

## AFRICAN STATES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL: FROM SOVEREIGNTY DEFICIT TO REGIONAL SOCIETY

İNGİLİZ OKULU PERSPEKTİFİNDEN AFRİKA DEVLETLERİ:  
EGEMENLİK AÇIĞINDAN BÖLGESEL TOPLUMA

F. Aşlı ERGÜL JORGENSEN<sup>i</sup>

### *Abstract*

*This article argues that the mainstream argument that sovereignty of African states has remained unfinished due to the difficulties they faced in domestic politics, should be reread by taking into consideration the cooperation of continental countries and the new model of sovereignty that moves from outside to inside. It is also claimed that the concepts such as state, sovereignty and intervention should be not be considered only within the classical understanding of Westphalia It makes this claim by following the trail of the regional community formation in Africa, which we can be seen as an extension of the English School's international community understanding. The African states, which do not want to return to the old colonial days, choose to cooperate against foreign interventions and this tendency has created an unusual form of sovereignty in the long run, along with domestic liberalization.*

**Keywords:** Africa, State, Sovereignty, English School, Intervention, International Society, Regional Society

### *Özet*

*Bu makale, Afrikalı devletlerin egemenliklerinin, iç siyasette karşılaştıkları sıkıntılardan dolayı yarım kalmış olduğu ana akım iddianın, kıta ülkelerinin işbirliği ve beraberinde gelen dışarıdan içeriye doğru ilerleyen yeni egemenleşme modeli ile tekrar okunması gerektiğini iddia etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, devlet, egemenlik ve müdahale gibi kavramların, sadece klasik Westfalia anlayışı içerisinde görülmemesi gerektiği de iddia edilmektedir. . Bu iddiasını, İngiliz Okulu'nun uluslararası toplum anlayışının bir uzantısı olarak görebileceğimiz bölgesel toplum oluşumunun Afrika'daki izini sürerek yapmaktadır. Eski koloni günlerine dönmek istemeyen Afrikalı devletlerin, dış müdahalelere karşı içeride liberalleşmeyi de teşvik eden bölgesel işbirliği hareketinin, uzun vadede alışlagelmişin dışında bir egemenlik oluşumu ortaya çıkartmaktadır.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Afrika, Devlet, Egemenlik, İngiliz Okulu, Müdahale, Uluslararası Toplum, Bölgesel Toplum

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The system of modern states is built on the perception of equal and sovereign states. Decentralized and confrontational social structure of the middle ages, which was divided between the religious and political elites, evolved into a different period with the reinforcement of the power of the secular and modern state. This transformation, which was especially observed in western and northern Europe, has also changed the social and political relations network. Having a symbolic turning point with the 1648 Westphalia Agreement, this socio-political transformation has led to the formation of states that see each other equal and sovereign in the international arena, as well.

The sovereign state understanding has spread to other parts of the world from Europe over time and has become globally accepted. Within this context, states are accepted as the central authority of their given territory. However, this estimation has some problems in itself when there are different levels of political, economic and social development around the world. In some relatively less developed regions of the world, there are still many countries that have not achieved social cohesion and political stability. Especially the countries in Africa are the most common examples in this regard. Even if they have political boundaries that are accepted under international law, it is one of the important debates in the literature how much these states, which do not have proper centralization and control mechanisms within these borders, and which are often open to the intervention of regional and global external powers, can be accepted as sovereign. Despite the lack of authority within these countries, the fact that they are officially recognized as the sole authorities of their territories, internationally, creates a contradictory situation according to some authors - if not many. It is highlighted that the sovereignty, which is thought to have "succeeded" by the Western developed states in a difficult historical development process, was just "bestowed" to the former colonial states in Africa through the recognition of their independence by the United Nations in 1950s and 60s. In other words, the sovereignty of African states was realized not by the result of a "natural" state of nationalization, but by artificial legal recognition of the international society. Various terms such as "quasi", "pseudo", "semi" or "half" are used in the literature for these kinds of states that use their sovereign rights outside but have the problem of legitimacy and power inside.

Such a sovereignty reading is based on the perception of Westphalian type of state, which estimates the sovereignty flourished from centralization inside. However, that perspective may be insufficient to understand countries with different historical processes. It is also evident that the geographical, physical and social conditions are not same for every state and that the modern age does not offer equal advantages to everyone. Western countries and the developing states cannot be expected to go through the same development processes; since the former ones are the forerunners made the template of being a modern state, or in other words, made the rules of the "game", when the latter ones have to follow these rules to get included in the game. In fact, they found themselves in the game without knowing too much about it. Moreover, the contemporary international relations are even more challenging, sophisticated and dynamic than before. Inter-state power balances are too sensitive to bear the slightest suspicion or hesitation. Not only states and societies but also local, national and international levels interact with each other in the globalizing world. In this new world of new dimensions and new problems, international actorness became highly complicated. Some states with fragile national unity or undemocratic regulations might be very active and powerful in international system, while some with an ideal liberal democracy might be passive or at least less powerful as an international actor.

The recent interstate and regional cooperation of African states may be seen as a model in which state sovereignty developed, for the first time in the world history, from foreign policy to internal politics. Especially the tendency to react jointly and organized against foreign

interventions reveals how much African states are promising to become a regional international community. Having a common colonial past and a common response in this regard emerges as a foreign policy dynamic in which African states embrace together. Regional mechanisms and organizations developed in order not to return to the colonial period and to protect themselves especially from the interventions of the old colonial regimes bring valuable international experience and effectiveness for African states. Thus, these troubled states can also have the self-confidence and motivation to gradually overcome the problems of domination faced in domestic politics through cooperation and experience in foreign policy.

The African Union (AU), which was established in 2001 with the membership of 54 states in Africa and Western Sahara, is the main cooperation organization in this sense. It aims to promote regional integration, peaceful environment, interstate solidarity, good governance and to raise the African voice in the international system. Besides its effect to socialize African leaders to accept liberal values and enhanced the agency of African political class on the world stage, it has also created decision-making structures that have contributed to the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts in Africa (Tieku, 2019: 1). The African state sovereignties, which have been strengthened by the momentum it has received from both the regionalization movement in Africa and the increasing international actorness through that, are worth examining as a phenomenon that can go beyond a conventional sovereignty consolidation and question the given understanding on this issue.

In this context, in our article, the concepts of sovereignty and statehood will be examined in order to examine the issue of how much African states are states. After a critical reading and discussing the literature on this issue, international interventions to Africa and the regional mechanisms to cope with them will be examined. The study will continue with the analysis of Africa as an example of the international regional community and be completed with the conclusion section, discussing how we can evaluate African states driving a different trajectory in sovereignty.

## **2. SOVEREIGNTY AS A PHENOMENON OF STATEHOOD**

The concept of the state is a body of values, powers and procedures based on the discourse of intimate connections between legal authority, political power and community (Dyson, 1980: 206 and 270). Socially, state refers to a given community of people living on a given piece of land believes that it is gathered under the roof of a nation and is connected to a central authority with a citizenship relationship. To put it differently, a given community of people living on a given piece of land believes that it is gathered under the roof of a nation and is connected to a central authority with a citizenship relationship.

The definition of state is legally made by a UN agreement which is signed by all of its member states. According to Article 1 of the "Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States" (1933) which reflects the international acceptance of the notion of the "state", has four essential components: "(a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states" (Montevideo Convention, 1933, art. 1). Thus, states are understood to enjoy complete (or near complete) control over their territories. In order to control these territories, states are assumed to have appropriate knowledge of what takes place on their land (Stanislawski, 2008: 10). One of the most fundamental elements that distinguish the state, or rather the modern nation-state, from other social organizations experienced in history is the belief that it has the freedom, power and ability to make decisions inside and outside. To put it another way, it is believed that the state is accepted to be sovereign inside and outside. They are all accepted as the units of the game, so called international politics, and their sovereignty is all equally agreed upon.

They are believed to be independent from any external power's interference and have the exclusive jurisdiction authority over their territories. As a corollary of being immune from such foreign impact, the principle of "non-intervention" developed in parallel with the concept of sovereignty. According to the UN Charter "(a)ll members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" (UN Charter, Art.2, Para.4). Even the UN body itself has no authority to intervene in "matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state" (UN Charter, Art.2, Para.7).

Such logic about state and sovereignty emerged at the end of a long process, especially the political, religious and social chaos in the 17th century. The Peace of Westphalia, ending the Thirty Years' War in 1648, added a new chapter of state sovereignty to modern history. There are occasional claims about the expiration of the Westphalian term of "state sovereignty", but it is still largely accepted that the international system and, also, society are still by it. As the duality of authority in international society between the pope and emperor came to an end after the war, hundreds of relatively independent authorities with formal sovereignty over their populations and territories emerged. The European political world was taken over by secular authorities instead of religious power, which meant the birth of the modern state system (Masahiro, 2009: 1).

In this modern state system, as mentioned, all states are recognized as sovereign and equal internationally, but in reality some suffer deeply with the low degree of territorial control, socio-economic efficiency and governmental performance. In other words, while some states can enjoy successful control over their territories, others might have some problems in maintaining such domestic control and integrity (Stanislawski, 2008: 367). In the literature, this lack of control over the territories makes the reason of the main the difference between juridical and empirical sovereignty. *Juridical statehood* is about the formal or legal status of a state in its relations with other states, in terms of being independent, enjoying membership of international organizations or possessing various rights and duties in international society. *Empirical statehood*, on the other hand, is the extent to which the substantial political-economic organization of states have developed in relation to efficiency of political institutions, solid economic basis, degree of national unity and the internal support for the state (Jackson and Sørensen, 2010: 20-22). Despite the tendency of western developed countries to be considered generally sufficient in terms of being both empirical and juridical state, the situation is not so simple for the underdeveloped countries which are struggling with various social, economic and political complexities. Moreover, this instability in domestic policy and the possibility that control can change hands at any time causes loss of trust and prestige in the international arena.

### **3. HOW MUCH "STATE" ARE THE AFRICAN STATES?**

The ability, limits and the international role of the states with certain domestic challenges became one of the most debatable aspects of the "taken for granted" sovereignty of states. In the literature, this kind of states with internal governance problems, have created a special area of attention. According to the eminent scholars of the English School, Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, these states can be named as "nascent" or "pseudo-states" enjoying equal sovereignty in international relations but they have neither well-established legal and administrative institutions, nor a high level of respect to the constitution or the rule of law (Bull and Watson, 1984: 430). There are some other definitions for these kinds of entities given by many scholars, such as, quasi-states (Jackson, 1987: 526; Lapidus, 2002: 341; Kalstø, 2006: 729), half-states (Jackson and Sørensen, 2010: 20-22), de facto states (Pegg, 1998), weak states, failed states (Bessinger and Young, 2002), almost states or as-if states

(Stanislawski, 2008: 368). This list can be extended. What is common for all of these definitions is that they all underline the “incompetence” of the given states.

We can get a closer look at one of the most cited authors on this topic, Robert Jackson and how he explains the “quasi-state” concept. He defines the sovereignty as a historical phenomenon which can be both acquired and lost. In nineteenth-century Europe, the concept began to be directly linked to the recognition of other states in the international system and can be called “de facto” independence (Jackson, 1987: 522-23). To recognize the other as sovereign was, then, based on the assumption that the recognized political body was primordially capable of a modern and civilized government. Yet, it was only the states which had the sufficient marks and merits of being a state that would be “baptized” by the recognition. In this way of thinking, sovereignty becomes the merit that states should be eligible to “take”; it should not be “given” automatically. “In other words”, says Jackson, “sovereignty by its original nature was a privilege of the few rather than a right of the many” (Jackson, 1987: 532). Hence, they are possessing juridical statehood but severely deficient in empirical statehood are called “quasi-states” (Jackson, 1993: 21). According to him, African states are the best examples for these states, which are not genuine states, but only “juridical artifacts” because of a “highly accommodating regime of international law and politics which is an expression of a twentieth-century anticolonial ideology of self-determination” (Jackson, 1987: 519). The shortcut to sovereignty, which means a “given” independence by the international society, is the backbone for these arguments. The abrupt transformation of African colonies into “sovereign” states sits at the center of the arguments.

Obviously, African states represent a paradox within the world of sovereign states. The domestic chaos and control problems make the academics question their international capacities for statehood. The mainstream understanding about sovereignty is basically grounded on the Westphalian model, which depicts the casual connection between internal and international authority. However, this leaves us with lots of problems to understand the dynamics of Africa and the world. This is why, we need to expand our understanding of sovereignty, leave the strict limits of Westphalia and begin to see that states become sovereign in different ways. African states might not, in the traditional understanding, represent ideal sovereignty, but the emerging African regionalism might create another trajectory for the foundation of an empirical form of sovereignty, that becomes to fulfill the formal *de jure* sovereign status.

Africa has followed a different course of political development than the rest of the world, especially the West. While most states in the West are known as strong states and having both statehoods together; most African states are so poor, inefficient and corrupt that they are barely able to carry on with effective governments to hold the empirical statehood in addition to the juridical. The emergence and development of the state idea followed an irregular path, in that sense. The independence of the African states was not a result of development of empirical qualities of statehood, but of a rather sudden and widespread change of mood within international society about the legitimacy of colonialism. With the decolonization process of Africa in 1950s and 1960s the nature of acquiring sovereignty status changed significantly. Decolonization was accepted internationally as a principle, as the world was getting ready to transform itself after WW2. The right of nations to “self-determination” was the idea behind the decolonization process. In 1960, the common interest of states turned into the UN Resolution, “Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples” (UN General Assembly Resolution 1514, 1960). As Jackson argues, African states were “granted” the courtesy to be states extensively and uniformly, almost entirely, in disregard of their weak empirical statehood (Jackson, 1987: 524-26). While there were only three independent countries (Ethiopia, Liberia and South Africa) in 1955, one decade later 31

countries were independent. Today, all states on the continent are independent and therefore sovereign.

However, as underlined before, the problems of centralization and control have not been eliminated by the official declaration of independence. It is possible to explain this situation with socioeconomic problems, backwardness in industrialization and the impassable side effects of the colonial period. Unlike the concentration of power in one area, mainly around the capitals which have the ability to reach out to their peripheries, the African states are less capable in projecting power into the periphery. The vast areas of deserts and terrain, makes it difficult for the central authority to reach out to their peripheries. Areas characterized by high population density are separated by areas of sparsely populated ones, if they are populated at all (Herbst, 2000). This situation supports the strong urban bias in the post-colonial state, which still holds the monopsonistic markets to produce rents for patrimonial networks centered on the central authority figure (Bates, 1981). The rural populations view the agents of the center as “strangers” or outsiders who are not trustworthy (Rotberg, 2006: 2-3). Providing the essential state services of health or education gets worse, the further you travel from the capital. As the rural, which is also the periphery, detached from the center, patrimonial networks centered on the “big man” begins to rupture and the African state falls far from the notion of an integrated sovereign society (Hentz, 2010). When we add some ethnic and tribal conflicts onto this socio-economic unrest, we can understand why there are that many civil wars in Africa. Keeping in mind that there were many others throughout the continent in recent decades, the civil wars in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Somalia, Burundi, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Republic of Cameroon and Democratic Republic of Congo are still going on. That is why there has been a vivid discussion and also implementation of external interventions into the region. The social unrest in the countries of the region and the ineffectiveness of the states in solving the problems make the region more open to foreign interventions.

#### **4. FROM NON-INTERVENTION TO INTERVENTION**

States are exempt from the influence of other states in all their internal and external decisions. From international law to international organizations, from international agreements to international collaborations, all kinds of international initiatives and behaviors are based on this pre-acceptance. The intervention, which means the violation of state sovereignty is a decision that can be taken at the end of a rather complicated and difficult process. Whether the interference into states is correct or under what circumstances can be considered correct has long been a wide area of discussion within the discipline of International Relations.

The English School develops one of the most sophisticated approaches for intervention among all International Relations theories by discussing the issue on a multi-dimensional level. In addition to the question of whether state sovereignty or human rights are a priority, dilemmas in different dimensions, such as international justice against international order or solidarity of individuals against pluralism of states, are also taken into consideration. At the heart of all these dilemmas is the concern that the international community can best be protected and improved. We can see these versatile discussions basically under the two camps: Pluralists, who argue that the sovereignty of the states should not be opened to discussion and therefore the international order should not be disrupted (see Bull, 1984; Wight, 1977); and the Solidarists who are clustered around the idea of solidarism underlying the claim that states might be interfered, if necessary, in cases where human rights are violated means saving the human being, the cornerstone of the international community (see Vincent, 1986; Wheeler 2002). The reasons to intervene and the possible consequences of it not only in front of that country but at the international level are among the topics that English

School academics have been discussing with passion. According to the solidarists, the international community must intervene when states cannot protect human life for various reasons or especially disregard. However, pluralists have reservations about this mechanism, which at first glance seems completely ethical. With the opening of the door to intervention it can turn into a political tool to eliminate some states that great powers can abuse for the sake of their national interests.

According to the eminent pluralist of the English School, Hedley Bull, the society of states shall not be based upon the existence of humanitarian intervention, since there is “unwillingness to jeopardize the rules of sovereignty and non-intervention by conceding such a right to individual states” (Bull, 1984: 193). He is underlining the danger of humanitarian interventions being unilateral or the possibility that states would act on their distinct moral principles, which would weaken the international order based on the norms of sovereignty, non-intervention and non-use of force. On the other hand, John Vincent, the solidarist English School scholar, keeps highlighting the importance of human rights vis-à-vis state sovereignties. He believes that if states systematically and significantly violate human rights, “then there might fall to the international community a duty of humanitarian intervention necessary condition for the protection and promotion of individual well-being” (Vincent, 1986: 14). Support for solidarism has been even further aggravated when the full-hearted solidarist, Nicholas J. Wheeler, published his book “Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society” (2002). In this book, he explains the legal and moral rationality of humanitarian intervention and underlines the “awesome responsibility” and “agonizing moral choices” of politicians in taking these decisions (Wheeler, 2002: 23). He compares various cases all around the world, including Rwanda, Uganda and Somalia from Africa, to which extent the humanitarian intervention has turned into a legitimate practice after the Cold War. Being a part of humanity is just an enough reason to help anybody all around the world, according to Wheeler, when they need help. The inhumane cases are like the turning points of the human history to shake the international community about what to choose: state or individual. As a matter of fact, the time from the principle of non-interference to the understanding that intervention can be done is filled with brutal experiences. In order to better understand this process, which theorists discuss with their conceptual aspects, it is useful to take a quick look at the events and the developing international reactions to tackle with them.

After the end of the Cold War, disagreements that have been covered for a long time or flared up with concerns of a new era brought with it many bloody events. When news of civil war, conflict and massacre came from countries in Asia, Europe and Africa in the early 1990s, the issue of whether the states in question were competent or willing to take adequate measures was also raised. The state sovereignty and the principle of not interfering, which has not been questioned for a long time, have been questioned in the face of these bloody struggles.

The course of work changed when the discomfort expressed in the international community due to unresponsiveness was also voiced by an important diplomat this time. The Ghanaian diplomat, Kofi Annan, who served as the UN Secretary General between 1997 and 2006, had a pioneering role in raising awareness of the international community about the humanity crimes after he witnessed the bloody massacres in Rwanda, Somalia and Srebrenica as the Assistant Secretary-General at the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (1993-96). Annan believed that the UN, as the biggest international organization, holds the responsibility on behalf of international community to protect people against mass atrocities when their state can/does not do so. In other words, state sovereignty can be of second priority when it comes to protection of peoples. He said in his famous UN 2000 Report, “We the Peoples”: “(S)urely no legal principle — not even sovereignty — can ever shield crimes against humanity. Where such crimes occur and peaceful attempts to halt them have been exhausted, the Security

Council has a moral duty to act on behalf of the international community” (UN, Report of the Secretary- General, 2000: para. 219). Annan’s call found a great echo in the world. The civil wars and mass murders made people rethink the protecting norm of state sovereignty and the well-being of humans.

In 2001, the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) released its report “The Responsibility to Protect”<sup>ii</sup>, which is also known as R2P, and the idea was given a legal status in the international arena. It was in 2005 that the R2P was unanimously adopted as a UN World Summit’s Outcome Document. In the final version of the norm, states are given the responsibility to protect their populations from crimes against humanity and, at the times of crisis in meeting this task by the states, the international society is to assist and even intervene into situations.<sup>iii</sup>

It is evident that protecting people against the violence of the state is a sublime principle. Being able to share the pain of someone we have never seen elsewhere in the world is one of the indicators of civilization of the international society. However, as the pluralists underline, stretching the principle of non-intervention has the potential to bring with it many different problems. Especially in a region with a long colonial past, such as Africa, the long-term intention and effects of external interventions have begun to be much debated in the countries of the region. Although initially it was seen as positively, such as struggling with hunger, accelerating development and seeking solution of conflicts in the early days, the gradual strengthening of the international institutions and even the former colonial states in the region caused a serious unrest in Africa. The humanitarian intervention mechanism based on the assumption of civilizing the international community appears to be a new topic of debate because of the unexpected and perhaps justified reaction in the African continent. Independent naturally or artificially, sovereignty gained or given, the states of Africa are all keen about protecting their boundaries against any external intervention which might canalize into a new form of colonialism. Moreover, this reaction also encouraged African countries to make cooperation and develop a common stance towards the outside world and be active international actor for this purpose.

##### 5. “AFRICAN SOLUTIONS FOR AFRICAN PROBLEMS”

African states have been intervened so many times for different reasons and by different actors. On the one hand, there are interventions of African states in other African states, mainly caused by territorial disputes, e.g. Mauritania and Morocco into Western Sahara, Ethiopia and Kenya into Somalia, Tanzania into Uganda and Comoros Islands or South Africa into Mozambique and Angola. On the other hand, there are also interventions, done by non-African external powers. In fact, France, by far, is the main external power, present in Africa<sup>iv</sup>. Although the continent became independent through decolonization, the ex-colonizer, France, maintains its strong hold on Africa. Through defense agreements with almost half of the African states, France looks like the *gendarme* of Africa. During the Cold War, France announced its “responsibility to protect Africa” from Communism. Even after the Cold War, France is very much present as a force in Africa through dozens of military bases. Between 1997 and 2002, France launched thirty-three operations in Africa, ten of which

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<sup>ii</sup> “Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect”, please see ICISS Report: Responsibility to Protect, 2001, p.11.

<sup>iii</sup> The UN adopts R2P with few differences from the ICISS report. Rather than human right violations, only mass atrocity crimes are to be reasons of R2P implementation and the UN Security Council was the only authorized body for intervention according to the UN document. Please see principles 138 and 139. *UN World Summit’s Outcome Document*, 2005.

<sup>iv</sup> Beside French interventions, there was also a Cuban intervention into Angola and the EU’s mission in Congo.



was done through the UN command within the context of promoting security and development (Charbonneau, 2008: 282).

International reactions to these operations differ, but general suspicion is pronounced. Especially African states' ability to run the operations without Western support (Mays, 2003: 122) or their poorest economic capabilities to solve the world's most deadly conflicts (Møller, 2009: 16) are among the subjects of debates. These considerations are partly similar with questioning the ability of the African states to be "sovereign enough". Even though R2P is an international norm and not addressing any particular regions, Africa is always, more than any other region, singled out. According to the list of the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, almost 90 % of the crisis which have referred or invoked by R2P are in Africa.<sup>v</sup> The African leaders are highly disturbed with this international tendency of frequent involvement in their internal affairs and, as a defensive reaction, developed some mechanisms. The umbrella for all these mechanisms is the African Union, which was founded in 2001 as a replacement of the Organization of African Union (1963).

As a reaction to these interventions, they announced their shared values for political freedom, self-sufficiency and unity are mentioned in the roadmap with these words: "the Pan -African movement, which was spearheaded mainly by the African Diaspora, was based on three main pillars, namely (i) Shared historical and cultural values (ii) Collective self- reliance and self-sufficiency (iii) Political freedom. The interaction between the movement and African researchers and political leaders has greatly influenced the struggle for independence in Africa, of which the search for unity and collective action was part and parcel." (AU Comission, 2019: 1).

Both because of the necessity to find a functional tool to deal with the ongoing regional wars and also to show the international community their eagerness to find solutions; the African Union was fast in institutionalizing the international mechanism. In 2000, the member states of the AU accepted to include into its Constitutive Act: "(T)he right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity" (AU Constitutive Act, 2000: Art. 4-h). Two years later, "the African Peer Review Mechanism" has been formed by the member states of the AU as a self-monitoring mechanism to foster the adaptation of best political and economic experiences among member the states, "including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building" (APRM, 2003: para.39). APRM is also a declaration of the African states that they are now able to deal with their problems, not necessarily with an inclusion of the non-Africans in the process. They also set their new position in favor of sharing the best practices of democracy, political governance and economic management, even when it clashes with the traditional norm of non-interventionism.

As a part of this regional stance, the AU and the UN had a special agreement about the application of the R2P norm, even when it is not the case for the UN with any other regional organization. With the report, known as "Ezulwini Consensus" announced at AU's 7th Extraordinary Session in 2005, the authority of the UN Security Council to decide about the use of R2P was recognized. However, the AU put a reservation and underlined the necessity of empowerment of regional solutions: "Since the General Assembly and the Security Council are often far from the scenes of conflicts and may not be in a position to undertake effectively

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<sup>v</sup> According to the online list of International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, the list of the crisis which have referred to or invoked by R2P are: Burma, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Darfur, The Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Syria and Zimbabwe.

a proper appreciation of the nature and development of conflict situations, it is imperative that Regional Organizations, in areas of proximity to conflicts, are empowered to take actions in this regard” (Ezulwini Consensus, 2005: B-i).

With this regional solution, African states decided to take the initiative earlier than the international community. Interventions by the external powers, in this sense, are never welcomed by the member states of the African Union. Hence, they presented their own interventionism from within the continent. The target of intervention is never explained as an activity that undermines the sovereignty of a given state, but rather as a way to normalize the conditions for the state and eventually leave the country.

This attempt of the AU to make the regional organizations more responsible about the regional problems fits the idea of “African solutions for African problems”, which found many supporters in both African and non-African countries. There might be several reasons behind it. First of all, there is a reactive psychology against the external actors in Africa, since it reminds Africans of the colonial experience. Therefore, to solve their own problems instead of involvement of an external power seems more preferable for many Africans. Yet, Western states initiated a withdrawal from African conflict management especially leaving power vacuum for African contingents to fill after the disasters in Somalia and Rwanda. Instead of taking more responsibility, getting “off the hook” might in practice be more logical to do for some Western states. Moreover, the rise of African sub-regional hegemony, such as South Africa and Nigeria, are also taking more initiatives, as they see the sub-regional organizations required to manage and field peace operations forces (Mays, 2003: 107). Hence, the AU took on the task of sending the peacekeeping missions to Burundi (2003-2004), Sudan (2004-2007) and Somalia (2007) in order to install stability and peace (Møller, 2009: 15).

To sum up, regional cooperation formulas, developed by African states to solve the crises in Africa without the intervention of foreign powers, lead to a development at both national and regional level. While the countries are protected by the African Union against intervention from outside the continent, the condition of liberalization, which is the basic value of cooperation, paves the way for normalization in domestic politics. One of the most important steps the Union has taken, as a regional community of liberal states, is the African Union Commission’s study for the road map to the African Union Government and the United States of Africa. This document emphasizing the common history, common culture and cooperation and voicing the ideal of being a single state as one of the forward-looking projects, also provides clear arguments for member countries to solve their internal problems through liberalization and protection of human rights. In fact, from the constitutive act to financial institutions, which is covering all three levels of continental, regional and national, it reveals the potential to be a very successful example to become a regional international society.

This developing cooperation on a regional basis is a good start for regionalization and a regional community, as a continuation. The reactionary motivation keeps the region uniting and also supporting their internal stability and liberty. It will, for sure, not be easy but the African states seem like on the right for being self-esteemed and independent actors of the international society.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The collective memory of colonialism might be the one and only thing to bring the African states closer and develop a common stance against any recurrence of exploitation. The colonial experiences and the common reaction towards western powers help to develop a regional stance around important organizations, institutions and rules, such as the African Union, ECOWAS or the APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism). African states demonstrate day-to-day development in terms of cooperation and confidence. Around the motto of “African solutions to African problems”, they activate a regional support

mechanism, backing and intervention when needed, which mostly push back the external powers' interventions in the region. They are decisive about protecting the boundaries, independence of and stability within African states. In this sense, there is a strong case for the existence of African regional society. A vision of African unity rooted in "pan-Africanism" and institutionalized through the African Union, has influenced the course of inter-African relations. In a sense "Africa" is not just a unit in international relations, but also as the highest referent unit for African states, with its numerous sub-regions. Both the Charter and Constitutive Act of the AU promoted fundamental principles, common objectives, norms and even secondary institutions which were all agreed by the member states.

Actually, the shared international orientation supports the advances of African regionalism and this regionalism supports the concept of state sovereignty, which is a version of statehood development not seen before. As the African states have been unwarrantedly acquainted with Western power politics for a long time, the African politicians use their skills in diplomacy and negotiation.

The regional mechanism created an apparatus for the African states with which they can engage external actors collectively; such as the African Group at the UN. Besides, it also explains the scope of responsibilities of numerous national organizations, working specifically to address African issues, such as the British Commission for Africa, The US Command (AFRICOM), the UN Office to the African Union or the UN Economic Commission for Africa (Tan Shek Yan, 2013: 7).

If fulfillment of a legitimate and successful state is among the criteria, African states may have serious problems; but if the capacity to cultivate international relations is the main idea, then African states can be seen as members of international society. Their role and activity in international relations is not different from any other sovereign states in international society. Their delay in development does not imply that they cannot be a part of international society. Their borders might have been drawn by the colonial powers in disregard of geographical or demographic realities, but this does not make them less meaningful for the populations living there. Ironically, border disputes and intervention into other's territories are one of the more common reasons of present wars in Africa.

The Western type modernization model and a Westphalian state sovereignty conceptualization do not fit Africa. Focusing on it will bring the risk of analysis based on the duality of "us", which is estimated as "normal or fulfilled" versus "them", which is estimated to be "different or lacking". In the end, the difference of African states is only a matter of degree and development and thus not of a kind. As African states connect more under the auspices of African unity, the African state is also more equipped and self-esteemed. This courageous actor behavior in the international system seems to bring a boost for a faster development of sovereignty.

International society is not a constant but a living mechanism, which is changing in time, with human knowledge and experience. This process of "normalization" is not easy as long as Africa is still seen in its colonial inheritance or the African states' sovereignty is not accepted as sufficient. Taking more initiatives about its regional problems, Africa is gradually developing not only the perspective as a regional international society but also its place within the global international society. Africa has a full package of experiences and lessons for international society to develop and empower itself. It is time to see that it is not only Africa becoming part of the international society but also for the international society to upgrade itself by embracing Africa.

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