, Slater 2004, 29-62). This raises questions about limits of accessibility to modernity for non-westerners (Ferguson 2002). Such epistemic violence has an impact on the non-Western Self. Mudimbe's work highlights

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1 Without taking position in the 'hyphen-debate' about postcolonial/post-colonial (Shohat 1992), I will use the hyphenated term (post-colonial) to refer to the historic post-independence period and the unhyphenated term (postcolonial) to refer to postcolonial theory, studies and critique.

2 Although Said and Fanon (1967) are considered to be the founders of postcolonial critique, its roots go back to resistance during the colonial era, such as for example the work of W.E.B, Dubois or Sol Plaatje and the Negritude movement of the 1940s and 1950s.

how it has affected African epistemologies and self-understanding (Fraiture 2009, Mudimbe 1973, Mudimbe 1988). It turns the West into a source of self-rectification for the non-West (Shih 2011). To emphasize this point, Chakrabarty suggests to 'provincialise Europe', to turn Europe into the periphery of modernity (Chakrabarty 2000a). The concern is that the non-European Other, has always been and will always remain an 'Other', never will it become 'part of us'. Charkrabarty points to exactly this problem inherent in the liberal assumptions that were the foundations of modernisation policies and the liberal peace.

The liberal peace continues practices of orientalism that dominate, restructure and claim authority over non-western societies (Said 2003, 3). It is an orientalist practice of power and domination, a Foucaultian regime of truth that attempts to 'discipline' and control the non-West (Abrahamsen 2000, Jabri 2010, 52, Zanotti 2006). Critical perspectives that emphasise the power relations captured in the liberal peace offer a counter-hegemonic discourse that can critically engage with the way in which liberal democracy has become the 'unchallenged regulative norm in relation to which all other forms of political community are to be judged'. Postcolonial critique emphasises the normative aspects of liberal democratic political modernity and enables a conceptualisation of political modernity in its own, local terms (Scott 1996, 18). Postcolonial studies as a critical approach is part of a broader critique of power and hegemony, domination, inequality, injustice, and bring valuable additions to the study of domination and relations of inequality anywhere in the world, whether it in the global West or the global South (Moore-Gilbert 2000, 12, Quayson 2000, 11).

The essentialisation of the non-West as non-Modern and the West as modern enables and justifies a need to intervene, police and control (Slater 2004, 82-3). Dunn's study of western conceptualisation of the Congo shows how perpetuated images of the Congo as continued 'Heart of Darkness' have had a profound impact on international policies towards the Congo and have cumulatively enabled the shaping of the Congo in its current condition (Dunn 2003). The Congo has been constructed as a savage other that needs to be civilized. The liberal peace is therefore highly interventionist and imposing. It assumes power over the non-liberal other which requires a form of temporary imperialism, a form of liberal democratic hegemony, without formal colonies (Chandler 2004, Ignatieff 2003, vii). This tension between the practice of far reaching intervention to enable the objective of self-determination and liberal freedom is a problematic contradiction within the liberal peace (Donais 2009, 16, Jahn 2007a, 90, Jahn 2007b, 222, Lidén 2011, 276). Emancipation and self-determination is to be achieved through the building of state. This means an interpretation of emancipation in terms of rights and freedoms, which ignores emancipatory claims based on needs, culture and custom (Richmond 2005, 150, Richmond 2011b, 12).

By temporarily filling the 'sovereignty gap', international interventions provide capacities that are perceived to be missing locally and which are required for a transition to liberal market democracy (Ghani and Lockhart 2008). Such an 'illiberal peace' may be based on an international peace building consensus, but often lacks legitimacy locally (Richmond 2005, 175). Chopra's (2000, 2002) work has shown that such 'UN Kingdoms' lack the essential local legitimacy and are highly problematic as a form of peace building. Ellis therefore argues for innovative forms of trusteeship in which local and international actors cooperate in the reconstruction of socio-political organisation, and the recognition of indigenous political structures as potential positive agents for reconstruction. The trusteeship formula will tackle the immediate issues of legitimacy and governance, while the recognition of indigenous structures as agents for state building is likely to enhance local support for the state building project (Ellis 2005).

The liberal peace is thus not a project of peace as such, but one of dispossession that denies self-hood and agency in the name of assumed universally agreed and shared norms (Jabri 2010, 48, Richmond 2005, 112). The objective of self-determination is kept discursively alive through the notions of 'local ownership', 'empowerment', 'stakeholders' and 'participation' (Cornwall and Brock 2005). However, the use of such terms to legitimise practices of liberal peace building has received much criticism as merely paying lip-service to fundamental problems within the liberal peace. Ownership is not about autonomy but about shifting responsibility for the implementation of externally designed policy solutions to local actors (Hughes and Pupavac 2005, 883). The same counts for the notion of 'African solutions for African problems'. African solutions are expected to fall within internationally established norms (Ottaway 1999, 115). As such, it is more disempowering than empowering (Donais 2009, 7). Such terms are used to 'soften-up the rougher edges of peace building' (MacGinty 2010b, 352). These terms are merely aspirational, and have become cliché and meaningless because of overuse (Chesterman 2007). Because of these internal contradictions, some consider state building as a practice of 'organised hypocrisy' (Egnell 2010).

The use of buzzwords like ownership and participation serve a purpose in denying the power-relation between intervention and host communities. It pretends that the West transfers its accountability and responsibility to domestic actors, while international actors merely play a facilitative role for capacity building and empowerment (Chandler 2004, 65, Chandler 2006, 8-9). Ownership is an essential part of a hegemonic project such as the liberal peace. Hegemony requires coercion and persuasion to construct and govern it. The notion of ownership is a tactic of persuasion of the hegemonic project of the liberal peace (Cornwall and Brock 2005, Slater 2004, 98, 103). Filling the 'sovereignty gap' is thus 'empire in denial', a practice which conflates the right to self-determination

with the capacity of the state in terms of good governance and which enables a highly invasive form of intervention through international organisations and institutional frameworks to establish the liberal peace (Chandler 2006, 32-6).

Whereas Richmond draws attention to the silencing of local needs and welfare, Chandler argues that institutionalist peace building practices ignore local societal demands that constitute politics and thus depoliticise an essentially political process. The assumption is that the political process towards democracy in non-western states can be influenced and shaped by foreign intervention. But this is a radicalisation of external intervention into domestic policy making and 'facilitates the erosion of ties linking power and accountability domestically' (Chandler 2006, 48-50, Chandler 2008, 339-41). Liberal peace building consensus thus undermines liberal peace building objectives.

Top-down peace building in the Congo

State Building is the most common practice of the liberal peace. It is problematic because it fails to build liberal democratic states (Richmond and Franks 2009). It relies on a mechanical metaphor that assumes that like broken machines, African states can be repaired (Ellis 2005, 136). Englebert and Tull (2008) argue that state building failures are caused by fundamentally flawed assumptions on which state building efforts are built. One of these flawed assumptions is the expectation that western institutions can be successfully transferred to Africa (Englebert and Tull 2008, 110). An argument prevalent with practitioners is that expectations of liberal democratic state building are unrealistically high and that more time is required – we expect too much and too soon (Brown 2011).

However, liberal peace critique has emphasised more fundamental problems with state building. The international community's 'urge to engineer' (Pugh 1999) assumes that it has the capacity to bring peaceful transformation and regeneration, where local people have failed to do so. But as Pugh points out, such processes result in strategies concerned with measurable output (e.g. DDR (Disarmament Demobilisation and Reintegration), elections, reconstruction projects, legal framework) and is less concerned with developing a reconstructing scheme that interacts with local norms and values (Pugh 2000, 3-4). It is a top down and technocratic intervention strategy (MacGinty 2011, 42). In addition to the already mentioned tension between the liberal ideals of self-determination and freedom and its need for far-reaching intervention to achieve this, the interventions itself are top-down and privilege institutions above people and communities (Heathershaw 2008, 607). The institutional approach to peace building assumes that people's needs are best responded to by putting in place institutions that give

them rights (Richmond 2011b, 27). In effect, this privileging of institutions silences and ignores local needs and cultures.

The disconnect with local realities impacts on the local legitimacy of peace building. Various country case studies have shown that top-down interventions not only exclude the local population, but also fail to connect with the reality of social life. They lack legitimacy locally, may contribute to the reproduction and repetition of conflict, and hide problems at the societal level that continue to exist but do not connect with the institution oriented practices of liberal peace building (Cahen 2005, Chopra 2002, 995, Chopra and Hohe 2004, 292, Fanthorpe 2006). As MacGinty has observed, liberal peace building aims to put something in place that enables interaction with Western states. But although this drawing of states into the liberal world order may enhance international legitimacy, there are important legitimacy problems at home which are ignored by the liberal peace (MacGinty 2011, 41).

Similar experiences occurred in the Congo. As the work of Autesserre has pointed out, the liberal peace in Congo has structurally ignored local needs, most notably those of an end to violent conflict. The liberal peace had a national level focus and ignored local level conflict, which was either deemed irrelevant for national level peace or expected to be ended as a consequence of national level peace. Autesserre argued that contrary to these assumptions, local level conflicts are not irrelevant for national level peace but actually sustained national level conflict. The main problem lies at the approach and perspective of the internationals on Congo, which enabled some practices while making others irrelevant (Autesserre 2006, Autesserre 2007, Autesserre 2009). These problems of ongoing local conflict and the inability of outside interventions to respond adequately persisted in the post-transitional period, and continue to be a matter of great concern as well as much frustration. There is thus a paradoxical situation in which there is talk of post-war peace building amidst conflict (Abass Ahamed 2006, Swart 2011) – a 'violent peace' (Aust and Jaspers 2006) – while silencing and ignoring these local conflicts to enable a perspective on the national agenda. Local conflicts in Eastern Congo have come to be understood as normal and acceptable (Autesserre 2009) while simultaneously this savagery is unquestioningly constructed as a consequence of a lack of state. Peace and the improvement of the human condition of people in the Congo is considered to be only possible through the building of a liberal state through the liberal peace (Kabamba 2010). The elections were therefore a key instrument for ending the war and creating an enabling environment for post-war reconstruction, democratisation and state building (Chivvis 2007, 32, Lyons 2002).

Much of the critique of the liberal peace in the DRC is concerned with the elitist and exclusive nature and model of the peace building strategies. Mehler

(2009) argues that the power sharing agreement in the Congo reflected the negotiators' will to end the war rather than the population's interests. Daley (2006) has thus described the peace building failures in the Congo as a failure due to the peace building model which is exclusive and relies too much on elites and political leaders while excluding the masses of the population. She argues that rather than blaming the political leaders for the failure, the basic mistake lies with the model that relies on these actors. The power sharing agreement that was at the heart of the peace agreement has been criticised for being merely a short term solution to end the conflict that turned out to be a source of conflict during its implementation. It was shaky at best, only partly implemented, did not foster confidence among the former belligerents (Rothchild 2005) and was over-ambitious (Lemarchand 2007). In addition, Lilly (2005) has argued that the power sharing formula in effect created political fiefdoms with each group trying to maintain control over their own circle of power. The power sharing formula on which peace building was to be founded in practice enabled ex-belligerents to behave in office the same way as they behaved during the war. Such power sharing deals recycle elites and as a consequence stimulate violence and conflict (Tull and Mehler 2005). The political institutions of the transition period were dominated by ex-belligerents who distrusted each other (Kabemba 2005, 168) and resembled a 'coalition of the unwilling' (Vircoulon 2007, 35). The apparent unwillingness of the political leadership of the transition to implement the transitional agenda has been a main concern during the transitional period. They wanted to maintain their positions and were united only in their interests to share the spoils, profiting from the no-war-no-peace situation and the lawlessness in the business of natural resource exploitation (Fatal Transactions 2006, Rogier 2003, Smis and Trefon 2003). According to Englebert and Tull local elites do not necessarily see reconstruction as a new beginning after crisis and failure, but rather as 'ongoing competition for power and resources', now 'facilitated by power sharing agreements, increases in foreign aid and lax international oversight' (2008, 121). Relying on them may not necessarily help the objectives of the liberal peace. Because such power sharing models are elite oriented, they exclude the population at large from peace making deals.

Recognising the potential difficulties of working with Congolese belligerent leadership to implement the liberal peace, the international community applied an intervention model of close engagement without directly assuming government tasks. The most clear example of this form of intervention is CIAT (*Comité International d'Appui au Transition*), a committee of foreign Ambassadors that supported the transitional institutions and transitional leaders in the implementation of the transitional agenda, but that in effect was in constant battle with the Congolese political leadership over these matters (De Goede and Van der Borgh

2008, 121). CIAT is a telling example of how local actors are considered to be without capacity and ability for self-government and therefore require supervision (Richmond 2011b, 59).

In the Congo, much international engagement for state building has so far resulted in little tangible improvements in the daily lives of the majority of the population. This results in struggles over statehood and the reconstruction of the state between central and peripheral actors. The continuous postponing of the implementation of the plans for decentralisation, particularly of tax revenues, with the approval of the donor community is a source of contestation between central and peripheral actors which destabilises the country on occasion and undermines efforts of state building, such as the case of Bas Congo province (Tull 2010). Bøås argues that the conventional approach of post-war state building that seeks to build from the capital into the peripheral areas ignores this dynamic of the formation political organisation in these peripheral areas. He thus argues that instead of ignoring these, existing power structures such as developing in eastern Congo should be reviewed and considered a reality that requires engaging rather than ignoring (Bøås 2010).

An underlying argument in these studies that emphasise the importance for state building to recognise local, existing political realities instead of dismissing them to make place for state building blue prints and models, is that international interventions need to be more responsive to local contexts and needs if they want to be successful. Eriksen identifies this as one of the main reason for international failures of state building in the DRC. He argues that the standardised approach is not sufficiently adapted to local contexts while the objective state to be built is based on a non-negotiable concept in which Congolese political elites have no interest (Eriksen 2009). In addition, it has been argued by others that the effect of western interventions has at best been ambiguous, has had little impact on long-term stability and even had a negative impact on domestic politics. According to some, this is mainly due to the fact that western interventions are driven by self-interest and risk-aversion which enabled conflict to continue (Gegout 2009, Marriage 2010).

Critique on the liberal peace in the Congo is thus either concerned with the model of the liberal peace, arguing that it is exclusive and does not take local needs and local context sufficiently into account because it is based on a general blue print, or that it is short-sighted and prioritises short term needs over long term perspectives. It focuses on the main actors, be it unwilling political and military leaders or the failure of the donor or international community to recognise and understand the local context. A general underlying argument in the critique of the focus of state building as a practice of the liberal peace is thus that it is disconnected from the (political) cultures and socio-economic structures of the

host societies. Despite this critique and the recognition of the need for better understanding of or adaptability to the local context is important, there are surprisingly little studies that actually engage with this problem and aim to provide the missing analyses of forms of local engagements and local agencies.

In Congo, as well as in other countries, these top-down interventions thus fail to deliver the liberal ideals of emancipation and self-determination. Post-developmentalist critique has argued how development practices that are part of the liberal peace objectify the developing world and its people. The 'reductive repetition' of development discourse reduces the diversity and different cultures of the developing world into a homogenous set of essential deficiencies (Andreasson 2005). It turns the people that occupy the developing world into 'objects of knowledge and management', that are re-invented as the 'assisted' (Escobar 1995, 23). They are perceived in their relation vis-à-vis de liberal peace, that is, in terms of what they have to contribute to the liberal project as a partner, a friend (e.g. civil society) or an obstruction, a foe (e.g. elites) (Heathershaw and Lambach 2008, 273). This objectification defines the developing world by its negatives – what it lacks, what it needs, what it is not. It is not liberal democratic, not peaceful, not developed, not modern, and it is consequently in need of assistance to become so. Ferguson's study on Lesotho shows how the conceptualisation of Lesotho as a Less Developed Country constructed a country 'with all the right deficiencies, the sort that "development" institutions can easily and productively latch on to'. The constructed deficiencies justified the answers the West was willing to give, instead of producing an analysis of Lesotho's problems that responded to the way in which the Basotho experienced them (Ferguson 1990, 66,70). The West consequently becomes the necessary provider and assistant, while the partners are mere objects in their own development. Interventions that are aimed at assisting the non-West in acquiring what it lacks thus become justified and legitimate (Abrahamsen 2000, 18, Escobar 1995, 45).

The objectification of the people concerned denies their political agency in these processes (Jabri 2010, 42). The answers to the needs of the objects of assistance are not to be found in domestic (the object's own) political agencies. The non-West is defined as an object that is in need of assistance and that requires fixing and constructing which is provided by the West. The liberal peace thus becomes an instrument of control which, as a hegemonic discourse, controls, disciplines or pacifies, contestable political orientations (Slater 2004, 102). This facilitates a 'depoliticised problem-solving approach' (Chandler 2006, 8). Such an approach is concerned with designing technologies and mechanisms to fix the needs of non-western countries and that develop them into the blue print of western liberal democracy. This technocratisation of development perceives development to take place in isolation of processes of social change (Escobar 1995,

52) and indeed of domestic political agency. It does not allow for development to be seen in political terms or for political agency and a free will of local people to be a factor in these processes.

Local peace building as a corrective for top-down liberal peace interventions

Although the argument that peace needs to be grounded in local communities has been established (Azar 1990, Azar and Burton 1986, Lederach 1997), the critique of the liberal peace as a top-down practice that silences local agencies, voices and needs has lead to a call for the more genuine inclusion of local population in peace building activities, and emancipatory methodologies of peace building (Patomäki 2001, 725). Likewise, the failure of the liberal peace to establish peaceful liberal democracies and the emergence of a range of alternatives has also given rise to a renewed interest in the local and its role in the shaping of the outcomes of liberal peace interventions (Acharya 2008, 7). According to Richmond, liberal peace building misses a peace building contract between the international and the local which could provide peace building interventions with legitimacy locally, a legitimacy current peace building interventions are missing (2011b, 12).

Based on a series of case studies, Richmond and Franks show how state building fails as a practice to deliver peace because it is extremely slow and it is unable to engage with the recipient societies and their needs. While state building has legitimised top-down peace building, it fails to deliver this peace because it is unable to build a locally legitimate peace. A relapse into violent conflict is not unthinkable in many countries that have undergone peace building interventions for long periods of time and people's daily lives have not been significantly affected. They therefore suggest to separate state building from peace building, where the former is concerned with the political, economic and security architecture of the state, while the latter focuses on the rights and needs of individuals living in the (post-) conflict environment (Richmond and Franks 2009, 181-85).

After many years of liberal peace building, only a virtual liberal peace has been achieved in Cambodia, one which is perhaps only recognisable to internationals but that does not connect with local populations. This has enabled intervention, conditionality and dependency, which has established norms which are not grounded in local custom and people's lives (Richmond and Franks 2007). Perhaps the best illustration of how a top-down institutional approach fails to build peace is that of Kosovo, where liberal peace intervention promoted a plural democratic society, while establishing the institutions on which a singular Kosovar-Albanian state would be founded on. In doing so, the top-down peace build-

ing strategy had an inbuilt bias with regard to the question of the status of Kosovo and against its own peace building discourse. This enabled Kosovar Albians to co-opt the liberal peace building interventions for their own nationalist objective (Franks and Richmond 2008). Similarly, in Sri Lanka local actors have instrumentalised liberal peace building in pursuit of their own interests which has resulted in local peace building practices that were equally exclusivist as liberal peace building. Using this case, the author's draw attention to the importance of a critical assessment of how legitimacy is locally constructed and how the liberal peace may influence these processes (Goodhand and Walton 2009, 319).

Where local populations have been more actively involved in and consulted for the intervention strategy, peace building interventions have a better chance of success than when local populations have not been actively included, even though they might sympathize with the objectives (Boege 2011, Gizelis and Kosek 2005). Including local voices and grass roots initiatives may make outside interventions more legitimate and meaningful for the citizens concerned (Alger 1989). Local peace building practices can counterbalance the technocratic and top-down nature of liberal peace building practices, because they are often participatory and operate on a community level that is beyond the reach of liberal peace building practices (MacGinty 2008). They are also assumed to be more effective because they draw on local resources and are assumed to connect better and easier to local norms and expectations and are therefore expected to be more effective (MacGinty 2010a, 350). An exemplary case is that of the Rwandan *Gacaca* courts, originally an instrument to deal with community justice for small crimes and disputes, but turned into community courts to deal with genocide cases after the 1994 genocide. This has compromised the authenticity, legitimacy and ultimately the effectiveness of these practices (MacGinty 2010a, 356-58).

Local civil society organisations are co-opted in peace building strategies to complement the actions of external actors and represent the local. However, instead of supporting local initiatives, peace building seeks civil society structures that resemble the western example and often engage in a patronising and asymmetric relation with their local partners, which potentially compromises local support (Lemarchand 1992, Pouligny 2005). They are co-opted in liberal peace building practices, and adapted to fit the norms, framework and objectives, thereby often outstretching their meaning and legitimacy (Bebbington 1993, 278, MacGinty 2011, 61). In a study on regional peace building initiatives in the Great Lakes Region, the author found that local civil society organisations were assumed to be in favour of peace, to be politically neutral or apolitical and to represent the local population (Van Leeuwen 2008, 396). They were therefore considered to be no party to the conflict and have no other interests than 'peace'. The study shows how local NGOs are considered to be part of the project of the liber-

al peace and its objectives of a regional approach despite the fact that 'many organisations found it difficult to analyse the regional character of conflict, and to establish how to take account of it in their programmes' (Van Leeuwen 2008, 410).

In an attempt to be inclusive and make the peace agreement more than a 'warlords' peace', Congolese civil society were included in the peace process in recognition of the important role it has played in political developments in the country since the early 1990s (Boshoff and Rupiya 2003). It may have initially increased the legitimacy of the peace agreement, but this extreme co-optation of civil society in liberal peace building is not without its problems. Not only was civil society co-opted in the institutions and could therefore no longer play its role as watch dog, it also made civil society elitist, thereby disconnecting it from the community level. Paradoxically, the all-inclusive peace agreement also meant that the few parties that did not participate (UDPS and PALU - *Parti Lumumbiste Unifié*) were almost completely sidelined and silenced (Willame 2007, 81-2). The peace process was thus disconnected from the Congolese people and became an elitist project that was seen as a collaboration of Congolese elites and the international community thereby silencing the needs and aspirations of ordinary Congolese people (De Goede 2011).

This inclusion of local civil society excludes the far majority of local populations as well as important changes that occur (Pouligny 2005, 507). Such engagements with local civil society does more harm than good as it pretends to be inclusive of local voices while it is little more than instrumental. This 'romanticisation of the local' is the definition and identification of the local to locate it within the framework of the liberal peace building. It can mean the perception of the local as exotic and unknowable, as without agency, as devious and uncivil, or as a repository of indigenous capacities that can be co-opted in liberal peace building (Richmond 2011b, 57-59). This practise of including local voices by co-opting local civil society organisations in a top-down intervention model, not by accepting them as alternative voices, reproduces a blind spot in liberal peace building. Richmond therefore differentiates between the local and the local-local to highlight the difference between the co-opted local elites and civil society that has become a disconnected elite in itself and that what lies beneath these local structures. The local-local then refers to communities that constitute a political society beyond the co-opted structures, and where the everyday takes place and is 'most powerful as a critical tool' (Appadurai 1996, 178, Richmond 2011b, 13-14).

Various authors have argued for more inclusive practices of peace building (Papagianni 2009). Chopra suggests 'participatory intervention models' which are based on anthropological assessments of local perceptions of the conflict and

context, of needs as well as perceptions of international intervention (Chopra 2002, Chopra and Hohe 2004). Basing peace building interventions more on local (as opposed to external) knowledge and understanding of the conflict and its causes may enhance the success of peace building efforts (Woodward 2007). Such an approach would focus on how local ideas about state and governance perceive a peace to be built, even if these ideas do not comply with the liberal state and its functions. An important source for designing peace building strategies should be how local people 'fill in the blank spaces' (Nielsen 2007). This means a primacy of local instead of external initiatives (Donini 2007, Pouligny 2005, 499). MacGinty speaks about hybrid peace building as a peace building practice based on the interaction between local and liberal peace building practices (MacGinty 2011, 8-9) as a way to meaningfully 'bring the local back in' and potentially fill the liberal blind spot (MacGinty 2011, 210).

But there is an understandable reluctance in the Congo to rely on local custom and political culture for peace building. In Congo, political culture is often understood in terms of clientelism, patronage, and corruption whereas ethnicity is seen to play an important role in social (and political) organisation. Consequently, local political culture and tradition are often understood as problematic or causes of conflict in the first place. Several studies about political organisation in the context of conflict in Eastern Congo have argued that war and political transition do not seem to fundamentally change political structures. Instead, the context of conflict gives new opportunities for local warlords to establish their fiefdom, based on violence, elite pacts, illegal trade, and clientelism (Aust and Jaspers 2006, Bellagamba and Klute 2008b, Jourdan 2008, Raeymaekers 2007, Raeymaekers and Vlassenroot 2006, Tull 2003, Tull 2005, Vlassenroot 2008, Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2005, Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers 2007). In this context, peace building challenges concern fundamental questions about statehood and its practices in the Congo, and the reluctance to build peace building practices on local existing structures or adapt them to problematic political custom is understandable (Raeymaekers 2007).

Much has been said about the failures of peace building in the Congo due to the peace building intervention missions inability to appreciate, understand and respond to the local context (Mathe 2007, Tull 2009). An often heard argument to explain the little results of liberal peace building in Africa is that liberal democracy is an alien concept to Africa and will not work because it does not relate to African political traditions and social organisation. Africa's traditions and socio-political structures, ethnicity in particular, are also seen as constraints for the building of liberal democratic states. The argument is that the ethnic tensions inherent in African societies are triggered by political liberalisation (Berman 1998, Snyder 2000, Young 1999, 31-32). This leads to more pressure on fragile

recovering states, creates political and social instability and stimulates the rise of violent conflict (Ake 1993, 72). In addition, political parties often remain based on ethnicity, which is understood as a constraint for democratic consolidation (Carey 2002, Randall and Svåsand 2002). Ethnic tension is considered to be both a cause and consequence of conflict in the Congo, and continues to be a source of instability in the east (Mamdani 2001, Prunier 2009b, Vlassenroot 2002).

Taylor has argued that the liberal peace in Africa is faced with the problem of applying an approach that is fundamentally dependent on the distinction between private and public, in societies in which the public and private spheres are blurred. The liberal peace will therefore be obstructed by well-established governance modalities such as clientelism and patronage (Taylor 2007). Case studies of democratisation in Africa have shown how processes of the local appropriation of democracy have reinforced clientelism and patronage, and built 'clientelist democracies' and electoral authoritarian regimes (Banégas 2003, Bierschenk 2006, Bratton and Van de Walle 2004, Reno 1995, Robinson 1994a, Szeftel 2000, Van de Van de Walle 2002, Van de Van de Walle 2007) .

This draws attention to the problem of African elites, who are considered predatory and self-interested, even criminalised. Eriksen (2009) has argued that although the liberal peace may privilege elites, it does neglect domestic interests and the interest regimes and elites may have in state building. Because it is a top-down and elitist project, state building requires domestic elite cooperation (Eriksen 2009, Meierhenrich 2004). There is therefore an inherent paradox in peace building practices. By predefining the objected outcome of state building as a liberal democratic state, it refuses local elites to determine the nature of the state and acquire a stake in the state building process. Donors undermine their state building objectives by disempowering local elites (Eriksen 2009). Added to this, external aid bypasses the state (its structures, agencies and national budget) because it deems the state problematic, predatory and obtrusive. In doing so, it undermines the state in the eyes of the population. In addition, the external agencies recruit the more qualified local staff that prefers the higher salaries at the international agencies compared to the state, which undermines the state at a human resource level (Moolakkattu 2011).

In 2011 the Congo was ranked 168 out of 182 in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, scoring a meagre 2 out of 10.[3] From a donor perspective, sidelining predatory elites and corrupt bureaucracies makes sense. In the Congo, as in many other countries in Africa, the state is a resource, which makes political elites problematic partners for peace building. Elites' interest in the state is only for the spoils it has to offer (Herbst 2004, 310). Even in its failed state, the state is a valuable resource for political elites because it offers opportu-

[3] http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2011, accessed 17 January 2012.

nities for self-enrichment (Bayart *et al*. 1999, Newbury 1984, Oliveira 2007, Reno 1998a, Reno 1998b). The regimes Bayart *et al*, Reno and De Oliveira describe are often considered to be the reason for conflict and state failure in the first place. It is exactly this type of capturing of the state by local predatory elites that liberal democratic state building, and its emphasis on democracy and justice, seeks to prevent or turn around. In this respect, the negative role of African (political) elites has been emphasised. African political elites are associated as causal factors of the crisis of the state, being seen as the core of the problem, the creators of the criminalised state and the profiteers of the successful failed state that have their interest in maintaining the profitable status quo rather than leading the nation on a path to democratic reconstruction and development. Political transitions and democratisation processes have been corrupted and manipulated by these self-interested elites who are held responsible for halting the Third Wave in Africa, leading their countries to chaos rather than a democracy (Baker 1998, Brown 2001, Brownlee 2002, Ihonvbere 1996). 'There is no reason why entrusting the creation and preservation of lasting peace to former warlords is a viable strategy. The recurrence of violence is far more likely' (Allen 1999, 381). There is therefore a reluctance to ground peace building strategies in local political culture, local tradition and in forms of political and social organisation.

Hybridity

The critique of the liberal peace as a hegemonic project which is institutionalist and fails to deliver its liberal ideals, as well as the emphasis on local peace building practices has led to the development of an interest in alternative forms of political modernity that have risen in the non-western world. These are shaped by local agents and are often responsive to local custom, culture and needs. The concepts of (political) hybridisation, or creolisation or grafting, have been used to describe these processes of the interaction between local and liberal, or more general between what is autochthonous and that what is allochthonous. When considering modernity in spatial instead of temporal terms (African modernity instead of modernity as a historical state of being) modernity can be understood in local terms without measuring it to western historical trajectories (Probst *et al*. 2002, 11). From this perspective, European expansion and post-colonial development, neo-colonialism, state building and other forms of international engagement in Africa, are influences in African modernities, imported concepts in Badie's terms (2000), and not necessarily the leading example.

This means that when liberal peace building interventions do not deliver its liberal ideals and objectives, the outcomes should be better understood as alternatives that are shaped by local agencies than as liberal peace building failures.

Perceiving these alternatives as failures is a result of a tunnel vision which can only understand societies that are not liberal democratic as being in transition towards it (Carothers 2002). From the different angles of critique of state building, peace building and western engagement in the rest of the world in general, has developed a growing set of literature that is concerned with the emergence of such alternatives, or hybridisations. The term hybridity or hybridisation is generally used to refer to the process and outcomes of co-existence and mutual engagement of different cultural systems – 'local'/'foreign', 'imported'/ 'indigenous', 'traditional'/'modern', 'western'/'non-western'. In the context of the liberal peace and its practices of state building and democratisation, it can be easily seen how the concept of hybridisation reflects the engagement between western state building and democratisation intervention in local contexts.

Although the term might have only recently become popular in the context of post-war state building analysis, hybrids themselves are nothing new in African politics and society (in the case of the Congo, see Mobutu 1975, 100-1, Vansina 1990, Young and Turner 1985, 208-11). Different systems and organising principles can co-exist in parallel to each other. They can also blend and turn into something new. The argument goes that imported foreign political systems can never be fully copied, and at best result in a form of grafted statehood. Conceptualisations that were formed in a foreign political tradition cannot completely replace local conceptualisations of politics and state (Bayart 1996b). The African state is then a hybrid state, in which elements of the imported conceptualisation of state are shaped by autochthonous conceptualisations which are rooted in historical traditions of politics and state (Badie 2000, Bayart 1996a). It also creates a heterogeneous political culture, in which 'two semantic and evaluative horizons are in fact mixed' (Bayart 2005, 111). The contemporary African political organisation is then a mixture of exogenous structures and institutions and endogenous customs. The exogenous institutions justify the regime internationally to a certain standard of 'modernity' and institutionalise the new political elite and regime. These imported models are adapted to local cultural frameworks in order to penetrate local societies and claim authority (Badie 2000, 143-4, 163).

A well-known example of an outcome of the grafting of western models on an essentially African core is that of neo-patrimonialism. It is an example of a system of governance and rule in which modern political systems and their institutions are organised according to a set of logic and rules that relates to the political custom of the country concerned rather than the political custom from where the political system originated. The distinguishing feature of the patrimonial state is the absence of real distinction between public and private domains which is formally recognised but not respected (Médard 1994, 328-34, Médard 1996, 84). The concept of the neo-patrimonial state as a hybrid has also been used to de-

scribe the process of the patrimonialisation of the recreated centralist, corporatist and authoritarian African colonial state in the 1970s and 1980s (Callaghy 1987, 89). Another example is the recognition of legal duality as a system in which codified, often western-modelled law coexists with customary law (Von Trotha 1996, Woodman 2005, Yakubu 2005).

This grafting, or hybridisation, may seem to be an almost unguided process. However, Badie emphasised that these processes are subject to not only a politics of exportation (the West exporting its concepts and political systems to Africa) but also a politics of importation (Africa strategically importing ideas and concepts), as was also the case in the mentioned study on liberal peace building in Sri Lanka (Goodhand and Walton 2009). In this blend of exogenous structures and institutions and endogenous customs, the exogenous institutions justify the regime internationally to a certain standard of 'modernity' and institutionalise the new political elite and regime. These imported models are adapted to local cultural frameworks in order to penetrate local societies and claim authority. But rather than exporting/importing concepts, ideas and institutions *with* their original meaning, Badie argues that in the process of exportation/importation political concepts lose their meaning and therefore their effectiveness and their power. The grafting process creates new meanings that reconstruct the political scene. Importation thus disrupts systems of meaning and gives rise to new political practices and political innovations (Badie 2000, 171). The loss of meaning creates opportunities for creative deviation and the reshaping of the political scene into political alternatives and hybrids.

Schaffer provides a very insightful example of what the loss of meaning of imported concepts produces in practice. He explains how democracy has been 'translated' into *demokaraasi* in Senegalese Wolof society and that this translation is not merely one of pronunciation but also entails a translated meaning. He argues that the translation of democracy to *demokaraasi*

> '(…) relied on a set of cultural premises grounded in the everyday life of the unschooled populace because the presuppositions that provide meaning to the French term *démocratie* are missing in Wolof. The transfer of meaning from French to Wolof involves a shift of reference points and corresponding metaphors. The absence of equivalent cultural frames in Wolof has, (...), required the various factions of the Senegalese political elite to generate frames of interpretation that fit the cultural frameworks of non-French speaking Wolofones.' (Schaffer 1998, 53)

Demokaraasi is related in meaning but fundamentally distinct from liberal democracy in its emphasis on collective economic security, consensus and group conformity, community solidarity and an emphasis on treating others as equals. Consequentially, these diverted meanings of democracy and *demokaraasi* result in different institutions and political practices (Schaffer 1998, 85).

The recognition of grafting in processes of modernisation in Africa is perhaps nothing new. But what is relatively recent is that these locally invented creative deviations have become recognised as a political reality that are not necessarily the core problem for African states and politics, and may be valuable for processes of reconstruction and political organisation in post-war and failed states. What is important to recognise is that earlier studies on grafting, duality and importation analysed these processes as part of a process of African modernisation that imitates the modernisation process of the West, and thus as forms of 'failure'. The Third Wave of democratisation in the 1990s raised questions about the outcomes. 'Failed' democratisation that has resulted in 'illiberal democracies' (Zakaria 2003), and a plethora of other 'democracies with adjectives' that intend to describe their problematic nature (Collier and Levitsky 1996). These are often hybrid regimes which are democratic in name, and may hold elections, but lack the civil and political rights and freedoms of democracy (Levitsky and Way 2010, 5, Robertson 2011, 4-5). In Africa, analysts have drawn attention to the phenomenon of 'clientelist democracy' or 'patronage democracy' as a system in which clientelist practices continue to operate within a democratic institutional framework (Banégas 2003, 430, Chandra 2007, Van de Van de Walle 2007).

Such hybrids have existed since the 1960s in Africa (Huntington 1991, 21) but the Third Wave gave rise to a new interest in how these regimes could contribute to further democratisation. These studies focused on questions about whether certain states could qualify as a democracy based on their level of electoral competitiveness (Diamond 2002), how to typify them (Bogaards 2009), whether their current in-between state could be fruitful for further democratisation (Brownlee 2009, Carothers 2002) and how the donor community finds excuses for the production of hybrid regimes as failed democracies (Brown 2011). These studies have engaged with the concept of hybridisation as a combination of two necessary ingredients, the blending of two political systems – democracy and authoritarianism – resulting in 'pseudo-democracies' (Diamond 2002, 24), *dictablandas* and *democraduras* (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 9).

In studies that emphasise hybrids as an outcome of political modernisation processes that follow the western model, the colonial state and western modernity was the referent of importation and grafting. Arguments about hybridisation in the process of post-war state building takes the liberal hegemonic project as its referent. MacGinty argued how peacemaking practices on the one hand do seek standardisation, they also seem to increasingly include indigenous peacemaking practices (2008, 157). The outcomes of such peace building practices are hybrids: the liberal peace distorted by local practices (MacGinty 2010b, 392). Based on a series of case studies that each focus on a different core aspect of liberal peace building (governance, state building, economic reform, civil society, security)

MacGinty argues that local agencies cannot be ignored in peace building interventions because they invariably have hybridised peace building practices which have blurred the distinction between local and external (MacGinty 2011). Peace building in Cambodia has established a hybrid polity that combines elements of the pre-democratic political system and elements of the externally driven democratisation programmes. Roberts describes it as a pragmatic outcome of the conflicts between indigenous political systems and the imported democratic system (Roberts 2008).

Case studies have suggested that these hybrid outcomes may be a more promising starting point for post-war reconstruction, as they may enjoy much legitimacy locally, in which elements of the western democratic state model are combined with traditional forms of governance, such as councils of elders, chiefs, clan systems, and customary institutions (Boege *et al*. 2008, 13-15, Clements *et al*. 2007).

Hybrids can also be a phenomenon that develops not within the existing state but 'beside' it (Bellagamba and Klute 2008a). Rather than seeing these alternative systems of political organisation and authority as challenging the (weak, failed) state, or as specifically 'African' alternatives forms of state, the notion of political authority beside the state points to a situation in which 'the state and the alternative to state power have shown themselves to be mutually constitutive and interdependent.' Such local authorities may develop themselves as part of a complex state structure in which they are simultaneously part of and parallel to the state, and even help to maintain the state. In such a heterarchy, there exists a plurality of competing powers in which the central state is one of them, but not hierarchically standing above and controlling other power groups (Bellagamba and Klute 2008b, 9-11). A case in point is the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly in the eastern part of the country, where, as discussed earlier, during the war a form of heterarchy or 'mediated statehood' (Raeymaekers & Vlassenroot 2006, 5) between various state and non-state actors has developed.

These studies and arguments on hybridity all see hybridity as an outcome, as the result of the interface between liberal and local. Although they use different terminology, it is very similar to the earlier discussions about Bayart's grafting and Badie's transplanted state. Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha rejects this idea of hybridity as an outcome. Hybridity for him 'is not a third term that resolves the tension between two cultures, or the two scenes of the book, in a dialectical play of "recognition"'(Bhabha 2008, 162). He does not see hybridity as a combination of one and the other, but rather as a space in which movement and dynamics are enabled. For post-war state building, this means that instead of using the term hybrid to describe neither-democracy-nor-authoritarianism, hybridi-

ty means a dynamic space in which the liberal peace is being negotiated through local agencies.

This then draws attention to engagement between the liberal democratic hegemonic project and its recipient society, but not on the level of political systems but rather looking at people themselves – their agencies, culture, power and resistance. Instead of seeing hybrids in negative terms or as an in-between state, hybridity is then not mirrored as a diversion from the model, but rather as an opportunity for actors to negotiate the liberal and the local. This conceptualisation of hybridity offers a more nuanced understanding of processes of conflict and peace which overcomes the hegemonic narratives of the liberal peace but also avoids the traps of romanticising the local as the normatively good, peaceful, and ultimately more successful means of peace building (MacGinty 2011, 207).

Local agencies

Through the practices of the romanticisation of the local, local agencies are silenced (Richmond 2011b, 51). Postcolonial and feminist critique have argued that there is no place for traditional, non-rational and generally non-western aspects of people's everyday life in the worldview that is exported by the liberal peace (Chatterjee 1998, 65). It has sought active participation in knowledge production to make it more representative (Gandhi 1998, 43-4). The world is framed in strict binaries of traditional/modern, rational/non-rational, etc. To become modern, 'the postcolonial subject had to let go of these authentic, local or cultural aspects of his everyday life' (Chakrabarty 1995). But this captures only part of the daily reality of postcolonial life: on the one hand it captures only a small part of the local society that conforms to western style modernity (Chatterjee 1998, 62); on the other hand, it captures only part of the complexity of modernity as such, only those aspects of modernisation that fit within westernised modernisation thinking, ignoring local elements and trajectories of modernity (Chakrabarty 1995, 758).

However, the above discussed studies on the emergence of hybridity draw attention to the significance of local agencies in the shaping of peace building processes in local contexts and that these local aspects of people's everyday lives cannot be ignored in peace building processes. Chabal *et al*. draw specific attention to African agencies as the driving force behind the creative process of social transformation that takes place within, but also challenges, the parameters of Africa's current challenging conditions (Chabal *et al.* 2007, 3). The Africa-Europe Group for Inter Disciplinary Studies in its project on 'African Alternatives', understands agency as being produced by the interaction between actor and structure, thereby generating a 'reflexive and negotiating moment between the two'

and the 'promise of agency', which emphasises the significance of local agencies as the creative driver behind local alternatives and hybridity (De Bruijn *et al.* 2007, 13).

Societies such as the Congolese, where, in the context of decades of decay practically a whole society is condemned to resorting to popular strategies and tactics of survival, have drawn attention from researchers interested in practices of everyday life in the context of conflict and state failure. De Boeck and Plissart have made a fascinating study of how the Kinois use their inventiveness and creativity to imagine and create a world that is materially non-existent (De Boeck 2006, De Boeck and Plissart 2004). Trefon has put together a valuable collection of studies on Kinois' responses to failures of the state by focusing on the 'legendary cleverness and inventiveness of peoples' practices and mental constructions' (2004, 3). The essays show how through inventive practices people find their access to health care, water, education, transport and other basic services that have for long been practically non-existent in the country. Similarly, MacGaffey has made a fascinating study on coping mechanisms of ordinary people's household economies in a context of economic collapse, where people consume two to three times as much as their actual income (MacGaffey 1991, MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000).

Such studies thus draw our attention to everyday practices beyond the parameters of what is conventionally considered as the political that can help us gain new insights in the political of contemporary Congo. What is politically relevant, and in what way it is relevant, can only be determined locally because political relevance is determined by cultural and identity aspects (Chabal & Daloz 1999, 156, Chabal & Daloz 2006, 122) while culture and identity are in itself an exponent of a specific historical context (Bayart 2005). This then brings alternative perspectives on how important political concepts such as legitimacy are conceived and how they operate (Bayart 2005, 155, Chabal & Daloz 1999, 42-4, Lonsdale 1987, 347). The insight that what is politically relevant (and relevant for political analysis) in Africa often occurs beyond the parameters and categories of western political analysis therefore highlights the significance of other political categories. Martin therefore draws attention to 'non-identified political objects' or expressions of indirect politics, that contribute to, and open up new fields of research for political analysis (Martin 2002, 14-15).

This brings the study of peace and conflict to other disciplinary fields, in particular those of anthropology, sociology, area studies and cultural studies (Richmond 2011b, 140, Viktorova 2008). There is a wealth of studies on everyday political practices and on the interpenetration of the everyday and politics. This rich literature focuses on the encounters between people and politics in their everyday lives to understand political practices and political organisation in Afri-

can countries. Bayart has discussed how politics is materialised in people's everyday lives by analysing practices of hair-styles, cuisine and clothing (2005, 181-232). Chabal has argued that political analysis should be driven by the immediacy of everyday and death (2009). Geschiere's work on witchcraft in Cameroon emphasises the significance of these cultural practices for modern day politics (1995). Daloz's work on political elites in various cultural and historical contexts, focusing on practices of, for example, ostentation, clothing and eating culture, shows how this elite behaviour is reproduced by social expectation and instrumentalisation which are historically and culturally informed (Daloz 1999b, Daloz 2002, Daloz 2003b, Daloz 2010).

Introducing the concept of agency to these political acts make these practices relevant, beyond an anthropological interest in local cultures as such, for political change, and, in the context of peace building processes, for a locally constructed peace. Critical peace studies do not see these agencies as operating in a void in the sense of creativity and production in the absence of state, state services or formal economy. Interests in the local from critical analysts have drawn attention to local agencies as expressions of the interaction between people and dominating structures such as the state, power, and in the context of peace building, the liberal peace. The notion of an interaction between the everyday and hegemony has also been highlighted by others. Bierschenk and Oliver de Sardan discuss how the 'idea of the state' informs everyday practices of politics (2003). Similarly, Gupta and Ferguson have argued that the state in relation to the everyday should not be merely seen as a structure of bureaucracy and power, but also as a site of cultural and symbolic production (2002, 981). On the way in which people relate to the state in Africa, analyses have focused on the non-horizontal but web-like or rhizomatic structures, which are based on complex systems of social organisation, and which often take place in the informal (Bayart 1993, 220-1, Migdal 1988, 28-39).

These studies focus on how structures of power, such as the state, shape everyday practices of people. However, the concept of everyday agency draws attention not to how people's agencies are shaped by structures of power, but to everyday agencies as resistance to power. The everyday of the 'little people' has been long recognised as a source of historical knowledge. 'History from below' emphasises the often unseen role of the ordinary people in the course of history (see for example Alexander 2000, Van Deursen 1996, Jewsiewicki and Moniot 1988, Lüdtke 1989, Ranger 1985). As Scott has shown in his study on peasant resistance in a South East Asian village, resistance of seemingly powerless people should be understood beyond open rebellions, demonstrations and conflict. It takes place in interaction of people's daily life activities with the structures of power, through 'passive noncompliance, subtle sabotage, evasion and deception'

(Scott 1985, 31). Bleiker's work has focused on a discursive level of this kind of mundane resistance by focusing on verbal expressions of dissent in everyday speech and writing. In response to Foucaults discursive conceptualisation of power, Bleiker draws attention to discursive resistance through which people seek to escape discursive domination. Such discursive dissent operates through daily and mundane verbal practices (speaking, talking, writing, singing, gossip, rumour) and has, according to Bleiker, a relevance to processes of social change in the sense that it lays the necessary foundations that prepare for and enable more debate and openly expressed forms of dissent (Bleiker 2004, 210-11). This type of discursive agency generates a public debate that challenge norms and values and are thus an essential form of agency in the process to bring about social and political change (Bleiker 2003, 44). An interesting example of these forms of resistance is Mbembe's study on Christianisation in Africa, which analyses this process of Christianisation as a 'logic of conquest' to which African societies responded with indiscipline and indocility as a form of revenge to challenge the hegemonic structure of the Christian church (Mbembe 1988).

Such discursive and material practices that occur in the everyday lives of people criticise and challenge power. Several studies have encountered such practices of resistance and critique in the Congo. An interesting example is that of the phenomenon of *radio trottoir* (pavement radio) as a popular response to a lack of trustworthy information which challenges power by defining its own truths shared by the masses (Ellis 1989, Sabakinu Kivilu 1988). Similarly, in Kinshasa people that feel excluded from the political debate because of its elitist nature have challenged democracy by organising informal and popular 'street parliaments' that challenge the formal governance institutions as representing the population (De Goede 2011, Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy 2008). A study on 'proximity reports' in Congolese media provides an insightful example on how people's creative use of the media to expose their suffering becomes a political act that mobilises shame and consequently establishes a channel of communication and interaction between state and society (Pype 2010, Pype 2011). Studies on administrative reform have shown that a lack of recognition of the complexity of the state institutions that are not merely failed and therefore vacuous, as well as a misunderstanding of the strategies and practices of survival of its employees, results in the failure of these reform programmes (Titeca and De Herdt 2011, Trefon 2009).

This emphasis on the relevance of people's everyday lives and their everyday practices in the context of domination is relevant for peace building because it draws attention to the fact that people are not passive recipients of liberal peace building interventions. Rather, there is a dynamic interaction between ordinary people and the liberal peace, beyond the elitist engagement with host societies of

liberal peace building practices. The studies discussed above on popular responses to state failure and popular political practices are a wealthy source of insight in local political dynamics and cultural practices, but are often written in isolation of questions concerning the liberal peace. There is an emerging literature on the interaction of local agencies and liberal peace building practices. Ellis' (1999) and Richards' (2005a, 2005b) studies on the Liberian civil war have provided much needed anthropological analyses of armed conflict. Pouligny's work on how UN peace missions have been experienced by host societies has argued that host communities are not passive recipients but actively interact with international interventions in pursuit of their own agenda's (2000, 2006). An anthropological study on recurring acts of violence (rape, massacre) in Eastern DRC engages with the perpetrators and their narratives to make sense of their own acts provides a fascinating and rare study of such events (Eriksson Baaz & Stern 2008).

Based on field research in East Timor and the Solomon Islands, Richmond's work on everyday agencies shows the importance of the recognition of local everyday agencies for peace building interventions. An interaction between local and liberal peace building is a foundation for a post-liberal peace, which has international as well as local legitimacy (Richmond 2011b). This is what made the peace process in Papua New Guinea successful. State building was a process of institutional *bricolage*, in which a liberal model was used, which housed customary elements of governance, thereby simultaneously constructing local and international legitimacy. What made this process successful, was the domination of local agencies in a bottom-up process, and an openness towards local agencies with the 'top-down' level of the process (Boege 2011). As other case studies in for example Somalia, East Timor, Cambodia and the DRC show, the experience in Papua New Guinea between local and liberal leading to peace building success stories is an exception to a more general practice of disregard for the local and the everyday (Richmond & Mitchell 2011).

Defining the interaction between local agencies and peace building, Richmond argues for a post-liberal peace as a local-liberal hybrid. It is based on the notion that the liberal peace fails to connect with or reach the daily life of people and does not produce a social contract on which peace is to be founded (2009a, 325-27). A post-liberal peace is then the process in which everyday lives of people and their needs, customs and culture, and grassroots agencies coexist and negotiate with liberal peace building practices (2009a, 331, Richmond 2010, 387). A post-liberal peace would be constructed on the local level, in 'contextual forms' (Richmond 2010, 671). Richmond therefore makes a plea for more engagement (of liberal actors) with the local, with the everyday; for an approach that can 'intellectually engage with the lives of ordinary people' (2009a, 333). But it requires more than an intellectual engagement. It means a move away from the

idea that politics can be changed from the outside, and a recognition of local agencies within peace building practices. Such analysis should thus 'pursue a politics embedded in lived experience', that is, in people's daily lives. It means engaging with other dimensions of the political, a shift in interest from the formal and public political life to the private political life (Darby 2006b, 49, 60).

A valuable contribution to the understanding of everyday engagement with hegemonic structures and political domination is the *politique par le bas* approach which was developed in the 1980s mainly through the work of Bayart, Mbembe and Toulabor and the journal *Politique Africaine.* It focuses attention to modes of popular political culture and behaviour, and aims for an understanding of African politics by looking at what happens below the level of high politics (Bayart *et al*. 2008). Although the studies in the collection themselves do not focus specifically on engagements with the liberal peace, the approach developed as the *politique par le bas* approach does provide us with useful tools for the analysis of negotiations between the everyday and the liberal, such as its emphasis on relational agency, the dynamics and interaction between high politics and low politics, and the use of concepts such as resistance and popular revenge. Studies inspired by this approach have focused on diverse domains such as football (Baller and Saavedra 2010), popular demonstrations in Africa (Lafargue 1996), and ordinary people's understanding of war (Maindo Monga Ngonga 2001) as sites of interaction between the politics of everyday life and the high politics of the state.

What becomes evident from the above is that an approach that privileges the interactions between local agencies and liberal peace building can provide valuable insights in addition to the limited understanding we have of processes of liberal peace building and their often problematic outcomes. By focussing on local agencies in this process and their engagements with the liberal peace – instead of on institutions and technocratic questions of policy implementation – new sites for research are opened. In addition, instead of focussing on how the liberal can engage better (or at all) with the local, centralising local agencies and their engagements with the liberal may enable us to access new understandings to how processes of liberal peace building materialise.

The important conclusion from the discussion in this chapter is that in mainstream academia and policy making circles the individual in whose name peace building interventions take place is at best considered a passive recipient and forgotten at worst. From various directions critical approaches have attempted to bring the focus back to these individuals, their custom and culture, their rights, needs and choices, and their agencies. This thesis is about the National Assembly of post-war DRC. The critique discussed in this chapter expresses a clear concern with the top-down approach of liberal peace building – which includes the insti-

tution of Parliament – and argued for an approach that is concerned with local agencies. Instead of putting aside the institutions of the state building project of the liberal peace, I suggest that these institutions remain relevant but that they should be analysed in a different way. Instead of seeing them as part of a top-down structure of the liberal peace, I suggest that they can be studied as sites of local agencies themselves. The people that make these institutions function have their own 'local-local', which lies hidden beneath the institutional cover and veneer of liberal democratic practices. It means a different everyday than the one discussed by Richmond, Bleiker and Scott. It concerns the everyday practices of people within the institutions, the political practices through which MPs perform their role as MP. They may be elites that are co-opted in the liberal peace and therefore part of the 'top-down' and 'elitist' project of state building, they are still Congolese citizens that partake in Congolese society, share Congolese customs and traditions, albeit it from a different position than the ordinary citizen. Even more so, through electoral representation they are connected to the local communities that they represent in the National Assembly. The interaction between their agencies, aspects of the liberal peace, the electorate as well as structures of state power make the site of the National Assembly a very relevant site where local agencies, the everyday lives of people collide with the liberal peace. The next chapter will build a theoretical framework to enable such a research into the interaction between MP agencies and liberal democracy.

3

Consuming agents in the institutions of liberal peace building

The critique discussed in the previous chapter offers new directions to analyse state building processes. The main interest of the liberal peace critique discussed is to redirect academic and policy making interest away from the institutions that are prioritised by the liberal peace over the interest of everyday needs of ordinary citizens. This would enable a more legitimate peace grounded in local needs and constructed on a social contract between recipient communities and international peace builders. This means a shift in focus to local agencies and their needs, custom, culture and their aspirations for what peace would mean for them and how peace would be shaped. Case studies that focus on local agencies, the 'local-local' and their interaction with and resistance to the liberal peace provide often overlooked aspects of peace building from the margins (see for example Richmond & Mitchell 2011). However, this emphasis on critical agencies can also shed light on dynamics within the very core of liberal peace building. Although the critique that the liberal peace is an institutionalist project is just, these institutions are made to function in the way they do by local agencies. This means that using the critique that argues for an emphasis of local agencies in peace building can also be employed to tackle the problem of the liberal peace as an institutionalist project in another way, namely, not by directing attention away from these core sites of state building, but by engaging with these institutions as sites of local agencies. This enables a more critical engagement with the actors on these sites beyond mere co-optation in the liberal peace as an elitist, exclusive and top-down project. It provides an analytical engagement with these often externalised and artificial institutions in which a local is hidden. These sites can then be studied as sites of local agencies in which the local interacts with the liberal through co-optation, resistance, negotiation, rejection and compliance.

At the site of the National Assembly, local agencies give shape to the institution of the National Assembly, making it function in a unique, localised way. These local agencies are enabled by social interaction such as that between MPs and their constituencies, between MPs and the executive, MPs and their political parties. But they are also shaped by local political custom and culture, as well as the newly established parameters of democratic governance. This chapter will discuss the concept of local agency within the institutions of liberal peace building. The chapters that follow will discuss how these local agencies consume liberal democracy at the site of the National Assembly in the DRC.

Practices of discipline

Foucault's concept of discipline is particularly useful for the conceptualisation of the power relations between the receiving countries and the liberal peace and the way in which this affects institutions (Abrahamsen 2000). Foucault's disciplining refers to the techniques of power to subjectify individuals, to turn them into 'docile bodies' and exercise control over them through normalisation and coercion. An important notion in Foucault's concept of disciplining is that the object of control is not the outcome (the disciplined body) as such. The objects of supervision and control are processes of normalisation. Normalisation is achieved through a corrective process. This means that disciplining aims to improve behaviour while establishing a power relation of strict subjection (Foucault 1991, 137-38). This is particularly relevant in the context of the liberal peace and its approach to institution building because it places emphasis on a process: disciplining as a learning process toward "liberal democratic self-mastery" (Jabri 2007, 116-24). Disciplining is for Foucault essentially corrective (Foucault 1991, 179). It upholds a norm to which the subject is coerced to comply. It thus assumes the possibility of progress (Foucault 1991, 160) or development towards normalisation. It also assumes the need for continuous coercion through disciplinary measures to contribute towards the achievements of normalisation through a double system of gratification (carrot) and punishment (stick) (Foucault 1991, 180).

In the case of institution building in the Congo we can see how the liberal peace is practiced through discipline. The disciplining practices aim to establish liberal democratic institutions that are seen to constitute liberal democracy. This disciplining takes place in the *process* of democratisation and liberalisation and uses events such as 'HIPC decision point'[1] or elections as moments to 'measure'

[1] DRC reached HIPC decision point in July 2003 and received US$10 billion in debt relief IMF. 2003. IMF and World Bank Support US$10 Billion in Debt Service Relief for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Press Release No. 03/127 28 July 28 2003..

or 'examine' the Congo's progress (Foucault 1991, 184). Similarly, gratifications (debt relief, development aid) and punishment or the threat thereof (international criminal court, public denouncing, aid cuts) function as instruments to force the Congo to comply with the norm. Although liberal democracy is the intended objective, the supervision or control focuses on the process towards that by disciplining the institutional practices. The constant need for improvement and the notion of how to do things better are emphasised (good governance, for example) while a power relation between the host country and the liberal peace (and its representatives) is established. Liberal democracy and peace is the norm. Through continuous pressuring, praising and denouncing the Congo forced in this norm.

Local agencies exercising their existence

The romanticisation of the local gives local actors a label and ascribes them a role: perpetrator, victim, 'civil' society, problematic leaders, marginalised urban and rural masses, etc. This is the contemporary equivalent of the colonial objectification of the subject: it turns people into an object that have a (by the liberal peace) predetermined position and role. They become orchestrated actors in a scripted play of rebuilding the Congo, in which the discourse of the liberal peace defines the script. The objectification of the subject takes away local agencies and their will and capacity to act.

The emphasis on citizens and their customs, culture and needs as opposed to merely their rights as liberal subjects implies a recognition of their contextuality or their subjective engagement with their present and future. People are actors in their own subjective presence. Mbembe speaks about the 'emerging subject in a time of instability and crisis', which problematises the relationship between temporality and subjectivity and emphasises that people live in a subjective world in which they 'exercise their existence' (Mbembe 2001b, 15). The post-war is then an 'emerging time', a time of entanglement and displacement (Mbembe 2001b, 14-7). The notion of displacement means that it is not a stagnant time. Rather, it is a time of constant redefinition; the only apparent stability is provisional. It is a time of constant disturbances and permanent instability. What is significant about this time of constant disturbances and permanent instability is that it is a state of 'normality', in the sense that it does not necessarily result into crises (Mbembe 2001b, 15-6). The notion of a time of entanglement problematises the concept of time and temporality in relation to subjectivity and emphasises that time is a non-linear experience. The historicity of the present connects the past with the present and the post-war future that is to be built. Mbembe speaks of the present as the

experience of a time, in which the absences of the past and the future come together (Mbembe 2001b, 14-6).

The significance of the recognition of the self that exercises his existence is that it draws attention to local agencies and the interaction between local agencies and the liberal peace in post-war Congo. As a project of dispossession and discipline the liberal peace silences and ignores these local agencies. Because it perceives local agencies as objects of the liberal peace it ignores the ways in which they exercise their existence as subjects of the post-war peace process. The emphasis on the subject that exercises his existence thus enables an analysis of processes of state-building in post-war societies that moves away from the liberal peace's focus on institutional organisation, institutional efficiency and efficacy, good governance, legal frameworks, and questions of policy implementation, management and efficiency. It moves away from an interest in the institutions as objects of discipline to a people and agency oriented perspective that aims to understand people and their agencies which make these institutions function, as well as how people themselves experience these processes. It redirects attention from institutions and their weaknesses and failures to the subject – the people living in contemporary Africa and their agencies.

In the context of the liberal peace as a hegemonic project of discipline local agencies negotiate the power of the liberal peace. Power and resistance are intimately related; power is inevitably faced with resistance (Pickett 1996). As the work of Bleiker (2003, 2004) and Scott (1985, 2009) that I discussed in the previous chapter has shown, such resistance is not a form of direct confrontation or rejection, but takes place in small forms through deceit, the toying with power and the negotiation of power (Bhabha 2008, 264, Mbembe 2001b, 128, Pickett 1996, 458, Richmond 2011a, 4). Such resistance is not necessarily negative or destructive. Instead, it is productive and produces local alternatives. It is a critical agency aimed at the transformation of power (Richmond 2011a). This means that we should look at how the liberal peace is being negotiated by local agencies through the practises of their daily lives. I thus take a Bourdieuian approach to agency, and consider agency and structure to be complementary and mutually informing. Whereas structures such as the liberal peace and local political culture inform human agency, human agencies also redefine these structures in their turn (Bourdieu 1977). When local agencies negotiate the liberal peace, it this interaction between structure and agency that is at stake.

The inevitable interaction between local and liberal that takes place in countries such as the Congo that are subject to a project of liberal peace is thus a process of liberal discipline and resistance through local agencies. The agency to resist and negotiate the liberal peace is enabled by its ambivalences, instabilities and discrepancies which provide opportunities to deviate (Bhabha 2008, 153).

This resistance is made possible by a 'time-lag', the 'temporal break in representation' in which the repeating takes place. In this time-lag things can take on new meaning because agents can in the process of repeating negotiate meaning (Bhabha 2008, 274, 263-5). The in-between as a creative space and moment that Bhabha calls time-lag, has also been emphasised by others. Ricœur distinguishes the meaning of the sender of a message (the speech-act) or the social action, and the recipient. They are not necessarily the same. But for the meaning of a message the sender's intended meaning is not more important than the meaning (interpretation) the receivers give to it (Thompson 1981, 53-4, 63-4). In the time-lag between the actual speech and receiving the speech, meaning can be deviated, knowingly or unknowingly. More in the context of the liberal peace in Africa, the earlier mentioned argument of Badie on the import and export of concepts also emphasises the translation that takes place in this process (Badie 2000, Schaffer 1998). Bhabha's time-lag is exactly that moment of the loss of meaning between exportation and importation, when ideas, concepts, institutions are given new grounding in a new context (Badie), when the speech-act is interpreted (Ricœur) or when the hegemonic discourse is slightly transformed (Bhabha). It is in this space to manoeuvre that local agencies are enabled.

The space in which local agencies are possible is hybrid space, enabled by the collision of the liberal and local. As discussed in the previous chapter, hybridity is often used to describe the product of the interface of the liberal and the local, in the same way as Bayart speaks about grafting and Badie speaks about the transplanted state (Badie 2000, Bayart 1996a). In Bhabha's terms hybridity is not an outcome of the blending of one and the other but as a dynamic space which enables the negotiation of the liberal peace by local agencies (Bhabha 2008, 162). These hybrid spaces enable agencies to resist, negotiate and challenge the liberal peace and its disciplining acts. Instead of seeing hybrids in negative terms or as an in-between state, hybridity is then not mirrored as a diversion from the model, but rather as an opportunity for actors to negotiate the liberal and the local. It is a momentum of opportunity to which this thesis focuses in its interest in the liberal peace in the Congo. I will use the term hybridity or hybrid space to refer not to a site or location, neither to refer to the collision of one and the other. Instead, following Bhabha, I will use the term to refer to opportunity, room to manoeuvre and act. Hybridity is then enabling; it enables agencies and produces 'third spaces'. It are these moments of transformation or deviation that Bhabha sees as 'resistance' to discursive domination that produce 'third spaces' (Bhabha 2008, 313-4). Third spaces are challenges to the hegemonic discourse by setting new boundaries. It is a form of resistance through negotiation to adapt the hegemonic discourse to the local context. It thus produces creativities such as the 'Hindi vegetarian bible' (Bhabha 2008, 168-9). Hybridity is created by the in-

consistencies in the dominant discourse, the time-lag in its translation, and by the disconnect between the liberal and the local – the 'zones of irrelevance and disengagement' between the liberal and the local (MacGinty 2011, 88). Hybridity is then a dimension, a 'constantly moving piece of variable geometry' which is enabled by the interaction between local and liberal agencies. That is, the liberal's ability to persuade and convince the local into the liberal peace, and the local's ability to resist and to come up with alternatives (MacGinty 2011, 77).

Local agencies and culture

A peace building practice which is founded on the interaction between local and liberal is what Richmond calls a post-liberal peace, a space in which local agencies claim emancipation, and in which they pursue and invent a peace that is based on local aspirations and grounded in local needs (Richmond 2009a, 330-33, Richmond 2009b). Although they overlap in many ways, an important difference between Bhabha's hybridity and Richmond's post-liberal peace is the understanding of agency. Whereas for Bhabha agency is unconscious, Richmond's critical agencies have awareness and strategy. Kapoor has criticised Bhabha for not developing the creative, resisting agent to its full potential. For Kapoor, the problem lies in Bhabha's implicit culturalism. Bhabha's hybridising agency takes place in the sphere of cultural transaction (Kapoor 2008, 135), in which the answer to the question of why people resist is implicitly cultural and unconscious. Culturalism sees culture as hidden and beyond the control and awareness of people that own it. Consequently, it denies agency and the ability to make choices. Culture is in this sense about continuity, and rejects the significance of innovation, borrowing and importation (Bayart 2005, 71). Culturalist approaches to political change are biased towards continuity within a process of change (Eckstein 1988, 792). It turns political development into an ideological struggle, in which one culture is better than the other in producing the objective of a democratic state in the western sense of the term (see for example Harrison 2006, Kaplan 2000). The concept of culture then becomes a 'methodological death trap' (Koelbe 2003, 213).

Kapoor argues that because of his use of culture, agency has for Bhabha no strategy and is not intentional but rather spontaneous, almost accidental. Bhabha does not accord agents a will and capacity to act consciously, which means agency is reactive rather than proactive. He allocates them a role of participation in the margin without actively contributing to the production of hybridity beyond the margins. Kapoor argued that Bhabha's notion of resisting agents can be moved beyond the margins towards a 'postcolonial politics that effects broader, structural change' (Kapoor 2008, 132). He therefore suggests that:

> '(...) Bhabha's agents are more calculative than he represents them, in particular because he does not grant them what he in fact grants himself: a greater awareness of hybridity. If he can claim that hybridity is constitutive of discourse, (...), then why not extend the knowledge of this claim to his protagonists, thereby making possible a more explicit strategy of hybridization?' (Kapoor 2008, 134)

Kapoor proposes a strategising agent (Kapoor 2008, 135). This concern with Bhabha's theory is relevant for the analysis of post-war state building processes. It potentially gives Congolese actors a role in this process as intentional agents that aim to make the state building discourse work for them in their society. Deviations from the state building agenda are then not necessarily 'mistakes', transitional stages or even failures, but rather diversions of the hegemonic discourse. Hybridity then not only deconstructs power to reject hidden truths in these discourses, it also enables alternatives (Kapoor 2008, 142).

Although Kapoor's argument that local agents may have more awareness of their agency than Bhabha ascribes to them is valid, it would be a mistake to take culture out of the equation as an informant for local agents. Culture is highly relevant as a resource that drives and shapes local agencies, and is foundational for the legitimacy of peace (Richmond 2011b, 14-16). Bhabha's argument itself is opposed to the idea that culture is conservative and closed in on itself. His (implicit) use of culture is more in line with Clifford Geertz's work on culture as 'the webs of significance that man himself has spun and in which he is suspended' (Geertz 1973, 5). Geertz's argument is that the only way to understand politics in a culturally sensitive way is to interpret politics through the interpretation of meaning, '… that is, to make the effort to decode the significance of such events from the other's viewpoint' (Chabal & Daloz 2006, 3). These meanings are 'informed by a set of conceptions – ideals, hypotheses, obsessions, judgments – derived from concerns which far transcend it.' These conceptions form a (political) culture, a system of meaning, providing rationale and shaping political development. Culture then concerns the 'systems of meaning through which men give shape to their experience' (Geertz 1973, 312). As a system of meaning, culture 'reveals the language in which people, who may disagree about values, or political ends, do so within a shared perspective' (Chabal & Daloz 2006, 22). The concept of culture is then not so much concerned with what culture actually *is* (as in classic anthropology), but much more with what culture *does* and how it gives meaning to social action and political events – or in Bhabha's work, how it creates hybridity. Culture is 'an active process of meaning making and contest over definition'. Its relevance lies not in what it *is* but in what it *does* (Street 1993).

Understanding the meaning of social action requires a thorough understanding of what is 'insinuated as background information', because meaning is produced

in and embedded in this socio-cultural and historical context (Geertz 1973, 9). Such an analysis of the meaning of social action is Geertz's thick description:

> 'As interworked systems of construable signs (...), culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviours, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is thickly – described' (Geertz 1973, 14).

Understanding culture as an informant of local agencies has much in common with Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus*. *Habitus* is conceptually located between structures and agents – it is produced by structures and mediates and regulates agent's actions without being a system of rules that must be obeyed (Bourdieu 1977, 72). *Habitus* is a sphere of subjectivities (thoughts, ideas, perceptions), a system of dispositions. It thus refers to the ways in which people in a certain locality relate to things and the meaning these things have for them (De Bruijn 2008, 89). It shifts attention to the interpretation of concepts and processes for what they mean for actors involved. For an understanding of the process of state building it is then no longer relevant how policy papers define and conceptualise it. *Habitus* is a product of structures such as historical experiences, material conditions, and indeed culture. It is thus a location (or patrimony, in Bourdieu's terms), a specific mediating structure, that mediates people's practices 'without either explicit reason or signifying intent to be nonetheless 'sensible' and 'reasonable'. It thus produces a notion of common sense, a logic which governs practice (Bourdieu 1977, 79-80). We can then understand local agencies as being contextualised in *habitus* and informed by culture thickly described.

Although Richmond's critical agencies share a sense of strategy with Kapoor's agencies, Richmond's critical agencies, however, have awareness and strategy at a different level. Instead of focusing on whether the local agent is aware of his agency that produces vegetarian bibles (to use Bhabha's well known example) or is aware of its own cleverness (De Certeau 1984, 56), Richmond's critical agent is an agent that pursues hybrid space, not hybrid outcomes. It is a demand for emancipation, a hybrid space in which negotiation is possible (Richmond 2011a, 6). The critical agent is Foucault's 'criminal' (Foucault 1991, 289) which seeks emancipation to pursue peace which has legitimacy locally. This local legitimacy should be the foundation for a local-international peace building contract, a social contract in the context of peace building. It is a space in which peace can be given shape and form by local agents, being informed by culture, local aspirations and local needs (Richmond 2009a, 331-33, Richmond 2011b, 12).

The 'problem' of awareness of hybridity is thus relocated from 'the awareness to create alternatives' (outcome oriented, vegetarian bible) to an awareness of the pursuit of opportunity to enable negotiating agencies (opportunity oriented,

emancipation). The hybrid space which is for Bhabha an opportunity which exists without agents being aware of it, is for Richmond, on the contrary, a consciously claimed space – a claim for emancipatory peace, self-determination and more influence over the process to pursue a peace that is grounded in local needs, local aspirations, and that responds to culture and customs. In this hybrid space the subject of post-war Congo exercises his existence.

Convivial agency

Exercising their existence in the context of the liberal peace means that the recipients of these liberal peace building practices negotiate it as a power structure. Being confronted with the dominating structures of the liberal peace, its recipients use their agencies to toy with power, negotiate, use it, divert it, resist it, etc. We should therefore shift our attention from how power is produced through practices of discipline, to the practices of 'antidiscipline', or the way in which power is being received and used (De Certeau 1984, xv).

De Certeau has emphasised this in his notion of the consuming agent. De Certeau's consumer is similar to the subaltern agent in Homi Bhabha's work. It is an agent that engages with hegemony and negotiates or consumes it. The consumer, or the consuming agent, does not reject hegemony and hegemonic structures. Instead, he consumes it, he uses hegemonic structures 'in the service of rules, customs or convictions' that are not part of the hegemony itself, thereby making it 'function in another register'. The consumption of power thus means maintaining difference within the sphere that hegemony seeks to organise (De Certeau 1984, 32). Consuming agency is therefore more diverse than mere resistance, as Bhabha's agency. Consumption encompasses a broader variety of local agencies' forms of engagement with the liberal peace. Understanding this engagement only in terms of resistance would miss the ways in which local agencies comply with, accept and cooperate with the liberal peace. Consumption describes the collective forms of consumers' engagements with the liberal peace, such as resistance, acceptance, rejection, diversion, negotiation, etc.

De Certeau's concept of the consuming agent, however, differs from Bhabha's subaltern agent on another important point. Because De Certeau's concept of the consumer encompasses a broader scope of forms of engagements with power, it places agencies in a more complex relation with power. The consuming agent can be part of various social groups and socio-economic classes. This is therefore a more useful concept of agency than that of subalterneity for a study of agencies at the National Assembly. The ways in which the consuming agent consumes structures of power must thus be understood beyond the limited notion of subalterneity. For proponents of a subaltern perspective agency is located with the

subaltern. Subaltern studies aim to bring the people back as agents of their own history and rejects to see them as masses that are merely easily manipulated by elites and therefore have no agency as such. It rejects the idea that they are passive participants in universal historic processes. Instead it recognises the historic significance of people's free and sovereign agency in the rediscovery of their culture, their engagement with their own knowledge, ideas and experiences (and not solely with their material conditions of existence). But it thus also recognises the existence of an autonomous political domain of elites and of the subaltern, the dominants and the dominated, each with their own idioms, knowledge, norms and values (Gandhi 1998, Lee 2005, 170-1, Spivak 1987, 197).

However, in the effort to focus on silenced voices, the subaltern approach risks essentialising subaltern consciousness or even turning subalterneity into an empirical social entity (Pouchepadass 2000, 167). This inflates subordinated voices into an alternative for dominating voices, and derives the subaltern from its subordinated state. Critical notes can also be placed on the claim made by the subaltern studies group that the subaltern has autonomous conscience and agency, which stems from the historic fact that dominants have never been able to integrate the subaltern sphere into their hegemony. The subaltern approach has ignored long term debates within anthropology and sociology on the relations, exchange and assimilation between high-politics and low-politics (Pouchepadass 2000, 168-9). The isolation of the subaltern as an autonomous group thus does not capture the complexity of social relations but ignores it.

Darbon and Quantin have criticised the overemphasis on the subaltern in the process of political change at the cost of an almost complete marginalisation of elites (Darbon and Quantin 2007, 488). It cannot be denied that elites do play an important role in peace building, particularly since peace building practices privilege elites and institutions. Although it is important to include the silenced voices of local agencies it would be naïve to ignore elites and their agencies as a consequence. Daloz draws attention to the modalities of leadership, issues of representation between elites and their supporters (Daloz 1999a, 14-6). A subaltern approach to processes of change in post-war Congo would ignore some of the key processes of the conflict and peace building process which have undeniably been played at the elite level. But a subaltern perspective reminds us that below the more visible side there exists a level that is by no means excluded from this process – 'under the pavement there is sand' (Bayart *et al*. 2008, 34). Although agreeing with Darbon and Quantin that agency is not exclusively located at the subaltern level, it should also be recognised that a solely elitist perspective, as they suggest, will also do no justice to the social complexity of these processes of political change. Elites and ordinary citizens are connected through various social

structures. This counts particularly for Parliamentarians, who are connected to their constituencies by the framework of electoral democracy.

The point these authors are making concerns the isolation of the subaltern or the elites as an autonomous social entity and a lack of recognition of the dynamics between them. An elitist approach argues that political action takes place at the elite level (Daloz 1999a, 18, Darbon & Quantin 2007). The subaltern approach emphasises a dichotomy between the dominants and the dominated, in which the dominated are silenced and agencyless. However, what an elitist approach and a subaltern perspective both ignore is that within the multi-layered power structures of the liberal peace these social categories become ambivalent. The notion of subaltern or dominated, just as the notion of elite, refers to a relation rather than a sociological category. In the complexity of liberal peace building these relations do not only concern domestic social structures. Through liberal peace interventions these domestic social structures are distorted and become ambivalent. Elites are subject to disciplining practices of liberal peace building interventions, and some subaltern actors find themselves given voice through INGO interventions, or have been provided with channels to participate and even access to become part of a new liberal peace building elite. In such an ambivalent context such categories thus obscure more than they reveal. The subaltern only exists with the elites as its reference and vice versa: if there are no dominants there can be no dominated, and if there are no dominated there can be no dominants (Pouchepadass 2000, 165, 174). Instead of understanding agencies in terms of a stable category their agencies should be better understood as relative. They are produced in relation to other agencies and thus dependent on each other. What matters is the power relation between different actors, the relation vis-à-vis the referent of domination.

These social interactions are important for political analysis. A simplified focus on the subaltern or the elites as an autonomous social group will not capture the dynamics and complexity of politics in Africa. The earlier mentioned *politique par le bas* approach focuses attention to modes of popular political culture and behaviour, and aims for an understanding of African politics by looking at what happens below the level of high politics. However, as the authors emphasise in the 2008 revised edition of the original book from 1980, *politique par le bas* should not be understood as an African version of subaltern studies (as it has often been), which they label as being mere populism, and, like Darbon and Quantin (2007), radicalised in the opposite direction of elite oriented studies of politics (Bayart *et al*. 2008, 12, 25). Rather than seeing controversies of 'high politics' and 'low politics', or of periphery and centre, *politique par le bas* does not privilege the role of one social group to another. Instead, it is preoccupied

with the relations between these different groups and the political game of the relations between different social actors (Bayart *et al*. 2008, 10, 20).

The political society should also not be seen as a separate structure from the civil society, instead it should be understood in terms of mutual interpenetration and mutual reinforcement. Bayart speaks of the mysteries of the rhizome; subterranean root structures, which act as a medium through which the link between African societies and state is formed (Bayart 1993, 163, 221). Structures of power are produced and institutionalised as a 'social-historical world' turned into common sense. In this process, the dominated and dominants both take part, but not as dominated and dominants. Rather, understanding their agencies in relational terms they can be better characterised as convivial, in which they share the same *epistème*, or the same living space (Bayart 1983, 110-14, Mbembe 2001b, 103-4, 110).

Because it rejects central binaries, the notion of conviviality problematises agency in a world we are used to understanding in terms of exploited and exploiters, dominated and dominants, suppressed and suppressors. The logic of conviviality does not reject the notion that people are dominated, exploited and suppressed, nor the fact that people resist, but questions the respective essential roles of dominants as instigators and dominated as passive recipients. Nyamnjoh argues that an emphasis on agency as located with individuals, and preoccupied with individual progress, achievement and capacities is, contrary to mainstream understanding of the term agency, not a universal. More relevant questions can be asked if agency is contextualised in conviviality – such as 'how are individuals able to be who they are – agents – through relationships with others?' (Nyamnjoh 2002, 111). Nyamnjoh argues that understanding contemporary Africa requires a re-conceptualisation of the concept of agency that does justice to the socio-political context. He argues that rather than conceptualising agency as the individual's ability to act, it is more important to 'understand how agency is recognised, fostered and contained in different localities' (Nyamnjoh 2002, 135). This then opens up the notion of agency 'beyond the analytic limits of individualism and the lone heroic actor' to the interaction of the political and the individual or collective Self (Werbner 2002, 3).

Like *politique par le bas*, Nyamnjoh argues for an understanding of agency that it is not merely about individual empowerment but rather about group or individual agency within social context. In the context of the Cameroonian grassfields he speaks of domesticated agency, which is agency that is locally recognised and culturally accepted, underlined by conviviality. The notion of conviviality emphasises the need of different agentive forces to achieve negotiated understanding, but also emphasises that agency, empowerment, is only recognised as long as it does not marginalise the other (Nyamnjoh 2002, 111-2). This exam-

ple of the recognition of agency in Cameroon points to the culturally biased mainstream understanding of agency as individual capacity to act. A convivial understanding of agency then means that subaltern agency is complicit with that of the dominants, and vice versa; that agency emerges within the broader social spectrum of conviviality. Agency is then open to groups and individuals, emergent within the convivial relations between rulers and ruled as a form of negotiation between the two. Agency should therefore not be understood solely as individual empowerment or capacity. It may have other forms, both in how it is socially recognised (as the study of Nyamnjoh shows) as in its practical manifestation (as *politique par le bas* emphasises) through forms of reciprocal relations and rhizomatic social structures (as Bayart discussed).

Agency seen as existing in conviviality means understanding agency beyond the relative autonomy of social actors and gives new perspectives on the relations between the political and the individual or the group. Rather than seeing political elites as exploiting victimised and incapacitated masses, it argues that the masses partake in the production and reproduction of the existing authoritarian state, and may thereby be complicit in their own exploitation (Bayart 1983, 112). This emphasis on social relations instead of central social binaries relocates agency, it is located neither with high politics (mainstream political science approach) nor with the subaltern (radical critique on the mainstream approach) but in the interaction. It thus brings a new dimension to questions of local agencies in a liberal- or post-liberal peace. This conceptualisation of agency enables a meaningful approach to the study of the consumption of liberal democracy at the site of the National Assembly. Instead of perceiving Parliamentarians as isolated actors that have agency because of their elite status, it understands them as members of a society recipient of liberal peace building interventions. It locates Parliamentarians in a web of social structures that enables their agencies.

Richmond's critical agency is primarily concerned with agencies of ordinary people, the 'local-local' which lies hidden beneath the often externalised civil society (Richmond 2011b, 13). The concept of convivial agency is another way of undoing the ignoring of the silenced masses and their everyday needs, but without ignoring elites either. Local elites are not cut-off from the everyday or the local-local. Because convivial agency emphasises the interaction between elites and masses, it does not isolate groups of people from the broader social complexity that they participate in. Local agencies are enabled and shaped through these interactions, seeing either group in isolation of the other means ignoring important aspects of local agencies and their consumption of the liberal peace.

Parliamentarians as consumers of the liberal peace

When conceptualising agency as convivial, we understand elites and their agencies in the context of the society they represent and are part of. We can then no longer see these elites as being distinct from society, but as being an integral part of it. Just as we can study ordinary people and everyday agencies which are enabled by their interactions with others, we can also study local elites' everyday agencies that are similarly enabled by their interaction with others, elites as well as non-elites. They are part of a spectrum of interrelated agencies and have their own everyday. This everyday is about how people 'navigate their way around and try to create space for their own activities while taking into consideration institutions of power' (De Certeau 1984, xi, Richmond 2009b, 571). This does not exclude elites per se. Just because they have a different social position than non-elites, and thus a different kind of everyday, does not make them less local, and therefore less relevant for the understanding of local consumption of the liberal peace. A certain local-local that lies hidden beneath the externalised 'local' of civil society (Richmond 2011b, 14-15) also lies hidden within the institutions that liberal peace building practices aim to build. It lies hidden in the practices of the people that make these institutions function. The point is thus to approach the agencies of local elites in a non-elitist way but focus on their hidden agencies.

De Certeau's notion of consumption recognises that agents' engagement with power structures is dependent on their relation to this power structure. Just as ordinary people, elites consume power – in our context, the liberal peace – although they may do this from a different position and with different interests. Their reproduction of power and their co-optation with power is also a form of consumption. Local political elites have in this sense an interesting, but ambivalent position. They may be part of the state structure, reproduce state power and be co-opted in the liberal peace, as for example elected Parliamentary representatives. But they are nevertheless still part of a local recipient community and as such have local aspirations, needs, customs and cultures which, as critical agencies, negotiate the liberal peace. This ambivalent position of local elites makes it highly relevant to study their everyday agencies as consumers of the liberal peace that may at times resist, reject, avoid, subvert, deviate and at other times accept, negotiate and reproduce it.

These forms of consumption of the liberal peace are shaped by local needs, aspirations, culture, custom and desires, as Richmond argued for critical agencies. But as I argued in the previous paragraph, those local needs are also informed by the social relations – elites and the people they represent, elites and other elites. This is even more so in a context in which a new democratic framework aims to change these elite-citizen engagements through liberal democratic

practices such as elections, representative governance, civil society interaction, etc. This means that elites can be studied and analysed in a non-elitist way, focusing on their everyday practices of how they consume democracy in interaction with others – their constituencies, the power structures they are part of, their own needs and aspirations, cultures and customs. Focusing on this interaction between MPs and others will give us a more complete understanding of how people's agencies interact, how democracy is being consumed locally, and how local present structures shape and enable agencies to consume their democracy.

Elites such as MPs thus consume the liberal peace through a variety of practices of consumption. They do that in their role as political representatives of their constituency, as Member of Parliament, as member of the opposition or majority, as member of a certain political party or as independent political actor, as supporter of the President, as member of an inner clique of power, etc. Each identity depends on one's relation to other actors (such as representative or member) which comes with different expectations and obligations. But agencies are also enabled by one's relation to power (to the liberal peace). For example, being an MP means that one's identity of MP is a form of co-optation with the liberal peace (the notion of elected parliamentary representation), which enables and disables certain forms of agency. But this being an MP has different aspects: one is a constituency representative, but also a member of a political party or an independent political actor, a member of the majority or opposition. These engagements all enable and disable different agencies. It suggests that the engagement with the liberal peace of political actors such as MPs is highly ambivalent and much more nuanced than as it is often understood in terms of 'co-optation' or reproducers of power- and state structures. Looking at their everyday practices of consumption of the structures they are both subject of (as local agents) and part of (as MPs that are elected through the liberal democratic practice of elections) can tell us much more about how such an important group of actors engages with the liberal peace.

That such analyses of the everyday of elites and their everyday practices can be very insightful about the functioning of politics locally has been shown in the work of, for example, Jean-Pascal Daloz and Peter Geschiere (see for example Daloz 1999b, Daloz 2003b, Daloz 2009, Geschiere 1995). However, the literatures that study the practices and agencies of political elites have analysed these practices in isolation of – or not in the context of – peace building interventions. The emerging literature on everyday agencies in the context of liberal peace building has, on the other hand, focused on the 'local-local' of non-elites, of the silenced subaltern. By combining an approach that focuses on the 'local-local' in order to include silenced voices in liberal peace building practices, with the study of institutions of state and governance, this study aims to bring new insights in

the hidden agencies that occur within the core of institutionalist state building practices.

This thesis focuses on the National Assembly in post-war DRC. It recognises the critique that that the liberal peace is disconnected from societies because of its top-down approach and its privileging of institutions over people. But it also recognises that these institutions are not irrelevant. The focus on local agencies that make the institutions function aims to provide a non-institutionalist approach to the study of the institutionalist project of state building. It are people that make institutions function. The theoretical frame outlined in this chapter aims to shift attention to agencies in this state building process by focusing on their practices of the consumption of the liberal peace. As discussed in this chapter, this consumption takes place in a hybrid space which enables local agencies. This space is produced by local agencies that seek an emancipatory peace that can be responsive to local needs. It is a hybrid space which is discursively produced by the interaction between the liberal and the local. In order to explore this hybrid space as a context in which local agencies are enabled, I will explore the discursive interaction between the local and the liberal. A historic perspective is essential to appreciate local discourses about the present experience of the liberal peace and the way in which people exercise their existence in the present. I will therefore explore narratives about the present by placing them in a context of narratives about the past. In these local narratives we can identify local needs, demands and interpretations of the significance and meaning of the liberal peace and the present in general. These narratives give us insights in how the present experience of the liberal peace has meaning in terms of a political project that seeks emancipation, self-determination and a peace that is responsive to local needs rather than international desires.

But if this hybrid space is a product of the discursive interaction between local and liberal discourses, these liberal discourses should be analysed in terms of their engagement with the local and the needs expressed in its discourses as well. Therefore, after having explored Congolese narratives, I will focus on the discourses of the liberal peace and its materialisation in the Congo. A comparison of the two, or putting the two together will show the discursive emergence of a hybrid space. This is then a virtual site in which the local agencies that consume the liberal peace are active.

I have chosen for the site of the National Assembly because it is a site of significance for the liberal peace. The liberal peace at the site of the National Assembly is specifically concerned with liberal democracy, so the research on the consumption of the liberal peace will focus on the consumption of an important pillar of the liberal peace, namely liberal democracy, more specifically in terms of how it concerns the National Assembly and its actors. Not only is Parliament

at the heart of liberal democracy, it is also a space in which agencies of elites and non-elites (MPs, executive, citizens) interact and collide. It is thus relevant in terms of a research that concerns post-war state building and the liberal peace, but it is also relevant for the kind of questions and issues this research project engages with. I have thus, despite my arguments for a non-institutional perspective on institution building, still chosen to focus on an institution. I maintain my argument that institutions are important, but that to understand their functioning, one should focus on the people (agencies) that make these institutions function in a certain way. The choice to study the National Assembly is thus legitimate, but it needs to be approached differently. That is, not as an institution relieved of its human characteristics, but as a site of local agencies. It is a space of movement, of dynamics in which local agencies consume democracy. My concern is then not with how the legislature functions as an institution that is central to the new democratic political order – i.e. whether it functions as it should according to the liberal democratic norm, or how it functions as an institution of liberal democracy, identifying problems and bottlenecks. Rather, my interest lies with how actors, agents, that act on the site of the National Assembly act in their engagement with the new democratic order. In other words, my interest lies in how these agents consume liberal democracy in their participation in and engagement with this institution of democracy. This also means that the 'site' is a virtual site which is defined not by the walls of the People's Palace, but by its agencies which penetrate in society as well as in the executive and occur in faculties outside the formal sphere of politics such as in the behavioural and performative spheres. This is convivial agency – the agencies enabled by the interaction between MPs, citizens, the executive, and to a lesser extent members of the international community, donor agencies as well as (I)NGOs that engage with Parliament and its agents in their state building and democratisation programmes. Although there are also other actors and agents that are directly or indirectly involved (e.g. parliamentary staff, provincial governance institutions which through gubernatorial elections elect the Senate, business interests ...), my research will be limited to these groups of agents.

The notion of convivial agency in the context of Parliament means that an MP as such and on its own has little agency. He becomes a relevant agent that consumes democracy when he acts with or in response to other agents (his engagements with the executive), his engagements in the Parliament (with other MPs), his engagements with the electorate, or representatives of the international/donor community. It is in these relations, these engagements with others that agencies are enabled and through which liberal democratic hegemony is consumed. Depending on his relation to the power structure (as an elected member of Parliament, a member of the opposition or majority, a member of a political party or in

his capacity as independent political actor, or perhaps as a close confident of the those in power) different agencies are enabled. Convivial agency in the context of liberal democratic hegemony is thus concerned with how liberal democratic hegemony is being consumed through agents through their relations with others.

4

Negotiating the present and claiming emancipation

"I am bound to tell what I am told, but not in every case to believe it" - Herodotus

On a morning in November 2009, I was talking with a group of young political activists in Kasavubu district in Kinshasa. We spoke about political developments in the Congo since the end of the war, and the promises and disappointments of democracy. A passerby tapped me on the shoulder and said '*Mundele*[1]*, c'est a cause de vous'*. The people with whom I was speaking were slightly embarrassed but did not contradict the man when he spoke about how the West has betrayed the Congo and its people. He said to me 'I don't like (President) Kabila', and walked away. The man used an in the Congo commonly used narrative to make sense of the current situation. He perceives the West to be the cause of Congolese misery. He is disappointed in President Kabila, but he understands that Kabila is in power because he is the favourite of the West, like Mobutu had been in the past. He therefore holds the West responsible for the perpetuation of misery and the veneer of democracy.

In this chapter I will discuss these Congolese historic narratives and argue that they give meaning to the post-war reality of Congolese people. In the previous chapter I have conceptualised the post-war as a time of instability and redefinition in which subjectivities emerge through a process of making sense of the present and imaging a future which demands a coming to terms with the past. The narratives I discuss in this chapter form part of this process of sense making of the present people experience. Historic self-narratives are therefore important informants of a Congolese demand for emancipation.

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[1] *Mundele* is Lingala for white person or foreigner, although the term is also used for people that have adopted 'white people's behaviour' CEUPPENS, B. 2003. *Onze Congo? Congolezen over de kolonialisatie,* Leuven, Davidsfonds.

The narratives are stories with a purpose which are constructed for a purpose. We will see that in the historic self-narratives a political project of emancipation is captured. This quest for emancipation is grounded in a local understanding of the present. This is an essential element for the understanding of local agencies and their participation in the present. It is a politico-historic context in which they exercise their existence. But they are also narratives that are silenced by the liberal peace. In doing so, it disengages from a local political project of emancipation. To provide a necessary background to the narratives and their workings, the chapter starts with a brief historic overview of the various phases of transition to democracy in the Congo.

Democratic transition since 1990

Efforts for democratisation in Congo did not start with the 2003 peace agreement. In November 1980, thirteen parliamentarians wrote an open letter to Mobutu in which they criticised him for being the cause of (then) Zaire's economic and political problems, and demanded political change in the name of the people of Zaire (Ngalula Pandanjila *et al*. 1981). The letter was a response to Mobutu's declaration of 1977, in which he had announced political reforms (Mobutu nd), but which had not materialised. The 13 parliamentarians, under the leadership of Etienne Tshisekedi, would in 1985 found the Zairian popular opposition party UDPS that lead the political resistance against the Mobutu regime. In the 1980s the economy further collapsed, the regime had to resort more and more to violent repression to maintain a form of order and lost effective control over large parts of the country. It took Mobutu until 1990 before he finally bended to growing international and domestic pressure for democratic reform.

The changing international context after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and increasing economic crisis domestically made an end to the unconditional support for the regime from the West (in particular a changing of tone from close allies Belgium, France, USA and the IFIs). Together with rising national unrest and political opposition, and with an eye for political transitions taking place in the region, Mobutu announced political change in January 1990. There would be a national consultation process with the intention of investigating popular demands for political reform. The population was invited to present their concerns a consultation committee in the following months. The response was overwhelming. After the consultation, Mobutu announced an end to the single party regime and a transition to democracy through a National Sovereign Conference (CNS). He also stepped down as leader of the MPR (*Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution*), redefined his role of head of state, and shed some tears – 'understand my emotions' were perhaps the most legendary words he ever spoke (Mobutu 2008).

Following the successful example of Benin in 1990, a CNS became a popular mechanism for political transition in Francophone Africa in the 1990s. The CNS was a national round table in which government delegates, interest groups, opposition parties and churches negotiated about the future political organisation of the country. The mechanism of a CNS was based on Rousseau's ideas about popular sovereignty and the right of the people to renegotiate a social contract. It was a platform on which the people renegotiated the social contract with the political leadership, setting the stage for democratic transition (Robinson 1994b, 577). The purpose of the CNS was firstly to investigate the wrongs of the past, both in terms of political and economic policy as well as crimes committed by the regime. As such it had a similar function as a truth and reconciliation committee as a mechanism for reconciliation and transitional justice. Secondly, the CNS would have to decide what would be the best way to get out of the crises Zaire was facing. It had to adopt a transitional constitution and a constitution for the Third Republic, and establish transitional political institutions (i.a. Parliament, Government of National Unity, Electoral Commission) (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 190-92).

The transitional process under the CNS would be a turbulent period. It failed to establish a democratic system mainly because of the obstructions by Mobutu who tried to cling onto power (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 193). Public protests against Mobutu's control over the process, and the demand for its reopening after Mobutu had closed it prematurely, resulted in the bloodbaths of the Christian March of February 1991 and the massacre at the university of Lubumbashi in May 1990 (Jewsiewicki *et al*. 1995, Kongolo-Mukanya 1991). Mobutu appointed eight new governments and Prime Ministers between 1990 (the 'launch' of the democratic transition) and 1994 (Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy 1995, Annex A), thereby firmly taking control over the process of democratic transition even though he was merely ceremonial head of state according to the power sharing agreement that came out of the CNS process. Eventually, general elections were scheduled for 1997, but these would never be held as Laurent Kabila toppled Mobutu in May 1997.

Kabila spoke of democratisation but quickly installed a centralised regime that resembled that of his predecessor. He excluded Tshisekedi's UDPS from his '*Gouvernement de Salut Publique*', thereby alienating many of his initial supporters (Schatzberg 1997, 70). Only days after overthrowing Mobutu, Kabila issued a constitutional decree that established a transitional system in which power was centralised in the hands of the President. Besides being head of the executive, he controlled defence, exercised legislative powers and ruled by decree (1997, Art. 5). He announced a system that was supposed to be a radical and direct democracy at the grassroots level in which Committees of Popular Power

(CPP) were elected. However, rather than direct democracy, the CPPs functioned as an instrument to consolidate Kabila's weak power base and to mobilise and control the population (Villers and Omasombo Tshonda 2002, 406-07). Political change towards democracy, or the further rooting of a new dictatorship, was again interrupted by war that started in August 1998. Contrary to the previous war, this war did not overthrow the regime, but ended at the negotiating table in Sun City, South Africa, in December 2002.

One of the five prime objectives of the Sun City Peace Agreement were democratic elections that would complete the transition to a democratic political order (2002, II). During the transition period, power and posts in state institutions were divided between the different signatories of the agreement (the ex-government, rebel movements, political opposition and civil society) based on a power sharing formula. The power-sharing agreement is commonly referred to as the '1+4', which refers to the system in which one President was assisted by four Vice-Presidents from different signatories of the agreement. Power sharing was a necessary mechanism to end the war, but proved to make the transition process complex. Lack of mutual trust, lack of commitment towards the transitional agenda, lack of willingness to work together and ongoing local conflict and security concerns dominated the transition process (De Goede & Van der Borgh 2008, 119-21, International Crisis Group 2006, 5, MONUC/PAD 2004, 1-2).

Much emphasis was given to the elections as the end goal for the transition, the closure of cycles of conflict and the start of a new chapter in the history of the DRC. The post-war transition process was framed in terms of a democratic transition. However, considering the relatively short time frame and the conditions under which the transition was to take place, a more realistic perspective was for elections to replace the problematic transitional government and Parliament with democratically elected governing institutions that could lead a democratisation and state rebuilding process in the post-transition period. It was a situation in which the termination of the existing situation was an urgent need, and elections were seen as a good mechanism to achieve that. Organising elections to end the transition process was thus not, as some have argued, a new approach of promoting democracy under conditions of war (Abass Ahamed 2006). Rather, elections were made instrumental in the transition from war to peace (Lyons 2002). The elections that were to end the transition process were seen from this less idealistic and more pragmatic perspective, aiming to create an enabling environment for post-transition democratisation and state building (De Goede 2006, 92). Elections were thus an important end goal of the transition process.

Organising elections in post-war DRC was nevertheless an overwhelming task. Voters had to be identified and registered, though there had not been a census since 1984 (UN 2005, 2) and hardly anyone had identity documents. 9,000

polling centres had to be set-up, stocked, staffed and trained, and that all in a vast country with no more than 500 km of paved road, vast areas with little or no communication facilities nor electricity, and certainly no experience with multi-party elections for more than 40 years (Human Rights Watch 2005, 4-5, International Crisis Group 2006, 2-3, UN 2005, 1). There was also no legal framework to enable elections. At the very minimum, a new constitution and electoral law were required, but also laws on i.a. political parties, campaign funding and the independence of the courts were required to enable the elections to take place in a well organised and fair manner.

On 30 July 2006 the elections were finally held, and Joseph Kabila (who had succeeded his father after he was assassinated in January 2001) was elected and inaugurated in December of that year. A national Parliament and provincial assemblies were elected and installed. Despite a few incidents and violent clashes in Kinshasa related to the electoral results, it was considered a successful process that had achieved its objective of ending the war and creating an enabling environment for state building and further democratisation by installing a legitimate government. For many Congolese it was an important milestone that meant a new beginning after suffering under dictatorship and violent conflict, completing a transition to democracy that had lasted sixteen years.

Congolese historic self-narratives as mythistory

The past and the present

The above brief description of the history of democratisation in the Congo since the 1980s puts the current post-war democratisation effort in a sequence of events that shows that the democratisation process has historicity. In order to make sense of current affairs we often refer to the past – looking for roots, origins or historic patterns. However, just whose past, or better said whose narratives, we engage with is a generally overlooked question. When speaking with Congolese people about their history it is evident that their interpretations differ from those commonly held abroad. For example, for many internationals currently working in the Congo, the democratisation process has started in 2003. For many Congolese it started in the early 1990s, or even before. For internationals the guiding document for democratisation is the Sun City peace agreement, Congolese often refer to conclusions of the CNS. For internationals the wars were conflicts as a consequence of state failure and the greed of Congolese warlords, for many Congolese it was an internationally instigated hurdle in the struggle for democracy. And while the Sun City Accords have ended the war in the eyes of international policy makers, many Congolese do not speak of peace because the

daily reality of this peace differs little from that of war and it is therefore considered an inappropriate term to describe their daily realities.

To engage meaningfully with Congolese experiences, we should, as Luise White has argued, let 'people speak for themselves' by allowing them to use their own narratives and stories (White 2000, 50). People's understanding of the world in which they live is always historically informed. The relations between the past, present and future are fundamental for processes of change and people's understanding of it. The distinction between before and after, or between past, present and future is too simplistic because 'every age is in reality a combination of several temporalities' (Mbembe 2001b, 15). Instead of understanding time as a sequence, in which the presence replaces the past and precedes the future, for Mbembe the past is not replaced by the present. The past is part of the present, in the same way the future is part of the present as well. The point is thus not to see the present just with respect to its proper historicity (Bayart 1996a), but with respect to the rapports between the past (historicity, history and memory) and the current, and the projected future. The present and the future are intimately connected: the past gives meaning to the present; the present gives direction for the future; the future makes us reinterpret the past. The claim of discursive space by non-western voices in the liberal peace also has a historiographic element to it.

Both the Subaltern Studies group and the English Marxist social historians have emphasised the democratisation of historiography, writing historical analyses in which subaltern groups – peasants, women, and other non-elites – are the subject of history (Chakrabarty 2000b, 14-15). These approaches have emphasised not only that non-elites are part of historical production, even though their voices are less heard, but also that perspectives from below provide unheard narratives on historical phenomena. In the study of non-western history, this approach has produced understandings of post-colonial experiences which break away from reading history within the frames of Eurocentric interpretations of the non-West as 'the other' (Gandhi 1998, 170-71). Filipino *Pantayong Pananew* historiography goes a step further and eliminates the West not only as a narrator, but also an as audience by emphasising that historiography should be 'from us and for us'. It therefore rejects writing in a non-native language and writes in *Tagolog* (Filipino) (Reyes 2008).

These historiographies are activist historiographies that provide additional perspectives on historical events. It has produced emancipatory historiographies that articulate national history in anti-colonial and nationalist terms, and emphasise exploitation and historical injustice.[2] However, the purpose of this chapter is not activist or to give voice. Rather than seeking to give voice to subaltern narra-

[2] A well-known example of this genre is Rodney (1973). On the DRC, see for example Mbavu Muhindu (2005).

tives as a means to democratise historic knowledge, this chapter seeks to analyse how Congolese people employ historic self-narratives to interpret and give meaning to the present. Historical knowledge then has a purpose and a function and historical narratives should be understood as such (White 1973, 1-42).

People employ their history to interpret the present and deal with events, and in the process they reinterpret the past (Alexander 2000, 253). From this perspective, historiography is not a representation of a historical reality, but rather a reconstruction in light of the present. The historiographer adds meaning, an interpretation, to his narrative – historical facts do not shape the narrative, the narrative shapes the historical facts (Ankersmit 1984, 186-88). Here Paul Ricœur's philosophy of history is helpful. Ricœur's work on history and historiography builds on Heidegger's centralisation of historic experience for human existence and Gadamer's notion of the way the past lives on in the present (Guignon 2006, 551-5). Engaging with history is eventually a way of engaging with the present. Ricœur holds history to be purposeful, intentional or *futural* – the present is always on the horizon when thinking about the past (Ricœur 2004, 412). His argument on the intentionality of history is most strongly developed in his work on the mediation between time and narrative in which he focuses on the concept of emplotment (Ricœur 1984, 53-54). Emplotment mediates between individual events and the story as a whole. And secondly, it brings together different factors in the same story, towards the plot (Ricœur 1984, 65-66). Emplotment thus provides the explanatory effect of the story. Ricœur here follows Hayden White who argues that explanation through narrative occurs through the use of emplotment, which is different from explanation through argument (Ricœur 1984, 164, White 1973, 7-11). With their notion of emplotment, White and Ricœur take distance from narrativist historiography which relies on a linear understanding of time and a story to be composed of a beginning, middle and an end. By focusing on the purpose of history through emplotment Ricœur proposes a different engagement with history and time. 'By reading the end in the beginning and the beginning in the end, we learn also to read time backward, as the recapitulating of the initial conditions of a course of actions in its terminal consequences' (Ricœur 1980, 180).

The notion of history as a construction and understanding of plots (Veyne 1971), emphasises the centrality of the narrator's point of view. Through emplotment the narrator constructs a story based on events, a story that is intentional or purposeful in that it provides explanation. This also means that there is 'no longer a polarity between history and its other'. The historian, or narrator, is closely involved in the formation of historical objectivity, of historical truth (Ricœur 2004, 295). Ricœur thus turns away from the notion of historiography as giving an account of facts and truth (Ricœur 1984, 171). Instead, he argues that

historic truth does not exist, for it is dependent on the horizon of the present, that is, the purpose of the narrator's past for his present (Ricœur 2007, 50-1).

By looking at historic narrative through Ricœur's lens, we can engage with these historic narratives to understand Congolese perspectives on the present because the narrated emplotment produces the truth of the narrator. This means that historiography is a negotiation between the past and the present, in which people's perceptions have influenced historic events, but also how events have shaped a worldview, a mindset and perceptions (Reyes 2008, 249). Historic narratives thus engage with the present as a state of being and a process of becoming, that needs 'inventing what no longer is, and perhaps never was, but must be in order to legitimize our presence, to give it a meaning that ensures the link between what no longer is and is not yet, constitutes the most important feature of postmodern invention of the present' (Jewsiewicki 1993, 772).

History, memory and mythistory

Memory connects the past and the present representations of the past in narratives are expressions of memory. In *Memory, history, forgetting* Ricœur explores the dynamics between memory and history, with the perspective of the horizon of the present and the future (Ricœur 2004, 412). For Ricœur memory has two dimensions; a veridical dimension and a practical one. It is at the intersection of these two dimensions that memory becomes intentional for the present (Ricœur 2004, 54, 57). Memory, as an object of historical knowledge, has a duty to the present and the future in the sense of forgetting and forgiveness. Ricœur speaks about 'reckoning with time' as the way in which people mediate between memory and history (Ricœur 2004, 383-4).

For the purpose of this study I consider these historic narratives as historic imaginations or myths. I choose the term myth not to imply that Congolese narratives hold no truth and are fictional. Neither do I imply that Congolese people refer to their historic narratives as a myth themselves. I choose the term because the narratives fulfil a role in interpreting the present and making sense of everyday life. The concept of myth embodies the notion of emplotment in historic narratives. Myths should not be taken literally in the search for historical facts, but rather they reflect constituted truths for the people that narrate them. They are narratives which locate the present in a historical sequence. They provide notions, sourced from the past, that interpret and give meaning to the present (Ram 1993, 11-12, Veyne 1988, 14, 113, 123).

But these narratives should also not be seen as being distinct from historical experience and events. The two notions of 'truth' and 'myth', *logos* and *mythos*, are not necessarily opposed. Rather, they interact dialectically, together constructing 'mythistory' (Blok 1994, 41, Heehs 1994, 11-15). Myths are construct-

ed on historical facts, events, which become distorted and 'mythologised'. The narrative, however, continues to make claims of historical truth and facts, and uses the language of logic and reason to validate itself (Heehs 1994, 15). This comes back to Malinowski's argument that myth is not so much a *story told* but rather a *reality lived* (Malinowski 1926, 21, Orr 1991, 142). Congolese myth should be understood as the outcome of the dialectics between myth and historical facts.

However, I would like to go one step further in the discussion about truth, or rather historical accuracy, and myth. Considering these historic narratives as myth shifts attention from historical events to the function the narrative has for the present. Concerns whether these narratives have truth and historic accuracy then become irrelevant (Veyne 1988, 122). The notion of a myth emphasises the function of narratives and their emplotment rather than its historic truth. It can therefore be employed when considered useful (Veyne 1988, 84). What matters is their function in enabling people to give meaning to the present reality they experience. Myths employ the constitutive power of the *imaginaire* (Veyne 1988, 117-18). The *imaginaire*[3] is not the unreal but refers to the inability to distinguish the real from the unreal, and thus the irrelevance of this distinction (Bayart 2005, 132, Deleuze 1995, 66). The *imaginaire* is a form of consciousness that represents the meaning of the real (Sartre 2005, 360-61). But it is more than merely an 'image of', something that gives meaning to something that 'is'. The *imaginaire* is a source for the creation of this 'real':

> 'The *imaginaire* does not come from the image in the mirror or from the gaze of the other. Instead, the 'mirror' itself and its possibility, and the other as mirror, are the works of the *imaginaire*, which is creation *ex nihilo*" (Castoriadis 1987, 3).

Historic imagination thus shapes the reality of Congolese people, and is thus constitutive of the post-war state of being. The sphere of the *imaginaire* operates at the materialisation of that what is not (yet) into that what is and thus blurs the state between Deleuze's 'real' and the 'unreal' (Deleuze 1995, 66, Peñafiel 2008, 100-02). Myths, as expressions of historical imagination, are thus an important resource that gives meaning to the present, but they are also a source that creates the present.

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[3] I use the French term '*imaginaire*' because, as Chambers remarks, the English translation 'imaginary' of the French concept of the *imaginaire* does not have the same meaning. The English term imaginary refers only to that what is imagined, the faculty of imagination. The French term *imaginaire* as it has been developed in French philosophy refers to a much more complex notion of interaction between consciousness and objects, between ideas and their materialisation (Sartre 2005). Chambers therefore suggests translating the French imaginaire for 'imaginarium', to maintain the aspect of the imaginaire as 'that what is possible to think' (Chambers, R. 2001). Because this term also does not necessarily capture the meaning of the term *imaginaire* in its full extent, and in my view only adds another layer of interpretation and potential misinterpretation, I follow the example of the translator of Bayarts, *L'illusion identitaire* and use the French term *imaginaire* (Bayart 2005).

The conceptualisation of these Congolese narratives as mythistory makes them usable because they are then not just stories, they are stories with a purpose, constructed for a purpose (Felkins and Goldman 1993, 448-49, O'Flaherty 1988, 35). The narrative produces a regime of truth that defines the kinds of narratives and arguments that are accepted as true, the frame of reference that can define what is to be true and what is not (Foucault 1980, 132). This regime of truth frames the historicity of the relations between the Congo and the West in the narratives. It is the confrontation with this regime of truth one encounters when discussing with Congolese people about the issues of the narrative. There often seems to be a miscommunication between internationals and Congolese not because of different argumentation, but because of experiencing and reflecting the same historic facts in a different regime of truth. What this regime of truth, like any other regime of truth, does, is that it makes certain things thinkable and logical while it discards others (Foucault 1980, 133).

The purpose of understanding historic narratives as historiographic narratives that carry myth is that it emphasises a constructed truth for Congolese people that is relevant for the current post-war state building process. Studies on civil war have shown the importance of what Oberschall calls 'collective myths' in the process of mobilising people for war (Jabri 1996, 139, Mertus 1999, Murer 2009, Oberschall 2007, 123-4). Subsequently, these collective myths are the key for successful peace building (Murer 2010, Oberschall 2007, 188). What these studies emphasise is the mobilising force of these collective myths, the fact that they can be manipulated to serve a purpose, be it war or peace. In more general terms, the effect of these myths is that they shape people's perceptions of and engagement with the present. For the moment we can leave undefined for what Congolese myths mobilise, but we can recognise their relevance for understanding Congolese engagement with the post-war State building process.

Sources and producing narratives in the Congo

In the following paragraph I will explore Congolese historic narratives as myths and their workings as interpretative frameworks that give meaning to the post-war experience. A few comments on the main sources from which I have drawn are in place. Evidently, there are multiple Congolese myths, none of them is uncontested. I do not aim to discuss a grand Congolese historic narrative. Rather, the narratives I will discuss are based on discussions with my respondents. They were widely shared by people in different parts of the country where I conducted my research (Bas-Congo, Kinshasa, South Kivu), in which different political preferences exist as well as different recent historical experiences. They also appeared to be shared by people from different social strata, such as political elites, civil society activists, members of the general public, and political party

activists. In my discussions and interviews with Congolese during my research in the Congo, as well as during previous visits to the country, my discussants often emphasised their historic experiences. These historic narratives were important for them to explain their perspectives. They found it important that I understood Congolese history 'in the right way', to be able to understand current political developments. The narratives I have put together in this chapter are thus collected as a by-product of my research, based on discussions, interviews and consultation of written texts and secondary sources. In addition to this, I have drawn on work by Congolese historiographers, and some important collections of Congolese narratives that have been published by anthropologists.

Discourses of foreign intervention in Congolese affairs are indeed produced by political leaders. The narratives remind us of the discourses of the nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s that lead the quest for independence. Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Côte d'Ivoire's Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Senegal's Léopold Senghor, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, and their more radical counterparts Amilcar Cabral, Sekou Touré and Patrice Lumumba – they all used a nationalist discourse for social and political mobilisation in the quest for self-determination (Cooper 2002, 49-59). This nationalism was distinctly different from European nationalism (Gellner 1983, 81-82, Kedourie 1970, 29). It constructed nationalism in terms of liberation, and was anti-imperialist. It emphasised sovereignty and self-determination and little beyond that (Davidson 1992, 162-64, Hobsbawm 1990, 136). The narratives thus contain not only the image of the Congolese as victims, but also of a new beginning similar to the Independence fifty years earlier. They construct the present as a reproduction of the independence momentum.

The narratives are quite overtly employed to present the respective leader, whether Mobutu, Kabila, Bemba, Tshisekedi or any other, as somebody that will stand up against this foreign tutelage and that will defend Congolese self-determination, dignity and sovereignty – be it successfully or unsuccessfully. They mobilise the resources provided by the 'pact between remembrance, memorisation and commemoration' to justify their power (Ricœur 2004, 85). However, dismissing these perceptions as elitist demagoguery to seek legitimacy is one side of the coin. The inverse is also true. These repertoires can only be employed by these leaders *because* they respond to popular perceptions (Cruise O'Brien 2007, 16-18). The recognition of this makes it impossible to deem the narratives irrelevant. In order to win popular support, one has to stand up for Congolese rights and resist foreign intervention. It is telling that criticisers of Kabila and *Radio Trottoir* in Kinshasa often seem more concerned with the idea that Kabila has the support of 'the European Mafia', than with the notion that he lacks support of the Congolese people.[4] The meaning might be similar, but the difference

[4] Discussion at Street Parliament, Victoire, Kinshasa, Field notes, March 2010.

in perspective is significant. The discourses of leaders are thus simultaneously a response to popular perceptions as well as sources of popular perceptions. This means that the use, construction and apparent manipulation of memory (and indeed forgetting) is more complicated than merely imposing a certain 'authorised' version of history from above, but that this truthful memory operates to oneself, but also in relation to others (Ricœur 2004, 132).

What make these narratives relevant is that they are employed by various social groups in the context of politics and post-war state building – political elites, urban masses, rural poor, civil society activists, the military, opposition as well as those in support of the regime. Evidently, these people do not necessarily agree with each other. However, they do use the same repertoires to construct their arguments. My respondents from various socio-economic and political groups, as well as in daily talks with people in public transport and the organisations and institutions I worked with – they often referred to the same narratives, using it as a frame of understanding for their interpretation of current affairs.

Some comments on knowledge production and access to information in the Congo are necessary. Spread of information in the Congo and creation of truths often depends on word of mouth, hearsay, rumour and the infamous *radio trottoir*, or 'pavement radio'. This has perhaps less to do with the literacy rate (which is actually not particularly low),[5] and more with a long established and chronic lack of (reliable) information in the country. Newspapers are rife in Kinshasa, but anywhere else they are difficult to acquire. Of the many books that are being published on the Congo, almost none are translated in local languages, and few of the publications in French reach the handful of bookstores that is to supply a city of 8 million inhabitants. Those that do are unaffordable for the far majority of the people.[6] Outside the capital city, books are extremely hard to get.

Radio is the most important and popular source of information, but outside the cities (but also increasingly within) a lack of electricity makes radio and tv often difficult to access which means that people often rely on rumour and hearsay for their access to information. I found it nevertheless surprising how well people in remote areas are sometimes informed about particular issues. But even in Kinshasa, where people have relatively good access to media (including internet) compared to the rest of the country, the city relies more on *radio trottoir* than anything else.

Radio trottoir is by outsiders considered to be the over-active rumour machine of Kinshasa, but for the Congolese it is a medium that spreads truth and facts, as

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[5] Literacy rates were estimated in 2007 as 81% for men and 54% for women, http://www.irinnews.org/country.aspx?CountryCode=CD&RegionCode=GL, accessed 10 July 2010.

[6] A recently published history book on the Congo by a renowned Congolese historian Ndaywel e Nziem (2008) costs US$60 (price November 2010), GNI per capita in 2009 was US$160. (http://data.worldbank.org/country/congo-democratic-republic, accessed 24 November 2010).

opposed to the manipulated and propagandised media that function as vehicles of political actors. People have long learned not to trust the official stories, and therefore find information based on eye-witness accounts more valuable (Ellis 1989, Jewsiewicki *et al*. 1995, 220). Increasingly, cyber cafes open their doors in Kinshasa, connecting the Congolese, and *radio trottoir*, with the internet. Ellis and Ter Haar describe *radio trottoir* as 'the socially-channeled, oral discussion of current events in Africa' which is 'more than rumour alone. It conveys information and news but is also used for entertainment and almost as a collective form of psychotherapy' (2004, 29-30). The truths *radio trottoir* provides are established because the stories are 'readily and commonly told' (White 2000, 31). This means that Congolese knowledge and popular understanding of history and current affairs is not based on a reflection of information from sources that are considered reliable in the West. However, as Luise White's study on vampire stories shows, using rumour and gossip – people's stories – as historic sources 'allows to access a more intimate terrain of personal experience and of thinking than other historical sources can do' (White 2000, 85). Allowing people to speak for themselves means engaging with their stories, their truths and their sources. Through such stories information is spread, ideas are constructed and popular conscious is being developed. It is this popular consciousness that I am concerned with here.

Another source, from which I have drawn extensively, is the '*Relecture de notre histoire*', a re-consideration of Congolese history in the context of the political transition of the early 1990s (Conference Nationale Souveraine 1992). This report is an important document in the development of Congolese self-narrative. The CNS tasked a committee of Congolese historians under the directorship of one of Congo's foremost historian with reflecting on the past to provide a historic context to the (then) current political and economic crisis, and enable the CNS to learn from the past to facilitate its transitional process.

The *relecture* is not a rewriting of history but rather a reinterpretation of history to identify where and how things went wrong, how the promise of independence could have ended in such a disaster. The report elaborates on the chaotic years following independence in June 1960. These events have had an impact on the course history has taken since then up until the period of the CNS. This reinterpretation of historic events that had eventually resulted in the crisis of the 1990s had a profound political meaning in the sense that it sought to simultaneously blame and reconcile in order to clear the ground for a new beginning that would not be haunted by the past. On the other hand, the document is a self-narrative that is as little as possible hampered and influenced by foreign discourses and interests. The CNS was a domestically driven process, with little interference of international donors and democracy promoters. The narrative that

the report offers is thus a self-narrative that is written for a Congolese audience in an attempt to facilitate a domestically steered transition process – a narrative by Congolese for Congolese.

The *relecture* played an important role as a narrative that produced 'truth' as part of a process; a healing mechanism that seeks to come to terms with the past to enable reconciliation between the perpetrators of the Mobutu regime and the people, thereby enabling a shared future (Rigby 2001, 186). It has succeeded in producing such a shared truth about the past and has much authority as such. Although the report itself never circulated widely, its conclusions have become common knowledge. It is therefore a rare source that provides authentic insights in Congolese historic self-narratives. It is however important to be wary of the dangers of the notion of collective myth and collective narratives and recognise that collective memory is a representation of the past that is shared by Congolese people, without claiming that 'some sort of collective mind or consciousness exists above and beyond the minds of the individuals in the group' (Wertsch 2009, 239).

Although other narratives exist to give meaning to different aspects of the present reality Congolese people experience, in the context of post-war politics, state building and democracy, it are narratives about Congolese victimhood and struggle for self-determination that dominate. This is not surprising. These repertoires emphasise the historicity of the relations between the Congo and the West. The process of post-war state building and the quest for democracy is a process in which the relation between the Congo and the West is prominent, for it is the West and international organisations dominated by the West (such as the UN and its agencies, and the IFIs) which are primarily engaged with these processes. This narrative therefore provides a relevant historic frame for Congolese experiences of the liberal peace, exactly because it centralises the relationship between the main stakeholders, and the Congolese experience of this relationship.

'They said "here is your independence", now we know it is all a lie'.[7] - Constructing historic self-narratives in Congo

Rubbers' study of Congolese narratives on post-colonial history in southern Katanga found that people use four different narratives to make sense of events and the situation they found themselves in. These narratives had an important commonality, they all emphasise the stable distinction between white people (or in broader terms westerners or foreigners) and Congolese people, and the opposing roles they have in history: chosen and cursed, perpetrators and victims, able and

[7] Congolese journalist in conversation with author, field notes November 2009.

helpless. They construct a perception of domination and submission, in which the Congolese is presented as a passive victim that has no agency or ability to influence its own fate. His fate is determined by foreigners, either directly or indirectly. Whereas the foreigners are ambiguous (they can be good or evil in their intent), the Congolese is always helpless (Rubbers 2009, 283).

One of the narratives identified by Rubbers emphasises the invisible hand of imperialism behind the misery of everyday life in the Congo. It reduces Congolese history to western intervention, in its past and current form, which it describes as shameless greed behind a farce of altruistic arguments (Rubbers 2009, 276). In the context of my research on politics, post-war state building and democratisation it is not surprising that exactly this narrative was brought forward by my informants. It is the West that is prominently present in state building and democratisation in contemporary post-war Congo, and therefore the necessary referent.

This narrative sees Congolese post-colonial history in terms of Congolese victimisation of western interference that is pursuing its own financial interests at the cost of Congolese self-determination and peace in the region. The mythistory is constructed on repertoires of violence against Congolese people, as well as continued interference in Congolese domestic affairs, and the breaching of sovereignty to serve foreign (western) financial interests. Leopold's Congo Free State, the Colonial era, the *Pagaille*, 32 years of dictatorial rule under Mobutu, the two wars of the 1990s, the difficult transition process, the tutelage of CIAT dring the post-war transition process, and the suspicion over the elections of 2006 – the Congolese see the hand of the West behind these events that have victimised the Congolese, either directly or through manipulated African collaborators such as the person of Mobutu or the state of Rwanda.

Consequently, a second important repertoire that carries the mythistory is the continued struggle for freedom and democracy. It is the powerful other, the West, Rwanda and their Congolese allies, that conspires against the Congo and its people. But the Congolese have continued a struggle for their freedom, dignity and democracy. Built on the heroic status of Lumumba, the second independence movement of Pierre Mulele, the martyrs of 1965, the struggle for democratisation of the 1990s and its martyrs, and the rebellions of the 1990s – there is a narrative that sees the Congolese as a nation struggling against foreign inflicted injustice. The mythistory tells a story of how the Congo has been victimised by western interference and exploitation, and how the Congolese have struggled to win back their self-determination and dignity. It uses classic repertoires of loss, fate, victimhood, good and evil, the promise of a better life, heroes and their dramatic deaths. The stark distinction between the two narrative forms – one of heroic vic-

tim, the other as tragic victim – offers an opportunity to explore the ambivalence of Congolese engagement with the present.

Narrating mythistory: The tragic victim

The present of the tragic victim is put in a historic sequence that starts with the exploitation of the slave trade, the terror under the rule of the Congo Free State, followed by the Belgian colonial regime (Ceuppens 2003, Fabian 1997, 20-71, Ryckmans 2010). The first few years of independence were dramatic. An institutional crisis made the country ungovernable, the regime lost control over the state, provinces seceded, rebellions broke out, foreign mercenaries roamed the country, Prime Minister Lumumba was assassinated, and two coups d'état were committed.[8] This *pagaille* (the mess) is seen to be caused by western interference (primarily Belgium, aided by the US and others) that did not want the Congo to be truly sovereign and independent, and thus beyond the control of the West and its financial interests. The aim was to maintain a form of neo-colonial control through the manipulation of Congolese leaders and let the nationalist government collapse (Wamba-dia-Wamba 1987, 33-35). The secessionist attempts of Katanga and Kasai were not autochthonous efforts to claim self-determination, but efforts by the West to divide and rule (commonly referred to by Congolese as *balkanisation*) to protect its financial interests. They thus engineered "the consolidation of political power by Congolese moderates under the tutelage of Washington, New York and Brussels" (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 96), in which the Congolese were merely manipulated pawns (Conference Nationale Souveraine 1992, 3-4).

This western instigated chaos enabled Mobutu to access power and install a dictatorial regime that would last for 32 years. Mobutu, however, presented himself as a combatant for Congolese dignity and self-determination. With his speeches on African dignity and his demands for cultural and economic self-determination he did much to develop the Congolese victimisation narratives that blamed others (Dunn 2001, Mobutu 1975, 506). Mobutu emphasised that many of the problems the country was faced with were either a legacy of colonialism, or a consequence of the continuation of colonial relations in the form of neo-colonialism (Ngoma-Binda 2009, 89).

Mobutu's *Authenticité* policy – the psychological and cultural decolonisation of the Congo – was presented as a counter-hegemonic discourse that rejected foreign tutelage. *Authenticité* was a form of Zairian cultural nationalism that was to restore national pride and build a national identity. It emphasised Congolese cul-

[8] For an account of events, see for example Ndaywel e Nziem (2008), Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002), De Witte (1999), Young (1965) , Young (1965) and Young and Turner (1985).

ture, traditions and values as a framework for development and a rejection of the exploitation from the West. This sense of injustice and the framing of the Congo's international relations in these terms is something that is known by every Congolese. People in isolated rural areas, as well as urban poor, political elites and intellectuals – they would often emphasise to me in interviews or in conversations that they know very well what is happening, how their country is exploited and who profits from this. Mobutu cleverly exploited the myths of Congolese submission to foreign interests that enabled him to present himself as a leader that claims the 'real independence' for the Congo.

However, towards the end of his regime, Mobutu became more and more seen as the embodiment of foreign interference, the instrument of foreign interests. Political opposition became more and more critical of Mobutu and his regime, and Congolese infamous rumour machine rapidly spread these concerns. There were concerns about whether Mobutu was an agent of the Belgian secret service and whether his disastrous economic policies of *Zairianisation* and *Radicalisation* were in fact drawn-up by western advisers aimed at ruining Congolese economy. Also, Mobutus attempt to obstruct the CNS process are seen as a foreign inspired attempt to block change (Conference Nationale Souveraine 1992, 19-21). The notion that Mobutu has implemented policies that worked against the best interest of the Congolese people thus directly lead to suspicions of him being an agent for the West.

Not long after Laurent Kabila accessed power in May 1997 people realised that the country had again fallen victim to foreign interests and the problems of others. 'AFDL came from abroad. From abroad comes no liberation, only aggression', said a former MP, 'the war was a war of occupation. The state had been occupied, supported by Rwanda.'[9] The notion of Rwandese aggression and interference in the Congo had developed already before the 1994 genocide. Mobutu's politics had caused much controversy over the nationality and identity of Rwandophones (the Banyamulenge and Banyarwanda), descendants of migrants from the colonial days when both Rwanda and Congo were Belgian colonies. Anti-Rwandan sentiments were thus already rife in the Congo before the spillover of the Rwandan genocide into Congo in 1994 and the Rwandan aggression of 1996 (Mamdani 2001, 234-63, Prunier 2009a, 46-72, Vlassenroot 2002).

When the second rebellion was launched in August 1998, the Kinois were furious. A true hunt for 'Rwandans' was organised in the city in which rebels that had reached Kinshasa from the military base in Kitona (Bas-Congo province) as well as civilians who were accused of being 'Rwandan' were assaulted or killed. The regime speaks about 'the war of aggression of which our country has been

[9] Interview with former MP 3, now civil society activist, Bukavu, 19 March 2010.

the victim' (Nzazi Mabidi 2009). Followers of UDPS go even further. For them the failure of the CNS and the two wars that followed are related:

> 'The CNS has given the people power, self-determination. It has liberated us. The International Community could no longer interfere. But they did not accept that, the international mafia – you know who I am talking about, (Louis) Michel[10] and his friends. So they instrumentalised the war and the Sun City peace process to win back their influence. Winning back our self-determination is still the struggle.'[11]

Stimulated by reports by (international) NGOs, the UN reports on illegal exploitation in the Congo and its infamous so-called 'secret paragraph' in which people, countries and companies were named and shamed (UN 2001a, UN 2001b, UN 2002, UN 2003), people frame the war as other people's war; as the war of people who were after Congolese riches. The argument is that war was brought to the Congo by outsiders, that it was not a Congolese war. The Congolese see themselves as a peace-loving nation. The idea that violence is brought to the Congo by the Rwandese is a common perception of Congolese people. It is an understandable idea, considering that the explosion of the Great Lakes Region in the late 1990s was triggered by the 1994 Rwandan genocide and its aftermath. But it is also an attempt to make sense of the senseless violence in some parts of the country, and to find a way to deal with it. When I spoke to an employee of a Congolese NGO about the state of misery in the Congo and the ongoing violence and conflict in the East, she asked me, 'do you see us as being violent? Are we violent and aggressive?' Her answer followed shortly, 'we don't do this to ourselves. The Rwandans have brought violence here.'[12] In a discussion in Bukavu, a town in Eastern Congo where people have suffered from ongoing conflict and structural violence in the region, people speak about the 'Rwandification' of the Congolese armed forces through the integration with CNDP (*Congres National pour la Défense du Peuple*) troops.[13] This explains the Congolese Armed Forces' atrocious behaviour, a source of insecurity rather than security.[14] Similarly, in Bas-Congo the perpetrators of the 2007 and 2008 massacres are said to be 'the

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[10] Louis Michel was European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Development from 2004 to 2009, before which he was Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs. He has been closely involved in Congolese peace and transition process, and was one of the main figureheads of the international community in Congo. He is seen by many Congolese as being too close to President Kabila and therefore partisan, and as a leader of the treacherous International Community.

[11] Interview with Street Parliamentarian 3 and UDPS, Kinshasa 03 March 2010.

[12] Discussion NGO employee, Kinshasa, field notes November 2009.

[13] CNDP was widely believed, and not just by Congolese, to be either a division of the Rwandan army, or a rebel force defending Rwandan interests on Congolese soil. The CNDP was composed of Rwandophones, and claimed to defend the interests of the Congolese Rwandophone minority in Congo. In 2009, as part of the peace agreement between the Congolese Government and CNDP, its troops were integrated in FARDC.

[14] Focus Group with 16 civil society representatives from Bukavu and surroundings, *Bureau de Coordination des Société Civile*, Bukavu, 16 March 2010.

Tutsis and the Katangans'. In other words, 'strangers' or 'outsiders', in the context of Bas-Congo.[15]

Since the mid-1990s there is thus a second 'foreign evil' that is held responsible for Congolese misfortune: Rwanda and to a lesser extent Uganda, Burundi and Angola – neighbouring countries that are held responsible for the continuing conflict since the mid-1990s and that are seen to want to control and destabilise Congo in order to profit from its riches, often working together with western powers in a conspiracy, between '*les Anglo-Saxons*' and Rwanda against Congo: 'The United States is a source of instability everywhere around the world, and also here. But so are Great Britain, and the European Union and Belgium. (...) Rwanda was the driving force behind the (rebellions of) AFDL and RCD. But behind Rwanda were the United States and Great Britain. Rwanda is just an instrument of the United States and Great Britain.'[16]

Referring to the failures of western responses to the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and its aftermath and the problem with the FDLR (*Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération de Rwanda*) on Congolese soil ever since, people feel that the International Community has brought a foreign (Rwandan) problem to the Congo. People feel they have fallen victim of a problem that is not their own.[17] In his State of the Nation Speech of 2008, President Kabila spoke about an 'unjust war that was imposed upon us'. He emphasises that not only has the Congo become victim of a crisis that was not its own, it is also not assisted adequately by those responsible, leaving the country victimised twice (Kabila Kabange 2008). In the east it is strongly felt that Rwandan problems continue to haunt the Congo, a notion which was reconfirmed in 2009 when Rwandan troops were invited to enter the Congo to join an offensive against the FDLR. Unfortunately for the Congolese in these parts of the country, these 'Rwandan' problems are dealt with on Congolese soil, making Congolese civilian victims. A great sense of injustice exists, and people feel betrayed by the international community which has imposed peace negotiation and a power sharing agreement on the Congolese, while the regime in neighbouring Rwanda is not told, or put under pressure enough, to talk with its enemy, the FDLR. Kagame refuses to talk to them, the International Community accepts that and the Congo suffers from it, is the reasoning. The International Community is therefore considered complicit in the continuation of instability and insecurity in the Congo.[18]

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[15] Interview *Bunda dia Kongo* representatives, Boma, 30 November 2009.

[16] Focus Group 2, civil society representatives, Bukavu, 19 March 2010.

[17] Focus Group 1, civil society representatives, Bukavu 16 March 2010, Focus Group 2, civil society representatives, Bukavu, 19 March 2010.

[18] Focus Group 1, civil society representatives, Bukavu, 16 March 2010; Interview with MP 9, Bukavu, 18 March 2010.

The DRC is of course not unique in using these repertoires. African self-narratives are often constructed on (the manipulated use of) the rhetoric of autonomy, resistance and emancipation to create an authentic African voice. Narratives are then employed to emphasise African victimhood. Africans are not presented as having their fate in their own hands, but rather as being subjugated to violence. The history of Africa is reduced to 'a series of phenomena of subjection interconnected in a seamless continuity'. Africans are reduced to passive receivers of subjection, agency is attributed to outsiders, and to fictive or invisible actors, who are 'said to always determine, ultimately, the subject's life'. The result is a 'cult of victimisation, in which the African is never responsible for the course history has taken, a lack of self-criticism accompanied by a quest for sovereignty and self-determination (Mbembe 2001a, 3-5). This Congolese narrative should be understood as such a form of self-writing.

Narrating mythistory: The heroic victim

A second narrative tells a story of Congolese people struggling against foreign inflicted injustice and for Congolese sovereignty and dignity. Referring to the notion of Congolese victimisation, leaders that resist foreign interference and exploitation and claim Congolese self-determination and sovereignty are hailed as national heroes, and martyrs of Congolese dignity and patriotism. Mobutu did indeed emphasise this imagery of himself as a protector of dignity and self-determination, but so did other Congolese leaders. It is a repertoire that has served Congolese leaders well. The imagery of Lumumba as a martyr whose tragedy represents the tragedy of the Congolese people as a whole goes back 50 years (Kinkela vi Kans'y 1993, 135, 138), but the imagery is effortlessly reproduced with a more recent 'martyr of Congolese dignity', Laurent Kabila. Although there was little democracy under Kabila, he is imagined as a protector of Congolese patriotism and self-determination, continuing the struggle of Lumumba. On the website of current President Joseph Kabila it is written that his father at the age of 19 swore to his mother to be another Lumumba (Nzazi Mabidi 2009). He has continued the effort for the second independence and has been *dans le maquis* until he took over power. Recently, a Congolese political scientist concluded that Laurent Kabila was 'undeniably one of the true patriots and martyrs', just as Patrice Lumumba (Ngoma-Binda 2009, 155-56). Kabila fought to liberate the Congo from Mobutu's dictatorship that was being upheld by his international friends. His struggle was therefore also against continued western imperialism. Ngoma Binda writes,

> "Kabila has rebelled, being outraged by the imperialist enterprise in Congo launched by Leopold II. It was an enterprise of the confiscation, by all means including villainous ones, of

the rights and powers of the people, and an enterprise that installs puppets of the dominating and imperialist powers at the leadership of the newly independent country." (Ngoma-Binda 2009, 161-62, Author's translation from French)

Because he stood up against this imperialism of the West, making 'the same mistake' as Lumumba had done 40 years earlier Laurent Kabila was killed (Le Potentiel 2010g), 'for his love for the Congo, for Congolese sovereignty and for territorial integrity.'[19] The mistake both Lumumba and Kabila made was to stand up against international interest and interference and to demand sovereignty, self-determination and dignity for the Congolese people. Both were assassinated, in the eyes of many Congolese, by an international conspiracy. And although father Kabila was shot by one of his body guards, it is widely believed by the Congolese that behind this act were in fact international actors and their interests – 'bullets shot by a body guard, remote-controlled by the enemies of our nation' (Nzazi Mabidi 2009).

When Jean-Pierre Bemba wrote in his autobiography (cum electoral campaign discourse), that his rebellion and political vision were about freedom and self-determination (Bemba 2001, 212), he built on a long tradition of liberation struggles since independence and martyrs of democracy, Congolese self-determination and sovereignty and Congolese dignity. The call for a second or true independence started in the context of the *pagaille* and the notion that foreign interests had lead to the assassination of Lumumba because he claimed full independence for the Congo. In the light of the political turmoil and the secession attempts of Katanga and Kasai, a rebellion was launched in 1963, led by Lumumbist Pierre Mulele, to claim a 'Second Independence'. The rebellion claimed self-determination and resisted the interference of western powers that had aligned themselves with the regime of Mobutu. It was a response of the Congolese people to the sell-out of Congolese independence by the murderers of Lumumba to western imperialists (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, Wamba-dia-Wamba 1987, 122-23). The rebellion failed, and Mulele was brutally executed.

The mythistory holds the West responsible for the failures of these claims of true independence. The argument goes that the inefficient and corrupt regime itself could not have resisted this uprising of the masses. The rebellion could only be defeated because of the assistance to the regime in Kinshasa by the West (Conference Nationale Souveraine 1992, 7-8). But it is not just charismatic leaders that have claimed the status of martyr of liberation. The failed CNS process is popularly remembered as the victorious days of popular resistance against a dictatorship that was upheld by foreign interests and as a popular demand for self-determination, power to the people. As the previously quoted UDPS activist said,

[19] Interview with former MP 1, Kinshasa 30 October 2009; Quote from Nzazi Mabidi NZAZI MABIDI 2009. Ne jamais trahir le Congo, 21 janvier 2009..

"the CNS has given power, self-determination and dignity back to the people. It has liberated us."[20]

Narrating the post-war transition process

Narrating history in terms of a long struggle for freedom, dignity and democracy frames the post-colonial past as a black chapter in the history of the country, and the present as a new beginning to overcome that past. After a failed democratic transition in the 1990s and two civil wars, the transition process that followed the peace accord was seen as a form of foreign tutelage, a western driven process. In December 2002, after a long and complex process of peace negotiations, a Global and Inclusive Accord was signed by all belligerents. It was necessary to include all the main belligerents. But it was also problematic, for it proved to be very difficult to proceed with the transition process, implement the ambitious transitional agenda, and organise elections. Foreseeing some of these difficulties, a committee of foreign ambassadors was installed as a spoiler management mechanism, but also an arbitration mechanism that aimed to hold the transitional leaders accountable and push as much as they could for the implementation of the transitional agenda.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the main funders of the transition wanted to oversee the process and arranged for a mechanism that would form some form of guarantee on the process. Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Bill Swing called it a moral authority, that had only a supportive role (CIAT 2006). For the Congolese, however, it was an interference in Congolese sovereignty,[21] that was sometimes perceived as threatening by the political elite.[22] The international community was overtly present on the political stage and involved in political processes. For many Congolese this was too much, either because it was seen as illegitimate interference in domestic affairs, or because it was interpreted as a conspiracy between the greedy political leaders and their foreign patrons.

The power-sharing agreement is also seen as being enforced by international mediators. This '1+4' formula, in which one President was assisted by four Vice-Presidents from different former belligerent groups, is seen as having paralysed governance. "1+4= 0" was a popular reference to governance during the transition period. The idea behind the 1+4 formula was that the Presidency could func-

[20] Interview with Street Parliamentarian 3 and UDPS activist, Kinshasa 03 March 2010.

[21] Interview with (then) MP, Kinshasa 11 May 2006; interview with (then) Minister, Kinshasa 18May 2007.

[22] Interview with one of the four (then) Vice-Presidents, Kinshasa 10 May 2007

tion as a platform to forge consensus between the former belligerents, and where mutual trust and confidence could be built. However, in effect it functioned as a platform on which the war between the belligerent leaders continued, thereby paralysing governance and the transition process (De Goede and Van der Borgh 2008, 120). Kinshasa daily *Le Potential* however wrote: "Eventually, the transitional executive is like a detonating cocktail, ready to explode at the least crisis and block the whole (transitional) mechanism. The only means to avert such an eventuality would be establish a climate of confidence between the primary actors, particularly the five members of the Presidency" (Le Potentiel 2003, Author's translation from French).

The idea behind the 1+4 formula may have been well intended, for many Congolese it was another example of how the international community, the West, finds arrangements to keep the country under its control:

> '1+4 exists only in the Congo, nowhere else. And we did not have it because the Congolese wanted it. It has been imposed upon us by the West. The West does not want a sovereign Congo, it does not want a democratic Congo, it does not want the rule of law in the Congo. It wants a weak Congo to exploit.'[23]

A civil society activist told me that 'since Sun City and the transition, Congo is under tutelage of the International Community. We have accepted the 1+4 in the name of peace.'[24] It was recognised that this was not a power sharing agreement in the best interest of the population, but rather a temporal elite bargain or warlords' peace (Lemarchand 2007, 12-14). It was accepted as collateral damage, convinced that it was the best of two evils. The narratives, on the other hand, interpret this as a conspiracy, a joint effort of Congolese elitist and western business interests.

The discontent about the transition is fed from different directions. UDPS, an opposition party that left the negotiation table in discontent and that has sidelined itself from the political process ever since, is perhaps most vocal and aggressive in its rejection of the Sun City peace process and the political system it has installed. It claims that the peace agreement was not a 'peace on our terms', that it served foreign interests instead of Congolese interests, and that it ignored the democratisation process of the 1990s. This process did perhaps fail in the end, for the supporters of UDPS it was the great momentum. Compared to the CNS transition, the post-war transition is not 'Congolese' but 'foreign'. UDPS claims that the West is behind the current regime, thereby insinuating that Kabila is a puppet of the West. To them, the elections were a farce and the results have been manipulated because 'the West wanted Kabila' – 'The International Community already knows who will be the winner of 2011'.[25]

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[23] Street Parliament, Victoire, Kinshasa, Field Notes March 2010.
[24] Interview with Civil Society activist 3, Bukavu, 18 March 2010.
[25] Street Parliament, Victoire, Kinshasa, field notes March 2010.

Despite these concerns, the elections of 2006 and the launch of the Third Republic were welcomed as a new beginning. Elections had been promised long ago, a transition to democracy started in 1990, and again in 2003. In the mean time there had been numerous victims of the struggle for democracy and both wars. The elections thus meant much more for the Congolese than merely a strategy in the transition from war to peace. Although conditions were perhaps not conducive to hold elections, it was nevertheless considered impossible to postpone them because of this public demand for elections.[26] People are proud of the elections of 2006, 'we have found our dignity again with the elections.'[27] This pride was evident on Election Day in 2006, when people patiently queued outside the polling stations, cast their votes with dignity and devotedly executed the counting process by candlelight until the early hours of the next morning. In his inauguration speech, Kabila refers to the war as a 'battlefield for democracy', a battle that has been won and that enables the beginning of a new era. Kabila presents his inauguration as the victory of Congolese self-determination, Congolese dignity and he emphasises that he, and with him the Congolese people, will take their responsibilities (Kabila Kabange 2007, 15-16).

The elections marked the end of the wars that were characterised by foreign interference and exploitation, and completed a peace and transition process in which the country had been under foreign tutelage. It also marked the end of a long struggle against dictatorship and the beginning of the long awaited democracy. It meant victory and the regaining of self-determination. With the launch of the Third Republic, the post-war thus becomes an emancipatory momentum in which Congolese re-claim self-determination and emphasise sovereignty and reject foreign tutelage.

The narratives provide a frame of meaning to the present. The narratives are very rich and contain much more interesting material than I can discuss in this chapter. For the purpose of this thesis, a few aspects stand out. The mythistory frames the current post-war situation in terms of both continuity (continued international interference and victimhood) and change (emancipation, democracy, a new impetus for resisting this international interference). It puts the current situation in a historic sequence of events of ongoing international breaching of Congolese sovereignty and a quest for emancipation. It frames the current post-war era as a victory of the quest for self-determination and an end to foreign tutelage. It is thus employed as an emancipatory discourse that claims sovereignty, Congolese dignity and self-determination. The liberal peace is thus locally defined as a political project that pursues peace founded on locally defined aspirations, namely those of emancipation and self-determination.

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[26] Interview with Western diplomat 1 and CIAT member, Kinshasa 28 May 2006.
[27] Interview with PALU representatives, Kinshasa 06 May 2010.

This means that Congolese and their partners have a different interpretation of the present in a historical sequence. As a project of dispossession the liberal peace is not about dignity and self-determination. The narratives also show ambivalence in the engagement with the hegemonic discourse of the liberal peace. Congolese employ a strategy of straddling engagement and disengagement with the liberal peace to emphasise their own status as hero or victim, and to give meaning to the failures of the past and the present, as well as hopes and fatalistic perspectives for the future.

Secondly, it affects relations with the main partners (donors) of processes of state building and democratisation. Different people use the same repertoires to construct opposing arguments. Putting political differences aside, the narratives create a suspicion of western partners engaged in state building and democratisation. These interventions are considered to be instruments to prevent Congolese self-determination and to continue Western domination. In the historical sequence of the relations between the Congo and the western world, these partners are perceived with distrust and suspicion. Consequently, the narratives also provide a frame of meaning and interpretation to the failures of the post-war regime and the disappointments with unfulfilled expectations. The narratives enable this to be interpreted as the result of continued interference of the West and its ally Rwanda. The West is simply not trusted. This sets the stage for us-them perceptions, rather than a partnership of actors with shared objectives.

The narratives thus negotiate western interference (power) in post-war Congo and seek to destabilise it by providing an understanding of the present shared by local agencies that pursue a post-liberal peace. Because these narratives are ignored and silenced by liberal peace interventions the liberal peace is unable to connect with local agencies. The agents of the liberal peace fail to recognise that local agencies see them as the cause of perpetuated Congolese misery, and neither do they recognise that local agencies frame the post-war as a political project in pursuit of emancipation from the West. This lack of understanding of local interpretations of the present affects the ability of outside actors to engage with local agencies. In the next chapter I will discuss these myth workings and how it implicates the process of post-war state building and democratisation in the Congo and negotiates with the discourses of the liberal peace.

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Narratives of disengagement and the emergence of hybridity

The narratives discussed in the previous chapter provide a historic context for a negotiation of the present. The liberal peace is given meaning as a political project in pursuit of emancipation and self-determination. In this chapter I will bring Congolese narratives on the present and the discourses of the liberal peace on the Congolese present together to emphasise a fundamental disconnect between the experience of the current post-war reality of the agents of the liberal peace and their Congolese partners. The first section will discuss the negotiation of the present based on the Congolese historic self-narratives discussed in the previous chapter. It expresses continuity (continued foreign tutelage) and change (emancipation). This claim for emancipation is a political project. It is a claim for space for local agencies. The following section will discuss the discourses of the liberal peace and how they materialise in post-transitional Congo. It discusses how the liberal peace intervention shies away from political engagement with the political processes it intervenes in and thus disengages from the process it seeks to discipline. But it not only depoliticises its own intervention. The liberal peace also fails to recognise the Congolese political project of emancipation because it ignores local needs and aspirations that are hidden in the Congolese narratives. Hybridity that enables local agencies is thus created through mutual disengagement. The final section discusses the disconnect that is established through these mutually disengaging narratives and the hybrid space that is subsequently enabled.

Negotiating the present

The relevance of the narratives discussed in the previous chapter is that they help us understand how Congolese experience and give meaning to the processes of

post-war state building and democratisation, and how this affects the processes under way. The narratives talk about the historicity of Congolese relations with the West. The emphasis is on the negative impact of western and foreign interference in Congolese domestic affairs, and a Congolese quest for self-determination. But because these local narratives are ignored and silenced, the liberal peace disables itself from engaging with local agencies. The ignoring of the emancipatory claims of local agencies reflects a failure of the liberal peace to live up to its emancipatory peace ideals.

Narrating the failures of post-war state building and democratisation

The ambivalent attitudes towards the new beginning expressed itself soon after the Third Republic was launched. Even in the Eastern part of the country, the region where Kabila won with an overwhelming majority, the region to which Kabila is said to owe his electoral victory, people feel disappointment. A civil society activist said that people have not voted for Kabila, but for peace, for self-determination, for sovereignty, for unification and against balkanisation of the country. For the people in Eastern Congo, 'voting for Kabila meant voting for that'.[1] Elections were a gift, received with open arms. People saw it as a means to make an end to all sorts of misery, war, poverty, lack of wellbeing, foreign interference. But little has changed, even insecurity has not ended. People know that 'the hand that gives is also the hand that takes', and hold the West accountable for this, because they pursue their own financial interest, forget the people and let Rwanda continue to interfere in Congo as before.[2]

This perception was further fed because in the words of the international community there is peace in the Congo, while for many Congolese violence, insecurity and conflict continue to be daily realities. The peace seemed to be a peace of the Congolese leadership and their international partners. 'During the Bukavu crisis of 2004[3] we understood that (SRSG Bill) Swing was the real head of state. He controlled everything. Joseph Kabila was only a farce.'[4] People confronted with the continuation of local conflict were very disappointed with the peace process. All attention went to the national conflict and the installation of a new regime, while local conflicts were ignored or expected to end automatically in the context of the national peace process (Autesserre 2010). The peace, they

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1 Interview with former MP 3, now civil society activist, Bukavu 19 March 2010.

2 Focus Group 1, civil society representatives, Bukavu 16 March 2010; Interview with MP 9, Bukavu 18 March 2010.

3 Following a series of incidents that heightened tension between the different former belligerents, violent clashes between former rebel militias lead to the temporary capturing of the city of Bukavu in May 2004 by one of the former belligerents and the threat to withdraw from the peace- and transitional process a few months later. The crisis nearly made the peace process collapse (De Goede & Van der Borgh (2008), International Crisis Group (2004), and Wolters (2004).

4 Interview with former MP 3, now civil society activist, Bukavu 19 March 2010.

feel, is a farce. It is not good enough, not a real peace, only a peace for the elites in Kinshasa, not for the rest of the population. People feel that the Congolese leaders and the International Community have betrayed the Congolese people.[5] It was a cause for much resentment, and anger. Much to the surprise and confusion of the international representatives, people expressed their anger towards peace keeping mission MONUC and the International Community in general, and on occasion responded violently to them instead of to the Congolese political leadership of the transition process.

The fatalistic repertoires of the victimisation narratives have tempered the initially high expectations of the post-war era. This is particularly useful for the post-war regime. The elections and the launch of the Third Republic were simultaneously a reclaim of dignity and self-determination, closure of the previous era, as well as a continuation of the historic sequence of foreign interference in Congolese affairs. The victimisation narratives emphasise Congolese inability to determine its own fate and turns them into passive victims of foreign determination. The perceived domination of the West thus turns Congolese leaders into incapable victims too. Although the failures of the regime are recognised, the narratives argue that Congolese leaders are hostages, captured by the demands of the West. It is argued that the President tries hard and does what he can to win back self-determination and make an end to the problems the country is faced with.[6] But he is faced with the same problem as his father and Lumumba were. It is therefore not surprising that it is a discourse that is populist and indeed very useful for Congolese politicians. It is used to unite with the people by identifying themselves as collective victims and the West as collective enemies.

As such, these narratives also serve a purpose for the new regime and the political elites. Although these narratives live among the wider general population and are reproduced by them, it would be naive to ignore the fact that the regime reproduces and instrumentalises these discourses to its own advantage. Not only do politicians make clever speeches in which they employ these discourses to emphasise nationalism, patriotism, and particularly themselves as leaders that reject foreign tutelage. The media and *radio trottoir* is of course also heavily influenced by the regime. Supporters of Jean-Pierre Bemba, Kabila's main opponent in the 2006 elections make similar claims. However, pointing accusatory fingers at the West cannot be put aside as mere political talk.

The West is the favourite enemy that can be used for many occasions: in the East the West is the manipulative hand between the conflict between Rwanda and Congo, in Kinshasa it is the imperialist hand behind the elections that had an unexpected – or unwanted – result. But while opposition voices accuse Kabila of

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5 Interview with Street Parliamentarian 3 and UDPS, Kinshasa 03 March 2010.

6 Focus Group 2, civil society representatives, Bukavu 19 March 2010.

plotting with the West, even members of the Armed Forces see a conspiracy of the West against the Congo. In a workshop for FARDC (*Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo*) officers on human rights and the rule of law, the officers expressed a sincere concern about the International Criminal Court (ICC) as another instrument of the West against Congo. The Court was seen as anti-Congolese and a threat to the Congo, and *thus* as pro-Rwandan and as an instrument of *les Anglo-Saxons*.[7]

But whereas Kabila employs these narratives to emphasise his own leadership, the urban supporters of UDPS use the same narratives to disqualify President Kabila and every other political leader that went along with the West in pursuing the Sun City Peace Accord, which was, according to them, a betrayal of the Congolese people. For them, democracy is about freedom, a freedom in their daily lives. That freedom presently does not exist. They feel sidelined by the donor community and the western partners because of its emphasis on institutions instead of the voice of the people (De Goede 2011, 149).[8] The supporters of the opposition argue that the West has abandoned the people and has chosen to support Kabila in its own self-interest. They all see a strong western hand that supports Kabila. The West has engineered the elections of 2006 so that Kabila would access power. It is another false start for the Congo, and the West is again perceived to be responsible for the outcome of the elections and the failures of the regime.

The post-war as emancipation

In the sequence of the Congolese historic self-narratives discussed in the previous chapter, the post-transitional era was to be a break with the past, an end to foreign interference in domestic affairs and a re-claiming of Congolese self-determination and dignity (Ngoma-Binda 2007, 23-24). Kabila tells the Congolese to be optimistic. The future is 'founded on the strength of emancipatory and democratic ambition which is discernible through the patriotic engagement of all our compatriots' (Kabila Kabange 2008). The narratives thus interpret the launch of democracy as a victory of self-determination, the long awaited second independence. The emphasis of democracy as governance by the people lies on self-governance as opposed to foreign tutelage. Democracy is then given an emancipatory meaning. Besides a redefined role between the people and its political leaders, democracy thus also means self-determination vis-à-vis the international community. In the Kinshasa daily *Le Potentiel* a politician commented:

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7 KAS/FARDC workshop, '*Etat de Droit et la Justice Militaire en RDC*', Kinshasa, 26 and 27 February 2010, field notes.

8 Interview with MP 4, Kinshasa 04 November 2009.

> "How can the International Community continue to impose things to a government that has been elected by the people? That is the real problem. Or rather, one has to respect the elections. The electoral game is not simple. It is about legitimacy. It is for this reason that the International Community always wants to manipulate elections, so that the elected leaders will not have legitimacy with the people. Only to be held to account by the powers that supported them. The Congolese will no longer accept that. (...) It should not be forgotten that, in this country, our ancestors have battled for centuries to create this country. If we reclaim this legitimacy through the ballot box, this is because we want normality, stability and organisation of this country. The International Community should understand that the history of this country is stubborn. For years, nobody notices that the Congolese are fed up. But it will take means that are the least expected at the time when you least expect it, then the Congolese will express their discontent."(Le Potentiel 2010f, Authors translation from French)

Similar comments are often made by ordinary Congolese people. The author of the quoted text above argues that there is no place for international interference in Congolese domestic politics anymore. The will for self-determination, self-government has for too long been ignored. But the Congolese 'will no longer accept' a government that is manipulated by the international community and that has no legitimacy from the Congolese people. Democracy, and the installation of a democratically elected President, Government and Parliament were critical elements for Congolese emancipation. Self-government can liberate the Congo from foreign tutelage. The post-war elections represented the long-awaited second independence. Democracy is emancipatory and means self-determination, sovereignty and dignity.

Democracy thus becomes a technology for emancipation, similar as 'liberation' for Laurent Kabila and 'independence' for Lumumba and Mobutu. It is a political project in pursuit of a peace that responds to local needs and aspirations. Using democracy as a technology for emancipation from western interference evidently has an impact on relations with western partners in post-war state building and democratisation efforts. The victimisation narratives perceive the Congolese as victims of international exploitation and interference for foreign self-interest, they see the engagement of the international community in post-war state building and democracy in this light as well. The perception is that international engagement still serves first and foremost the interest of the international community itself, not the Congolese.

Distrust of the international and disengagement

Many Congolese therefore distrust international (western) partners and donors, assuming they hide their true intentions. Subsequently, the discourse of the liberal peace (including good governance, state building and democracy) is considered with suspicion because it is the international community in the first place that has interests against these principles. It has after all, according to the narrative, rigged the elections. There was much concern about electoral fraud and manipulation, not by the Congolese candidates but by the international partners.

They paid for the elections, they wanted to make sure they would get the result they wanted, was the assumption.[9] Much to the frustration of democracy promoters, an often heard comment was that it were not the elections of the Congolese ('not our elections') but those of the international community ('your elections').[10] It was widely believed – particularly in parts of the country where UDPS and Jean-Pierre Bemba's MLC had much support – that the international community wanted Kabila to win. Particularly in those parts of the country, many people now feel that 'Kabila is just like Mobutu': both accessed power with the help of the West, but against the will of large parts of the population.[11]

A second aspect in this are the country's natural resources. The Congolese are well aware of the wealth of the country in terms of natural resources. They emphasise that they have become victim of their wealth, and perceive any foreign interference in the country as being driven by greed and economic interests. Altruistic arguments of development and democratisation are considered a farce. History shows ample examples of the true intentions of the international community. The suspicion towards the international partners in state building and democratisation has made that the international discourses of democracy and development are not taken seriously, because they are perceived to be a farce behind which the West hides its true intentions.

As an emancipatory discourse, democracy and self-determination then claim a certain distance from the international partners in which foreign tutelage is not accepted. The Congolese search for emancipatory opportunity. This emancipation means disconnecting from western interventions, which are dominated by imperialistic and exploitative interests. But also, western interventions that are unable to connect with the Congolese reality as it is being understood by Congolese are excluded from this emancipatory project. It is therefore this emancipatory project that is ignored by liberal peace interventions. The liberal peace therefore fails as an emancipatory peace. In doing so, liberal peace interventions fail to engage with local agencies. This creates a Bhabhaian hybrid space in which local agencies redefine the political process of state building and democratisation. Western donors are however not rejected as a whole. People are well aware that foreign assistance is needed to rebuild the country. But what is demanded is a different relationship with donors, one with mutual respect. It needs to be based on the interests of the Congo, in terms of development and democratisation,[12] but on local terms and situated in a local context.

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[9] The 2006 elections were for 80% funded by international donors (International Crisis Group 2006).
[10] Interview with Western diplomat 1, Kinshasa 28 May 2006
[11] Comment by a taxi driver in Kinshasa, field notes 13 October 2009.
[12] Street Parliament, Victoire, Kinshasa, Field notes 06 March 2010.

Depoliticised state building in post-war Congo

I will now turn to the approaches and engagement of the western donor community in the Congo and discuss the state building and democratisation effort in the Congo as a project of discipline to normalise the Congo into a docile democracy. However, in practice the donor community shies away from engaging politically in this very political process and thus fails to implement what it argues. And secondly, the liberal peace also ignores the political demands of Congolese agencies which see the liberal peace as a political project for emancipation and self-determination. Subsequently, the liberal peace is disconnected from local agencies. However, both narratives do relate to each other, and are relevant to put together, in the way they engage with the other as actor and position themselves.

Poverty reduction strategy and country assistance framework as depoliticised problem solving approach

The post-war transition period in the Congo (2003-2006) mainly aimed to stabilise the country and reinstall a regime with a legitimate government. It aimed to do the groundwork on which democratisation and state-building could take place in partnership with the newly elected government. The post-war effort for reconstruction, democratisation, state building and development in the DRC derives from the July 2006 Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper (PRGSP). The PRGSP was prepared after a participatory consultation process, in which 35,000 people throughout the country participated (IMF 2007, 15). However, this consultation was conducted in a period when large parts of the country were still affected by violent conflict, which puts question marks to the claims made on inclusiveness of the process (and subsequently the claims of 'local ownership' of the strategies in the strategy paper), as well as to the impact this reality may have had on the responses given by participants. Aimed at improving living conditions, the strategy is first and foremost concerned with poverty reduction, development and economic growth.

The first of the five identified pillars of the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is the promotion of good governance and the consolidation of peace through strengthened institutions (IMF 2007, 49), with a focus on administrative, political and economic good governance. Administrative governance is focused on reorganisation of the public sector, in terms of census, designing organigrams and anti-corruption measures. However, despite some minor comments about the need for enhanced institutional capacities, the primary concern is with the *setting up* a public sector, not with its quality of service, capabilities or defined roles (IMF 2007, 50-53). The section on political governance is dedicated to decentral-

isation measures only, and ignores concerns about national political governance institutions (IMF 2007, 53-54).

Following the PRGSP, the short-term priority plan for 2007 drawn up by the new Government (*Contrat de Gouvernance mars-décembre 2007*) carefully avoids the discussion about corruption and anti-corruption measures, the link between politics and corruption. For example, although Parliament is promised more access to information to perform its oversight duties, there are no strategies mentioned whatsoever to combat corruption within political governance (Government of the DRC 2007, 9, IMF 2007, 51-52). Neither is there mention of the perseverance of corruption in political governance as an obstacle to good governance. The political process as a whole as well as practices that shape these political processes are ignored in the document. It prefers a narrow interpretation of institution building as institutional structures that emphasises poverty reduction and development without accepting that these are essentially political processes.

This negligence of politics is continued in the 'Country Assistance Framework' (CAF), the joint donor response to the PRGSP that forms the common strategic approach to international assistance to the DRC for 17 multi-and bilateral donors, together worth ca. 85% of donor funds available to DRC.[13] Because the needs and strategies as outlined in the PRGSP are broad, CAF suggests a sequencing strategy, which prioritises security and transparency (CAF 2007, 15). Consequently, the strategy about governance reforms is reduced to Security Sector Reform (SSR), transparency, management of public finances and natural resources, decentralisation and reform of public enterprises and civil service. There is no recognition of the fact that these processes and issues are inherently political and require political processes to function. Nor are the inherently problematic nature of political processes in the DRC and corruption within the political process recognised as potential risks that could threaten reforms (CAF 2007, 23-26). The donor community shies away from the political context in which these reforms are to take place, and takes political norms and subjectivities for granted.

The strategy in post-war DRC is a clear example of Chandler's depoliticised problem-solving approach (Chandler 2006, 8). A concern with this approach that focuses on technical issues and procedures is that it does not touch on the internal logics and practices of politics in Congo, the structures of power, domination and accountability. It sets up institutions, but does not engage with the political role these institutions play in governance processes. It engages in capacity building, but does not consider to what political end these built capacities will be used, or

[13] CAF is a joint Assistance Framework of the European Commission, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

whether they will be used at all. The strategy is concerned with a transition to statehood, rather than the state's functioning (Richmond and Franks 2009, 204-5). It is telling that the indicator for the objective to improve the oversight role of key institutions is merely the percentage of parliamentarians that have received training on parliamentary oversight (CAF 2007, 87), not a qualitative assessment of Parliament's performance. Because donor engagement shies away from the political context in which the reforms are to take place, the political decision making process itself remains relatively untouched by state building programmes.

State building in the Congo: The case of the National Assembly

This thesis is particularly concerned with the site of the Congolese National Assembly and the final two chapters will all focus on local agencies on the spatial site of the National Assembly. I will therefore take a closer look at the state building effort at the National Assembly, how this important political institution is approached in isolation of politics in the state building programme as well as in isolation of the politics of local agencies.

Although further in the report it is mentioned that the PRSGP requires strengthening of institutional capacities of the state as well as its non-governmental partners (NGOs) (IMF 2007, 94), not once in the whole document is the National Assembly or Parliament mentioned as a subject of institutional reform or capacity enhancement strategies. The mere installation of Parliament is considered to be enough in the context of perhaps more pressing needs. Political institutions are thus approached by donors as requiring technical assistance to restructure the institution, better manage it and make it more efficient and effective. The National Assembly itself responds to this technical approach by measuring its own successful functioning quantitatively in terms of the number of laws prepared and adopted, and the MPs questions as part of parliamentary oversight (Assemblée Nationale n.d.). Although the parliamentary institutions do receive considerable attention from a variety of donor organisations, much of the funds and means are allocated to the provincial assemblies that were in an embryonic state and would require significant institution building to facilitate the much awaited decentralisation process (Niane and Baba Unpublished, 2009).[14]

The technical assistance programmes with the National Assembly are executed mainly by UNDP and other INGOs such as AWEPA (Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa), DAI (Development Alternatives Inc.), EISA (Electoral Institute Southern Africa) and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) that are often subcontractors to UNDP itself. Activities

[14] Interviews with USAID representatives, Kinshasa 28 October 2009 and EISA representative 2, Kinshasa 05 November 2009.

include capacity building in for example parliamentary core activities such as drafting laws and parliamentary oversight, as well as the donation of equipment and setting-up of offices, and thematic workshops and seminars on issues such as corruption, good governance and the rule of law.[15] Another strand of projects is concerned with MPs representational role, and aims to facilitate the relation and exchange between MPs and their constituencies (for example EISA 2007).[16] Congolese NGO's, Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) and Community Based Organisations (CBO's) also undertake projects of this kind, often funded by one of the mentioned international agencies involved in parliamentary support. In the provinces as well as in Kinshasa itself, *ateliers d'échange* are organised by local civil society groups, aimed at bringing the MPs together with their electorate. The CSO's involved argue that there is little interest of the MPs to participate – sometimes they carefully avoid contact with civil society in their constituencies – but they also argue that if CSO's do not take the initiative there will not be any exchange at all.[17]

A few general conclusions can be made. Some organisations have made a deliberate choice to work primarily with, or allocate a significant part of their activities to, parliamentary staff. The argument is that building staff capacity is more durable, since MPs (in theory) rotate every five years, while staff (in theory) remains.[18] The problems in the functioning of the institution and its administration are seen as being caused by a lack of experience, understanding, knowledge, and skills. These are all technical needs that can be addressed through capacity building efforts such as training, workshops and seminars. The identified needs thus suit the capacity building agenda of the donors and the implementing organisations, and justify the interventions made.

Even more so, some organisations argue that a key problem is the 'confusion' over the 'role' of the MP in a democracy.[19] Again, this is an issue that is expected to be addressed through capacity building efforts such as training. In this respect, it is recognised that capacity building itself does not necessarily change behaviour, political mentality and culture, and that when capacity is being built it remains to be seen how enhanced capacity is being employed and used.[20] The

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[15] Interviews with USAID representatives, Kinshasa 28 October 2009, DAI representative, Kinshasa 11 March 2010; UNDP representatives, Kinshasa 10 November 2009; EISA representative, Kinshasa, 05 November 2009; AWEPA representative, Kinshasa, 16 October 2009

[16] Interviews with KAS representative, Kinshasa, 27 October 2009 and EISA representative, Kinshasa 05 November 2009.

[17] Interviews with civil society representative 1, Boma 30 November 2009, civil society representative 2, Bukavu 16 March 2010, civil society representative 5, Bukavu 19 March 2010.

[18] Interviews with UNDP representative, Kinshasa 10 November 2009, DAI representative, Kinshasa 11 March 2010 and USAID representatives, Kinshasa 28 October 2009.

[19] Interviews with USAID representatives, Kinshasa, 28 October 2009, DAI representative, Kinshasa 11 March 2010, AWEPA representative, Kinshasa 16 October 2009.

[20] Interview with USAID representative, Kinshasa, 28 October 2009

feeling that capacity building workshops have little impact in practice is common among donors and implementing organisations. 'MP's seem keen to learn, but they do not implement what they have learned in their daily work'.[21] Some even feel that the activities they organise 'have no impact whatsoever'.[22] Individual politicians that are well-known to be self-enriching and corrupt denouncing corruption and advocating for more transparency is the 'Caliban-syndrome'[23] in practice - Congolese using the language western donors like to hear (Chabal 1996, 46). In practice, domestic political actors speak the same normative liberal democratic language, but do not necessarily share its underlying political subjectivities. It is a practice of disengagement.

Often, participants arrive late or leave early, enjoying a generous lunch and a per diem for participation. These practices raise concerns about the interest in these capacity building activities. More importantly, they emphasise the fact that there are limits to the extent to which democratisation can be built through capacity building while political subjectivities do not support its underlying norms. Even if subjectivities are influenced by capacity building workshops, they do not necessarily change. International assistance in democratisation is concerned with measurable output (in terms of workshops held, numbers of participants, etc.), rather than the outcome of these activities.

The engagement with the democratisation process, and the development of Parliament as a key institution for a democracy, is thus reduced to technical assistance and capacity building with a limited impact on Parliament as a political institution. Such workshops and assistance may indeed provide MPs and the civil servants of the National Assembly with improved skills and a better understanding of the role of the National Assembly in a democracy. But it does not necessarily affect the efficiency and efficacy of the institution, nor does it necessarily discipline its agencies to become and behave like western style liberal democrats. Although the assumption is that having put in place the framework of Parliament in a liberal democratic state order, people will not only have the commitment to make it work, but more importantly, to make it work according to the liberal democratic norm. The state building and democratisation logic tends to equate the desired outcomes of democracy with the mere creation of institutions and processes. By using a language that is normative and that aims to 'shape' and 'discipline' political subjectivities political actors are assumed to adhere to liberal democratic principles and thus materialise the desired outcomes of liberal de-

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[21] Interview with AWEPA representative, Kinshasa 16 October 2009.

[22] Comment made by INGO representative, author's field notes August 2010.

[23] Caliban, the half man-half fish from Shapespeare's *The Tempest*, is a savage who speaks in Shakespearean verse. The character has become a symbol for oppressed peoples, the savage who has learned to speak the oppressors language, straddling between indigenous and imposed culture (Vaughan, A.T. and Vaughan, V.M. 1991, Mannoni, O.J.D. 1956).

mocracy (Bhuta 2008, 521-23). The assumption is thus that with the shell of liberal democracy (its institutional framework, which can relatively easily be built with technical projects) political subjectivities will automatically be disciplined. In addition, the depoliticised international approach does not engage with these political subjectivities either. The practice of engaging in a process of disciplining Congolese political actors to become liberal democratic politicians through a technocratic and depoliticised approach thus fails.

Mutual disengagement and creating hybrid space

The engagement in the process of post-war state building and democratisation of both the Congolese and the International Community in DRC shows that there is no constructive partnership in this process. From both sides there are discomforts with the discourse of state building and aspects of it are rejected. It is evident that there are radically different assumptions about the starting point and purpose of the process. There is also discomfort with each other and the perceptions about the other, expressed through distrust and disrespect as well as though silencing and ignoring, which results in mutual disengagement.

Nevertheless, the Congolese discourses as well as those of the liberal peace both engage, each in their own way, with three important concerns about the process of state building and democratisation: the political nature of the liberal peace in the Congo; power and empowerment in the relation between western and Congolese actors; and the agency of the actors involved. In this final paragraph of this chapter I will bring the discourses together and discuss how they narrate these concerns, and thereby together create 'zones of mutual non-engagement and irrelevance' (MacGinty 2011, 88).

Liberal peace as a local political project

The Congolese narratives bring instabilities and ambivalences in the hegemonic liberal democratic discourse to the forefront. The narratives deconstruct and lay bare the (perceived) power that is hidden by the hegemonic liberal democratic discourse, a power that wants to keep the Congo under its control. This expression of power and hegemony from the West is subsequently rejected and resisted by emphasising self-determination. In a Bhabhaian way, the narratives engage with the hegemonic liberal democratic discourse, and mimic it to resist the liberal democratic hegemony by using the notion of democracy as people's self-governance. They are constructed on the ambivalence in the liberal democratic discourse (Bhabha 2008, 122), which 'does not recognise the self-determination of others, but is rather a project of dispossession' (Jabri 2010, 48). Whereas the western partners offer an orthodox peace, that is 'determined to transfer (its)

methodologies, objectives and norms into the new governance framework', the Congolese claim an emancipatory peace that resists foreign domination through peace building practices (Richmond 2005, 214, 218). The narratives engage with the argumentation of the liberal peace, reflect on themselves in this argumentation and emphasise ambivalence. The ambivalence is found in the fact that the liberal peace speaks about democracy, self-government and ownership, but practices it in a way that disrespects these principles. The narratives emphasise this ambivalence and use that to destabilise the western engagement in post-war DRC. It negotiates the liberal democratic discourse, it challenges its boundaries and makes demands for the changing of its terms based on the ambivalences (Bhabha 2008, 158, 169).

It thus bends the democracy argument by replacing the domestic power holders as the referent with the West, thereby not emancipating the people from its rulers, but emancipating the Congolese people from western domination and the agents of the liberal peace. It thus constructs the argument for the Congolese to accept the liberal peace (in terms of democracy, peace) but reject it as a project of dispossession. This peace is quietly claimed by local agencies. This opens up the emancipatory agency that Congolese use when they perceive the post-war momentum in terms of reclaiming self-determination. In this hybridity, democracy, state building and indeed the relation with the partners in these processes are reconsidered and negotiated. What the narratives then produce is a claim for a sense of citizenship that not only recognises the rights to participate in a political system, but more importantly to participate in the process of the definition of that system (Barnsley and Bleiker 2008, 134, Slater 2004, 203-4). The hegemonic liberal democratic discourse is the discourse that is simultaneously used as a source for this demand, as well as the main object of resistance.

Power and empowerment in local-liberal relations

Both the Congolese narratives and the liberal democratic hegemonic discourses narrate power and the relations of power that exist between the Congo and its international partners. The discourses of liberal democracy seek to control, dominate and discipline the Congo which is presented as being in need of this assistance to become what it should be. It locates the cause of the misery (and the way out of it) in the Congo and with Congolese people themselves. It presents itself as the willing partner, being faced with an unwilling, violent, corrupt population that is both ruthless and ignorant. For the international donor community, implementing the liberal peace then means a process of disciplining and teaching in the form of transferring capacities and knowledge. The Congolese narratives locate the cause of the misery with the West, and see the West as either the ob-

struction to a way out (tragic victim) or as the power to be overcome (heroic victim).

When they narrated the past and the present in our discussions about current affairs in the Congo, many of my respondents expressed a concern with the audience of historic narratives. Like the *Pantayong Pananew* historiography group mentioned in the previous chapter, they centralise the questions of whose history is being told, and for whom it is being told. This Filipino historiography group emphasises the emancipatory power of historiography, because historiography 'from us and for us' can help people regain primary agency in their own history. It would inspire people to take responsibility for their own past, and thus reject the psychologically crippling attitude of blaming others for their own fate (Reyes 2008, 247, 250). My informants emphasised that they found it important that I would understand Congolese history: *their* past on *their* terms. The narrative is thus employed to imagine identity and give meaning to the present (Ricœur 2004, 81, Rigby 2001, 2). But contrary to *Pantayong Pananew* historiography, the tragic victim narratives, however, fail to be self-critical and deny Congolese agency. Instead, they produced an identity of Congolese people as Fanon's 'native' (1967, 1968), Said's 'oriental' (2003), or Spivak's 'subaltern' (1988), people that are not autochthonous, but merely a construct of western intervention (Lazarus 1999, 86). They reproduce colonialist discourses to emphasise their own victimhood.

But the parallel narrative that emphasises the heroism of resistance against this victimisation seeks to resist this and narrates Congolese empowerment. It uses the past and the historic trajectory of these relations as a technology to make events of the past relevant for the present and the future (Jabri 2007, 145). It presents a past in which the West is the perpetrator and the Congolese are the victims. While the Congolese are willing, the West is a continuous obstacle for a more prosperous future. Salvation must come through emancipation and empowerment which become the objective of the liberal peace in Congo. The coexistence of these two opposing narratives emphasises the ambivalence of Congolese engagement with the post-war situation in terms of continuity and change, engagement and rejection.

This virtual dialogue about power and empowerment remains a dialogue of the deaf because both parties avoid engaging in it and with each other. It concerns the production of truths about the current post-war democratisation and state building process. It is evident that there is conflict between the perspectives on the partnership in the implementation of the liberal peace. Even though both parties have used the post-war momentum to push their agendas, the Congolese demand for democracy thus means something very different than the demand of the western partners and democracy promoters (Abrahamsen 2000, 44). The liberal

pursues an objective of turning the Congo into a docile liberal democracy. For local agencies the post-war is a political project through which they can give shape to their new post-war political and society. The implementation of the liberal peace in post-war Congo is then not a process in partnership between Congolese actors and the international donor community, as the PRGSP and CAF wants to make us believe, but rather a power struggle over the meaning and need for democracy (Abrahamsen 2000, 84) which precedes questions about the form and shape of democracy.

Narrating agency

The discourses also narrate agency or rather the lack thereof. The Congolese present themselves as victims whereas the liberal democratic discourse evades responsibility and agency by emphasising Congolese ownership. But this is only ownership over a process with a pre-determined outcome. The liberal evades responsibility by locating the problem with the host community (Chandler 2006, 73). The donor community in the Congo shares a depoliticised engagement in state building and democratisation. Overall, members of the international community refer to working with the current regime as frustrating and have become cynical over political developments and the will of the regime to implement the decentralisation plans or organise the long awaited local elections.[24] It has therefore decided to leave the initiative to the Congolese regime and be less proactive. 'We realise more and more that state building requires a local government that is willing. If that does not exist, as in the Congo, the international community can do little.' [25]

To argue that they do not have responsibility and ownership over this process (and its inherently difficult nature), international actors follow different lines of argumentation. Development organisations that implement the technical programmes of institution building shy away from these concerns and operate as Ferguson's 'anti-politics machine' (Ferguson 1990). They hide behind their 'political neutrality' as a form of moral superiority and refuse to engage with politics. This attitude of the development sector is sometimes even potentially undermining, when uncritical funding of problematic reform programmes contra-

[24] These were originally supposed to take place before the general elections of 2006, but have been continuously postponed. According to the electoral calendar of May 2011, they were to be held in February 2013 (Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante May 2011) but this has been postponed again. In May 2014, CENI announced a new electoral calendar for the local elections. They are now scheduled to take place in three steps between June 2015 and October 2015 (Commission Électorale Nationale Indépendante 2014).

[25] Interview with Western diplomat 2, Kinshasa 09 November 2009.

dict efforts to engage critically in political debates about state building and democratisation.[26]

Some donors choose to hide behind the workings of the Congolese narratives and use the Congolese claim for sovereignty and self-determination as an excuse to not engage in the more difficult aspects of political processes such as democratisation and the disciplining of political subjectivities.[27] According to others, this 'cowardice attitude' pretends to respect Congolese sovereignty, but merely aims to protect financial interests some countries have in the Congo. This attitude thus not only uses the workings of the Congolese narratives to its own interests, it also reproduces the myth by confirming that these countries financial interests stand above concerns of democratisation and good governance in the Congo.[28]

A more critical response towards the Congolese regime and the implementation (or lack thereof) of the democratisation and state building agenda criticises both the 'political neutrality' of the development approach, as well as the 'cowardice attitude' of other countries. It seeks to engage in a political dialogue with Congolese authorities. It claims to see through the workings of the Congolese narrative and the Caliban-syndrome. However, this approach does not locate the problem with the response of the international partners. It still locates the problem with the Congolese actors themselves, and with their lack of recognition of the problem, or lack of willingness to engage with it:

> 'You can capacity build as much as you want, organise as many workshops and seminars as you want, and keep pouring millions into it, but if the elites do not have the political will for democratisation and to improve things here in general, it will not make a difference.'[29]

These more critical partners question the notion of sovereignty and how that interferes with state building efforts. They argue that if outside interventions on state building and democratisation are to be successful they will have to breach the sovereignty principle. But they also argue that the notion of sovereignty is based on functioning states, and therefore does not apply similarly to countries such as Congo. Because the Congo is considered, and treated, as a sovereign state, successful change and reform becomes a matter of political will of the political leadership.[30] Centralising political will of Congolese actors, they argue that the problem is that Congolese authorities refuse to engage seriously in the content of democracy and that they have difficulty to get access to discuss these matters. They argue that there is a need to discipline political subjectivities, but that they are unable to do so because of a lack of access and openness for an upfront

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[26] Interviews with Western diplomat 4, Kinshasa 29 August 2010, DFID representative, Kinshasa 03 September 2010.

[27] Interview with Western diplomat 4, Kinshasa, 29 August 2010, Western diplomat 5, Kinshasa 30 August 2010 and Western diplomat 6, Kinshasa, 03 September 2010.

[28] Interviews with Western diplomat 3, Kinshasa, 25 August 2010.

[29] Interview with Western diplomat 5, Kinshasa, 30 August 2010.

[30] Interview with Western diplomat 3, Kinshasa 25 August 2010.

and honest discussion. These representatives of the international community are being confronted with the workings of the myth described in the previous chapter. 'No longer can we say "do this, do that", the DRC has claimed its sovereignty. All the international community can do is advice.'[31]

These three responses appear to be very different and are the cause of tension between different international actors on the ground. However, an important commonality in these three responses is that they deny primary agency of themselves in the process of democratisation, either because they avoid it and hide behind the workings of the myth and the claims of sovereignty and self-determination; because they refuse it and play the depoliticised development card; or because they are confronted with the workings of the myth and are faced with what is considered as a lack of Congolese political will. The argument is that the Congolese have the agency but not the will, whereas the internationals have the will but no (sufficient) agency. The different attitudes towards the question of agency and responsibility are thus different narratives of disengagement which make space for hybridity and local agencies.

However, despite Congolese claims for agency and emancipation, the victimisation narrative remains present. But by pointing to the West as the cause for the failures of Congolese attempts to democratise and stabilise the country, the Congolese present themselves as being without agency as well. They thus also evade responsibility for the outcomes of the processes towards their own constituencies. The Congolese narratives argue that the West does not want the Congo to be democratic and independent, and that western partners seek to maintain control over the country through trade, war and aid. The Congolese are helpless and lack agency to take matters in their own hand (Rubbers 2009, 283). Both discourses emphasise that there is an essential problem with the other partner in this process, a problem that seems unsolvable.

Producing hybridity

The liberal peace in the Congo shies away from political engagement and limits itself to technical assistance and thus in effect evades the very core of what it claims to be doing: disciplining the Congolese to become good democrats. The International Community chooses to avoid this level of political engagement, whereas the Congolese do not want the international community to engage with it in the first place. This is the political project of local agencies. Local agencies are ignored but maintain a form of resistance. It is a hybrid space in which local agencies shape a new political environment. The core of the liberal democratic hegemonic discourse is rejected, resisted, ignored and avoided. Institutions are

[31] Interview with representative of development organisation, Kinshasa, 19 October 2009.

not disciplined, political subjectivities are not touched upon, but through everyday practices these agencies shape an emerging political environment (Richmond 2010, 21-2).

This may lead to the conclusion that post-war state building as a practice of the liberal peace in the Congo has, as in many other countries, resulted in little more than a virtual peace, a shell state made up of shell institutions (Richmond 2005, 227, Richmond and Franks 2009, 204). The outer framework of democracy is being constructed, but the inner workings of these institutions that depend on political subjectivities are being left untouched. However, the case of the Congo shows that this virtual peace or shell state is not just a consequence of the internal contradictions of the liberal peace itself. It is also produced by Congolese actors and their resistance towards the liberal peace. The boundaries of international engagement in democratisation are set by the Congolese as well as the international partners themselves. This reflects the model of hybridisation as a process of engagement and resistance between the liberal and the local (MacGinty 2011, 77-8, Richmond 2009a). However, what we see in the Congo is a variation on the model. The liberal peace may in word seek to comply with local agencies, but as we have seen it in effect does not follow through this project of discipline with its practices. It thus does not incentivise local agencies.

The model sees local agencies only as resisting the model. As we have seen in the analysis above, this interaction is more complex. The liberal not only depoliticises its own practices, it also silences the political project of local agencies. It is therefore not merely the resistance of the local, but also the disengagement of the liberal that produces 'zones of mutual non-engagement and irrelevance' – that is 'areas of lives that the liberal peace is uninterested in, and areas of the liberal peace in which local communities have no interest' (MacGinty 2011, 88).

If international partners do not wish to engage in a reinvented *mission civilisatrice* and if the Congolese do not want to allow this to happen, the consequence is that the liberal peace is unable to connect with local agencies. These local agencies will then shape the way in which the institutions will function and the political role they will play. This means that responding to the failures of the liberal peace is not just a matter of improving its praxis. The previous analysis suggests that it is also a matter of perceptions about the partnership and the partners itself, and the ability of the liberal to meaningfully connect with its local partners. The outcomes might thus depend less on praxis and more on agencies that are less tangible and therefore less manageable. Even more so, because of this mutual disengagement state building may actually take place not within the liberal peace, but outside it (Richmond 2010, 18), in these 'zones of irrelevance' and hybrid spaces.

The concept of a shell institution is therefore unfortunate, because it easily leads us to think of these newly formed state institutions as being empty shells, a framework on paper, a building, a budget, but little substance. Such a perspective ignores agencies within these empty shells. This perspective is widely shared by practitioners in general. By accepting these newly built institutions as empty shells, the mechanisms and processes of consumption that make these institutions function are ignored as being irrelevant. Even more so, by pretending it is only possible for these institutions to function (according to the liberal democratic norm) or else be an empty shell the 'dissensus about their detail, contextuality and the mechanisms of governance, control and power that put them together for others' are ignored as well (Richmond and Franks 2009, 15). Below the institutional level of these empty shells reside local agencies that shape hybridity. This is a site of struggle, a site of resistance, and a site of consumption. But paradoxically, also, as this chapter has shown, a site of negligence and evasion. The following two chapters explore the practices of consumption of local agencies that occur in these hybrid spaces, focusing on the site of the National Assembly and its agents.

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Consuming democracy: MPs and the electorate

The previous two chapters have discussed how the discourses of the liberal peace and those of local agencies are mutually disengaging and produce a hybrid space in which local agencies are enabled. Despite this mutual disengagement liberal agents and local agencies do not operate in complete isolation from each other. There is an unavoidable interaction between the liberal peace and local agencies which is expressed through various agencies such as resistance, rejection, acceptance, or negotiation. In the following two chapters I will focus on this interaction between local agencies and the liberal peace. The agencies of resistance, negotiation and renegotiation express a negotiation of the liberal peace in response to local needs, customs, culture and aspirations. But the interaction between the liberal peace and local agencies is also a process of renegotiation of the local itself.

The case study looks at agencies at the site of the National Assembly as a site on which local agencies are enabled in conviviality. The focus is thus on agencies that are enabled in the relation between different actors. As such, the case study will look at MPs and their interaction with others. Chapter six will focus on agencies produced by the interaction between MPs themselves and in their interaction with *le pouvoir*. This chapter, on the other hand, is concerned with practices of the consumption of democracy between the MPs and their constituencies through which social expectations are re-produced, but also renegotiated. It thus looks at the everyday practices of MPs in their relations with their constituencies. The first section describes everyday aspects of MPs – their social position, behavioural aspects as well as expectations and responsibilities associated with the office of MP. The following section then focuses on the expectations this assumed role produces. A position of father-chief comes with rights, but more importantly also with responsibilities towards the community or the electorate. The

final part of the chapter describes how MPs are unable to meet those expectations within the framework of liberal democracy. There exists a tension between formal practices of constituency work and the formal responsibilities of an MP, and a preference for informal practices of constituency work which better respond to the social obligations of an MP. It is in effect at this level that the liberal clashes with the local. MPs seek strategies to divert from the liberal democratic practices to meet their obligations, sometimes successfully, sometimes unsuccessfully. These practices negotiate the liberal, but while doing so, the MPs also renegotiate the terms of their obligations towards the constituency. The MPs thus straddle between the two in an attempt to redefine political practices.

MP's self-representation and status

On an early evening in October 2009 I am sitting in the car with an MP, driving through Kinshasa. As opposed to many of his colleagues, he drives himself. He has a posh saloon car, with leather seats, tinted windows and an infra-red camera that helps him reverse through the dark, unlit streets of Kinshasa. The impressive music installation in the car also plays cassette tapes. He plays a tape with Congolese music in Lingala. The MP translates the lyrics for me. The song praises deceased people. In the choir of the song the names of well-known people are cited, among them some politicians such as the popular former Speaker of Parliament (who actually is not dead). The MP notices that I have picked up some names and explains that it is common practice to cite the name of well-known people to flatter them – 'it does not mean anything', he adds.[1] On the back seat sits the policeman that the MP has privately hired for his security.[2] The policeman has an assault rifle on his lap. The MP asks if it bothers me. It does not. Although the policeman is there for the security and protection of the MP, he also makes himself useful by getting out of the car in the traffic jam to arrange the traffic so we can get through. When we're driving again he jumps back in the car.

The MP has a very un-Congolese driving style. He drives slowly, gives way to other people and smiles and waves at people we pass. At a busy and lively square the car gets surrounded by young men that shout at us excitedly. '*Mokonzi*, *Mokonzi*', they shout, 'Chief, Chief', followed by a waterfall in Lingala.[3] They must have recognised the car. They are not angry or aggressive, rather excited to see their MP and have the opportunity to express their needs and possibly get some money. The MP calmly opens his window and tells the young men that he has a guest to be concerned with now, but that he will speak to them on his way back.

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1 On this practice in Congolese popular music see Bob White (2008).
2 On this practice of hiring policemen for private purposes, see De Goede (2008).
3 Lingala is one of the four national languages of the DRC, and the lingua franca in Kinshasa.

He explains to me that we are driving through his constituency. 'Social assistance', he says to me with a smile.

This incident shows how the relation between MPs and their electorate is one of direct redistribution. MPs (are seen to) hold a social position which is performed through material and behavioural ways. Because of this, they are expected to provide assistance to their electorate, while expectations about their formal responsibilities as MPs (representation, parliamentary oversight, legislation) are diminished. However, MPs are often unable to meet these (informal) expectations and attempt to renegotiate them.

Congolese MPs present themselves as being different, distinct, from their electorate. They consider themselves to be part of a different social class, away from the masses. The masses are poor, invisible and without opportunities. They are people that need to be taken care of. MPs are wealthy, visible, and well-known, people with many opportunities and connections, and people that take care of the people that need taking care of. Although many MPs may come from privileged backgrounds or privileged families, many others used to be members of those invisible masses. Being an MP, a member of the political but also social and economic elites, is therefore an escape from this invisibility.

This being visible, being 'somebody', is most clearly expressed in material ways and behaviour, or 'external signs of superiority' (Daloz 2010, 61). Their possessions and life style express a socio-economic status that distinguishes them from the rest of the Congolese. Material possessions such as a car become highly symbolic of status. When MPs took office in 2006, they were all granted a government sponsored interest free loan to buy a suitable vehicle for themselves. One of the measures from the regime to manage the parliamentary crisis in February-March 2009[4] was to pay off the loans of these cars.[5] Kinois refer to a 'parliamentarian's car', for a type of 4x4 that is typically associated with MPs, rather than referring to its brand and type. Like the car of the MP described above, many of these cars have tinted windows which enhances the celebrity status of the MP, but which also blocks the view from the outside. MPs thus segregate themselves from their community. By driving cars that the general public does not have, and by hiding behind tinted windows, they create a symbolic separation between their own class and the rest.

But these symbols of distinction do not end here. For example, MPs and the general public have a separate entrance to the plenary (although coming from the same entrance hall), and MPs enjoy privileges such as legal immunity (République Démocratique du Congo 2006a, Art. 107). There is also a dress

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4 This crisis will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

5 Interviews with MP 1, Kinshasa 20 October 2009, MP 6, Kinshasa 13 November 2009, MP 8, Kinshasa 08 December 2009.

code. MPs wear a suit, like other members of the political and economic elites, as well as representatives of the international community in the Congo. According to the *Règlement Intérieur* of the National Assembly, male MPs are required to wear a suit during parliamentary debates and committee meetings. Female MPs are required to wear a long skirt or a traditional Congolese dress (*pagne*), and are not allowed to wear trousers (Assemblée Nationale 2007, Art. 62). This again emphasises the socio-economic distinction between members of the elites and the general public. The suit is a dress of the elites; the vast majority of the general public probably does not own a suit. Directors of local NGOs, politicians, businessmen, people with high income have and wear suits, others do not. This became awfully painful when in early 2010 the dress code for MPs was extended to the public that wanted to sit in the audience during parliamentary debates in the Plenary. No longer were men that did not wear a suit with tie allowed in the audience of the plenary, neither were women that wore trousers or clothes that were otherwise deemed 'inappropriate'. According to a civil servant in Parliament, the point is that people are dressed appropriately, in a way that respects the stature of Parliament. Himself dressed in a silvery suit and bright purple tie that made him resemble a piece of Christmas decoration, he said that people sometimes came very poorly dressed, even in working clothes, pointing to a cleaner wearing an overall. 'In Parliament it should not be like that', he says.[6] Parliament is a place for elites.

These rules about dress code have a significant symbolic impact on democracy. By excluding that part of the population that does not have the dress of the socio-economic and political elites from the 'People's Palace', as the Parliament building is called, politics and governance is lifted to an elitist level. It basically tells people that democracy is not something they are allowed to participate in. It confirms the popular cynical belief that politics takes place in the 'air conditioned offices', a space occupied by people in suits. This dress-code clearly marks the boundary between people that participate and are part-of the political space, and people that are not.

This notion of wanting to demarcate the spaces of people that are part of these elites and people that are not is also seen in the way in which people think about education and degrees. People expect their leaders to have a certain social status. In the run up to the second round of the presidential elections in October 2006 a common argument of Bemba supporters was that Kabila did not have a university education. They wondered why having a university degree was not a condition for a presidential candidate, whereas it is a precondition for ordinary people to

[6] Discussion with civil servant at the Palais du Peuple, Fieldnotes, April 2010.

qualify for even the more mundane jobs.[7] MPs and members of the political elite use a notion of education as part of their image to demarcate an in-group and out-group. MPs emphasise the lack of education and understanding of the general population, while they present themselves as a social group of people that is able to quote from the Constitution at will, and that speaks in a formal, legalistic and pompous language. Carrying a copy of the Constitution under the arm seems to be part of the dress code for MPs. In parliamentary debates, no speaker leaves an opportunity unused to quote from the Constitution and various laws. This may express a search for legitimacy of the discourse of the speaker in question, or an attempt to express one's respect for the new Constitution and the democratic institutions of the 3rd Republic, including the Rule of Law. More importantly, what it also expresses is a symbolic definition of the formation of a social group of people that work with the law, makes the law, and speaks in legalistic terms. This parlance is a form of performance of status, institutional behaviour, that distinguishes them as an educated elite from others. Dress-codes, use of language, certain cars (Daloz 1990), eating in expensive restaurants and preferring European dishes above Congolese dishes (Daloz 1999b), having assistants, body guards or a private police escort, a driver and several cell phones, and pretty and young girlfriends (Daloz 2002), access to travelling abroad, and the ability to send children abroad for their education are all part of the repertoire of acts that can be best understood as the codes and performance of identity of a self-proclaimed social group of elites. They are practices of ostentation to 'assert oneself and win recognition' (Daloz 2003b, 40).

This political and socio-economic elite is in many ways similar to the colonial *évolués.* As in some other African countries, under colonial rule native Congolese could achieve the status of '*évolué*'. The *évolués* were a social class of people that were educated and had achieved a level of 'civilisation' and 'development' that made them emerge from the Congolese masses. They were never considered to be equal to the white colonials, but were respected as developed Congolese (Quantin 2005, 50). They occupied positions in the colonial administration, and at independence were the people in whose hands the political control and administration of the state fell. The political and economic elite that emerged in the wake of independence had its origins largely, though not exclusively, in the *évolués*, a social class from the late colonial period (Bomandeke Bonyeka 1992, 388-99, Mutamba Makombo 1998, Willame 1972, 167-73).

Interestingly, *évolués* were not only put in an intermediate position (in between Congolese masses and colonial whites) by the colonial system, the mem-

[7] Personal conversations, Kinshasa September-October 2006. In the revised electoral law of 2011 this has indeed been amended. The law now states that an eligible candidate must have completed studies or be able to prove he has professional experience in the professional areas of politics, administration, law or the socio-cultural domain (République Démocratique du Congo 2011).

bers of this class also sought to distinguish themselves from other Congolese, and demanded treatment as people who had adopted European behavioural norms (Ryckmans 2010, 34, Willame 1972, 24-6, Young and Turner 1985, 112). As Congolese that behaved like European colonialists, they were referred to as '*mundele ndombo*' ('white-blacks') (Ryckmans 2010, 35): people that have a black appearance but the behaviour of white colonials (Ceuppens 2003, 41). The behaviour of these white-blacks was similar to the behaviour of the white-whites that were gone, and whose places, status and behaviour they took over: they occupied the colonial mansions, drove expensive cars, used the coercive forces to repress any popular dissent and, worst of all, looked down on the population (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 123).

Like the *évolués*, current MPs show a similar attitude of searching a status, a social position that distinguishes them from other Congolese people. Being an MP, a member of the political and socio-economic elite, then comes with certain expected behaviour, or the performance of this claimed status. In the eyes of the general public, MPs have power. They are seen to be part of the political and powerful circles that reside in Kinshasa. Little distinction is seen between opposition MPs (who have in reality practically no power or influence), or MPs of the ruling coalition. Neither does the general public see a difference between MPs and members of the executive.[8] What matters is that they are understood to be part of a group and therefore have a certain status. That the MPs that lost their mandate for (alleged) electoral fraud in July 2007[9] were given the monthly salary of an MP for the duration of the legislature's mandate (Kamerhe and Kengo wa Dondo 2009)[10] is thus not merely a pay-off but also a symbolic recognition of the loss of status the MPs have suffered. Some of them continue to refer to themselves as '*Honorable*', the official title for an MP, as another way of holding on to the symbols of being part of the political elite.[11] Although they may have lost their seats in Parliament, in public life they are still addressed as an MP and have therefore not fallen back into the invisibility of being a member of the masses. This status, the social position that comes with being an MP is important. The MPs enjoy their status and claim this status, and the electorate gives them this status. They do this not without reason. The status of being distinct from the

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[8] Interviews with MP 8, Kinshasa 08 December 2009, MP 9, Bukavu 19 March 2010, Mwami 2, Bukavu 20 March 2010, field notes, Bas Congo, December 2009.

[9] In July 2007, 18 MPs lost their seat in Parliament after the Constitutional Court had ruled that they were guilty of electoral fraud. The former MPs themselves argue that it was a matter of personal conflict with *le pouvoir* or an unwillingness to join the majority. Interview with former MPs, Kinshasa April, 2010.

[10] In this letter, the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Speaker of the Senate respond to a letter from the IPU concerning the case of the dismissal of the 18 MPs. The authors explain which measures were taken to accommodate the people concerned.

[11] Interview with former MP 4, one of the 18 MPs that lost their mandate in July 2007, Kinshasa, 26 April 2010.

masses comes with important social obligations, as we will see in the following paragraph.

Obligations of being distinct: The MP as father-chief

The significance of understanding the performance of status and politics is that it helps us understand politicians' everyday lives and their everyday engagements with others. In the case of MPs this is most notably their relations with the electorate in general or more specifically their own constituency. It is evident from the above that MPs seek to distinguish themselves as an elite that is elevated from their electorate. What MPs in effect do is define their own position vis-à-vis their electorate, or in De Certeau's terms, they appropriate a space for themselves (1984, 36). By adopting and performing an identity as an elite they claim a position for themselves and the other (the electorate) and thus define a relation that enables agencies. Apart from political expectations that fall within the framework of representative democracy, such an elevated position comes with social expectations as well (Chabal 1992, 213). The relations between MPs and their electorate are established by representative democracy, but the dynamics are better captured by Schatzberg's (2001) moral matrix of the political father-chief and the political family. Within this frame, the MP's escapism to achieve elite status should be seen as the performance or the self-representation of the MP as father-chief. The MP thus relates to his constituency as a father-chief to his family. The ostentation of MPs confirms their power and prosperity, but it also provides reassurance to their followers because it shows that they have the ability to supply and provide to their constituency or clientele (Daloz 2003b, 48).

The father-chief is a member of his family (community), but he is also elevated from the rest of the group in terms of his status, wealth and wisdom. In his role as a provider, the father-chief figure redistributes his wealth to take care of his family and shares his knowledge and wisdom to teach the community (Schatzberg 2001, 149). A father-chief is thus simultaneously member of the family, as well as, as a head of the family, distinct from the rest of the family members. In his paternal role, an MP, while being distinct from the masses he is thus also seen to be a *member of* the community he represents (his constituency). This being a member of the community is an important aspect of being a community's representative as a father-chief.

The conceptualisation of the role of MP as father has also been observed in other countries, African as well as non-African (see for example AfroBarometer 2005, Auyero 1999). Lindberg, for example, observes that 76% of the Ghanaian electorate sees its MP as a father figure that should take care of the electorate (Lindberg 2010a, 8). The conceptualisation of the MP as a father figure is an ex-

pression of a clientelist voter-politician relationship, which is characterised by the delivery of direct and material benefits to individuals and small groups of people (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, 2). The adopted (as well as given) paternal status comes with a range of social practices and expectations thereof in the engagements between the father-chief and his family. The ostentation of African elites should thus not be understood as some 'self-gratifying pastime', but rather as a practice that corresponds to popular as well as elite's expectations (Chabal & Daloz 1999, 42-3, Lindberg 2009b, 11). It is a practice that belongs to people of a certain status; they are not merely allowed to behave as such, they are *expected* to behave as such. The self-representation of MPs thus impacts their engagements with their constituencies.

What Congolese people expressed in my interviews is an expectation that their political representatives are wealthy so that they can distribute. The argument made is not that they earn so much, nor that they have access to funds. Where the money comes from, whether it is actually there, is not what matters. The immediate assumption is that with a certain position comes a certain economic status and social responsibility. This assumption is confirmed by the way in which MPs present themselves. Being a leader implies one has means, which one is expected to redistribute. MPs describe their constituency work as social assistance; people come to MPs with their demands for the most diverse problems that stretch far beyond the responsibilities of an MP within a representational democracy, but which are common practices of clientelist accountability.

In March 2010 I visited a small village about 50 km from Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province in the far east of the country. I had joined a personal friend who works for a Congolese NGO that runs community development projects with CBO's in rural areas. He visited the village to discuss the projects on co-operative agriculture and the commercialisation of their agriculture by accessing markets to generate a much-needed income for the poverty-stricken village. It was busy in the village, everybody had come out to see and welcome the visitors. Children stared at me with big eyes and surprised faces when stepped out of the car. A group of women sang and danced on the village square to welcome the visitors. After the meeting with the CBO we were given a tour through the village and were welcomed by the village chief to share a meal in his modest house. When we stepped into our car to leave the village, a big crowd of villagers swarmed around the car. They held their hands up, asking me for money or small gifts. My friends explained that we had not come to give people money, but that we had come to support their community organisation. The people were disappointed and some even slightly angry. A woman shouted at me 'then we will not vote for you in the elections!'

I doubt that the woman really thought I was an electoral candidate. But she was also clearly not joking when she made the comment. The incident could not express more vividly the expectations that go with political leadership. The notion of MP as a father-chief plays an important role in the practices through which legitimacy and accountability are negotiated between MPs and their electorate – both during and outside the electoral period. One of the most notable roles of the father-chief is that of provider; he must provide for the general well-being of his people. He is thus expected to provide private- and club goods, instead of public goods. Because it is private or targeted at a small group, clientelist accountability is often considered to be hampering democratisation. 'Rewards' are expected to be distributed before the elections (vote buying) rather than after (delivering of political goods) (Lindberg 2003, 127). As accountability becomes a matter of distributing benefits MPs priorities are diffused towards private relations and primary MP tasks such as legislation and executive oversight become less important (Lindberg 2003, 127-28). Lindberg thus concludes that clientelist practices in voter-politician relations are a credible indicator of 'how healthy' (or 'unhealthy') a democracy is and whether the 'soil is fertile for consolidation' (Lindberg 2003, 129).

However, in constituency systems such as the Congo club goods and private goods often make, in the eyes of MPs and the electorate, more sense than public goods because they are targeted only at that part of the population that matters for re-election (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007, 10). It has been argued that the continuation of clientelist accountability practices is typical for young democracies which lack credibility and therefore rely on patronage systems and the buying of credibility (Keefer 2007). Clientelist strategies are then a strategy to acquire political credibility which MPs lack otherwise (Bratton 2007, 99, Keefer and Vlaicu 2005). This would suggest that clientelist strategies are not preferred by MPs, but are the only means available because the state is malfunctioning.

A different argument holds that poverty explains why voters value direct assistance and material goods higher than public goods such as legislation and executive oversight (Kitschelt & Wilkinson 2007, 24). What is relevant about this argument is that it underlines that an important driver of clientelist practices is the demand side, the electorate. Studies on accountability pressures in other African countries have shown that people hold MPs primarily accountable for the distribution of private and club goods (Lindberg 2009b, 9-12, Szeftel 2000, Wantchekon 2003, 403). Clientelist accountability is just as much about 'vote selling' as it is about 'vote buying' (Lindberg 2010a, 5). People give their votes in exchange for private or club goods, not for collective goods such as legislation or executive oversight. In my encounters with villagers in Bas Congo I had the

following conversation with three carpenters that were making furniture in the open-air workshop under a tree on the village square:

MdG: 'Do you know who your National MPs are?'
Carpenter 1: 'Yes, they are Mr. X and Mr. Y'

Carpenter 2: 'And Mr. Z' (who was actually not an MP but a senator)[12]

MdG: 'What do they do in Kinshasa?'

The carpenters remain silent and look puzzled; they have no idea.

MdG: 'What do they do for the community here?'
Carpenter 1: 'They come here, but it is a long time ago'
Carpenter 3: 'Mr. X. has delivered water to our village. The water we have now was brought by him.'
MdG: 'When was that?'
Carpenter 3: 'That was during the election campaign'
Carpenter 2: 'Mr. Z installs electricity in different communities of Boma (the nearby city), but not yet here.'

People do not expect any representation of their interests in the legislature. Direct redistribution and constituency work is not an expectation in addition to political representation, legislation, and executive oversight (Barkan 2009a, 7-8). Instead, it is the primary concern. Although in my interviews some people recognised in that political representation, executive oversight and legislation are indeed tasks of MPs, the vast majority considers direct redistribution and constituency work the primary task of an MP. Their demands and expectations do not go any further than direct problem solving and direct assistance, often of a more practical nature.[13]

It's notable that the matter of what an MP does for his electorate is first and foremost associated with his presence and his symbolic visibility through his acts. As the above quoted conversation shows, MPs are recognised for what they personally deliver to their constituency, not for their actions in Parliament itself. However, presence need not be physical. For example, the pictures below are an advertisement of a community development project funded by the MP for his constituency. The MP in question is never to be seen in his constituency and being close to the President he resides comfortably in the higher circles of the Kinshasa political elite. Nevertheless, he is vividly present in the community because of his projects and the advertisements of these projects.

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[12] Members of the National Assembly are referred to as '*Député*', whereas members of the Senate are referred to as '*Senateur*'.

[13] Interviews with MP 3, Kinshasa 27 October 2009, MP 4, 04 November 2009, MP 8, Kinshasa 08 December 2009, Mwami 2, Bukavu 20 March 2010, civil society representative 2, Bukavu 16 March 2010, Deputy bourgmestre of a Boma city disctrict, Boma 30 November 2009, Field notes Bas Congo, December 2009.

Photo 6.1 Sign in a village in the constituency of MP Antoine Ghonda in Bas Congo province ('Antoine Ghonda Foundation - join the effort to reconstruct the wealth of our country together') – *Author's picture, December 2009*.

Picture 6.2 Sign in a village in the constituency of MP Antoine Ghonda in Bas Congo province ('rehabilitation of the market 'Blue Bonnet' provided by the Antoine Ghonda Foundation') – *Author's picture, December 2009*.

This case of Antoine Ghonda does not stand on its own. An MP from South Kivu builds and maintains school buildings in his constituency from his private pocket.[14] An MP from Maniema runs a local development NGO, for mother-and-child care and runs a community radio station to provide access to information for the population of his constituency.[15] An MP from Bas Congo Province has set up community based self-help organisations in his constituency, which function as a solidarity, emergency and well-fare fund for its members. The MP has provided the start capital for the funds, and members pay their contribution. The CBOs are named 'Friends of *Honorable* so-and-so'.[16] Although the CBOs may function as self-managed self-help funds, by attaching his name to the CBOs, the visibility of the MP in question is high. This MP combines the paternal roles of providing (financial means) and giving parental guidance to his people to learn to take care of themselves. Members of these CBOs will thus acquire a sense of empowerment as well as a sense of relief, which is provided for by their MP. Similarly, an MP from Equateur province imports medicines, second hand medical equipment and things like mattresses from North America for the hospital in his constituency.[17] An MP from Bas Congo province regularly organises parties for the youth of the constituency, who feel impoverished and deprived of such luxuries. Music, alcohol, food, women, but not a single word on politics, 'yet still he is liked by the youth,' complains a local civil society worker.[18] The examples of such activities are endless.

As shown in these examples, many MPs creatively play with the notion of civil society and its popularity with Congolese people as well as with the discourses of international donors. They stretch the notion of community development, and try to use their access to the donor community to mobilise funding for their charitable projects for their communities. Employees of Embassies and donor organisations in Kinshasa confirmed to me that many MPs use individual meetings as an opportunity to present project proposals for community projects such as the building of schools or medical centres in their constituencies.[19] In western minds this logic of combining community development work and political campaigning is morally rejected as corrupt or as an attempt to vote buying. However, Congolese MPs often spoke proudly about their attempts to improve living conditions in their constituency through private means. Most MPs I interviewed wanted to elaborate on their relations with their constituency, and emphasised that they were working hard to use their political power and position, their access to do-

[14] Interview with MP 1, Kinshasa, 20 October 2009.
[15] Interview with MP 10, Kinshasa, 20 April 2010.
[16] Interview with MP 8, Kinshasa, 08 December 2009.
[17] Interview with MP 11, Kinshasa, 24 April 2010.
[18] Interview with civil society representative 1, Boma 30 November 2009.
[19] Fieldnotes, private conversations, Kinshasa October-November 2009.

nors and organisations, to provide some of the basic needs for their constituency. It is not morally rejectable, but rather a moral obligation to do so for 'their people'.

From this behaviour we can read two things. Firstly, Congolese MPs may be concerned about the general negative reputation they have with foreigners (as well as Congolese people) for being selfish, greedy and without good intentions for democracy and development of the country. This is without doubt the case. But more importantly, and even if the former is the case, it is interesting that the MPs I spoke with were not inclined to present themselves as good intended and hardworking MPs by focusing on their responsibilities to hold the government to account, to draft and adopt laws, and to represent the electorate's needs in the National Assembly. Instead, they choose to present themselves as legitimate MPs by emphasising their commitment to their constituency. What this indicates is on the one hand that MPs are fully aware of the inability of MPs or the National Assembly to do anything meaningful for their electorate and therefore need to provide through other mechanisms. But also, it reflects the fact that MPs, like the electorate, are cognitively captured in the conceptualisation of leadership and representation as being practiced through direct (paternal) redistribution, and not through representation in the legislature. A villager in Bas Congo said that 'we are suffering. He (the MP) needs to help us'.[20] It is these kinds of expectations that people in the constituencies have of their MPs, redistribution to directly resolve the needs of their electorate, be that access to clean water, electricity, health care, education, transport, jobs, help in legal matters, food supplies and money, or the setting up of NGO-type development projects in the village. Representation does not concern speaking on behalf of a constituency in the political debate, but rather bringing some of the spoils of power back to the constituency. Members of the general public have no knowledge of – and as it appeared also little interest in – the parliamentary tasks of MPs. Instead, their only interest concerns what MPs have done for their constituency, or whether they have done anything at all. The constituency work is thus in the eyes of the general public much privileged above other core tasks of MPs. Whether somebody is an effective and good MP is measured by his work for the constituency. MPs know that this is how their credibility as an MP is assessed.[21]

This may be partly due to the fact that legal change may mean little to no change on the ground in the Congo. Laws are often not implemented, local governance structures are weak and dysfunctional and there are no funds to deliver

[20] Discussion with villager, Bas Congo province, 02 December 2009.

[21] Interviews with MP 4, Kinshasa 04 November 2009, MP 8, Kinshasa 08 December 2009, Mwami 1, Bukavu 17 March 2010, Mwami 2, Bukavu 20 March 2010, Civil society representative 1, Boma 30 November 2009, Focus group 1, civil society representatives, Bukavu 16 March 2010, Focus Group 2, civil society representatives, Bukavu 19 March 2010, Filed notes, Bas Congo, December 2009.

what has been promised. However, what the expectations of the general electorate also express is a conceptualisation of leadership and political representation that does not coincide with the roles and functions of MPs as conceptualised in the notion of representative democratic politics. It confirms Lindberg's argument that clientelist practices undermine horizontal accountability. In other words, holding the executive to account is less of a priority for MPs (Lindberg 2003, 128). Consequently, they push towards a delegative form of democracy, in which those elected are entitled to do as they see fit without any horizontal accountability (O'Donnell 1994, 59).

However, despite this delegative democratic tendencies people also have a certain expectation of constituency representation by MPs and feel MPs fail to speak up for their interests in Parliament. The follow-up on the massacre of January-February 2007 in Bas Congo is an interesting example in this regard. On 31 January and 1 February 2007, police and armed forces launched a violent campaign against the politico-religious movement *Bunda-dia-Kongo* (BdK), claiming it was a response against an armed movement that sought to overthrow the government (Human Rights Watch 2008, 72, Tull 2010, 649-51). Apart from the founder of the BdK, who is also an MP, none of the Bas Congo MPs visited their constituencies in the aftermath of the violence. People concluded that their MPs do not care, or that they are unable to speak up for their constituency because they fear that this would be interpreted as critique on governmental actions, which would harm their personal position.[22] However, an MP from Bas Congo did ask questions with debate in the Plenary to the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Defence on 12 February 2007, in which explanations on the recent events in Bas Congo province were demanded. The MP's request for a commission of inquiry was adopted by a parliamentary majority. When the state security forces responded violently to the BdK again a year later, another MP for Bas Congo province responded with parliamentary questions to the Minister of Interior (Assemblée Nationale and Direction des Séances 2009).

The National Assembly conducted a parliamentary inquiry into the events in February 2007. The report was presented by the inquiry commission and discussed during three days in the Plenary in May and June 2007 (Basabe and Ngokoso 2007).[23] This was completely unknown to the people and many civil society organisations in Bas Congo who criticise their MPs for not responding to the events or caring about the people in their constituency.[24] Although the inquiry can be criticised on many accounts (Human Rights Watch 2008, 73), the

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[22] Interview with *Bunda dia Kongo* representatives, Boma 30 November 2009.

[23] Log book of Bureau des Annales, session ordinaires Mars 2007.

[24] Interview with *Bunda dia Kongo* representatives, Boma, 30 November 2009, interview with civil society representative 1, Boma 30 November

population of Bas Congo has little knowledge of the fact that MPs have undertaken an inquiry into state sponsored violent actions against the BdK.

The case of for former Speaker of Parliament, Vital Kamerhe, shows a similar tendency. Although as Speaker he was no longer part of the actual Assembly (and thus not representing a constituency), he did speak up for his fellow South Kivutians when he criticised the President for inviting Rwandan troops in the country to partake in joint Rwandan-Congolese military intervention against FDLR. In the past, South Kivu has been one of the regions that has suffered severely from Rwandan military intervention and warfare between foreign military and rebel militias. Instead of having won political credibility for this critique in defence of the interest of his constituency, Kamerhe has lost much political support because he has since left the country and is therefore no longer visible nor able to directly redistribute. He is considered a traitor by some people in South Kivu, and has lost much of his political credibility.[25]

What counts for people is when they see concrete action, when they see their MP, and when they can directly speak to him and receive from him. The only way in which an MP can show that he acts in the interest of his constituency, is through his presence in and direct distribution to his constituency. For the constituency invisible actions such as parliamentary questions and parliamentary enquiries or executive oversight actions mean little or nothing. A father-chief is member of a community, and thus needs to be visible and present. Representation work in the National Assembly does not fulfil this need of a father-chief. Local agencies are more responsive to local needs and people's wellbeing (Richmond 2009b, 561) and much less with questions of good or democratic governance. Contrary to the assumptions underlying democratisation, people do not claim their democratic rights nor pursue their democratic obligations of holding their representatives to account (Bratton and Logan 2006). It means that good or democratic governance in contexts such as the Congo is not necessarily responsive to local needs. If people seek to resolve their needs through practices that do not fit in the liberal democratic framework, it makes it questionable whether citizens will, or can, actually be a driving force for democratic governance in contexts such as the Congo.

Formal and informal constituency work

The framing of voter-MP relations in paternalistic terms and the subsequential emphasis on clientelist practices of accountability stresses a tension between formal and informal practices of accountability. In his study about accountability

[25] Focus Group 1, civil society representatives, Bukavu 16 March 2010, Focus Group 2, civil society representatives, Bukavu, 19 March 2010.

pressures of Ghanaian MPs, Lindberg shows that because the office of the MP is infused with paternal notions of the MP as head of a family, the MP is therefore subject to formal as well as informal accountability pressures (2010c, 126). That politics in Africa takes place beyond the scope of the formal state structures has for long been recognised. Chabal & Daloz argue that the political realm in Africa is more often than not informal and that the usefulness of the African state, for political elites, lies in the fact that it is weakly- or non-institutionalised (1999, 14). Power relies on (informal) personal relations as much as occupying an office (Hydén 2007, 16754). But as Bayart has argued, it is not merely political elites that prefer a weakly institutionalised state, civil society and the population in general often actively evade and undermine the state too (Bayart 1986).

Work of Trefon and MacGaffey has shown that the preference for the informal in the Congo has an additional dimension related to the collapse of the economy and the failure of the state, which forces people to seek informal alternatives (MacGaffey 1991, Trefon 2004, Trefon 2009). The implicit argument of these studies is that the choice to opt for the informal instead of the formal is due to the failure of the formal. In other words, the informal is a second choice (Helmke and Levitsky 2004, 730). Similarly to the argument that clientelist practices are merely a response to the lack of other sources of credibility, this suggests that the privileging of the informal is a temporary solution which will disappear when formal institutions will function again. This is a rationale underlying state building programmes. However, when observing practices of constituency work and constituency representation in the First Legislature of the Congo's Third Republic, we observe not only a coexistence of formal and informal institutions of constituency work and –representation (both forms are not mutually exclusive), but also that the formal is, as Bayart argued, actively undermined by both MPs and electorate.

Constituency work of Congolese MPs is formalised in the procedures of the *Vacances Parlementaires*. In the months in between the (ordinary) parliamentary sessions MPs are expected to travel back to their constituencies to do constituency work and engage with their electorate about their concerns and needs. MPs are to hand in a report on their findings at the beginning of the next parliamentary session, which are used as a basis for parliamentary questions to Ministers and committee work (Assemblée Nationale 2007, Art. 113). Based on these individual reports a synthesis report is made per province. A second synthesis report is made per ministry, which is sent to the ministry concerned for follow-up action, and which is discussed between the Minister and the respective parliamentary committee. When observing how the process functions in practice, it becomes clear that the process itself is not taken seriously, nor considered useful, by MPs and ministers alike. It may on paper appear to be a good system it is in practice

totally unsuccessful. Although practically all MPs eventually hand in a report,[26] most of these reports are superficial. Little exchange with the constituency is necessary to draw-up such recommendations, and few MPs actually do so. Many MPs just state the obvious (such as a need for jobs, security, development), and others use locally based assistants to write-up a report. The preparation of the *Vacance Parlementaire* reports thus fails to be a momentum for exchange between MPs and their constituencies.

It takes a long time before the synthesis reports are put together and before they are even discussed in the parliamentary committees. The synthesis reports of the period July-September 2008 were sent to the Assembly and stamp dated for reception in January 2009 (Assemblée Nationale 2009c, Assemblée Nationale 2009d, Assemblée Nationale 2009e).[27] They were discussed in the plenary only on 12 December 2009 (i.e. a year and a half after the period concerned in the report), together with the synthesis reports of the *vacance parlementaire* of January-March 2009.[28] Although the reports mention evident structural problems of insecurity, lack of infrastructure, jobs, ill-functioning local authorities, and the need for basic things such as health care, education, electricity and clean water, many of the problems mentioned in the reports are issues that require direct response, or concern police and law and order action, rather than issues that can be dealt with at the level of the National Assembly. For example illegal road blocks and harassment by local police and military, or the presence of illegal squatters on private land (Assemblée Nationale 2009e), a need for more banking facilities and football stadiums locally and illegal taxation for market salesmen (Assemblée Nationale 2009c). However, the responsibility to respond to such local needs of a more law and order, or needs of a more civil legal nature, is always referred to a ministry, never to local authorities. Often the (by the MP) suggested action to be taken is left blank in the report, and never is the allocation of means to the local authorities to take action a suggested response.[29]

Follow-up action in response to the MPs reports does not take place, and neither do the MPs question the respective Ministers for not doing so. The follow-up

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[26] Interview with political advisor to the Office of the Speaker of Parliament, responsible for collecting the *Vacance Parlementaire* reports of the MPs and for making the synthesis reports, 24 March 2010.

[27] The reports were stamp-dated for receipt by the National Assembly on 10 January 2009, 10 January 2009 and 11 January 2009 respectively.

[28] Log book of Bureau des Annales, session ordinaires Mars 2007.

[29] Decentralisation of power and state funds is a political hot potato, so much so, that it is not spoken about. Congolese speak about '*le fameux 40%*', thereby referring to it as a myth, something that everybody talks about but is not expected to ever materialize. According to the constitution 40% of national budget should be allocated to the provincial authorities. It is generally understood that decentralisation is blocked by the central government, despite many promises from the regime and efforts to push the issue from the international community in DRC. Despite being considered one of the most important issues on the political agenda since the end of the war (even dating back to the CNS), it has in effect been removed from the political agenda and is no longer debated, not even when the national budget is being debated in Parliament.

of problems and needs noted in the MPs reports is further complicated because many of the issues stated are not issues of the National level, but instead issues that are the responsibility of the local or provincial authorities. Instead of MPs sharing their reports with the authorities concerned directly, all goes to Kinshasa, only to be sent back via provincial synthesis reports to the respective local authorities. The centralisation of governance and the bureaucracy of the process paralyses a response from the authorities concerned, and the net effect is that little to nothing is being achieved through the formal procedures of MPs constituency work.

The failing practice of formalised constituency work and the inability to actually bring MPs and their electorate together in a meaningful discussion shows there is a lack of formalised rapport between MPs and their constituency. They appear out of touch and disengaged. But also, members of the general public appear confused over the different responsibilities of the national and the local authorities, and they appear equally out of touch with the national representatives as with their local representatives. MPs may not take the formalised procedures of the *Vacance Parlementaire* too seriously, knowing that the procedures will have little result, and if there is any result it will be late as well as not directly his doing. The *Vacance Parlementaire* procedures thus fail on different levels. Not only does the process not contribute to improvement of conditions or the solving of problems in the constituency. Because the process is centrally organised, the MP loses his visibility in the process, and therefore his political gain from any outcome. Parliamentary action and its outcomes do not fit within the exchange between the father-chief and his family, it is not a form of redistribution that is recognised, because it is abstract, formal and intangible. MPs therefore resort to informal practices, recognising that formal practices and institutions do not work sufficiently or adequately enough to guarantee their political survival and victory at the next elections. The formalised procedures do not respond to the political needs (of both the constituency and the MP) of their relationship, whereas informal practices of direct action by the MP that fit within the notion of paternal redistribution, do. In such actions local needs are directly met (e.g. the building of a school, the provision of electricity in a community, the reconstruction of a bridge, or the example refurbishment of a marketplace). The visibility of the MP in such actions is high, because it was his personal action, which was not obscured through state bureaucracy.

This direct visibility and action is more valued than political representation at the Assembly is not surprising or specific only for the Congo. What is relevant is the response to it by MPs as well as members of the electorate. Instead of seeking to be better informed, or to better inform the public about parliamentary actions, and instead of striving to make formal procedures respond better to the needs of

the general public, both electorate and MPs prefer to resort to the informal, thus continuing these informal practices in parallel to the new and ill-functioning practices of democratic governance and democratic representation. The privileging of informal practices over formal practices is thus not a reaction to the failure of the formal procedures as such. Even if the formal procedures would function, they would still not deliver the desired results of the visibility of the MP and his actions of direct and personal redistribution. These informal practices then substitute the formal procedures because they deliver what the formal practices fail to deliver (Helmke and Levitsky 2004, 729, Lauth 2000, 25). The formal procedures are nevertheless nominally maintained to keep up the infrastructural and institutional framework of democratic governance. But mutual preference does not lie in the improvement of formal relations and state-society relations, nor in the improvement of formal procedures and practices, or in state building. Although the intended outcomes of state building processes may be responsive to the needs of both the electorate and the MPs, and the hoped for effects may be pursued in what international policy makers perceive to be the best interests of both, in their preferred practices neither is interested in such state building projects or improvement of state-society relations. What both MPs and electorate pursue is an informal and personal relation of direct redistribution and direct political gain. Formalising and abstractifying this relation by building in bureaucracy and the state only reduces its desired effect for both and makes it less effective. What we see here are local convivial agencies that avoid formal democratic procedures to maintain informal practices within the framework of democratic governance and democratic representation. The assumption that the preference for informal practices will diminish when formal practices become more effective is thus flawed which has far-reaching consequences for the possibility of state building and institution building.

‘We see his jeep drive past our village regularly, but it never stops’[30]

Although both electorate and MPs are participating in practices of redistribution that resist democracy, that does not mean that no tension between MPs and their constituencies over these practices exists. The basic principle of the practices of redistribution and representation are agreed upon, namely that they should be informal, personal, direct and highly visible. However, MPs feel too much is expected or demanded from them. Members of the electorate, on the other hand, feel forgotten and abandoned and are disappointed that the expectations of democracy have remained unfulfilled. This tension is the basis of a process of ne-

[30] Comment made by a villager, Bas Congo, field notes December 2009.

gotiation and renegotiation over the terms of the exchange of loyalty for redistribution; whether an MP provides 'enough' and whether people's expectations are reasonable. The liberal peace has created new expectations which enable a renegotiation of existing practices of redistribution.

People had high expectations of democracy. They expected that democracy would deliver something in terms of development and improvement of their daily lives. In other words, they expected that democracy would mean more redistribution, the trickling down of wealth to their communities. However, they complain that they see little of their MPs after the election campaign, and that little to nothing is being delivered. During campaign time MPs were present in their constituency, with radio- and tv, journalists and money and gifts to distribute. They have made many promises, mainly in terms of development for the region. In my interviews people told me they did believe the promises of the candidate MPs. But now they know better. 'During the campaign they came to flatter us. But after the elections they have abandoned us', said one of my respondents.[31] An MP of Boma argued that 'he has already paid' during the election campaign, and that people should therefore not expect anything from him anymore. According to my respondents, his comments infuriated the population of Boma.[32] Overall, people are very disappointed with the results of three years of democracy. They argue that none of the promises have been delivered, and that those with a political job profit from the new system while they have disappeared from the vision of their electorate. A village chief of a village in Bas Congo told me that he has helped to get an MP elected by telling the people in the village to vote for him. But since then, the MP has disappeared. Now the people of the village complain to the chief and ask him why none of the promises have been delivered.[33] Even political party representatives have the same experience. 'We have campaigned for days, and did not even receive a coke', says a PPRD (*Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie*, the party of President Kabila) representative. Not only were they not rewarded for their efforts, they have since lost all contact with the local MP. The party representatives have subsequently even sent a formal request to the party to ask for a visit of the MP to his constituency, to which there has been no response.[34] People feel neglected and forgotten, while it had been the expectation that with democracy this would all be different. They tell stories of MPs driving past in their fancy cars, hiding behind tinted windows and that many have changed their phone numbers after having been elected. Being a politician

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[31] Focus Group 3, Students at *Institut Supérieur Technique*, 01 December 2009.

[32] Interviews with civil society representative 1, Boma, 30 November 2009, with former MP 3,2, Boma 01 December 2009, Author in conversation with members of population of Boma, field notes November 2009.

[33] Focus Group 4, Village in Bas Congo Province, 03 December 2009.

[34] Focus Group 4, Village in Bas Congo Province, 03 December 2009.

has become synonymous with being a liar, and doing politics refers to lying or '*faire la farce'*.

What we see here is a practice of the distributing of clientelist goods which are typically redistributed beforehand (Lindberg 2003, 127). The MP that argued that he 'had already paid' refers to this logic. The rewards for campaigning for a candidate, as well as the distribution of gifts during the campaign period are typical clientelist goods. However, people also expect redistribution after the elections, in terms of a straightforward redistribution of wealth or in terms development projects for the community or a delivery of promises made. The liberal peace and the long awaited promise of democracy have created new expectations which have not been fulfilled. This creates new tensions between MPs and their electorate a source for renegotiation of practices of redistribution.

In the Congo it is generally assumed that MPs are more concerned with their own interests than with those of their electorate or the general population. MPs themselves are aware that they can indeed not live up to the expectations of people. Some recognise that they and their colleagues have made promises they could not deliver. Often because they had expected that people would forget, or they had hoped that they would understand that this was rhetoric. Sometimes, because they made promises because they were themselves politically inexperienced and naive, and believed that they could achieve much more than they managed in reality. Being faced with an unwilling government, and the complexity and indirectness of the political process, some have been very disappointed themselves.[35] Many also argue that they do simply not have the means to deliver what people ask of them. An MP explained to me that they (like all people in service of the state) are being paid in US dollars on paper, but in reality they receive Congolese Francs. However, an old exchange rate is being used, which means that MPs now receive ca Fc500 per dollar instead of the current rate of Fc900, a significant loss.[36] He continues to explain that the majority of his income is being used for his house in Kinshasa, his car, his assistants, and that only a small part of his personal salary remains. The state does not provide funding for his constituency work, and even the allocated funding to pay for the transport to and from the constituency in the *Vacance Parlementaire* (Assemblée Nationale 2007, Art. 112) has never been made available. A return flight between Kinshasa and Bukavu costs around US$1,000. 'But when people see us, they think we are rich', and expect us to pay for everything – health care costs, school fees, provide everybody with food and drinks.'[37]

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[35] Interviews with former MP 3, Bukavu, 19 March 2010, and MP 9, Bukavu 18 March 2010.
[36] Exchange rate of late 2009.
[37] Interview with MP 8, Kinshasa, 08 December 2009.

MPs feel put under pressure by their electorate while they realise they cannot deliver what is expected of them. MPs are often criticised for earning too much without doing anything for their constituency. It is a sensitive subject. In May 2009 a motion of no-confidence was launched against Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexis Thambwe Mwamba because of his statements concerning MPs salaries which implicated that MPs earn too much. It was felt by MPs that these statements put the institution of the National Parliament in discredit. The motion was rejected (albeit marginally, 199 against, 194 votes for) (Assemblée Nationale 2009b).[38] In a seminar on democratic parliamentarianism a Congolese researcher at the Centre for Political Studies in Kinshasa (CEP) spoke about the relations between the MPs and their electorate. His critique was (untypically) very direct. He criticised the MPs, accused them of corruption and serving the regime and the President rather than their electorate. He quotes members of the electorate saying that

> 'Parliament only acts in response to the interests of the government and at the expense of the interest of the people. Democracy is the rule of the majority. Instead of serving the interest of the population, this majority uses it weight to remove from the agenda any item relating to the improvement of the daily life of the population. (..) this majority thinks of nothing else than its own interests and that of its leaders.' (Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy 2009, Author's translation from French)

The MPs and Senators present responded with much anger towards the critique and instead of a discussion on Parliamentarianism the debate became an agitated and emotional one on salary figures and expenses. An MP said to me that '[the researcher's] text will be on the internet in no time, and then what will people in Europe think about us?' The critique expressed by the researcher of CEP is commonly heard in Kinshasa, as I experienced in my conversations, interviews and heard in public transport and the political discussions of the Street Parliamentarians. What was interesting in this seminar in Kinshasa was therefore not so much the criticism itself, but rather the MPs reactions to it. It is obviously a sensitive issue, and I had the impression that MPs feel criticised from all directions for 'not doing it right' according to the formal liberal democratic behavioural norms for MPs or according to the expectations of local political practices. This explains the MPs concerns about what people in Europe would think about them when reading the presented text.

But while being confronted with this criticism, they also know that the more pressing reality they face is that of direct redistribution as part of their paternal relationship with their electorate. In the straddling between the liberal and the local, local practices are evidently more pressing than those of the liberal. This is

[38] 'Annales Parlementaires de la Séance Plénière du jeudi 21 mai 2009', hand written transcript by Bureau des Annales of audio recording, 184 pages ; 'Annales Parlementaires de la Séance Plénière du vendredi 22 mai 2009', type written transcripts by Bureau des Annales of audio recording, 46 pages.

despite the fact that these local practices take place within a framework provided by the liberal peace, that is, the election of community representatives to the political institutions.

Realising they cannot deliver what it expected of them in terms of either formal or informal constituency work and – representation, MPs hide from their constituencies and try to minimise contact. The case of so-called replacement MPs provides a good illustration of how MPs try to hide from their constituencies. When MPs give up or lose their seat in parliament (e.g. because they step down or have accepted a position which is incompatible with that of a parliamentarian, such as member of the Government (Electoral Law 2006b, Art.77), no by-elections are held. Instead, the seat is passed to the first (of two) substitutes, that the MP had declared when he/she registered as a candidate (Electoral Law 2006b, Art. 116).[39] However, these substitutes are not mentioned on the ballot paper. Their names are known by the electoral committee, but not by the general public. In many cases, the electorate does not know whether the MP concerned has given up his seat, or who his replacement is. This is a real problem in South Kivu, where many MPs have been replaced by their anonymous replacements.[40] It is generally unknown who the MPs are, and they can therefore not easily be held to account.[41] In my encounters with members of the general public, community organisations and civil society organisations in Kinshasa, Bas Congo and South Kivu, in all occasions where an MP had been replaced, nobody knew who the replacement MP was, and neither had he been seen in his constituency. One replacement MP from South Kivu said that he does not need to engage with the population of his constituency and be held to account. After all, he has not been elected himself, he only replaces somebody. In anonymity he takes distance from the parliamentary majority that he is part of, thereby also rejecting responsibility for its failures and the disappointments people may feel towards the regime. He can walk anonymously through Bukavu, and nobody will ask him anything. He is more concerned with preparing for the next elections.[42] The feeling that it is about a personal relation, not a matter of an institutional relation between member of the electorate and MP (which can be transferred to replacement MPs) is shared by the electorate. People feel that if they have not voted for them, they

[39] In the revised Electoral Law of 2011 some slight amendments are made on this issue. When for an electoral seat there are no more replacements available, by-elections will be organised in this specific constituency.

[40] The presence lists of April 2010 show that 13 of the 32 MPs that had in 2006 been elected for South Kivu have been replaced. Four of the five MPs for the constituency of Bukavu have been replaced. Of the 500 MPs a total of 81 had been replaced by substitute MPs ('*Liste de présence des Députés, Séance Plénière du Jeudi 15 Avril 2010*').

[41] Focus Group 2, civil society representatives, Bukavu 19 March 2010, interviews with civil society representative 5, Bukavu 19 March 2010, Mwami 3, Bukavu 21 March 2010.

[42] Interview with MP 9, Bukavu 18 March 2010.

cannot hold the MP in question to account, or even that they themselves and their interests are not represented in Parliament because the candidate of their choice has lost.[43]

In this process of straddling and the (re-)negotiation of the relation between MPs and their constituencies civil society and local and traditional authorities take up a role of mediators that facilitate this negotiation. Local authorities are important for MPs.[44] On some occasions political parties can facilitate contact by either organising meetings, or by channelling information between MPs and their constituencies, and vice versa.[45] Traditional leaders fulfil a particularly special role in this regard, particularly the Mwami's (Kings) of South Kivu province.[46] Some of them have been elected as provincial MPs, and thus already have a double function. But others that have not are important contact persons for MPs, in election time as well as after that. Throughout Africa, traditional leaders such as the Mwami's continue to play an important role, despite the setting up of modern institutions of governance (Logan 2008). When an MP has a bad relationship with the Mwami from his constituency, this affects his legitimacy very badly. As has been observed in other countries as well (Englebert 2002, Oomen 2000, 63, West and Kloek-Jenson 1999, 121, Williams 2004), Mwami's thus have an important role in mediating between the people and their MPs.[47]

So do civil society organisations, although their involvement and role varies widely in different parts of the country. Contrary to their colleagues in Bas Congo, civil society organisations in South Kivu see it as an important role for civil society to bring MPs and the electorate together, to facilitate this rapport and organise public debates, discussion and meetings with MPs.[48] Such engagements can sometimes go quite far, for example the case of an NGO that receives funding from MPs to visit their constituency and engage with the people on his behalf.[49] Although members of CSOs accept that they may facilitate the legitimation of MPs there is a general feeling that it is important to bring MPs and their electorate together, and to facilitate mutual engagement and discussion rather than limiting the relation between the two to redistribution, social assistance and

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43 Congolese journalist in conversation with author, Kinshasa, field notes, November 2009.

44 Interviews with deputy *bourgmestre*, Boma city ditrict, Boma 30 November 2009, and with *Administrateur du Territoire* in Bas Congo province, 03 December 2009.

45 Interview with MP 9, Bukavu 18 March 2010.

46 Traditional leaders in North- & South Kivu have traditionally had and have maintained a much stronger position than their counterparts in other parts of the country. Whereas chiefs in most parts of the country have become marginalised, the Mwami's of North- and South Kivu have maintained a strong and influential position.

47 Interviews with Mwami 1, Bukavu 17 March 2010, Mwami 2, Bukavu 20 March 2010, Mwami 3, Bukavu 21 Marc 2010.

48 Interviews with civil society representative 2, Bukavu 16 March 2010, civil society representative 3, Bukavu 18 March 2010, civil society representative 4, Bukavu 18 March 2010, civil society representative 5, Bukavu 19 March 2010, Mwami 1, Bukavu 17 March 2010.

49 Interview with civil society representative 4, Bukavu, 18 March 2010.

election campaigning strategies. For example, the *Institute Congolaise pour la Justice et Paix* (ICJP) has placed suggestion boxes in towns and villages in which people can put their comments and questions anonymously. During the *Vacance Parlementaire* they invite the respective MP and the population to open these boxes and discuss the matters on the notes. Although the MPs hardly ever show up for such meetings, the sessions continue for the sake of voter education.[50] Local NGO representatives think that MPs are afraid to meet their electorate, because they fear that they will be attacked and criticized,[51] or sanctioned through informal practices such as harassment and loss of prestige and status locally (Lindberg 2010c, 136).

What we see is a process of the redefinition of the relation between MPs and their constituencies. In this process of redefinition, local political practices and new opportunities of democracy are being negotiated and renegotiated. Liberal democracy brought new expectations with Congolese people. However, these expectations were not in terms of the delivery of public goods and parliamentary tasks of representation, legislation and executive oversight, but rather in terms of an intensification of the interaction between electorate and MPs and the redistribution of goods and services to the constituency directly. These practices were still expected to be direct, personal and informal. MPs however feel they cannot respond to this expectation.

What is interesting to note is that in the cases some other African countries, where MPs are subject to similar expectations and pressures from their electorate, MPs respond much more favourably than in the DRC (Adamolekun and Laleye 2009, 127, Kasfir and Twebaze 2009, 101-2, Lindberg 2010b, Lindberg 2010c, Lindberg and Zhou 2009, 168). This may be so because the cases mentioned, Uganda, Ghana and Benin, have a much longer experience with representative democracy and practices of managing expectations and obligations have settled more than in the much younger democracy of the DRC. But despite this longer experience with democratically elected and representative governance, MPs are still expected to deliver private and club goods and the rules of the interaction between MPs and their electorate is still very much defined in terms of personal interaction, visibility and redistribution.

MPs and their constituencies contest not so much the principle of redistribution, but rather the terms and extent of these practices of redistribution. People complain about the lack of rapport with their MPs, that they are hardly visible in the community, and that they have abandoned and forgotten the people in the constituency. In response to this gap between expectations and ability to deliver,

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[50] Interview with civil society representative 2, ICJP, Bukavu, 16 March 2010.

[51] Interviews with civil society representative 2, Bukavu 16 March 2010, civil society representative 3, Bukavu 18 March 2010, MP 3, now civil society representative, 18 March 2010, civil society representative 6, Boma 30 November 2011.

they hide away from their constituencies, they deliver as much private and club goods as they can from private means as well as through NGO type practices, and use CSOs and traditional authorities to mediate the interaction with their constituencies. But simultaneously, they hold on to socio-cultural expectation such as ostentation, the performance of their socio-economic position, and the privatised nature of the relation with their constituencies.

The local needs and aspirations, customs and culture, that agencies of MPs and their constituencies respond to is one that prefers a clientelist relationship which is practiced through informal institutions. The local agencies seek to negotiate practices of liberal democracy so that it can respond to these local preferences. This is a worrying conclusion for state builders and democratisers in the Congo, because there is little sign that local actors, MPs nor their electorate, will shift their preferences to formal and institutionalised practices of representation. The fact that both the electorate as well as MPs each from their own angle strive to maintain these informal practices makes it hard for outsiders to interfere in and manipulate these agencies. Moreover, state builders and democratisers often see an ally in 'the people' and assume that once they have the freedom to follow reason, 'irrational' practices such as clientelism will come to an end (Jahn 2007a, 92). As this chapter has shown, this assumption fails to take into consideration that citizens may be as little interested in the institutionalisation of governance, each for their own reasons, as elites are. As Bratton and Logan have identified, people do not claim democracy and their democratic rights and obligation, instead they claim rights that are part of a clientelist relation (Bratton and Logan 2006) while they use the freedoms of liberal democracy to renegotiate these.

7

Consuming democracy at the national assembly

The previous chapter has discussed the practices through which MPs and their constituencies consume democracy. MPs claim an elite status that defines themselves as father-chiefs in their relations with their electorate. MPs are expected to redistribute based on their adopted and given social position. As we will see in this chapter, the engagements between MPs and between MPs and *le pouvoir* enable different agencies and their interaction with the liberal peace.

The first part of the chapter discusses how the highly fragmented Parliament is being organised as a de facto two-party Parliament in which the Opposition and Majority are organised in terms of political families. The chapter then continues with an analysis of how these political families function within a liberal democratic institutional framework. I will use case material to discuss political practices defined by the rights and responsibilities of the political family that provides a way to understand occurring political practices in the National Assembly and its rapports with the Executive. A central case in this analysis is that of the 2009 Parliamentary crisis, which provides a wealth of material about the negotiation between liberal democracy and local political practices and their consumption by local agencies. The analysis focuses on political leadership or the role of the political father within a political family, and secondly on practices of accountability. The final section of the chapter discusses the interaction between the liberal and the local in terms of a renegotiation of local practices as a process of renegotiation of the self rather than a negotiation of the liberal. I will mainly focus on the ruling coalition because practices of political familyhood are more evident and more observable in a political group that is in the centre of power and attention. Nevertheless, the opposition practices similar notions of political familyhood. I will therefore occasionally refer to the opposition as well.

Majority and opposition in the national assembly

The Congo has an extremely large number of political parties. The Congo is not the only African country with a high number of registered political parties and independent candidates participating in elections (Rakner and Van de Walle 2009, 111). But it is nevertheless an extreme case, with no other African democracy coming even close this level of fragmentation.[1] In the Congolese 2006 elections, a total of 269 parties participated in the parliamentary elections, together with numerous independents, together counting almost 9700 candidates for 500 parliamentary seats (Anstey 2006, 50-51). The Congolese political party system may be described as pulverised (Erdmann & Basedau 2007, 8, Sartori 1976, 125, 260) or fragmented (Van de Walle 2003, 309). In the brief periods when political parties were allowed, extreme numbers of parties mushroomed. For the 1965 elections 227 political parties registered (Carey 2002, 59). Shortly after his *coup d'état* in November of that year Mobutu disbanded Parliament and banned political parties (Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy 2006, 20). When Mobutu announced a transition to democracy in 1991 the ban on political parties was lifted. Around 440 political parties registered, characterised by weak internal structure, lack of ideology and/or political programme, and many were regionally or ethnically based. After Laurent Kabila's take-over of power political parties were banned again. When after the war the transitional constitution came into force in 2003 which allowed for political parties again, a multitude of political parties mushroomed as in the early 1990s (Kabungulu Ngoy-Kangoy 2006, 16-34). This trend continued in 2011, when 445 political parties and 542 independent candidates participated for the legislative elections, together registering 19.006 candidates (almost twice as many candidates as in 2006!) (Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante 2011, www.cei-rdc.cd/partispolitiques, accessed 12/11/2011).

An extreme number of political parties and candidates is perhaps nothing new in the Congo, but what was new is that they participated in elections – the first elections held after Mobutu's political opening of the early 1990s, were those of 2006. This extreme number of political parties and independent candidates that participated in the legislative elections resulted in a ballot paper that in some voting districts was three A3 size papers long, and the election of an extremely fragmented legislature. 68 parties and 63 independent candidates won parliamentary representation in the July 2006 elections, of which only two parties managed to win more than 10% of the vote: Kabila's PPRD[2] won 22,2% and Bemba's MLC won 12,8% of the votes (Vander Weyden 2007, 210-11) (See annex 1).

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[1] Lindberg (2006) notes 100 parties for the 2002 ballot in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), 61 for the 2001 ballot in Senegal, and 50 for the 2000 ballot in Ethiopia.

[2] The PPRD was founded during the Inter-Congolese Dialogue from the remnants of Laurent-Désiré Kabila's AFDL that remained loyal to the regime.

The 131 political entities in the National Assembly in 2006 would, however, rapidly congeal into two seemingly homogenous political blocs: the majority, or those that support the government, and the opposition, or those that do not support the government. The country now appears to be ruled by what is in effect a dominant party that is perhaps instable internally, but that controls power in an according to some almost dictatorial manner (Dizolele 2010).

This pre-electoral fragmentation of the political party spectrum and the post-electoral alignment with the winning camp is locally referred to as *vagabondage politique* or as *transhumance politique* in other African countries. *Vagabondage politique*, or political vagrancy, is generally understood in negative terms as 'the shameless shifting from one camp to another' (Nzongola-Ntalaja 1998) or a 'search for the highest bidder' (Wamba-dia-Wamba quoted in Taylor and Williams 2001, 272). MPs themselves often agree that politicians tend to go where the grass is greenest and where money is to be gained.[3] Being an independent politician or representative of a small or 1-member party provides flexibility to align with those in power without having to convince party members and the party structure. It can thus be understood as primarily election strategic (Rakner and Van de Walle 2009, 112).

After the elections and the installation of Parliament, this fragmented political landscape would rapidly congeal into two blocs, the opposition and the majority. The origins of these two alliances lie in the pre-electoral period, when legislative candidates and parties participating in the elections joined alliances in support of specific Presidential candidate without giving up their own position as independent candidate or member of a political party – to support both his as well as their own political ambitions. Candidates that aligned themselves with a presidential candidate before the elections would in their region campaign for their chosen presidential candidate while campaigning for themselves as candidates for the legislature. In return, these candidates would be given funds for the campaign, and promises of profitable positions such as a Ministerial post or directorship of a state agency should they be successful.[4] Besides uniting in support of a presidential candidate, the formation of these alliances thus also meant the formation of a pre-electoral power-sharing agreement (for the AMP see AMP 2006a, Art. 4.2). The political alliance of political parties and independent politicians in support of Kabila was the Alliance for Presidential Majority (AMP) (AMP 2006a), that of his main opponent Jean-Pierre Bemba was called the Union for the Nation (UpN). Several others were formed as well, such as 'Everything But Kabila' (Le Potentiel 2006a, Le Potentiel 2006b). The AMP (officially) holds a 66% majority

[3] Interview with MP 2, Kinshasa 21 October 2009.

[4] Interviews with MP 5, Kinshasa 13 November 2009, MP 7, Kinshasa, 21 November 2009, MP 10, Kinshasa 20 April 2010.

in Parliament (332/500) and a 52% majority in the Senate (56/108) (Booysen 2007, 13).

Because run-off elections were required, the AMP formed a pre-electoral coalition with other parties (AMP 2006a, Art. 30). In the run-up to the second round, the scramble for powerful political allies (with a proven support base) became an important electoral strategy. After the legislative elections and the first round of the presidential elections (July 2006) Kabila has formed an alliance with PALU and UDEMO (*Union des Démocrates Mobutistes*)[5] to secure a parliamentary majority and guarantee the victory of the presidential elections in the second round in October.[6] These two parties had been unsuccessful in the presidential elections, but aimed to turn their electoral loss into an electoral success by aligning with Kabila. For these parties, their participation in the presidential elections was perhaps never expected to be successful in the sense of winning the Presidency, but rather aimed to position themselves in the political spectrum, and elaborate their political relevance based on electoral results.[7] Because they had a proved support base (albeit small, 6.8% and 1.8% respectively[8]) in the western part of the country (where Kabila did not), PALU and UDEMO thus became strategic partners for Kabila (AMP 2006b, Art. 1, Préambule).

In this pre-electoral deal, PALU was promised the post of Prime Minister (AMP 2006b, Art. 3), the proportionally much smaller UDEMO was granted the post of deputy Prime Minister. The divisions of Ministerial seats and even the formation of the parliamentary bureau would be organised based on the number of seats of each member of the coalition and '... the contribution of each (of the significant organisations that form the parliamentary coalition) in terms of the votes contributed to the second round in favour of candidate Joseph Kabila Kabange' (AMP 2006b, Art. 5. Author's translation from French).

The AMP as a structure and its coalition with other parties is a strategic alliance to gain control over the political institutions by the President and his fol-

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5 PALU (*Parti Lumumbiste Unifié*) is a political party lead by Antoine Gizenga and has its stronghold in Bandundu province. It was founded in 1987 and is one of the older political parties in the country. Gizenga was Vice-Prime Minister in the Government of Patrice Lumumba. The party is one of many that claim the heritage of Lumumba. It is often described as almost sectarian in the way the person of Gizenga is seen by his followers. UDEMO is lead by Nzanga Mobutu, son of Mobutu, and has its support base in Equateur province.

6 Interview with MP 7, Kinshasa 21 November 2009, Groep interview with PALU representatives, Kinshasa 06 March 2010.

7 Unsuccessful electoral candidates in the legislative elections explained to me that although they did not expect to win, their candidature was a strategic effort to advertise themselves as a relevant actor in politics.

8 Despite these small percentages, PALU is with its 6.8% the third largest party (after PPRD and MLC) and UDEMO is the 9th largest party. Of the other 10 largest parties MSR, *Forces du Renouveau*, and CODECO have joined the majority, while CDC and *Camp de la Patrie* have joined MLC in the opposition. RCD has not officially joined either camp. The majority has 207 seats from these largest 10 parties, whereas the opposition has 107 seats. See annex 1.

lowers. As a power sharing structure it thus has little to do with power sharing as a conflict management or conflict resolution mechanism (Hartzell and Hoddie 2003, Hoddie and Hartzell 2005, Sisk 1996, Sisk and Reynolds 1998, Spears 1999, Spears 2000, Spears 2002, Walter 1997). Instead, it is a form of elite appeasement. The coalition is a combination of unlikely bed-fellows: the son of the former dictator Mobutu has formed a coalition with the son of the rebel leader that ousted Mobutu in 1997 and a politician that has been on the scene for half a century. The AMP and its allies speak of a political coalition that was necessary to build a majority to rule the country. It is evident that this coalition is also strategic and follows in Congolese politics important east-west logics, similar to the Lumumba-Kasavubu alliance of 1960. President Kabila is an Easterner; his support base is in the east of the country. To establish a stable political coalition, his allies should therefore be westerners and have a support base in the west. Despite the relatively small electoral support of both PALU and UDEMO, their main addition to the AMP was the fact that they were Western based. It is this east-west dynamics which play such an important role in Congolese politics that primarily explain the odd coalition, rather than more general coalition politics based on ideological like-mindedness or search for a broad coalition to pursue extremist policies, as has been suggested for coalitions in other African countries (Oyugi 2006, 55).

From this perspective of an east-west coalition to enable stable governance and broad support it is tempting to see the AMP and its allies in terms of consociational democracy (Lijphart 1969, Lijphart 2008). However, although the coalition might be organised around the cooperation of elites and the proportional power-sharing and division of posts, it is difficult to see the coalition in terms of a strategy to overcome societal divisions and guarantee minority interests. A second aspect of the AMP and its coalition with PALU and UDEMO is what Bayart has called the reciprocal assimilation of elites, similar to that of predecessors in the post-independence era. With the reciprocal assimilation of elites Bayart refers to the production of a relatively homogenous social group, a dominant class, from potentially competing elites around the central pole of state power (1993, 163). As Bayart suggest, rather than being a mechanism of political competition, universal suffrage (i.e. elections) is in this logic of reciprocal assimilation of elites a mechanism of political compromise, in which 'electoral losers' are appeased and awarded posts 'in the spirit of unity'. It is an 'elite bargain' (Lindemann 2008) or a 'fusion of elites' (Boone 1994). It is a form of securing control over power through co-optation and appeasement (Lustick 1979). Although it is unlikely to support democratisation, elite cohesion is an important factor in stability of governance (Cheeseman 2011, 359). Like in the case of the AMP coalition such elite bargains are often formed around a dominant party, or

even take the form of a dominant party (Lindemann 2008, 20-21). However, these practices of appeasement and co-optation are exclusive. People that have neither the means to participate in the game nor the right connections to the dominant class are excluded (Mehler 2009). The National Assembly is thus little more than a 'privileged zone of unification in the quest for hegemony' (Bayart 1993, 166-67). As we have seen in the previous chapter, MPs and the political elite claim this elitist identity and present themselves as being distinct. It is this distance that is so clearly apparent when observing the political class in Congolese.

Once Parliament was installed, efforts were made to institutionalise the split between those that support President Kabila (majority), and those that do not (opposition). A key instrument in this process is the *Statut de l'Opposition,* which was initiated by an opposition MP in an attempt to institutionalise opposition, protect the rights and obligations of opposition, and recognise its significance for the functioning of democracy (2007c, Exposé des motifs). In response to the formation of the powerful bloc of supporters of the President, it aimed to create and guarantee a space for the opposition that has never existed in the Congo.[9] To further emphasise itself as a voice and counter force in Parliament, the opposition announced a '*Gouvernement de fantôme*', a shadow cabinet in June 2010 (Le Potentiel 2010c, Le Potentiel 2010d).

In order to create recognised space for the opposition the initiators of the law have looked at the Westminster model, a system in which the role, position and rights of the opposition are more formalised and defined than in a French-continental parliamentary system (which the DRC has adopted) (Punnett 1973, 10). The law does in effect organise the Assembly in two clearly defined camps from the moment it takes office:

> 'The political parties and political groups in the different assemblies make a declaration at the respective Office of the National Assembly, the Senate, the Provincial Assemblies, the City Councils, the Municipality, a sector or chieftaincy, of membership of the majority or the opposition.' (2007c, Art.3, Author's translation from French)

Although the formation of coalitions is a logic consequence of the fragmentation of Parliament, this article expresses a desire to think of Parliament in terms of a contradiction between opposition and majority, rather than a space of a multitude of political voices of 131 political entities. This 'obligation to declare' makes the alignment with either the opposition or the majority visible for actors within the National Assembly and Government. Although the initiative for the law came from an opposition MP, it is interesting to note that there seemed to have been a general consensus of members of the majority and opposition in the

[9] Interview with MP 12, Hon. Delly Sesanga, initiator of the Loi portant Statut de l'Opposition Politique, Kinshasa, 30 April 2010; Speech by Hon. Delly Sesanga in Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 June 2007, audio tape recording.

Assembly that a *Statut de l'Opposition* would be essential.[10] The quoted article, neither it's phrasing nor its purpose, has been subject of discussion in the PAJ Committee,[11] nor in the plenary session in which the report of the PAJ was discussed,[12] nor in the process of the harmonisation of the versions of Senate and National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale and Sénat 2007). What this tells us is that there was a widely shared consensus that there was a need for the National Assembly to be organised in a clear majority and a clear opposition. As soon as Parliament has been installed, there has been no more reference to this independence of parties. Instead, as the process of the adoption of the law on opposition reveals, there was no concern over giving individual or party political identity in order to reshape Parliament in a majority-opposition dialectic.[13] However, these coalitions of opposition and majority are only temporary, limited by the time frame of the first legislative. Discussions have been held mid-2010 within the AMP about the transformation of the alliance into a political party as a strategy for the upcoming presidential elections of 2011. However, the suggestion was rejected by the members of the Alliance.[14] It is relevant in this sense that in the preparation for the 2011 presidential and legislative elections the AMP has indeed not been turned into a political party but has been disbanded. A new coalition has been formed in its place, the *Majorité Présidentielle* (MP).

In the Congo these two political blocs are conceptualised as political families. The concept of political family is often used by Congolese politicians to describe the relations between themselves and the alliance they are part of. The discourse of the political family unites the loose coalition of AMP members and its partners in the ruling coalition. It emphasises a relationship that cannot be broken as easily as a coalition based on political programmes. The notion of a political family captures practices that define the ways in which a variety of diverse political actors come together and the ways in which leadership and power are practiced and performed. Familial references to political parties are common in Africa, especially in the case of state parties such as Mobutu's MPR (Schatzberg 2001, 16). However, while familial references to the MPR referred to the politi-

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[10] Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 June 2007, audio tape recording.

[11] The PAJ is the Parliamentary committee to which the discussion of the proposed law was referred to. Plenary Session National Assembly, 15 May 2007, audio tape recording.

[12] Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 June 2007, audio tape recording.

[13] Only one MP, Hon. Idambituo of the Renaissance-PE party (opposition), was concerned over the need to declare and align with one leader of the opposition. He argued that 'to make the opposition chose a coordinator means to put other parties subordinate to this leader. We need pluralism in the opposition' (Author's translation from French). The response of the initiator of the law Hon. Sesanga (MLC, Opposition) was simply that the law did not concern the issues of multi-partyism itself, and that this is protected in the constitution, and there was no further debate on the issue. Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 June 2007, audio tape recording.

[14] Interviews with the *Chargé d'organisation* of the AMP, Kinshasa 28 May 2010, and MP 14, Kinshasa 31 August 2010.

cal organisation of the population, the use of the family analogy in the case of the AMP does not concern the population and its relation to their political leaders, but the formation of a ruling coalition from a fragmented political sphere under the leadership of the President as the political father-chief. Members of the AMP often refer to the AMP as their political family, and similar terms are frequently used in the media. In doing so they articulate loyalty, accountability and leadership, core concepts that form the moral logic of family. The AMP is constructed as a political family centered around the leadership of the political father-chief, i.e. President Kabila. This leadership comes with rights and responsibilities, which define the relations between the members of the family (MPs) and the father-chief (*le pouvoir*).

The case of the 2009 parliamentary crisis

The functioning of the AMP as a political family was perhaps most clearly visible during the parliamentary crisis of 2009. In January 2009, a disagreement between President Kabila and the Speaker of Parliament Vital Kamerhe resulted in a political crisis that was finally resolved with the stepping down of Vital Kamerhe as Speaker in March 2009. Kamerhe's downfall was because he had openly criticised the head of the political family Kabila instead of keeping his concerns within the relative privacy of the political family.

In January-February 2009, a joint military operation between the Rwandan national army RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front) and FARDC was employed to deal with the ongoing problem with FDLR, a shared problem of both Rwanda and DRC, in eastern Congo.[15] However, the joint military operation that followed was not welcomed by many Congolese, who, after having been invaded by Rwandese troops several times since 1994, feared a repetition of the past. In the forefront of this public critique towards the joint military operation (commonly perceived or referred to as 'Rwandan intervention') was Vital Kamerhe, Speaker

[15] This decision should be seen in the context of shifting power politics between Rwanda, DRC, and CNDP in the political complexity of Eastern Congo. While negotiations between the Congolese government and CNDP were taking place in Nairobi, simultaneous talks between government representatives and a CNDP faction under the leadership of Bosco Ntangana (a.k.a. 'the Terminator', whose arrest is warranted by the ICC) were held. Bosco claimed that Nkunda had been dismissed as leader of the CNDP for bad leadership and that he was the new CNDP leader. The Nairobi talks had been suspended from the 15th to the 25th, but they would never resume. On 16 January 2001, the Bosco faction of CNDP declared a unilateral ceasefire in a meeting with RPF representative James Kaberebe and DRC minister of Interior Celestin Mbuya. At the heart of these events was in fact Kigali. It appeared as if Kigali had decided to get closer to Kinshasa, and therefore drop Nkunda. It engineered a split within the CNDP to enable a deal between the two, in which Rwanda itself was centre. Bosco's CNDP would be integrated in FARDC, Nkunda would be arrested by Rwanda. Rwanda would be allowed to intervene militarily to deal with the FDLR. The bargain combined two core issues of the problem in the East: FDLR for Rwanda and Nkunda for DRC (Africa Confidential 2009a, 2009b).

of Parliament.[16] Kamerhe, from South Kivu himself, referred to the human suffering in east Congo in relation to Rwandese interventions, and that with the people's trauma an invitation from the government for the RPF to intervene is not a good idea. Although the issue of concern was the actual military intervention, the political crisis developed over a statement by Kamerhe in an interview with Radio Okapi,[17] in which he stated:

> *'I have never been informed about the possible entry of Rwandan troops on Congolese territory. (...) If you tell me now that Rwandan troops have entered DRC, I prefer to believe this is not true. If it is true, it is simply terrible!' (Radio Okapi 21 January 2009, quoted in Kibungu et al. 2009, . Author's translation from French)*

The issue was that Kamerhe criticised Kabila for organising this joint military operation without informing Parliament. Insiders argue that the statements made by Kamerhe on Radio Okapi were only a trigger, but that it had nothing to do with the real issue between Kabila and Kamerhe, which was about leadership, prestige and power. MPs and party members close to Kamerhe said that, although Kamerhe and Kabila used to be close, Kabila had come to see Kamerhe as a threat. Not only was Kamerhe a very good Speaker, who was respected by majority and opposition, he was also a respected politician popular with the donor community and had a strong support base in the eastern part of the country. Kamerhe wanted the National Assembly to be independent from the Executive, seeking to let the Assembly play its proper role. He allowed the Opposition to speak and debate and did not necessarily use his position as Speaker to enforce certain objectives.[18] Kamerhe, being popular and too independent in a powerful position, became too much of a nuisance for *le pouvoir*.

Kamerhe refused to follow presidential orders to resign and argued that if he was to step down it should be via proper parliamentary procedures, not a resignation when Parliament was not in session (Kamerhe 2009, 4). Being put under pressure by the President and AMP and after bribes being paid, the Parliamentary Majority issued a declaration on 16 March 2009, the opening of the parliamentary session, in which they demanded Kamerhe to resign. In this declaration, the authors clearly sided with the President, despite their appreciation of Kamerhe as Speaker. They argue that handling the security issues in the east is a core respon-

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[16] Although other MPs of the majority also questioned the decisions taken and launched a petition in which they asked for clarification, without directly attacking the President or criticising his decisions. L'AVENIR. 2009. Parlement: une session extraordinaire. *L'Avenir*, 31 January 2009, LE POTENTIEL. 2009. Accord RDC-Rwanda contre les FDLR: le député Kyaviro: "l'opération encours doit être clarifiée et corigée pour éviter tout contentieux de futur. *Le Potentiel*, 09 February 2009.

[17] The radio station Radio Okapi was set up by the UN peacekeeping mission MONUC in cooperation with the *Fondation Hirondelle* in 2002. It broadcasts nationally, and is one of the most widely listened to radio stations in the DRC. See www.radiookapi.net

[18] Interviews with MP 1, Kinshasa, 20 October 2009, MP 3, 27 October 2009, MP 10, Kinshasa, 20 April 2009.

sibility of the President, and that the President did not do wrong in attempting to solve matters.

Although it was one of the biggest political events since the elections, which has without doubt altered the National Assembly and relations between the Assembly and *le pouvoir*, the issue was never debated in Parliament itself. It had risen when Parliament was not in session, and although Kamerhe had refused to resign before Parliament would reconvene (i.e. he forced his resignation to take place during parliamentary session), he also asked the house to accept his resignation without vote or debate (Kamerhe 2009). He opted for the less bloody exit.

The case of the 2009 Parliamentary crisis provides insightful information about how the Majority – and as we will see also the Opposition – are organised as political families. In the remainder of this chapter I will analyse political practices of MPs and *le pouvoir* in terms of a political family, drawing extensively on the above described case as well additional material. These practices determined by the organisation of the majority and opposition as two political families have a significant impact on how parliamentary democracy is organised within the institutions. The notion of political family is evidently not an institutionalised aspect of the institutional organisation of democracy in Congo. Local agencies enabled by the relations between MPs and *le pouvoir* nevertheless reshape the institutional organisation of democracy in the Congo following the logic of a political family. I will discuss this by focusing on three aspects. Firstly, the concept of political fatherhood as an organising principle for both the majority and the opposition. Secondly, I will focus on how accountability is being practiced within the political family by looking at rules of political punishment and reward. Finally, I will focus on the political family as a private space, which relocates the political debate from the National Assembly to the political family.

Political family and fatherhood

Political fatherhood is a central notion for the understanding of political alliances as political families. The 2009 parliamentary crisis was a contestation over the rules and leadership of the political family. With his statements and his acts, Kamerhe challenged Kabila's political fatherhood and threatened the political family. Although the official arguments used concern procedural and legal matters (whether the President should inform parliament or seek parliamentary support for his decisions), the language used by participants in this crisis makes clear that it is a matter protecting the political family.

In his resignation speech Kamerhe himself speaks of the event in terms of the political family of the AMP. He emphasises that he feels part of the political family. He speaks about his statements on Radio Okapi which were not appreci-

ated by his political family nor by the head of his political family (Kamerhe 2009).

The figure of the political father functions as the organising principle for the alliance, for both the AMP as well as the opposition. The AMP has as its core not a socio-economic ideology but the person of Joseph Kabila, who assumes a position of father-chief in this alliance. The personalisation of power and politics is common in Africa, often referred to as 'Big Men politics' (Daloz 2003a, Hydén 2006, 94-115, Russell 1999) or personalised rule (Jackson and Rosberg 1982). It is also persistent, as various analysts have argued that despite democratic transitions politics and power remain personalised in many African countries (Van de Walle 2003, 310). Personalised rule is not only about the leaders, but also about how those that follow him participate in this system (Quantin 2005, 47). In the process of the formation of the AMP and other coalitions in support of a Presidential candidate we see how potential clients chose their Big Man. In the same way as clients will move away from a Big Man when they feel he is losing his power, people will join a new leader when they feel he will be the new Big Man. Personal rule is indeed very opportunistic and calculative (Hydén 2006, 102). A broad support base is thus an expression of power (Hydén 2006, 103). The AMP functioned as a platform on which the hegemony of Kabila is expressed. The openness with which pre-electoral agreements on power-sharing were shared aimed to make use of this logic. In the run-up to the run-off presidential elections, the scramble for powerful political allies (with a proven support base) became an important electoral strategy. The fragmented political arena thus became de facto divided between those that supported Kabila in the run-off elections and those that supported Bemba.

The founding documents of the AMP provide important information on the conceptualisation of the role and position of Kabila in the alliance. As a protector of the well-being of the nation and its people, President Kabila elevates himself as a father-chief figure that will protect his people. The AMP initially presented itself as an alliance of true patriots that unite beyond their ideological and political differences, to protect the people of the Congo who are and have been threatened by war. They united themselves under the leadership of Joseph Kabila to 'rally and mobilise the Congolese to maintain the flame of patriotism and protect territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of Congo' (AMP 2006a, Art. 4.1. Author's translation from French). The leadership status of Kabila was thus constructed on Kabila as a unifying leader, building on his campaign slogan and claimed credits of the transition period that Kabila was the bringer of peace, whose leadership has enabled the end of the war (Booysen 2007, 13). In 2007, the AMP was reorganised. Whereas the Charter of 2006 stated that the aim of the AMP was for Kabila to win the elections, the aim of the

AMP according to the new *Acte Constitutif* of 2007 was to promote the leadership of Kabila, in terms of consolidation of his power, and the general objective of national coherence and institutional cohesion (AMP 2007, Art. 3). The *Acte* emphasises the formation of a political clientele of people that organise themselves around Kabila.

But this form of political organisation in terms of a political family and leadership in the form of a father-chief figure is not restricted to the AMP or to those in power. Similar tendencies are at play within the opposition. The *Statut de l'Opposition* introduces the officially recognised position of Leader of the Opposition (2007, Art. 19-21), a practice borrowed from the Westminster system. In the Westminster parliamentary system the Leader of the Opposition has the recognised status of an official state function, with an additional salary and privileges such as a car with driver provided for by Parliament (Punnett 1973, 77-78, 98-99). In the process of the adoption of the *Statut de l'Opposition* one of the more fiercely debated issues was that of the recognition, title and status of the Leader of the Opposition.[19] In the context of the situation in which the assumed leader of the opposition, Jean-Pierre Bemba, was in exile,[20] the emphasis on the recognition of a leadership position is understandable. But it also emphasises the perceived need for a designated leadership figure within the opposition as a basis upon which to organise the political family.

For the opposition the identification of one leader, or spokesperson, of the opposition, is to enable the opposition to participate effectively and to negotiate at an equal level with the leadership of the majority.[21] The opposition has, however, never been able to appoint a leader. For MLC the leader is naturally Jean-Pierre Bemba. But because he has been arrested and is on trial at the ICC he cannot assume his leadership role. The opposition cannot decide whether to appoint somebody else as its leader, and if they would decide to do so, who that would be. The opposition has throughout the first Legislature remained fundamentally divided over this issue and consequently paralysed.[22] An initiative for a motion of no-confidence by an MP of MLC illustrates this. The motion was not supported by part of the MLC faction in the National Assembly, because 'we cannot take such

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[19] Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 June 2007, audio tape recording; Assemblée Nationale and Sénat 2007.

[20] Jean-Pierre Bemba, leader of MLC, lost the run-off Presidential election in October 2006, but was elected Senator in January 2007. After a military confrontation between Bemba's bodyguards and loyal troops and FARDC in March 2007, Bemba went abroad, allegedly to seek medical treatment. In May 2007 the ICC issued an arrest warrant against Bemba, and in May 2008 he was arrested (Africa Confidential 2008, ICC-CPI 2008, MONUC/UNHCR 2007, Reuters 2008).

[21] Hon. Ramazani, Vice-President of the Parliamentary Commission PAJ, presenting the PAJ report on the Proposed Law to the National Assembly in Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 June 2007, Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 June 2007, audio tape recording.

[22] Interview with MP 13, Kinshasa 30 April 2010.

big decisions when Bemba is not here'.[23] The figure of a leader, a political father, is critical for the functioning of a political family. The problems within the opposition surrounding the leadership question and the consequences it has for the functioning of the opposition, emphasise that the opposition, like the majority is conceptualised/organised as a political family that strongly relies on political father-chief.

A father-chief is typically elevated above politics and political differences (Schatzberg 2001, 158). This enables a coalition of political parties and political leaders that have little in common, but unite beyond their political differences under the leadership of Kabila. Similarly, the absence of a clear political leader of the opposition results in a lack of cooperation. Despite participating in the elections (a political practice), Kabila presented himself as such a non-political father-chief. He participated in the 2006 elections as an independent candidate, the 'candidate of the people', not as the presidential candidate of his own political party (Matotu 2006, Soudan 2006, 44).[24] Within the AMP he is referred to as the 'Moral Authority' (AMP 2007, Art. 5), a distinctly non-political but fatherly reference to somebody who 'does not participate in the debate but dictates the debate'.[25]

An important aspect of the conceptualisation of the power of the political father as head of the political family is the notion that power is indivisible. All power resides in the hands of the political father (Schatzberg 2001, 58-9). A Congolese proverb says that *le pouvoir se mange entier*, 'power is eaten whole' (Fabian 1990). The notion of a political leader who is elevated above politics and who holds all power in his hands is difficult to combine with a democratic logic of the separation of power between institutions, as well as the sharing of power between different political parties. This excessive centralisation of power in the hands of the President is a common feature in African politics. Van de Walle notes that the far majority of African democracies have a Presidential constitutional system, while most of them initially started with a Parliamentary constitution. The centralisation of power with the President normally means a weakened legislature and judiciary. But Van de Walle also points to the fact that regardless of constitutional arrangements (whether Presidential or Parliamentary) power is in either case centralised in the person of the President, whether this is formalised or not (Van de Walle 2003, 309-10). This is the current situation in the Congo. The Congo formally has a semi-presidential system with significant powers for Parliament, whereas in practice much of this power is delegated to the President in his role as political father.

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[23] Interview with MP 13, Kinshasa, 30 April 2010.

[24] For the 2011 Presidential elections, Kabila again stood as an independent candidate, despite being the figurehead of the PPRD.

[25] Interview with Minister 2, Bukavu, 18 March 2010.

When Kamerhe criticised Kabila that he should have informed Parliament at least, if not seek Parliaments approval, he lays bare the tension between the division of power between different institutions and the unification of power in the hands of the President. Kamerhe openly challenged Kabila's position as political father. The suggestion that decision making should be passed by the legislature means that the legislature assumes powers that according to the moral matrix of the father-family lie naturally with the President. Kamerhe's suggestion thus challenges Kabila's position as political father and the unity of power in his hands, something which is unacceptable. His position has thus become untenable.

The MPs of the Parliamentary majority also argued in their statement that:

> *'The declarations of the Speaker of Parliament upset the mentioned dispositions and create a harmful tension to the harmonious functioning of the institutions of the DRC in general, and the National Assembly in particular.'* (Députées Nationaux de la Majorité Parlementaire 2009, Author's translation from French)

The MPs emphasise the importance of harmony within and between the institutions involved, that is, unity under the leadership of the political father-chief. Kamerhe himself followed this line or reasoning as well. When he decided to step down he does so to protect the country's unity and hard won democracy. In his resignation speech he also said he did not want to 'add (his) name to the history of obstructions of the institutions that have been so dearly acquired by our people at the cost of their blood' (Kamerhe 2009, 7, Author's translation from French, Reuters 2009). He emphasised unity and a form of democracy that is not only conflict-avoiding but also debate-avoiding, while reaffirming the leadership of the political father-chief. As a true martyr he offers his political head in order to maintain unity within the political family and political consensus to prevent political conflict. It is a graceful exit.

The political father is a central figure for the functioning of governance and politics, much more than that of a President in a semi-Presidential system such as that of the Congo. Because the notion that 'power is eaten whole' prevents a separation of power between the legislature and the executive, it has a significant impact on the functioning of the institutions of governance. The following paragraph will discuss the interaction of the notion of the political family and the democratic institutional framework in the practices of accountability between the executive and the legislative.

Accountability in the political family

With his statements on the radio, Kamerhe directly attacked President Kabila and started a row between the two which would result in Kamerhe's political down-

fall. Formally the row was about procedures of decision making between the executive and the legislature. Kamerhe emphasised on various occasions that he did not criticise the President but the Government whose responsibility it is to inform Parliament. He refers to the crisis as an issue between the Government and the National Assembly not as a personal row between himself and Kabila (Kamerhe 2009, 4-6). However, the actual matter was about the public critique by a member of the political family (Kamerhe) to the political father-chief (President).

What was at stake was that Kamerhe breached the rules of the political family. The understanding the ruling majority as a political family in which the executive and legislative branch are united is evidently at odds with the institutional division of powers, as mentioned before. The rules that count for the interaction between the legislative and executive are therefore not those defined by the constitution but those defined by the rules of the political family. Chabal speaks of the 'politics of belonging'. Peoples' relations to others define their social position and are an important constituent of his identity (Chabal 2009, 43). That can be an ethnic group, a kin group or any other 'imagined community' (Anderson 1983), such as a political family. The politics of belonging emphasise that an individual only belongs to the group if he participates in the system of obligations (Chabal 2009, 48). The political family is such an 'in-group' to which one only belongs if one participates in its system of obligations.

The fact that the executive and legislative are an in-group is important for practices of accountability. In a model liberal democracy the accountability practices between Parliament and the Executive are external, both institutions are independent of each other (or have a certain degree of independence). In a clientelist democracy (Van de Walle 2003, 313) such as the political family the accountability relations between Parliament and the Executive are of an internal nature because it concerns a relation between a patron and his clients, or a political father and his political family (Lindberg 2009a, 32). There needs to be a set of generally understood criteria that can form the basis for the definition of accountable behaviour (Lindberg 2009a, 27, Schedler 1999). In the case of the political family these obligations are largely unarticulated and informal, but they nevertheless exist and cannot be ignored (Schatzberg 2001, 1).

In a very broad sense political accountability can be understood as 'the ensemble of formal and informal factors which impinge on the way in which rulers and ruled relate to each other in a political community' (Chabal 1992, 54). Accountability is primarily about answerability and sanctioning (Schedler 1999, 14). It thus shapes a relation between the rulers and the ruled. By understanding accountability, and therefore power itself, as a relation between actors, this means that the ruled may be dependent on the rulers, but that the inverse is also true. Somebody does not have power, it 'resides in the other's dependency'. The

consequence is that the power holder is also dependent on those he rules for his hold on power (Emerson 1962, 32-3). This reciprocal relation between rulers and ruled is particularly significant within the political family that is situated within the institutional framework of the democratic state. Not only are practices of accountability of prime concern for a new democracy, as we will see, it is also in the interaction between different political actors that local agencies shape the functioning of the political institution of the National Assembly.

Answerability in the political family: Loyalty & redistribution

Answerability in the political family is primarily shaped by the reciprocal relation between the father and his family. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this reciprocal relation is defined in terms of loyalty and redistribution. When making his statements on Radio Okapi, Kamerhe breached the rules of the political family in two ways. Firstly, by expressing critique on an executive decision he assumed the right of the National Assembly to hold the Executive to account. Secondly, he used a public platform – the radio – to do so, instead of discussing his concerns within the private sphere of the political family. He was thus openly disloyal to the political father, thereby making his position untenable.

The notion of accountability is thus turned around: instead of the executive being held to account by the legislative branch of government, the members of the political family (of both the executive and the legislative) are held to account by *le pouvoir* for their (dis-)loyalty. This question about whether the National Assembly can hold the Executive to account is an issue on which the logic of the political family collides with that of liberal democracy. Whereas in a liberal democracy one of the core tasks of Parliament is to oversee the Executive, within the political family it does not have the moral right to do so. Democracy in the Congo currently resembles a delegative democracy, in which the elected political father (the President) 'is entitled to govern as he sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office.' The role of MPs in a delegative democracy is to be passive and support whatever the President decides (O'Donnell 1994, 59-60). Horizontal accountability, or the practices of accountability between the different governing institutions, is weak or absent in these delegative democracies either because the institutions are not legally empowered, do not have the capacity or do not have the willingness to take oversight actions (O'Donnell 1994, 61, O'Donnell 1998, 117). Although it could be said that Parliament does not have the willingness to hold the Executive to account, it is more useful to understand this lack of willingness in terms of moral codes of the Political Family.

Lindberg's mentioned distinction between internal and external accountability (2009a) also draws our attention to a second aspect of Kamerhe's aspects that

made his position untenable within the political family. An important obligation of the political family is that critique should be dealt with and kept within the political family. Just like any ordinary family, the political family is a private sphere, which is distinguished from the public sphere of politics. The problem was not that Kamerhe expressed critique as such, but that the stage he had chosen for his critique was inappropriate. Instead of expressing it privately and directly to the President, he chose the public stage of radio Okapi.[26]

There is room for critique in the political family, but it needs to be managed in a safe and closed environment, that is, within the political family. The case of the motion of no-confidence against Prime Minister Muzito is exemplary in this regard. The day after the motion of no-confidence against Muzito was delivered in Parliament (October 2009) a counter motion to not bring the motion of no-confidence to the vote was adopted, and the motion of no-confidence never made it to the debate in the plenary.[27] The National Assembly appeared farcical, *a coup de théâtre* was the judgement of a local newspaper (Le Climat Tempéré 2009). However, on the evening before the Prime Minister was to respond to the motion of no-confidence in Parliament, a hidden exchange between MPs of the AMP and the Prime Minister was held at the AMP headquarters. Present were de Prime Minister, MPs and Senators of the AMP. According to an MP present at that meeting, the MPs shared their widespread grievances and discontent over the theft and failures of the Prime Minister, 'the Prime Minister was trembling'. MPs were given the opportunity to express their critique, but had also received orders not to take this any further than the present meeting and support the counter motion that would be brought to a vote the next day.[28]

The meeting at the AMP headquarters seems a showcase rather than a genuine practice to hold the Prime Minister to account. However, the meeting was held behind closed doors in a private setting, not in Parliament. There was no media present, nor was there any publicity about this internal practice of answerability. The meeting thus could not function as a show case to show-off (or pretend) the National Assembly as a critical institution that responds to the widely recognised weakness of and corruption by the Prime Minister, because the 'stage' was not right for such a performance. Rather, what this interesting meeting reveals are the

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[26] Interview with MP 6, Kinshasa 13 November 2009.

[27] It was argued by MP Pius Mwabilu (PPRD) that a motion of no-confidence against the Prime Minister in effect means a motion of censure against the whole government. For the former the signatures of at least 50 MPs are necessary, for the latter at least 125 ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE 2007. Règlement Intérieur.). The motion of no-confidence (which was deposited at the Speakers office four months before it was brought to the Plenary) was signed by 51 MPs. The motion of no-confidence was thus rejected because of these procedural inconsistencies. Personal observation, Plenary Session National Assembly, 16 and 17 October 2009, Palais du Peuple, Kinshasa; Assemblée Nationale 2009, Motion de Défiance de l'Honorable Clément Kanku Bukasa; Le Climat Tempéré 2009.

[28] Interview with MP 1, Kinshasa, 20 October 2009.

parameters of the system of answerability, that is, within the political family as opposed to in public. And although the MPs were not in a position to take steps to evict the Prime Minister, measures were taken as the President has (allegedly) withdrawn the Prime Ministers powers to authorise government expenditures.[29] The point is that an important rule of the politics of belonging of the political family is that processes of accountability are kept internal and cannot take place in a public location such as the National Assembly.

This strategy to keep problems within the political family is a thread in how current political practices respond to problems within the ruling coalition. In heated parliamentary debate of 21 April 2010, when a motion of censure was debated, the known spokes persons of the *Courant de Rénovateur* were denied speaking time for exactly this reason of not allowing internal critique to be expressed on a public space.[30] As an exception, the Speaker strictly kept to the speaking time of each parliamentary group. The technicians at the *Bureau des Annales* were instructed to switch off the microphone after the on beforehand allocated speaking time was used.[31] The Speaker would decide on the order in which speakers of different parliamentary groups would be called to the stage. In the case of the parliamentary group *Force du Rénouveau*, of which the spokes person of the *Courant de Rénovateur* that was supposed to speak is a member, the Speaker of Parliament had allowed to let the previous speakers of the group take more than their allocated time. By the time it was the turn of the spokes person of the *Courant de Rénovateur* (who was put on the bottom of the list by the Speaker), the speaking time of the whole parliamentary group had been used. The spokes person of the *Courant de Rénovateur* was not able to speak in the parliamentary debate on the critique towards the Prime Minister.[32] By preventing the spokespeople of the *Courant de Renovateur* to speak in the Plenary of the National Assembly, the Speaker disabled them from speaking in public about matters that are considered private. The *Courant de Renovateur*'s existence is

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[29] Interview with MP 1, Kinshasa, 20 October 2009.

[30] The *Courant de Rénovateur* is a group of allegedly more than 170 MPs from the majority that strive for change and democratic practice within Parliament (although this number is likely to be grossly exaggerated). It was launched in December 2009 by two MPs of the Parliamentary Group *Force du Renouveau*, Honorable Fabrice Puela and Honorable Gustave Omba. The PG *Force du Renouveau* is headed by Minister Olivier Kamitatu, an important partner in the AMP. The group makes it clear it does not campaign against the President or the regime, but against the inability of the National Assembly to play its role. It thus chooses to stay within the majority and not engage with the opposition. There are no members of the opposition within the *Courant de Rénovateur*. For the protection of the MPs that support the *Courant de Rénovateur*, their names are not made public (apart from the 2 leading MPs), and neither do they sign petitions of motions. Author's interview with MP member of the *Courant de Rénovateur*, 20 April 2010; Le Potentiel 19 February 2010; Radio Okapi 2010a, 2010b.

[31] Author's discussion with technical team at the studio of the bureau des annales of the *Palais du Peuple*, field notes 21 April 2010.

[32] Personal observations plenary session National Assembly, 21 April 2010; Interview with MP members of *Courant de Renovateur*, Palais du Peuple, Kinshasa 21 April 2010.

tolerated but it is not allowed to use public space to destabilise the political family.

As a public space the Plenary or the National Assembly is the space where two political families can debate and criticise each other. Critique from the opposition is not at all considered a problem or threatening. But critique from within the political family of the majority is. The motions of no-confidence and even the motion of censure of April 2010 are by the ruling coalition not considered political crises, for it would only be a crisis if such public attacks on the regime would come from within the coalition.[33] There is no space for critique from family members themselves, because 'the majority cannot show in public that there are internal differences,'[34] that is a matter of protecting the interests of the family.[35] The National Assembly is not the right space for such debates. Issues that concern the ruling coalition, the government and the parliamentary majority are issues of the political family and should thus be dealt with within the confined space of the political family, not on a public platform such as in the National Assembly. The National Assembly is public space, and therefore not a suitable location for family matters. As long as the members of the political family act according to their obligations, that is, be loyal, attacks from the opposition can never threaten *le pouvoir*. Critique from the Opposition is accepted and not considered to be of major relevance, because it is restricted to a space where no major decisions are being made. Opposition MPs criticise in public and in the plenary, whereas the political process, or the decision making process is restricted to the political family. These are two separated spaces.

But loyalty does not come without redistribution. The importance of redistribution to fuel loyalty in the political family can be seen in the opposition. Because there is no leader of the opposition, there is also no focal point for practices of the exchange of loyalty and redistribution. Because these exchanges are so important for the functioning of the political family, the opposition is paralysed. This reciprocity is a form of exchange between members of the political family and the father-chief. Building on the work of Marcel Mauss on the gift as a mechanism of obligation (Mauss 1925), social exchange theory sees social relations in terms of exchange in which power is being balanced, or negotiated (Baldwin 1978, Emerson 1962). Building on this idea of interdependent social transactions of direct reciprocity that define power relations within a group, Hydén speaks of the 'economy of affection' which prevails in political relations in Africa (Hydén 1980, Hydén 2006, 73-93). The exchanges within the economy of affection in the context of the Congolese political family do not only involve

[33] Interviews with Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Evariste Boshab, Kinshasa 03 May 2010, and civil servant at the Ministry of Relations with Parliament, Kinshasa 07 May 2010.

[34] Interview with MP 9, Bukavu, 18 March 2010.

[35] Interview with MP 7, Kinshasa, 21November 2009.

material gifts, but should be understood as including symbolic exchanges as well, such rewards and punishment which can be expressed in material and non-material ways (Hydén 2006, 87). In this sense we can think for example about loyalty, votes in Parliament, distribution of political and other profitable positions, sharing of power, but also plain material and financial payment.

There are ample stories about practices of redistribution between *le pouvoir* and MPs. What is relevant is that these obligations of redistribution define a depoliticized relationship between the majority and *le pouvoir*. The exchange of loyalty for redistribution emphasises that it is not a political relationship between the father-chief and his family, but strictly one of father-chiefly authority (in which the father-chief is a non-political figure). In this sense, the father-chief should be seen as an office. His obligations (to redistribute) and entitlements (to loyalty) have little to do with his person or respect and authority as a leader, nor with his policies. Instead they are located in the office of the father-chief. These entitlements and obligations are a system of legitimacy.

Sometimes meetings in which these exchanges between MPs and the Executive take place are collective and the whole parliamentary majority is invited at once. More often, these meetings are organised per province – MPs of one province are invited at the time. Occasionally, MPs of the opposition are even included as well.[36] This enables a more targeted form of redistribution, in which the MPs can negotiate about specific needs of their region, whereas in the collective exchange meetings the gifts exchanged are often of a more personal and private nature and directly target the MP himself (such as money or cars). But by inviting the MPs per province, *le pouvoir* does not face the MPs per political party of parliamentary group.[37] This is a strategy to depoliticise the exchange in line with the a-political character of the political father-chief.

The demand of AMP MPs for Kamerhe to resign was therefore not an act to merely please the President. Rather, it falls within the clientelist logic of rights and responsibilities that shape the relations and engagements between MPs and le pouvoir. There is mention of money handed out by Kabila to engineer Kamerhe's resignation. It was reported that members of the Kamerhe's parliamentary Office were given $200,000 each upon resignation before Parliament would reconvene on the 16th of March (which they subsequently did). An additional $1 million was allegedly distributed among AMP members to buy their votes against Kamerhe in case of a parliamentary no-confidence vote against him. Rather than interpreting this as bribes and the threat of the abuse of power, within the moral matrix of the father-family, it are practices of redistribution that a father is obliged to perform.

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[36] Interview with MP 13, Kinshasa, 30 April 2010.

[37] Interviews with MP 3, Kinshasa 27 October 2009, and MP 8, Kinshasa 08 December 2009.

Enforcement in the political family: Sanctioning & punishment

Loyalty is demanded (or enforced) through various practices. The most common practice is that of *mots d'ordres*, or instructions per sms on, for example, how to vote and whether to be present at a certain debate or not (e.g. to disable a vote from taking place).[38] Secondly, because most of the (larger) political parties of the majority have their leader as a member of the Government, this control over Parliament takes also place through more general forms of party discipline.[39] In addition there are certain MPs that are part of the inner circles around the President. These MPs are the eyes and ears of the President in Parliament, and function as the 'whip' by 'reminding' MPs or whole parliamentary groups of their obligations when necessary. When the vote or debate is of little concern, these particular MPs are generally not present. When they are present, other MPs know that the President is symbolically present and is watching them.[40] The events in the earlier mentioned Plenary of 21 April 2010 are an illustrative example of the importance of such MPs. The Prime Minister was heavily criticised by the Opposition and was called to the Plenary for a debate – itself a rare event. When he responded in Parliament to questions and accusations, the MP that had posed the questions rejected the answers the Prime Minister had given and announced a motion of censure in an inflammatory speech in which he unprecedentedly listed a long sequence of corrupt practices of the Prime Minister, named illegally acquired properties, and gave a financial overview of the theft (allegedly) committed by the Prime Minister (Bussa Tongba 2010).[41] When the Prime Minister walked off the stage, he walked through the audience to take the back exit for the public instead of the much closer side exit for MPs and Ministers or an even quieter exit through the wings of the stage.[42] By doing so, he had to walk through the sitting area of the MPs (the audience in the theatre hall), and passed two powerful MPs on the back row that are known to be close confidents of the President. The Prime Minister stopped and shook the hands of these two MPs.[43] The Prime Minister staged his relation with *le pouvoir*, despite the critique that was just expressed to him. Although he may behind closed doors be begging for forgiveness and asking for support, at that moment he expressed to the supporters of the motion of censure that he was 'on shaking hand terms' with *le pouvoir*; he reconfirmed and made visible his patron-client relation with *le pouvoir*. It showed the MPs that despite the critique he had not been dismissed by *le pouvoir*

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38 Interviews with MP 1 Kinshasa, 20 October 2009, MP 3 Kinshasa 08 December 2009, MP 6 Kinshasa 13 November 2011, MP 10 Kinshasa 20 April 2010.

39 Interview with Minister 1, Kinshasa, 18 November 2009.

40 Interview with MP 6, Kinshasa, 13 November 2009.

41 Personal observations and notes, Plenary Session National Assembly, 21 April 2010.

42 The Parliament sits in a former theatre, with the Microphone on the stage, and the MPs sitting in the 'audience'.

43 Personal observations and notes, Plenary Session National Assembly, 21 April 2010.

and consequently that he was entitled to Parliamentary support. Unsurprisingly, the motion of censure failed when it came to a vote a few months later.

In the political family it is the father that has the right to sanction, as well as the right to reward. As we have seen all power is united in his hands, and family members do not have the right to criticise the executive. These powers also reside in the hands of the father. When Kabila demanded Kamerhe's resignation he used his fatherly right to sanction members of the political family. Kamerhe however refused to follow presidential orders to resign and argued that if he was to step down it should be via proper parliamentary procedures, not a resignation when Parliament was not in session (Kamerhe 2009, 4). Although constitutionally correct, this was another provocation of the leadership of Kabila, because Kamerhe did not accept Kabila's power to punish and sack disloyal subjects at will.

It is the father who rewards and punishes. It is the President who appoints Ministers and other positions (a reward) (République Démocratique du Congo 2006a, Art. 78), and it is therefore also the President who sanctions them (a punishment) (Schatzberg 2001, 160). Although it has the legal right to do so, it is unthinkable for the National Assembly to evict a Minister, as this is considered to be critique towards the President. After all, the Ministers are the President's Ministers, should Parliament reject one of them, this is the rejection of a choice of the President. The sanctioning of a Minister by Parliament would thus weaken the position of the President. It is this logic that was performed by the Prime Minister when he shook the hands of the powerful MPs in Parliament in April 2010.[44]

An MP from the opposition recalls a case when the opposition tried to launch a motion of no-confidence against the Minister of Transport, Remy Kuseyo Gatanga after a crash in Kinshasa of an airplane that did not comply with the safety rules killed at least 50 people (Le Potentiel 2007). The then Speaker of Parliament, Vital Kamerhe, said to him 'why do you want to sanction him? Let us arrange it ourselves, let the President deal with it.'[45] The Minister concerned was fired by the President the day after the crash (Omasombo 2009, 138, République Démocratique du Congo 2007b). Although the Minister had been sanctioned because he was held responsible for the crash, Kabila's act disabled Parliament to engage in a debate with the Minister and possibly sanction him. The National Assembly responded by launching a *motion of no confidence* against the Minister of State to the President of the Republic, Nkulu Kilombo, who was considered to be responsible too because he had allegedly instructed the Minister of Transport to allow this faulty Antonov plane to fly. Speakers of the Majority felt that the problem had been dealt with because the responsible Minister was sacked and a

[44] Interviews with MP 6, Kinshasa 13 November 2009 and MP 13, Kinshasa 30 April 2010.
[45] Interview with MP 13, Kinshasa 30 April 2010.

commission of inquiry was installed. The motion was rejected by Parliament (252 votes against to 156 for).[46]

When Ministers need to go, it is the President and not Parliament that takes this decision, or in other words, that has the right to punish a Minister. Although it may constitutionally be a power of the National Assembly, according to the rules of the political family, it is the father-chief only that has the power to do so, or not. Parliament can never sanction a Minister,[47] and neither has it ever done so in the first legislature of the Third Republic. The Ministers that have lost their position have been sacked via Presidential decree (République Démocratique du Congo 2007a, République Démocratique du Congo 2007b, République Démocratique du Congo 2011b) or cabinet reshuffles orchestrated by the President, not by Parliamentary vote.

Kabila chose to punish Kamerhe by forcing him to resign and go into exile, that is, to declare him politically dead (Schatzberg 2001, 51).[48] AMP MPs are said to have received text messages 'facing them with the ultimatum of dropping Kamerhe or provoking the dissolution of the National Assembly by the President' (South Scan 2009).[49] The threat of the dissolution of Parliament is a threat of punishment in the same sense as the punishment of Kamerhe himself. The chief has this power, a power which is accepted and assumed. But Kamerhe enforced his stepping down to take place within the parameters of the institutional framework of the democratic state, not within the political family. In this institutional framework, Kabila needed the MPs to be loyal to him, and choose against Vital Kamerhe.

MPs of the majority that have been openly disloyal – for example known members of the *Courant de Rénovateur* and MPs that have sided with Kamerhe in his conflict with the President –have all been excluded from the channels of redistribution. No longer are they invited for AMP meetings in preparation of a critical parliamentary debate in which funds are distributed and gifts promised in exchange for loyalty.[50] The exclusion of these MPs is a form of political punishment by *le pouvoir*, in the same way as Vital Kamerhe was excluded. The eviction of 18 MPs in July 2007, many of which from the parliamentary majority, in July 2007 should be understood as such a political punishment as well. Even

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[46] Plenary Session National Assembly, 13 October 2009, audio tape recording. It is interesting to note that the motion was rejected by 252 votes against, whereas 251 votes are required to pass a motion. It alludes to manipulation.

[47] Discussion with civil servant at the Ministry of Parliamentary Relations, Kinshasa, field notes, 07 May 2010.

[48] Kamerhe's name was cited in the song played in the MPs car (see chapter 5). He was in this song cited as a deceased person.

[49] Interview with MP 1, Kinshasa 20 October 2009.

[50] Interviews with MP 1, Kinshasa 20 October 2009 and MP 10, Kinshasa 20 April 2010.

more so, some of these 18 MPs have been re-instated, allegedly because they have reconfirmed their loyalty to the President.[51]

Negotiation and renegotiation

What is evident from the above analysis is that the logic of the political family and the conceptualisation of power and leadership in the political family is at odds with some basic principles of liberal democracy. The political father holds all power united in his hands at the cost of the powers and independence of other institutions such as Parliament. The 2009 parliamentary crisis vividly shows how logics of the political family and the position of the father-chief dictate the way in which MPs and the executive relate to each other. The rules and practices of the liberal democratic state exist on paper but make place for practices that emphasise the political leadership of the father-chief and the unification of power in his hands, and practices of a political family. These notions of the father-chief and the unity of powers in the hands of the father-chief determine political practices in the consumption of democracy by the MPs and their engagements with *le pouvoir*.

This in itself is nothing new. What is, however, interesting to observe in the above described events is that we can also see that these practices are subject to negotiation. Much like the processes that Vansina (1990) describes which took place since the early days of colonial encounters, local agencies renegotiate local political traditions and customs for which they use means provided by the liberal peace. The organisation of the political according to the moral matrix of the father-family is from this point of view then not a re-traditionalisation of politics in which liberal democracy is being Africanised. Instead, it is a negotiation of local politics in which the liberal peace is a resource that provides opportunities for the renegotiation of local political practices. This means that 'the local' is not static and does not only negotiate the liberal peace by influencing it. The local itself is also a dynamic site which is being renegotiated by local agencies that use their needs, aspirations, customs and culture, as well as the liberal peace, as resources to do so.

The in this chapter discussed practices are practices that occur in the negotiation between the practices, norms and institutions of the father-family moral matrix, and the norms and institutions of the recently installed democratic political organisation of the state's institutions. The democratic institutional framework provides new opportunities for a renegotiation and for bargaining, because it has altered the interdependence and power relations within the political family. Whereas in a politically stable situation in which the political family functions

[51] Interview with former MP 4, and one of the 18 evicted MPs, Kinshasa 26 April 2010.

these unarticulated obligations may be stable and non-negotiable (Hydén 2006, Schatzberg 2001, 1), what seems to be the essence of the settlement of the moral matrix of the political family in the institutional framework of liberal democracy, is that these obligations are now open for renegotiation and the formation of a new system of obligations.

With elections, the ability to sanction ministers or the whole government, their own voting power in the National Assembly, and threats of motions of no confidence, MPs now have new tools through which power relations and exchange can be renegotiated with *le pouvoir*. At the site of the National Assembly we can see several cases of such negotiation and renegotiation concerning the cases and events discussed earlier in this chapter.

The described practices to enforce loyalty of the parliamentary majority itself indicate that loyalty to the political father cannot be taken for granted. The mere fact that it needs to be enforced through *mots d'ordres*, reminders by certain MPs, fuelled by payments and gifts, means that the loyalty to the political father is subject to constant negotiation. In a conversation in the corridors of Parliament an MP complained to me that they were only offered US$ 500 for a certain vote. He argued that $500 was an unreasonably low amount, which does not enable them to do anything. After some negotiation, more material benefits were added to the exchange and the MP agreed to vote as requested.[52]

The case of a petition by the South Kivutian MPs is illustrative of this renegotiation of the terms of loyalty and redistribution. In May 2010 28 of the 32 MPs of South Kivu wrote and signed a petition to the Prime Minister, and by extension to the President. The petition was published in full in the Congolese newspapers. In the petition, they reminded the Government that 96% of the electorate of South Kivu has voted for President Kabila and that none of the South Kivutian MPs is a member of the opposition. In other words, South Kivu and its representatives in the National Assembly are unquestionably loyal to the President. They complain about the 'ingratitude' of the regime for the loyalty of South Kivu. The elite of South Kivu has, according to the MPs, been excluded and paralysed. A number of South Kivutian high profile politicians have been removed from the scene,[53] and according to the petitioners South Kivutians are nearly absent from high-ranking posts within public administration. The MPs quote another MP and close confident of the President saying that 'we will finally govern without South

[52] Conversation with MP of the majority, April 2010.

[53] Such as the former Minister Mushi Bonane; the former Speaker of Parliament Vital Kamerhe; Ministers Kyamusoke Bamusulanga, Essambo and Bitijula, who were Minister in Gizenga's first government but did not survive the cabinet reshuffles of (respectively) November 2007, November 2007 and October 2008; and Hon Bahati, who lost his post as Questor of the National Assembly (Member of the Office of the Speaker, responsible for the internal administration of the National Assembly) as a result of the crisis around Vital Kamerhe. These names are listed in the petition (Le Potentiel, 08 May 2010).

Kivu', which confirms their suspicion of being deliberately excluded. In addition, projects of the Cinq Chantiers[54] are, according to the petitioners, close to non-existent in South Kivu, while the province continues to be victim of insecurity, instability and conflict (Le Potentiel 2010e).

The South Kivutian MPs claim what they are (in their eyes) entitled to based on their loyalty and support to the President, namely more high profile positions for themselves and fellow politicians from South Kivu, and more development projects and support for the problems of the people in South Kivu. This petition is a practice of negotiation. Redistribution apparently did not take place satisfactorily in the normal channels of the political family. The MPs have opted to make a public statement, thereby publicly embarrassing the regime for its failures to deliver its end of the exchange. The petition is therefore formally addressed to the Prime Minister, even though it discusses the exchange between the people and representatives of South Kivu and the President, not the Prime Minister (the MPs have joined the Presidential majority and not the Prime Minister's majority, and the people of South Kivu have voted for Kabila in 2006, not for PALU).

The petitioners ask 'do you really not want to see us again in the next Assembly?', suggesting that these specific MPs will not get re-elected if there is no increased redistribution to South Kivu. But the statements also suggests that *le pouvoir* risks losing the loyalty of the of the MPs from South Kivu (Le Potentiel 2010b). It shows that the power holder is indeed also dependent on those that are dependent of him (Baldwin 1978, Emerson 1962). Kabila is dependent on his support base in the eastern part of the country. And the not so subtle hint that they might not support him anymore in the future is a reminder of the reciprocal character of the dependency relationship between them. The MPs practice a form of 'blackmail of the ruled' (Chabal & Daloz 1999, 38), which is a form of the negotiation over de obligations in the political family.

The negotiation over the levels of reasonability and material and symbolic weight of these exchanges, the bargaining itself, is a consequence of the discursive negotiation between the moral matrix of the father-family and that of liberal democracy. MPs are very well aware that *le pouvoir* needs Parliament to pursue its policies, or generally get approval of its practices. Within the framework of liberal democracy which includes elections and a formal role of Parliament to approve government policy, MPs have a certain power to bargain. They know that they are indeed expected to vote according to the *mots d'ordres*, but they will only do so if they feel that the political leader has lived up to his moral obli-

[54] The *Cinq Chantiers* (five worksites) is the reconstruction programme of President Kabila, focussing on employment, infrastructure, housing, water and electricity, and education and health care. See www.cinqchantiers-rdc.com. It should be mentioned that complaints that 'there are no *cinq chantiers* in our region while other parts of the country are being privileged', are complaints expressed in practically all parts of the country.

gations in the sense of redistribution. What is at stake is a contestation over the 'unarticulated conceptualisation of the distribution of rights and responsibilities' (Schatzberg 2001, 1) between the father-chief and the political family. Consequently, every vote in the assembly needs to be negotiated.

The case of the *Courant de Rénovateur* is another interesting way of how political practices of the political family are renegotiated within the framework of liberal democracy. Because the opposition has very little influence in Parliament due to the fact that arrangements are made within the majority outside the Plenary, the members of the *Courant de Rénovateur* feel that change and reform can only come from within the ruling majority. It is therefore important that critical voices stay within the political family.[55] They thus practice a strategy of being an'inside-outsider' – they choose to stay within the in-group of the political family, while challenging it by negotiating the limits of critique. At the same time, they are very careful not to over step the line and risk being evicted from the in-group. This would silence them as well as cut them out of redistribution channels which they need to fuel their own clientelist relations with their constituencies. They therefore always criticise the Prime Minister and never directly the President, but they do chose to use the Plenary for their critique (when given the chance) as well as open platforms such as the media.

Like the practices of loyalty and redistribution, practices of sanctioning and political punishment are renegotiated as well. The case of the crisis around Vital Kamerhe is an interesting example. Rather than a political gamble by Kamerhe to gain political support at the expense of Kabila as has been suggested (South Scan 2009), the case of the parliamentary crisis highlights a clash between a liberal democracy and the moral matrix of the political family. Kamerhe constructed his acts and argument within a democratic logic in which powers are separated between the legislature and the executive, and where the Assembly has the obligation to inform Parliament as the assembly of representatives of the population. His critique was that Parliament had not been consulted nor informed by the executive about these important decisions. In addition, he argued that he should only leave his office as Speaker if the National Assembly – which had elected him –would demand his departure. Kabila, on the other hand, constructed his acts and argument within the moral matrix of the father and family, in which powers are not separated but united within the political father and the acts of the political father cannot be publicly questioned by a member of the family without being punished. The public critique of a member of the family to the political father is a faux-pas which requires political punishment by the father to restore his authori-

[55] Interviews with members of the *Courant de Rénovateur*, Kinshasa, 21 April 2010 and with MP 10, 20 April 2010.

ty. In this logic the President, and only the President, has the right to sanction people.

Kamerhe rejected this power of the father-chief. Kamerhe presented himself as a respectful politician that adheres to the law and regulations of parliamentary procedures, and he also tapped into existing anti-Rwandese popular sentiments, knowing that the military operation would be ill received by the population. Although he may have won support from the parliamentary opposition and the population, trying to win political support at the cost of the President is unacceptable within the family of the Kabila regime. However, as a consequence of his political downfall, he has gone de facto into exile (i.e. his 'political death'), which has cost him much of his popularity.[56] His defence is that he acted in accordance to the law, although he does accept that he has done wrong and did not act in accordance to the code of conduct of the political family. It is this duality expressed in the headline of the *Journal du Citoyen* saying that Kamerhe is 'split between the law and loyalty' (Kibungu *et al*. 2009). Although Kamerhe may have had the legal right to criticise the President, he did not have the moral right to do so. Kamerhe describes how he is torn between the demands of his political family and the Congolese people, who expect of him, as a politician, to uphold institutional and democratic integrity to make an end to the years of political infighting that has affected the functioning of political institutions since 1960. However, although Kamerhe acknowledges that his political family may perceive his statements as a crime, he takes up the role of political victim of the 'hazards of politics in our country'. He emphasises this implicit accusation later in his speech when he implies that there is more going on than is visible: 'I know that many among you (…) are not convinced about the true reasons of my resignation. But, it is like it is said that politics has reasons that reason ignores' (Kamerhe 2009, 3, 7. Author's translation from French).

Kamerhe eventually had to give in to the rules of the political family and accept his defeat. His attempt to renegotiate the rules of the political family by stretching up the possibilities of critique failed. In this sense it was perhaps a miscalculation of the possibilities provided by the liberal democratic framework and an underestimation of the strength of the rule of the political family. The failure of this renegotiation does nevertheless show that certain aspects, such as the position of the father-chief, are currently not negotiable. Whether he participates in elections, a political process, or not, the President is as the father-chief a non-political figure that is elevated above political differences. Criticising him publicly is politically dangerous. Power is unified in this figure. This enables a broad majority of strange bedfellows that based on their backgrounds and politi-

[56] Focus Group 1, civil society representatives, Bukavu, 16 March 2010, Focus Group 2, civil society representatives, Bukavu, 19 March 2010.

cal interests may not be suitable partners, but that can unite under the leadership of such a non-political father-chief. This has implications for the concept of presidential elections. Elections politicise the position of a political leader, whereas in the political father-chief is not political. These conceptual notions may have far reaching implications for issues such as the turn-over of power, or the relevance of elections as a mechanism to appoint a political leadership figure. However, the Courant de Rénovateur is also an interesting phenomenon in this respect. As we have seen, the notion of the political family and its practices depoliticises the institutions of legislature and executive. Not only is the President a non-political figure elevated above the political debate, the interaction between *le pouvoir* and the Assembly is turned into an exchange of loyalty and clientelist goods and the conceptualisation of the political family as a private sphere disables the National Assembly to be a platform for political debate. The *Courant de Rénovateur* is renegotiating this depoliticised space. If they would leave the majority they would be silenced. The only way to bring back political debate within the National Assembly is from within the circles of the majority.

8

Conclusions: Local agencies consuming democracy

In the previous chapters I have analysed peace building in the DRC through a perspective that emphasises local agencies that consume democracy. This is not an attempt for a creative approach. It is an approach that aims to respond to a lack of appropriate engagements, understanding and insights with the local context in which liberal peace building is contextualised. It is an approach to find ways to capture and understand the local consumption of the liberal peace by approaching it from a people's instead of an institutional perspective. This focus on people that operate within the institution as opposed to institutions themselves emphasises identity and cultural practices and lays bare insights that are often ignored by mainstream approaches.

Although it is often argued that higher context sensitivity is necessary to make peace building practices better adapted to the specific context concerned, few analyses actually make the effort to engage with local agencies in a meaningful way. Critically engaging with local agencies means that the local should not mistakenly be idealised. The 'evil white westerner' should not simply be replaced by the 'good black local'. Such inversion would ignore diversity, and would be guilty of the same lack of critical reflection that the liberal peace is accused of (MacGinty 2011, 51, Slater 2004, 198). Engaging with local agencies in peace building processes in a meaningful way means looking at the interaction between liberal peace building interventions and local agencies and the way in which peace building processes are being shaped by this interaction. These local agencies cannot be ignored in peace building processes, even if they rely on custom and practices which contradict liberal ideals (Richmond 2011b, 183), as for example in the case of the co-option of warlords in peace building in Afghanistan (MacGinty 2011, 91-114).

In this thesis I have focused on local agencies at the site of the National Assembly and their practices of consumption of liberal democracy as a central pillar of the liberal peace. I have used De Certeau's notion of consumption as the processes through which people make hegemonic structures function in the service of other sets of rules and customs to capture local agencies' engagement and interaction with the structures of the liberal peace, and liberal democracy in particular (1984, 32). Although underlining the critique of liberal peace building as a top-down and institutionalist project I have not moved away from the institutions and their elites on which liberal peace building relies and moved to the local-local and everyday of the ordinary citizen, as suggested by Richmond (2009a, 2009b). Instead, I have used Richmond's critique and brought it back to the institutions of liberal peace building by focusing on the hidden 'local-local' of the actors that make these institutions function. Focusing on MPs and their agencies enabled by their interaction with other actors, I have considered these agencies as driving an undefined dynamic of political reorganisation towards an undefined outcome within the context of liberal peace building. A process which is shaped by the needs, customs, desires, ambitions, as well as the identities and political culture of MPs and the people they interact with, such as their electorate and the executive.

Before turning my focus to practices and local agencies, I have contextualised these agencies in the discursive field of the liberal peace and the discursive field of local experiences of the present. Experiences of the present are shaped by historical experiences. I have therefore approached Congolese narratives of the present by engaging with narratives in a Ricœurian way of a future oriented past which understands history as purposeful or futural. This approach has provided a deeper understanding of the narratives that shape the Congolese present as a discursive frame in which people exercise their existence, and in doing so engage with liberal peace interventions. Connecting the discourses of the present with mythistoric narratives has highlighted the experience of the post-war situation in terms of continuity (continued international interference and victimhood) and change (emancipation, democracy, a new impetus for resisting international interference and victimhood). The peace building process is framed as an event of ongoing international breaching of Congolese sovereignty and a Congolese quest for emancipation. The mythistory that gives meaning to the present is employed as an emancipatory discourse that claims sovereignty, Congolese dignity and self-determination. This defines Congolese engagement with peace building interventions in their country. The end of the war was a new beginning. The 2006 elections launched democracy and were seen as a final victory of the quest for self-determination, the long-awaited second independence. Democratisation is

then a political project in pursuit of a peace that responds to local needs and aspirations.

However, Congolese experiences with the liberal peace are ambivalent: it is a means for emancipation and self-determination, while simultaneously a practice of continued domination and breach of this self-determination. The disappointments that followed the high expectations and the failures of liberal peace building are ascribed to western intervention. International peace building intervention can thus also be considered as a continuation of foreign domination in the Congo. Liberal peace building is simultaneously welcomed and rejected. This Congolese ambivalence towards liberal peace building is ill-understood by the donor community, which critiquelessly sees peace building and development as a means to improve the daily lives of Congolese people. Congolese narratives that reject, question or resist Western engagement are put aside as 'untrue' and are therefore considered irrelevant. The emancipatory objectives Congolese people may have are subsequently ignored. As I have discussed in chapter four, the state building project that aims to rebuild the National Assembly as well as other state institutions follows what Chandler has called a depoliticised problem solving approach (Chandler 2006, 8) which is concerned with technical aspects of setting-up the institution without engaging with custom, political culture and practices of politics in Congo, nor its structures of power, domination and accountability. It sets up institutions, but does not engage with the political role these institutions play in governance processes. It engages with capacity building, but does not consider to what political end these built capacities will be used, or whether they will be used at all. This undermines liberal peace building as a project of discipline, because as a result of the technical approach local agencies define the way the institutions function.

When analysing and comparing the different narratives, a disagreement about the purpose and practice of the liberal peace in the Congo emerges. I have identified three discursive clashes. Firstly, there is a clash over the emancipatory purpose of peace building which reflects the critique of the liberal peace developed by various authors as discussed in chapter one. Where Congolese narratives explain democracy as a technology of emancipation that seeks to establish self-determination and reject foreign tutelage, peace building itself practices Foucaultian disciplining that pursues an approach which shies away from politics (even at the heart of political organisation of the country, such as Parliament) and aims to teach through technical assistance, and seeks to supervise and control a process of democratisation. As argued by liberal peace critique, although liberal idealism talks about self-determination, in practice it dispossesses. Evidently, these two experiences can co-exist without making a meaningful impact on each other, which is what has been happening.

Secondly, both the Congolese narratives and the liberal democratic hegemonic discourses narrate power and the relations of power that exist between the Congo and its international partners. The Congolese narratives and that of the liberal peace in the Congo produce different regimes of truth about the present. An important consequence of this is that these regimes of truth then perceive the self and the other, Congolese or international, and allocate them a role: the willing but unable, and the able but unwilling. Whereas the Congolese narratives describe the liberal interveners as dominating and hegemonic, seeking to subjugate the Congo, the liberal agents perceive the Congolese that uphold these narratives as obstructive, as unreasonable moaners, as liars, or simply put, as problematic for the liberal peace. Both perceive themselves as the willing partner that is faced with an unwilling other. Neither takes the other and its narratives seriously, assuming that they are lying, hiding something, or can just not be trusted. Both want the other to be something else than what he is to enable the pursuit of the respective objectives, be that emancipation or discipline. Evidently, this results in mutual frustration and disappointment.

Agency and the lack thereof is thus an important argument that is hidden in Congolese and liberal discourses. Congolese perceive themselves as lacking agency because they are obstructed in their efforts by the internationals who seek to dominate the Congo and keep it poor and unstable, and without democracy. The agents of the liberal peace see themselves as lacking agency too, claiming that it cannot build a democratic state if the Congolese do not have the will. They perceive themselves as having the will but not the agency, whereas the Congolese have the agency but not the will. What we thus see is a negotiation or a contestation of the purpose of the liberal peace and the meaning of democracy in the Congo. Whereas for the Congolese it is considered to be a project of emancipation, for the agents of liberal peace interventions it is a project of discipline towards what Jabri calls 'liberal democratic self-mastery' (2007, 124). Whereas the Congolese narratives emphasise democratisation as an emancipatory project, the liberal peace discourse considers this can only be achieved through disciplining. Whereas the Congolese narratives see this emancipation as emancipation from foreign tutelage and democracy as self-determination, liberal peace building emphasises democracy as governance by popular vote that liberates the population from authoritarianism. These are not nuances but rather differences over the fundamental meaning of peace building in the Congo.

There is thus much tension over the meaning and purpose of democratisation and peace building, and the role therein of the self and the other. When the other is seen as untrustworthy and of ill intent, its discourses are consequently delegitimised and thus irrelevant and negligible. The mutual disengagement that follows as a consequence is thus produced by the shortcomings of liberal peace building

itself, such as its disregard for local interests and meaning, as well as its distancing from its own disciplining practices at the heart of the institutions of liberal democracy. But likewise, the mutual disengagement is produced by a rejection of liberal peace intervention by Congolese people. Constructive partnership in peace building is disabled and a discursive space of mutual disengagement and irrelevance is shaped. Because peace building interventions shy away from local agencies and focus on the technical and institutional level of state building, and because local actors disengage from international peace building objectives, hybrid space in produced. Focusing on the National Assembly, this thesis has shown how local agencies in this hybrid space consume liberal democracy and make it their own. Consequently, liberal peace building lacks legitimacy with the donor community as well as with the local community. Neither is content with the way peace building has developed, and both blame the other for the peace building failures. For the donor community the processes of democratisation and state building of the liberal peace show disappointingly little structural differences in how political practices are practiced. The 2011 elections as the most recent moment of 'measurement' which confirmed concerns about the direction the democratisation process is taking in the Congo. For Congolese people, however, the liberal peace is the latest phase in the continued western interference in Congolese national affairs. In the case of democratisation at the site of the National Assembly there is a veneer of co-operation while beneath these discourses disengagement is hidden.

The case study on the National Assembly has shown some aspects of the problematic nature of peace building in the context of mutual disengagement between local and international partners. Liberal peace building aims to fundamentally change local practices through disciplining and corrective strategies that will result in turning the Congo into a docile liberal democracy, but without actually touching upon these political processes. Local agencies consume liberal democracy without being disciplined or tempered in their practise of consumption. This then draws attention to local agencies and their practices of consumption. This is not because the local necessarily provides a better alternative for the failing practices of the liberal peace. This is not the case. The interest in local agencies derives on the one hand from the fact that they are a reality and cannot be ignored, and on the other hand, because they may provide the local legitimacy that the liberal peace intervention is missing in the Congo. Currently, instead, the disciplining practices are technical and institutional and disengage from people's agencies, their identities and the socio-political and socio-cultural context in which they are located. It is evident that such interventions are meaningless because the real process of shaping the political takes place in this negotiation by local agencies.

As the case study on the National Assembly has shown, local agencies are tremendously important and influential in determining how political processes function and how political institutions are being enabled to function. The focus on local agencies at the site of the National Assembly has emphasised that the building of an institution such as Parliament does not merely concern the institution itself, nor only MPs and their capacities. Meaningful parliament building programmes will have to engage with the actors involved, but not just with MPs. Focusing on convivial agencies, I have shown how local agencies at the site of the National Assembly are enabled by relations with others. Because MP's agencies' are relational and enabled by their relations with *le pouvoir* and the electorate, donor engagement needs to take these relations into account and recognise their significance for the functioning of Parliament. As shown in this thesis, the ways in which MPs relate to their electorate and the ways in which they engage with *le pouvoir* are different from the way these political relations are envisaged by liberal democracy.

Being grounded in local custom and political culture, and being responsive to (certain) local needs and expectations, these local political practices add local legitimacy for democratisation. However, the way in which these local practices are being renegotiated by MPs and members of the electorate in response to the new framework of liberal democracy and the tools it provides, shows that the local needs are not uncontested themselves. The local and its needs and expectations are not stable, particularly not in the post-war as a time of redefinition, in which people expect change. Local needs and local custom are instable, contested and ambivalent. Engaging with local agencies that are grounded in these local needs and customs in peace building and democratisation is valid, and necessary, but it is also likely to encounter ambivalence and local contestation.

I have used Schatzberg's (2001) frame of the moral matrix of the father-family as a frame to capture the political practices as performed by MPs. The moral matrix of the father-family organises the political sphere in several in-groups, such as the majority and the opposition as political families. Within the in-group of the political family, there are important rules which determine the way in which the political game is being played in the Congo. Father and family members have rights and obligations. Using the analogy of the moral matrix of the father-family provides a frame of understanding for the impact of MP's identities on his practices and the ways in which democracy is consumed by the political family, because the rules, rights and obligations of the political family need to be respected, even within the institutional framework of liberal democracy.

Importantly, using the concept of the moral matrix of the father-family also emphasises the significance of identity, and the fact that locally constructed identities differ from those assumed by the framework of liberal democracy. Rich-

mond mentions identity as one of many aspects in which post-liberal peace building should be grounded, but the concept remains undefined and ill-contextualised (2011a, 8). My research on local agencies at the site of the National Assembly has shown how actors' identities shape their behaviour and enable as well as disable their agencies. But it has also shown that locally constructed identities of MPs do not correspond to the identity liberal democracy applies to and MP. Identity in the African context is often taken as ethnic identity, but I refer here to identity in terms of a constructed role, a position, a social status and the expectation, rights and obligations that come with this identity. The liberal peace assumes roles and identities of local actors in peace building processes, and hence the way in which they relate to each other. At the site of the National Assembly, these assumed identities are fundamentally flawed. MPs do not perform the identity of an MP in a liberal democracy, instead, they perform the identity of a political father or a member of the political family. As we have seen, the identities of father-provider or family member are more relevant for the dictating of MPs acts than the formal rules of liberal democracy and the assumed identities of its actors. MPs perform an identity which does not conform to the liberal democratic ideal typical MP, nor does he practice the cultural practices liberal democracy expects of him. Instead, the identity he performs conforms to the cultural and customary practices of a political family.

Acts such as dress code, use of language, or showing off material wealth are codes that perform an elite identity. MPs present themselves as providers (fathers) that take care of their people (family). The performance of a different identity than that expected of MPs according to the liberal democratic norm is a form of De Certeau's anti-discipline (De Certeau 1984, xv), practiced in the MPs everyday life. It is a practice of anti-discipline because it fundamentally undermines the shaping of the political process according to the liberal democratic norm. In doing so, they enable different interaction with the electorate and *le pouvoir* which is shaped by these performed identities. Identity in the sense of the self in the context of the institutions and practices of governance comes with rights and obligations in terms of how to behave and act in this context. As this study about MPs and their agencies has shown, identity is an aspect of vital importance in addition to rights, needs, custom and culture, when considering local agencies' interaction with the liberal peace. The complexity of local actors' identities is an overlooked aspect by liberal peace interventions, as it is an issue which is seldom spoken about beyond ethnicity, gender and cultural identity.

In chapters five and six I have focused on MPs political practices in relation to the electorate and *le pouvoir* respectively. In their relations with the electorate, MPs perform the identity of political father who provides for his political family in exchange for loyalty, support and respect. This identity defines practices

through which MPs and the electorate engage with each other and which enables agencies that negotiate the liberal peace. The MP is expected to provide for his constituency by redistributing part of the spoils of his position. This concerns primarily material benefits such as the direct redistribution of money, funding schools and hospitals, setting-up and funding local development NGOs, or other forms of material benefit for the constituency. For both the electorate and the MP, this redistribution needs to be material, direct, personal and the MP needs to be visible as the provider. Direct constituency work is by the electorate highly privileged above other parliamentary tasks of legislation, representation and executive oversight. Consequently, MPs privilege their constituency work above their other tasks as well, because their re-election depends on it. Congolese people thus do not claim their democratic rights (Bratton and Logan 2006). Instead, they claim their rights as loyal family members.

In this father-family relation between MPs and the electorate, the formalised practices of constituency work are considered irrelevant while parallel informal practices are pursued. The practice of the *Vacance Parlementaire* aims to institutionalise constituency work, and provide a mechanism that connects constituency work to other parliamentary tasks, such as executive oversight and legislation. However, these formalised practices fail to respond to the basic demands of constituency work as defined by the father-family relation between the MP and his constituency. It depersonalises the interaction and thus makes the MP invisible as provider. By bringing the issues that are brought up to Parliament to be responded to through Parliamentary oversight and legislation, the potential outcome of any action is no longer a matter of direct material benefits. Even more so, by bringing the issues concerned to the national level, the potential goods delivered are no longer targeted at specific constituencies. They are no longer club goods, but become public goods. The state building objectives to establish effective and transparent structures and institutions is thus not what local agencies seek in democratic practices. Mutual interest does not lie in the improvement of state society relations through the establishment of formal, impersonal structures, nor in 'state building' as such. Consequently, the formal structure of constituency representation is avoided. It exists on paper, by law and in practice. MPs write their reports of their *Vacance Parlementaire*, the reports are processed through the political mill accordingly, but fail to respond adequately to needs. A system that does respond to the demands of direct personal relations functions in parallel and ignores the formalised structures that have been put in place.

This is important because the preference for the informal directly contradicts the idea of state building, which emphasises institutionalisation, or the formalisation and de-personalisation of the functioning of the state and its governance system. Instead, local agencies try to keep it informal and particular. The preference

for the informal negotiates the liberal peace. MPs as well as the electorate prefer the informal and avoid or reject formalised practices and procedures. Instead, parallel practices of direct material and personal redistribution are put in place that substitute the failing practices developed in the framework of liberal democracy.

When merely approaching the concern about MPs and their constituency work on a technical level, efforts to improve it are likely to aim at speeding up the reporting process, emphasising the need for more policy response to the needs identified by the MPs, or establishing additional structures to communicate the follow-up back to the constituencies. This, however, fails to connect with local agencies' interests, which emphasises direct, personal and visible forms of consumption of the relation between MPs and their electorate. Such technical efforts to discipline will only face anti-disciplinary tactics of rejection, avoidance and the use of alternative practices that do respond to local expectations. These practices of anti-discipline do indeed occur, in the form of deeming the structure and process irrelevant and pursuing personal and informal means to practice forms of representation and redistribution.

The liberal peace thus in practice fails on various levels to respond to the needs of the people concerned. Good governance, which emphasises transparent, formalised and depersonalised practices of governance, is not responsive to the needs and demands expressed in the informal practices and the everyday engagement between MPs and their constituencies. Because both MPs and their electorate have an interest in maintaining their informal practices of constituency work, the practices of liberal democracy are made irrelevant, and substituted for other practices. The assumption underlying state building interventions is that liberal democratic practices of good governance will replace informal practices when institutions are strengthened to take up these tasks. The evidence from the case of MPs constituency work does not support this assumption. Neither is this merely an issue related to the relative short experience with democracy in the Congo. Countries with longer established democracies in Africa, such as Benin, Ghana and Uganda, also show little progress in the replacement of current customs of constituency work which relies on direct and personal redistribution for more formalised, impersonal and indirect forms of constituency work (Adamolekun & Laleye 2009, 127, Kasfir & Twebaze 2009, 101-02, Lindberg 2010b, Lindberg 2010c, Lindberg & Zhou 2009, 168).

In his relations to *le pouvoir* and other MPs in the National Assembly, the MP's identity is that of a member of the political family, whereas the President, or *le pouvoir*, is the political father. Practices are still dictated by the moral matrix of the father-family, but the MP plays a different role and different agencies are enabled. Although these agencies are both contextualised in the father-family

logic, they are clearly distinct: an MP cannot act as a father-chief in his relations with *le pouvoir*, just as he cannot act as family member in his constituency.

A first important practice of MPs and *le pouvoir* driven by the moral matrix of the father-family is that the political arena is redefined and reorganised. Instead of defining the National Assembly and the executive as independent and distinct institutions, the moral matrix of the father family defines the ruling majority and the opposition as two political families. This means that, in the case of the ruling majority, the executive, the parliamentary majority and the presidency all belong to the same unit. This redefinition of the political arena seriously undermines horizontal accountability, the separation of powers between the legislative and the executive, and the independence of Parliament. These foundational principles of liberal democracy are made irrelevant by the moral matrix of the father-family and substituted for an alternative organisational logic, that of the political family. The political family is considered to be private space, whereas the National Assembly is for the political family a public space. Opposition and Majority confront each other in this public space, but critique from members of the political family cannot be expressed in this public space. This stifles debate and critique, as the example of the inability for the *Courant de Rénovateur* to speak has shown. By denying the National Assembly to be a space for critical debate, the Assembly is undermined in playing its fundamental roles. Parliamentary oversight is made impossible, and representation of the interests of the electorate is denied.

Instead of using the stage of the National Assembly as a platform for political debate and critique, MPs of the majority are expected to conform to a fundamental rule of the political family: loyalty to the political father. Loyalty means voting according to instructions and not to criticise the political father in public (such as within the media or the National Assembly). Doing so guarantees an in-group status and participation in redistribution practices. This undermines horizontal accountability (O'Donnell 1994, 61, O'Donnell 1998, 117), but also turns it around. Instead of Parliament holding the executive to account through practices and procedures of parliamentary oversight, *le pouvoir* holds the parliamentary majority to account for its obligations of loyalty and support to the political father. The case of the Parliamentary crisis of 2009 is an illustrative example of how these rules of the political family work. Kamerhe criticised the President in public which made his position as speaker unsustainable. Although according to the constitution the President cannot dismiss MPs directly, he can punish them for their disloyalty by enforcing their dismissal, as in the case of Vital Kamerhe, by dismissing Ministers through Governmental reshuffles or by cutting them out of the channels of redistribution. The right to sanction lies with the political father and with the political father only, thereby taking away a fundamental role of

the National Assembly. Formally the institutional framework is left intact – the constitution does not give the President the power to dismiss MPs or ministers. However, in practice the rules of the political family are privileged and considered more relevant than those of the Congolese formal legal framework.

The position of the political father is central in the political family, and for the political practices performed by MPs. In the case of the opposition this is illustrated by the fact that because of the absence of a political leader the opposition finds itself unorganised, paralysed and incapable, and some members of the opposition have on occasion even refused to take position on certain issues because of a lack of direction from the political father. As the political father the President is elevated above political squabbles and the political process. As a father he is a non-political figure and his position is therefore unquestioned and he is considered irreplaceable. This practice is at odds with liberal democracy, which assumes the President as an electable, replaceable, and a political head of state. Because the President takes office through elections the office becomes a political office. The conceptualisation of the political father as a non-political figure which occupies a political office affects electoral democracy as a concept, process and as a possibility. The partaking in the political process of elections to acquire a non-political function is an example of the instrumentalisation of the liberal peace which emphasises the tension between the liberal peace and political culture in a host society.

Another tension between the liberal democratic model and the moral matrix of the father family is that liberal democracy assumes that power can both be divided (executive, legislative and juridical) and shared (if necessary) between different parties in a governing coalition. This is radically opposed to the notion that power is united in the hand of the political father, and 'eaten as whole' (Fabian 1990). My research did not extend to the juridical institutions. On the matter of the divisibility of powers I can therefore only refer to the separation of powers between the legislature and the executive. This separation of power exists according to the legal framework in the Congo but is in practice not adhered to. According to the logic of the division of power between the legislature and the executive the National Assembly has powers which are at odds with the assumption of the unification of powers in the hands of the political father. The independence of the National Assembly is at odds with the unwritten rule of loyalty to the political father. It is therefore unthinkable for the National Assembly to undertake actions as an independent body, such as sanctioning a Minister, criticising government's performance, or not following instructions on how to vote. But the indivisibility of power also concerns sharing power with other political actors and parties. The AMP is an interesting case which appears to be a form of power sharing between different parties in a ruling coalition in which political

positions are divided. However, it is in effect far from a form of power sharing because the different members of the AMP all unite under the leadership of Joseph Kabila. In return for their support (loyalty), they acquire political positions, but that does not mean that there is a form of negotiation over government policies, as power sharing assumes. They are co-opted in Kabila's rule, not sharing it.

When we bring together the two identities of the MP as a father or provider in his relations with his electorate, and as a family member in his relations with *le pouvoir* we see that these two family structures in which the MP participates are disconnected. The performance of these two identities is in this sense a tactic of anti-discipline in itself because it disabled the system of democratic representation to function. The performance of two distinct identities separates the MPs relations with his electorate from his relations with *le pouvoir*. This manipulates the fundamental assumption of liberal democracy that the population and the political decision making process can be connected with each other through elected representation. The double identity of the MP as a family member and the MP as a father, and the practices and agencies this enables and disables, is an obstacle for the assumed trickling up and down of representation and accountability between electorate, Parliament and Executive.

MPs do represent their constituency in Kinshasa, but not to defend the electorate's interest at the political decision making level. Instead, they are there to get access to spoils, tap into the redistributive system to bring something back to the constituency – funds, projects, development assistance, electricity, etc. The only way in which an MP as a family member can achieve something for his constituency as a provider is by being a family member loyal to his father-chief to be entitled to redistribution. Co-optation with *le pouvoir* thus becomes a form of constituency service. But paradoxically, it means not speaking up for the constituency in Parliament and not holding the executive to account for its policy failures and malgovernance. Rather, representing the constituency is played in terms of bringing back part of the spoils of their access to the circles of power and redistribute them. Constituency service and constituency representation in liberal democratic terms can thus in the way in which Congolese parliamentary politics work be paradoxically mutually exclusive – representing constituency interests in Parliament by not holding the executive to account may prevent the access to spoils which is a constituency service. This is a fundamental negotiation of the terms of representative democracy. Constituencies elect their representatives in Parliament, but the terms and purposes of accountability are very different. It is a form of the co-optation of the father-family logic within the liberal democratic institutional framework.

Enabled by identities and interaction with others, local agencies at the site of the National Assembly do not passively accept liberal peace building, but actively engage with the hegemonic structures of liberal democracy. It is a process of the consumption of democracy, a process which negotiates liberal democracy. While certain aspects of liberal democracy are formally left intact (such as elected representation, a two house parliament, separation of powers) the rules that come with the liberal democratic framework are considered irrelevant and are ignored, sidelined, and substituted. Instead, the rules of local political practices define the way in which the National Assembly functions within the institutional outer framework. The moral matrix of the father-family is, evidently, at odds with the liberal peace and liberal democracy. It conceptualises leadership and subjection within the political family, which dictates loyalty and redistribution in terms of rights and responsibilities. The liberal democratic institutional framework – itself a moral matrix – does not replace the moral matrix of the father-family. Instead, they are competing institutional logics (Englebert & Tull 2008, 125-27, Hesselbein 2007, 12). This is a situation in which parliamentary capacity building fails to connect with the actively functioning structures, and, failing to replace it, is therefore irrelevant.

On the other hand, in a distinct set of practices of consumption a process of the renegotiation of the self takes place, in which liberal democracy functions as a resource. Rules and practices of liberal democracy are paradoxically again picked up and used to renegotiate local political practices. The liberal democratic framework has brought new tools, such as elections and the parliamentary vote, that are used to renegotiate these local practices and their unwritten rules. As discussed in chapter three, such renegotiation also takes place in appropriation of meaning to the concept of liberal democracy as an emancipatory discourse that seeks emancipation from the most visible agent of the liberal peace, 'the West'. The notion of democracy thus becomes instrumentalised in pursuit of political objectives that are not necessarily 'democracy' or part of the liberal peace. As discussed in chapter four, democracy has thus acquired a meaning in the pursuit of political objectives that differ from the orthodox liberal peace objectives that the donor community pursues in the Congo.

At the site of the National Assembly, local agencies instrumentalise the liberal peace to challenge the terms of rules of the moral matrix of the father-family, while its mere existence as a defining framework is maintained. When Congolese politicians use elements of the liberal democratic discourse they are not necessarily a converted or co-opted liberal agent. They are more likely to be cleverly using tools provided by the liberal peace to renegotiate better terms of the system he partakes in. The liberal democratic institutional and legal framework has enabled the re-negotiation of the modalities through which politics in the father-

family matrix is practiced. In the case of the parliamentary crisis around Vital Kamerhe we see a struggle between the moral matrix of the father-family and that of liberal democracy. Kamerhe uses liberal democracy in an attempt to renegotiate the terms between Parliament and *le pouvoir*. Kamerhe's narrative reflects a discussion between the liberal democratic discourse and that of the father-family. He used the terms of liberal democracy (implicitly criticising the political father in public media, and refusing to step down when being told to do so) but also admits that he has lost this negotiation when he finally asks Parliament to accept his resignation without vote or debate. Another example of the renegotiation of local practices is that of the *courant de renovateur*. Its members challenge the rules of the political family but referring to parliamentary freedom and the Plenary as a platform for political debate. In doing so, they challenge the rules of the family that dictate that critique is to be kept away from the public space while renegotiating the de-politicised space of the National Assembly.

The liberal democratic system provides powerful new tools for the renegotiation of practices of redistribution. MPs negotiate the payments for a vote in Parliament when what was offered by *le pouvoir* was considered too little. The South Kivutian MPs challenged the practices of redistribution with their threat to withdraw their support in Parliament, or the threat of not getting re-elected in 2011 and risking to leave the parliamentary seats to opposition MPs. A similar renegotiation takes place in the relations between MPs and their constituencies. People had high expectations of democracy. However, of their MPs they expected not so much the delivery of public goods and their parliamentary tasks of legislation, representation and parliamentary oversight, but rather an intensification of the redistribution of direct, personal and material benefits. Like the South Kivutian MPs, and the MPs that negotiate the 'price' for their vote, they do not so much challenge the principle of such clientelist exchanges, but use the means provided by the democratic framework (elections, parliamentary vote) to renegotiate the extent of these redistributions and the reasonable expectations.

These cases all show an engagement with the discourse of liberal democracy to construct an argument in a contestation with *le pouvoir* over the terms of their relations. In doing so, they turn the argument into a discursive argument about the moral-matrix of liberal democracy and the moral-matrix of the political family. People engage with the liberal democratic discourse to win their moral right. But it is also a form of straddling. They use it strategically, when it is useful, and engage with the father-family discourse when that is more useful. Liberal democracy thus provides tools to renegotiate a system that is being maintained through this renegotiation instead of being fundamentally challenged. While negotiating the liberal through practices of consumption, local agencies thus also use the liberal to negotiate these practices. This is not a process of local appropriation or

domestication of democracy or a process of grafting, in which local custom, culture and practices gives new meaning democracy. Instead, the liberal peace itself is the resource that enables a renegotiation of local custom and practices, a source of self-rectification (Shih 2011, 538). However, as the cases that emerged in the case study have shown, this process of renegotiation of the self is not very successful at the site of the political practices. Nevertheless, using the liberal peace as a resource for a renegotiation of the self is potentially a more sustainable process of changing political practices than through disciplining.

The post-war is then indeed a time of redefinition in which people exercise their existence (Mbembe 2001b, 15). The way in which local agencies engage with the liberal peace and make it their own in response to local needs, custom and people's identities emphasises that people do not necessarily need others to tell them how to exercise their existence, but that they can reinvent it themselves. This conclusion directly confronts the institutionalist focus of state building, for it shows that institutional frameworks themselves do not define how politics is being practiced. Practices implicitly associated with the liberal institutional democratic framework are substituted, diverted and rejected. Local agencies are thus undeniable. But this thesis has challenged the assumption common in critical peace studies that the local is located in grassroots, in the subaltern. This thesis has emphasised that the local does not necessarily have a location either in special or sociological terms, but rather resides in practices, in identities and in the cultural domain, which is shared by different people, elites and non-elites. As *politique par le bas* argues (Bayart *et al*. 2008), this thesis has emphasised that local agencies also reside in peoples engagements with others. Engaging with local agencies in peace building processes can thus not be limited only by focusing on the local at a grass roots level. This thesis has shown how different social groups interact and enable agencies through this interaction, thereby overcoming assumed elite-mass binaries that often do not reflect practices on the ground.

If liberal peace building is to regain legitimacy locally, as well as internationally with its donors, it may have to find ways to meaningfully engage with the local in a peace building practice. Richmond calls for a peace building practice that is receptive to these interactions of local-liberal negotiations and that can be legitimate for both, a post-liberal peace. A post-liberal peace

'implies a contextual approach to peacebuilding, where the context is local, state, regional, international, transnational, and transversal. It represents a praxis which occurs *with* its subjects in order to produce a synthesis, not *for* its subjects (or international actors) in order to produce an invasive form of peace'. (Richmond 2011b, 198)

This is perhaps a new idealism in peace building which requires deep levels of mutual engagement and interaction, respect and cooperation. As this thesis has

shown, the peace building process in the DRC has developed into the opposite of a peace building process founded on a contextual approach and mutual engagement and cooperation. The peace building process in the DRC is characterised by mutual disengagement, mutual distrust, and a deeming irrelevant of the other's perspective. The moral-matrix that defines political practices in the Congo clashes with liberal democracy on a fundamental level. If a post-liberal peace is to emerge, it would require for this clash to be resolved, rather than being ignored as is currently the case. A post-liberal peace may offer a way forward out of the current non-constructive form of partnership, but it would require a different attitude towards the other by both Congolese and intervening actors before such a post-liberal peace could emerge in the Congo. Post-liberal peace building as conceptualised by Richmond does not emerge naturally, but requires effort and a fundamental change in attitude from both international and Congolese partners. It would require a deep level of engagement, interaction and understanding, which would require a fundamental level of mutual trust as well as a mutual willingness for this form of cooperation. This is currently not existent in the Congo, and considering the discursive clashes as discussed in chapter four, it is idealistic to expect that forms of post-liberal peace building can emerge in the short- or medium term future in the Congo.

Annex 1

Table 1 Results legislative elections 2006

	Party	*% vote*	*Seats*	*Maj/Opp*
1	Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et la Démocratie (PPRD)	22,2%	111	Majority
2	Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo (MLC)	12,8%	64	Opposition
3	Parti Lumumbiste Unifié (PALU)	6,8%	34	Majority
4	Mouvement Social pour le Renouveau (MSR)	5,4%	27	Majority
5	Forces du Renouveau	5,2%	26	Majority
6	Rassemblement Congolais pour la démocratie (RCD)	3,0%	15	Opp/Non-Inscrits
7	Coalition des Démocrates Congolais (CODECO)	2,0%	10	Opp/Maj/Non-instricts
8	Convention des Démocrates Chrétiens (CDC)	2,0%	10	Opposition
9	Union des Démocrates Mobutistes (UDEMO)	1,8%	9	Majority
10	Camp de la Patrie (CP)	1,6%	8	Opposition
11	Démocratie Chrétienne Fédéraliste - Convention des Fédéralistes pour la Démocratie Chrétienne (DCF-COFEDEC)	1,6%	8	Maj/non-inscrits
12	Parti des Démocrates Chrétiens)	1,6%	8	Majority
13	Union des Nationalistes Fédéralistes du Congo (UNAFEC)	1,4%	7	Majority
14	Alliance Congolaise des Démocrats Chrétiens (ACDC) Intégral (UPERDI)	0,8%	4	Majority
15	Alliance des Démocrats Congolais (ADECO)	0,8%	4	Majority
16	Convention des Congolais Unis (CCU)	0,8%	4	Majority
17	Patriotes Résistants Maï Maï (PRM)	0,8%	4	Majority
18	Rassemblement des Congolais Démocrates (RCD-N)	0,8%	4	Opposition
19	Union du Peuple pour la République et le Développement	0,8%	4	Majority
20	Alliance des Batisseurs du Congo (ABAKO)	0,6%	3	Majority
21	Convention Démocrate pour le Développement (CDD)	0,6%	3	Majority
22	Convention pour la République et la Démocratie (CRD)	0,6%	3	Majority
23	Parti des Nationalistes pour le Développement Intégral (PANADI)	0,6%	3	Majority
24	Parti de l'Alliance Nationale pour l'Unité (PANU)	0,6%	3	Maj/opp
25	Union Nationale des Démocrates Fédéralistes (UNADEF)	0,6%	3	Majority
26	Union des Patriotes Congolais (UPC)	0,6%	3	Non-Inscrits
27	Alliance des Nationalistes Croyants Congolais (ANCC)	0,4%	2	Majority
28	Alliance pour le Renouveau au Congo (ARC)	0,4%	2	Majority
29	Forces Novatrices pour l'Union et la Solidarité (FONUS)	0,4%	2	Opposition
30	Mouvement pour la Démocratie et le Développement (MDD)	0,4%	2	Opposition
31	Parti Congolais pour la Bonne Gouvernance (PCBG)	0,4%	2	Majority
32	Parti Démocrate et Social Chrétien (PDSC)	0,4%	2	Majority
33	Parti de la Révolution du Peuple (PRP)	0,4%	2	Majority
34	Renaissance Plate Forme Electorale (Renaissance-PE)	0,4%	2	Opposition
35	Rassemblement des Forces Sociales et Fédéralistes (RSF)	0,4%	2	Opposition

Table 1 Results legislative elections 2006 (continued)

	Party	*% vote*	*Seats*	*Maj/Opp*
36	Solidarité pour le Développement National (SODENA)	0,4%	2	Majority
37	Union pour la Majorité Républicaine (UMR)	0,4%	2	Maj/opp
38	Union Nationalistes des Démocrates Chrétiens (UNADEC)	0,4%	2	Majority
39	(ANC/PF)	0,2%	1	Majority
40	Action de Rassemblement de pour le Reconstruction et l'Edification Nationale (ARREN)	0,2%	1	Unknown
41	Convention Chrétienne pour la Démocratie (CCD)	0,2%	1	Opposition
42	Convention Nationale d'Action Politique (CNAP)	0,2%	1	Majority
43	Convention Nationale pour la République et le Progrès (CNRP)	0,2%	1	Opposition
44	Conscience et Volonté du Peuple (CVP)	0,2%	1	Majority
45	Démocratie Chrétienne (DC)	0,2%	1	Opposition
46	Front pour l'Intégration Sociale (FIS)	0,2%	1	Majority
47	Front des Démocrates Congolais (FRODECO)	0,2%	1	Majority
48	Front des Sociaux Démocrates pour le Développement (FSDD)	0,2%	1	Unknown
49	Front Social des Indépendants Républicains (FSIR)	0,2%	1	Majority
50	Générations Républicaines (GR)	0,2%	1	Opposition
51	Mouvement d'Auto Défense pour l'Intégrité et le Maintien de l'Autorité Indépendante (MAI MAI)	0,2%	1	Majority
52	Mouvement d'Action pour la Résurrection du Congo, Parti du Travail et de la Fraternité (MARC-PTF)	0,2%	1	Majority
53	Mouvement Lumumbiste (MLP)	0,2%	1	Unknown
54	Mouvement Maï Maï (MMM)	0,2%	1	Majority
55	Mouvement du Peuple Congolais pour la République (MPCR)	0,2%	1	Opposition
56	Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (MPR)	0,2%	1	Opposition
57	MSDD (lutundula)	0.2%	1	Majority
58	Organisation Politique des Kasavubistes *et al*liées (OPEKA)	0,2%	1	Unknown
59	Parti National du Peuple (PANAP)	0,2%	1	Unknown
60	Parti Congolais pour le Bien-être du Peuple (PCB)	0,2%	1	Unknown
61	Parti d l'Unité Nationale (PUNA)	0,2%	1	Unknown
62	Rassemblement pour le Développement et Economique et Social (RADESO)	0,2%	1	Majority
63	Rassemblement des Chrétiens du Congo (RCPC)	0,2%	1	Majority
64	Rassemblement des Ecologistes Congolais- Le Verts (REC-VERTS)	0,2%	1	Opposition
65	Union Congolaise pour le Changement (UCC)	0,2%	1	Majority
66	Union Chrétien pour le Renouveau (UCR)	0,2%	1	Majority
67	(UDR)	0,2%	1	Unknown
68	Union des Libéraux Démocrates Chrétiens (ULDC)	0,2%	1	Majority
69	Union des Patriotes Nationalistes Congolais (UPNAC)	0,2%	1	Unknown
	Independent Candidates	12,6%	63	Opp/maj
	Total	*100%*	*500*	

(UNDP-APEC 2011, 210-11)

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Interviews and focus groups

In accordance with agreement made with the interviewees, references to interviews have all been anonymised, except for two cases, in which it the position of the interviewee was by the author considered important to mention, and this reference would identify the interviewee. The interviewees have given their explicit permission for using their name in these two cases.

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28 May 2006, interview with western diplomat 1 and CIAT member, Kinshasa
10 May 2007, interview with (then) Vice-President, Kinshasa
18 May 2007, interview with (then) Minister, Kinshasa
16 October 2009, interview with AWEPA representative, Kinshasa
19 October 2009, interview with EISA representative 1, Kinshasa
19 October 2009, interview with representative of development organisation, Kinshasa
20 October 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 1, Kinshasa
21 October 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 2, Kinshasa
27 October 2009, interview with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung representative, Kinshasa
27 October 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 3, Kinshasa
28 October 2009, interview with USAID representatives, Kinshasa
30 October 2009, interview with former Member of Parliament 1, Kinshasa
30 November 2009, interview with civil society representative 6, Boma
04 November 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 4, Kinshasa
05 November 2009, interview with EISA representative 2, Kinshasa
09 November 2009, interview with western diplomat 2, Kinshasa
10 November 2009, interview with UNDP representatives, Kinshasa
13 November 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 5, Kinshasa
13 November 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 6, Kinshasa
18 November 2009, interview with Minister 1, Kinshasa
21 November 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 7, Kinshasa
30 November 2009, interview with *Bunda dia Kongo* representatives, Boma
30 November 2009, interview with deputy bourgmester of a Boma City district
30 November 2009, interview with civil society representative 1, Boma
01 December 2009, interview with former Member of Parliament 2, Boma
03 December 2009, interview with *Administrateur du Territoire*, Bas Congo province.
08 December 2009, interview with Member of Parliament 8, Kinshasa
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