

Failing Attempts to Westernise the Non-Western: Why There Are No States in Sub-Saharan Africa

**Stefan Cibian,
PhD Candidate,
Doctoral School of Political Science,
Public Policy and International Relations;
Central European University
cibian_stefan@ceu-budapest.edu**

Abstract:

Several streams of literature point to the lack of capacity of the Sub-Saharan African States. Most of the authors focus on what these states lack in order to be fully functional. And most of the indexes we use in comparing states reflect a strong bias towards specific Western understandings of statehood. This paper claims that the Sub-Saharan African States are in fact not states and that they are being seen as such due to the West's incapacity of observing the meanings that the state-like institutions acquire within the local socio-cultural contexts in this region. The theoretical analysis is based on recently concluded field work on the European Development Fund which, consisting of a complex set of negotiations between the European Commission and the Sub-Saharan African States, reveals the importance of the international community for maintaining into existence the state-like institutions in the region. Based on field work conducted in Burundi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Brussels, the paper hints to an Agamben-inspired framework for understanding the dynamics between the Western States and the non-Western state-like structures.

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“This is an instance not of ‘covenants, without the sword’ [Hobbes] being ‘but words’ but of swords without a covenant signifying nothing but force and terror. The quasi-state is an uncivil more than a civil place: it does not yet possess the rule of law based on the social contract. The populations of quasi-states have not yet instituted a covenant. If no covenant exists, there can be neither subject nor sovereign nor commonwealth: no empirical state. But unlike Hobbes’ realist scenario, the quasi-state cannot logically collapse into a state of nature because its sovereignty is derived not internally from empirical statehood, but externally from the states-system whose members have evidently decided and are resolved that these jurisdiction shall not disappear. The quasi-state is upheld by an external covenant among sovereign states. [...] Quasi-states turn Hobbes inside-out: the state of nature is domestic, and civil society is international” (Jackson 1993, pp. 168-9).

Several streams of literature point to the lack of capacity of the Sub-Saharan African States. Most of the authors focus on what these states lack in order to be fully functional. And most of the indexes we use in comparing states reflect a strong bias towards specific Western understandings of statehood. This paper claims that the Sub-Saharan African States are in fact not states and that they are being seen as such due to the West's incapacity of observing the meanings that the state-like institutions acquire within the local socio-cultural contexts in this region.

In what follows I will attempt to map out several of the puzzling aspects around the existence of African states, development aid and the involvement of the western international community in the developing world. I will start by looking at the dilemma of quasi-states and the aid-sovereignty paradox which are reviewed widely in the literature as two puzzling aspects when considering the functioning of most of the postcolonial African states. Jackson (1993) introduces the dilemma of quasi-states in the context of the process of decolonization and integration of the newly established states in the international society. What I refer to as lack of substantive statehood is in Jackson’s terms lack of positive sovereignty. In his view the postcolonial states possess *negative sovereignty*, i.e.: the sovereignty recognized to them by the Western states at independence, but lack *positive sovereignty*, which would enable them to function as proper states. The fact that they have been recognized as states in spite of their lack of positive sovereignty is considered a dilemma for Jackson, and more widely by the literature on fragile and failed states.

The aid-sovereignty paradox refers to the incompatibility between the strongly entrenched principle of sovereignty and the activities of donors which in many cases do get involved in the internal affairs of the ‘partner states.’ The aim of this paper is to further analyze these two puzzling aspects and to in fact develop a multi-dimensional puzzle which will suggest that what the International Western Donor Community is upholding the existence of states where these do in fact do not exist. Due to limited space the paper will hint to a potential explanation for the West’s engagements with the African states which attempts to go beyond the existing highly ideologized debates in the IR and development literature by referring to Giorgio Agamben’s philosophical contribution on the generalized state of exception.

Quasi-states dilemma and the Western statehood orthodoxy

The outcome of the colonial period in terms of administration and governance appears to have been a fairly established administrative apparatus which has transformed overnight into a new state. The relations with the former colonies have continued in the vast majority of cases in a direct manner, and later through aid-related relationships. “As if to avoid the stark reality of negative sovereignty significant ties providing for military, economic, and cultural cooperation were retained between Paris and every new Francophone African state – except Guinea. French financial aid in particular was made available and this continuing external dependency was later reinforced by the close association of the Franco-African states and other former French colonies with the European Economic Community under the Lome Convention [the Lome Convention is the predecessor of the Cotonou Agreement]” (Jackson 1993, p. 101).

In terms of outcomes we end up in a situation described by Jackson’s quote at the start of this section. He offers an account of the newly created states where, even if externally these states seem to present some degree of civility in their international engagements, internally these states are characterized by an uncivil mood “This is an instance not of ‘covenants, without the sword’ [Hobbes] being ‘but words’ but of swords without a covenant signifying nothing but force and terror. The quasi-state is an uncivil more than a civil place” (Jackson 1993, p. 168). The sovereignty of such states is derived from external sources rather than from a social contract among their citizens. This has deep implications, as apparently this legal qualification of ‘being sovereign’ cannot collapse, placing these states in a specific relations both with their international counterparts and their citizens, locally. “, the quasi-state cannot logically collapse into a state of nature because its sovereignty is derived not internally from empirical statehood, but externally from the states-system whose members have evidently decided and are resolved that these jurisdiction shall not disappear. The quasi-state is upheld by an external covenant among sovereign states”(Jackson 1993, p. 168-169). This characterization, as quasi-states, is applied to all former colonial territories transformed into internationally recognized states through a process of independence in the 1960s and 1970s, especially so to the Sub-Saharan African states.

A specific example is offered by Sørensen (2004) who observes the dysfunction of the quasi-states in their engagement with markets.

[T]here is a peculiar relationship between states and markets in the least developed Third World countries. These states are so feeble that they are unable to set up and enforce the rules and regulations necessary for the market to function. As a result there is a lack of well-defined property rights, of an efficient and unbiased judicial system, of a clear and transparent regulatory framework and of an institutional framework promoting impersonal forms of exchange. Instead, norms of exchange have developed which benefit self-seeking rules and their favored group of clients (Sørensen 2004, p. 57).

The same lack of capacity is observed in most other realms of state activity, making it possible therefore, in many cases, to talk about a generalized lack of state capacity.

In this context Sampson (2003) rightly asks the question “But if the state has no resources to provide services or maintain public order, why even call it a state?” (p. 333). Sampson goes on and attempts a reply, which can be encountered more and more often in the state failure literature. In his view “we are all too enamored of the rappings of statehood without analyzing its substance. Our tendency to reify “the state” as a single actor and complain about “the evils of the bureaucracy,” only exaggerates this abstract gap between state and society. The state, instead of being seen as coalitions legitimating themselves via the public sphere, is demonized as “the system,” what Harzfeld (1997) calls “secular theodicy.” The

“criminalization of the state” paradigm maintains this fiction of the reified state as unified, floating above as an agent” (p. 333).

Sampson’s question is of tremendous importance, as it does not only reinforce what Jackson calls the quasi-stated dilemma, but takes it a step further – “If no covenant exists, there can be neither subject nor sovereign nor commonwealth: no empirical state.” (1993, p. 168). An important puzzling element is then **why does the international community, mainly the West which rests at its center, choose to see states, where in fact they do not exist.**

Development (Aid) – Sovereignty Paradox

In analyzing the workings of one of the postcolonial states (i.e. Lesotho), Ferguson (1997[1990]), offers a puzzling account of the relation between the negative sovereignty these states possess and the process of development in which they are engaged. In Ferguson’s view “the “development” apparatus promotes a colonizing, expanding bureaucratic power that expands its reach and extends its distribution” (p.273). He does not imply by this that the sovereignty of the state is strengthened, nor that ““development” projects necessarily expand the capabilities of “the state,” conceived as a unitary, instrumental entity, but that specific bureaucratic knots of power are implanted, an infestation of petty bureaucrats wielding petty powers” (p. 273). Ferguson’s remark opens another dimension of the puzzle which brings to the fore the type of exercise of power at play in the development realm: governmentality. The development process is viewed in this sense as accommodating a strong desire for concentrating power with the aim of control. “What is expanded is not the magnitude of the capabilities of the “state,” but the extent and reach of a particular kind of exercise of power” (Ferguson 1997[1990], p. 274). In Ferguson’s view, this particular ‘exercise of power’ rather than strengthening state capacity weakens it. This brings yet another puzzling aspect to our attention: “Is state power in these settings feeble and ineffectual (as Hyden would have it), or is it overgrown and crushing (as Dutkiewicz, Shenton, and Williams seem to suggest)? Does the African state have too much power, or too little?” (Ferguson 1997[1990], p. 272).

Having to deal with a world of states which are not in fact equal beyond their formally-upheld legal status, how does international relations theory deal with this ontology? As Jackson points out “some international rules and institutions which are fundamental to any society of sovereign states – such as nonintervention – cannot be changed without destroying that society or rather transforming it into something else” (p. 166). This in turn requires that “if our theories are to be relevant they must be able to account for the difference” (p. 164).

A further component of the puzzle is the aid-sovereignty paradox brought on legal grounds. Aid in legal terms is translated into positive right to development (i.e.: which imposes an obligation on the other members of the international community to contribute actively, in spite of the incapacity of these states to reciprocate), while on the other hand, sovereignty translates into a negative right of non-interference (that is to say that the other members of the international community should not interfere in the internal affairs of third states). As Jackson observes “They [quasi-statesmen, ...] consequently have contradictory expectations: the right of independence (reciprocity) but also the right to development (nonreciprocity). In short they want to have their sovereignty and eat it. [...] They therefore promote these conflicting international norms which really disclose not only an ‘incoherence’ of international law but a dilemma of international justice” (Jackson 1993, p. 180). Bringing this debate back on IR grounds, sovereignty appears to have been redefined by the process of decolonization. “Every sovereign government possesses negative rights of non-intervention but some assert

additional positive rights or at least demands of external material support. This is not only unprecedented in the annals of the states-system but is also a real dilemma in the normative structure of contemporary international relations” (Jackson 1993, p. 112).

A more specific component of the aid-sovereignty dynamic is revealed by Ferguson, in his contrasting of how development projects work on the ground to their declared goals. Ferguson observes the incompatibility between the apolitical claim of development projects on the one hand, and the necessity of political engagement for creating enduring societal transformations:

On the one hand, they [“development agencies”] are supposed to bring about “social change,” sometimes of a dramatic and far-reaching sort. At the same time, they are not supposed to “get involved in politics” – and in fact have a strong de-politicizing function. But any real effort at “social change” cannot help but have powerful political implications, which a “development project” is constitutionally unfit to deal with. To do what it is set up to do (bring about socio-economic transformations), a “development” project must attempt what it is set up not to be able to do (involve itself in political struggles) (Ferguson 1997[1990], p. 226).

To sum up, it appears that the existence of the sovereign states in the post-colonial world as well as the interplay between their sovereignty and development bring with them a wide array of puzzling processes. “If anything is clear from the post-colonial experience it is that sovereignty and development are not necessarily collaborators and can be antagonists” (Jackson 1993, p. 198). Related to these dynamics, I will move on to highlighting other puzzling elements relating more specifically to the relationship between the West and the Sub-Saharan African states. The next aspect I deal with is what could be called the ‘independence trap.’

The Independence Trap

The ‘independence trap’ contrasts the African hopes associated with and Africa’s involvement in obtaining independence (i.e.: the struggle for independence) with the outcome that independence brought about. This trap is visible at three levels – that of the state, that of the people and that of society. I look into them in the mentioned order.

Focusing on the state, I will commence from Jackson’s argument mentioned above, that in spite of apparent civility on an international level, internally, the African States are in a state of incivility. The state apparatus put up at the moment of independence appear to fail to perform their initial tasks within their jurisdiction. The paradox rests a step away, in the fact that the civility of the international spheres which forces the postcolonial spaces into ‘sovereign’ entities, by so doing, contributes to the high level of incivility within. “There is evidence of unprecedented civilization at the international level today. Third World statesmen are honourable members of international society who respect international law and morality as well as any others. Paradoxically, however, international civilization not only veils significant domestic incivility but actually contributes to it, albeit unintentionally” (Jackson 1993, p. 163). Falk (2004) puts it more bluntly “aside from Europe the notion of nation-state was a dangerous fiction that has produced decades of violence in non-Western countries” (p. 326).

I am claiming however, that in spite of the presumed independence of these states, we have witnessed rather a transformation of the dependence in which they rest vis-à-vis the West. The core of the ‘independence trap’ is therefore, that by struggling for independence and by making the choice of becoming states, the former colonies, transformed themselves from being legal and material colonies of the empire, into ‘conceptual colonies’ of the West. This

conceptual-dependence rests, again, on accepting the state as a mode of societal organization – the state, which is in fact a western mode of organization and which if indeed meant to function on the new, non-western grounds, requires numerous adjustments. Such adjustments, if ever possible, engulf the new ‘states’ into the similarly western system and relations from which they were struggling to escape. “On a closer analysis, however, quasi-states disclose a vision of international relations which is very far from viewing independence as little more than a veil on continuing dependency” (Jackson 1993, p. 177).

In this context, therefore, we have a wide array of problems spanning from the state, being able to function and fulfill its western mission on non-western territories (which as we have seen up to now is far from being the case) to the entrapment of the new state-like entities into depending on the very same Western countries for advice on how to become a functional state. As Opello and Rostow (2004) show this dependence is obvious in the immediate post-independence relationships between the former colonies and the former metropolae: “economies of the newly independent states usually remained dependent upon the economy of the former colonial power, which controlled the value of their money, provided the markets for their exports, supplied investment capital, and owned much of their land and national assets” (p. 221). As well this becomes evident in the implications derived from transforming the colonial administrations into new state institutions. In Opellos and Rostow’s (2004) view, the high importance of the military and police in the colony accounts partially for the decay into authoritarianism of the post-colonial states. This dependence in material terms, based on the newly established inter-state relations has continued as Jackson (1993) points out: “For the 1980s there was a net outflow of public and private capital from many Third World states to the industrial countries and this will continue in the 1990s unless the rules of international financial obligations are changed. Payments on loans, repatriated capital, royalties and the like constitute transfers that can exceed foreign aid disbursements moving in the opposite direction” (p. 116).

To take the independence trap another step further, it is important to look at the way these states acquired their independence, i.e.: how the recognition of their sovereignty came about.

The new state is the successor of an identical pre-existing European colony and is legitimate by right of succession regardless of the different ethonationalities enclosed by it: ‘Thus the principle which broke up the Central Empires of Europe in 1918 is invoked for a contrary effect outside Europe. The principle *cujus regio ejus religio* is restored in secular form. [...] Ironically, therefore, it is the colonial state under new indigenous management which is the embodiment of self-determination in the Third World. The population within its jurisdiction is formally the ‘people’ regardless of substantive differences of tradition, language, religion or opinion (Jackson 1993, p. 152).

Jackson supports his argument by looking at how, in spite of nearly all post-colonial African states being deeply divided ethnically, none of them disintegrated. “Rebels can gain de facto control of territories, of course, but this is insufficient to capture sovereignty. They must first be recognized, but the OAU, the UN, and the leading world powers will only do this if they have received prior recognition from the sovereign governments involved” (Jackson 1993, p. 153).

At a closer analysis, the fact that ‘self-determination’ receives this particular meaning on the African territory, raises a serious problem as this reinterpretation has been sanctioned by the Western International Society. The paradox here is that the independence of the ‘postcolony’ has been arrived at through a decision of the colonizer, which by granting an exceptional place for the ‘postcolony’ in the ‘new’ international system, renders it exceptional. One can claim therefore that by such a decision a state of exception is opened, with regard to international law, in which the post-colonial state is suspended.

Moving further to the significance of the ‘independence trap’ for the peoples of the post-colonial states, one can easily see that if claimed that “[d]ecolonization is often understood as a successful revolt against the West” (Jackson 1993, p. 82), but if “the real benefits of independence which is what freedom amounts to have not yet arrived for most of their citizens” (Jackson 1993, p. 22), it means that these ‘citizens’ have been trapped into an international construction for which some of them fought, and which instead of offering protection offers the opposite. In brief, “decolonization ironically was not only a liberation movement but also an enclosure movement”(Jackson 1993, p. 151), which led to the enforcement of practices in blatant oppositions to the internationally upheld norms of international humanitarian law.

These occurrences [arbitrary detentions, beatings, political killings, torture, terror, political prisoners, disappearances, refugees, death squads, destruction of livelihood, and various other human rights violations] are not happening outside sovereign states or in wars between them. They are not inflicted on foreigners or colonial subjects. They are occurring inside independent states. Although anti-government rebels are also responsible and foreign interventions can be involved, the principal violators are sovereign governments. The victims are their own citizens. [...] citizenship often is scarcely more than a nominal status with little or no real purchasing power. This is because the Third World state is usually the possession and instrument of elites who often act as if sovereignty is their license to exploit people” (Jackson 1993, p. 140).

Linking the citizen-related aspects to the previous state-level interpretation of the ‘independence trap,’ it appears problematic not only that “the same institution which provided international recognition, dignity, and independence to all colonized populations could be exploited to deny domestic civility, liberty, and welfare to some” (Jackson 1993, p. 202); nor that the “international society can do very little about it but [that...] certain recently adopted international norms actually contribute to this unfortunate state of affairs” (Jackson 1993, p. 161).

Lastly, the ‘independence trap’ can be observed at a societal level. As Frideman (2008b) argues “for decades the argument has been: “First you colonized me and I was dispersed and became transnational, and now I want to reestablish my former connection to my source, that is, to turn my former pre-national space into a nation” (p. 279). The intriguing part of the argument is that in practice the ‘nation’ most often post-colonial states strive for, is an imagined Western construct, which not only diverges from the Western reality, but seems up to date to be at odds with the local realities on the ground and more importantly, seems many times to disregard the local altogether. The implications of the ‘formal’ existence of the state (i.e.: negative sovereignty) on the society which it attempts to govern is many-fold, however, suffice to mention that by the assumed/Western-decided power of states over certain territories, the space for the development of a genuine form of governance has been closed.

To sum up, the ‘independence trap’ refers to a decolonization process which has been accompanied by a strong struggle for independence. In Jackson’s (1993, p. 82) words ““Decolonization is often understood as a successful revolt against the West.” In retrospect, this struggle for independence did not lead to the expected outcome i.e.: independence, but rather to a more subtle and a stronger form of dependence. This is what I call the move from legal to conceptual colonies. The embracing of state structures, the transformation of the previous colonies into states and their subsequent integration in the international legal, political and economic systems has led to a form of dependence which has not only reduced the freedom of action of the local peoples, but has reduced the space for the development of coherent autonomous governance systems and is in many ways threatening their cultural existence altogether through a specific process of internationalization of life itself. To put it briefly, the struggle for independence of the colonial peoples has led them into a deeper form

of dependence, which has produced deep cultural mutations, especially so at the level of governance.

Parallel Realities Dilemma

Having on the ground the presence of the international community, the state-like structures and local communities leads, I would argue, to the creation of parallel realities. These parallel realities appear as societal dimensions which in spite of interacting in various forms maintain an ontology of their own (from a cultural, social, economic and political point of view) which seems to be persistent over time and which even in the event of cross-generated change remain separate, hence the term ‘parallel.’ These parallel realities/dimensions can be multiple. As well, they can acquire a variety of meanings in localized settings. Regarding the space of the postcolonial state, three such parallel ontological loci can be observed, these are: the postcolonial state and the reality surrounding its existence, the local-people-traditional, and the reality around the international community’s presence on the ground. In this section I will briefly reveal these ‘parallel realities’ and point to the dilemma they bring about.

Starting with the state-dimension, it is important to highlight the way these states came about. As seen above, the postcolonial states have been granted sovereignty in the process of decolonization. This implies the establishment of a state based on a constitutional framework. The different realities I refer to become obvious in Opello and Rostow’s (2004) view on the effects the constitutional frameworks produced on the ground: within the postcolonial setting “a written constitution generally plays a different role in instituting sovereignty than it does for European states, but not because non-European peoples are too immature or politically underdeveloped to appreciate constitutionalism, as modernization theory once argued. Rather, this differing role was due to the distinctive historical circumstances that condition the emergence of non-European states” (p. 222). What Opello and Rostow term ‘distinctive historical circumstances’ imply the existence of different dimensions, which when pushed into a European-generated constitutional process has led both, to a particular take on or localization of the way the state got to look like in practice and to a partial segregation of the social from the newly established structure (be it due to capacity constraints, misunderstanding, or diverging interest). “The formation of states outside of Europe must be understood not in terms of a presumed universal process of modernization exemplified by the original European states, but rather in terms of how the sovereign state as a political form of politico-military rule was imposed and constituted *reflexively* by contending elites as they sought to construct states in the context of the encounter between European and non-European peoples” (Opello and Rostow 2004, p. 219).

The downside brought by this new dimension within the postcolonial space is twofold. Many times the outcome, as clearly reflected above, is less than desired for the majority of those involved: “In the so called patrimonial states, for example, individuals seek to acquire power through “patronage”[...] – that is, through connections with strong individuals and a particular family, clan, tribe, village, or region within the state” (Opello and Rostow 2004, p. 223). It is as well evident that the postcolonial space was not in a generalized vacuum of authority, therefore multiple forms of traditional authority were predating the apparition of the postcolonial state. These forms of authority are threatened by the newly emerging sovereign and this may create a disruptive dynamic as well. The outcome gets to be that the sovereignty “in non-European states has been both contested within and limited from the outside” (Opello and Rostow 2004, p. 219).

The international community-dimension is represented by the wide array of international institutions both present on the ground and at an international level which as Opello and Rostow imply frame the sovereignty of these states – a recognition which is upheld *de jure* and which cannot be shaken by the most compelling evidence on the ground. This dimension comprises, by and large, the Western mechanism at play, the life-support apparatus, for maintaining the postcolonial states into existence.

These two dimensions are encompassed in various ways by the third dimension, the one of the local-people-traditional. Said (1994) reveals this dimension by drawing on Davidson: “Davidson goes on [...] by pointing to what he calls the peoples’ “own solution to this carapace accepted from the colonial period.” “What these peoples think upon this subject is shown in their incessant emigration across these lines on the map, as well as by their smuggling enterprises. So that even while a “bourgeois Africa” hardens its frontiers, multiplies its border controls, and thunders against the smuggling of persons and goods, a “people” Africa works in quite another way” (p. 308). The dilemma resulting from the existence of these different realities becomes evident when contrasted to the Western approach to development and international relation. **The ‘people’s Africa’ dimension is by-and-large ignored, but it is the one expected to ‘develop.’**

Western projections, fantasies, and monologues...

Ignoring the fundamental dimension/world which should constitute the basis of development raises another important aspect, which will be developed in this section. Specifically it refers to, not only, the West choosing to see states (i.e.: representations of the self) where they do not exist¹, but as well the West’s predilection towards being strongly proactive in *deciding* on projecting itself and attempting to (re-)create itself as alterity in the non-Western, hence a wide array of labels which, in trying to escape the West, offer it a central position by signifying nothing about the substance of the respective ‘alterity’ but solely its distinctiveness from the West – ‘non-Western,’ ‘postcolonial,’ ‘non/post-modern,’ ‘failed/failing/fragile states,’ ‘resistance (...to what?).’

In the exercise of running a global international society/international community, Jackson’s (1993) remark appears justified: “it would be impossible to operate across cultures without not only a shared discourse and framework of communication – including international law and diplomacy – but also common standards which make comparative appraisals and equitable treatment possible” (p. 141). The problem intervenes however when such ‘shared discourses and frameworks’ are embodying *one* particular voice as the voice of *all*, leading not only to seeing the rest of the world through *one’s* eyes/lens, e.g.: “[t]he comparative civility of Western states and the corresponding expectations of their populations have undoubtedly created heightened awareness of inhumanity everywhere” (Jackson 1993, p. 141); but rather to reducing the potential *otherness* to be the perpetual ‘*less than*’ in a totalizing comparison. “To be non-Western (the reifying labels are themselves symptomatic) is ontologically thus to be unfortunate in nearly every way, before the facts, to be at worst a maniac, and at best a follower” (Said 1994, p. 304).

¹ This aspect of the West seeing states where they do not proper exist is recently receiving increasing attention in literature (Call 2008, Ghani and Lockhart 2008, Baker 2007, Draude 2007, Sakiko and Picciotto 2007, Risse and Lehmkuhl 2006, Grovogui 2002), however most of the authors are stopping without inquiring why is it so and what are the real implications of such a narrow view.

This assumed/supposed totalizing comparison brings with it a deeper problem. What if in the existing *plurality of otherness*'es no comparable ontologies exist? – Evidently the case with most of the colonized territories, where the solution has been to create the '*less than*' component of the comparison. This becomes more than a comparison, it becomes a conscious re-creation of self within a territory which can never transcend the boundary of otherness. This problem of 'creation' can be spotted in many of the encounters between the West and the non-Western areas of the world. A specific exemplar case is the development process, where along these conceptual lines 'development' becomes the tool for projecting the West/ern in its alterity and responding to a modernity-related need of creating the self/self-identity through the definition of an alterity. "The problem of the donor comes when these potential implementing partners do not exist. If they do not exist, then they must be created" (Sampson , p. 321). The evident discrepancy of capacity between the West and the developing world/Third World/postcolonial World leads to a perpetual process of projecting the self onto the other which seems to offer no alternative. "Despite the subversive intent of the politics of resistance and difference, the effort at empowering the postcolonial agent and invigorating a radical subjectivity, there is no escape from modernity, or indeed from colonial authority or European domination more generally. These manifestations of the Western other are internalized and constantly rearticulated in an ambivalent postcolonial context" (Paolini 1999, p. 84).

Bringing such a view in the discussion about statehood, reveals the entrapment of the postcolonial state in between, internationally, an impossible, nevertheless perpetual process of becoming Western and, locally, a localized reality which may oppose such transformations or even if not opposed, may lose faith due to the disappointment with the resulting failure – a perpetual confusion:

This [modernization theory's implicit claim that non-European states are always lagging behind] reinforces the dualistic political and moral structure of European-centered international society, although in a way that allows for a degree of independence of those states, but which "regulates" their sovereignty. That is, this way of thinking about non-European states encourages and sanctions behaviors that limit the sovereignty of non-European states, both by European states and by indigenous elites seeking to "modernize" them (Opello and Rostow 2004, p. 218).

Another problem brought by the West's 'orthodoxy in seeing itself in the non-Western' is missing out on what may be out there beyond the West-induced institutional construct. This problem transcends ignoring the local, and reveals a strong bias in the West's capacity to analyze and understand this localized other. The Western tools for analysis are based on Western concepts and respond to Western needs and questions. Such a lacuna can be seen from an epistemological perspective as a limited potentiality for understanding 'alterity-as-such,' on its own terms, but solely through its inclusion in the self and redefinition as 'alterity.' Said's discussion of nationalism and Abeche's view on universality are revealing this limitation:

No one needs to be reminded that throughout the imperial world during the decolonizing period, protest, resistance, and independence movements were fuelled by one or another nationalism. Debates today about Third World nationalism have been increasing in volume and interest, not least because too many scholars and observers in the West, this reappearance of nationalism revived several anachronistic attitudes; Elie Kedourie, for example, considers non-Western nationalism essentially condemnable, a negative reaction to a demonstrated cultural and social inferiority, an imitation of "Western" political behavior that brought little that was good; others, like Eric Hobsbawm and Ernest Gellner, consider nationalism as a form of political behavior that has been gradually superseded by new trans-national realities of modern economies, electronic communications, and superpower military projection. In all these views, I believe there is a marked (and, and in my opinion, ahistorical)

discomfort with non-Western societies acquiring national independence, which is believed to be “foreign” to their ethos. Hence the repeated insistence on the *Western* provenance of nationalist philosophies that are therefore ill-suited to, and likely to be abused by Arabs, Zulus, Indonesians, Irish, or Jamaicans (Said 1994, p. 216).

Or, as Chinua Achebe puts it, when remarking that Western critics often fault African writing for lacking “universality”: “Does it ever occur to these universalists to try out their game of changing names of characters and places in an American novel, say, a Philip Roth or an Updike, and slotting in African names just to see how it works? But of course it would not occur to them to doubt the universality of their own literature. In the nature of things the work of a Western writer is automatically informed by universality. It is only others who must strain to achieve it. So-and-so’s work is universal: he has truly arrived! As though universality were some distant bend in the road which you may take if you travel out far enough in the direction of Europe or America, if you put adequate distance between yourself and your home” (Achebe in Said 1994, p. 216).

Finally, this dynamic brings about a puzzling effect at the level of the international system. This puzzling effect refers to the West’s role in the international system which it created. The expansion of the international society gets to include a plurality of re-productions of the West which are, in fact, different from what they are expected to be. We may be looking at the self-entrapment of the West in a system-of-its-own-making which might lead to its demise.

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