On Vulnerability in the South:
Sovereignty in the Post-Colonial Space

Ioana Puscas[*]

Abstract

This article engages critically with the question of sovereignty, with a focus on the post-colonial state. Building on Stephen Krasner's arguments, it will point to the risks of employing European-centered/ inspired concepts for understanding processes in former colonies. In doing so, the paper will reveal the complexity pervading the discourse and history of sovereignty, beyond the purely legalistic definitions, questioning whether this institution was only a new democratic appearance for a system that remained inherently coercive. In relation to this, some epistemological and methodological issues will be explored concerning the discipline of International Relations as such.

Key words: sovereignty, post-colonial, empire, decolonization, coercion

There seems to be broad, if not unanimous, consensus of the fact that sovereignty is the fundamental institution of international relations, the *sine qua non* foundation for the relations between states. It is on the basis of a system that privileges sovereignty at its core that the very existence of a plurality of political communities and social orders is rendered possible. On the basis of these essentialist claims, the division of the world into an arrangement composed of *sovereign spaces* is the departure point for any type of interaction in the system and for various relations of power.

It is, therefore, hardly surprising that much of the literature on the post-colonial state is confined in a conceptual apparatus and methodological tools that revolve around these set of assumptions. The argument, as expressed above, has acquired the status of a meta-narrative in international theory and practice, as the ossified expression for a global nomos.

This type of conceptualization is simplistic and highly conventional. There is a series of epistemological and methodological points which need to be addressed more rigorously when dealing with sovereignty. To begin with, it is very difficult to assess sovereignty, to 'measure' it, even though indicators and variables have been suggested for that. Beyond purely legalistic notions sovereignty still remains a contested and problematic issue.

Moreover, any study of the problematique of sovereignty represents an exercise in European-ness, in the realm of hegemonic European discourses and institutional arrangements. This raises, as it will be further explored, important limitations when transplanting the model elsewhere. It is crucial, therefore, to be aware of this Eurocentric mindset which has pervaded thoroughly the debate on sovereignty, self-determination and independence in the post-colonial space.

By exploring such themes, this paper will point to the way in which sovereignty, conceived of as *the* institution of modernity, has itself been molded and transformed in the process of emulation or adaptation in the "Global South" and new developments in the world (mainly stemming from global economic regulations). The political remapping of the world, to include numerous new states, as well as novel shifts of power in the past, say, 60 years with the spread of international regimes and various post-Westphalian actors have shown new facets of sovereignty. This means that contrary to assuming a rather fixed understanding of sovereignty, this has hardly been invested with immutable features and has been subject to rather superfluous reinterpretations.[1]

Just as Robert Keohane points out, the concept of sovereignty can mean different things in different parts of the world. In highly developed capitalist societies, conditions of high interdependence or regional integration have redefined the significance of sovereignty, and reduced it to the understanding of the legal grip on some aspects of transnational processes (terrorism, drug dealers, migration).[2] As this article will further show, in much of the post-colonial space sovereignty is rendered more problematic, tightly embedded in a legal-normative discourse, but contested in practice.

What does sovereignty bring about?

Many scholars have rejoiced themselves in (quite hastened) optimism or, at least confidence, about the newly emerged countries in the post-colonial space. Equally, many others expressed more negative attitudes, viewing the post-colonial state not far from the Hobbesian scenario, in which life would be nothing but 'nasty, brutish and short'. Stephen Krasner could perhaps, *grosso modo*, be placed in a mid-way category.

In his analysis of the Third World countries and their strategy for overcoming their vulnerability in international relations, Krasner advances the idea that the South strove to mould new international regimes that would promote their interests and prevent further shocks. In doing so, they posed a serious challenge to the liberal market-oriented regime.[3]

For this scheme to be applicable the fundamental asset of these countries was their sovereignty. This is *not* to say that the latter was the unique added value that came along with their independence but it paved the way for ensuing steps and measures to be pursued. Implicitly, Stephen Krasner operates with a Eurocentric axiomatic model of the state as the entity which, through its mere existence, is expected to be agency-building and an empowerment factor in itself. In his acceptance:

> The most important general institutional advantage enjoyed by the Third World has been the acceptance of the principle of the sovereign equality of states. (…) Before the twentieth century, however, the Great Powers were accepted as the dominant actors in the system, possessing rights of unilateral action that were denied to smaller states: the principle of great-power primacy dominated that of sovereign equality. (…) In the present system the principle of sovereign equality dominates that of great-power primacy, and states with the most exiguous national power capabilities deny that others have special prerogatives.[4]

Therefore, the breakthrough achieved through the universalization of sovereignty as a principle of inter-state order was that it eradicated previous patterns of hegemony. In Krasner's understanding, once sovereignty became a globally recognized principle of international law and politics, it turned upside down all the existing hierarchies and leveled off power relations. European powers were no more the exclusivist holders of sovereignty over others, but the "Other" of European empires broke the silence and asserted its agency.

Sovereignty can be credited for having brought into reality the unthinkable: a world of perfectly legally equal states as:

Without the triumph of sovereignty, the North-South debate would not exist in its present form. Weaker states would be subject to formal and informal domination by more powerful actors in the system.[5]

However, Krasner does not envisage a world of perfect harmony by stating that the sovereign national state emerged as the only legitimate form of political organization. Nonetheless, in a rather circular argumentation, he ultimately claims that once colonialism and tributary status were denied as norms, sovereignty marked the beginning of a new era in which even weaker powers in the system have rights and prerogatives equal to those of all the others.

The legal argument: Sovereignty and Empire

What sovereignty is (not)

There is an intricate and perverse relationship between sovereignty and empire. While the normalization of sovereignty as a globally acceptable standard for interstate relations could be rather naively embraced as the triumph of a superior principle of equality of states, an investigation into the history of sovereignty as institution surfaces radically different rationales. In a purely legalistic sense, arguments like that put forward by Krasner leave little room for doubt as to the viability of his claims.

Simply put, sovereignty is the totality of competences attributed to the state by the international legal system, which confers the state a status of full international legal person.[6] What is of relevancy for the purpose of this paper is precisely moving beyond face value theoretical propositions and looking into *the practice of sovereignty*, into the way in which sovereignty can respond empirically to the expectations that come along with it. This will point to inadvertencies of axiomatic Western concepts and to new ways of re-considering the discipline of International Relations.

International law devotes much attention to the notion of *effectiveness* of states, assuming specific conditions for statehood, ranging from permanent territory, independence to the capacity

to establish relations with other countries.[7] Despite the acknowledgement of such criteria, sovereignty in the post-colonial era does no render itself more quantifiable because its ontology is grounded in context and time-specific conditions and cannot be divorced from the particular hegemonic discourse that allowed its birth. This means that beyond all the descriptions, classifications and categorizations, in order to understand the essence of sovereignty, it is necessary to grasp the discourse that complements the legal definitions.

Therefore, obscuring the fact that sovereignty has become a normative premise of political life, it is ultimately reducible to a constitutional arrangement and thus artificial and historical. This means that there is hardly anything about it that is natural, immutable or inevitable.[8] Apart from the fact that it has become a fundamental norm, or a legal institution that authorizes a certain political order, there is a crisis of representation surrounding the problem of sovereignty, as it subscribes to *an unmappable region of ambiguity, uncertainty, indeterminacy.* [9] The word *sovereignty* has no content to reveal by itself. Sovereignty enters the realm of discursive representation not as something that corresponds to a real object, distinguishable from other things, but as a matter of reflection upon something that exists more as a shared background against which people can stabilize meanings.[10]

There is an intrinsic elusiveness of sovereignty. It is a domain of no absolute and supreme meanings, but one of compromise, relative slipperiness and constant re-negotiations. As noted by Krasner in a later refined study of this problematique, Westphalian sovereignty has never existed in a complete way, but only through deviations from its own definition: it has always been affected by institutional arrangements, such as conventions, contracts, coercion and imposition.[11] These jeopardized its position of assumed sacredness in international relations and hence the hypocrisy in granting it supremacy as an organizing principle of inter-state coexistence.

The Westphalian model is a *well-understood cognitive script, (…)sometimes honored and sometimes not.*[12] Between theory and practice there has been a schism, although the sovereignty-as-norm narrative has eschewed the acknowledgement of such deviational hypotheses. For, in order not to undermine itself, the discourse that promotes sovereignty at the rank of ultimate norm has stubbornly sought to remain intact.

Descending sovereignty from the pedestal on which international law of states has placed it, a critical scrutiny and a diachronic analysis on the evolution of this institution shed light on its

inherent coercive roots, its intimate link with the modern European empire and also that mundane practice is often divorced from the juridical expectations that derive from it.

Tracing the genesis of sovereignty: Empire and the rest

The democratic appearance that pervades the discourse on sovereignty (i.e. all states are equal and sovereign, bearers of rights and responsibilities in a un-discriminatory way) should be seen in light of a more recent, post-colonial past. In reality, sovereignty, which Krasner credits for being the fundamental institution in the South's struggle for a more just global order, has experienced multifaceted shapes in its evolution and has changed so as to meet certain contextual expectations.

At its roots lie specific European endeavors across the globe, as part of the colonial/ colonizing experience. First and foremost, modern sovereignty is a European concept as its development is primarily linked to Europe and with the evolution of modernity itself. At its onset, it functioned *as the cornerstone of the construction of Eurocentrism*.[13] However, even though its emanation from Europe is beyond doubt, it could only be sustrained through a set of dialectical relations, in a constant struggle and tension with Europe's 'Other'.

In particular, what contributed to the affirmation of sovereignty as a ruling principle was the synthesis between Europe's politics of negativity and modern capitalism. Firstly, the colonial project and the resistance of the colonized acted at the service of the European empire, in its quest for an Alter and a solution to its own crisis. Colonialism profiled the much desired figure of alterity, through a negative construction of non-European others.[14] The ensuing racial conflicts and the creation of the colonized as negation expressed the necessary dialectical opposition needed by the colonizer as its *necessary double*.[15]

Another feature that was part of European modernity and impacted upon the affirmation of modern sovereignty was capitalism. For Hardt and Negri, the forces of capitalism have been central to Europe's success in gaining a hegemonic position at a global scale. The powers of the capital intertwined with political forces and endowed the state with a special ranking as the axis of rationality in the mediation between private and public interests. This narrative leads to a claim that capital(ism) was not just central in the assertion of European sovereignty, as institution, but that the development of capital urged for a special form of command between

individuality and universality through the state. Hence their conclusion that *modern European sovereignty is capitalist sovereignty.*[16]

The institution of sovereignty underwent significant changes from its initial modern roots to day. Without delving into the specific characteristics of subsequent periods, one overarching and encompassing observation can be made about the nature of the change. At times, the modus operandi of sovereignty was challenged or put to doubt. When the nationalistic fever became widespread or when colonialism turned decrepit or illegitimate, certain constitutive parts of sovereignty were affected or altered. Therefore, if in the beginning sovereignty was dynastic and imperial, it later on became popular or nationalistic. This passage from one form to the other outlines the *chameleon-like narrative* of sovereignty, which can easily accept renovations.[17]

Nevertheless, throughout its historical trajectory, all the above-mentioned 'sovereignty episodes' did not shatter the core ontology of the institution as such. It should by no means be inferred that all the forms of contestation or the pressure for change- in a given time period- searched for variants outside the norm of sovereignty. The disciplining effect of this institution is extremely durable and well-entrenched in political behavior and individual sense of identification. The moments of relative rupture hardly questioned the normative basis of sovereignty, but mostly asked for a redistribution of forces within the system. Nationalist and anti-colonial movements contested one form of sovereignty, but in parallel bid for a new one to be created (in the form of a nation-state).

The underlying logic of such processes can be found in the nature of the international system, as it has been shaped by European empire. The tendency to prevent revolutions and favor a certain degree of ossified order is simply part of the *conservative bias* of the international system of states which aims at fostering stability. Because international society is fundamentally conservative, sovereignty- like any historical institution- is subject to change, but the result *does not have to be a capitulation on the part of sovereignty.*[18]

An analysis of the post-colonial state will shed further light on this particular argument. An investigation of the state of the "Global South" can easily outline how the endurance of certain power relations have remained in place, despite new circumstances. When independence was granted, the structural situation was hardly altered, but perpetuated with a new façade. The new states were to a large extent the descendents of the states which the Europeans initially

carved. The post-colonial elite supported and re-affirmed these patterns of power relations so that these states can be seen as *uncritical successors of the colonial state*. [19]

Added to this, the emergence of a new range of international financial and economic actors, which raised many debates about the fading of sovereignty in general[20], posed serious further problems to countries of the Global South. The inability to fulfill basic functions necessary for the perpetuation of statehood surfaced the actual vulnerability of these countries, besides the juridical discourse in which their independence and sovereignty appear unquestionable.

The Post-Colonial State and the Façade of Sovereignty

The struggle for independence and the trajectory of state-formation in what was to be known as the "Global South" seems heroic at a first sights since in a matter of years many post-colonial states shattered imperial hegemonic edifices that had been in place for long. This section will argue that sovereignty in the post-colonial state can mostly be looked at not as an institution that could be self-sustainable, but as one that was granted or supported by exogenous forces. It is paradoxical, nevertheless, that while supported from the outside, the same institution was also weakened by external actors through continuous and abusive intrusion, through informal or "a-political" means.

The technique employed in order to assure the persistence of Africa's weak states consisted of a set of practices of formal transplant of institutions, but without effective bureaucratic and administrative apparatuses, with predatory political elites and no sense of popular "we-feeling". More than in other post-colonial areas, in Africa society did not have a crucial role in the process of state-formation and many elites just found themselves inheriting predetermined boundaries and societies that were heterogeneous and very weak in terms of social cohesion.[21]

However, it can be questioned whether this has ever been the case in processes of state-formation. For scholars like Charles Tilly this would be an invalid argument as even in the European experience there was hardly any real popular or societal action, independent of a ruling capitalist class, which activated for state-making. In this reading, the state appeared as a fabricated result (initially unintentional) of war-making, extraction, capital accumulation and coercive practices of a distinct class of power holders. [22]

Nevertheless, irrespective of the way in which the state in Europe and its supporting institutions, sovereignty, appeared, the idealized model is the Western one and it is this the one against which all judgments are made. Therefore, mirroring the two models (Western-European and post-colonial) they appear in antithesis, one being just a sham or poor copy of the other. At this point a crucial question emerges, which illustrates the crux of the problematique. If these states have been so weak, devoid of many features characteristic of a functioning state, how was even possible for them to exist and resist?

A comprehensive answer is offered by Robert Jackson and Carl Roseberg. They affirm that despite any vulnerability, these countries have not disintegrated or been absorbed into larger countries mostly because they have been created by the international society and supported by it.[23] This means that apart from all these states' incapacity of rising to the empirical expectations of statehood, in the paucity of means of control of coercion or solid economic institutions, they have been sustained by the international community and thus no jurisdictional change occurred in their status.

A conceptual refinement of the concept of sovereignty itself becomes essential here. Jackson and Roseberg make a distinction between juridical and empirical sovereignty, a dichotomy that can be used to challenge Krasner's belief that sovereignty was the utmost important institution of the South, used as part of its strategy to overcome its vulnerability.

Empirical sovereignty, understood as the actual capacity of the state to govern a territory and its population, have a well-functioning bureaucracy and effective institutions is something that is taken for granted in the West. However, a broad view of many post-colonial states is enough to point to a paucity of such components. Countries like Sudan, Rwanda, Chad have witnessed periods of ceaseless disorder or civil wars for a long time in their history of independence. In many of these countries even small armies could carry out successful coups due to the utter lethargy of state military and political institutions. An observation of all these factors points to the conclusion that such states have more often than not enjoyed only a juridical sovereignty, i.e. the formal recognition the state's legitimacy by the other actors in the international system.[24]

Therefore, a binary consisting of negative sovereignty (legal protection from external interference) and positive sovereignty (the ability of the state to provide public goods for its citizens)[25] can be observed. By employing such conceptual distinctions, it does not appear far-

fetched to argue that the post-colonial states, mostly unable to exert real positive sovereignty, appear as entities which, while legally sovereign, were mainly kept intact in the system by a conjugate will of the greater powers and the structure of the international system. That is to say that in the post-colonial space, sovereignty exists, to a large extent, *through* the empire's will[26], through the consent and support of an international legal system and order, mostly inspired and created by Western hegemonic powers, which allows these states to possess juridical sovereignty, in parallel with their frailty.

The paradoxical situation of post-colonial sovereignty is that it exists mainly through an amalgamation of external factors that facilitate or mediate its existence. In this context, it is quite surprising that Krasner identifies sovereignty as *the* institution that countries of the Global South used within international regimes. It goes without saying that it allowed them to claim membership and participation in international regimes or institutions, but this was far from being a clear-cut process. Quite the opposite, central to their preoccupations was a constant *sovereignty dilemma*, pervading their discourses throughout the troubled decades after the decolonization. Bluntly put, they could hardly have the impact for long-term normative and empirical impact as for most of their part, the post-colonial states were weak, vulnerable and poor and *vastly unequal to those seen as the "movers and shakers" within the international system.*[27]

Much of the cooperation in which these countries took part had practical considerations, such as reducing costs, but even more importantly, grasping the mechanism of engaging with the world. [28] It may thus appear more precise to view international institutionalism in the case of the Global South as *sovereignty learning*, as the effort carried out by these countries to become self-aware and appropriate the rules and responsibilities that came with their political independence.

However, a constant container against their objectives has been the enormous asymmetry between them and the rest of the Globe. As Ayoob claims, most states in the Third World *are economically and militarily too dependent on their external benefactors to benefit substantially from relationships based on the notion of absolute gains.*[29] Cooperation resulted, therefore, from the utter sense of insecurity and the need to survive in a system in which Northern countries were blatantly more able to mould matters in their interests. When different forms of regionalism or cooperation through regimes did exist, the push factors came more often than not from the outside or emulating a pre-existing model, through normative and structural borrowings from the north.[30]

Such fears, of a loss in/ of sovereignty were well grounded, given the constant pressures that these countries were faced with within and from the outside. As previously noticed, ceaseless conflicts, corruption and institutional failures inside added to the different forms of mingling from the outside, rarely in the form of military intervention, but through more subtle or allegedly "technocratic" measures. When in 1999 the government of Sierra Leone signed a Memorandum with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), half of the requirements were of political nature, intervening decisively in the social, security and electoral policies of the country, whereas the macroeconomic policies were expected after the fulfillment of political criteria.

Financial aid comes at a price and it becomes inevitably intersected with politics, conditionality and coercion. The threat of economic sanctions became a supplementary warranty for political docility.[31] The implications for sovereignty are not difficult to grasp. International financial institutions, for example, have been skillful in claiming part of debtor states' sovereignty, by imposing conditions that touched upon their political independence or their full control over political and economic institutions and processes.

This process of *sovereignty-lending*[32] was obvious in the conditionality agreements signed between IMF and Indonesia in 1998 bidding for an end of the subsidies for the president's families, or the decision to withhold loans to Kenya when there was no anti-corruption agency created. Even more evident, the state and its political institutions were the target of the World Bank's 1997 Report, bearing the subtitle "The State in a Changing World".[33]

This range of examples is not meant to either demonize international financial institutions, or glorify them for wanting to push for democratic political reforms. Dodging a normative judgment, the scope is rather to prove how sovereignty in the post-colonial states, to a much more extent than in advanced capitalist countries, has been severely affected by external or intermediary actors and their ability to act as free agents on the international scene has been jeopardized. Their behavior bore the mark of empirical weakness, insecurity and a lack of genuine solidarity.

It is not surprising that Krasner himself adopts a somehow more nuanced view in his latest book, acknowledging the peculiar flaws and vulnerabilities of the institution of sovereignty, where internationally recognized Westphalian sovereignty coexists with a sham of domestic sovereignty (the extent to which domestic authorities are able to control activities

within their own boundaries). In this respect, a country like Somalia continues to be an internationally recognized entity whereas it has barely any national institutions.[34]

Concluding Remarks: Subjugation and Emancipation in International Relations

The discipline of International Relations was to a large extent colonized and enslaved into a set of epistemological frameworks that measured and weighed an entire Globe through European filters. This originates in Europe's leading stance in global capitalism and its supreme role in producing knowledge and truth(s).

The question of sovereignty has been purposely dissected, stripped of its inherent Western essentialism and contested so as to show that apart from the legal support, one that is reinforced by hegemonic powers, it falls crumbling down when it is critically scrutinized and interrogated at its very core. Stephen Krasner's claim that sovereignty was the fundamental institution that countries of the Global South used in order to advance further agendas operates with an extremely narrow understanding of sovereignty and at the risk of annihilating subaltern arguments or the profound historical foundations of it.

This analysis has shown how the unsophisticated tendency to transplant European/Western concepts beyond Europe encounters the risk of empirical inadequacy. Moreover, the very same concepts and frameworks for understanding global order are questionable even when applied to the hegemons that created them as they cannot be fully applicable in their idealized form anywhere.[35] In this sense, decolonizing IR is an act of exorcism for both the colonizer and the colonized and does not assume a crude distinction between the two.[36]

By making this methodological and epistemological move, the issue at stake is not so much to apply labels as the post-colonialism/anticolonialism to International Relations as a discipline. Rather, the purpose is to signal a suffocating epistemology which does not account for local subjectivities and a wide plurality of antagonizing voices.

Ultimately, whether sovereignty operates at juridical/ empirical, negative/positive levels is not the only question of paramount importance. Once a first step has been taken to deconstruct and deny the supremacy of axiomatic and normative notions, the discipline is on a promising path of liberation. Nonetheless, beyond the epistemological sympathy for the subaltern or

oppressed, the true decolonization of international relations is a more daunting task as it requires an *active production of a different international social order.*[37]

NOTES

[*] Department of International Studies, International History and Politics, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

[1] A short note is necessary in this sense. Besides a 'methodological' trap, of employing concepts and notions of institutions that are inherently European, the argument becomes an ontological one also. What sovereignty *is*, what constitutes sovereignty and its web of coercive principles and mechanisms, becomes revealed when trying to unpack it. In the process of mirroring the "First World" to the "Third World" it will become apparent how *sovereignty* is not subject to the same criteria at all times and that its ontological foundations have been severely affected with the entry into scene of a plethora of new states after the mid 1950s onwards. On the surface, in political and legal narratives, the essentialist content of "sovereignty" is stubbornly preserved, but a critical scrutiny will actually point to the fact that it is often a mere carcass for an empty content.

[2] Robert Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 74.

[3] Stephen Krasner, *Structural Conflict: The Third World against Global Liberalism*, University of California Press, Berkley, 1985, pp. 5-6.

[4] Ibidem, pp. 7-8.

[5] Ibidem, p. 72.

[6] David Raic, Statehood and the Law of Self-Determination, Kluwer Law International, The Hague, 2002, pp. 25-26.

[7] See David Raic, *op. cit.*, Chapter 3.

[8] Robert Jackson, *Classical and Modern Thought on International Relations. From Anarchy to Cosmopolis*, Palgrave, New York, 2005, pp. 73-74.

[9] Richard Ashley, R.B.J. Walker, "Reading Dissidence/ Writing the Discipline. Crisis and the question of sovereignty in international studies", in Andrew Linklater (Ed.), *International Relations. Critical Concepts in Political Science*, Volume I, Routledge, London, 2000, p. 143.

[10] Ibidem, p. 143.

[11] Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty. Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999, p. 25.

[12] Ibidem, p. 69.

[13] Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 70.

[14] Ibidem, pp. 124-130.

[15] Ibidem, p115.

[16] Ibidem, p. 85-87.

[17] Robert Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[18] Ibidem, p. 77.

[19] Obiora Chinedu Okafor, *Re-Defining Legitimate Statehood. International Law and State Fragmentation in Africa*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague, 2000, p. 37.

[20] It is beyond the scope of this article to review the abundant literature on the impact of globalization and the intensification of interdependencies on state sovereignty. It is essential, nonetheless, to consider that the discourse on globalization has strongly challenged the very foundations of the nation-state, its coercive mechanism, its aspiration of utopian unity and absolute control. It was then inferred that sovereignty, in its classical understanding, was more and more passé in the detriment of a post-Westphalian order. This is nonetheless based upon a quite narrow acceptance of sovereignty that does not look into the subtle mechanisms through which it continues to be preserved and serve as standard for political life, despite some changes in the functions of the state. Moreover, in international reasoning the sovereign state continues to be seen as the desirable entity, hence the efforts to build states or strengthen them in war-shattered areas, because it is believed that it is only through a sovereign states that other public goods can be offered and international order be maintained.

[21] Karen Barkey, Sunita Parikh, "Comparative Perspectives on the State" in *Annual Reviews* , No 17, 1991, pp. 531-532.

[22] See Charles Tilly, "War-making and State Making as Organized Crime", in Peter Evans et al, *Bringing the State Back In*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985.

[23] Robert Jackson, Carl Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood", in *World Politics*, Vol. 35. No 1 (Oct 1982) , pp. 17-21.

[24] Ibidem, pp. 12-14.

[25] For a further detailed discussion see Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 26- 29.

[26] In his study of the relationship between international law, empire and African statehood, Obiora C. Okafor (previously cited) points to the fact that the incipient forms of international law glorified the Empire and the construction of large centralized states. As former colonialism is now normatively passé, some axiomatic and structural features of the old system are still in place, nonetheless, the very creation of centralized sovereign states being an institution that survived and re-adjusted to new historical circumstances. Of course, according to this rationale it is less about real-life sustainability, but the issue is to have the state comply with strict requirements of law, in order to have it recognized.

[27] Mohammed Ayoob, "Inequality and Theorizing in International Relations: the Case for Subaltern Realism", in *International Studies Association*, 2002, p. 35.

[28] Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, *Institutions of the Global South*, Routledge, London, 2009, p. 210.

[29] Mohammed Ayoob, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[30] Jacqueline Anne Braveboy-Wagner, *op. cit.* , p. 211-212.

[31] Tibor Mende, *De l'aide à la recolonisation*, Seuil, 1979, pp. 98-101.

[32] The concept was termed by Stephen Krasner and discussed at length in his 1999 book (previously cited), *Sovereignty, Organized hypocrisy...*

[33] Ibidem, pp. 144-145.

[34] Stephen Krasner, *Power, the State and Sovereignty. Essays on international relations*, Routledge, New York, 2009, p. 232.

[35] As it has been shown, there is no such thing as a unique understanding of sovereignty, besides the legal one, produced and hailed as a norm during by the European empire. This institution is flexible, discourse-dependent and context-related.

[36] Julian Saurin, "International Relations as the Imperial Illusion; or the Need to Decolonize IR", in Branwen Gruffydd Jones, *Decolonizing International Relations¸* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, 2006, p26.

[37] Ibidem, p. 25.