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***The Problem of the African State:
The Missing Genealogy of
International Statebuilding***

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Abstract

It would seem that international statebuilding has arrived practically *de novo*, fully formed at the end of the Cold War, with commentators trying to extract lessons from the new practices of international administration in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor and Iraq. The more historical approaches which seek to guide international statebuilding draw on institutionally similar circumstances under the League of Nations and the United Nations. The more conceptually minded analysts suggest that the field is a new one and that it is still too early to rush to judgement on techniques and practices. This paper seeks to draw out some pointers to a missing genealogy of international approaches to statebuilding in policy discussions about 'transitional states', particularly in relation to sub-Saharan Africa. It suggests that two areas which can be usefully drawn upon are the discussions of colonial 'transition' in the 1920s and discussions of post-colonial 'transition' in the 1960s. Both sets of policy-orientated discussions of transitional states implicitly focussed on the problem of the relationship between subject or post-colonial states and their societies. These discussions posed the problem in terms which set them apart from discussions of domestic political forms of administration and political management. This paper suggests that it is in these debates, on the specific distinctions between the management of non-Western state-society relations and domestic state-society relations, that the missing genealogy of international statebuilding can be found.

Introduction

International statebuilding, international assistance in strengthening the regulatory capacity of the state in terms of the protection of citizen rights, post-conflict social cohesion, welfare and economic development, is increasingly held to be the solution to the problems of security, development, and democratization in many regions of the world. External international assistance and oversight which operates through capacity-building state institutions takes many forms, from World Bank and IMF loans, debt-forgiveness and poverty reduction strategies to programmes attached to the UN Millennium goals, European Union statebuilding of potential members, and international programmes to prevent state failure, to assist failing states and to reconstruct states held to have failed or which have necessitated international intervention (see Chandler 2006 for an overview). However, books and academic articles dealing with international statebuilding tend to address the topic in the narrowest of institutional terms, seeking to study international administrations per se (sometimes even excluding Iraq for not meeting the exacting criteria used, for example, Caplan 2005, Zaum 2007), rather than external frameworks of knowledge and practices which seek to regulate and manage state-society relations in the non-Western state.

In dealing with international statebuilding from the narrow institutional perspective of international administration there is not much pre-history to work from. These books normally provide background sections which demonstrate that international statebuilding has its institutional precursors. Their focus is on the League of Nations' administrative mandates over the Free City of Danzig (1919-1939) and the Saar Basin (1922-1935) and the United Nations trusteeship system after World War Two and brief administrative experience in the former Belgian Congo (1960-1961) and western New Guinea (1962-

1963) at the end of Dutch colonial rule, before they move rapidly on to the post-Cold War age of international interventionism, with UN missions in Namibia, Angola, El Salvador, Western Sahara, Cambodia, and Eastern Slavonia as a prequel to the high profile interventions in Bosnia, Kosovo and East Timor in the mid- to late-1990s and the post-9/11 experience of external intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq (see, for example, Chesterman 2004; Paris 2004; Dobbins et al 2005; Caplan 2005; Wilde 2007; Zaum 2007).

These works predominantly take a narrow institutional focus on international frameworks of external administrative powers and tend to argue that statebuilding and debate around suitable policies and practices has been insufficiently developed with little policy consensus around the best-practice approaches which their research points to. Academic books and research projects are concerned with learning policy lessons to improve administrative policy in this area, rather than with seeking to understand international statebuilding as a much broader set of practices of external regulatory control focused on the management of state-society relations (for example, CSDG 2003; Caplan 2005; Dobbins et al 2003; 2005; 2007; Ashdown 2007). From the viewpoint of attempting to study the development of policy thinking behind international statebuilding and frameworks for approaching non-Western state-society relations, it is necessary to take a different approach.

This paper seeks to highlight some key approaches to the problems of the external relationship and management of non-Western state-society relations and, in the words of Michel Foucault, to replace a 'genetic analysis' which focuses narrowly on institutions with a 'genealogical analysis'. Foucault argued that: 'This kind of method entails going behind the institution and trying to discover in a wider and more overall perspective what we can broadly call a technology of power.' (Foucault 2007: 117) Rather than focus narrowly on the fairly unique institutional nature of international cooperative administrative regulation of problematic states, or narrowly focusing on the functional descriptions of managed 'transitions to democracy' or 'state capacity-building' as the key to 'sustainable development' and 'consolidated peace', or seeing a clear act of instrumental interest operating in an unmediated way, Foucault suggests that research should:

...attempt to free relations of power from the institution, in order to analyze them from the point of view of technologies; to distinguish them also from the function, so as to take them up within a strategic analysis; and to detach them from the privilege of the object, so as to resituate them within the perspective of the constitution of fields, domains and objects of knowledge... By de-institutionalizing and de-functionalizing relations of power we can grasp their genealogy, i.e., the way they are formed, connect up with each other, develop, multiply, and are transformed on the basis of something other than themselves, on the basis of processes that are something other than relations of power. (Foucault 2007: 118-119)

I want to focus on what I suggest are the two most relevant periods which provide an insight into the broader aspects of the practices and techniques of international statebuilding - and therefore the Western understanding of relations between non-Western states and societies - as a domain and object of knowledge. I suggest that these are the discussions of the problems of the administration of 'transitional' colonial

protectorates in the 1920s, particularly on the merits and disadvantages of indirect rule vis-à-vis direct rule, and the 1960s discussions of the problems of state-society relations in post-colonial states, predominantly led by US social scientists. Neither of these discussions referred to practices which took the institutional form of international statebuilding administrations in the 1990s and 2000s. In the former case, the institutional form was that of the protectorate, lacking sovereignty, and, in the later, that of an independent sovereign state. However, this paper suggests that the missing genealogy of international statebuilding can be found in these moments, despite the institutional distinctions.

In the first period under consideration, the question of non-Western state-society relations is first analysed as a problem for Western administrators. In the early stages of empire the lack of mediating state-society relations was not considered to be a problem either because the system of domestic rule was exported in the process of colonization, as in the white Dominions, or because the external power was not directly interested in governing the subject people, only safeguarding its own military and commercial interests. In the 1920s, and particularly in the discussions on the relevance of direct and indirect rule in sub-Saharan Africa, the question of state-society relations was of immediate concern to the external regulation and management of the society, in a way which it was not after the Second World War when disengagement rather than management was the priority.

In the second period, the 1960s mark the highpoint of discussions of the problems of the post-colonial state and the institutional impact of its attenuated relationship with its society. In the period between the celebration of the end of colonialism and declarations of independence, replete with liberal democratic constitutions, and the Vietnam war, which marked a shift towards judging the post-colonial state in the purely geo-strategic terms of the Cold War, there was a relatively insightful discussion of whether liberal democratic solutions were viable for post-colonial states. Where, in the 1920s, tribal authority was sought to be reconstituted as a substitute mechanism linking the state to society, in the 1960s, it was thought that the one party state or military rule could bring the social cohesion necessary to bind the post-colonial state and society together.

In conclusion, it will be suggested that in today's international statebuilding a third solution is being proposed and practiced, which in many ways can be better grasped and understood in the context of the early discussions. Key elements of continuity are present in both the problematisation of unguided or unsupervised forms of liberal democracy and in the attempt to use state institutions to bring cohesion from the top-down, but the favoured solutions are not those of empowering tribal or native rulers or of the creation of single party regimes, but of international oversight in extending the administrative and regulatory capacity of the post-colonial state. This framework helps us to get beyond descriptive approaches to international statebuilding focused on formal legal institutional terms, which dichotomously counterpose sovereign statehood to new forms of protectorate or empire, in favour of more analytical frameworks which seek to enquire into the technologies of power and the forms of knowledge and expertise which they require.

Indirect Rule in Africa

British colonization of Africa was not a gradual process of expansion from an existing relationship of regulation and intervention but a rapid process of expansion covering huge swathes of the hinterland of the Nile, Niger and Zambesi, as inter-imperialist competition in the 'scramble for Africa' (from the 1885 Berlin Conference onwards) meant that jurisdiction over a territory could not be claimed merely through extra-territorial treaties with 'voluntary consent' of the natives. Increasingly it became necessary to assume direct sovereignty, direct jurisdiction over the subject peoples rather than just over the business and activities of British subjects (see Lugard 1923: 9-47). The colonial claim to be safeguarding the 'interests' and 'advancement' of the natives was an inevitable by-product of these inter-imperialist rivalries, which forced the territorial partition of Africa. Without this pressure there would have been little need to go beyond extra-territorial treaties to safeguard strategic and commercial interests.

Although in 1865 a Royal Commission had recommended abandoning Britain's older settlements on the West Coast, by the end of the century Britain was responsible for a vast empire in Africa. Ironically, the political powers and responsibilities acquired bore little relationship to the political importance which these areas held. Britain had been forced to declare sovereign power over vast African hinterlands, but had little desire to take on the governing responsibility. Initially, as Lord Lugard notes, the British government passed responsibility for acquiring territory to chartered companies, such as the Royal Niger Company, the Imperial British East Africa Company and the British South African Company, which unlike those in the Dominions (which were commercial companies which gradually acquired administrative powers) were formed to do the work of administration, with a commercial arm to fund it.

Pre-figured by the 'scramble for Africa', the First World War highlighted the end of the confident imperial project of universalism under the Victorian banners of empire and free trade. It is important to recognise that the rise of Japan as an Asian 'Great Power' (Schmitt 2003: 231), the impact of inter-European war and the use of colonial troops to fight (Füredi 1998: 38-40) and the withdrawal of Russia from the imperialist club, meant that by the 1920s the world could no longer be easily understood in terms of racial hierarchies:

Most serious were the loss in prestige and the intrusion of gnawing doubts as to the supremacy and even the validity of Western civilization itself. The West's decline of faith in itself coincided with the East's growing confidence in its right and ability to assert its equal claims. (Emerson 1960: 17)

In the British case, the African protectorates were already, in effect, a postscript to the glory of Empire. The African states were classed as Protectorates not Crown Colonies. Lord Lugard quotes Sir C. Ilbert, a leading authority of the day, that 'for purposes of municipal law an African Protectorate is not, but for purposes of international law must be treated as if it were, a part of the British dominions' (cited Lugard 1923: 34). The African states were 'protectorates' not colonies, which already highlighted a contradictory and problematic approach to the assumption of sovereign power over them. The distinction lay, not so much in the power which the British government could exercise, but, in the responsibilities which it accepted. In 1900 the British courts (Kings Bench) definitively ruled that:

East Africa, being a protectorate in which the Crown has jurisdiction, is in relation to the Crown a foreign country under its protection, and its native inhabitants are not subjects owing allegiance to the Crown, but protected foreigners, who, in return for that protection, owe obedience. (cited in Lugard 1923: 36).

The growth of empire was now seen more as a problem than as an opportunity. Unlike India and the Far East, there was a high turnover of colonial staff and few administrators took their families with them or would have thought of their stay as more than temporary. It was clear that Britain had no interest in devoting the resources necessary to exercise direct sovereignty over its African territories.

Colonial administrators were much more conscious of their contingent relationship with colonial society than in the pre-war era, nowhere more so than in sub-Saharan Africa. There is now, for the first time, a genuine concern in the colonial administration about the contingent nature of their links with society. It was in order to address this problem that indirect rule concepts developed as attempts to shore up administrative authority through talking up the autonomy and independence of native chiefs, who they sought to rule through and to 'capacity-build'.

As Rupert Emerson describes it, indirect rule, based on giving traditional authorities official recognition, meant that 'Europeans regularly attributed to the chief a greater measure of royal omnipotence than was traditionally accorded to him by native custom' (Emerson 1960: 250). While the chief's substantive power may have passed to the colonial power, his formal authority was often enhanced and, as long as he was compliant, he would receive the protection of the external power. Emerson argues that this process corrupted both chiefs and colonial officials:

For the chief it meant subservience to the alien authority... In the case of the colonial official it meant that he tended to align himself with reactionary elements in the society just at the time when the forces for change were beginning to come into prominence... For some, prisoners of the dogma of indirect rule, the maintenance of an increasingly anachronistic traditional society tended to become an end in itself. (Emerson 1960: 251-52)

David Latin describes the process through which British colonizers revived the status of the Yoruba kings creating administrative mechanisms of indirect rule through reifying tribal associations and encouraging claims based on the invention of traditional and historic rights (Latin 1985). The legacy of imperial statebuilding is generally seen to be that of 'divide and rule' mechanisms which undermined a cohesive national polity, reconstituting chiefly rule as a barrier to independence:

In West Africa, up to the end of the 1940s, they redoubled their efforts to launch their colonies down the same slipway of chiefly rule which their own colonialism had previously done its best to undermine. Titled honors were duly handed around to suitable chiefly recipients... Hard-pressed district officers were urged to invent new ways in which the authority of chiefs, now that Britain was to withdraw, could be reinforced by prudent measures of administrative devolution, notably in the matter of "native tax" and "native treasuries". (Davidson 1992: 104)

There tends to be reading backwards of history in relation to the development of mechanisms of indirect rule. These do not stem so much from the desire to undermine the nationalist movement (this was clearly of little consequence in Africa in the early 1920s when Lord Lugard is writing) but from the concern over the tenuous administrative power which the administrators held over the masses. As Lugard noted, in contrast to territories such as Hong Kong where direct rule was ‘thoroughly efficient’, in Africa there were few British staff and if there was direct rule without tribal authority: ‘There could only be one end... eventual conflict with the rabble’ (1923: 216).

The insight that Lugard had was to make a virtue out of necessity in the understanding that it was possible to create mediating institutions between the colonial power and the masses that could act both as a protective barrier and enhance the power of colonial rule. It is clear that indirect rule was not intended to merely support the forces of reaction or to freeze social relations. There is an ambiguous relationship in which through the rubric of interventionist administrative ‘good governance’ both native institutions are built and simultaneously external control is enhanced. As Lugard describes:

The Resident [colonial official] acts as sympathetic adviser and counsellor to the native chief, being careful not to interfere so as to lower his prestige, or cause him to lose interest in his work. His advice on matters of general policy must be followed, but the native ruler issues his own instructions to subordinate chiefs and district heads – not as the orders of the Resident but as his own – and he is encouraged to work through them, instead of centralising everything in himself... (Lugard 1923: 201)

For Lugard, ‘the native authority is thus *de facto* and *de jure* ruler over his own people’, there is not ‘two sets of rulers – British and native – working either separately or in co-operation, but a single Government’ (1923: 203). Lugard states: ‘It is the consistent aim of the British staff to maintain and increase the prestige of the native ruler, to encourage his initiative, and to support his authority.’ (1923: 204)

Key to Lugard’s strategy was the reinvention of native authorities with modern administrative techniques which could assist in developing trade through introducing a wider use of money, rather than barter, and could expand the scope of political identification beyond personal social connections. The introduction of direct taxation, for example, was seen not in narrow functionalist revenue raising terms, but as a mechanism of strengthening the links between the colonial administration and native rulers and, through them, the links to the rural mass. Not only would colonial oversight encourage good governance and transparency in tax assessment, collection, and accounting, but it would give the masses a greater sense of collective, civic, identity and formalise links to the administering authorities:

...the Suzerain power imposes the taxes... and the general rate... the actual assessment is in the hands of the native ruler and his representatives... guided and assisted by the British staff. It therefore appears to the taxpayer as a tax imposed by his own native ruler, though he knows that the vigilant eye of the District Officer will see that no unauthorised extractions are made... Since the salaries of the ruler and the officials of the “Native Administration” are paid out

of their native treasury funds, they cannot be regarded by him as officials paid by the Government. (1923: 207)

In Lugard's view, the problems of external management of the dual mandate are resolved through administrative mechanisms such as these. There is no necessary contradiction between strengthening the capacity of local native administrations for 'self-government', increasing and extending the social and political bonds between the masses and the native administration, and enhancing the power and authority of colonial rule.

The discussion of indirect rule is the first major discussion of how rule in a colonial state can be socially mediated, to ensure modern forms of regulatory control despite the lack of modern economic and social relations. Lugard directly makes the point that in India, where there was direct rule, there was no social mediation, which meant that at independence only a socially isolated elite could take power. British direct rule which covered two-thirds of India, meant that 'when the inevitable time arrived, and India demanded a measure of self-government, the bases on which it had rested for centuries are found to have been destroyed'; according to Lugard, external direct rule had undermined the capacity for self-government because: 'the policy of the past rated administrative efficiency more highly than education in self-government' (1923: 226).

Lugard criticised attempts to export British method of administration and political institutional forms to less developed societies, such as India, on the basis that this merely destroyed organic native structures of social and political mediation without creating any new ones in its place. Lugard was well aware that indirect rule stood accused of being a 'reactionary' alternative to the development of representative institutions on the Western model, which was being followed in India at that time. However, he felt that this view was based on ignorance. In language that would not be out of place in 'lessons from Iraq' policy documents concerning the disbanding of the army, he notes: 'To overthrow an organisation, however faulty, which has the sanction of long usage, and is acquiesced in by the people, before any system could be created to take its place... would have been an act of folly which no sane administrator could attempt.' (1923: 224)

He argued that, while the jury was still out with regard to India, and that anyway it was too late to revive alternative traditional models of rule, African development was less advanced and had clearly not reached the stage where the representational model could be successful rooted in existing social relations. He stated that it was not yet the case that 'a comparatively small educated class shall be recognised as the natural spokesmen for the many' (1923: 194). The argument comes across today as paternalist and elitist. However, Lugard is, in fact, expressing possibly a more developed understanding of socio-political relations than those who today would count as more enlightened administrators. Lugard posed indirect rule as necessary in opposition to those who sought to mould a compliant native political professional elite and focused on the qualities of native administrators through civil service training in the values of good governance. With Lugard, the science of colonial administration takes its highest form in attempting to work through forms in which colonial administration can overcome the lack of clear elite representatives. There was no point in having compliant native politicians if there was little link between educated professional, 'Europeanised' Africans and native society. For Lugard:

The fundamental essential, however, in such a form of Government is that the educated few shall at least be representative of the feelings and desires of the many – well known to them, speaking their language, and versed in their customs and prejudices... In present conditions in Africa the numerous separate tribes, speaking different languages, and in different stages of evolution, cannot produce representative men of education. (1923: 195)

Lugard argued that Europeanised or Westernised educated professional Africans would be antagonistic towards the native rulers and councils established under direct rule and judge colonial policy in terms of Western mechanisms of liberal democracy. He stressed that the key point was not narrow instrumental control over dependent tribal authorities but, rather, that of the relationship between state and society. As Lugard comments in relation to the extension of representation in India:

...the real test is not merely whether the native councillors show moderation and constraint as against extremists of their own class, but whether, when legislation has to be enacted which is unpopular with the illiterate masses and the martial races of India, there may be a reluctance to accept what will be called “Babu-made law”, though it would have been accepted without demur as the order of “the Sirkar” – the British Raj. (1923: 196)

Today, it is difficult to read the discussions about indirect rule and the lack of representational legitimacy of the professional native elites, without interpreting this argument to be a reactionary and self-serving one. This is no doubt that there is an element of this, nevertheless, I suggest that it is at this moment that the genealogy of international statebuilding essentially begins as a study of administrative political science. The problem of state-society relations was seen to be a matter of administrative politics, not merely ‘political’: the problems of managing could not be resolved politically without there being mediating social and political relations. For example, Lord Lloyd, High Commissioner for Egypt (1925-1929) argues for the prioritisation of administrative solutions:

Good administration is their only desire and concern – and it is because we have allowed administration to be obscured by political issues that we have brought such heavy troubles upon the shoulders of all concerned. In these countries the real problem has been administrative, and we have chosen to regard it as political. (cited in Emerson 1960: 38)

Rupert Emerson, writing in the post-colonial era, reads this privileging of administration above politics as reflecting the framework of aristocratic prejudice of British colonialism, rather than a reflection of the genuine problems facing government in underdeveloped fragmented societies:

This pattern rests essentially upon the two assumptions, familiar to aristocracies everywhere, that the backward masses, incapable of administering themselves and misgoverned by their own regimes, will receive a far better deal at the hands of their advanced overlords, and that they are primarily interested only in living their lives in peace and quiet with rising standards of welfare to be provided for them from above. (1960: 38)

The post-colonial reading of colonial discussions of state-society relations, which questioned the existence of organic links of political interest between the educated native elites and the masses, is seen in narrow instrumental terms as an elitist aristocratic attempt to privilege the voice of the peasant over the voice of the middle class professional agitating for national independence and self-government:

The proper focus of colonial attention is the “real” people, the simple peasant mass, which gratefully accepts benevolent paternalism... The occasional outbursts of political agitation reflect, not the demands of the “real” people, but only the self-interested machinations of an untrustworthy few (Emerson 1960: 38)

There is some grounding in these complaints. It was in the name of the ‘real’ people that the colonial statebuilders attempted to undermine elected representatives and argued that the nationalist parties represented little more than their own self-interest (little differently from today’s discussions of ‘New Wars’ or ‘greed and grievance’ which see venality and corruption where previously there was political interest; for a discussion, see Kaldor 1999; Collier and Hoeffler 2001; Cramer 2006). Emerson, for example, cites Winston Churchill’s condemnation of the Indian National Congress, in 1931, for its inability to represent the interests of the people of India:

They [Congress] merely represent those Indians who have acquired a veneer of Western civilization... To transfer that responsibility to this highly artificial and restricted oligarchy of Indian politicians... would be an act of cowardice, desertion and dishonour. (Emerson 1962: 42)

Of course, there is no question that British imperial rule had no claim to representational legitimacy, nevertheless this does not invalidate the critique of the gap between nationalist (largely Western-educated) elites and what remained a largely rural peasant society. The question is not so much the rights and wrongs of indirect rule vis-à-vis representational bodies under direct rule, but the fact that what was at stake was an analytical view of state-society relations and a debate about the extent to which the science of political administration could effect change and assist in the regulation of society and create or support mediating links between state and society.

This question was revived in terms of content but in a very different form in the post-colonial era. Here, as we shall see, similar arguments, to those put by Lugard about the need for separate and distinct political forms to overcome the isolation between the state and society, were seen as progressive, while arguments which insisted on measuring the post-colonial state according to the standards of Western liberal democracy were seen to be reactionary. The mere fact that the debates are interpreted so differently, with representational government being seen as progressive under imperial rule and reactionary under post-colonial rule, demonstrates how the stigma of colonialism has contributed to the concealment of the genealogical links between experiments with indirect rule and experiments in international statebuilding.

Post-Colonial Nation-building in the 1960s

The other clear point at which the problems and questions of international statebuilding, as the regulation of pre-modern state-society relations, are highlighted is a post-colonial

one. In the 1960s there was a general awareness of the weakness and fragility of the post-colonial state but, pre-Vietnam, the discussion was not yet purely shaped by Cold War geo-strategic concerns. The rolling back of colonial power was here seen as a matter of unfortunate timing. Just when colonialism had been held to have undermined traditional structures of power and traditional relationships and generated new social forces and social upheaval, the colonial powers had been forced to retreat, leaving behind new states which were ill-equipped to handle the problems of 'transition':

Everywhere in the world, this process of social mobilization makes the developing countries harder to govern by their own traditional elites, but still harder to govern from abroad. Everywhere the trend is toward rising costs of foreign intervention... The actual capacities of many of the new countries for self-government and for the maintenance of political cohesion have been quite limited. From the Congo to Laos and Viet Nam, political instability in many of the new countries has been extreme. In such countries only one form of rule seems even harder and more costly to maintain: government by foreigners. (Deutsch 1966: viii)

The problem of nation-building was seen to be the disjunction between the state and society. This posed two problems. The first problem was that of the perceived need of top-down interventionist policies to create social cohesion, breaking the traditional perception that political development could be understood as a natural or even automatic phenomenon. Again there was an attempt to (re)ground a science of post-colonial political administration to guide this intervention. Secondly, there was a second disjunction, between Western forms of political (and economic and technical development) and the underdeveloped non-Western state. Therefore, the question of what works and of what strategies and policies to promote couldn't just be read from Western experience, or transferred from Western states. Colonial intervention was held to have undermined traditional social and political processes, but the West was held to be in a difficult position to guide the process of social and political reconstruction.

The cause of the problem was initially seen as the fact that post-colonial states were external creations, not reflecting a social reality. In sub-Saharan Africa, states 'were not brought into being because of the cultural homogeneity and traditional unity of the people composing them; each was made up, in varying degrees, of disparate ethnic groups forced into a single political form by the imperial power' (Emerson 1966: 96). Even the struggle against colonialism, which was held to be the essential mechanism for forging national identity, often was little developed before the withdrawal of colonial power, the only exceptions being the white settler states, such as Algeria, Rhodesia and Kenya (Wallerstein 1961; Emerson 1960). In many respects the nationalist parties gained power too easily before forging a close relationship with society, and often came into being only shortly before independence (Huntington 1968: 425). The rapid withdrawal of colonial power meant that most African states were 'cheated of their revolution' (Emerson 1966: 110). Without a shared history or a shared language other than of the former colonial power, it appeared that sub-Saharan states faced a long and arduous task in the creation of social cohesion.

In recognition of the crisis of the post-colonial state, in the 1960s, nation-building was increasingly understood to be a highly interventionist project, much more than 'just the establishment of that most complex of modern organization, the machinery of state' (Pye

1962: 39). The problem of nation-building was implicitly and explicitly a matter of administrative intervention to reshape and create socially mediating links, involving not merely the transfer of technical capacity and skills but also changing cultural attitudes and values. It was also understood that the process of 'transition' created many possibilities for conflict and instability before national cohesion could be assured.

It was clear, especially with regard to sub-Saharan Africa, that although states existed as administrative creations, the lack of relationship between state and society appeared as the key problem undermining development and social stability. In Lucian Pye's words, for the new states: 'the great objective is to achieve impressive elements of organization that characterise the modern nation-state; and the almost universal problem is that they have the form but not the substance of nationhood' (1962: 3). Initially, in terms of presentation at least, the pre-modern society and culture of the non-Western state was seen to be the central problem facing the security and legitimacy of the post-colonial state. Traditional patterns of social life meant that the state could not play the same social role as in modern Western states. There appeared to be an unbridgeable gap between society and the state, between social relation and the state form. Fundamentally, the political sphere was not and could not be sharply differentiated from social and personal relations. Political parties were not based on functional social divisions, but either on nationalism or regional and ethnic identities. The fragmented traditional social relations meant that there was no politically or socially-mediated conception of citizenship. Rather than reflecting organised and cohered social forces, politics was seen to be organised on the basis of personal relations and personal cliques or networks of association. The problem was that pre-modern social relations could not be expected to result in modern Western political processes (Pye 1962: 15-31).

There was understood to be very little prior theorisation of statebuilding, in terms of the different circumstances faced by post-colonial states in bridging the gap between the state and society – generally addressed under the rubric of 'nation-building'. As Pye noted, leaders of new states were 'provided with glowing expositions of the virtues of democratic values and republican constitutions' or they received 'extensive advice on limited technical matters of applied administration':

But they are not offered any systematic guide to the nature of national development which can provide a sound basis for judging progress and for determining priorities for action. We seem to have neither the theoretical nor the applied knowledge to provide the basis for strategies for nation building. (Pye 1962: 6)

In terms of policy responses, the problem of state-society relations at the heart of nation-building was seen to be a unique dilemma which had only arisen in the post-colonial period. It was clear that while democracy was an agreed aim, the precondition could only be economic and social progress which could provide the basis for a modern democratic state. In post-colonial 'transition' societies, Western norms of judgement appeared to make little sense. This sense of confusion is well expressed by Pye:

Is the emergence of army rule a sign of anti-democratic tendencies? Or is it a process that can be readily expected at particular stages of national development? Must the central government try to obliterate all traditional communal differences, or can the unfettered organization and representation of conflicting

interests produce ultimately a stronger sense of national unity? Should the new governments strive to maintain the same levels of administrative efficiency as the former colonial authorities did, or is it possible that... because the new governments have other claims of legitimacy, this is no longer as crucial a problem? The questions mount, and we are not sure what trends are dangerous and what are only temporary phases with little significance. (Pye 1962: 7)

Samuel Huntington argued that, in so far as the American policy establishment was concerned, the lack of attention to the question, despite its policy importance, was a major problem (1968: 5). He saw two reasons for this, linked to American historical experience:

Firstly, the US experience of economic plenty and political stability had led social scientists to believe that the problem of statebuilding would be automatically overcome by economic development. The understanding of nation-building in the post-colonial state as a process that needed administrative interventionist tools led many US academics to criticise US foreign assistance in this area for its focus on administration rather than socio-political factors. The US appeared to have no nation-building strategy, Pye argued that 'our policy is in search of purpose' (1962: 297), suggesting that:

We have not been creative in exploring the prerequisites of successful assistance programs, and we have tended to vacillate between a narrow-minded economic approach and a diffuse desire for uncritical and "friendly" relations with the underdeveloped countries. (Pye 1962: 295-6)

For Pye, it appeared that technical considerations dominated US aid programmes to make up for a lack of clear strategic goals: 'such considerations seem to provide us with objective and neutral standards that protect us from appearing to be unduly arbitrary' (1962: 297):

Economic criteria are not unimportant and certainly should not be casually disregarded, but they are not adequate for policy in one of the most important matters of our time. The fundamental framework for our policy toward the underdeveloped areas must be defined by the entire range of our associations and our interactions with them, and it would be a gross if not insulting reversal of priorities to place at the heart of our relations with other societies such limited matters as our technical and economic assistance programs. (Pye 1962: 297)

Pye argued that administrative and institutional reform would be key to successfully cohering state/society relations:

For different reasons, both Westerners and the leaders of the new countries have tended to shy away from the fundamental issues in nation building, preferring to talk about supposedly innocuous technical and administrative matters than about politics. Nation building is above all else a political matter, which means that at the heart of the problem lie the questions of values, of human trust, and of the proper sharing of power. (Pye 1962: 299-300)

The problem of post-colonial states was not held to be that of inadequate administrative capacity but the lack of fit with their societies, which were unable to give content to

representative politics (Pye 1962: 301) Emerson noted that in the circumstances of underdevelopment and relations of rural dependency, 'representative government which emerges can be no stronger than the society which it represents' (1960: 278). Statebuilding was more than a matter of drawing up democratic constitutions. Democratic constitutions had not arisen in the new states as a reflection of societal processes but were the property of small Westernised elites, what was needed was leadership and the development of nationally cohesive political programmes.

Secondly, the US had imported its political framework from seventeenth century England; it had been 'born with a government' and had 'never had to worry about creating a government' (1968: 7). The US experience was of concern to limit government, 'confronted with the need to design a political system which will maximize power and authority' there was no answer except 'free and fair elections (ibid.)'. The focus on economic development, which became the basis of aid and loan programmes, had meant that the issue of political development in post-colonial states had been largely ignored. There was a clear recognition by the social science community that statebuilding in transitional states could not be achieved by merely transferring administrative and technical capacity, nor the political institutional systems of developed Western states:

What we are witnessing is the failure of a series of experiments in grafting an alien form of government on peoples whose background and circumstances are totally dissimilar... The first phase of the post-colonial reaction to colonialism involved the copying of the institutions of the imperial West. The failure of those institutions and its aftermath constitute a second phase... What the inarticulate masses wanted from the revolutions... was presumably not constitutional democracy or parliamentary government, but economic and social advance under their own leaders within a framework of national unity and strength. (Emerson 1960: 289)

It is ironic that Emerson is repeating in content, if not in form, the views which he condemned as aristocratic prejudice when they were formulated by the British colonial administrators to argue that advance under native administrations was key rather than democracy and parliamentary rule. In these circumstances it was seen as unsurprising that statebuilding was increasingly undertaken by institutional innovation, through the military or under one-party systems. The search for social cohesion could only take a national form; in the circumstances of a highly fragmented society, this often meant international commentators' support for one party rule, aware that pluralist forms of democracy would open up demands of regional and ethnic particularism. In fact, the mass party was seen as playing a crucial role in bridging the gap between the state and society, bringing the masses into the political process (Foltz 1966: 120). A national project and national goal were seen as crucial to the integration of new elites, the problem being whether this cohesion could withstand the social pressures associated with mass mobilisation.

Samuel Huntington's 1968 book, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, concretised the problem of the mediation between state institutions and the masses, drawing out the consequences of the analysis. Whereas previous analysts had suggested that instability and authoritarian rule could be inevitable, Huntington proposed a much more interventionist approach to prevent instability and maintain order. He also inverted the

traditional understanding of the problem being that the state institutions were in advance of society, suggesting that the issue should be seen from a new angle. Rather than seeing the lack of economic development as causing the state-society gap, he argued that it was the development process itself which was destabilising:

It is not the absence of modernity but the efforts to achieve it which produce political disorder. If poor countries appear to be unstable, it is not because they are poor, but because they are trying to become rich. A purely traditional society would be ignorant, poor, and stable. (1968: 41)

Rather than being the potential solution, economic progress was the problem facing non-Western states, creating an increasingly destabilised world, wracked by social and political conflict:

What was responsible for this violence and instability? The primary thesis of this book is that it was in large part the product of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics coupled with the slow development of political institutions. (1968: 4)

It was not the case that the political institutions of the post-colonial state were ahead of their societies (in terms of representing a national collectivity which was yet to become fully socially and economically integrated). The problem lay with the institutions of the state rather than with society. Huntington's statebuilding thesis consciously sought to privilege order over economic progress, as both a policy means and a political end.

In many ways, his work presages the themes of current academic policy approaches. This is not merely because he was directly involved in interventionist policy-making, being intimately involved in US policy-making in the Vietnam War. From 1966 to 1969 he was chairman of the Council on Vietnamese Studies of the US Agency for International Development's South-East Asia Advisory Group, and visited Saigon in 1967 on behalf of the State Department 'to investigate ways in which political power could be developed in Vietnam' (cited in Leys 1996: 75). But because Huntington specifically focuses on the active policy which could be pursued to help bridge the state-society gap rather than theorising about it in more abstract terms.

It was his experience in Vietnam which convinced him of the urgency of the task. His concern was that instability in weak post-colonial states would favour the communists:

The real challenge which the communists pose to modernizing countries is not that they are so good at overthrowing governments (which is easy), but that they are so good at making governments (which is a far more difficult task). They may not provide liberty, but they do provide authority; they do create governments that can govern. While Americans laboriously strive to narrow the economic gap, communists offer modernizing countries a tested and proven method of bridging the political gap. (1968: 8)

Huntington's concern was that if the West complacently waited for economic development to bridge the gap between post-colonial states and their societies, they would find the process being short-cut by communist takeovers which promised to statebuild through politically galvanizing the newly created urban classes. Huntington's

concerns were with the methods through which governments could maintain non-communist order by marginalising the power of urban groups, especially through the repression of middle class radicalism (seen as the greatest threat) (1968: 373) and ensuring that the peasantry were satisfied through land reform and the promotion of individual land ownership (1968: 377) and could counterbalance them (1968: 72-78; 443).

His focus was on state institutions rather than with socio-economic processes, he concretely sought to address head-on the political gap between post-colonial states and societies. Huntington expresses an innately political understanding of the relationship between the administration of states and their relationship to society. He clearly expressed the thinking of the time that creating a strong state capable of withstanding the threats of upheaval cannot be done through administrative or technical measures but only through strengthening the state's links with society and through institutionalising these mediating links:

Without strong political institutions, society lacks the means to define and to realize its common interests. The capacity to create political institutions is the capacity to create public interests... The public interest... is not something which exists a priori in natural law or the will of the people... It is something created and brought into existence by the institutionalization of government organizations. (1968: 24-5)

Huntington is clear that the promotion of democracy is not the best way to modernise or to withstand the threat of communist takeover. The barrier to communism is a state which is strongly rooted in society, possibly through the undemocratic framework of one-party or authoritarian rule: 'the non-Western countries of today can have political modernization or they can have democratic pluralism, but they cannot normally have both' (1968: 137). The strength of the state in post-colonial or 'transitional' societies could not be measured on the basis of how democratic their constitutions were or on the technical and administrative procedures, but only in its relationship with its society:

In modernizing society "building the state" means in part the creation of an effective bureaucracy, but, more importantly, the establishment of an effective party system capable of structuring the participation of new groups in politics. (1968: 401)

He argues for an administrative solution to the problem of unregulated politics in post-colonial states. He suggests, as did the colonial advocates of indirect rule, that focusing purely on organic solutions, waiting for economic growth to develop a middle class basis for liberal democracy, would result in 'political decay' and weak states falling to communist revolution. Instead strong states needed to be institutionalised through the top-down mechanism of political parties binding the masses to the government, not necessarily through representation, but through organizational involvement, where the party becomes a substitute for and is capable of overcoming the state's weakness and isolation.

This innately political understanding of the creation of strong states and of statebuilding through institutional mechanisms which reconnected the state with society meant that

Huntington had little time for the ‘apolitical’ or technocratic approaches which focused on the state in isolation from society:

The administrator opposed to parties accepts the need to rationalize social and economic structures. He is unwilling, however, to accept the implications of modernization for broadening the scope of popular participation in politics. His is a bureaucratic model; the goal is efficiency and the elimination of conflict. Parties simply introduce irrational and corrupt considerations into the efficient pursuit of goals upon which everyone should be agreed. (1968: 404)

The problem of state capacity was a question of administrative politics, of developing institutional frameworks capable of bridging the gap between the state and society, rather than purely conceived in administrative terms which would fail to address the problem of cohering a sense of national unity. The institutional focus for Huntington, as for Lord Lugard, was not a bureaucratic one, but a political one. For Huntington it was political parties which were considered to be key to social mediation: ‘as they develop strength parties become the buckle which binds one social force to another and which creates a basis for loyalty and identity transcending more parochial groupings’ (1968: 405).

This much more ‘political’ approach to statebuilding is often read with hindsight as merely reflecting the Cold War framework of US foreign policy which sought to support ‘friendly’ authoritarian regimes in order to maintain international stability and order, rather than concern itself with questions of economic development or democracy. Following the US defeat in Vietnam, policy towards the non-Western world was increasingly shaped by geo-political security concerns rather than the concerns of development and democracy. Until the late 1980s neither the superpowers nor the former colonial powers were concerned with the domestic politics of African states, international aid was based on political allegiances of post-colonial states and discussion of international statebuilding went back into abeyance until the post-Cold War era. However, the development of propping up isolated military and dictatorial regimes was a far cry from the insights of Huntington, Pye, Emerson and other theorists into the concrete need to mediate state-society relations. Once again, current sensibilities tend to erase the essence of the discussion of international policy in response to the problem of non-Western statebuilding.

Conclusion

According to the general analysis setup by current studies into international statebuilding, there have only been limited practical attempts to address the problems of international statebuilding and there is no theoretical analysis to draw upon. This paper has asserted that there is a hidden genealogy of attempts by external powers to address and understand the problem of international statebuilding in non-Western societies, where it is held that it is not possible to merely transplant Western liberal democratic frameworks. Both the solutions forwarded, in the 1920s of indirect rule through traditional authorities and in the 1960s of authoritarian one party rule, sought to experiment and to create state-society links and build social coherence through top-down mechanisms of administrative control.

Both can be seen as genuine attempts to resolve the problem of state-society cohesion, through providing 'short cuts' to make up for the lack of economic and social development held to be necessary to facilitate a genuine public sphere, capable of constituting a 'modern state'. To read history backwards and see indirect rule merely as an attempt to undermine popular nationalists movements or to see Western support for one party rule merely as a mechanism of Cold War geo-political influence would be to conceal the genealogy of the problematic of international statebuilding.

Having attempted to revive a hidden genealogy of international statebuilding, particularly as it has been constituted in relation to the problem of the African state, a few issues stand out. The most striking one is that if economic and social progress will not facilitate an internal organic 'solution' to the problem of the African state on liberal democratic lines then administrative politics and institutional innovation can provide an alternative mediating solution. Today, we live in an international context which is undoubtedly more conducive to more externally-managed 1920s style solutions than those of the 1960s and it could be argued that we are returning to forms of indirect rule, starting with the reformation of the post-colonial state itself, but percolating through society through new forms of top-down administrative regulation, particularly around pro-poor policy making, poverty-reduction strategies and the institutionalisation of civil society involvement as part of external aid conditionality. The fact that these aspects of international statebuilding can be conceived as the latest in a long line of technologies of power exercised through institutional experimentation in forms of external management alerts us to the potential limitations and dangers involved.

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