

**Aid and its Discontents: The Paradox of Democracy Promotion and the Media in Africa**

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## Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War in 1991 international assistance has focused largely on the spread of democracy to developing nations. African nation-states, have been some of the largest recipients of this aid, yet very few have successfully implemented democracy. The Western solution to this has been to maintain, and in some cases increase, funding under the assumption that change will eventually occur.

This thesis explores the major criticisms of the effectiveness of Western aid to Africa and the criticisms regarding local media development as a conduit for this aid. This will be shown through a pragmatic approach that combines qualitative analysis and a case study approach by examining the aid analyses of various scholars, and applying this examination to the specific case of the first democratic elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since those that took place upon independence in 1960. Sources used for defining this qualitative data include reports published by leading non-profit and non-governmental organizations in prominent roles within their respective fields. Discussion of aid effectiveness and proposals will be sourced primarily from books, scholarly articles and academic studies. Many of the sources used in relation to the case study of the DRC include articles published in English during the time of the election, although the base of the case study will be established through the use of books and scholarly articles published in the years since the elections. For the purpose of this thesis, “Africa” will be used in the generalized sense as it is often used in scholarly works, although Africa as a continent is historically heterogeneous.

Through an investigation of proposals for new methods of aid to Africa, this thesis will further demonstrate that the current methods used in Western aid to Africa, and more specifically

those methods used in Western democracy aid directed at media initiatives, are not necessarily the best methods for promoting growth.

This thesis begins by examining the history and different forms of aid. As such, it differentiates between democracy and development aid, and describes how media initiatives are funded through such aid.

This framework will be followed by the exploration of the major criticisms of the effectiveness of Western aid to Africa. Concerns with aid effectiveness and proposals for improvements in aid will be woven together to create an overview of the major aid discontents. This section will then apply these criticisms to media development and examine the effectiveness of aid in the media sector, as well as provide an analysis of the variety of proposals for effective methods of media aid in Africa.

The presentation of the case study will begin by identifying the similarities and differences of the 2006 democratic elections in the DRC and the above-discussed criticisms of aid effectiveness in Africa. This will be followed by the identification of the aid and assistance given to the DRC by Western nations and organizations, and by an overview of how this aid performed during the elections in 2006. This section will also discuss the involvement of the DRC's media in the elections and the international contributions to this media involvement.

## **Aid Framework**

Because this thesis is centered specifically on democracy and development aid to Africa and its effect on media, the majority of this aid framework will focus on the differentiation between types of aid. This section will also explain the way media development occurs through and as a result of aid. The history and context of aid as a whole will be outlined in order to

explain democracy and development aid, the international emphasis on giving aid to Africa, and the indirect influence of this aid on media.

### *History of Aid*

It is widely accepted that aid refers to the large transfer of resources from one country to another. The phenomenon of aid began as early as the nineteenth century with countries sending food aid to other countries facing shortages; however, these early aid transfers were largely colonial in nature and focused on direct political control (Moyo 10). In the twentieth century this aid was regulated under the Colonial Development Act of 1929, a British aid policy that, although not internationally enforceable, largely altered the focus of aid as a whole to infrastructure projects across poor countries (Moyo 10).

The concept of aid was extensively reformed and defined during the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire, in early July of 1944. At this conference, more than seven hundred delegates from forty-four countries established a basis for a global system of financial and monetary management (Moyo 10). Dambisa Moyo, a Zambian-born economist and author, separates post-Bretton Woods aid into six categories that have led to present-day aid. These categories are: aid's birth at the Bretton Woods Conference, the Marshall Plan in which the United States helped rebuild Europe after World War II, the spread of industrialization in the 1960s, aid as an answer to poverty in the 1970s, aid as a buttress of democracy in the 1990s, and aid as the solution to Africa's problems (Moyo 10).

Although these categories give a general outline for the progression of aid since World War II, these categories are not as concrete as they may seem. Aid to Africa began in small doses in the late 1950s when many African nations won their freedom from their colonizers. The

World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) grew in response to independence movements in Africa, promoting the WB to the world's main aid giver. The African Development Bank was established in 1964 to support outside aid organizations, including the WB and the IMF, on their endeavors in Africa. Furthermore, many African nations sought external financing opportunities in the 1970s, as post-independence economic growth came to a rapid end. However, aid to Africa during this period did little to restore commodity prices, which many African governments hoped would result from external grants and loan financing. (Glennie 10)

This aid failure occurred parallel to the rise in neo-liberal global policies, which resulted in the institution of aid-based programs that emphasized initial stabilization followed by the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in Africa in the 1980s (Moyo 20). The 1980s marked the beginning of the use of conditional aid in Africa through SAPs implemented by the IMF, which was followed by a major reduction in development assistance for Africa (Glennie 11). Jonathan Glennie, who works at the Overseas Development Institute and is a research fellow at the Center for Aid and Public Expenditure, writes:

Most analysts regard the declining need to make payments to Cold War allies as a major reason for this decline, but the failure of the 1980s policies to halt growing poverty in Africa, and the increasing number of analyses skeptical of the poverty-reducing impact of aid, were all important factors in the downward pressure on aid budgets (11).

But, the relationship between aid and this post-Cold War mentality goes deeper than just maintaining allies. Returning to Moyo's categories of modern aid, the 1990s marked the switch to democracy and governance objectives in aid in an attempt to generate sustainable economic growth (22). It is not a coincidence that this new emphasis on strong and credible institutions and ending corruption aligned with the fall of the Soviet Union (Moyo 22). In the 1990s,

“Western democracy and democratization become preconditions for African countries that sought foreign aid and loans, especially from the IMF and the World Bank, in order to redress their dire politico-economic crises” (Nwauwa).

Much of today’s aid – aid that Moyo categorizes as democracy-driven and Africa-focused – is increasingly directed at short-term development objectives separate from direct democracy aid, which will be explained in more depth later in this thesis (Glennie 20). Glennie illustrates this change in focus through the use of aid statistics:

In the first half of the 1990s the share of aid to Africa being spent on infrastructure and economically productive projects was 53 percent... Ten years later (in the period 2000-2004 the proportion of aid spent in these areas has reduced dramatically to only 31 percent. Meanwhile, spending on social sectors (such as health and education) has risen as a proportion of aid to Africa from 33 percent to 60 percent. (Glennie 20)

### *Types of Aid*

There are many ways to classify types of aid. A combination of two classification structures, which has been created by the above-mentioned scholars Moyo and Glennie, will be used in this thesis. Moyo writes:

Broadly speaking there are three types of aid: humanitarian or emergency aid, which is mobilized and dispensed in response to catastrophes and calamities [...]; charity-based aid, which is disbursed by charitable organizations to institutions or people on the ground; and systematic aid – that is, aid payments made directly to governments either through government-to-government transfers (in which case it is termed bilateral aid) or transferred via institutions such as the World bank (known as multilateral aid). (7)

Conversely, Glennie writes:

There are countless ways to categorize aid; the simplest is to split it up into just two categories: emergency aid and development aid. Emergency aid is short-term assistance to help a country or region out of a crisis. Development aid is intended to support long-term growth and poverty reduction. (14)

All aid mentioned in this thesis, unless otherwise noted, is provided bilaterally by governments or multilaterally by institutions, such as the WB, the IMF and international non-governmental organizations, and is intended for development objectives that primarily focus on democratization. This thesis combines Moyo's definition of systemic aid with Glennie's definition of development aid, while periodically referencing each of these scholars' other categories of aid.

### *Democracy Aid vs. Development Aid*

Although democracy aid and development aid serve to achieve different objectives, they are oftentimes administered simultaneously. The ultimate goal of democracy aid is to set the framework for democratic elections in nation-states that have historically used other forms of governance. Democracy aid encompasses more than just the administration of elections; a 2007 Congressional Report sponsored by the Library of Congress discusses the broad nature of democracy as a form of governance:

According to Richard Haass, former State Department official and current President of the Council on Foreign Relations, democracy is more than elections; it is a diffusion of power where no group within a society is excluded from full participation in political life. Democracy requires checks and balances within the government, among various levels of government (national, state and local), and between government and society. Elements such as independent media, unions, political parties, schools, and democratic rights for women provide checks on government power over society. Individual rights, such as freedom of speech and worship, need to be protected. Furthermore, a democratic government must face the check of electable opposition and leaders must hand over power peacefully. (Epstein et. al. 3-4)

Given the extent of democracy itself, it is clear that democracy aid must focus on more elements than just elections. Most aid directed at democracy extends its reach beyond elections and focuses on the enhancement of accountability through various institutions, organizations and



mechanisms including the legislature, civil society and the media (Stewart). Danielle Resnick of United Nations University writes:

By supporting independent media outlets, augmenting the capacities of civil society, reinforcing electoral commissions, and strengthening legislatures and judiciaries, democracy aid aims to reinforce relationships of responsibility between citizens and their governments as well as between different government institutions.

In doing so, democracy aid includes the following components: “constitutional design and/or reform, electoral process, parliamentary processes, justice and the rule of law, human rights, including freedom of expression and of association, civil society participation, and existence of political parties, access to information and transparency, accountable executive and administrative power” (Vahtras 27).

It can therefore be seen that democracy aid is intended to promote political liberalization via domestic means. There are two primary international justifications for the implementation of democracy aid among donor countries. First, it is commonly reasoned that democracies do not fight wars with other democracies. However, it can further be reasoned that the subsequent economic prosperity that often follows democratization may lead to a more favorable worldview, as they are likely to be viewed as good trading partners (Epstein et. al. 8). Second, the Universal Declaration of Democracy adopted in 1997 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an international organization of Parliaments focused on peace and cooperation, states:

‘...an ideal democracy aims to protect and promote the dignity and fundamental right of the individual, instill social justice and foster economic and social development. Democracy is a political system that enables people to freely choose an effective, honest, transparent and accountable government.’ (Vahtras 19)

It is, therefore, assumed that all member parliaments of the Inter-Parliamentary Union participate in democracy aid under the premise of the right all individuals have to a democratic government.

However, democracy has not universally been defined as a human right, although there are many laws concerning the right to democracy and democratic governance (Vahtras 23). Aside from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, various organizations and divisions have been established within the United Nations (UN) for the purpose of promoting democracy. These include the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division within the Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Democracy Fund, as well as the United Nations' Development Program's adoption of democratic governance promotion as a core principle in its development work (Vahtras 25).

Tiina Vahtras argues that, "When we speak of democracy we also tend to underline freedom of thought and expression, free media, freedom of association and assembly, regular elections, separation of power, different political ideologies and parties, free market and neo-liberal economic policy, and more" (20). Many of these items can be seen as elements of democracy as well as human rights. This dual classification is also seen within the realm of development aid.

The goals of development aid are oftentimes short-term, although some medium- and long-term goals exist, and are focused on economic growth and poverty reduction (Glennie 16). Action items of development aid include such items as healthcare, schools and teacher's salaries, and infrastructure projects. These actions are strategically implemented with the intention of long-term effects regardless of the amount of time over which the aid is sent, which clearly sets development aid apart from emergency aid, which is intended to address a specific problem that is directly correlated to an emergency situation (Glennie 16). Overall, development aid aims to foster long-term progress through short-term aid and often serves to encourage democracy through social and economic transformation (Resnick).

Development aid works well when combined with democracy aid, as it strengthens both the public and private sectors, while democracy aid focuses largely on the public sector alone. Together, democracy and development aid address all of the above-mentioned components of democracy outlined by Haass and Resnick. The combination of democracy and development aid has the capacity to address more components of democracy than each type of aid on its own. Furthermore, democracy and development aid are linked by their dedication to the improvement of civil society. Democracy aid emphasizes the involvement of society in elections as a corruption-reduction mechanism and the protection of non-governmental organizations; development aid emphasizes the creation of institutions that foster societal involvement and growth.

#### *How Media Is Funded Through Aid*

Donor support of civil society strengthening programs began in the 1990s under the assumption that civil society and democracy are symbiotic elements of development, which occurred simultaneously with the fall of the Soviet Union (Ishkanian; “Can Media Development”). This civil society focus has opened the aid arena to a wide scope of private donors ranging from private foundations to Western non-governmental organizations and private service contractors, and has allowed for an expansion of aid from primarily government-related aid projects to many private sector-related aid projects.

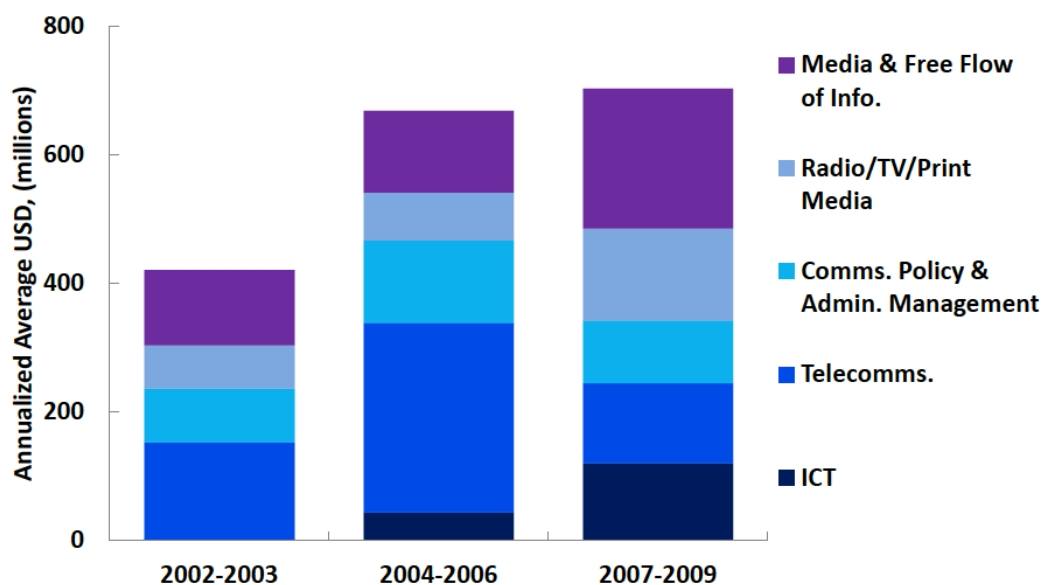
On a traditional governmental and institutional aid level, media improvements have been funded indirectly through constitutional and legislative reforms that, among other things, have established laws concerning the media and its role within a nation-state. Furthermore, these

constitutional and legislative reforms have increasingly emphasized the free flow of information as a result of the progression of democracy aid.

At a conference hosted by the *Center for International Media Assistance*, Daniel Kaufmann, senior fellow at Brookings Institute described a compositional shift over the last decade (the mid 2000s) to a more free flow of information in regard to what elements of media development had been funded (“Can Media Development”). Despite the fact that media development assistance increased only .04 percent between 2002 and 2009 from .51 percent to .55 percent of all aid, the focus of the funding changed as the key donors changed. As seen in Figure 1, there had previously been a large portion of media assistance dedicated to telecommunications, whereas in more recent years more assistance was dedicated to media and the free flow of information.

*Figure 1*

### Composition of Media Development Assistance, 2002-2009

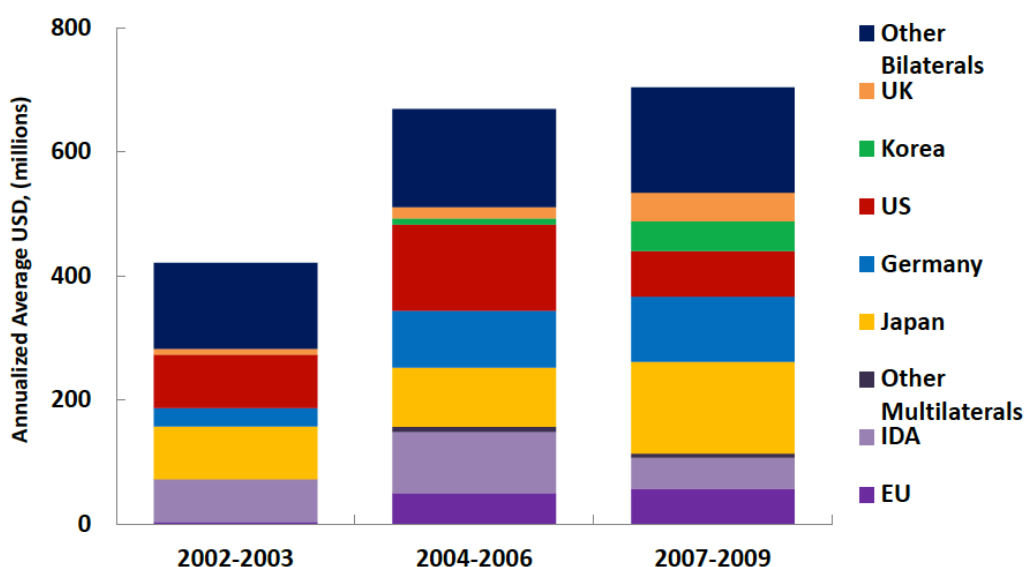


Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (last updated in April 2011).

Furthermore, Kaufman discussed the compositional shift in donors of media assistance. As seen in Figure 2, there had previously been few donors and most assistance came from the United States, Japan and the WB's International Development Association (IDA), whereas in more recent years there have been more donors and most assistance came from Germany, Japan and the IDA.

*Figure 2*

### Media Development Assistance: Bilateral and Multilateral Disbursements, 2002-2009



Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (last updated in April 2011). Disbursements by donor include all bilateral, regional and bilateral unspecified aid for media development.

However, Kauffman's research fails to identify non-Western nation-states and organizations, namely China, as a component of media assistance. Bob Wekesa, a Kenyan communications researcher based at the Communications University of China, wrote:

The Western approach to media assistance is informed by ideology. Its support is intent on changing entire social systems to fit into their Western-centric worldview. The Chinese approach is based on broader Sino-African relations that eschew preaching or exporting ideology to Africa, settling instead for pragmatic areas of collaboration. Africans should be allowed to choose between these two models themselves.

Media is inherently ideological, as it is surrounded by the themes of ethics and professionalism, which are valued and defined differently from society to society. Wekesa's view exemplifies the importance of diversity among donors when it comes to traditionally ideological areas of development, as it allows for the receiving nation-states to choose which model of aid best fits its own ideologies.

### **Aid Effectiveness Criticisms**

Many scholars, both Western and non-Western, doubt the effectiveness of aid, especially in relation to Africa. These doubts can be divided into four main categories: democracy woes, colonial undertones, aid dependency and the applicability of civil society. Within these categories, there exists an underlying theme of Westernization and globalization that many scholars believe inhibits Africa from reaching its full potential. This section will first introduce the major criticisms of each of these categories, and then examine the criticisms in the specific context of media aid. In doing so, this section will weave a comprehensive framework for the overall scholarly opposition to the current methods of aid.

In exploring the criticisms of aid effectiveness I will not introduce personal judgments; any bias in the weaving of views is unintentional. The purpose of this section is merely to outline a variety of critiques of the effectiveness of aid. Many of these critiques come from larger works and debates and could benefit from more discussion, but for the purpose of this thesis this discussion cannot be developed to its fullest. After the review of criticisms, I will demonstrate how some of them were exhibited in the 2006 elections in the DRC. My position will be explored in the conclusion, where I will identify which of the criticisms I identify with the most.

*Democracy Woes and Colonial Undertones*

From 1991 to 2008, eight elections in which the incumbent left office took place in Africa (“Economic Aid vs. Democracy Aid”). Furthermore, a recent study showed that only 23 percent of transitions from authoritarian governments from 1972 to 2003 resulted in democratic governments (Epstein et. al. 11). Moyo poses the question, “Has the insertion of democracy via foreign aid economically benefited Africa?” to which she acknowledged that some democratic countries in Africa are still struggling economically, while some undemocratic countries in Africa are experiencing economic growth, which exposes the possibility that democracy is not a prerequisite for economic growth (43). Given the magnitude of international resources devoted to democracy and development aid, these statistics raise concerns among many scholars regarding the effectiveness of such aid.

Africa is a diverse continent where there exist many peoples, languages, religions and traditions. However, many country borders date back to colonialism in Africa and the 1885 Berlin Conference. These borders took into account the existing political situation of Europe and the desires of each colonial power, leaving African tribes and traditions divided and grouped among and within nation-states. Albert Boahen writes that under colonialism, Africa was at the mercy of the Western world, often stripped of the ability to manage its own affairs, to create its own successes and to learn from its failures (99). In some instances, indirect rule was implemented, leaving the African nation-states to continue to govern themselves; however, this system was not free of colonial influence. It is difficult to institute democracy in some African nation-states because many suffer from a lack of national identity, as well as rampant ethnic divisions that interfere with unification within nation-states.

According to Vahtras, historically, African governance has been based on a multi-dimensional worldview and vision of the universe, and the concept of eldership; the pre-colonial legal and justice system was based on traditions and societal involvement (49). She further argues that, “The law in Africa was not written, for this reason we call it customary, it was generally accepted behavior and rules, which organized life into domains, for example, marriage, family, property, inheritance, criminal matters” (49). Vahtras writes that community was held in high regard, and the concept of society was group-oriented, which resulted in a judicial system based on regret and personal responsibility rather than punishment (50). Although this was not necessarily the case in the entirety of Africa, Vahtras believes it to be true for the majority of African nation-states.

Despite the functioning system of governance, Apollos O. Nwauwa, Professor and Director of African Studies at Bowling Green State University, believes that the Western world has widely held the assumption that Africa is “incapable of democratic thoughts,” and has ignored that “democratic values and processes have been as indigenous to Africans as they were to ancient Greeks” (Nwauwa). He writes that prior to colonization in Africa, some African societies functioned under democratic systems that resembled representative and constitutional monarchies in which government was centralized and the power of the monarch was limited by representative agencies (Nwauwa). Examples of these pre-colonial governments in Africa include the Kongo Kingdom and the Lumba and Lunda States in the region that now makes up the DRC, and the Kanem-Borno Empires in the area around Lake Chad. These kingdoms, states and empires existed mainly from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century, although some were founded as early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century, and engaged in international trade and defense (“Kanem-Bornu,” “Luba-Lunda States”).



Furthermore, Nwauwa argues that the European justification for colonization in Africa resided in the philosophy of the “White Man’s Burden,” and the assumption that Africans were animalistic and less human than Europeans (Nwauwa). Frederick Lugard, a British statesman and colonial administrator, outlined the “necessity” for white men to assume positions of superiority in order to inspire Africans to utilize their capacity to be good people during the era of colonialism (Lugard). This mindset quickly spread through Britain and Europe and led to the belief among many that it was the Europeans’ duty as the superior race to fix a system of governance that they saw as broken; however, Nwauwa points out that in many cases, all the Europeans did was disrupt the existing political systems in Africa (Nwauwa). This disruption was avoided in some cases due to the implementation of indirect rule, which supported local governance and chiefdom and respected the traditional laws and courts of the colony, although, as previously stated, these systems were not always free of colonial influence (Perham).

Nwauwa writes:

What is usually considered in the West as democratization of Africa may well be a ‘redemocratization’ process in which Africans should evoke or draw from their indigenous political traditions replete with democratic ideals [...] The main problem with Western-sponsored democracy and democratization is that they tend to be culturally biased and insensitive to indigenous political incentives.

But are the remaining democratic traditions of pre-colonial history strong enough for African nation-states to build from?

If the answer to that question is “no,” then Western democracy aid must be evaluated as a method for re-establishing governance in African nation-states. According to Armine Ishkanian, Lecturer in non-governmental organization management at the London School of Economics, there are two sets of arguments to the democratization of Africa:

First, democracy is a luxury that can and should only come after a certain state of economic development and stability has been achieved; and second, democracy is

a Western individualistic value that is not compatible with more 'traditional' or kin-based societies.

To address the latter of these arguments, many scholars, including Vahtras, believe that democracy in its aid form is pursuing global reach and attempting to establish universalism (32). Many Western institutions attempt to establish universal values and rights that serve as the foundation to international assistance. These universal values and rights are often based on the current Western view of a given claim. For instance, many scholars have observed that Western nation-states and institutions impose democracy on developing and post-conflict nation-states as a condition of monetary and structural support, which leads to the spread of the ideal of democracy by exploiting the non-governmental needs of aid-receiving nations-states. Vahtras writes, "The difficulty of universalism lies in the fact that its sources tend to be in one concrete time, place and context and due to favorable conditions this notion starts to claim universal approval and validity" (32). In this view, the concept of universal values and rights fails to address how these values and rights are perceived in the recipient nation-states; universalism challenges the principle of cultural relativism, which stipulates that beliefs and activities should remain understood in the context of individual societies. The Western world's focus on universalism therefore, according to Vahtras, disregards the local values within the recipient nation-states much like the colonialists did during the colonial era. This is not to say that aid should not be given to make changes to values when donors believe change is necessary, but rather to say that donors should acknowledge the perspective of the recipients when giving aid to make such changes to values.

Another common critique of universalism is the idea that democracy in a purely Western sense is not necessarily the only viable option for effective development and global participation. Vahtras observes that as democracy increasingly became the goal in the 1990s after the fall of

the Soviet Union, as both a structure of government and a condition for aid, many small countries have been forced to align with democratic countries to avoid the seemingly inevitable need to end authoritarianism (30). However, in recent years, Russia and China have proven that authoritarian regimes can operate effectively and globally, which, according to Vahtras, has overturned the commonly used theory that democracy is the only method for effective growth and participation in the global world (30).

The success of Russia and China in achieving global success despite their authoritarian governments connects the anti-universalism debate with Nwauwa's above-mentioned idea of allowing African nation-states to choose the system of governance that will work best for their needs. Shakuntala Rao, Professor of Communication at the State University of New York, Plattsburg, writes about the task of "decolonizing universality" (100). In doing so, Rao refers to the work of scholar Dipesh Chakrabarty, a Bengali historian, in explaining how scholars must "seek a space for multiple knowledge systems which work either to counter or harmonize with Enlightenment philosophical approaches, and which can be immeasurably useful in our analysis of the local and global nexus" (Rao 100). Essentially, Rao believes that the spread of universal ideologies can best be stopped by the top-down acknowledgement of the validity of a multitude of systems beginning at the level of scholars and making its way down to the people. This is not to say that corruption is a valid alternative to democracy, but rather to say that democracy, and all other Western-centric ideals, are not universally accepted among scholars as the only viable options for development. Many scholars affirm that there is more than one version of democracy and more than one path to achieve it.

However, not all scholars agree with this critique. Many other scholars believe that increased Western involvement in strict democracy promotion is the key to successful aid.

Moyo proposes that the strengthening of institutions may lead to increased government accountability by holding people responsible when they fail to comply with policies that promote transparency and a strong private sector (147). Economist and writer Robert Calderisi holds an even more extreme position on the matter, proposing that aid become more openly political (210). Calderisi writes:

All African countries receiving assistance should now be expected to meet minimum standards of open political debate and fair elections [...] International supervision of elections would need to be highly organized and well staffed, and would have to begin months rather than days before elections took place. (211)

This view implies that these measures are necessary for the implementation of democracy in non-democratic nation-states due to lack of support for and knowledge about democratic proceedings. Michael Bratton and Carolyn Logan, University Distinguished Professor of Political Science and African Studies at Michigan State University and Deputy Director of the Afrobarometer respectively, reflect, “it is easy to assume that competitive electoral politics automatically unleash public desires and expectations for answerability. But it is not clear that popular understanding of political rights and obligations can be taken for granted” (185). This consideration provides justification for Calderisi’s belief that a strong international presence is needed for democracy aid to be successful; however, it does not provide justification for the imperialistic nature of conditional aid, which is seen by some as a way of imposing Western values in recipient nation-states.

Calderisi admits that, “ensuring the new aid money really helps Africa may indeed resemble colonialism,” but he goes on further to differentiate democracy aid and election support from colonial enterprises by pointing out that today’s aid is done out of generosity rather than out of exploitation (163). Contrarily, Nwauwa believes that the close resemblance between the West’s introduction of democracy to Africa and the mission of the Europeans during the era of

colonialism is too great to have originated from different ideologies. Nwauwa indicates that both democracy promotion and colonialism in Africa are founded on the premise of discrediting existing culture and replacing it with a Western societal model; he writes:

The current obsession for Western democracy, democratization and globalization in Africa is, then, déjà vu. Reminiscent of European motives or justifications for colonialism, the current push for democratization has little to do with the selfless notion of the ‘civilizing mission.’ Instead, the interests and well being of the African peoples have been subordinated to those of the industrialized countries of the West.

Nwauwa continues to denote that the push toward globalization, which is fundamental to the Western push for democratization in Africa, is merely the industrialized world’s exploitation of the developing countries of Africa. Cultural relativism is an important aspect of this view, as it calls for donors to take the interests of the recipient nation-states into account before democratization missions are carried out.

### *Aid Dependency*

Many scholars also emphasize the abundance of aid dependency that has occurred in Africa as a fundamental problem with the effectiveness of aid. Scholar Roberto Belloni writes, “At the same time, however, international support comes with a cost – in particular when local organizations become more accountable to international donors than to the communities they are supposed to serve” (200). If the goal of democracy aid, as described above, is to increase accountability of national and local governments to their people, then what Belloni is describing indicates that such aid has not been effective. Todd Moss, G. Pettersson and Nicholas van de Walle, Non-Resident Fellow at the Center for Global Development (CGD), economist at Oxford Policy Management, and Vice President for Programs and Senior Fellow at CGD respectively, have coined the term “aid-institution paradox” to describe how aid intends to “build effective

indigenous public institutions,” yet tends to undermine that very objective (De Renzio 19).

These scholars believe that this occurs because when aid flows in such high amounts, recipient governments oftentimes postpone much-needed public sector reforms, and instead simply run their country off of aid funding (De Renzio 19).

Joel Barkan, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Iowa, further contends that, “...by financing incumbent governments, donors may be preventing healthy domestic accountability mechanisms from developing, potentially propping up antidevelopment regimes” (De Renzio 19). Moyo describes this trend as “rent-seeking,” which she defines as, “the use of governmental authority to take and make money without trade or production of wealth” (52). She identifies that this trend is made possible by the ability of aid to be increased, which allows corrupt recipient governments to steal, redirect or extract money under the assumption that more money will be provided (Moyo 52). Resnick, too, emphasizes the phenomenon of rent-seeking; she writes, “By contrast, it has long been speculated that development aid represents a type of unearned income that reduces governments’ incentive to levy taxes and thereby undermines government accountability to citizens” (52). Although the phenomenon of rent-seeking seemingly supports the need for conditional aid, these scholars observed much of these actions in environments where conditionality was present, and therefore claim to be exposing a flaw in the system of conditional aid.

However, the question of what can be done to reduce such aid dependency and corruption remains. Glennie suggests that African leaders should aim at independence from aid, just as they aimed for independence from colonialism. Glennie acknowledges that it is not easy for African nation-states to refuse the money and assistance that is being given to them. Therefore, he suggests that Western donors change their objective from doubling aid to cutting it in half; he

further proposes that this be done gradually, so as to give African nation-states the chance to establish themselves economically (123-124). He proposes that this be done by simultaneously reducing the amount of aid sent to Africa and increasing spending on development in Africa, essentially using the aid funds remaining after cuts solely on development initiatives (Glennie 137). Glennie believes that such cuts and redistribution could yield new technologies, renewable energy and life-saving drugs, among other global goods; his view follows the traditional mindset of globalization in which investment in technologies is the solution in all developing countries (Glennie 138).

Calderisi's aid reform proposal addresses the rent-seekers and suggests a method for gradual aid reduction. He writes:

Aid should be denied to all governments which refuse to hold internationally supervised elections, suppress minority views or tamper with free press. Such a change in policy might cause some governments to fail, and jolt others into realizing that they can no longer count to Western guilt to bail them out of their difficulties...Africa needs new leaders, ideas, approaches, and technologies much more than it needs money. (212)

This view establishes the position that aid and assistance be given directly to elections, and that direct government-to-government or institution-to-government aid should be ended. Under this model, the governments that were rent-seeking and relying heavily on international funding rather than internal development will likely experience failure; however, this failure is a necessary catalyst for change – change that will result in African nation-states that function on an international level rather than African nation-states that function because of international support. Moyo contends that without such change, aid to Africa will continue to be a vicious cycle that encourages dependency and assists corruption, perpetuates underdevelopment and assures economic failure (49).

### *Applicability of Civil Society*

One of the most controversial critiques of aid effectiveness is the ability of aid to produce results when given to support the development of civil society organizations and initiatives, especially in Africa. This thesis has previously cited scholars as including civil society as one of the most important elements to successful democratization; however, scholars do not universally accept civil society as a realistic component in democracy and development aid.

Robert Putnam, Professor of Political Science at the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government, has argued that, “healthy civil society is key to making democracy work,” and that, “civil society is the microcosm for the development of democratic norms and practices” (Belloni 185). Putnam further believes that civil society is crucial to elevating nations out of conflict, as it fosters trust, reciprocity and tolerance (Belloni 185). Similarly, Larry Diamond, a professor of Sociology and Political Science at Stanford University and a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, argues that civil society is an integral part of checks and balances within a democracy, as it allows citizens to participate with government while creating an atmosphere of compromise and representation (Belloni 185).

These two views stress the importance of civil society in democratization, especially in post-conflict nation-states, and are based on both the belief that civil society does not already exist in these post-conflict nation-states and the dogma that civil society can be implemented everywhere regardless of environmental factors. This is not dissimilar to what is previously explored in the *Democracy Woes and Colonial Undertones* section of this thesis, in that it disregards any pre-existing forms of local civil society while implying that the Western model for civil society is universal.



However, many other scholars would argue that these views overlook the deeper implications of civil society promotion. Thomas Carothers, Vice President for Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has been cited as saying:

Democracy promoters pass through these countries [in Africa, Asia and the Middle East] on a hurried civil society assessment mission and declare that ‘very little civil society exists’ because they have found only a handful of Westernized NGOs devoted to non-partisan public-interest advocacy work on the national side. (Ishkanian)

Furthermore, Ernest Gellner, a British-Czech philosopher, argued that civil society is not universally applicable, and that it is least applicable to non-Western patrimonial and tribal societies. In his analysis of civil society, Gellner acknowledges the existence of cultural relativism, citing the difference between human nature and cultural environment in societal development (Gellner 185). These two views together further elucidate the aid-institution paradox; aid is intended to help, but its success remains hindered by the failure to recognize the existing structures and needs of the recipient nation-states. These scholars point out that aid-giving nation-states and institutions assume that a single form of democracy is feasible world-wide without exploring the complex relationship between government and civil society in the cultural environment of the recipient nation-states.

As with the above-mentioned criticisms of the use of aid funds by government agencies for the purpose of furthering their own agendas, Belloni observes that international assistance to local civil society groups, which frequently take the form of non-governmental organizations, often results in the alteration of local priorities, as local groups focus on the ideas and causes that are likely to attract international funding rather than focusing on the ideas and causes that are important to the people (Belloni 184). Belloni writes that to reduce the risk of international agencies unwittingly controlling the agendas of local groups, “civil society organizations need

also to become progressively less dependent on foreign resources for their funding” (209).

Belloni’s main argument in the reduction in civil society assistance is that the establishment of stable and efficient social and political institutions would result in an environment in which civil society organizations could grow independent of outside funding (208).

To summarize the views expressed in this section, civil society can best be funded through the mobilization of resources that assist in the movement toward a community goal rather than direct funding that assist in the movement toward an international goal. Many of these scholars believe that if the priorities of local civil society groups are determined, either directly or indirectly, by international agencies, they will likely become dependent upon aid funding, as they will not generate the level of local support necessary for independent stability. In that sense, civil society, although largely defined as an integral part of democracy, is by itself a microcosm of the aid-institution paradox.

### *Media Aid and Effectiveness*

At a conference held by the *Center for International Media Assistance*, Tara Susman-Peña, director of research for Internews’ Media Map Project, described the clear link between free press and economic growth, political stability and good governance in Sub-Saharan Africa. She also cited links between free press and lower levels of corruption, and between world market integration and less dependence on foreign aid (“Can Media Development”). Susman-Peña’s presentation was based on extensive research focused on media freedom and development throughout Africa, and demonstrated the extension of the democracy and development aid effectiveness criticisms into the media sector. If, according to her view, free press is a factor in reductions in areas such as corruption and aid dependence, then democracy aid should be

focused largely on creating a policy environment that fosters freedom of expression and diverse private media ownership.

However, private media ownership is not valued universally among scholars. A report published by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) reads, "...privately owned media organizations, particularly when there is a trend in the concentration of ownership in the sector, may contribute little to democratic deepening as they advance the interests of their owners and can come to manipulate the news for private benefit" (Putzel et. al. 6). Given the above-mentioned troubles with civil society implementation, this view stipulates that there is oftentimes a lack of barriers to protect against the abuse of private media power, often leading to a polarization of the media sector that is largely contingent upon economic prominence of media owners (Putzel et. al. 6). Many government-to-government and institution-to-government aid campaigns direct funds at the development and/or strengthening of Ministries of Information, which can regulate the media sector. The above-mentioned aid-institution paradox exists on this platform just as it does on others, as, according to this report, the direct funding of Ministries of Information can lead to the skewing of local media values under the pretense that assuming Western media values will result in an increase in international funding.

Furthermore, this LSE report argues that these Ministries of Information oftentimes end up hindering press freedom by implementing regulations that influence the press (Putzel et. al. 8). This report is not saying that constraints need not be placed on the media – it is merely saying that the power of these Ministries of Information needs to be limited to protecting information flows from political manipulation and hate speech, and to say that laws need to be established that protect the media from overregulation (Putzel et. al. 13). Similarly, Marie-Soleil Frère, Senior Research Associate at the National Fund for Scientific Research in Belgium and

Director of the Research Center in Information and Communication at the University of Brussels, writes, “What is needed are regulators which are independent and properly resourced, with legal back-up and statutes that respect constitutional and international protocols on free speech, as well as maximum self-regulation by viable and independent media” (348). This view would allow for the implementation of media rules and regulations, but would do so without the contingencies that come with direct aid.

Going a step further to incorporate cultural relativism into media regulation, John Nerone, Professor of Communications, Media and Cinema Studies and Director of Graduate Studies for the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois, writes:

Media law tends to remain grounded in the traditions of its host countries. It doesn’t travel well. Scholars in the United States, for instance, have tended to think of freedom of the press mostly in terms of the First Amendment, and journalism educators universally agree that the tradition is unique, that no other country has quite the same understanding of freedom of the press, no matter how devoted it is to freedom of the press as a value. (26)

This observation indicates the importance of adapting media values to aid recipient nation-states, and differentiating between the Western view of press freedom and the more global view of free expression (Nerone 26). Given this view, it can be inferred that international assistance directed at the bolstering of Ministries of Information would merely be the imposition of Western media values on aid recipient nation-states, exposing yet another colonial undertone that could be averted if donors would assess the local situation and needs before intervening.

To combat this colonial undertone, Herman Wasserman, Professor of Journalism and Media and Cultural Studies at Rhodes University in South Africa, writes that media ethics in post-colonial societies should include the necessity for media to contribute to the rectification of past prejudice and serve to reinstate human dignity as a core principle of the media (83). He believes that such rectification and reinstatement is not possible if international aid is funding

Ministries of Information and the value of free press. Rather, he believes that this type of funding introduces a new wave of prejudice not unlike those of the colonial era, as it overlooks the ideological differences between the donor nation-states and institutions and the recipient nation-states in regard to expression and the media. Wasserman points out that media ethics are not confined to the view of objectivity prevalent in the Western world, which is the principle behind Western funding for Ministries of Information and media regulations. Although objectivity is used to varying extents in the Western world, it remains a shared media value. However, other ethical philosophies exist in the world, notably those of ubuntu and ahimsa in Africa, which, according to Rao's research, have proven to be effective at maintaining freedom of expression while upholding cultural relativism in the realm of ethics (Rao 101). Furthermore, Mohamed Keita, the Africa Advocacy Coordinator at the Committee to Protect Journalists, writes of the similarities between the African and Chinese views on press, specifically the similar focus on collective achievements.

Despite the debate surrounding aid funding, many scholars have found that the liberalization of media through international assistance has been transformative in many countries that previously had been controlled and influenced by the state; however, according to an article published in *Global Civil Society*, these scholars have observed that this liberalization has led to the decline in the inclination and capacity of media to cover complex issues such as globalization and poverty within these countries (Deane et. al. 172-173, 184). This article presents that in many aid recipient nation-states, liberalization of the media has resulted in the increased fragmentation and partiality rather than the often hoped-for diversification and accountability (Deane et. al. 184). Ufu Uzodike and Ayo Whetho, of the University of

KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, demonstrate why liberalization in the media sector does not always prove successful in Africa. They write:

[...] the function of the media in societies becoming democracies in Africa takes a slight detour from the traditional liberal thesis. In other words, the role of the media in societies in transition does not necessarily entail only offering a check on the actions of government. It also involves playing other, more formidable roles in regard to social engineering and nation building such as facilitating the processes of political participation and democratization. (38)

This view perpetuates the idea that diversification and accountability are not enough in societies in transition, and liberalization fails to address the social and political roles of the media in these nation-states, yet most Western scholars fail to see this as a possibility.

One such scholar is Mark Nelson, Manager of the World Bank Institute's Global Programs unit. Nelson discussed the need for media aid organizations and other institutions to work together in order to ensure the public sector reform and environmental changes necessary for media to play a role in development work at a conference held by the *Center for International Media Assistance*. He discussed how much of the current media development work focuses on skills and resources, when those skills and resources cannot be put to use until political reforms create an environment of leadership and engagement. Furthermore, Nelson acknowledged the importance for there to be a conversation at the societal level about the needs of the media in order to convince society that media is an important element in development and that neither can happen without societal involvement. ("Can Media Development")

Such a conversation happened in March, 2000 at the Global Knowledge Forum, where a group of senior editors, publishers and directors of training institutions from developing countries developed a set of guidelines for creating a free and plural media. Their five key recommendations, which can be found in their entirety in Appendix 1, included:

1. Policy: To create an effective policy environment that nurtures a free, independent and pluralistic media
2. Ownership and Control: To prevent excessive concentration of media power, much of it located in the North
3. Content: To create dynamic and locally relevant content to counteract North-South information imbalances
4. Skills: To build human capacity and skills within the media of developing countries
5. Technology: To combine old and new technologies creating imaginative synergies between the two (Deane et. al. 186-187)

These recommendations are founded on permanence, as they call for legislation, private sector development, investments in education and training, and encouraging innovation. Other scholars have provided similar recommendations:

“[Aid donors should] consider supporting the establishment of a national broadcasting corporation with a national reach and detached from vested interests...[and] support media training programs among journalists and members of political parties” (Putzel et. al. 2).

“The development of an open and free media environment, like other liberal policies, requires the presence of a strong state which includes, among other features, a well functioning legal and judicial environment” (Putzel et. al. 17).

“External organizations should consider supplying the expertise needed to harmonize the media legal framework” (Kabemba 9).

“Empowering a multitude of media institutions and actors to operate independently and professionally, without undue constraints by the state or elites, promoting freedom of expression and democratic accountability” (Kaufmann qtd. from “Can Media Development”).

It is clear that there is a consensus among scholars that legislation and education are at the core of effective media aid. If all of these recommendations were to be instituted as conditionality for international funding, they could effectively negate aid dependency, as they require temporary funding for fixed initiatives rather than increasing funds under the risk that they are not being used properly. Neither traditional aid nor the funding of specific projects takes place under fixed time frames; however, traditional aid has not proven to have an end, whereas the funding of specific projects has.

## Case Study

### *History and Relevance*

King Leopold II of Belgium colonized the Congo Free State in the 1880s as his personal possession, because the Belgian people did not want to be involved in the colonization of Africa. Leopold II's rule over the Congo Free State included exploitation of natural resources and violence toward the Congolese people. The Congo Free State was transferred to the Belgian government in 1908 after Leopold II could no longer afford his colony and after his mistreatment of the Congolese people and exploitation of mineral wealth was exposed throughout Europe. The Republic of Congo, later to be renamed Zaire, then DRC, became independent in 1960, and Patrice Lumumba was democratically elected the first Prime Minister; however, Lumumba was assassinated twelve weeks after the election with the help of the U.S. and Belgium who feared that he had ties with their Cold War enemies. ("Roots of the Crisis")

Mobutu Sese Seko successfully took office in 1965 after performing a coup against the interim president with the assistance of the U.S. and Belgium. Mobutu installed an authoritarian regime and ran a kleptocracy aimed at robbing the public of their possessions. During the Rwandan Genocide, Mobutu provided shelter to the Rwandan Hutu army and militias that were responsible for the genocide, which provoked a 1996 invasion of Rwandans and Ugandans into the Congo. Mobutu left office in 1997 and was succeeded by Laurent-Desire Kabila, a Congolese rebel leader. A second war between the Congo and Rwanda and Uganda began in 1998 after Laurent-Desire Kabila attempted to remove all Rwandan elements from the government. This war was also marked by Rwandan and Ugandan intentions to exploit the Congo's mineral resources in the east of the country. A ceasefire was reached in 1999; however, neither side of the war abided by it. ("Roots of Crisis")



Laurent-Desire Kabila was assassinated in 2001, and was succeeded by his son, Joseph Kabila, who will be referred to as Kabila from this point forward. Kabila agreed to peace negotiations, which resulted in an agreement signed in South Africa in 2002 ending the war and providing a framework for development in the DRC. Despite this agreement, rebel groups continued to resist the government in an attempt to further exploit the country's mineral wealth. ("Roots of Crisis")

This case study demonstrates the changes in types of international aid, and exposes the negative effect that these changes have had on recipient nation-states. The U.S. and Belgium's involvement in ending the post-independence democracy led by Lumumba shows the alacrity of international donors to preserve their global interests at the expense of the global interests of others. Lumumba's assassination was largely due to Western fears of the spread of communism. The West did not want African nation-states to fall into communism, so the West did anything it could to prevent ties between African nation-states and the Soviet Union. In many cases, like in the case of the DRC, these actions resulted in authoritarian regimes, which, although removed from communist influence, resulted in the non-democratic environment that the same international donors later decided to end through democratization.

This inconsistent messaging and constant change led to a confused and inefficient media system that largely failed in the current movement toward democratization in Africa. This inefficiency is rooted in the legal system, the aid environment and civil society organizations, and was apparent in the DRC during their first democratic elections since Lumumba was elected in 1960.

Three laws dating from various stages in their post-colonial transition protect the media in the DRC. Decrees 70/057 and 81/011, of 1970 and 1981 respectively, concern the freedom of

the press in the Republic of Zaire. These laws were the product of Mobutu's one party state, which held the media under state control, although Mubutu allowed the public to believe that press was free. Despite their continued presence in the nation's laws, they are obsolete in today's liberalized press sector (Frère.b 56). The third decree, Law Number 96/002 of 1996, encourages diversification within the media sector and reasserts the freedom of the press (Frère.a 330). Article 53 of Law Number 96/002 protects against the monopolization of individual groups and calls for pluralism in public communications (Tshimanga 108). However, according to Frère, this law is incomplete, as it fails to address the governing of the audio-visual sector, which has developed without any legal reference (Frère.a 330). Scholar Stephanie Matti cites a 2004 audit of the judicial system in the DRC as finding that only 20 percent of the population had access to the formal justice system, therefore perpetuating the idea that although these decrees are part of the country's laws, they are not universally enforceable throughout the DRC, regardless of their completeness.

Furthermore, Claude Kabemba, director of Southern Africa Resource Watch, writes that, "although the media is purportedly free, in reality, it is not," citing that the media continues to be politicized and controlled by the party in power (2-3). This can be explained by the findings of a 2008 *Bertelsmann Foundation* report, which stated: "There is no rule of law in the DRC in terms of a strict and effective system of separation of powers (checks and balances)" ("BTI 2008"). However, it can be argued that the implementation of a stricter and more effective system would not make much of a difference in governing the DRC, as the government has little to no control over large parts of the country.

The liberalization of the media through aid has led to changes in the media landscape in the DRC; however, politicization remains one of the largest issues facing the sector. Prior to

1990, all of the few privately owned publications present in the DRC were owned by people close to Mobutu and were devoted to his regime (Frère.b 41). As political liberalization began between the years of 1990 and 1997, hundreds of newspapers, radio stations and television stations were created, most of which dealt with exposing scandals, supporting the newly developing political parties and preaching religious messages (Frère.b 44). The media landscape became polarized between the opposition and support for the government (Frère.b 27).

Despite these developments, the government maintained strict resistance against freedom of the press – resistance so strict that many journalists received threats and were the victims of violence from the government (Frère.b 44). Kabemba and Frère both write about the injustices journalists in the DRC faced as a result of their profession. Kabemba writes, “Journalists have been harassed, kidnapped and imprisoned and the law in many instances does not protect the journalists” (2, Frère.a 8). According to *Journalistes en Danger*, a Congolese non-governmental organization dedicated to the defense of freedom of the press in the DRC, more than 160 journalists were imprisoned between 1997 and 2001, and many more were harassed (Frère.b 45). These attacks and arrests often took place in direct relation to the publication and broadcast of stories that the government perceives to be anti-governmental, including the offenses of treason, inciting revolt or offending the army (Frère.b 60). The constant threat of violence and arrest instill an atmosphere of fear and hostility around the media, making it difficult for journalists to publish their stories freely.

With the rapid expansion of the media sector, as seen above with the wide-spread creation of new television and radio stations, within the DRC came the influx of journalists who had little to no formal training, equipment or financial resources. This resulted in the proliferation of sensationalism and hate speech in the media. Frère writes, “Since their

beginnings, most Congolese media outlets had been characterized by a politically committed and accusatory editorial line, more given to taking sides and sensationalizing than to checking facts” (Frère.a 332). To further this view, Kabemba observes that investigative journalism simply does not exist in the DRC, and that the salaries of journalists are so low that they often resort to unprofessional behaviors to supplement their income (4). Also because of the lack of financial resources within the media, journalists oftentimes do not have the means to travel to where stories are occurring, leaving them to infer what is happening based on stories and rumors rather than learning the facts first-hand (Frère.b 46).

There exists a phenomenon in the DRC termed “coupage,” which describes a financial remuneration given to journalists to influence the media coverage one will receive (Kabemba 7). Coupage is nothing short of bribery, but journalists in the DRC do not hesitate to partake in the phenomenon, as they are driven by financial return rather than the notion of responsibility to the public (Kamemba 3). Melanie Gouby, a freelance journalist based in Goma, Eastern Congo, writes about her experience interacting with local journalists, “All of them – and I mean all of them without a single exception – admitted to taking bribes from politicians and influential people. They know it is wrong, but what do you do when you are never paid your salary at the end of the month?” Therefore, despite the technical freedom that the press is granted under the laws of the DRC, the government remains in near total control over the media. When the government wants an event or story to be covered, they pay coupage to journalists, and when they do not want an event or story to be covered, they do not.

Johanna Vollhardt, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Clark University, defines hate speech as, “any form of expression directed at objects of prejudice that perpetrators use to wound and denigrate its recipient” (23). Although media reports in the DRC are politicized, many are

biased to the extent of religious and ethnic persecution (Kabemba 3). Frère cites that during the 1998 war in the DRC, “Journalists in the west of the country...indulged in virulent propaganda against the Rwandan ‘enemy’ and encouraged ‘Tutsi hunting’[...]” (Frère.a 45).

At World Press Freedom Day in 2001, Kikaya bin Karubi, one of Kabila’s Ministers of Information, said, “The Congolese journalist’s ethics are sorely tried by the daily handling of information that is constantly distorted, unchecked or even deliberately false” (Frère.b 50). This comes from one of the very people responsible for the implementation of laws and regulations on the media sector in the DRC, yet institutions remain weak. Aside from the Ministry of Information, there exists a wide array of institutions involved in the regulation of the media including the *United National de la Press du Congo* (UNPC), which promotes the media through non-governmental organizations, labor groups and universities, *Observatoire des Media au Congo* (OMC), which supervises journalism ethics, *La Haute Autorité Des Média* (HAM), which supervises the media’s adherence to the formal laws and regulations, and *The Congolese Communities Radios Association* (ARCCO), which supervises community radio (Kabemba 2). These organizations were created with the primary purpose of engaging journalists in the transition process and to restore credibility and professionalism in the media sector of the DRC (Frère.b 46). Furthermore, there exist a variety of permanent outside organizations aimed at training journalists including PANOS, Konrad Adenauer and UNESCO, as well as local institutions; however, their support has been inconsistent and unreliable (Kabemba 6).

#### *Aid and Assistance*

The DRC has received large sums of aid from many international sources, the UN being the largest. The United Nations Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) was

established in 1999 by the United Nations Security Council and has been a large supporter of the democratization process in the DRC. The MONUC mandate has involved four phases: the forcible implementation of the ceasefire agreement of the first civil war, monitoring and reporting violations of said ceasefire, assisting in the disarmament, demobilization, reparation, resettlement and reintegration process, and facilitating the transition toward the organization of credible elections (“UN Mission”). In regard to media development, MONUC has appealed to the media sector in the DRC to respect a code of conduct, to separate information from propaganda and to refrain from publishing hate speech (MONUC.c). Some of the other aid organizations include the European Mission’s European Union Force (EUFOR), the *Comité International d’Accompagnement de la Transition* (CIAT) and the International Commission of the Elders (Kabarhuza 100).

International aid has served a crucial role in the DRC’s democratization process by assisting in the conduct of democratic elections, building infrastructure and stabilizing the economy; further economic and security assistance has been conditional upon democratic reform (Matti 52). However, as described in the above-detailed criticisms of aid effectiveness, this foreign aid has not always been utilized the way it was intended to be. Matti writes about the DRC democratization process:

Foreign aid represents a large inflow of capital that feeds into and supports the corruption and patronage networks upon which the regime is established. In this way endemic corruption and patronage is part of the reason why the regime has been so willing to accept democratic reform. A pragmatic approach suggests that despite patronage and corruption, or possibly even due to it, foreign aid has provided an incentive for democratic reform. However, democratization on this basis necessitates the continuation of high levels of foreign aid, and it is therefore not an option for sustainable political reform. (53)

This conjecture validates the above-detailed aid effectiveness criticisms on the clause of aid dependency; according to Matti, participation in the democratization process is merely a disguise

for the perpetuation of corruption in the case of the DRC. According to Matti, the funding of such corruption networks has, “undermined the establishment of strong democratic institutions by drawing human resources away from the administration and undermining the establishment of a strong taxation system” (53). International assistance successfully initiated democratic reform in the DRC; however, the local government merely complied with the minimum desires of the international donors in order to maintain their own status within the nation-state, which has resulted in the failure to create necessary democratic institutions such as a taxation system (Matti 53). Such compliance and failures has instilled a parasitic relationship between the DRC and its international funders, as without democratic institutions, the DRC cannot become financially independent.

Similarly, on a smaller scale, many media development organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as many organizations in other sectors, have worked in the DRC. These organizations have emphasized the importance of journalistic training regarding writing and professionalism, but many of these organizations have failed to create an organizational infrastructure that can survive after they leave. (Gouby)

To counter the lack of reliable and professional media organizations in the DRC, MONUC developed Radio Okapi, an independent radio station, with the help of the Swiss Hirondelle Foundation. This station served as the most non-partisan and reliable source of information during the democratization process in the DRC, as it played an important role in instilling national cohesion across the geographically and ideologically diverse Congolese population (Frère.b 53). This radio station was broadcast throughout the country and gave equal airtime to all sides of the stories it reported. This radio station cost approximately \$8 million USD annually, a price that Frère considers, “totally out of line with the realities of the local

market” being that Radio Okapi journalists earned between \$650 and \$950 more USD than journalists working at local media operations (Frère.b 65). Yet others believed that “Radio Okapi demonstrates that the construction of a functioning media in a non-functioning state like the DRC can be an important element in helping to bring a functioning state into being” (Putzel et. al. 16).

Furthermore, many international donors funded the creation and maintenance of the above-mentioned HAM, which was to serve as a temporary transitional body responsible for organizing and supporting the media sector during the electoral process (Frère.a 330). Its responsibilities included ensuring that the press remained free, pluralistic and neutral while promoting media access to informational and communicational technologies and putting an end to hate speech (Frère.b 69-70). The UNDP, Germany, Britain, France, Belgium, the EU and UNESCO largely funded HAM’s 540,000 Euro budget, leaving the DRC to fund a mere 10 percent of the operational costs of the organization (Frère.a 330).

The success of HAM is widely disputed. Although HAM attempted to establish itself in every province of the DRC, it only operated successfully in the capital region of Kinshasa (Frère.a 330). Furthermore, HAM was also not respected by many within the media sector, and was seen as a censor to the freedom of expression rather than a key figure for reform (Frère.a 443). Donat M’Baya Tshimanga, president of Journalistes en Danger, observed HAM to be a hypocritical institution, as it served to protect the freedom of the press by imposing censorship (115). Many of HAM’s roles were also limited by the restrictions of its powers; despite its roles in ensuring pluralism and putting an end to hate speech, HAM lacked the power to shut down media outlets when they acted in disregard of media law, and therefore relied on voluntary compliance rather than on forceful punishment (“Securing Congo” 6). This lack of power



fostered an environment in which coupage and politicization of media outlets could remain alongside unenforceable laws against them. In the case of HAM, international assistance largely failed to address the major issues within the media sector. The creation of regulatory institutions aligns with many of the views expressed in the aid effectiveness criticisms. This particular case failed to ensure that this regulatory institution was aligned with laws and legislation that would allow it to function as it was intended to.

### *First Democratic Elections – 2006*

With the assistance of international aid, the DRC held its first democratic elections since those that took place upon independence in 1961. These elections were held in two rounds. The first multi-party elections took place on July 30, and the runoff election took place in late October. Thirty-three people ran for the presidency, and nine thousand people ran for the five hundred seats in the federal parliament. By the time of the runoff election, the presidential candidates were Kabila, the incumbent, and Jean-Pierre Bemba, one of the four vice-presidents in the transitional government.

The elections were marred by “predatory politicians pursuing political survival in order to maintain profitable positions of power,” yet were held without major explosions of violence, and were widely regarded as free, fair and open (DeGoede 95; Frère.b 71). Despite some factional violence between election rounds, nearly 70 percent of Congolese people voted in the first round and nearly 65 percent voted in the runoff (Weiss 139). However, Matti discusses that Kabila, “used various methods, including the manipulation of state resources, to tip the electoral balance in his favor” (47).

*Media and Elections*

The media was involved in the elections to a great extent, in both positive and negative ways. Uzodike and Whetho wrote about the role the media played during the DRC elections:

Across the country, media organizations have been educating perspective voters on how to exercise their democratic rights during the impending elections. In their performance of this role, the media have been providing information about the electoral process with a view to assisting voters to make an informed choice. (40)

Their emphasis on the educational role the media played during the elections depicts the importance of civic engagement in democratic transitions. This civic engagement is undoubtedly the result of international aid, as it aligns with the Western ideal of checks and balances. It conforms to the idea that political parties are held directly accountable to the people because the people are responsible for electing them to power. It can be inferred that this mission was successful based on the above-mentioned voter turnout during both rounds of elections. Furthermore, this emphasis on the educational role of the media allowed both presidential candidates to reach out to their constituency. Although state-run media outlets favored Kabila, Bemba effectively utilized his two personal television stations to reach out to the people (Weiss 145). HAM created a Code of Conduct prior to the elections that was signed by all political parties (Tshimanga 114). Although this code of conduct was not upheld, HAM still played an active role in regulating the media during the elections; a week prior to the elections, three Kinshasa television stations accepted HAM's suspension request for failing to respect the freedom of the press (MONUC.b). During the elections, HAM also denounced the increasingly anti-Tutsi hate speech that Bemba's campaign broadcast in an attack against Kabila's ethnicity ("Democratic Republic of Congo" 109).

The media's negative role in the elections is seemingly larger than its positive one. During the elections, very few media outlets, most of which were owned by politicians and their associates, remained neutral; however, because no single candidate held a monopoly over any of the publication or broadcast mediums, competition for support remained ("Securing Congo" 5; Matti 46). According to a report published by *Transparency International*, the DRC ranked 168 out of 179 countries for transparency in politics and the media during the time of the elections ("Persistent Corruption" 7). Violence also played a crucial role in intimidating members of the media; according to a report published by *Global Humanitarian Assistance* at least seven journalists were threatened or beaten and two were detained on charges of criminal defamation in April and May of 2006 alone ("Democratic Republic of Congo" 110). Furthermore, many of these stations resorted to publishing and broadcasting personal attacks and hate speech against the opposing candidates for both political and monetary gain ("Securing Congo" 5). Media outlets remained largely funded by coupage and bribes during the elections, resulting in biased coverage based on the greed of journalists (Frère.b 71). In the first round of elections, Kabila and Bemba "tried to compete against each other by increasingly showing more violent pictures and unashamedly using bloody pictures of policemen stoned to death by unruly mobs or pictures of slaughtered civilians during the two wars" in order to gain media attention (Tshimanga 111). This disturbing interpretation of free press epitomizes the need for both an effective regulatory body that has the power to implement reform, and for the implementation of civil society organizations that can protect the people from such imagery.

To combat the prevalence of hate speech as a means of gaining supporters, Radio Okapi broadcast a series of programs, beginning prior to the runoff elections, explicitly focused on informing Congolese listeners about how to recognize, analyze and deconstruct hate speech

(Vollhardt 22). These programs were intended to indirectly improve the media's professionalism by creating an educated public that would demand a non-partisan media. However, the effects of these broadcasts were not rapid enough to change the media coverage of the current elections.

Following the first round of elections, Tshimanga wrote the following demands for the media sector in the DRC:

1. Continue with the creation of synergies between the media and civil society
2. Improve professionalism in spite of the editorial orientation of various media
3. Put an end to the shameful practice of coupage
4. Improve the wages and working conditions of journalists
5. Revitalize the self-regulatory body to oversee a professional code of ethics
6. Work on capacity-building and training of journalists, especially those working in community radio stations and associations (116)

Tsimanga also requested that non-governmental organizations continue to support reforms to the legal framework of media freedom in the DRC and continue to support the media sector via training and equipment (116). Similarly, the *International Crisis Group* published a proposal following the first round of elections suggesting the promotion of a constructive criticism by HAM, giving HAM the authority to suspend media outlets guilty of hate speech, and ensuring that state television and radio stations provide equal coverage to both candidates in the runoff ("Securing Congo" 1). This proposal also emphasized the importance of educating journalists on how to cover the elections in a professional manner ("Securing Congo" 8).

Despite these demands, the media remained polarized and violence ensued during the runoff elections. A few weeks before the runoff elections, Bemba's television and radio stations were attacked and burned after they broadcast a story accusing Kabila of electoral fraud (Matti 46). Twenty-three people were killed and forty-three were wounded in the protests that followed the attacks (Matti 46). All equipment in the stations was destroyed. This was debilitating to Bemba, whose helicopter had been destroyed a few months prior by Kabila's guards. For the

remainder of the campaign, Bemba had limited means to reach his supporters either in person or via the media (IRIN).

Further media infractions included the publication of electoral tendencies and speculations as premature results. Despite the prohibition of such actions by electoral law, many of the politician-run media outlets published preliminary results as each province released them without identifying the fact that they were not the final results (MONUC.a). One election official, translated into English, said, “The media should not raise the confusion to [occasional] violence and also create the atmosphere of tensions, [which are] useless or dangerous, of which Congolese people do not need anymore” (VOA News).

## **Conclusion**

The effectiveness of aid to Africa is a widely debated topic. Many scholars criticize the current methods of aid. Furthermore, the role of media development in international assistance has, in the views expressed above, more times than not failed to support the other forms of aid. Also from the views expressed above, it can be inferred that the fundamental need for assistance in African nation-states stems, at least partially, from two separate waves of Western intervention – first colonialism, and later the crusade against the spread of communism. Thus, it can be seen that the West’s current aid agendas are nothing more than efforts to mend its past faults while imposing the Western version of democracy on post-colonial and post-conflict nation-states.

In working on this thesis it has become clear to me that aid is an important aspect to development and that the media has the potential to be the conduit for change, as it can liaise between the state and the people, and between the aid donors and the people. However, through

the case study of the DRC's 2006 democratic elections, I can identify that while aid can produce relatively fair elections, it can simultaneously fail to recognize the systemic corruption and diverse values present in the recipient nation-states. Although the UN declared that the elections in the DRC were fair and although voter turnout was regarded as high, Kabila remained in power and a democratic government was not achieved. For me this exemplifies the need for changes in the way that aid is given.

Through the course of this project, I have come to agree with many of the criticisms outlined above; however, my position within the aid effectiveness debate is more moderate than some of them. I tend to agree with all of the views that include cultural relativism at their core, including Nwauwa's belief that the democratization process should draw on indigenous political traditions. Furthermore, I agree with many of the scholars who suggest a gradual reduction in aid, namely Glennie and Belloni. I believe that such a reduction, if implemented along with culturally relevant aid conditions, could result in the strengthening of local institutions and ultimately set recipient nation-states on a course toward independence from aid, as it eliminates the ability of local governments to run their country purely off of aid funding while simultaneously addressing the local needs, such as tax systems and legislative reform. I further agree with Susmen-Peña in that the most effective way to impact the media sector through aid is via legislative reform that would provide regulation on the media.

Contrarily, I tend to disagree with some of the more radical views expressed in this thesis. I do not agree with Ishkanian's view that democracy is entirely a Western individualistic value that is incompatible with traditional societies. Rather, I agree with Nwauwa's demonstration that democratic values and processes existed in Africa before colonialism, i.e. the Kongo Kingdom and the Lumba and Lunda States. I further disagree with Calderisi's belief that

elections are the most effective method of democracy promotion. It is clear through the case study of the 2006 elections in the DRC that “free and fair” elections do not always result in change, reform, or even democracy. In regard to the media, I am not convinced that the sole use of public media during democratization, as presented by the LSE report used in this thesis, allows for enough participation from the people to foster transition into a democratic government. I am also not sure that this view takes into account that public media systems in many aid-recipient nation-states are corrupt and serve to promote the agenda of the person in power. I agree that a purely privately owned media system can result in polarization, which was seen in the DRC. However, I believe that a balance between the two is necessary, similar to the use of Radio Okapi in the DRC, in order to disseminate factual information while fostering political participation in the media. Furthermore, I disagree with the notion that the media models used in Russia and China would be effective alternatives, as they are entirely government-run, but I do agree that a somewhat less objective system could be a valuable option as long as it remained free government control.

Ultimately, I believe that aid conditionality can only be effective if the conditions are thorough and measurable. This is to say that the condition of holding democratic elections should be more detailed, specifying everything from how many candidates can be put on the ballot and the media’s role in the election process to the identification of key policy issues and when these elections must be held by. I believe the latter to be of the utmost importance, as it would serve to prevent some of the aid dependency and rent-seeking while encouraging aid recipient governments and institutions to become accountable to the people they serve rather than to the countries and institutions giving them aid. As mentioned earlier in this conclusion, I believe that the implementation of culturally relevant aid conditions combined with a reduction

in funding would serve to ensure that local governments are increasingly held accountable to the people they govern via the creation of domestically necessary institutions and functions. In this scenario, aid-recipient governments would be accountable to aid donors in the sense that they must implement certain reforms, but the focus of these reforms would be centered on developing long-term local accountability through the creation of efficient government systems. In working on this thesis I have also come to see the importance of tailoring aid to the individual needs and values of each recipient nation-state. It is important for aid donors to recognize that their own needs and values differ from those of the recipient nation-states and that what has worked in one country may not work in every country. That being said, I believe that recipient nation-states are largely capable of developing systems of governance based on their traditional values, although I acknowledge that some international assistance may be a positive method for initiating this development.



## Appendix 1 – Global Knowledge Forum Recommendations

### Box 7.6: Recommendations from the Global Knowledge Forum, 2000

In March 2000, a group of senior editors, publishers, and directors of training institutions from developing countries gathered at the Global Knowledge Forum and mapped out an agenda for creating a free and plural media. This is a summary of their recommendations.

#### 1. Policy: To create an effective policy environment that nurtures a free, independent and pluralistic media

**Analysis:** Society benefits from free, independent, and pluralistic media. But to achieve this, a supportive policy environment is required, and it must be proactively encouraged by public and private sectors, the international community and multilateral agencies.

##### Action:

- Promote, consolidate and effectively enforce freedom of information legislation.
- Encourage independent voluntary complaints procedures based on industry codes of ethics, and including representation from other sectors of civil society.
- Promote independent public service broadcasting.
- Develop independent media support agencies (voluntary or statutory) which provide assistance through loans and subsidies, and/or other measures such as postal rate or connectivity cost reductions (e.g. the Media Development and Diversity Agency being established in South Africa).
- Encourage the private sector to support socially useful communication initiatives.
- Make licensing and regulation policies for broadcast media transparent and open.
- Implement effectively legislation that already exists in these areas.

#### 2. Ownership and Control: To prevent excessive concentration of media power, much of it located in the North

**Analysis:** An increasing concentration of power in media ownership, internationally and within some countries, works directly against plurality. It leads to more homogeneous content, reducing spaces for the expression of a diversity of views. New information technologies pose an additional challenge because they are outside existing systems of accountability. The implications of creating such systems are complex, but this remains a key global issue.

##### Action:

- Do research to map and monitor the economic and power relationships emerging among global media and communications conglomerates.
- Introduce or strengthen anti-monopoly legislation or measures to prevent the emergence of private or state monopolies.
- Seek dialogue between transnational media groups, the telecommunications industries and local communities.
- Explore creating voluntary codes of conduct at the global level.
- Support existing proposals to organise an International Congress on Media and Communications similar to the UN Social Summit.

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