

A de-emphasis of the state in African(ist) analysis and praxis will not, in and of itself, solve Africa's current problems. This chapter suggests, however, that this may be an important first step in dethroning the hegemony of the Westphalian framework imposed on Africa through colonialism. A more useful framework to address Africa's current internal struggles and external irrelevance must recapture the hitherto marginal dimensions of nationalism and ethnicity. As primary elements in African peoples' lives, such dimensions must be central to any reconceptualizations of Africa, including its international relations.

Notes

1. Van der Waals derives these figures from the 1950 census, the last to enumerate Angola's population by 'tribe.'
2. Two prominent Ovimbundu figures, Jonas Savimbi and Daniel Chipenda, once held high level position within FNLA. In 1962, Savimbi was appointed foreign minister in the FNLA-dominated (and short-lived) Angolan government in exile. He resigned in 1964, amid accusations and counter-accusation of 'tribalism,' to form his own movement. Chipenda, once the vice-president of MPLA, joined FNLA as secretary-general in 1975. He left in 1977 for exile in Europe, but returned to MPLA in 1990, only to leave again to pursue 'independent' politics. He died in exile in 1994.
3. Savimbi received his early military training in China in the early 1960s.

3 Sovereignty in Africa: Quasi-Statehood and Other Myths in International Theory

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Introduction

International relations (IR) theorists and publicists have proposed the need to reconsider the notion of sovereignty with a view to reforming practice (Kegley 1993). They have been moved to their conclusions by international developments such as the plethora of internal wars owing to ethnic conflicts and the collapse of legitimate authority; the increasing flow of refugees worldwide; and the attendant spread of misery and pandemic diseases across borders. Invariably, these critics denounce the rigidity of the present regime of sovereignty and point to its insufficiencies as basis for understanding and managing international existence. In general, they assume the existence of one international regime of sovereignty of fully autonomous territorial states. Many complain that belief in this Westphalian system obscures otherwise fluid international dynamics and relations of power. Thus, they find it paradoxical that the regime of sovereignty-as-enclosed-territories persists as the privileged mode of international existence (Lyons and Mastanduno 1993, 1995). Such are the positions of Robert H. Jackson (1990), Robert Kaplan (1994), and others who argued that post-colonial states possess neither internal coherence nor credible governments to be granted the status of full sovereignty. I do not question the humanitarian dispositions underlying their arguments, but I find their representations of sovereignty, the international order, and international relations fraught with analytical errors, ideological confusions, and historical omissions.

Their discussions of sovereignty omit from consideration the global structures of economic relations and the political processes and

ideological contestations that led to post-colonial formulations of sovereignty. They obscure significant structures of power and governance and political processes which have sustained subjectivity within the international order. These structures are reflected in historical modes (or international regimes) of sovereignty and a related international morality. The pertinent processes are manifest in ideological, cultural, and political traditions which have dominated inter-state relations, first in Europe since the seventeenth century, and in the rest of the world, following European conquest and expansion (Malnes 1994). These traditions have nurtured arbitrary ontological distinctions between the West and the rest, as well as resulted historically in a corresponding political ethos.

In this chapter, I will focus on two oft-repeated errors. One is the notion that Western states uniformly possess a certain organic coherence generated by a purposeful fit between state and nation, a legitimate state desire to maintain this relation, a proven state aptitude to create and maintain a secure environment for the nation, and a credible state capacity to defend itself against competing entities. The other is that post-colonial sovereignty constitutes a historical deviation from Western norms, both as a juridical fiction and an empirical reality. These errors are compounded by a general analytical confusion that conflates, on the one hand, global stability with Western hegemony and, on the other, universal morality with collective submission to the will (and desire) of a few presumptive hegemony.

In fact, sovereignty represents an historical mode of global governance intended to effect a moral order of identity and subjectivity. The current moral order corresponds to a historical distribution of power and strategic resources initiated in Europe during its ascendancy to global hegemony. It was generated by European sovereigns – dynastic rulers, princes, and other rulers – in conjunction with the politically significant European elites: adventurers, merchants, industrialists, and other capitalists. The instituted regimes of sovereignty resulted from power dynamics and conflicts globally but the resulting modes of governance reflect the particular and collective wills and desires of the participants. These are the structures of subsequent global inequities. They set the context for ideologies and political traditions that have justified the instituted order but also continuously undermined alternative discourses and modes of representations. Unfortunately, the resulting discursive structures, ideologies, and political institutions are now unreflectively encapsulated by international theory and authoritatively reproduced ‘international norms.’ However, this is not my main

point. My first argument is that the regime of sovereignty implemented in Africa did not involve a different morality than that which applied to European powers. It simply established a distinct degree of moral solicitation consistent with historical wills and desires which effected specific modes of identities and subjectivity and corresponding modalities of allocation of values and interests. My second point is that the concurrent regimes of sovereignty remained genealogically connected to a historical teleology that held unified the base moral imaginary: Western hegemony.

To illustrate my points, I will consider the historical forms of sovereignty that Western hegemony envisioned for Belgium and Switzerland, on the one hand, and Congo/Zaire, on the other, during the last two centuries. I intend to highlight the political significance and economic implications attendant on two distinct but concurrent regimes of sovereignty: one applicable to Europe (Belgium in the nineteenth century and Switzerland in the twentieth) and the other to Africa, particularly to the Congo (Zaire). Belgium and Switzerland display the same ‘artificial’ features as their contemporary African counterpart, the Congo. Yet, Western powers designed the international regimes of sovereignty and their structures of allocation of strategically significant resources such that the two European states played a significant role in international affairs incommensurable with their capability – measured by size, power, and domestic resources. Moreover, both European states exercised their global role to the detriment of the Congo. These structures of power and subordination and the corresponding processes of global governance are the central themes of this chapter.

The theory and practice of sovereignty

Jackson’s (1992) starting proposition is that, following the Second World War Western powers extended international morality on collective representation to effect decolonization and sovereignty in their colonial empires. This ‘catering’ to the needs of small states, according to Jackson, was an historical exception in that the new entities lacked the requisite attributes for real or positive sovereignty: the capability to deliver domestic security and welfare. They possessed only negative sovereignty, limited exclusively to non-interference in their domestic affairs (1992: 24). Since the resulting ‘quasi-states’ owe their existence to Western-derived norms, Jackson perceives a paradox in their rejection of ‘international legal obligations’ or related moral duties. He is irritated

that the 'governors' of 'quasi-states' decry Western interventions by insisting upon the sanctity of the doctrine of non-interference when such interference is intended to implement international standards. Hence, his conclusion that the sole purpose of 'negative sovereignty' has been to shelter African autocrats. Blaming 'international liberalism' for this state of affairs, he considers that Western generosity has proved misguided as it has fostered only the survival of 'illegitimate, incapable, disorganized, divided, corrupt and even chaotic states' (1992: 2).¹ To Jackson, in sum, African states and their sovereigns are unworthy of equal treatment as sovereign entities.

Jackson's view of African sovereignty is purposefully incomplete and founded upon tendentious representations of historical modes of identity and subjectivity within the moral order. It is incomplete because it leaves out significant global processes (including economic ones) which historically determined various regimes of sovereignty (encompassing such extra-territorial structures as colonialism) that Europe imposed upon other regions of the world (Walker 1993). It is tendentious because it dispenses with the context of African claims to sovereignty and post-colonial autonomy: (a) the material structures of political power and subordination within the post-colonial international order, and (b) the historical exclusion of Africa from the politically significant relationships of the global order (see Clapham 1996).

Jackson is mistaken to claim that, historically, the applicable regimes of sovereignty depended solely upon material domestic conditions or the capacity of the sovereign to ward off external encroachment. Rob Walker, for instance, has challenged the view that there exists a Western norm of sovereignty that is firmly established and historically fixed in a Westphalian orbit and that this model may serve 'as a kind of counterpoint' to a more chaotic post-colonial practices (1993: 805). To believe so one must overlook the survival in Europe of a variety of micro-states (Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, and the Vatican) and others (Belgium and Switzerland) that owe their existence to geopolitical and other considerations by their most powerful neighbors (see Duursma 1996). In fact, sovereignty reflects historical regimes or social compacts, real or imagined, that give form to power and legitimacy (Bartelson 1995: 186-248). These entities exist because international morality has never been founded upon a single standard of moral authority or sovereign legitimacy. Nor has a unified code of ethical standards determined the nature of symbolic and material exchanges among sovereigns or regulated the actions of competing sovereigns towards one another.

It is the case that international morality has reflected material conditions historically associated with the domestic order. Thus, for their own survival, sovereigns have sought domestic legitimacy by establishing historical or strategic alliances with politically significant domestic constituents. So, too, has the capacity of the sovereign to amass the necessary resources to defend itself or to wage war accounted for their authority and recognition by competing entities. Yet, as ethical realities, the historical regimes of sovereignty have also depended on subjective conditions, including the desire of domestically enabled sovereigns to project their wills upon others. In this sense, and thirdly, international morality is not global because it is universally consensual. It emerges as an intrinsic component of the common aspirations, or objectives, of the politically significant sovereigns. Fourthly, the process of universalization of the particular wills and desires into international morality is not straightforward. It is mediated through an ordering of the values, identities, and interests of the various subjects of the moral order.

Historically, as articulated by Hegel, the subjective conditions of sovereignty have comprised the ordering of civilizations (subjectivity) and faculties such that Christianity and Western rationalism have taken precedence over all others.² Hegel recognizes the disparities in the capacity of states to impose their will as the universal will and to translate their desire into common objectives (Taylor 1975). Consistently, a number of Christian/European or Western powers willfully generated the existing international morality by reconciling their conflicting wills and contradictory desires – of autonomy and interdependence, antagonism and cooperation, exclusion and inclusion freedom and subordination, and so on – into common objectives. In other words, the external conditions of sovereignty are *not* entirely independent of the collective decisions of Western powers to establish particular rules, norms, and mechanisms of resolution of competing interests (Bartelson 1995: 217). They also determined deliberately to forgo the available alternatives. Thus, for instance, European powers effected the colonial regime of sovereignty by establishing a hierarchy of subjectivity – based upon an ethical imaginary which organizes moral solicitude according to a combination of a number of subjective considerations: ethnic, racial, ideological, political, and/or economic. This regime privileged the will, desires, and interests of colonial powers at the expense of those of the colonized.

Indeed, the so-called 'objective determinants' of modern Western policies toward self and others cannot be envisioned without related subjective ends. The most elemental is the will of Western sovereigns,

expressed by political determination, to 'emancipate' themselves from mutual and collective alienation through cooperation, leading to consensual rules of mutual recognition, and the attainment of historically defined cultural, ideological, and economic ends. This historical desire was prompted by the chaos resulting from centuries of antagonisms among Western powers. Thus, the Peace of Westphalia, the treaties of Augsburg, Vienna, and others established a fictitious equality among states that were unequal in size, capacity, and other respects. This fiction also allowed European states to coalesce within the Concert of Europe, the Holy Alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and similar groupings which hold mutuality and multilateralism as essential. The relevant international regime of sovereignty effected self-emancipation for all other members of the European (and later Western) order through the principles of recognition of equal sovereignty and willful reciprocity. These principles applied to such less powerful states as Belgium and Switzerland, as well as to micro-states such as the Vatican, Andorra, and Liechtenstein.

The above historical disposition must be contrasted with a parallel Western determination to subjugate non-Western political entities to the requirements of their own needs and desires (Clapham 1996: 3). To be sure, this process was neither uniform, nor entirely coercive, nor free of conflicts or contradictions. As self-appointed enactors of international morality, Western powers extracted compliance from their subordinates by selectively but strategically applying their political skills – including negotiations or accommodations – and military means. The choice depended upon a hierarchy of subjectivity which determined the degree of moral solicitude. Hence, beginning in the eighteenth century, Western hegemonic powers have not been equally solicitous of other European states, on the one hand, and Asian entities (old world 'Infidels'), African, and other polities, on the other. While they countenanced the wills and desires of less powerful European sovereigns, European powers simply subordinated the expectations and needs of others to their own. In both instances, the choice of the means of solicitation hinged on the disposition of the subordinates toward the international regime, particularly their willingness or not to align their political, ideological, or economic expectations with the hegemon's wills, desires, and interests. This process of manipulation seldom depended upon domestic structures of legitimation – democratic or otherwise – and the related historical expectations of the governed. It sufficed only that the external requisite of sovereignty (conveniently aligned to the needs and interests of the hegemon) prevailed.

These processes of manipulation permeate both the colonial and neo-colonial projects. The political context of the Berlin African Conference, the related partition of Africa, and the questionable treaties leading to it, all suggest the deliberateness with which a few European powers unilaterally set themselves to determine the status of Africa, the requisite form of autonomy applicable to Africans, and the subordination of that continent within a larger moral order. Extracted through force, negotiations, and deceit by individual European profiteers and corporations, the corresponding treaties of capitulation, concessions, and transfers of power imposed burdens on the local populations which exceeded the ethical limits of intra-European conventions. In general, these treaties imposed countless unreciprocated burdens upon previously autonomous entities, with the effects of depriving them of sovereign rights. Likewise, in the post-colonial era, Western powers have continued to establish alliances with despotic African rulers – as in the Congo – simply because the latter supported the former's political, ideological, or economic interests.

Historical modes of sovereignty and global governance

International morality and norms did not emerge as a uniform body of juridical principles and rules that applied equally to all. The norms applied to the interactions among European communities within the boundaries of Western Christendom formed a particular body of law known as *Jus Gentilis*. By design, this law differed from the rules and procedures applicable to the transactions among Christian merchants, settlers, and adventurers abroad. These two sets of laws bore no resemblance to yet a third, which governed the dynamics between Westerners and non-Europeans (see Davidson 1961: 53; Alexandrowicz 1967: 150–57; Reynolds 1992: 1–54). Indeed, throughout the modern era, European formulations of the rights to property, the principles of reciprocity, and justice had no equal bearing outside of Europe. Theorists such as Emerich de Vattel held that native or indigenous populations possessed inferior religion, social habits, moral sentiments, and political structures. The latter were also deemed to lack civil institutions and notions of rights. The related sentiment that prevailed until the beginning of the twentieth century was that the natives had no physical, legal, or emotional attachment to land or territory worthy of European respect (Reynolds 1992: 9–22). Versions of Emerich de Vattel's formula formed the basis of the allocation of values within the international

order, including sovereignty, and that of the various determinate modes of inter-communal interactions. This point has received much attention among critics of so-called *international colonial law* (see de Courcel 1935). Yet, the coexistence of different regimes of sovereignty is the more significant dimension of the historical morality emerging from the Western moral imaginary. Here, I will focus on its central teleology as means to unifying the moral order in order to subordinate it to the particular desires and wills of a few select states. I will demonstrate this point by focusing on the regimes of sovereignty applicable to the Congo, Belgium, and Switzerland.

First, Belgium. At the time of its inception in 1830, this European entity lacked all but a few features of the more established states. It was, according to Christopher Clapham, a prototypical artificial state (Clapham 1996: 3). Much like many African countries today, it emerged primarily as a result of revolt by people united primarily by their aversion to insertion into another country: the Netherlands. In another historical parallel to contemporary African cases, the creation of Belgium was precipitated by the urgency of the strategic realities of the moment, as the new state was deliberately maintained as an independent entity by the Great Powers of the Concert of Europe (Clapham 1996: 16). These European powers guaranteed Belgium's survival through a system of neutrality guaranteed by a political structure backed by the threat of force. The Great Powers also insured Belgian independence by prohibiting outside political interference in the internal affairs of the new state.

Switzerland's existence also broke with the Westphalian model and trajectory (Hobsbawm 1990: 80–100). When the Helvetic Republic emerged from French occupation, it too resembled today's post-colonies in many regards. From 1802, when it ceased to be a French puppet state, to 1848 the Swiss Confederacy was very loose internally and, as now, never ethnically unified. It lacked the kind of centralized authority (or, to paraphrase Jackson, 'internal political authorization') enjoyed by other European sovereigns. Yet, Switzerland was integrated into the European system of states. In particular, the requisites of the European balance of power, which authorized Swiss existence, allowed that state to expand, acquiring the Italian-speaking Ticino and the French-speaking areas of Valais, Geneva, and Neuchâtel (Anderson 1991: 135–38). European powers not only recognized the confederate status of that state, they also acted to preserve its neutrality and independence from the Holy Alliance and future imperial powers. In short, although the Swiss state lacked internal organic cohesion and a government capable

of unilaterally fending off competing claims, the European order allowed it to overcome both handicaps – as we will see later – for certain political and economic ends.

Both Belgium and Switzerland owe their survival partly to the 'Great Powers.' From 1815, these European powers decided, in the interest of the balance of power and regional stability, to incorporate some of the weakest members into the continental structures of powers. The collective European will to incorporate and nurture weaker states was particularly evident during the era of imperial conquest, when Belgium was given access to the important *strategic resources* of a global power. Thus, despite its intrinsic deficiencies, this small kingdom played a role during the 1884–85 scramble for Africa that far surpassed its size and strategic capability. It emerged from the Berlin conference as a colonial contender, alongside the traditional and more powerful colonial powers: France, Germany, Great Britain, and Portugal.³ European powers ensured Switzerland's survival by recognizing and enforcing its neutrality, which it maintains today, and extending to it a regime of non-interference, cooperation, and assistance. These powers agreed not to undermine the efforts of Swiss cantons to settle their internal disputes. Not only did this agreement prohibit outside encroachment, the regional powers acted to mediate the frequent rebellions that afflicted the new state. They thus dissuaded, on the one hand, its ethnic French, German, and Italian ethnic groups from seeking incorporation into the more powerful neighboring states and, on the other, these neighbors from disrupting the administrative unity of the emergent state through territorial partition (Anderson 1991: 137).

The attitudes of Western powers toward Africa have not been so charitable. This is evidenced by the peculiar political consequences attendant on the material deficiencies of the Congo. Like Belgium and Switzerland, the polities of Central Africa which were amalgamated in the colonial discourse as 'The Congo' did not follow in the mythical Westphalian trajectory. At the time of amalgamation, the region was covered by loosely connected kingdoms and political entities (some of them confederated). The last kingdom of the Congo was reunified in 1710 (Collins 1990). The name of the region (now country) may even be related to one of these old kingdoms. To be sure, these entities differed in their outlook from European ones. The nineteenth-century internal structures of legitimation in what remained of the princely African kingdoms and political structures emanated undoubtedly from historically specific articulations of subjectivity, bound in regional cultures and politics. It is easy to surmise that these structures of

legitimation – unaffected by the political culture that led to the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Counter-Reformation – differed profoundly from those of the monarchical and confederate systems of Belgium and Switzerland. Nonetheless, prior to colonialism, various European powers viewed the related modes of legitimation as functionally equivalent to European ones in that they corresponded to the domestic political necessities of governance. Indeed, some African rulers in the region had maintained diplomatic relations with the papacy and a succession of Portuguese monarchs (Collins 1990). Throughout the era preceding the slave trade and Western imperialism, the populations of the region maintained regular (if contentious) contacts with Sudanese, Arab, and European officials, associations, and individual traders, merchants, adventurers, and others. Once again, the latter included Portuguese, Spanish, French, English, and later Belgian.

It would be disingenuous, therefore, to attribute latter-day Western attitudes and political dispositions toward Africa exclusively to incommensurable differences in internal structures of authority, power, and legitimacy. Once again, in accepting the specificity of Belgian and Swiss entities, European powers not only recognized their domestic structures of governance as functionally equivalent to those of others, they also validated a long tradition of toleration of multiple and divergent forms of political authorities in Europe. Likewise, prior to modern imperialism, it was not uncommon for Europeans to recognize non-Christian structures of legitimation as functionally equivalent to their own. The colonial project has to be viewed in this context as corresponding to a new Western imaginary and a related moral order which transgress the spirit of centuries of diplomatic contact and mutual recognition between European and African political and religious entities. The Catholic Church and Portugal played a considerable role in the formulation of this imaginary, paving the way to formal colonial rule.

The teleology of these disparate regimes of sovereignty was to integrate the moral order under a unified political economy subordinated to peculiar Western wills, desires, and/or needs. Thus, the fate of the Congo (Zaire) was irredeemably linked to that of Belgium and Switzerland. From 1885 to the present, both Belgium and Switzerland benefited directly from privileges accorded to them by other Western powers. By design, these privileges encroached upon the autonomy (and sovereignty) of the Congo. The regimes of sovereignty imposed upon Central and other regions of Africa by Western powers facilitated the transfer of strategically significant resources from the Congo to Belgium (from 1884 to the political independence of the former in 1960), and Switzerland

(from the time of the independence of the African country to the present). The nature of these resources varied in time, depending upon the requirements of the global political economy and the self-perceived needs of the European states: commercial interests, empire, natural resources, and financial resources. Thus, in 1885, Western powers (including the USA) established the Congo Free State for the commercial interests of the participants. King Leopold II of Belgium transformed the Free State into, first, a personal fiefdom and, then, a colony for Belgium under his personal lordship. It must be remembered that the colony was eighty times bigger than Belgium and that, at the time, Belgium lacked the political and military wherewithal to unilaterally project the kind of influence it did in Europe and Africa.⁴ Further highlighting European discrimination against Africans, Leopold established his trading empire through the very methods prohibited by the Vienna Congress, including the establishment of state monopoly over trade to advance private interests, the 'systematic use of force, mainly through the recruitment of mercenaries, and a policy of developing plantations for trade,' particularly in rubber (Vellut 1989: 306).

For its part, Switzerland has been implicated in the disempowerment of post-colonial Congo – also with the collusion of the present hegemonic powers and against the wishes of the Congolese. This resource-poor country was aided in its ascendancy as an influential player in the global political economy by its political neutrality and bank secrecy laws. Originating in the aftermath of the revocation of the Edit of Nantes, when Protestant French and Italian financiers turned to Geneva to shelter their fortunes, these laws were intended to protect private interests against abuses of state power. They were reiterated in 1934, turning Switzerland into a safe haven for Western-based international finance and capital (Ziegler 1976: 54–6; Cox 1994: 48–50). Yet, Swiss bank secrecy laws have served also to abet illicit transactions, authorized or not by Western powers, in the interests of national governments, agencies, and corporations. Thus, Swiss banks have accepted deposits of laundered money, pay-offs, and bribes paid to illegitimate leaders and businesses, without fear of reprisal or sanctions from states and organizations to whom they are accountable (Ziegler 1976). In fact, Western officials, non-governmental agencies (NGOs), and transnational corporations have frequently used Swiss banking channels to subvert or circumvent the political autonomy and sovereignty of post-colonial states. The post-colonial republic of the Congo has been one of the prime victims of such operations. Its former dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, first rose to power presumably through the assistance of external

powers and their agencies. An autocrat, Mobutu renamed the country Zaire and proceed to embezzle and plunder its resources. Western powers (including the USA and Switzerland), multinational corporations, and foreign individuals provided the incentives for the related corruption as well as the networks through which funds were siphoned out of Zaire. These processes brought the African country to the brink of bankruptcy, making it more dependent upon the whims of international financial institutions for its salvation (Blumenthal 1979).

Knowledge, history, and African identity

I do not mean to suggest that the norms, rules, and principles of international politics, law, and ethics have remained fixed in regard to the subjectivity of non-Europeans: quite the contrary. Western legal and political thought has evolved in accordance with political transformations and changes in the ideological structures of legitimation, domestically and globally. For instance, at the end of the nineteenth century, theologians, philanthropists, anti-slavers, and missionaries worldwide denounced the inhumanity of all forms of slavery (see Galton 1853; Gore ca. 1919; Harris 1938). Policy makers could not ignore these manifestations of outrage, but they appeased the protesters simply by convincing the former that colonialism was an act of conscience. Hence, the humanitarian clauses of the Berlin Declaration (article 9), the League Covenant (articles 22 and 23), and the Charter of the UN (Articles 72 and 73). However, these acts reduced the original humanitarian concerns to rhetorical clichés that paradoxically advanced the processes of domination and subordination of 'native populations' (see Banning 1885; Engelhardt 1887; Sandhaus 1931). In the end, Western decision makers undermined the generative moral, philosophical, and juridical principles of humanitarianism and instead simply subsumed them to coincide with the core ethos and values of *Realpolitik*: the primacy of the *reason of state* and the *national interest* as well as the sovereign *monopoly* on the means and use of *violence*.

Jackson's casting aside of the languages and structures of colonial legislation, although they are a substantive part of international law, subsequently overlooks the permissive political climate and actual behavior of the participants. In doing so, he recasts old modes of knowledge and disguises evident processes of subordination and actual structures of domination.⁵ He effectively espouses an ontology that, according to Richard Falk, is rooted in 'colonizing forms of knowledge' (1992: 5). First, Jackson perpetuates the oft-repeated but unfounded allegory of

privation – that is, of an Africa chronically engulfed in chaos owing to inherent antagonism of opposing 'tribes' or the obsessive pursuit by domestic groups of their own self-interest, unrestrained by state or civil institutions. He is joined here more forcefully by Kaplan (1994), who insists that the abrupt end of colonial and white rule left a cultural void in Africa which the formerly colonized were not prepared to fill. They also claim that Africans lack the ideological, cultural and intellectual resources to overcome this deficiency.⁶

This authoritative view reduces Africa-related social theory to *chronopolitical* observations on everyday conflicts. It is devoid of any reflections on (a) the historicity of the post-colonial order; (b) the rationality of the African state within it (with respect to both domestic and external contingencies); and (c) the necessary tensions between state and civil society in relation to post-colonial governance. Worse, as shown below, it assumes an imaginary of sovereignty and of the socio-political order that is impaired by dated ethnographies of ethnicity and race, erroneous hermeneutics of subjectivity, and an absence of historical perspectives on sovereignty. Significantly, this kind of social knowledge necessarily engenders structures of domination, in particular the erasure or banishment of Africans from the sovereign spheres of production of knowledge itself, particularly international theory.

In regard to the latter point, Jackson claims a privileged knowledge of the conditions of the post-colonial state by assuming falsely that Africans have not given (or are unable to give) thought to their own circumstances. In fact, for over thirty years, countless Africans have ventured their opinions on the requirements of sovereignty, the moral obligations of rulers, and the consequences of state-sponsored oppression in conjunction with treatises on the faculties, in particular the will and desire to freedom and human dignity:

By 1966, Camara Laye had produced in *Dramouss* a horrific vision of political thuggery and murderous violence. Convinced, as early as 1968 that 'the beautiful ones are not yet born,' Ayi Kwei Armah (Ghana) moved on to explore his 'two thousand seasons' of degraded and degrading behavior *by* and against Africans. Meanwhile, set on the eve of Kenyan independence, Ngugi's 1968 *A Grain of Wheat* had ended in telling fashion, with a politician set to fatten himself on misbehavior, and thus to betray the investment in human life and passion that Kenyans had rebelled to achieve in the 1950s. Only a few short years behind, Mariama Ba & Aminata Sow Fall (Senegal); Ama Ata Aidoo (Ghana); Micere Mugo (Kenya) had all added special

insights into the gathering pattern of rot and degradation. So, too, Ousmane Sembene – in film, short story, and novel. Likewise, by 1968, Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), Wole Soyinka (Nigeria) in *Dance of the Forest*, and Ahmadou Kourouma (Mali) in *The Suns of Independence* had denounced the kleptomaniac, political corruption, violence, and outright cannibalism perpetrated by the likes of Nguema (Equatorial Guinea), Bokassa (Central African Republic) and Idi Amin (Uganda). (Lemuel Johnson, personal communication 17 February 1997)

These Africans' views of the crisis of the state, based upon experience, are more discerning and circumspect. They combine an uncompromising critique of domestic tyranny with one of the historical modes of global governance and interactions – the means through which hegemonic powers both order the international system and define access to its strategic resources. The personal cost of these denunciations, including prison and death, did not cause these intellectuals to surrender to unnecessary escapism by attributing domestic ills to external (foreign) factors. The domestic focus is evident. Here, African critics fix their gaze on internal modes of being that perpetuate the subordination and exploitation of Africa. Thus, they denounce not only political tyranny, gross managerial lapses, and corruption, but also examine the historical social contradictions engulfing Africa. They uniformly agree that the usurpation of the popular will by despotic rulers and the subsequent violation of the autonomy and dignity of the citizenries constitutes a grave handicap to African self-determination and 'positive' sovereignty. Thus, for instance, Cheikh Hamidou Kane eloquently describes the painful political turmoil and social strife that eased the way to slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, as well as to informal empire, and colonialism. On the other, many are concerned that class, gender, and regional differentiations as well as 'tribalism' impose structural impediments and corrupting influences in post-colonial African politics. As such, they are constitutive elements of the crises of the post-colonial state (see Mamdani 1996).

Unlike Jackson and Kaplan, however, these African critics and countless others turn their gaze whenever appropriate to two complex sets of factors that define the African experience within the global order. The first set of factors are the hegemonic modes of the international order that obstruct African self-realization or self-determination and cause alienation. To Yambo Ouologuem and Mongo Beti, for instance, the historical modes of subordination derived instrumentally from the mechanisms of distribution of the strategic resources of the moral

order (including moral solicitude) and those of the international political economy. They are enabled by externally imposed structures of cultural subordination and economic marginalization of Africa resulting from foreign policies based on narrow geo-political and regional interests and, at times, in total disregard of African rights and dignity (Mamdani 1996).

Indeed, the usurpation of the popular will by despotic rulers, however significant a violation of the autonomy and dignity of the citizenries, is the sole handicap to African self-determination and 'positive' sovereignty. African subjectivity within the global moral order has been a general condition of subordination and exclusion amplified by (a) domestic dysfunctions and (b) the policies of hegemonic powers, based upon narrow geo-political and regional interests. The latter effectively estranged Africans from the processes of the international order and, predictably, provided the historical foundations of anti-colonial and counter-hegemonic consciousness. In this manner, they helped generate African identities and the desire for emancipation within autonomous spheres. Such an autonomy has been conceived as only a precondition to self-determination and sovereignty. The realization of such an autonomy requires non-interference as a condition for the integrity of the self and the independence of the will, but it has and must coexist with the desire to remain engaged with others.

The paths to African self-realization have long been apparent and yet unattainable. African critics have militated for the removal of both the external and internal handicaps to self-realization. Thus, they – along with 'their' dictators – have insisted frequently on domestic autonomy but also demanded full inclusion and participation in the determination of the juridical norms, political mechanisms, and economic instruments that modulate 'sovereign empowerment.' These demands have been continuously in evidence, particularly in the failed attempts to bring about a new international economic order; to maintain neutrality during the Cold War; to institute international regimes of the sea, air, and space congenial to all interested parties; to reorient resources from the arms race to human needs, and so forth. These attempts at global reforms of the management of international affairs faltered partly under their own weight; but they failed principally because of the arduous opposition of the present hegemonies of the global order.

The domestic paths to self-realization are equally apparent. They include democratization and the rearticulation of the rationality of the historical post-colonial state in the light of the needs of the citizenries

and in the function of both domestic and international exigencies. Consistently, Africans have frequently pleaded for the right and freedom to make final determination on domestic issues and cultural matters. They have insisted on the right to make claim to their labor and the right to a minimum return on their natural resources. As evident in the case of the Congo, the capacity of Africans to positively exercise sovereignty in these spheres has been impaired by constant interferences from outside actors – principally hegemonic states, their political and economic agents, or the transnational organizations that substitute for them – acting in accordance with the ethos and norms of the present international regime.

Conclusion

Whatever else one may think of current African rulers, their claims to non-intervention under the current rules of sovereignty do not constitute the most serious obstacles to an orderly global governance. The most entrenched impediments to a universally acceptable international morality are to be found in the discourses of international relations and law, which still depend upon the perpetuation of the power and interests of the few, on the one hand, and, on the other, the alienation of the many from the politically significant relationships of the international order. 'The sad fact,' according to James Mayall, is 'that the end of the Cold War has not fundamentally altered the problem of power in international relations any more than the end of World War I or World War II' (1996: 18). Mayall has been particularly disheartened that Western powers failed to modify their approach away from their perceived 'national interests' and to take into account the political implications of 'popular sovereignty and the concept of democracy,' both domestically and internationally. In this context, one should be wary of the proposition that the solution to the post-colonial condition of Africa is to further disempower its states by imposing an overt or disguised form of international trusteeship, as Jackson argues so emphatically.

I conclude with the conviction that the realization of a new international morality requires new discursive and cultural practices that transgress the theoretical and conceptual limits of the prevailing international institutions and norms. Such a process would depend upon the broadening of social knowledge on the basis of multiple frames of reference in accordance with the complexity of the practice of sovereignty – and not simply founded upon international reality as understood through the prism and lived experiences of the West. Any

viable and legitimate international morality henceforth must allow for parity in judgment and equal consequences for the actions and omission of all participants of international relations, without regard to status or habits. Mobutu must be criticized for the bankruptcy he has wrought upon the former Zaire. Accordingly, Switzerland must proceed with full restitution of embezzled funds currently in its banks, as well as compensation for its facilitation of other illicit transfers. Belgium and the Western allies must be held accountable for their role in creating Mobutism (the Mobutu phenomenon), maintaining the autocrat in power, as well as participating in land expropriations and human rights abuses in their pursuit of wealth and regional hegemony, including anti-communism. In addition, future Congo leaders must be held accountable domestically as well as internationally for the treatment of their citizens' rights.

Notes

1. Jackson has frequently held that African leaders, without exception, hold power in their personal interest. See Jackson and Rosberg (1982a).
2. Hegel rejected the ethic of the general will propagated by Rousseau, Kant, and others which 'promises to go beyond what is just given... to ends derived [solely] from the rational will.' Yet, he joined them in significant respects regarding the ordering of faculties and rationality (Taylor 1975: 392–402).
3. Although contested by parliamentarians and colonial interests in Britain, France, and Germany, their governments continued to uphold the principle of the equal status of Belgium.
4. At the time of the Berlin Conference, the extant influence of Belgium in Central Africa was limited to the activities of a volunteer organization, hardly a match for the more established Portuguese, French, British, and German interests.
5. Jackson maintains that states should be expected always to continue to act in their self-interest because '[there] is a long-standing Machiavellian applied science (*realpolitik*) on the subject' (Jackson 1995: 69).
6. Even those who reject interventions hold the view of an inherent African chaos. Thus, Stephen Krasner rejects the utility of American intervention into 'domestic developments' in Africa because of a total absence of cultural and psychological resources suitable to order (1992: 49).