Analyzing the European Development Fund: An English School Account of How Presumed Statehood Undermines (Development in) Sub-Saharan Africa

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Declaration

I hereby declare that no parts of the thesis have been submitted towards a degree at any other institution different from CEU. To my knowledge the thesis neither contains unreferenced material nor ideas from other authors.

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Signature

Abstract

This thesis engages in an analysis of the European Development Fund (EDF) in order to show how the underpinning theoretical and conceptual frameworks fail to enable a sufficient understanding of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) statehood and development practices. The thesis argues that development failures in SSA are inherently linked to donors' misunderstanding of partner states. Equally important, this thesis claims that development failures are connected to donors' incapacity to connect to local SSA governance and social realities. The puzzle is not only that there is an evident mismatch between donor policies and local social realities, but as well that western donors appear to be incapable of understanding SSA governance and social realties while claiming to sustain their development. An interpretive research design has been employed for uncovering the perceptions and beliefs of policy-makers and non-governmental organizations (NGO) employees involved in EDF-related processes.

The findings show that the European EDF policy-makers, while being responsible for designing development policies, encounter substantive difficulties in understanding the way partner governments and more broadly SSA states and societies function. Therefore, the thesis explores the EDF policy-makers' lack of understanding of SSA states and societies, in an attempt to uncover its implications for international relations theory and development policy. In more detail, building partially on the previous literature, the thesis looks into the implications of lack of empirical sovereignty of SSA states for statebuilding and development efforts. The thesis shows that SSA states continue to be seen as states by western donors because of the incapacity to observe and translate at a policy level the meanings-in-use that state-like institutions acquire within the local socio-cultural contexts in SSA. On a conceptual level, the thesis claims that the centrality of western understandings of statehood, while making all other forms of governance irrelevant, obscures furthermore our capacity to conceptualize and run analysis beyond the theoretical boundaries of western statehood, leading to policy incoherence.

The thesis aims to empirically illustrate discrepancies between western conceptions of statehood- and development-related practices and SSA experiences. It does so through a single case study research design analyzing the perceptions of policy-makers and NGO employees involved in EDF-related interactions. A specific focus is shed on the negotiations carried out between the European Commission and SSA governments. Based on 76 interviews, carried out in Brussels, Burundi, Kenya, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda, the empirical analysis reveals the perception of substantial inconsistencies and discrepancies between various meanings attributed to development and state-related norms, institutions, and practices. The thesis shows how the discrepancies observed at an operational-policy level are connected to discrepancies at a general conceptual level and how both such discrepancies are partially determined by the western ethnocentricity of the conceptual frameworks underpinning EU development policies.

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List of Abbreviations

ACP	African, Caribbean, and Pacific States
AIDCO	EuropeAid Coordination Office – Directorate General
AU / OUA	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CellON	National Authorizing Officer support unit
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CTM	Country Team Meeting
DG	Directorate General
DG Dev	Directorate General for Development and Relations with African, Caribbean, and Pacific States
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDF	European Development Fund
EEC	European Economic Communities
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
ES	English School Theory
ETR	End-Term Review
EU	European Union
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GIT	Governance Incentive Tranche
GSP	General Scheme of Preferences
HoD	Head of Delegation
IQSG	Inter-service Quality Support Group
IR Theory	International Relations Theory
JAR	Joint Annual Report
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NA officer	National Authorizing Officer
NAO/ ON	National Authorizing Office
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NIP	National Indicative Program
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PRS(P)	Poverty Reduction Strategy (Paper)
RELEX	Directorate General for External Relations
RIP	Regional Indicative Program
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TNA	Trans-national Actors
WTO	World Trade Organization

"The contemporary state in sub-Saharan Africa is not African. […] Nor is the African state a state." (Englebert 1997, p. 767)

"The dilemma for most western donors is that they never went beyond the cold war in terms of understanding of the African state and certainly they have always wanted to recreate little Europes, little Frances, little Belgiums. It is not possible for them to conceive what's a society that's in development, and that's why China remains an enigma to them, and same other people who live in a traditional society. […] There is an incomprehension of why does this [traditional part] matter, and does it matter at all. And there's a contradiction, because there is this general desire among western donors to make sure that the people participate in development, but their conception of people is something that is familiar to them […] It's a whole setup because it's well intentioned, it's not maliced at all, very confident, but confidently wrong." (NGOFI063[1])

Introduction

The European Development Fund (EDF) represents the development aid provided jointly by the European Union (EU) Member States to the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries. With a history of over half a century, the EDF is one of the longest-standing development cooperation mechanisms and represents a substantive connection between the EU and the ACP states. Although one could expect that 50 years of development cooperation produced a functional partnership based on mutual understanding, current EDF practices reveal significant challenges, as policy-makers and the literature[2] analyzing the ACP-EU relations suggest.

This thesis engages with the EDF in order to show how the underpinning theoretical and conceptual frameworks fail to enable a substantive understanding of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) statehood and development practices. In order to do so, an

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[1] Field interview with NGO employee 2010. The categories of interviewees and the modalities of employing interview transcripts are presented in section 2.3.3.
[2] Critical perspectives see the ACP-EU partnership agreements as neo-colonial (Lister 1988) or failing to achieve their goals (Flint 2008).

interpretive research design has been employed for uncovering the perceptions and beliefs of policy-makers and non-governmental organizations (NGO) employees involved in EDF-related processes. The findings of my research show that the European EDF policy-makers, while being responsible for designing development policies, encounter substantive difficulties in understanding the way partner governments and more broadly SSA states and societies function. This EDF puzzle will be further explored below.

The EDF policy-makers face significant difficulties in applying international principles of donor coordination in several ACP countries. While this challenge is particularly acute in countries in situations of fragility, it proves to be equally problematic in more stable contexts as for example the case of Senegal illustrates. Furthermore, even in cases where donor coordination has evolved substantially, as for example in Tanzania, challenges still remain as the expected outcomes are far from being achieved. The derived puzzling aspect is that it proves close to impossible to apply and respect the international and EU regulations with regard to donor coordination and division of labor. This gap between donor policy prescriptions and on-the-ground realities reveals not only a pervasive disregard for the local realities, but as well a more fundamental discrepancy between the assumptions which inform development policies and the way developing countries actually function.

As pointed out by one interviewee, the diverse and complex needs of developing countries make 'everything' a priority (ECFI009)[3]. In such a context, it becomes close to impossible to prioritize, while prioritization in itself triggers further donor dependence. For example, donor support for achieving universal primary education triggers more donor support needed for managing the pressures at secondary and tertiary levels as another interviewee remarked (NGO60). These entangled needs coupled with dysfunctional governance practices and violent conflicts raise serious questions concerning statehood[4] and development sustainability in SSA.

In the past decades, substantial amounts of development aid have been provided to SSA countries through the EDF. Its impact, however, is not clear (Flint 2008). Neither policy assessments, nor economic analysis prove capable of adequately measuring the impact of aid in development countries (Riddell 2007). Both the international community and developing countries have attempted to improve their engagements through various assessment processes. In some cases these assessment processes remain precarious, as in the case of aid effectiveness. In other cases where evaluations are successfully carried out, the outcomes are unfortunately insufficiently taken into account[5]. All in all, views range from full appreciation of the impact of aid to outright skepticism that development is ever possible.

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[3] Field interview with EU official 2009. The categories of interviewees and the modalities of employing interview transcripts are presented in section 2.3.3.
[4] Most scholars carrying out research on SSA acknowledge the diversity of the continent. My work follows this line of argumentation while, at the same time, based on Harrison (2010) and Englebert (2000), it assumes that we can discuss African statehood as a general phenomenon, as further explained below.
[5] The Kenyan electoral violence of 2009 illustrates how the 2006 African Peer-Review Mechanism report's warning about the fragility of the situation, has been ignored, as one Commission official

On the one hand there is significant advancement with regard to formal appropriation of specific practices (e.g.: elections) or advancement on specific development indicators (e.g.: enrollment in primary education). On the other hand, however, in both academic literature and policy practice skepticism with regard to the sustainability of the development process persists. A European Commission official suggestively explains: "[w]e [the EU] have realized our development based on some very specific approaches which are not reproducible, they are also reports of domination. […] I am regularly very frustrated by the results which I would like to see but which don't arrive, by the weakness of the appropriateness. But I think I don't have a response for this; I also think one needs to accept failure[6]" (ECFI033). This perspective implicitly highlights the incapacity of the SSA states to converge towards a specific (western[7]) model of development.

The thesis argues that development failures in SSA are inherently linked to donors' misunderstanding of partner states. In particular, it is questioned whether most of the SSA partner states are states-proper. The literature has termed such states in various ways, for example Jackson (1993) has proposed 'quasi-states' or others have used general idioms such as failed, fragile, or phantom states. In such cases, a

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explained (ECFI020).

[6] In the context of this research, I will refer to development failures as noted by several authors among which Harrison (2010), Duffield (2002) and remarked by the interviewed policy-makers and NGO employees. It must be noted that there is a substantial debate in the literature on the impact of aid and regime type on development which at times identify improvements (Goldsmith 2001).

[7] Employing terms like 'the West' and 'western' have led to the ardent debates in international relations literature and beyond. For a review see O`Hagan (2002). In the context of this thesis, these terms will be utilized in relation to the literatures the thesis primarily speaks to: international relations theory (the English School in particular) and development policy.

fundamental question is whether such 'states' can even be considered states at all (Englebert 1997). Even in cases where states approximate the image of their western counterparts, in substance there appear to be significant differences. In the words of a Commission official: "[t]here is a state but it functions at a different level. […] The state here functions in a completely different way than the state that we recognize" (ECFI071). In spite of these differences, EU development policies appear ethnocentric, as the opinion of the official suggests: "yet our whole cooperation is based on our understanding of the state and then we talk to a state that is organized in a completely different way" (ECFI071).

Equally important, this thesis argues that development failures are connected to donors' incapacity to connect to local SSA governance and social realities. A particularly important example in this regard is EU's incapacity to integrate traditional authorities into the official development dynamics. At the level of EDF policy practice state institutions are not perceived to be the only authorities that matter in the quest for development. Traditional authorities appear to play a more important role than EU policies assume[8]. In consequence, limiting relations to formal state institutions misguides development policies and further reveals ethnocentrism at the level of EU engagements.

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[8] Aspect supported by a wide literature: Hill (2010), Englebert (2009), Kaplan (2008), Kingsbury (2008), Englebert and Tull (2008), Herbst (2000), Englebert (2000), Bayart, Ellis and Hibou (1999), Warren (1993), Davidson (1992), and Weitz (1986).

The crux of the EDF puzzle is that attempting to formalize the participation of traditional authorities in development policy dynamics may prove however, more problematic than assumed at first sight. The capacity of western donors to fully understand traditional authorities and their role in the SSA context is questioned. Therefore, the puzzle is not only that there is an evident mismatch between donor policies and local social realities, but as well that western donors appear to be incapable of understanding SSA governance and social realties while claiming to sustain their development.

This mismatch leads in practice to contradictory actions on the side of the EU. Somalia is a good example as it shows how the EU has increasingly engaged with non-recognized entities like Somaliland or Puntland over the last decade. That piecemeal engagement with extra-legal situations characterizes the core of development relations where the western donors get entangled in an ontological complexity partially of their own creation[9]. Donors are forced to practically engage in a double talk of creating norms and rules on the one hand and in dealing with situations outside the very norms and rules they've produced on the other, as for example recognizing the sovereignty of SSA states while intervening in their internal affairs (Watson 1997).

From a recipient state perspective, this double talk that donors engage in translates into a vacuum of accountability and legitimacy, isolating the SSA state into a world

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[9] Several of the western donors are former colonial powers and have played an important role in creating and shaping the SSA states.

of its own. This world of the SSA state is characterized by the internationalization and de-politicization of development policy which lifts most governance and sectoral issues from the national debates in the black box of international engagements while at the same time sovereignty confers the right to non-interference. Although the discrepancies inherent in the development engagements of western donors may be easily observable for those working in the field, the international development policy follows its own route as if trapped in the inescapable conceptual straightjackets of mainstream international relations and international law.

<u>The question</u>

Through new empirical research focusing on EDF policy-making practice in SSA, this thesis seeks to sustain that it is the conceptual ethnocentrism of western donor policies assuming a particular western understanding of statehood (i.e.: of positive sovereignty) which rests at the core of the above identified puzzle. The following research question will therefore be addressed: *how does western statehood ethnocentrism reflected through EU policies contribute to limiting the EDF policy-makers' understanding of SSA states and social dynamics?* The EU's approach to development ignores SSA local social dynamics and reinforces institutional practices that fail to be appropriated locally. I argue that this relates to epistemological limitations which appear to misinform policy to the point of failure. These epistemological limitations generate significant conceptual and operational discrepancies which can be revealed through analyzing development interactions.

<u>The literature</u>

The EDF policy-makers' challenges suggest that there is insufficient theoretical and conceptual guidance for how to make sense of the SSA states and social dynamics. The struggles of the policy-makers are reflected in the various streams of literature which come to analyze aid, statehood, and development in SSA. The above puzzle poses serious challenges to IR theory, political theory, comparative politics and development policy. Economics and development economics seem to be entrapped in an inconclusive debate on the impact of aid on growth and reducing poverty. Policy studies face substantial difficulties in assessing aid effectiveness. Comparative politics focuses on western understanding of political institutions offering little insight into how such institutions are appropriated in the SSA contexts. However, first and foremost, international relations theory is challenged as it proves incapable to adequately comprehend the nature of SSA state-like entities and their impact on and relevance for international relations.

The international relations literature up to date proposes at least four avenues for making sense of statehood in SSA. One line of argumentation, represented by Jackson (1993) and Krasner (1999), maintains that the international recognition of SSA states (i.e.: negative sovereignty) fails to trigger internally legitimate and accountable state authority and institutions. A second line of argumentation, represented by Englebert (2009) and Herbst (2000), posits that international recognition (i.e.: negative sovereignty) receives various meanings in the SSA contexts and is utilized by SSA political elites for securing power and resources. The

third line of argumentation, represented by Chandler (2010, 2006), uncovers a 'statebuilding paradigm' in order to show how western international community annihilates the autonomy (political independence) of SSA states exactly through its concern for building state capacity. The fourth line of argumentation, which derives from the postcolonial debates, is represented by Bhabha (1994) and Hardt and Negri (2000), and consists of an "attack on binary divisions, essential identities, and totalization" (p. 144) revealing a new inter-play of global power dynamics, i.e. empire. While all four approaches contribute with valuable insights to the study of statehood and development in SSA, individually they are insufficient for addressing the above puzzle.

It is therefore the aim of this thesis, building on Chazan *et al* (1999), to bring all four approaches together through an integrative approach to understanding statehood and development dynamics in SSA. I will show below why each of these approaches is insufficient individually and how the study of SSA statehood and development can advance through bringing the four approaches together. Chazan *et al* (1999) provides an integrative framework. While conceptually their work is commendable, their analysis remains mostly within the western conceptual and theoretical realms. The aim of this research is to show the necessity and importance of transcending western conceptual frames in attempting to understand statehood- and development-related processes in SSA.

The first chapter provides a brief review of some of the relevant streams of literature addressing aid, statehood, and development in SSA. It is important to note that most theoretical work and research rest within western conceptual frames[10]. There is nevertheless some attention paid in the literature to the inappropriateness of the western statehood experience for non-western areas (Englebert 2009, Herbst 2000). Few studies address specifically this western bias which is presumed to impact negatively on the development engagements in SSA (Englebert 2009, Draude 2007, Mbembe 2002, Herbst 2000, Badie 2000[1992], Chabal and Daloz 1999, Paolini *et al* 1999, Englebert 1997, Bayart 1996[1993], Reno 1998, Davidson 1992). Building on their work, the next two chapters engage mainly with international relations, sociology of the state, failed states literature and critical strands of development literature to create a theoretical and an analytical framework. The aim is to enable an analysis of the interplay of potentially diverging meanings-in-use attributed to SSA statehood and development processes. Such a theoretical approach would more specifically allow an interpretive analysis of the perceptions and beliefs of EDF-related policy-makers and NGO employees who find themselves located at the intersection of western and local practices.

The argument and thesis structure

This thesis explores the EDF policy-makers' lack of understanding of SSA states and societies, in an attempt to uncover its implications for international relations theory

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[10] Given their western bias, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a thorough literature review of all fields of study concerned with statehood, aid, and development in SSA, although all of them reveal important insights into the challenges of SSA statehood and development.

and development policy. In more detail, building partially on the previous work as presented above, the thesis looks into the implications of lack of empirical sovereignty of SSA states for statebuilding and development efforts. The thesis shows that SSA states continue to be seen as states by western donors because of the incapacity to observe and translate into policy the meanings-in-use that state-like institutions acquire within the local socio-cultural contexts in that region. On a conceptual level, the thesis claims that the centrality of western understandings of statehood, while making all other (existing or potential) forms of governance (at a national level – including the definition of the national level itself) irrelevant[11], obscures furthermore our capacity to conceptualize and run analysis beyond the theoretical boundaries of western statehood, leading to policy incoherence.

Drawing on the English School (ES) as representing the via-media of the IR mainstream and constructivist approaches, the thesis shows that while ES observations are by-and-large correct, they are incomplete. In addition their conclusions are problematic as they remain within the western conceptual and practice boundaries. The distinctiveness of the non-western states is recognized by the ES: "[t]o say that juridically states are equal does not alter the reality of these differences. The concept that states are sufficiently alike to be treated as members of the same set is more than a fallacy. [… i]t is a myth which influences our concept of international reality and distorts our judgment" (Watson 1997, p. 69). Furthermore,

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[11] Aspect addressed as well by Englebert (2009) and Herbst (2000).

in his study of Africa states, Englebert underscores in more specific terms the difference between SSA states and western definitions of statehood:

> "[m]ost African states differ from other states around the world along most of Weber's and Young's criteria. They are dubious communities of heterogenous and occasionally clashing linguistic, religious, and ethnic identities; their claim to force is rarely effective and much less monopolistic; their government's frequent predatory nature fails the test of legitimate use of force; their territoriality is generally at best hesitant and contested' and their existence as an idea is usually limited to an urbanized and schooled minority. In a nutshell, most African states fall short of the requirements for statehood" (Englebert 2000, p. 74).

Based on Englebert's (2000) and Harrison's (2010) work, this thesis maintains that one can refer to a general phenomenon – the SSA state[12] (particularly so in what regards state capacity, i.e.: positive sovereignty), while at the same time acknowledging the diversity characterizing SSA. Showing however that SSA states 'fall short of the requirements for statehood,' puts forward nothing less than what these entities fail to be in the eyes of western observers. Such an approach (which is pervasive mainly in the literatures on failed states, democratization and democracy promotion, governance, and political development) stops short of showing what in effect the created SSA state-like entities are, do, and signify within their domestic contexts and the related international implications of particular localized normative and institutional appropriations. Most of ES work focuses on the coming into existence of such states and does not pay sufficient attention to the implications of the discrepancies indicated in the above quote.

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[12] Harrison (2010) argues that "we can meaningfully speak about Africa" (p. 16) due to it being extreme: "it manifests the most radical instances of a generic aspect of contemporary globalization – that is neoliberal reform" (p. 16). The extreme characterization of Africa can also be distilled from Englebert's (2000) argument on the limited legitimacy and capacity of African states. In addition to Harrison's and Englebert's work, two other elements are important for justifying the use of a generic category of SSA states in the context of this research. First, the colonial history and similar modality of coming into existence of most SSA states (except Ethiopia) and, second, the EDF procedures (and broader donor approaches) which do not differentiate between SSA states.

Earlier scholarly accounts have dealt with the distinction between juridical (negative) and empirical (positive) sovereignty by analyzing the significance that juridical sovereignty acquires within the SSA sate (Englebert 2009). While Englebert's work shows how negative sovereignty (i.e.: international recognition) is appropriated and interpreted within SSA states, this thesis will focus on the implications of how the positive sovereignty of SSA states is understood and catered for by western donors (the EU). In line with Chandler (2006, 2010) the project focuses on how donors conceive and impose standards for internal functioning of SSA states (statebuilding and positive sovereignty broadly understood) and how the respective conceptions loop back into constructing development policies. Going beyond Chandler's approach, however, this thesis will focus on the impact of the 'statebuilding paradigm' on the development processes dynamics unfolding in SSA. The thesis will show how EU's development policies are ethnocentric in their conception of statehood and how alternative structures of meanings-in-use and related practices exist but cannot be captured with western state-related concepts and theory, generating a pervasive lack of understanding among policy-makers.

Sovereignty is reified and as such it becomes the bedrock of the western-generated global international society. This thesis takes IR theorizing beyond the idea of positive sovereignty as perceived by western donors, with particular relevance for development policy. The core of the argument is that failure of development in SSA is primarily conceptual and cognitive and intimately linked to the orthodoxy of statehood and sovereignty in IR theory. Watson (1997) shows how words like

dependence change their meanings over time. However, the pressing issue with regard to development policies is that the concept 'state,' which underpins their content, fails to capture the local realities, staying rather in the realm of the western evolving conceptual imagery.

The juncture of donor engagement, limited statehood (at best) and development as social change appears in the view of one interviewee too complicated, dangerous and complex for donors to fully engage with (NGOFI074). That amorphous 'in-between' is the particular locus where the negotiation and implementation of the EDF strategy documents take place. These are the loci inhabited by policy-makers on both EU's and SSA governments' sides and adjacent NGO employees, academics, other international bureaucrats, and various beneficiaries. It is my contention that these are the loci where the answers to the above identified puzzle can be localized and understood through analyzing the perceptions and beliefs of those involved. Carrying out research on the SSA statehood- and development-related processes, as they are perceived by the EDF policy-makers and NGO employees, offers avenues for better understanding not only of why development tends to fail in SSA, but also of the relations between SSA and the West and of the impact of the western imageries and resources in SSA.

In chapter one the theoretical framework is developed based on three main inter-related arguments. The expansion of international society to SSA has brought with it the transformation of colonies in externally recognized sovereign states. The first

theoretical argument relates to the creation of SSA independent states through a western decision, placing them in a state of exception vis-à-vis the international legal order. That modality of creating states opens up a split between the internal and external conditions of those states' existence. They are externally recognized as sovereign, however internally their sovereignty is contested. This leads, on ES grounds, to a dilemma between international order and internal justice.

The second theoretical argument shows how the result of the western sovereign decision on the constitution of SSA states and the ensuing ES dilemma between order and justice lead to the creation of three dimensions within the SSA domestic arenas: the international community on the ground (including donors), the SSA state, and the SSA society. These dimensions are conceptualized as life-worlds which exist based on (an) own logic(s) and which generate distinct structures of meanings-in-use for statehood- and development-related practices. The third theoretical argument relies on the concept of meaning-in-use (Wiener 2008, Milliken 1999) or meaning-in-action (Bevir 2010) employed in transnational and intercultural contexts, in order to enable an analysis of the interactions unfolding at the intersection of the three dimensions.

The second chapter puts forward the analytical framework. It is based on a reconceptualization of the 'international' which encompasses national and local dynamics. Furthermore, it focuses on the development aid-related interactions taking place at the intersection of the three dimensions of which the EDF becomes an

empirical locus. While current ES theorizing is mainly based on arm-chair research, this thesis shows that empirical interpretive research is fundamental for enabling the ES to overcome its western bias.

The thesis aims to empirically illustrate discrepancies between western conceptions of statehood- and development-related practices and SSA experiences. It does so through a single case study research design analyzing the perceptions of policy-makers and NGO employees involved in EDF-related interactions. A specific focus is shed on the negotiations carried out between the European Commission and SSA governments. The focus on EDF is therefore not at a technical level as in most of the specialized literature[13] but at the level of perceptions and beliefs of policy-makers and NGO employees. These policy-makers and NGO employees, beyond their belonging to a specific cultural background (dimension in the context of this research) are socialized in an inter-cultural setting which exposes them to both: 1) culturally distinct understandings of statehood and development-related norms, institutions, and practices and 2) the potential hybridities unfolding in the enactment of statehood- and development-related practices. This approach is deemed suitable for uncovering the discrepancies between western conceptual assumptions, local experiences, and locally-derived structures of meaning-in-use through targeting inconsistencies at the level of meaning encountered in the experiences of EDF policy-makers and NGO employees.

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[13] The literature focusing on EU development policy and the EDF maintains mainly a technical focus from a policy perspective (see Chapter three). My work differs in that it focuses on an interpretive methodology applied to the negotiations of EDF strategies. It therefore targets the opinions and beliefs of policy-makers and NGO employees.

The empirical section consists of four chapters. Chapter three provides an overview of the broader EDF context i.e.: EU-SSA relations and EU development policy. In addition, it places a specific focus on the evolution of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreements, particularly on the Cotonou Agreement which is currently in force. Chapters four and five focus on analyzing discrepancies at both operational (EDF practices) and general levels (broader conceptions of state- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices). Chapter four provides a description of interviewees' perceptions on the negotiation and implementation of EDF strategies, with a specific focus on the encountered challenges. Drawing on the challenges perceived by the policy-makers involved in the EDF negotiations, chapter five provides evidence for the existence of the SSA state dimension and the way it inter-relates with the international community and SSA society dimensions. Finally, chapter six describes and interprets the discrepancies which are encountered at the intersection of the three dimensions and the lack of understanding it generates.

The contribution

There are several ways in which the current research contributes to current literature, policy, and practice. On a theoretical level, drawing on the work of Englebert (2009, 2000) and Herbst (2000), the thesis substantiates the link between IR theory and development aid. The thesis makes an additional theoretical contribution to the ES by proposing a theoretical modality to move past the dilemma of maintaining international order while ensuring internal justice in the postcolonial states. In more specific terms, the thesis brings a substantial contribution to the ES *not* through

building on current ES theorizing of the expansion of international/world society, but rather through opening avenues for integrating non-western conceptualizations and practices in ES theorizing. Equally important, the thesis takes further the critical literature on development through bringing additional evidence for the ethnocentrism of western donor policies. It does so through illustrating not only instances of perceived development failure, but indeed the fundamental incapacity of the western donors to feed back into the policy process the insights and knowledge acquired by policy-makers in their engagement with the field.

A major contribution the thesis makes is its empirical focus on the EDF. The EDF is little studied in general and particularly so within IR theory. An important component of this contribution is the attention shed on the perceptions and beliefs of policy-makers and NGO employees involved in EDF-related processes. In addition, this case study represents a contribution to the broader literature on development policy through the discussion of challenges encountered in the negotiation and implementation dynamics and through showing the substantial disconnect between policy and academic work[14].

A further contribution the thesis makes, through its integrative approach to perceived statehood, is the conceptualization and empirical validation of the three dimensions at play in the SSA domestic arenas (i.e.: international community, SSA state and SSA society), including the dynamics encountered at the intersection of the three dimensions. This approach to understanding the interplay of meanings can be of

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[14] See as well Paris (2011), Court and Young (2005), and ODI (2004).

significant use for understanding that EU development policies fall in the trap of conceptual stretching and also for generating theories and hypotheses, for theory building, and for policy-making.

At the same time several limitations are to be recognized. Carrying out research on such an inter-disciplinary topic as development aid and statehood comes with substantial challenges in engaging with the wide array of existing literatures. Thereafter, while the thesis is an attempt to open avenues for including non-western conceptualizations and practices in IR theorizing, the project relies mainly on western conceptual and theoretical frameworks. With this limitation in mind a structural approach has been put forward where the focus of the research has not been placed on uncovering SSA local practices, but rather on perceptions of such practices. In addition, the focus of the thesis has been purposefully centered on uncovering, through a structural approach, the loci where the western – non-western dynamics unfold. Conceptualizing and theorizing the specific loci of interaction and related dynamics reduces (even if not completely eliminating) western bias. These loci uncover spaces where both western and non-western meanings-in-use interplay and can be accessed through the perceptions and beliefs of policy-makers and NGO employees.

The interpretive approach employed in this thesis, while enabling access to novel empirical data, reduces the generalization of the advanced claims. There is methodological quasi-agreement that interpretive approaches help us acquire a more

substantial understanding of the processes we research. Given the limited results of quantitative studies in providing the context and meanings of development and statehood failure in SSA, I have considered that using an interpretive approach enables a more substantial contribution to be made in this field. In addition, Bevir and Rhodes (2005) argue that interpretive research is equally useful in providing explanations. While engaging with the understanding–explaining methodological debate is beyond the purpose of this thesis, Bevir's suggestion that interpretive approaches can be used for generating causal-chain mechanisms is considered relevant.

Chapter 1: Concepts and theories: understanding development (aid) from an IR theory perspective through re-conceptualizing African statehood[15]

1.1 Introduction

The EDF puzzle described above falls at the intersection of foreign aid, statehood, and development in postcolonial Africa. As such we can find it on the agenda of several streams of literature, among which: (development) economics, policy studies, political science, international relations, sociology, and anthropology. In more specific terms, foreign aid is analyzed particularly from an economic or policy perspective, sometimes getting the attention of political science, philosophy (Pretes 1997, Opeskin 1996), legal studies (Dann 2010, Kennedy 2008), and international relations scholars (Burnell 2004, Hattori 2002, Lumsdaine 1993, Hayter 1972[1971], Morgenthau 1962).

Economic literature engages with the impact of foreign aid on the economies of developing countries (Adu-Opako 2007, Gibson *et al* 2005, Gomanee *et al* 2005, Lancaster 1999). A particular focus is put on poverty and economic growth[16] and the integration of developing states into global markets (Callaghy 2009). Policy studies

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[15] Earlier versions of several of the chapter's sections have been presented at PSA Annual Conference 2010, Romanian Sociology Association Conference 2010, ISA Annual Convention 2008, Graduate Network Conferences at EUI in 2007 and at CEU in 2008 and have been published in Cibian (2008b).
[16] Easterly (2006), Djankov, Montalro, and Reynal-Queral (2006), Dollar (2006), Rajan and Subramanian (2005a, 2005b), Dollar and Burnside (2004), Easterly, Levine, and Roodman (2003), Collier and Dollar (2000), Evans (1996), Agrawal and Lal 1993..

are concerned, among others, with 1) the efficiency and effectiveness of the provided aid[17], 2) the modalities to manage and deliver aid (Dewald and Weder 1996, Goldsmith 1996, Nelson 1996), and 3) the evolution of development policies from donor and recipient perspectives[18]. In more practical terms, there are specific streams of literature covering virtually all sectors and topics development encompass (e.g.: natural resources: Collier 2007, Heller 2006). The work of international institutions focusing on development among which the OECD Development Assistance Committee is fundamental in this area[19]. A critical stream of this literature focuses on aid practices as experienced by policy-makers (Mosse 2005).

The EDF and EU development policies are at times taken as case studies for researchers focusing on EU studies[20]. The broader Partnership Agreements the EDF is related to (e.g.: Lomé, Cotonou) trigger a somewhat broader critical attention[21]. This literature focuses mainly on analyzing the ACP-EU relations from a legal and policy perspective, sometimes taking a critical stance like for example qualifying the partnership agreements as neo-colonialism (Lister 1988). In addition, a significant amount of work consists of the EU's contracted evaluation studies carried out to

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[17] Riddelll (2007), Dichter (2005), Radelet (2004), Cracknell (2000), Cassen and associates (1994).

[18] Shirley (2008, 2005), Lancaster (2007), Brainard (2007), ADB (2006), Browne (2006), Gupta, Pattillo, and Wagh (2006), Clemens and Moss (2005), Klein and Harford (2005), King and McGrath (2004), Rogerson, Hewitt, and Waldenber (2004), Pritchett and Woolcock (2004), Roodman (2004), Akram (2003), Kayizzi-Mugerwa (2003), Owusu (2003), Sampson (2003), Vasquez (2003), Thérien and Lloyd (2000), CBO (1997), Katada (1997), Rao (1997), Svenson (1997), Black and Thérien (1996), Feinber and Avakov (1991), Pearson *et al* (1969).

[19] See http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/index_en.htm - accessed on September 1, 2011.

[20] Carbone (2009, 2007), Holden (2009), Smith (2006), Hoebink and Stokke (2005), Santiso (2002), El-Agraa (2001), Elgstrom (2000).

[21] Flint (2008), Holland (2002), Arts (2000), Lister (1997), Grilli (1994[1993]), Lister (1988), Frey-Wouters (1980).

assess the implementation of EDF-related practices[22]. The thesis will engage with this literature in chapter three. Given the interpretive orientation of this research and consequent focus on the perceptions and beliefs of EDF policy-makers, this thesis adds a new dimension to the existing literature.

The development challenges encountered in SSA have long been in the attention of development studies scholars. Development theory, influenced by several disciplines, has led to the advancement of various propositions and debates (Nederveen Pieterse 2009[2001], McMichael 2008, Greg, Hulme, and Turner 2007, Maxfield 2006, Adelman and Taft Morris 1997). Development economics, dependency theory, and neoclassical approaches view development from primarily an economic perspective. Alternative development and postdevelopment theories draw more on critical sociological and anthropological insights to present broader understandings of the transformation processes development encompasses[23].

Postcolonial SSA states and related institutions and processes (e.g.: elections, governance, capacity building, corruption, etc) have been studied by scholars focusing on political development and comparative politics[24], failed states[25], sociology of the state (Badie and Birnbaum 1983[1979]), and international

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[22] See http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/evaluation/evaluation_reports/index_en.htm - accessed on September 1, 2011.

[23] Young (2009), Ekholm Friedman (2008), Friedman (2008a,b), Gordon and Gordon (2007), Comaroff (2006), Mosse (2005), Sueur (2003), Beissinger and Young (2002), Darby (1997), Ferguson (1997[1990]), James (1997), Mamdani (1996), Werbner and Ranger (1996), Escobar (1995), Said (1994[1993]).

[24] Randall and Theobald (1998[1985]), Weiner and Huntington (1987), Almond and Coleman (1960).

[25] Paris (2011), Call (2008), Englebert and Tull (2008), Ghani and Lockhart (2008), Kaplan (2008), Kraxberber (2007), Kreijen (2004).

relations[26]. Almond (1987) provides a thorough overview of the work undertaken by political scientists in the early years after independence. In the post Cold War period a stronger focus has been put on democratization, corruption, and governance[27]. Throughout the period, studies focusing on the relation between Africa and the North have been conducted (Engle and Olsen 2005). As well, the impact of aid on statehood has received attention (Moss, Pettersson, and van de Walle 2006, Goldsmith 2001, Frisch and Hofnung 1997).

The wide array of literatures and approaches to statehood, development, and aid in SSA reveals more than just the relevance of the subject. The unfolding debates are characterized by a perpetual struggle to make sense of the development processes and developing SSA contexts, up to now with limited success. The best example in this regard is development theory where the efforts of academics, policy-makers, and international organizations are countered by contradictory SSA development outcomes (e.g.: status and sustainability prospects of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)). Chazan (1988b) rightly identifies this gap as a conceptual one, which is described as follows:

> "[a] feeling of unease nevertheless remains. The paths of interpretation are frequently dissociated; full understanding is all too often obfuscated. Intellectual tools are masterfully employed and extended, but a sense of incompleteness prevails. Existing categories shed light on portions of the political landscape; however, they are only partially reflective of realties and hence only partially assist in the quest for greater comprehension. Conflicting interpretations raise more questions than any single approach can adequately accommodate." (p. 337)

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[26] Salter (2010), Englebert (2009, 2000, 1997), Brown (2006), Sørensen (2004), Watson (1997), Jackson (1993), Mazrui (1992[1984]), Bull (1992[1984]).

[27] Harbeson (2009), Morlino and Magen (2006), Kosack (2003), Joseph (1999), Sardan (1999), Moore and Robinson (1995).

It is the contention of this thesis that this conceptual gap is a result of western ethnocentrism(s). Most of the above accounts remain entrapped into western conceptual frames which, while employed for analytical and comparative aims, fail to capture local meanings attributed to the objects of analysis[28]. Empirical facts are interpreted through western conceptual frameworks and fail therefore to provide anything more than a mere western perspective, at times the fruit of imagination. It will be argued below why IR theory and the ES more specifically are best suited for undertaking the task of analyzing the western ethnocentrism of the EDF and its implications.

The incompleteness and lack of understanding that Chazan (1988b) refers to, are equally applicable to international relations. International relations scholars struggle for a long time with understanding both SSA and the practice of foreign aid. Chabal (1986) underscores the difficulty international relations scholars encounter in comprehending SSA: "[t]he present condition of Africa has engendered despondency because we seem to have lost the capacity to understand it" (p.3). In the light of the failing Washington Consensus and MDGs in SSA this statement appears to be still as relevant as it was in the 1980s. In addition, Morghenthau (1962) notes the difficulty to make sense of the post-World War II practices of foreign aid. This double lack of understanding contributes to a generalized disarray in designing development policies, aimed at 'imagining the future' of developing states in SSA and beyond (Nederveen Pieterse 2009[2001]). In Lancaster's (2007) terms, it leaves us "far from

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[28] The core of this conceptual problem is conceptual stretching, as a series of referents remain without adequate terms (Gerring 2001, Adcock and Collier 2001).

understanding why governments have performed so poorly in much of Africa and [how to] help them improve performance – not just their capacity but their probity as well" (p. 224).

In spite of that lack of understanding, the development context of SSA states is characterized by increasing international intervention (Chandler 2010, 2006). In addition, while development policies do change, the values and concepts which underpin these policies tend to stay the same: "rather than failures leading to reconsideration, the result is usually a fresh round of agency, reinvention and repackaging" (Duffield 2002, p. 1068). However, coupled with prevalent failure and the lack of sufficient understanding of local realities, development's intended grasp on societies is questionable. In Duffield's words, while "the radicalization of aid has achieved a fair degree of coherence at a policy and, to some extent, an institutional level […] its ability to actually transform whole societies has, so far at least, achieved equivocal and uncertain results" (p.1050). We can see therefore a fundamental mismatch and tension between the implicit commitment of western development policies to transform societies and the pervasive lack of understanding what these societies actually are and how they transform[29].

One of the core concepts and values on which development policies rely is that of 'state.' On the one hand, the western conceptions of statehood underpin (implicitly and explicitly) the design of development strategies and the measurement of results

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[29] Riddelll (2007) provides an extensive account of how aid effectiveness is limited by lack of attention paid to the local environment.

(e.g.: various indexes) (Harrison 2010, Englebert 2000). On the other hand, development efforts become instrumental in legitimizing statehood (McMichael 2008, p. 51). The centrality of statehood is evident in the modernization and neo-liberal debates within development theory of the past decades. The increasing literature on various forms of state fragility and failure reveals a surprising reality which refuses to obey the cannons of western societal organization. A myriad of authors, global indexes, and streams of literature address, with varying degrees of persuasion, the way many of the SSA states do not work. Most of the authors focus on what these states lack in order to be fully functional. And most of the indexes used in comparing states reflect a strong bias towards specific Western understandings of statehood. As a many authors show, the understandings of statehood and development rely fundamentally on the western experiences and western conceptions[30], even in cases where their inapplicability is outright evident.

The failure of the western development project[31] is claimed to be based in part on the mismatch between the conceptual reliance on western understandings of statehood and the structures of non-western societies[32]. Migdal's (2001, 1988) and Chazan's (1988 a, b; Chazan *et al* 1999) work focuses in particular on the relation between state and society in the post-colonial spaces. For Englebert (2000) "Africa's development crisis is indeed a crisis of state capacity" (p. 43) and is linked to "the

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[30] There is a wide literature underscoring the western origin of the conceptions of statehood and development: Badie and Birnbaum (1983[1979]), Constantino (1995), Grist (1990), Davidson (1992), LaTouche (1993), Badie (2000[1992]), Englebert (2000, 2009), Herbst (2000), Englebert and Tull (2008), McMichael (2008).

[31] Kothari (1988), Sachs (1992), Riddelll (2007), Moyo (2009), Harrison (2010).

[32] Englebert (2009), Kaplan (2008), Herbst (2000), Chazan *et al* (1999), Azarya (1988), Chazan (1988a, b), LaPalombara (1963).

peculiar genesis of the African state and the extent to which that state clashes with preexisting political institutions and political culture" (p. 71).

The centrality of the state both conceptually and practically reveals the importance of political science and international relations in addressing development failure. While political science scholars have been concerned with the political development of non-western developing states for several decades (Almond 1987), international relations scholars have shown less interest in this topic until more recently[33]. In Maxfield's (2006) view "international relations scholarship has an in-built bias against questions of development" (p. 475). While the discipline gives little attention to the development processes (Lancaster 2007, Cibian 2008c), it is exactly the international dynamics which appear to have a considerable impact on development theories and practices: "[t]he major turns in development have been shaped by supranational dynamics entirely outside the scope of standard development theory" (Nederveen Pieterese 2002[2001], p. 43-4).

Making sense of the supranational dynamics Nederveen Pieterese refers to falls preponderantly within the remit of IR theory. IR theory has come over the past decades to make sense in various ways of the international dynamics at play and their transformation, conceiving various imageries of the continuously enlarging community of states (i.e.: international system, international society, world society, dispersed loci of authority, etc.). Several theories and their proponents have engaged in more or less fruitful debates over epistemological, ontological and methodological

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[33] Englebert (2009, 2000, 1997), Kaplan (2008), Herbst (2000), Watson (1997), Jackson (1993).

issues. The discipline started from a legal/traditional basis challenged by behavioralists, rationalists, and radical and post-positivist stances. Therefore the dynamics which underpin development relations and practices can be approached from several perspectives.

Focusing our attention on the relevance of state—society relations in developing contexts can however be helpful in identifying a suitable IR theoretical lens. As can easily be inferred from the literature on African statehood and development[34] the crux of the problem is the issue of state sovereignty, and particularly so how sovereignty unfolds in non-western contexts. State sovereignty is theoretically simultaneously based on two processes: a social contract between the citizens of the polity that legitimates the existence of the state internally and international recognition[35].

While western states are perceived to possess both dimensions and to represent the statehood model which was replicated globally, non-western developing states appear to differ to various degrees (Englebert 2000, Jackson 1993). This difference can be tackled from an IR theory perspective in several ways. First, the mainstream approaches (realism, liberalism, structuralism) prove of limited use as they are based on a universal understanding of sovereignty and in consequence do not differentiate between western and non-western states. Second, the constructivist approaches view

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[34] Chandler (2010), Englebert (2009), Kaplan (2008), Herbst (2000), Watson (1997), Jackson (1993).
[35] This two-fold dynamic generates and interplay of actors and processes which spawn across levels of analysis making irrelevant, as Herbst (2000) argues, a clear-cut distinction between comparative politics and international relations. As will be argued below, this triggers the necessity to reconceptualise the 'international' in order to enable the construction of appropriate analytical frameworks.

sovereignty built through an intersubjective process which is shaped by the participating actors, themselves being transformed along the way. Third, the rationalists, in particular ES theory, encompass elements from both mainstream and constructivist approaches and due to their legal and cultural sensitivity manage to address to some extent the issue of sovereignty on non-western grounds. Finally, the poststructuralist and postmodernist approaches, focusing primarily on discourses and deconstruction, reveal contextualized practices of imposition and resistance.

From among the above, the ES scholars have shown an important and sustained concern for the issue of statehood on non-western postcolonial grounds, in particular addressing the expansion of international society at a global level and its implications. ES scholarship (Bull, Mazrui, Holsti and particularly so Jackson and Watson) is fundamental as it rests at the basis of the argument that postcolonial states are juridical (based on international recognition) rather than empirical. Jackson (1993) advances the concept of 'quasi-states' and Watson (1997) of 'mini-states' to depict this juridical existence having neither domestic legitimacy nor international capacity to reciprocate.

Analyzing statehood and development processes in SSA from an ES perspective, is in addition instrumental due to the ES' capacity to relate to the four approaches identified in the introduction. Jackson's (1993) work is at the core of the ES. Englebert (2009) and Chandler (2010, 2006) draw on ES work in their studies. Hardt and Negri's (2000) 'empire' connects to some extent to Chandler's 'statebuilding paradigm' and both can be viewed as modalities to make sense of the functioning of

ES's international society – the former referring to general dynamics, while the latter to the specific case of statebuilding. Finally, Bhaba's (1994) approach, through its anti-dialectic stance, opens opportunities for transcending the western approache(s) to IR theorizing of statehood and development in SSA.

The western state orthodoxy is conveying a negative spill-over effect as two processes are at play when sovereignty, hence equal legal status, is assumed under international law. First, the international systems (economic, political, etc) are based on western conceptions of statehood, which require not only formal external recognition, but also well specified internal institutional processes which enable specific international engagements. Second, the assumption of statehood even as mere external sovereignty brings with it almost automatically the presupposition of an internal institutional setup modeled after the western prototypes – aspect visible in the policies of multilateral and bilateral western donors, see Chandler's (2010) 'statebuilding paradigm.' These two processes apparently engulf the SSA state-like entities in a pre-determined western world from a conceptual, normative, and institutional perspective. The ES addresses partially these issues (Watson 1997) and represents an important starting point due to its cultural sensitivity and openness to interpretive methodology.

The ES and western development policies share two fundamental aspects which are relevant for this research – attention paid to the propagation of western or European values, norms, and practices world-wide and the preponderantly western understandings of statehood. It is important therefore, to engage in a debate with the

IR theories, more specifically the ES, in order to bring non-western realities to the core of IR theorizing and development policies.

The particularity of the independence of SSA states and the necessity to hold specific knowledge on government was acknowledged in the pre-independence period (although sometimes based on racial discrimination). After 50 years, that acknowledgement appears to have been warranted, not in racial terms, but rather from normative and practical perspectives. Normatively, the values on which the western system of government rests seem to be different from those at play in SSA. From a practical point of view, the SSA states prove to be dysfunctional. That indeed implies discrimination, but in a different direction. Posing the question of how institutions travel across cultural boundaries, what becomes to be discriminated against are local cultures, norms, and practices which in front of the complexities of the western state apparatus appear inappropriate and irrelevant in governance processes. While institutions do travel across cultural boundaries, they seem to be substantially transformed in the process. The current western theoretical, conceptual and policy tools do not enable a proper understanding of exactly that respective transformation and the impact it generates.

The upholding of a specific 'imported' (Badie 2000[1992]) model of statehood (i.e. the western state) appears to block the development of a genuine and appropriate governance model based on local values and local understandings (Englebert 2009, Herbst 2000). The local values and knowledge recede in the background or in the informal systems, while the formal space (officially created as such) is occupied by

imported, formal but dysfunctional institutions. The relevant point is therefore that African societies far from not being able to use state-like constructs, are, in fact, incapacitated by formal institutions which are not rooted in their values, norms, and life (Englebert 2009).

The conception of development the thesis explores is based on two main pillars. The first pillar is represented by the lack of change in the underpinning values, norms, and institutional conceptualizations which characterizes development theory and western donor practices (Duffield 2002, McMichael 2008, and Harrison 2010). The second pillar (related to the first) refers to the definitions of development and statehood apparent in donor policies, in particular the European Union policies with its Cotonou Partnership Agreement and EDF.

The acquisition of sovereignty by the postcolonial states through an act of international recognition and the weakness of their internal legitimacy represents the theoretical entry-point of this thesis. Building on the work of several scholars[36] my argument will focus on how the international community, through western donor practices, reinforces the western understandings of statehood, particularly its positive sovereignty component, precluding development in SSA contexts. This takes place in spite of the western policy-makers' experiences of development failure on the ground and of an increasing literature which documents the inappropriateness of the western state model for SSA. The western donor policies remain entrenched in western concepts and meanings, ignoring the local context as the locus where the

[36] Chandler (2010, 2006), Englebert (2009), Kaplan (2008), Herbst (2000), Englebert (2000), Chazan *et* al (1999), Watson (1997), Jackson (1993).

state and related institutions acquire locally-attributed meanings. Equally important, this project provides, by tailoring the ES framework for empirical analysis, an alternative understanding of development interactions which can represent the basis for transforming development policy. This chapter will further construct a theoretical framework to enable such analysis, while at the same time reviewing the relevant literature.

1.2 Theoretical framework: the expansion of international society and the stalled development process in SSA

The ES lends itself as a useful theory for analyzing development and statehood in SSA. The ES advances particular understandings of the international society and world society, providing useful conceptual frameworks for discussing non-western states. On ES grounds connecting development with IR theory becomes possible due to several characteristics. The theoretically normative stance of the ES, its historical approach, its emphasis on the role of culture and identity, its support for interpretive methodology (Dunne 1998) and its concern for analyzing different civilizations (Yurdusev 2002) enable a comprehensive discussion of the emergence of state-like entities in SSA and their internal and international practices. Furthermore it enables the discussion of the relation between the western states as donors and SSA states.

The concern with colonial relations, the Third World, and development aid (Watson 1997) make the ES a good starting point in exploring the international interactions generated by the expansion of the international society. The ES has paid substantial attention to the composition of various international societies over time and the relationship between the former colonial powers and their colonies, offering the

possibility of an important link to be made, in the post-colonial era, between IR theory (with a specific focus on statehood and sovereignty) and the concept and practices of development. In addition, the ES offers the potential for a grand theory, which means that in several respects it can transcend many of the unproductive debates of the discipline. While traditionally the ES brings together the major streams of IR theorizing (Hobbesian, Grotian and Kantian), in its more recent accounts it accommodates as well constructivist elements (Dunne 1998, Buzzan 2004), and also insights from other conceptions of world society (Buzzan, 2004, Brown 2001).

If traditional ES does pay attention to the emergence of the global international society and to some extent to how such a society functions, there is limited attention paid to how it expands (Buzzan 2002, 2004). On a minimal note, the expansion of international society is represented by the diffusion of statehood and global practices such as diplomacy, international law or conferences (Bull 1992[1984]). More recent accounts which partially build on the ES work manage to some extent to show what the expansion of the international society has brought to SSA. Herbst (2000) and especially Englebert (2009) depart specifically from the ES assumption of the juridical existence of the SSA states (Jackson 1993) and show how international recognition of sovereignty and sanctity of borders impact the socio-politico-economic dynamics of the region.

Bull's understanding of the expansion of international society exposed above points to important similarities with the development process. In both processes the values,

norms, and structures of the 'developed' are diffused onto the 'developing'. Contrasting both approaches we observe that the western underpinning of the evolution of international society is comprised of mostly the same actors referred to as 'developed' and as well that the non-western areas where international society expands are in fact developing countries. These links I will explore in what follows.

The processes of interaction between the West/developed and the non-western/developing are themselves complex. At a macro level, these are for the most part conceptually fixed and non-negotiable. The way political, societal, and economic organization is understood by both donors and (supposedly by) recipient states is clearly driven by the existence of a western model; the very same model that we find at the basis of western development policies (Harrison 2010). However, development interactions are in a substantial way different. If in general terms development comprises fix meanings to be transferred to the developing countries, the process also involves the disbursement of official development assistance which due to its normative standing and implementation procedures[37] opens a concrete space of negotiation between donors and recipients. Aid becomes an area of both meaning-generating interaction and clashes of pluralities of meanings which facilitates access to the interplay between the West and the non-western.

The interactions generated by development aid relations between western donors and non-western partner states also reveal a significant shift in understanding the concept of 'international'. In more detail, development (aid) is about states but it is also about

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[37] I would like to thank T. Heller for pointing this out.

a much wider set of relations which emerge between donors, partner states and recipient societies, e.g. the concern with alleviating poverty (e.g. MDGs) creates a direct link between the citizens of one state and the institutions of a third state or intergovernmental organizations. Furthermore, the presence on the ground of aid agencies which are deeply involved into the policy processes within developing countries questions the traditional conception of sovereignty. As such, the term 'international' comes to be diffused by including a range of interactions from the traditional inter-governmental ones to the presence of third states (i.e.: donor agencies) in the internal environment of developing countries and to the presence of international elements at local or micro-level (e.g.: international aid experts in villages).

For building a theoretical framework which enables an analysis of the interplay of meanings-in-use which come together through the disbursement of aid, it is important to make reference to substantial work undertaken both within and outside IR theory. The challenges of development and statehood in SSA represent a focus for various scholars both from international relations and other disciplines. This chapter will therefore attempt to build a theoretical framework based mainly on the ES while incorporating views from the broader international relations literature and related disciplines.

Three main inter-related arguments structure this theoretical framework: the first concerns statehood in SSA, the second concerns three dimensions at play in domestic SSA arenas, while the third, the interactions which unfold at the intersection of the

three dimensions. The literature claims that the expansion of international society to SSA has brought about state fragility and failure and the failure of development (Englebert 2009). In order to present an understanding of state fragility and failure, I will build on Astrov's (2011) connection between the ES and Agamben's state of exception (Agamben 2000). Thereafter I will show how establishing states through an exclusionary process leads to the creation of three dimensions which are at play in the SSA governance and development environment – a dimension of the international community, one of the SSA state, and finally one of the SSA societies. These three dimensions generate different and at times diverging structures of meaning-in-use for the governance processes and institutions at play in SSA contexts contributing to maintaining state fragility and limiting the development process. The theoretical framework of the thesis is summarized in the figure below. In constructing this theoretical framework I start by theorizing the link between IR theory and development by drawing on the ES' understanding of international society and Pretes' conception of development and by presenting the main ES concepts and their structural reinterpretation advanced by Buzzan.

Figure 1: Theoretical framework:

Expansion of International Society in SSA

English School + exception

State fragility/failure

English School + three dimensions ➔ different meanings-in-use

Failure of development
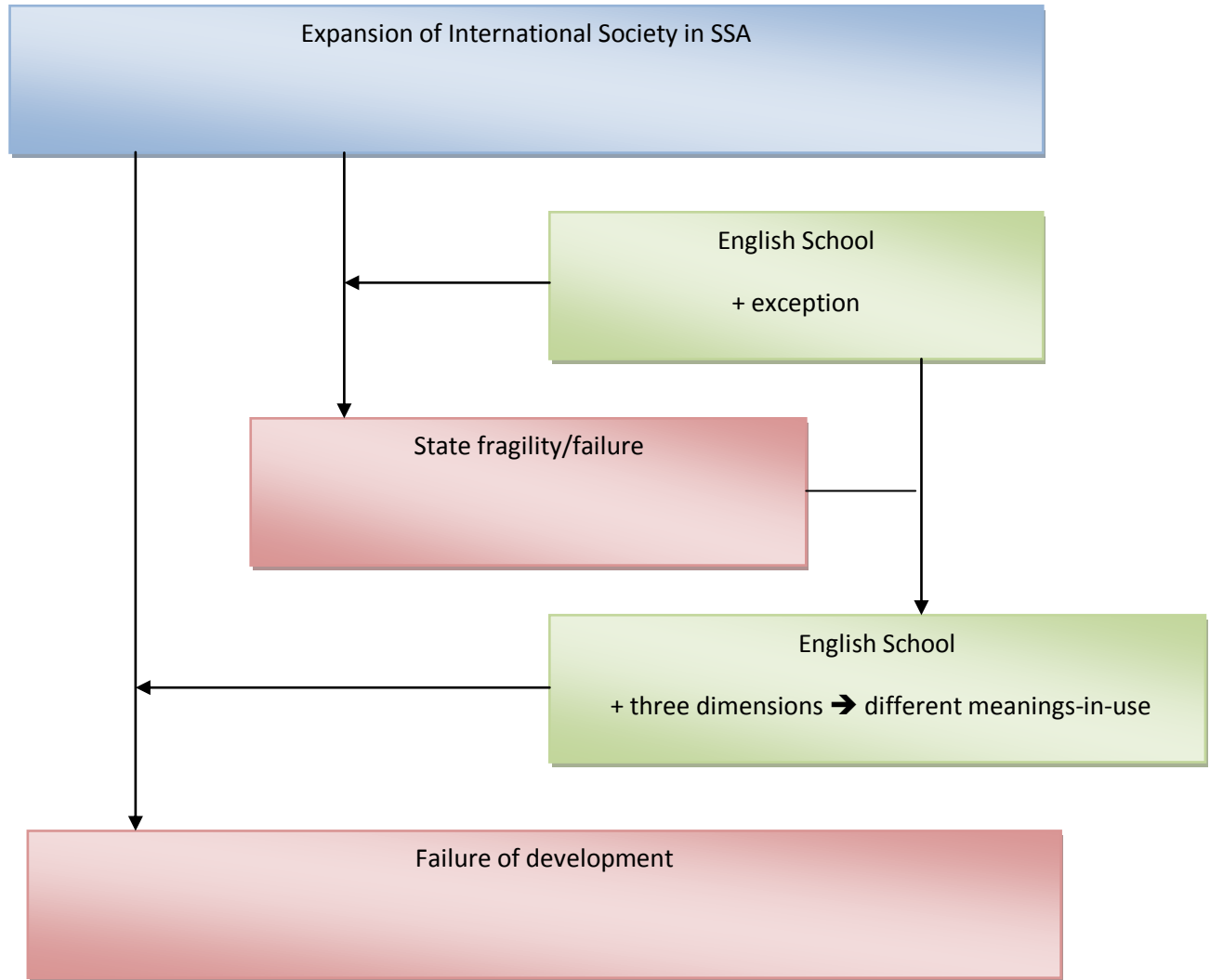
1.2.1 The traditional[38] ES (main concepts)

For presenting a proper conceptualization of the central ES concepts I first focus on the traditional definitions and continue with Buzan's (2004) reconceptualization which will become the basis for developing the analytical framework. The ES looks at how the international and global relations have developed over time. It attempts to

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[38] I use 'traditional' ES as referring to the conceptualizations existing before Buzan's (2004) work.

accommodate, with the purpose of furthering our understanding of international affairs, different perspectives on inter-state relations, more specifically by referring to the development of an international system, an international society and a world society. For the traditional ES these three concepts become the main pillars around which theorizing evolves.

As Buzan (2004, p. 8) notes, the basic idea of the ES appears quite simple, "just as human beings as individuals live in societies which they both shape and are shaped by, so also states live in an international society which they shape and are shaped by." The states in this understanding become part of two overarching structures: international system and international society. The international system

> "refers generally to the macro side of the interactions that tie the human race together, and more specifically to the interactions among states. Its usage in classical English school thinking is close to that in realism, being about power politics amongst states within a political structure of international anarchy." (Buzan 2004, *xvii)*

Going further than the realists, ES theorists see the interactions among states as having reached a higher level of connectedness. They refer to this development as 'international society' and they understand it as a:

> "group of states (or, more generally, a group of independent political communities) which not merely form a system, in the sense that the behaviour of each is a necessary factor in the calculations of the others, but also have established by dialogue and consent common rules and institutions for the conduct of their relations, and recognize their common interest in maintaining these arrangements" (Bull and Watson, 1992[1984], p. 1)

More specifically, Little (1998) views international society forming when states do not only see themselves as part of the same system but when they acknowledge each other as detaining equal legal status.

Complementing the existence of this two domains (i.e. international system and international society) the ES looks at a third dimension, the 'world society' which in the traditional ES implies taking "individuals, non-state organizations and ultimately the global population as a whole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements, and puts transcendence of the state-system at the center of IR theory" (Buzan 2004, *xvii*).

1.2.2 Buzan's reconceptualization of the main English School concepts

Buzan presents in his 2004 work a structural reinterpretation of the ES' basic concepts. In his book *From International to World Society?,* appreciated as the most solid work on ES since Bull's (1977) *The Anarchical Society* (Dunne *et al.* 2005*),* Buzan attempts to develop the ES by addressing the gaps of the traditional approach and by reconstructing the underlying argumentation of the ES theory. In doing so he makes reference to several other lines of thought from international relations or sociology: Wendt's constructivism, the Stanford School and conceptions of 'world society.'

In more substantial terms, Buzan attempts to correct for the ES' state-centeredness, for the lack of focus on economic issues, for unclear conceptualizations of the three main concepts (particularly world society), for the un-clarity of the pluralist–solidarist debate, and for the lack of focus on sub-global (regional) international societies. He does so by building up a structural approach, in the sense that he delimits the three dimensions of the ES based on the actors which compose them. First, he puts together the international system and international society as both of

them deal with states into a so called 'inter-state society' which can be: asocial, power political, characterized by coexistence, cooperative, characterized by convergence, and confederative.

In this structural account, world society remains the domain of the individuals and transnational actors (TNAs) being divided into interhuman societies (which can be: fragmented societies, large-scale imagined communities, and universal identities) and transnational societies (which can be: societies without TNAs, with competing TNAs, with coalitions of like TNAs, with TNA coalitions across type, and characterized by pure mediaevalism). All these types of societies have particular characteristics.

Drawing on Wendt (1999), Buzan adds another dimension by referring to the mode/depth of internalization which is characteristic of all three societies and which can be described by coercive action, calculation or belief. Connected strictly to the types of interstate societies the pluralism–solidarism debate finds its meaningful development, being connected to the thin–thick characteristics of the interstate societies. As such,

> "[u]nder pluralism, coexistence is rooted in the self-interest of the states composing interstate society. Self-interest certainly stretches to cooperation in pursuit of a livable international order, but it keeps the focus on differences among the states and does not require that they agree on anything beyond the basics, or that they hold any common values other than an interest in survival and the avoidance of unwanted disorder. It [...] does not exclude the members of interstate society form sharing a degree of common identity. [...] solidarism almost certainly builds on the foundations laid down by pluralism, or at least must do so in its early and middle states whatever it might evolve into in its more advanced forms." (Buzan 2004, p. 145-6)

The passage towards solidarism takes place "when states not only recognize that they are alike in this sense, but see that a significant degree of similarity is valuable, and seek to reinforce the security and legitimacy of their own values by consciously linking with others who are like-minded, building a shared identity with them." (pp. 147-8). While initially sub-global, the development of solidarism is viewed by Buzan as "nearly global in extent" (p. 151).

Another important characteristic of the different types of societies, particularly interstate societies but with deep implications on the existence and characteristics of the other two (transnational and interhuman), resides in the concept of institutions. Buzan sees institutions as central for the ES as they represent an order-generating infrastructure. More particularly, he refers to primary institutions as "relatively fundamental and durable practices, that are evolved more than designed; and that [...] are constitutive of actors and their patters of legitimate activity in relation to each other" (p. 167). In Buzan's framework the contemporary primary institutions are: sovereignty (derivatives: non-intervention, international law), territoriality (derivatives: boundaries), diplomacy (derivatives: bilateralism, multilateralism), great power management (derivatives: alliances, war, balance of power), equality of people (derivatives: human rights, humanitarian intervention), market (derivatives: trade liberalization, financial liberalization, hegemonic stability), nationalism (derivatives: self-determination, popular sovereignty, democracy), and environmental stewardship (derivatives: species survival, climate stability). Basically, these institutions reflect the type of existent interstate society and can offer numerous insights into how that interstate society transforms and expands.

Based on the above, Buzan re-defines international society and world society. International society becomes "the arrangement that emerged during the twentieth century (Mayall 2000: 17-15), where the basic political and legal frame is set by the states-system, with individuals and TNAs being given rights by states within the order defined by interstate society" (Buzan 2004, p. 202). In Buzan's structural approach world society becomes "a vehicle for dropping the assumption that states are the dominant units, and interstate society the dominant domain. In world societies, no one of the three domains or types of unit is dominant over the other two, but all are in play together" (Buzan 2004, p . 202).

A substantial missing point in Buzan's approach is the relevance of actors (states, TNAs, and individuals) for the advanced theory. As Adler (in Dunne *et al*. 2005) notes, agency is missing from the picture. Implicitly it can be identified, but what I am claiming is that it is not boldly spelled out and that has implications for the ES' analytical capacity. This is highly relevant because as Buzan notes drawing on Hollis and Smith (1991), ES is an inside-out theory: "international society is constructed by units, and particularly by the dominant units, in the system and consequently reflects their domestic character" (Hollis and Smith 1991: 95). Buzan's ES is based on the different types of actors and the characteristics of the interstate, transnational, and interhuman society are intimately related to the nature and activity of the actors which form them. As such it becomes relevant to discuss the actors themselves, how they build the respective society, how they transform, and what does their transformation mean for the international society, itself.

As Hollis and Smith (1991) point out, the dominant units are central to the development of the international society. However, an analysis of the peripheral units may provide important insights as the attention falls on the interaction of different forms of life. From analyzing the interaction between the dominant units and the peripheral units, one can understand the nature of the peripheral units and their role in the international society, the nature of the dominant units when engaging internationally, and the structural constraints circumventing the action of both.

Having reviewed the main concepts of the ES, in what follows I touch upon two aspects. First I briefly engage with the concept of development. Second, I will provide a discussion of (post)colonialism and development on ES grounds by discussing the connection between the expansion of the international society and the process of development.

1.2.3 Discussing development: actors, processes, outcomes

In order to establish a connection between the ES and development it is important to first discuss the evolution of development thinking and some practical implications of the development process. This section expands the definition of development provided in the introduction and points to some contradictory practices which further accentuate the centrality of international relations matters in the disfunctionalities of the development process.

The evolution of development thinking, hardly ever escaping political overtones, has moved in the last few decades from reserving a specific area of social sciences (i.e.: development studies) for the study of developing countries towards a total rage

against the idea of development itself (i.e.: anti-development). Not long after their birth, development studies are declared dead: "development studies, as a coherent social science, is dead" (Maxfield 2006, p. 462). This emerges because of the recurrent failures of the proposed development paradigms/theories. From development economics, to modernization theory, to dependency theory, to international political economy (IPE) and neoclassical economics, to alternative development and finally to anti-/post-development, no sustainable success has been achieved, particularly so with regard to the situation of SSA states and in spite of the Southern provenience of some of these theories (Nederveen Pieterese 2009[2001], McMichael 2008, Lancaster 2007, Maxfield 2006).

Nederveen Pieterese (2002[2001]) defines development as "the organized intervention in collective affairs according to a standard of improvement. What constitutes improvement and what is appropriate intervention obviously vary according to class, culture, historical context and relations of power. Development theory is the negotiation of these issues" (p. 3). In practice, as substantive amounts of scholarly work indicate, the standards of improvement and intervention have been mostly (if not completely) generated within western cultural and/or epistemological realms. As the relations of power are strongly unbalanced – with direct implications on the definition of histories and recognition of cultures – the space for negotiation that Nederveen Pieterese refers to appears to be in effect minimal. The 'dramatic and complex struggle over the shape of futures' (p. xii) may actually exclude exactly those whose futures Nederveen Pieterese talks about.

It is important to note that this discussion opens the possibility of creating a substantial connection between the process of development and the international society as conceived by the ES. Both development thinking and policy comprise at their core aspects related to state and institutional capacity, governance, economic development, security, human rights, environment, etc. These aspects link in a direct manner with the primary and secondary institutions of the international society, such as: sovereignty and territoriality, markets, war, equality of people, or environmental stewardship.

There are voices in the literature (Sachs 1992, Riddell 1996, Moyo 2009, Harrison 2010) who question the capacity of current understandings of development to lead to the fulfillment of the goals set for the aid enterprise (e.g.: poverty reduction). I will develop this point further as I find it hides one of the central problems leading to failure of donor engagement. I start by referring to what development means in the West[39] in Pretes' (1997) view:

> "in its Western sense, [...] an established process central to the Western worldview (cf. Banuri, 1990, p. 66). Development has no end; it is infinite and continua – in practice this involves the control over transformation of nature to serve human ends – and its ultimate justification is that Western civilization has defined it as its principal goal, as its prime symbol or imaginary social signification. The Western understanding of development is distinctly Western and not shared by non-Western cultures; it is a cultural product and one that is not fixed or given, but subject to potential redefinition. Such a redefinition would involve changing the fundamental questions and beliefs of Western society, in which case it would no longer be Western society."(p. 1424)

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[39] The discussion of the evolution of understanding of development in the West is substantive in the literature; for a review see for example Nederveen Pieterese (2002[2001]). The aim of the point I am trying to make relates specifically to two aspects: the predominance of the western views on development, and their cultural embeddedness in the western culture.

The way the West understands development is significant because it represents the basis of the EDF and other western donor development policies and influences they way development aid is disbursed[40]. In practical terms this becomes problematic as the conception of social organization which is derived from the western conception of development encounters a plurality of other social realties on non-western grounds. Dealing with these deep cultural differences proves to be difficult in practice and little addressed in IR theory[41].

Another major shortcoming in the practice of development is the reluctance of donors to assume responsibility for their involvement in societal transformations (Chandler 2010, 2006; Cibian 2008b). The problematic communication among donors (i.e.: donor coordination) which creates rather complex dynamics at the local level can be considered a strong indicator of the failure in and lack of willingness to assume responsibility. Dozens of aid agencies and multilateral donors, hundreds of non-governmental organizations, and thousands of projects make out of the developing countries a set of rather difficult realities. In this very place the major contradiction I want to emphasize appears. While on the one hand development in the West is continuous, the practices that the West employs for producing development in the developing countries are time-wise limited (Duffield 2002). This inconsistency is also visible if one compares the way development is handled internally in the developed countries with the way development policy is conceived

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[40] Epistemologically, it is highly unlikely that donors would be able to promote anything else than their own understanding of development, or practices which are in line with such an understanding, this does not to say that involuntarily this could not happen.
[41] Englebert (2009), Herbst (2000), Bayart (1996 [1993]), Badie (2000[1992]), *Paolini et al* (1999), Badie and Birnbaum (1983) present some impressive accounts on these cultural interactions.

in partner countries (Cibian 2008a,b). This subtle distinction is both complex and significant. It is complex as it drives not only from the limits imposed by the normative structure of the international system, but as well from the practical impossibility to transcend culturally distinct meanings of temporality between the West and the non-western. The significance of this distinction rests in that it alludes to the potential existence of distinct universes of different orders, which if not properly taken into account can undermine the development theorizing, policy, and practice.

The temporal mismatch raises another relevant issue with regard to the practices which development unfolds onto the non-western spaces – the development project. Those projects, which by definition are limited in time, create an inconsistency with the very idea of 'development.' Furthermore, those

> "[p]rojects remain forever *projections*. Their actions and events never have meaning in themselves, but are constantly recalled or translated back into the policy text, from which they can never fully depart in order to become part of the everyday (cf. Latour 1996: 24). These projects spread 'false models, simplifications, and development illusions" (p.235).

Projects, as well as development strategies, need to constantly be adapted to the internal and external political and financial dynamics (e.g.: the permanent fluctuations in aid disbursement). This indicates that the focus of development rather than falling on the 'developing' (sustainable recipient communities) is put on the sustainability of donor projects and as such they fail to become part of the local (Cibian, 2008a,b). This indicates that "[c]ontemporary development policy is incoherent because the different levels of development action – local, microregional, national, macroregional, international, global – are not adequately articulated"

(Nederveen Pieterese 2002[2001], p. 16-7). Furthermore such an approach incapacitates any meaningful form of ownership. Lastly, more than alluding to specific failures of appropriation, this observation hints to the epistemological and conceptual impossibility of the development projects to produce the expected form of development[42].

1.2.4 The ES and development in SSA: conceptualizing three dimensions in the SSA domestic arenas

The ES' concern for development is rather limited. Most of the references to development are made in relation to the broader issues of decolonization and Third World locus in international relations (Dunne 1998, Jackson 1993, Bull 1992[1984], Mazrul 1992[1984]). On a theoretical level, Vincent's work on non-intervention contributes to how the ES approaches the non-western states (Dunne 1998). Of the English School scholars, Watson (1997) presents a more robust take on development and the relations between former colonies and the West. Watson provides a historically embedded discussion of the development of statehood past decolonization in line with ES assumptions. More recent work based partially on the ES makes substantial contributions in this direction as indicated above (Englebert 2009, Englebert 2000, Herbst 2000).

Watson's (1997) work does identify several problematic aspects in the relationship between the western powers and developing states. He argues that 'independence'

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[42] This does not mean that by their existence and (non/partial) implementation these projects do not impact the local social realities of developing states in various ways.

has changed its meaning to such an extent that it "is now a term of art, a legal status, not a description of a state's real or substantive functions. The new meaning we have given to independence […] does not exclude dependence, and is indeed designed to cover a substantial degree of it" (Watson 1997, p. 108-109).

Hegemony plays in as the fundamental logic which leads to the creation of the present worldwide international society. In Watson's view today's worldwide international society "is in practice largely a highly developed set of regulatory capitulations" (1997, p. 99) whose limits are imposed by a common culture "to some extent only because the major powers belong to or recognize an extended European culture, and are able to impose their views on others" (p. 99).

Statehood represents a central part of this hegemonic action and imposition of European culture:

> "the states of Asia, Africa and Oceania are modeled structurally on European lines; the rules, institutions and may of the values of the society of states are essentially European; and the differing functions of most of the European-style states in the European-style society are still largely what they were before the imperial overly was lifted." (Watson 1997, pp. 66-67)

The expansion of the international society has occurred along these lines through modeling states in accordance with European standards, leading as argued above to dependence: "[t]he decisive action of the Europeans as they expanded was to establish dependent states on the European model, with European concepts and practices of statehood, linked to Europe" (Watson 1997, p. 48).

The set of new states which seem to be consistently different from their Western counterparts are qualified as 'ministates.' The independence of 'ministates' is trespassed by the Western powers "collectively through international organizations and agreements, or individually through the leverage of direct aid [...] on a wide range of issues from internal order and fiscal prudence to human rights" (Watson 1997, p. 67). Being externally recognized the min-states possess negative sovereignty. However, their incapacity to sufficiently control their territory, provide security for their citizens, and reciprocate in international affairs highlights in Jackson's (1993) view their lack of empirical existence. They lack positive sovereignty. While the existence of such states was inconceivable according to the international norms prior to the de-colonization period, their recognition by the international community signifies a substantial international normative and legal transformation.

Such transformation of the main concepts of international relations triggers significant implications. Therefore, a first fundamental concern in this remodeling process has been the enduring of *world order*: "order in the dependent territories, the imposition by European states of an imperial pax. [...] maintenance of order between European powers and their nationals outside Europe, and between them and independent non-European states" (Watson 1997, p. 50). A second fundamental concern is the realization of *justice* within the ministates (Dunne 1998). This focus on both order and justice brings the ES scholars in an impasse. The capacity of the international society to maintain order on the basis of existing principles of

sovereignty and nonintervention appears, in practice, to sacrifice the claim to internal justice in the ministates (Dunne 1998).

That impasse reveals a subsequent dilemma: i.e.: *a normative discrepancy between the western international society and the postcolonial states which become the majority of states in the global international society*. The ES has not adequately addressed this dilemma in spite of its importance for maintaining the argument of a global international society. As will be shown below, this contradiction brings together statehood and development and offers an avenue for understanding their failure in SSA.

1.2.4.1 A persistent ES theoretical challenge and the three dimensions

Given the ES' concerns with colonialism and decolonization[43] it appears rather striking that the focus on the former SSA colonies, currently developing states, has been rather neglected in recent debates. Besides Watson's (1997) several ES scholars note the importance of colonialism prior to 1945. From among these "Holsti and Keene (2000, 2002) are thus quite right to identify colonialism as the key institution of pre-1945 European international society" (p. 179). However ES scholars make close to no reference to the locus and relevance of the developing states in the post-1945 period or to how the international/world society and its transformation relate to the respective states.

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[43] Little (2000), Dunne (1998), Epp (1998), Attina (1998), Watson (1997), Watson (1992), Bull (1992[1984]), Kedourie (1992[1984]), Mazrui (1992[1984]).

The above mentioned dilemma of the ministates (i.e. securing both international order and internal justice) comes from the unfolding of the de-colonization process[44]. Once the new post-colonial states were legally recognized as states they were considered equal members of the international society. In general terms, "as colonialism became obsolete [,…] sovereign equality became universal" (Buzan 2004, p. 215). Sovereignty granted all states equality, increasing the prospects for international peace; however the very same sovereignty allowed SSA governments to repeatedly disrespect the basic rights of their citizens, thus creating injustice.

The fundamental concern rests a step away. Two additional aspects are necessary for better understanding this ES dilemma. First, it is not only important that the new states acquired sovereign equality, but also that "they make up the majority of the nominally independent states of our international society" (Watson 1997, p. 9). Second, within the ministates/quasi-states "the mere existence of institutions and rules does not ensure their effectiveness" (Watson 1997, p. 9).

If the ministates within the global international society hold empirically fundamentally different norms, but they represent the majority and benefit from equal legal sovereignty (and all the rights derived from it) this poses serious concerns for the perpetuation and solidity of international society: "[t]hey [Bull and others] see decolonisation as not only bringing a host of weak states into interstate society, but also as undermining its civilizational coherence by the inevitable introduction of a multicultural social background" (Buzan (2004), p. 214; Mazuri 1992[1984]). My

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[44] Buzan (2004), Bayart (1996[1989]), Badie (2000[1992]), Bayart, Ellis, and Hibou (1999), *Paolini et al* (1999), Jackson (1994), Badie and Birnbaum (1983[1979]).

contention is that the analysis and understanding of development relations rest at the core of this ES dilemma.

Buzan argues that there is a disjuncture between the interstate society of before- and afer-1945, but chooses to see this difference as solely the collapse of colonialism, without enquiring in the implications of the post-colonial developments: "[a] narrowly based, coercive, global imperium collapsed, and was replaced by a thick global interstate society, resting on voluntary acceptance of Westphalian primary institutions" (Keene 2002 in Buzan 2004, p. 216). Buzan seems to overlook that the new state of affairs may potentially be a new 'imperium' based this time on different types of dependence i.e.: debt, aid, knowledge, technological innovation as various other authors suggest[45].

Buzzan recognizes missing out on this dimension as he acknowledge that the "formal position of legal equality still allows huge amounts of practical inequality between core and periphery" (Buzan 2004 p. 216). He nevertheless sees this transformation as an improvement (from total inequality) and stops short of dealing with the implications of these inequalities for the post-1945 international society. What I am claiming is that Buzan's structural advancement of the ES fails in addressing the role of development (aid) relations within the assumed 'global' international/world society. The assumed sovereign equality and the theoretical focus on understanding it limit the capacity of the ES to engage with the discrepancies resulting from its enactment. They furthermore obstruct an epistemological comprehension of non-

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[45] Bayart (1996[1989]), Badie (2000[1992]), Bayart *et al* (1999), *Paolini et al* (1999), Badie and Birnbaum (1983[1979]).

western meanings and practices. It is exactly these discrepancies which if understood can shed further light on the both the expansion of the international society and the failure of development in SSA, in more specific terms, of the ES dilemma and the EDF puzzle.

What discrepancies does the enactment of sovereign equality lead to? There are several such discrepancies as will be noted in the following sections of this chapter. However, on a theoretical level we can make sense of the nature of these discrepancies. For the SSA context, the enactment of sovereign equality represents the transformation of the colonies into independent states. This process is far from being easy to comprehend as it implicates a plurality of interconnections steming from the pre-independence and colonial social, cultural, political, juridical, and economic dynamics. The ES' historical approach and cultural sensitivity has enabled however substantive debate on this topic which allows us to identify a meta-structure of the governance space in SSA domestic arenas. This meta-structure rests on three dimensions as will be shown in what follows.

Three fundamental divides need to be mentioned in order to uncover the three dimensions. As discussed above a first divide can be identified between the western state model and the SSA state – the enactment of equal sovereignty led to the creation of 'states' in SSA which are de facto different from their western counterparts, in spite of their assumed juridical equality. Furthermore the western model rests, as presented in the previous section, at the basis of the development policies (including governance, state-building, etc) of western donors. This divide

reveals two dimensions – the international community (of which an important component is represented by western actors) and the SSA state (understood not as a domestic arena, but rather as the normative-institutional outcome of the enactment of an appropriated western statehood model).

A second divide can be identified between the SSA states and their respective societies. Mazrui (1992[1984]) identifies a first element of this divide which is signified by "the difficulties in the transition form a pre-colonial to a post-colonial state" being "precisely the normative and moral gap between the two" (p. 293). The gap identified by Mazrui at a general normative level indicates the decoupling of the postcolonial state from the societies it is supposed to govern.

That gap is recognized by Kedourie (1992[1984]) at an institutional level (the second element of the divide): "between the norms and the institutions of the 'decolonized' states and their social realities, between the form and the content, there is great contradiction and very dangerous tension" (p. 353-4). This second divide underscores the distinctiveness between the dimension of the SSA states and an additional dimension of the SSA societies. The third divide unfolds between the international community dimension and the SSA societies. Development failures (Duffiled 2002) in SSA indicate resolutely this divide. The three divides and the resulting dimensions are portrayed in the below figure:

Figure 2: The three divides and dimensions of the SSA governance space:
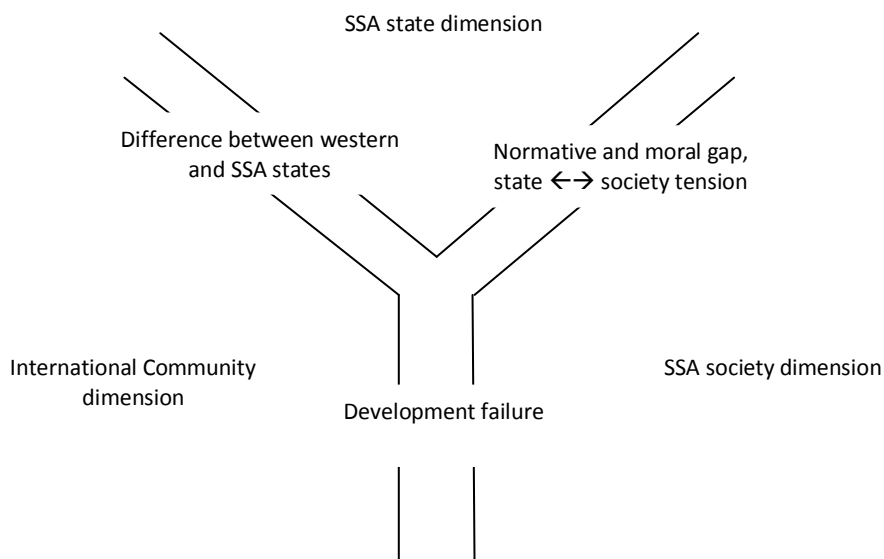
The 'great contradictions and dangerous tensions' generated at the intersection of these dimensions lead to different, and at times, potentially diverging structures of meaning-in-use attributed to institutions and practices. It is, therefore, the contention of this thesis that it is these dimensions and the misalignment of structures of meanings-in-use unfolding at their interactions which lead to the failure of the EDF, of the broader development processes, and which maintain state fragility in SSA.

1.2.4.2 The ES and development aid practices

The above sub-section has set the stage for exploring the locus where EDF processes unfold – the intersection of the three conceptualized dimensions within the SSA domestic arenas. Before attempting to do so, few aspects need to be addressed. First, a discussion of how the development process connects with the theoretical core of the ES is required in order to identify the empirical focus of the thesis. Second, a

substantiation of the inter-relations between the three dimensions theorized above will be provided in order to enable an analysis of the unfolding dynamics.

In the light of the above discussion, from a western perspective, developing states appear as imperfect representations of developed states. Since conceptually they (developed and developing states) are bound together, the process of development represents an active recreation of the West within the non-western. The self (the developed) is supposed to reconstruct itself in its self-defined alterity (the developing). As Buzan and Segal (1998) and Badie (2000[1992]) imply, and as mentioned above, this process is rather inflexible in most of its parts. On the political level the conceptualization of 'statehood' is fairly rigid, and it actually covers a vast array of dimensions with regard to internal social organization and external engagements. On the economic level the western scientific approach makes ideas/conceptions of economic organization fixed as well – a brief look at development economics offers sufficient evidence that the scientific laws of economy are not up for negotiation. From a military point of view, the recent cases of Iraq and Afghanistan provide recent examples of how the might of western states matters. *Is there any domain left where the 'non-western(s)' might have a say in their interaction with the 'western(s)'?*

My claim is that an area of flexibility can be found within the process of development. I am not sustaining that development per se is negotiable – on the contrary, I argued above that its western meanings prevail. I am rather pointing at the way in which development is being produced. Developing states get more and more

voice in international fora (e.g. Monterray, Rome, Paris, and Accra High Level Fora). In more practical terms I refer to the 'developed'—'developing' interaction which takes place as a consequence of the disbursement of aid[46].

Taking a closer look at the content of development (policies) one can see that it refers specifically to those fixed understandings of economics and political process – scientific-driven societal organization. However, by looking at the development aid interactions we are capturing that very space of freedom which cannot be fully removed from the developing states and societies and which consists of their understandings, meanings, beliefs, and practical employment of the conceptually rigid western systems. Development aid creates a space where the West talks to the non-western about how the non-western is about to become western, but at the same time it is a space where the non-western spaces make sense in unique ways and give localized meanings to institutions and practices, be they local or derived from the West. In this sense while western policies are based on western understandings, the negotiation of development strategies and particularly their implementation may reserve a space of agency for the partner states and, at times, societies.

In Therien's (2002) words: "[i]n more political terms, foreign aid has become so well entrenched as a pillar of modern North-South relations that many observers now regard it as an integral part of customary international law. In short, the aid regime has contributed substantially to the transformation of contemporary world politics"

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[46] Development aid understood as a space of interaction between donors and recipients (West and 'non-western') offers the opportunity to have a closer look at how western concepts are (not) appropriated in non-western areas.

(p. 229). Therefore the independence granted to SSA states did not come alone. The right to self-determination (which translated into independence and sovereign statehood) has been accompanied by a right to development. The ES gives some attention to this aspect. The claim to a right to development on behalf of the newly independent colonies is based on the justification "on the affirmative action grounds that independence is necessary but not sufficient to enable ex-colonial states to become their own masters" (Jackson 1993, p. 31). Jackson takes this argument further by showing how this right to development has produced an international regime of development assistance:

> "[t]oday one can speak of a development assistance regime based on a distinction between 'developed' and 'underdeveloped' states with dramatically unequal capacities and needs. This regime has been targeted primarily and extensively at the Third World since the 1960s. […] And it presupposes a new type of sovereign state which is independent in law but insubstantial in reality and materially dependent on other states for its welfare. […] International development is an extension of self-determination from the negative or political to the positive or socioeconomic realm: not only the freedom of non-intervention but also the entitlement to material assistance: sovereignty plus." (p. 43)

In the establishment of the 'development assistance regime,' as well as in its functioning, the assumed sovereignty of the recipient states is neither interfered nor questioned. The existence of this regime in its current form leads to the aid-sovereignty paradox which can be summed up concisely as follows:

> "[t]he new ethics of international development are obviously difficult to reconcile with historical liberties of sovereign statehood. If developed states have obligations to come to the assistance of underdeveloped states – as is often claimed – they certainly have no corresponding rights to ensure that their assistance is properly and efficiently used by governments of the latter. Developed states have no such rights because it would violate the sovereignty of underdeveloped states and could amount to foreign intervention. There is a fundamental incompatibility, therefore between classical liberal rules of reciprocity and cumulative justice and contemporary doctrines of nonreciprocity and distributive justice." (Jackson 1993, p. 44)

The aid regime meant in practice the transfer of significant amounts of aid of various kinds to the newly independent states. The intentions of the donors are widely debated in the literature[47], however the outcomes seem to be perceived in similar ways – the creation of development gives at best partial results, while more specifically in SSA (with very few exceptions) it encounters substantial failures (Englebert 2009, Moyo 2009, Riddell 2007, Sachs 1992). In spite of failing, such important aid flows play a crucial role in maintaining many of the postcolonial states into existence by enabling local dynamics of various kinds (Englebert 2009). Reno (1998) explains how "[e]xternal aid helped weak-state rulers to reward loyalty and cooperation. This external guarantee—the global recognition of sovereignty—gave those rulers the autonomy to experiment with strategies that diverged from the sovereign state ideal" (p. 22).

The role of aid is seen by Sampson (2003) as fundamental in providing resources for the mafias of various regions in their construction of 'states.' The aim of these mafias is to have access to the 'project society' enabled by international development aid engagements. These 'mafia kingdoms' or 'white-jeep states' interact with the project society as an outcome of the globalization processes:

> "[g]lobal processes of both the project and the mafia type help create "states," but these states are not necessarily coterminous with sovereignty or control; they are states only in terms of their trappings or their recognition by other states and donors. They are states that attract projects. But it should be emphasized that these states are no more than coalitions of actors who utilize public resources under varying degrees of popular legitimacy." (p. 337)

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[47] For a review see Cibian 2008a.

Seen from this perspective SSA and the Third World more generally become less of an instrumental identity group (in Buzan's terms) and more of a substantial question mark on the globality and especially solidarity of the international society. A deeper understanding of development aid interactions between the West and the non-western can bring a substantial contribution to both IR theory and development studies. In particular, understanding these processes is fundamental for acquiring a more substantial account of how the international society expands, of the kind of entities SSA 'states' are, and of the challenges and failures of the development process in SSA.

1.3 Substantiating the theoretical argument: exception and distinct dimensions in SSA

The preceding sections have built a link between IR theory and development by providing an ES theoretical framework for analyzing the EDF interactions in SSA. This section will focus on substantiating, from a historical and conceptual perspective, two of the arguments on which the theoretical framework relies: statehood as exception and the inter-relations between the three dimensions identified above: international community, SSA states and SSA societies.

1.3.1 Setting the context: the process of decolonization and its implications

The emergence of the global international society is viewed by-and-large through the acceptance of the state as the organizing rational all over the world, accompanied by practices such as diplomacy, international law and conferences (Bull 1992[1984], Watson 1997, Jackson 1993). The assumption that the international society has expanded globally can be seen as an overstatement, nevertheless for statist-IR the

considered world-wide existence of states makes it at least a western international legal reality. This sub-section looks closer into the implications of the expansion of international society in SSA. I start with the historical aspects concerning decolonization and a brief analysis of the societal impact of western statehood orthodoxy onto the SSA societies. This approach sets the necessary context for enabling an analysis of the divergent meanings institutions acquire in the EDF practices which can be located at the intersection of the three identified dimensions.

The historical character of the English school as well as its cultural sensitivity has led to a comprehensive discussion of Africa's political organization in the pre-colonization era and the transformations brought by both colonialism and independence[48]. The African continent prior to the colonization period presented a variety of modes of societal organization and governance (Herbst 2000, Bull 1992[1984], Bozeman 1992[1984]). The presence of state-like structures even if present was profoundly different: "Africa was a continental archipelago of loosely defined political systems: a world of societies rather than states" (Jackson 1993, p. 67).

In spite of certain interactions among these political systems, in Jackson's (1993) view they cannot be considered to form an international society. Therefore, in a space lacking "general diplomatic practices or international law" (p. 69), the interactions between the Europeans and the local social and political entities gave

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[48] Bull (1992[1984]), Mazrui (1992[1984]), Bozeman (1992[1984]), Jackson (1993), Watson (1997), and Young (2009).

rise to a slow integration of these areas in the international legal order. Jackson's

(1993) presentation of this engulfment process is revealing:

> "European sand Africans for centuries engaged in treaty-making along the coasts, but whether it had the same meaning and significance for both parties is open to doubt. […] They [Africans] could hardly have realized the European international legal implications of what they were doing. […] African rulers were not present at the Berlin Conference and were excluded entirely from this sovereign game. Their exclusive role was to sign a treaty. […] The Berlin Conference resulted in an international framework of large-scale jurisdictions imposed by European powers on Africans with only the most tenuous indication of their consent. Most explanations stop at this point. By the positive international law of the day, however, Africans had no consent to give: they were not considered to be capable of consenting. […] In brief, the partition amounted to an international enclosure movement in which the vast continent was divided among several European powers and its populations were subjected to their jurisdiction with little if any regard to African values or institutions. The entire episode was authorized and guided by international law which was still a European institution." (p. 69-70)

Jackson's description of the integration of the African territory in the international

community, being based essentially on a western decision, without proper

consideration given to local realities and without the informed consent of the local

leaders, can be understood as a sovereign decision over the state of exception[49]. Such

a decision is made possible at an international level by the existence of an

international community and 'international law' which recognizes the existence and

capacity to decide of the recognized 'sovereign states' – in the colonial context of the

western sovereign states. The international treaty in this context gets to represent the

instrument of the sovereigns to legalize their decisions. In particular, the Brussels

and Berlin Conferences and the resulting treaties between the colonial powers, are a

clear expression of the western mode of governmental action. A decision along the

same lines was to be taken at the times of de-colonization.

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[49] Aspect alluded to as well by Agamben (1998[1995]), Comaroff (2006), Harrison (2010), Astrov (2011).

Three main aspects are highly relevant from the postcolonial period – the formation of the African states through the acquisition of externally recognized sovereignty, the process of decolonization and the impact of these two aspects on today's African states. Only a few African states are considered to possess substantive precolonial identity – Botswana, Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Madagascar, Morocco, Rwanda, Swaziland, and Tunisia. Most of the other states "are products of competitive subordination of Africa—mostly between 1875 and 1900—by seven European powers (Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, and Spain)" (Young 2009, p. 19).

The 'importation' (Badie 2000[1992]) of the state after independence pushed the pre-colonial political structures into the social sphere and generated specific dynamics of cooperation and conflict (Englebert 2009, Herbst 2000). The positioning of the newly created state mostly against the pre-existing governance mechanisms (i.e.: traditional institutions) leads to the creation of the state dimension in the SSA context. While the SSA state failed to replicate its western model, it failed as well to encompass the society it was supposed to govern. This aspect is relevant as the state institutions and political leaders are mostly placed above or outside the traditional customary legal arrangements, allowing them to escape social control and accountability.

Colonial domination has brought with it a specific history and a state-like apparatus which are the core of the postcolonial states in spite of being considered immoral and

exploiting: "[t]he importance of colonial past in shaping contemporary African international relations is thus beyond dispute. At the same time, the colonial system serves—paradoxically—as a negative point of reference for the African concert of nations" (Young 2009, p. 31). However devastating impact colonialism had for the African societies, it brought about a strong connection to the rest of the world through the recognition of 'sovereignty'. Postcolonial leaders, however disenchanted they may be with the western project and colonial engagement, they enjoy the benefits provided by the sovereignty entrusted onto them, which in fact is in many cases the central element which maintains them in power (Englebert 2009, Herbst 2000). This 'priceless gift of sovereignty' turns out, however, to be rather devastating in its turn for most of the populations under its rule.

The decolonization period brought about a major change in the West's engagement with the colonial regions as well as in the understanding and interpretation of international legal norms. The fundamental change in the normative legal structure has been a move from a paradigm based on positive sovereignty (sovereign right backed up by capabilities and built on a solid societal basis) to a different one based on negative sovereignty (sovereign right granted by international law). The colonial mindset viewed the colonial powers as responsible for 'civilizing' the colonized peoples in order to bring them up to a high enough level of understanding and knowledge necessary for self-government – i.e.: to the level where they posses positive sovereignty. This mindset was reflected in international law by incorporating the colonies within the territory of the colonial powers. With the

evolution of self-determination as an international legal norm, this has changed and colonial peoples "all acquired the right to self-determination […] Sovereignty could no longer be withheld on the grounds that indigenous politicians were not yet sufficiently experienced in modern statecraft or the colonial populations were not adequately prepared and equipped for independent citizenship" (Jackson 1993, p. 14).

We are facing a normative change which meant in practice that virtually all colonies were granted independence, being recognized internationally, and becoming members of the UN. This new principle of contemporary international constitution is based on the self-determination of indigenous peoples and implies that "[t]o be a sovereign state today one needs only to have been a formal colony yesterday. […] All that is required is the evident desire of the population to be independent. I say 'evident' because it is usually attributed to a population rather than expressed by them, as in a referendum" (Jackson 1993, p. 17-18). In strengthening Jackson's emphasis on the 'evident' desire of the population, Englebert (2009), Herbst (2000), and Parkinson (1993) underline the role that elites educated in the West played in choosing statehood as the system for societal organization in the post-independence period.

The colonial apparatus has been transformed in 'new states,' possessors of negative sovereignty – a blank check signed by the international community, however "[b]y subtle metamorphosis the bureaucratic authoritarianism of the colonial state legacy

became the patrimonial autocracy almost everywhere ascendant by the 1970s" (Young 2009, p. 34). The lack of empirical statehood underlined by Jackson and the bureaucratic authoritarianism mentioned by Young, which lead to little benefits for the population of the African states is supported by data, as Callaghy (2009) and Englebert (2000) demonstrate: "African countries generally perform worse than their counterparts elsewhere in the developed and developing world on most indicators of development policy and good governance" (Englebert 2000, p. 42).

Jackson (1993) compares what he calls the 'new sovereignty game' of the postcolonial period with the 'old sovereignty game which belonged to dynastic Europe in that it is "a right of rulers rather than peoples" (p. 157). An important aspect about the 'new sovereignty game' is that it is not the difference in empirical statehood which is novel for the international system, but rather the way this difference is dealt with within the international society:

> "[t]herefore, it is not empirical differences and variations among states that is novel – although these are probably greater today than ever before owing to the globalization of international society. Rather, it is the way that inequality and underdevelopment is conceived, evaluated, and responded to by international society that has changed. Ramshackle states today are not open invitations for unsolicited external intervention. They are not allowed to disappear juridically – even if for all intents and purposes they have already fallen or been pulled down in fact. They cannot be deprived of sovereignty as a result of war, conquest, partition, or colonialism such as frequently happened in the past. The juridical cart is now before the empirical horse. […] In short, quasi-states are creatures and their elites are beneficiaries of non-competitive international norms. It is this which is new and indeed unprecedented in the long history of the sovereign state-system. (p. 23-24)

This novel situation is strengthening the North—South gap and "is likely to persist indefinitely regardless of international decisions to the contrary because it is rooted in deep-seated cultural, material, and even psychological conditions of sovereign states" (Jackson 1993, p. 18). Jackson's description illustrates significantly how the

SSA states exist due to a sovereign decision. They appear suspended in a space of indistinction where they are reduced to inaction.

This aspect reveals strongly the limits of juridical equality brought about by the expansion of the western international society. International recognition is insufficient as "[s]tate-building is primarily a domestic process occurring over a long period of time that can only be brought about by the combined wills, efforts, and responsibilities of governments and populations. The community of states can at most only assist or hinder it" (Jackson 1993, p. 21). Today's Africa seems to be far away from a successful process of state-building as imagined by Jackson while the international community not only appears helpless in assisting such a process, but rather hinders it as recent research and policy work demonstrate (Englebert 2009, Kaplan 2008). Englebert (2009, 2000) and Herbst (2000) analyze the resilience of African states and provide a substantial account of the meanings statehood acquires on the SSA grounds which in effect deter the development process: "[t]he African state is maintained, but African societies and their potential for development are torn apart in the process" (Englebert 2009, p. 230).

The complex history of pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence SSA cannot be captured in such a brief overview. My attempt has been to provide the historical context in which, as it will be shown below, the SSA states become the object of a western sovereign decision. This illustrates the placement in exception of the SSA

independent states and in consequence leads to diverging interactions between the three dimensions conceptualized in the preceding section.

1.3.2 SSA statehood as exception

As discussed above, from a western perspective, statehood in SSA is characterized by lack of sustainability, fragility, or failure. In this sub-section I will propose an alternative understanding of the SSA 'states' based on the concept of exception. Astrov (2011) provides a compelling argument in connecting the ES with Agamben's (1998[1995]) conception of 'exception.' Astrov shows how the great powers can be understood as 'sovereign power' acting at an international level. In the specific case of SSA states, it is the colonial powers of the time and the donors of today who represent 'sovereign power' embodied with the legal entitlement to decide (more or less directly) over the existence or internal configuration of SSA states. In Comaroff's (2006) terms "[t]he colonized suffered as much through the exercise of the law as by its suspension" (p. 214).

A first important element in building this exception-based argument is the centrality of the West for the existence of SSA states: "[w]hat is different, therefore, is the existence of an international society that has presided over the birth of numerous marginal entities, guarantees their survival, and seeks at least to compensate them for underdevelopment if not to develop them into substantial independent countries" (Jackson 1999, p. 24). Three aspects are relevant here: the role of and the manner in which the international society (in particular its western core) has 'presided' over the creation of these states (e.g.: Berlin and Brussels Conferences, the decolonization

process); the way in which the international society 'guarantees the existence of these states (e.g.: international recognition of sovereignty and membership in international institutions); and the involvement of the western international society in developing the resulting entities into functional states (e.g.: development aid, statebuilding (Chandler 2010), good governance). All these aspects reveal a central role of the West in the process of creation, maintaining in existence and further development of the imagined SSA states.

Another relevant aspect (related to the West's centrality in this process) is Jackson's observation that "[t]his categorical right derives from new international norms such as anti-colonialism, ex-colonial self-determination, and racial sovereignty underwritten by egalitarian and democratic values which like so much else have their origins in Western social and political movements" (1993, p. 24). These principles of international law, onto which the new states were created, represent the engulfment of the new entities into a western world. In this world, the SSA states exist due to a mere western decision, becoming, therefore, part of a continuous futile process of attempting to become the West or western. The decision of the West to create these states is also made evident in accepting negative sovereignty as sufficient for being qualified as states. The implications of this western decision deserve further analysis.

1.3.2.1 The western decision over the creation of SSA states

International society, through its expansion, is supposed to bring about specific sets of rules and institutions which maintain order and structure international organization. The international society – as the international realm where the inter-

state society (i.e. the states) are the central actors determining the nature of interactions and the roles ascribed to the inter-human and transnational societies (humans and TNAs) – grows to encompass those areas which have not been traditionally characterized by statehood. Therefore the specific set of rules, practices and institutions comprise both the universalization of the state and also of the international logic derived from its existence.

In the same way, the process of development as understood by intergovernmental institutions and as it emerges from EDF and other policy documents and strategies of bilateral and multilateral donors is supposed to bring about sets of rules and institutions which maintain order and structure states internally, enabling them to take part actively in the international society dynamics. This process acknowledges the coming into existence of independent states and targets particularly their transformation along the postulates of international law, the laws of development economics or the best-practices of development policies. Development becomes concerned therefore with both the internal and international engagement of its target – the developing state. As such, the relation between the expansion of the global international society and the process of development becomes blurred, due to the succumbment of traditional distinction between the internal and international realms.

There are authors[50], however, who advance the claim that development, as a matrix of the expanding western statehood, brings about disorder by undermining the traditional forms of political organization while proving incapable of successfully

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[50] Badie (2000[1992]), Bayart (1996[1989]), Paolini *et al* 1999.

transferring the western state model. Be it the recognition of hybrid forms of political organization or of a 'dual society[51]' these authors emphasize the failure of the state to take roots in its western form in non-western spaces such as SSA. Such an acknowledgement negates both the expansion of the international society (beyond the formal proliferation of states) and development in their western understandings, admitting however that significant transformations do occur on the ground.

Finally, the above negation of the expansion of the international society and of development hints to the incapacity of the ES (which seems to be trapped in an ordering obsession) to recognize that no rule can exist without exception[52]. The realm of exception brought in the discussion of the expansion of the international society and development is supported by both the successive practical failures to produce development, maintain stability, and render functional statehood and by the evidence presented in the literatures analyzing these failures. In this context, it becomes relevant to be concerned with the process through which exceptions are generated. In this section, building mainly on the work of ES scholars I will build an exception-based argument for the failure of statebuilding and development in SSA in order to show how the SSA state insulates itself as a distinct dimension from both the international community which generated its creation and the local society it is supposed to govern. This argument reinforces the above identification of the three dimensions on ES grounds[53].

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[51] Geertz in Badie (2000[1992]).
[52] I would like to thank Alexander Astrov for pointing out this aspect.
[53] While this argument remains within the realm of western thought, it opens the necessary space for engaging with non-western elements in further research through the recognition that the SSA society

Self-determination in the former colonial context has brought about, together with the categorical right to independence, the inviolability of previous colonial borders. For Jackson (1993), this symbolizes the "triumph of the European definition of the non-European world" (p. 41). The western decision is evident not only in the setting of borders, but in the establishment of political communities (at least juridically), as Davidson (1992) notes: "constitutions were to be London's initiative, work and decision" (p. 41-2). The triumph of the 'European definition of the non-European world' represents the triumph of the western decision onto the non-western grounds. Moreover, coupled with a doctrine of "positive discrimination, international aid, and state-building" (Jackson 1993, p. 80), the western decision brings about an entire apparatus which not only upholds its decision as such, but also projects it into a continuous process of redefining whatever it encounters on the ground.

The duality that Jackson observes in the structure of the international legal system, is of tremendous importance as it clearly shows the demarcation between a realm of the western sovereign and one of the exception onto which the western sovereign has ruled, i.e. the non-western, post-colonial states, particularly so the SSA states:

> "what appears to have happened is the formation of a dual system of international legitimacy and legality. This is revealed in the concurrent practice of acknowledging the special claims of marginal, Third World governments to preferential and nonreciprocal assistance while respecting their universal and reciprocal rights of nonintervention." (Jackson 1993, p. 122)

The 'dual system of international legitimacy and legality' brings with it two different worlds, one which is confined to the West and the other one which is

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and SSA state dimensions exist. While western sovereign power manifests itself over these two dimensions it cannot fully control them except in its own conceptual frames, being epistemologically blinded by their dichotomous universalist clams.

constituted by the western sovereign as an exception to the very West which, through becoming the intangible model, re-establishes its dominance.

The aid-sovereignty paradox, described in a preceding sub-section, comes to be representative for the exceptionality in which the post-colonial African states have been placed – being recognized sovereign in spite of being sovereign and being granted a right to noninterference in spite of a myriad of interventionist practices at play. This western decision creates a distinct ontology of the SSA state which transforms fundamentally the SSA societies. The aid-sovereignty paradox illustrates as well that, while created through a western decision, the western norms of non-interference safeguard the newly created entities from the direct control of the western powers, enabling them to maintain a distinct existence. The functioning of the SSA states in a mode of exception leads to a qualitative differentiation from the western model and to the development of a set of particular logics which insulates them from both their societies and from their creators (i.e.: western powers and donors). Within this context, international assistance for development becomes the mechanism at play through which the Western sovereign decides onto the faith of those entities it has placed into a state of exception. To get a broader understanding of this space of exception it will be briefly analyzed from legal, economic, political, and cultural perspectives.

1.3.2.1.1 A legal perspective

From a legal perspective, the existence of the two legal orders is remarked by Roling through what he calls an "old 'international law of liberty' and 'a new 'international

law of welfare'" (Roling in Jackson 1993, p. 120). This new international law of welfare consists of new norms which bring in a compensatory preferential treatment for the post-colonial states which hold a disadvantaged position in the international economy. Furthermore, the resulting legal equality from the recognized sovereign rights of the post-colonial states, imply as well 'eventual socioeconomic equality' which in its turn alludes to a newly conceived 'right to development.' This explicit right to development has led in the last decades to the construction of 'development law' whose characteristic feature, in Jackson's view, is "the limitation of reciprocity and extension of preferential treatment for a select category of underdeveloped countries" (Jackson 1993, p. 119). My contention is that this law of development has grown as an exception to Roling's old international law of liberty and functions as a set of rules through which the western sovereign manifests itself in ruling over situations of exception.

The western sovereign has included the postcolonial states in the western system of states through their exclusion i.e.: the postcolonial states have been recognized as sovereign, however they are kept in a state of indeterminacy with regard to their substantive statehood. Most of these states are maintained as states as long as the western sovereign so upholds with regard to their status. In this case the western decision onto the postcolonial states can be easily placed in space-time (Berlin and Brussels Conferences and the decolonization processes). It also rests 'simulated through everyday life' which including practices such as aid and unrecognized

interventionism. The postcolonial states are created as an 'otherness' that the West

encounters, defines, and transforms.

The effects of this modality of creating an appropriated otherness are identified by

Kreijen (2004):

> "state failure may have been the result of a normative process that – considering the
> level of centralization of the international legal order – was too far ahead of the
> facts or, to put it another way, that state failure was caused by a normative
> revolution that was insufficiently backed by the social substratum with which it was
> concerned. […] by neglecting the principle of effectiveness, this normative
> revolution cut the umbilical cord between the law and power that is vital to the
> efficient functioning of the norms in a predominantly decentralized legal order. […]
> As far as the concept of statehood is concerned, this means that the abandonment of
> effectiveness entails the risk of creating States which are essentially powerless, and
> as such lack the capacity to function as a 'going concern'. Such States may fail."
> (Kreijen 2004, p. 2)

Kreijen's interpretation is fundamental for establishing the exceptionality in which

the postcolonial African states have been placed. These "[s]tates, because of their

essential powerlessness or lack of capacity, escape the normative character of

international law. This is inevitable, since the law in a decentralized legal order

presupposes positive capacity or power on the part of its subjects" (Kreijen 2004, p.

4). Therefore the way in which the West engages the postcolonial 'state' entities not

only gets to place these entities into a exceptionality 'mode,' but having been created

by the West onto a western model, they in fact cannot exist as states beyond this

western interpretation.

1.3.2.1.2 A political perspective

From a political perspective, the post-colonial states are in substantial ways

exceptions from the western statehood model. Englebert's (2000) work shows not

only that the functioning (in terms of political legitimacy, etc.) and output of SSA

states (in terms of development policies) are distinct from their western counterparts. It shows more specifically, that most of the SSA states perform at the opposite end of most evaluation scales (see most global indexes on which states are compared). This positioning reflects from a political perspective the very exception mode in which the SSA states are placed.

The post-colonial states face a greater internal than external threat and are not constituted on a covenant between their citizens. They do not hold credibility in the eyes of western sovereigns. Internally they appear to be rather uncivil. Coupled with the most analysis of statehood which several indexes reflect, these states seem not to provide the services or play the role a state should be playing. Exceptionally, 'the state of nature is domestic'(Jackson 1999).

Also important for this argument is the observation that "the quasi-state cannot logically collapse into a state of nature because its sovereignty is derived not internally from empirical statehood, but externally from the state-system whose members have evidently decided and are resolved that these jurisdictions shall not disappear" (Jackson 1993, p. 168-9). Here, the western decision which constituted the post-colonial African states is spelled out-right. Furthermore, the impossibility of dismantling the post-colonial state is another important indication that these states are suspended in a state of exception. This impossibility is based on two aspects. First, being depended on a decision of the western sovereign, these states cannot be dismantled by any other means than the western sovereign's decision. Second, the

logical impossibility of collapse reveals the prevailing western orthodoxy towards an international architecture based on the state model. This implies in its turn that the western sovereign cannot decide on dismantling the postcolonial African states due to its own epistemological limits.

Englebert (2009) analyzes the impact of the resilience of African states on domestic political institutions and processes. He shows how internationally recognized sovereignty transforms internally in what he terms 'legal command.' This legal command represents the capacity of power-holders to exploit their formal role for extracting resources and private benefits, even in those cases where the state has effectively collapsed. Therefore, the undisputed recognition of sovereignty rests at the basis of the domestic political institutions: "[i]t is international sovereignty that give national and local state institutions the legal and political foundation to make their decisions enforceable (or executoires as the French would say more descriptively) over citizens and local resources, even when otherwise incapable to perform their functions" (Englebert 2009, p. 94).

The external provenience of the SSA political institutions results in a complete loss of legitimacy as "[t]here was no agreement as to the mechanisms of the political system because the latter was perceived as an alien colonial creation" (Englebert 2000, p. 96). Sovereignty acquired through the West's sovereign decision "prevents institutional innovation and institutional responses to decay; it reduces the institutional elasticity of the state. By substituting an international arrangement for a

set of domestic alliances, it removes the state from the realm of the institutionally negotiable" (Englebert 2009, p. 228). The raison d'être of the so-created political entities replicates the mechanism through which it was created – the capture and exercise of sovereign power. As "power became the purpose of public policy, development became its victim" (Englebert 2000, p. 101).

When moving to a Foucauldian perspective as the one advanced by Ferguson (2007[2006]), it appears evident that the policy processes at play as well as the concepts used by the Western governmental apparatus are in an exception-mode as they signify and function in a specific manner which is an exception to their western meaning-in-use, i.e.: "policies that are in fact made and imposed by wholly unelected and unaccountable international bankers may be presented as democratically chosen by popular assent. Thus does "democratization" ironically serve to simulate popular legitimacy for policies that are in fact made in a way that is less democratic than ever" (p. 101).

1.3.2.1.3 An economic perspective

From an economic perspective, the postcolonial African states distance themselves in many respects from their western counterparts. The lack of empirical statehood becomes blatantly evident in these states' inability to play the economic game on the same rules as their western 'equals.' For Ferguson, the most striking aspect of the recent African history is the existence of a process of "economic exclusions that distance Africa from the rest of the world and destroy the sense of connection with,

and membership in, an imagined world community that so many Africans experienced during the early years of independence" (Ferguson in Ferguson 2007[2006], p. 166).

The discrepancies between the postcolonial African states and the West are evident when discussing economic agreements, debt relief, and most other aspects of economic relations. With regard to economic agreements, "[t]hird World states have succeeded in getting preferential tariff arrangements built into the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] as a matter of principle. However, the GATT evidently regards these concessions, for example, the Generalized Scheme of Preferences, as merely 'exceptions' to its general rules (such as the Most Favoured Nation principle) which still aim at non-discrimination in international trade" (Khan in Jackson 1999, p. 123). The exceptionality of the postcolonial African states is probably most visible when discussing debt relief issues. In Jackson's view, "[t]his thinking [debt relief, etc] seeks at a minimum to make underdeveloped states exceptions to some rules of the liberal economic order and at a maximum to devise new rules and perhaps a new order" (Jackson 1999, p. 116).

1.3.2.1.4 A cultural perspective

On the cultural realm, the exclusion derived from the western sovereign's decision reveal the generalized exception mode encompassing SSA. Analyzing the cultural dynamics of the postcolonial African states implies with necessity an account of the localized appropriation of the 'placement-in-exception' (i.e. state and state institutions) and of the local aspects which transcend the entirely western pictures so

far depicted and which account (even if partially) for a number of particular (sometimes hybridized) cultural outcomes.

Ferguson (2007[2006]) draws on the above argued exclusion of the postcolonial African states, and their peoples, from political and economic processes of the western world: "[a] similar danger is introduced by treating the question of modernity in exclusively cultural terms and thus too easily including within an analytical "modernity" people who are quite distinctly *excluded* from the political and economic conditions of life that are normally characterized as 'modern'" (p. 167). This exclusion is established with reference to a western cultural existence and implies two further aspects. First, the impossibility of SSA people to ever become western which suspends them in a state of indeterminacy, as Davidson (1992) remarks: "yes, to become civilized Africans they must cease to be Africans, but in order to ensure that this should duly and completely happen, should never be allowed to become Europeans. They should wonder in some no-man's-land of their own" (p. 47). Second, it is not only that Africans 'must cease to be Africans,' but furthermore that that whatever they may be as 'Africans' is irrelevant.

Said (1994[1993]) reveals exceptionality on the cultural realm by bringing together the African migrant and the intellectual and artist in exile:

> "[y]et it is no exaggeration to say that liberation as an intellectual mission, born in the resistance and opposition to the confinements and ravages of imperialism, has now shifted from the settled, established, and domesticated dynamics of culture to its unhoused, decentred, and exilic energies, energies whose incarnation today is the migrant, and whose consciousness is that of the intellectual and artist in exile, the political figure between domains, between forms, between homes, and between languages. From this perspective then all things are indeed counter, original, spare,

> strange. […] And while it would be the rankest Panglossian dishonesty to say that the bravura performances of the intellectual exile and the miseries of the displaced person or refugee are the same, it is possible, I think, to regard the intellectual as first distilling then articulating the predicament that disfigure modernity—mass deportation, imprisonment, population transfer, collective dispossession, and forced immigrations." (p. 332-3)

The migrant and the intellectual and artist in exile are the main representations and creators at the same time of the postcolonial African hybridized cultures. They themselves being in a state of exception are derived and at the same time come to represent the generalized state of exception characteristic of the postcolonial African states. This cultural realm, as depicted by Said, reveals maybe in the clearest way the connection between the postcolonial state and Agamben's generalized state of exception[54] which given the above can be claimed to expand beyond the western political space to engulf the global international society, its creation.

The placement of the SSA states and societies in an exception mode from a juridical, political, economic, and cultural perspective demonstrates the establishment of a generalized state of exception. The consequence is blocking SSA states in a state of indistinction very well portrayed in the words of the OUA Secretary General Edem Kodjo: "Africa may have "space, people, natural resources […], but Africa is nothing, does nothing, nor can do anything" (Davidson 1992, p. 13).

In claiming that the African postcolonial states are understood as exceptions from a legal, political, economic and cultural perspective, I have built the argument that exceptionality is a derivative of the western sovereign power which manifests itself in international interactions. The international interactions of the western sovereign

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[54] Vaughan-Williams (2009), Agamben (1998[1995]).

retain the internal predisposition of ruling through deciding on exceptions and creating zones of indistinction of which the global international society appears to be one or a plurality. Therefore, the SSA state is encapsulated into a realm of its own, forced to generate (a) logic(s) of its own, while at the same time being 'protected' from external (western or local) interference and even comprehension. This is the dimension of the SSA state which distinguishes itself from the both the western world (represented within the national SSA borders by the international community on the ground) and the society entrapped within its national borders. While the three dimensions are distinct and are characterized by logics of their own, they co-exist and intersect in multiple ways. The dynamics which bring the three dimensions together is the focus of the next section.

1.3.3 The three dimensions at play: the international community, the SSA state and the SSA society

One can make sense of the three dimensions both at regional and national levels. The interactions among them becomes, however, more intense within the post-colonial borders, therefore this will be the focus of my inquiry. Within the national arenas of SSA states we find the three dimensions coexisting and at times overlapping from temporal, spatial, and functional perspectives.

As noted above several authors point to various disfunctionalities of postcolonial African states or to processes which are not characteristic of states in general. However, they do so by using a state-centric language and conceptual tools. Even

some of the authors attempting to look beyond the western assumptions regarding statehood do so based on a western understanding of various political, economic, or cultural dynamics. I will argue in this section, based on the ES theoretical framework above that the existence of what I call distinct dimensions renders the use of such conceptual frameworks insufficient for understanding both the local dynamics which result from the projection of the western state-ideal in SSA and the local SSA societies.

The mainstream literatures and policy approaches have sensed the presence of these distinct realities, but due to their western-bias are not able to fully make sense of their existence. As Ferguson (2007[2006]) notes, the state has decayed in its importance and the local level has received renewed attention:

> "[s]tate and society"—the "new paradigm" in the study of African politics that emerged at the end of the 1980s to rival the old nation-building approach—regards the state and its projects with new skepticism and rediscovers the local as the site of civil society, a vigorous, dynamic field of possibilities too long suffocated by the state. Instead of the main protagonist of development, the state (now conceived as flabby, bureaucratic, and corrupt) begins to appear as the chief obstacle to it. […] The local level, meanwhile, is no longer understood as necessarily backward, ethnic, or rural. New attention is paid to such non-"primordial" manifestations of the local as voluntary associations and "grassroots" organizations through which Africans meet their own needs and may even press their interests against the state." (p. 95)

Ferguson continues by claiming that the two paradigms are in fact very similar. They both relay not only on a western view of the state and society, but actually on the very same view of the state and society, as the below table indicates.

Table 1: Mainstream approaches to State-Society dynamics[55]:

	Nation-Building	State and Society
National	National integration Modernity: + Democracy: + Development: + Progress: +	The state Modernity: - Democracy: - Development: - Progress: -
Local	Tribal, primordial attachments Modernity: - Democracy: - Development: - Progress: -	Civil society Modernity: + Democracy: + Development: + Progress: +

Ferguson's (1997[1990]) work on Lesotho indicates in detail not only how these distinct dimensions exist but as well how they internally transform due to a skewed process of interaction: "[p]lans constructed within a conceptual apparatus do have effects too but in the process of having these effects they generally "fail" to transform the world in their own image. But "failure" here does not mean doing nothing; it means doing something else, and that something else always has its own logic" (p. 276). Therefore the assumption of these dimensions being distinct comes from the different logics, and related structures of meaning-in-use, at play within each of them. The presence of these different logics inhibits meaningful interactions as the way the very interactions and their content are viewed (i.e.: its meaning-in-use and potentially even ontology) is different with each respective logic. Furthermore, so is the meaning attributed to its effects. Referring to the 'sape' fashion trend, Ferguson (2007[2006]) remarks that "[t]he young men in their Paris fashions

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[55] From Ferguson 2007[2006], p. 95.

superficially appear to be acting Western, but at a deeper level, the cultural analyst

unearths a logic that is "authentic" and "entirely African"" (p. 160).

These distinct dimensions are identified as well by Ekhoolm Friedman (2008) in her

account of the Congo:

> "[t]he Congo can be seen as composed of two more or less separate spheres (not including the oil company Elf): *the state,* dominated by a ruling class controlling all the resources of the country; and *the popular sector,* where people are left to survive on their own. The ruling group had simply disengaged itself from the people, in spite of rhetorical assurances to the contrary, and it formed an enclave in the country with its own economy, culture, political party (the only party), and the military (Ekholm Friedman 1990a, 1990b). The inflow of money derived from three main sources: export revenues (mainly oil), aid and foreign loans, all controlled by the state." (p. 185)

The behavior of Ekhoolm Friedman's '*the state'* sphere is further delimited from the

international community by Jackson's remark that "[q]uasi-states expect and demand

forbearance from others because their survival depends fundamentally on

nonintervention. […] Their good conduct internationally may therefore spring more

from necessity than virtue and indicate only the appearance of civility and not the

reality" (Jackson 1993, p. 172). The three dimensions are portrayed in the figure

below.

Figure 3: The three dimensions of the SSA domestic arenas:
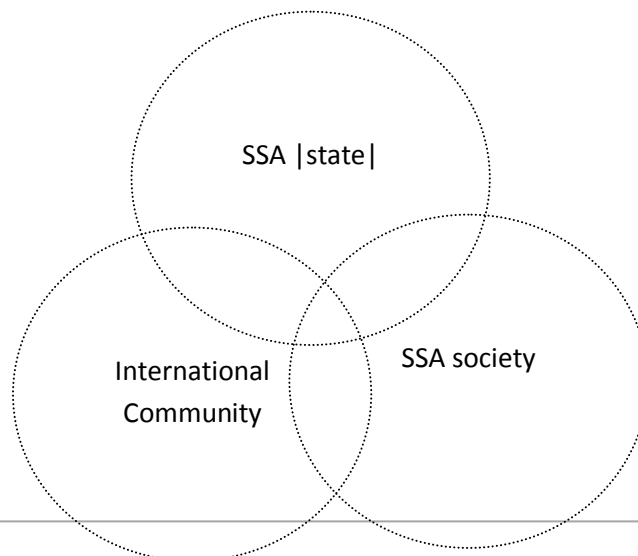
The state dimension refers to the postcolonial state and the forms of life it generates in the SSA context. The international community-dimension is represented by the wide array of international institutions both present on the ground and at an international level which as Opello and Rostow (2004) imply frame the sovereignty of these states – a recognition which is upheld *de jure* and which cannot be shaken by the most compelling evidence on the ground. This dimension comprises, by and large, the western mechanisms at play for maintaining the postcolonial states into existence. These two dimensions relate in various ways to the third dimension, the one of the local-people-traditional (society). Davidson points to

> "what he calls the peoples' "own solution to this carapace accepted from the colonial period". What these peoples think upon this subject is shown in their incessant emigration across these lines on the map, as well as by their smuggling enterprises. So that even while a "bourgeois Africa" hardens its frontiers, multiplies its border controls, and thunders against the smuggling of persons and goods, a "peoples'" Africa works in quite another way." (Said 1994[1993], p.308)

The manner in which these dimensions interact has been understood in various ways, as Ferguson (2007[2006]) argues: "we find a range of forms of power and authority springing up that have not been well described or analyzed. These are usually described as "sub-national" and usually conceived either as essentially ethnic (the old primordialist view, […]) or, alternatively […], as manifestations of a newly resurgent civil society that has been long suppressed by a heavy-handed state" (p. 102). However both alternatives are relating to a pure western account be it by the

absence what western views expect (e.g.: the primordialist view) or as instances of western (re)creation (e.g.: civil society):

> "[i]f "backward nations" were not modern, in this picture, it was because they were not *yet* modern. Modernity figured as a universal *telos*, even for the most "traditional" of societies. The extent to which societies differed from the modern (and—implicitly or explicitly –Western) ideal neatly indexed their "level of development" toward the ideal. The effect of this powerful narrative was to transform a *spatialized* global hierarchy into a *temporal* (putative) historical sequence. (Ferguson 2007[2006], p. 178)

Such approaches bring with them a deeper problem, as understanding the 'modern' as above leads to that "the vast majority of Africans [being] denied the status of modernity increasingly come to be seen, and may even (sometimes and in complex ways) come to see themselves, not as "less developed" but simply as less" (Ferguson 2007[2006], p. 189).

Having on the ground the international community, the state-like structures and local societies leads to the creation of these distinct dimensions. These societal dimensions can be seen as specific life-worlds[56] (Habermas 1987) which while interacting in various forms however maintain (a) logic(s) of their own which seem(s) to be persistent over time even in the event of cross-generated change. These distinct dimensions can multiply and can produce a variety of meanings in localized settings, therefore they do not represent essentialized entities, but rather loose frameworks similar to Bevir and Rhodes' (2005) 'traditions.' They may engulf a plurality of actors whose continuous interaction produces evolving intersubjective structures of meanings-in-use. The dilemma resulting from the existence of these different dimensions becomes evident when contrasted to the western approach to

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[56] Habermas (1987) understands lifeworlds as "represented by a culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns" (p.124).

development and international relations – Said's 'people's Africa' dimension is by-and-large ignored, but it is the one expected to 'develop.'

1.3.3.1 SSA domestic arenas as the locus where the three dimensions coexist and intersect

The three dimensions exist and intersect within SSA domestic arenas. In this section I focus, therefore, on the limited statehood characterizing SSA, in an attempt to provide an understanding of the dynamics at play in SSA domestic arenas. In line with Englebert's (1997) argument, I substantiate the claim that the postcolonial states are not states internally in spite of their recognition as such by the international community through western development policies[57]. One of the central claims of this research project is that attributing western understandings of statehood (i.e.: positive sovereignty) to SSA state-like entities (understandings which currently underpin western donor policies) contributes to disregarding locally attributed meanings to institutional processes and to undermining the understanding of governance and development in SSA.

In line with the exception-based argument from above, Reno (1998) remarks in his study that "[n]o distinct domestic politics as commonly understood is seen in the weak states in this study. […] Much recent commentary on African states also focuses on their performance, taking states as given and rarely paying attention to the organization of political authority" (p. 9). Reno implies therefore that the political (if

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[57] Given the limitations deriving from the adopted research design, this project cannot propose alternatives to statehood. It is considered that the bundle of locally-ascribed meanings to SSA state-like entities vary with each context where they unfold. The locally-attributed meanings may vary between fully dispersed meanings-in-use to creating coherent entity-like structures; therefore it is considered that one specific term would not be useful in trying to understand the dynamics at play.

we can call them political) dynamics are different from both the traditional western practices and from the western approach to understanding them. As well, he implies that the organization of political authority on the ground is different from the assumed state model. If this is the case, it justifies questions like: what is indeed on the ground? What structures of political authority are relevant? How does seeing the 'state' where it does not exist influence both local and international dynamics and development policies?

The literature up to date has tried to deal with this problem of discrepancy between concepts and reality, between norms and practices in various ways. Different authors qualify the postcolonial states as 'weak states', 'failed states,' 'quasi-states,' 'white-jeep' states,' 'project societies,' 'mafia states,' 'ministates' or refer to them in various ways, like for example 'criminalization of the state[58].' Most of these idioms imply and indeed reveal a difference between the western ideal concept of 'state' and the reality on the ground.

I claim that this approach is problematic for at least two reasons. First, from a terminological perspective, calling a state, a 'failed,' 'weak,' 'quasi' state tells us what these entities are not, and reveal very little about what they are. Second, from a conceptual perspective, understanding that a state has failed, not only does not tell us

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[58] Various authors have attempted to make differences between these terms which refer to various degrees of fragility or collapse of the postcolonial African states. I will consider these terms, however, synonymous as in my view all of them, most frequently, entail a western bias as they look at what there is not or point out differences from the western state model, and in consequence tell us very little about the societal organization of the respective areas and the wide range of dynamics at play.

what that so called state really is, but it forecloses the possibility of seeing the specific 'entity' or 'space' from a non-state perspective. Even authors who transcend traditional understandings of statehood in their work, engaging substantially with non-western local practices (Englebert 2009, 2000, Herbst 2000, Badie 2000[1992], Bayart 1996[1993]) remain terminologically committed to western 'statehood.' This I claim has deep implications at conceptual, theoretical, and policy levels.

1.3.3.1.1 The statehood problems of the postcolonial SSA states

Several authors (Jackson 1999, 1993; Kreijen 2004; Sørensen 2004, 2001) note that postcolonial states lack positive sovereignty and implicitly state capacity. In specific terms, Kreijen (2004) understands lack of capacity as "the breakdown of the monopoly of the use of force, the absence of political control over major parts of its territory, and the fragmentation of the political spectrum in general. Any attempts at the realization of an effective order are continuously being thwarted by the lack of positive sovereignty, or basically, power" (p. 232). Failed states are therefore "political failures: the government has failed the citizens and maybe the citizens have failed the government too. Even to speak of 'government' and 'citizens' in connection with such countries is misleading because these roles scarcely exist in any meaningful sense" (Jackson 2000, p. 295).

Jackson's remark, on the meaningfulness of such fundamental terms as 'government' and 'citizens,' deserves further attention. In contexts of state fragility or failure the meaning of institutions is relevant from two perspectives. First, as Jackson implies, the western meanings attributed to institutions tend not to hold. Second, the practices

and dynamics at play acquire localized meanings which cannot be grasped adequately with western conceptual tools. This sub-section will focus on the inapplicability of the western-driven conceptual frames related to statehood in SSA, and the specific meanings statehood acquire locally.

Sørensen (2004) engages in an analysis of the weakness of the postcolonial states. He looks at the characteristics of theses states in what concerns their government, nationhood and the economy. Table 1 below presents Sørensen's view.

Table 2: The weak postcolonial state[59]

The weak postcolonial state	
Government	Inefficient and corrupt administrative and institutional structures. Rule based on coercion rather than the rule of law. Monopoly on the legitimate use of violence not established.
Nationhood	Predominance of local/ethnic community. Neither the 'community of citizens' nor the 'community of sentiment' has developed to become the primary bond between people. Low level of state legitimacy.
Economy	Incoherent amalgamations of traditional agriculture, an informal petty urban sector, and some fragments of modern industry. Significant dependence on the world market and on external economic interest.

It becomes obvious that these entities, in spite of their recognized sovereignty cannot, in practice, make use of the resulting rights and obligations. Jackson (1993) concludes that such an entity, "is not a state properly so-called" (p. 53). He moves further, drawing on Hobbes, to highlight a fundamental distinction from the western state: "the expression of 'failed state' is something of a misnomer. Hobbes would not understand a failed state as a state at all." (Jackson 2000, p. 296). In the same way, Reno (1998) draws on Weber and indicates the same distinction from the western

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[59] From Sørensen 2004, p. 140.

state: "I find throughout the four case studies that the exercise of political authority in these countries represents nearly the opposite of the Weberian ideal" (p. 5).

The lack of positive sovereignty translates as well into the incapacity to deter external intervention. Jackson (1993) highlights this difference between being free from others' interventions on the one hand and being capable to deter such interventions. This decoupling of right from fact brings with it a significant transformation of both the internal and international dynamics in which these states get engaged. In its international relations, the postcolonial African state is facing various forms of intervention, of which a significant one is its relation with donors:

> "[i]nstead of nonintervention, the basic 'golden rule' of sovereignty, donors increasingly practice some form of *intervention* in order to make sure that the resources they provide are used according to plan. […] the rules connected with the institution of sovereignty have been twisted in new ways when it comes to the weak states. Instead of nonintervention and reciprocity, there is intervention and non-reciprocity." (Sørensen 2004, p. 118-119)

Kreijen (2004) underlines that, "[e]ssentially, State failure is rooted in a normative revolution that failed because it was insufficiently backed by social fact" (p. 378).

Equally important, Kreijen (2004) warns us that "[a]t bottom State failure in Africa teaches that in the international legal order one should not expect to create change successfully by delegitimizing existing situations" (p. 378). This differentiation between the state and society is relevant as it hints to a reality on the ground which exists beyond the western state-related conceptual frames.

The almost opposing views of the state as it is understood in the West and the 'state' as it is transposed in the postcolonial reality is strong enough to support the claim that the SSA entities are not states from a positive sovereignty perspective and, in consequence, should not be regarded as such neither in theory nor in policy and practice. The relevance of this argument increases when relating it to the development process and donor policies, as it is precisely the inapplicable western understandings of statehood which rest at the basis of donor's development policies.

1.3.3.1.2 Local practices within the postcolonial domestic arenas

We have seen above that the SSA states differ in substantial ways from their western counterparts. These states are seen

> "in various degrees of state failure [to] have 'retreated' to such an extent that there is virtually no substance left. Such states are little but empty shells; their existence is formally recognized by the international society, but they are of no service to their populations. On the contrary: armed branches of the state are a direct threat to the physical security and safety of large parts of the population." (Sørensen 2004, p. 139)

SSA states are perceived to exist, even if only as a 'façade' in order to provide "access to domestic control, international support and foreign aid" (Sørensen 2004, p. 135).

This discrepancy from the western norms of statehood and democracy has led these states to be seen in various ways by various observes. For Jackson, "most Third World countries are far more like internal empires than nation-states" (Jackson 1993, p. 162). Within this context, "[n]ationhood has simply not taken on the significance that it has in the modern states. Instead, ethnic identities and affiliations remain of crucial importance" (Sørensen 2004, p. 100). Furthermore, the literature shows how,

from a western perspective, state-related practices in SSA undermine the state itself: "the irony of African nationalism is that it sets the stage and provides the mechanism for the private dismemberment of African states' assets" (Englebert 2009, p. 201).

The created legal infrastructure enables these 'state'-entities to preserve indefinitely their sovereign legal status (Englebert 2009). As such they have developed further legal instruments and norms which they use for their own protection. Jackson (1993) looks at the African Human Rights Charter, which he sees as rather protecting the rights of the sovereign African governments than the rights of individuals. This example is instrumental for substantiating Bull's concern with regard to the incapacity of the European international society to accommodate cultural differences and at the same time to maintain its fundamental norms.

At the same time, this example highlights the nature of the relationship between SSA states and their subjects. Jackson (1993) observes not only that "[d]ecolonization multiplied the number of independent governments with responsibility to safeguard civil standards but also with power to violate them" (p. 146), but also that "[t]hese governments had the sovereign right to abandon the rule of law or do almost anything else in their jurisdictions" (p.146). And so they did. In many of the cases "[m]ore than four decades after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the violation of basic standards of human decency is more universal than the protection" (p. 140). Jackson provides as well an expressive view of the relationship between citizens and states:

> "[t]hese occurrences [arbitrary detentions, beatings, political killings, torture, terror, political prisoners, disappearances, refugees, death squads, destruction of livelihood, etc] are not happening outside sovereign states or in wars between them. They are not inflicted on foreigners or colonial subjects. They are occurring inside independent states. Although anti-government rebels are also responsible and foreign intervention can be involved, the principle violators are sovereign states. The victims are their own citizens." (p. 140)

However, beyond the formalistic legal talk, and indeed as a reaction to both institutions without societal fundament and the atrocities that come with such institutions, the society reacts in various ways. Various forms or resistance are observable not only against the West, but against the various postcolonial, western-like loci of reality:

> "the African city as the "visual symbol of postcolonialism" in that it forms the locus for a vibrant, nonformal expression of politics in which people, through their everyday activities—such as scrawling graffiti, listening to "pavement" or street radio, or simply spreading rumors—take "revenge on the State" and partake in new battlegrounds for registering dissent and constituting subjectivity. Working against the grain of conventional state politics, people and groups in the city have managed to effect a "negotiating power" in activities and actions that tend to take place beyond the gaze of state institutions yet still manage to reach such targets." (Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 13)

Sørensen's (2004) take on the relationship between developing states and their citizens is suggestive of a western-biased approach: "unreasonable as it may sound, the institution of sovereignty leaves primary responsibility for state failure resting upon the peoples of weak states themselves. It is their state; they will have to make it work" (p. 140). This assumption illustrates the presented above dilemmas of the West seeing states where they do not exist and at the same time the western attempt to recreate itself in the post-colonial space, which cannot transcend the boundaries of 'otherness.' The question is whether people who are considered to belong to a 'state' can make or be responsible for making that 'state' (i.e.: something they do not own nor fully relate to) functional, irrespective of their values, norms, practices, or

understandings of statehood. The way the West chooses to see the postcolonial realities appears to have much more to do with an attempt to build a specific western identity – which, as a modernity project, requires the existence of a self-constructed otherness – than with whatever one may conceive as realities on the SSA ground.

The very same legal infrastructure which enables the recognition of these states as sovereign and which protects governments in their abuses against their 'citizens' is seen by Kreijen as having collapsed. The lack of capacity to enforce the existing legal norms leads to the demise of the state:

> "[w]ithin the failed State the enforcement of existing legal norms, whether these are of domestic or international origin, is basically impossible because of the breakdown of the monopoly on the legitimate use of force and the resulting paralysis of juridical institutions. In addition it may be observed that the enactment of new domestic laws and the incorporation of international legal norms into the national legal order are impossible because legislative institutions are either non-existent or do not function properly. Indeed, the State as a normative (coercive) order may be said to have ceased to exist." (Kreijen 2004, p. 234)

In spite of the 'state' as 'normative order' having ceased to exist, we can observe that on the ground the dynamic behind the so considered failed, fragile, or weak states is of a serious intensity. This denotes that there are realities and consequences that the bringing of the state to the postcolonial areas has created, realities which cannot be observed, let alone understood, by the employment of the traditional state-related conceptual frameworks as the work of Englebert (2009) and Herbst (2000) implicitly shows. What has happened on the ground, in Opello and Rostow's (2004) view is that "the sate imposed on non-European peoples has been taken up and reworked by indigenous elites according to particular circumstances and conditions" (p. 218) and in order to serve their perceived interests. Badie (2000[1992]) goes a step further in

discussing how the 'imported' state in spite of not performing the expected functions

gets to have a significant impact on non-western grounds:

> "importation creates a disorder that, as we have seen, often reinforces relations of dependence, however, this disorder disrupts systems of meaning, processes of identification, modes of collective action, and forms of government, for this reason it gives rise to new political practices, as well as forms of inventions and political innovation." (p. 168)

Exactly these 'new political practices and innovations' and the related meanings

which, while escaping the understanding of theorists and practitioners, may

constitute the missing link in making sense of the failure of statehood and

development in SSA.

We are faced with a chaotic and diverse reality in which the western institutions,

concepts, views meet a different local reality. In this interaction they are

transformed. Even if when in a nominal sense the western institutions appear similar

to their imported counterparts, from a substantive point of view, they are many times

fundamentally different as for example: "weak-state rulers used aspects of formal

sovereignty, such as the right to define a legal order, for purposes other than those

intended by conventional standards of sovereignty" (Pean 1988 in Reno 1998, p. 21).

Jung (2008) provides a specific example in this regard, delineating three 'strategies

of social action' African leaders need to simultaneously pursue. The strategies of

political leaders presented by Jung reinforce the relevance of the three dimensions as

different meaning-generating spaces:

> "three strategies of social action that are necessary for their political survival. In order to extract resources from international and transnational donors, they have to pretend that they are acting according to the standards of modern statehood, that is, following the rules of good governance which emanate from the normative image of the state. As political entrepreneurs, however, they apply strategies of personal enrichment in accumulating external and internal resources within their networks of

personal ties. Finally, they must meet the normative expectations of 'traditional' African societies for a redistribution of their resources within a system of clients. Caught in this pattern of often contradictory organizational and social constraints, the 'big man entrepreneur' must act according to a hybrid normative setting, containing elements of both the universal image of the state and the particularistic values of local social practices." (p. 38)

These local realties are analyzed in a significantly different manner by Englebert (2009, 2000) and Herbst (2000). In their work Englebert and Herbst focus particularly on the practices and meanings generated by the appropriation of the state in SSA. Englebert shows how international recognition of SSA states' sovereignty translates locally in a valuable resource: legal command. Far from leading to complete collapse, negative sovereignty, and the legal command it generates, reinforces the resilience of SSA states. The resulting dynamics center on the various modalities of accessing and employing legal command for extracting resources: "[h]olders of legal command operate with some impunity, where public office is often equated with license to abuse and exploit. Manifestations of the private exchange of sovereignty are not typically censured or prosecuted. Public office is expected to be arbitrary, dominant, and irresponsive" (Englebert 2009, p. 222).

Callaghy (2009) and Reno (1998) see a specific form of such states – the warlord state in which the struggle for power is driven by violence and where private interest replaces any form of collective interest (Reno 1998, p. 3). This "rise of warlords in regional and civil wars is similar to those in nineteenth-century Africa challenged the very notion of the nation-state borrowed at the time of independence in the 1960s" (Callaghy 2009, p. 42). In practice, therefore, "rulers reject the pursuit of a broader project of creating a state that serves a collective good or even of creating institutions

that are capable of developing independent perspectives and acting on behalf of interests distinct from the rulers' personal exercise of power" (Reno 1998, p. 1). The subjects of these states, the 'people,' are caught into these dynamics in various forms, "[p]eople know very well that the state is a source of pillage, threat and exploitation. It is by no means a provider of welfare, security and order. Instead, ethnic communities attempt to build their own 'self-help systems' in order to compensate for the absence of state services" (Sørensen 2004, p. 80).

Sampson (2003) focuses on another aspect which may characterize such 'state'-like entities – the mafia states which exist due to their ability to mediate informal conditions. "Let us conceive states *as filling gaps where the informal sector does not operate.* […] They use their legitimacy and international recognition to play mafia chieftains and warlords against each other" (p. 337). Sampson rightly asks: "[w]hat is it that makes states weak in the first place? Why does informal organization sustains itself even when formal organizations collapse? Why are states and project society undermined by primordial ties of kin, ethnic, region or religion?" (p. 337-338).

These questions stress the further necessity to look beyond the current western attempts in order to understand the realities of postcolonial African states. They reinforce the above theorized dimensions (state, society and international community in SSA) which in spite of interacting remain substantially distinct. "We observe here two contradictory processes: primordial ties seem to undermine the state and corrupt

project society, while global projects and states try to replace primordial ties with those based on civil society or citizenship ties. […] This entails changing loyalties, and the various social groups in the global world are indeed people who have forsaken local loyalties to join another world" (Sampson 2003, p. 338).

The struggle for independence did not lead to the expected outcome i.e.: independence, but rather to a more subtle and a stronger form of dependence. This is what I call the move from material/legal to conceptual colonies. The embracing of state structures, the transformation of the previous colonies into states and their subsequent integration in the international legal, political and economic systems has led to a new form of dependence (Watson 1997). This has not only reduced the freedom of action of the local peoples, but has reduced the space for the development of coherent autonomous governance systems (Englebert 2009, Herbst 2000).

As Callaghy (2009) notes "[i]n many respects, Africa was lost between state and market. It wandered between an ineffective, sometimes collapsing state and weak markets, both domestic and international, and the latter were increasingly indifferent" (pp. 43-44). This 'being lost between state and market' raises a fundamental issue. The Western approach to analyze statehood and society based solely on western criteria renders such an analysis useless as it cannot capture the 'lost' part of the story, which in effect is the de facto content of whatever there exists within the postcolonial African space. While Parkinson's (1993) view that by "imposing their political domination and cultural values on their dependent

territories, the colonial powers distorted, and in many cases arrested, the free historical development of those areas" (p. 337), is relevant, the historical development of 'those areas' has not only been 'arrested,' but also ignored[60].

Ignoring local realities comes both from an incapacity to relate to the specific localities and from the lack of interest in doing so. The West is engaged in a series of monologues with and about itself, referencing the 'other'. The plurality of processes of self-construction is based on the opposed images of the 'other,' which in this case is the African postcolonial state(s). The implied recreation of the western self on the non-western space brings with it the state-like structures which develop into a 'distinct' dimension, a dimension to which the West connects to and constantly supports, however cannot fully comprehend – the SSA state. That distinct dimension projects fundamental mutations in the local and is based according to Ferguson and Gupta (2002 in Ferguson 2007[2006]) on ""claims of vertical encompassment." These claims naturalize the authority of the state over "the local" by merging three analytically distinct ideas – superior spatial scope; supremacy in a hierarchy of power; and superior generality of interest, knowledge, and moral purpose—into a single figure, the "up there" state that encompasses the local and exists on a "higher level"" (p. 92).

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[60] Several authors highlight the lack of attention paid to local circumstances: Englebert 1997, Dia 1996, Riddelll 2007, Booth et al 2006.

While western approaches expect a western state-derived logic to be prevalent in the SSA domestic arenas, the above discussion suggests that it is rather the opposite. The western state-derived institutions and practices appear to be integrated in local logics, acquiring specific meanings and being employed in ways which transcend western assumptions and expectations.

This section has substantiated two of the three main arguments on which the theoretical framework rests. It showed how SSA states can be understood through an exception-based interpretation of their genesis and resilience. Also, the section discussed how the statehood-as-exception argument reasserts the existence of the three dimensions and qualifies the SSA state as mere western assumption. Finally, the section has provided a brief overview of the dynamics at play within the SSA domestic arenas where the three dimensions exist and intersect. The next section focuses on the plurality of structures of meaning-in-use which results from the creation of states within SSA and is shaped within each of the three dimensions.

1.4 Statehood and development at the intersection of the three dimensions

The discrepancy between the West and SSA statehood experiences leads to a perpetual process of projecting the western self onto the non-western other which seems to have no alternative. A case in point is the EDF and the broader development process, where along these conceptual lines 'development' becomes the tool for projecting the West/ern(s) at its/their alterity. This responds to a modernity-related need implicit in the shaping of the West's self(-identity) – creating and

defining alterity: "[t]he problem of the donor comes when these potential implementing partners do not exist. If they do not exist, then they must be created" (Sampson 2003, p. 321). In practice the wide array of non-governmental associations and the SSA states themselves represent examples of such western creations.

The last several decades of development policy and practice appear to have missed LaPalombara's (1963) warning. He notes, in the early debates on political development, that failure to observe the shift in the meanings institutions acquire in development contexts "is certain to encounter our discussions of political change with confusion and with culturally limited and deterministic baggage" (p. 10). As the critical literature on development shows current development policies carry exactly that culturally limited and determinist baggage LaPalombara was warning against. This incapacity of the western international community, and particularly the western donors, to capture and utilize locally derived meanings of political institutions indicates an epistemological limitation. My research will address this limitation by analyzing the EDF dynamics between the European Commission and the SSA partner states.

The international relations literature up to date, including the literature which is more sensitive to local contexts, maintains statehood and/or western state-related concepts at its core. My attempt is to substantiate two counter arguments. First, I claim that the employment of western-derived concepts and theories does not help policy-makers involved in development practices to understand the context in which they

carry out their activity. Second I argue against most international relations scholars discussed above who view the logic of the state as the prime logic within SSA. Even scholars who explore local meanings of political institutions retain the western state as a reference point. I claim that it is rather the local social logics which are central in the governing of SSA spaces and which engulf, disperse, and give specific meanings to 'imported' institutions. Therefore without comprehending the broader social dynamics within SSA societies, it becomes epistemologically impossible to comprehend the locus and functions of the 'state' institutions and the processes through which the actual governance of the region unfolds. Before structuring the research design which I will employ, it is necessary to first theoretically discuss the western ethnocentric approach towards SSA and to present a theoretical approach to the way meanings are generated and employed at the intersection of the three dimensions.

1.4.1 The ethnocentricity of western development policies

While Jackson's (1993) and most other ES work discussed above rightly observes the complex dynamics at play in the development encounter, it remains entrapped into a western conceptual world. On western grounds all the above mentioned problems of SSA states become puzzling, challenging our understanding and contributing to policy and implementation failures. However, once we offer adequate attention to the local contexts and practices, most of these puzzling elements become outcomes of ignorance.

Ignoring the fundamental dimension which should constitute the basis of development (i.e.: SSA society) raises an important aspect, which will be addressed in this section. Specifically it does not only refer to the West choosing to see states (i.e.: representations of the self) where they do not exist[61]. It equally portrays the west's strong predilection towards *deciding* on projecting itself and attempting to (re-)crating itself as alterity in the non-western. Hence a wide array of labels which, while trying to evade the West, offer it a central position by signifying nothing about the substance of the respective 'alterity' but solely its distinctiveness from the West – 'non-western', 'postcolonial', 'non/post-modern', 'failed/failing/fragile states', 'resistance (…to what?)', etc. The West, "symbolically at the heart of global power" (Keith in Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 151), has engaged in the creation of structures of governance in Sub-Saharan Africa (and the broader postcolonial areas) by putting itself in the center: "[w]e are slowly becoming aware that the West is both a particular in itself and also constituted as the universal point of reference in relation to which others recognize themselves as particularities" (Featherstone in Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 154-155).

Mainstream understandings of the space delineated for the postcolonial states in SSA ignore other kinds of borders besides those drawn by the western colonial powers. This ignorance of the realities on the ground brings with it two important problems.

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[61] This aspect of the West seeing states where they do not properly exist is recently receiving increasing attention in the literature: Call (2008), Ghani and Lockhart (2008), Baker (2007), Draude (2007), Fukuda-Parr and Picciotto (2007), Risse and Lehmkuhl (2006), Grovogui (2002), Reno (1998). However, most authors stop short of inquiring into the causes of such a phenomenon and into what are the real implications of such perspective.

First the stability of these borders is, beyond doubt, questioned, in most cases, by internal forces divided along unrecognized but nevertheless ontologically relevant 'borders.' Second, the creation of spaces-to-be-governed and the implicit power structure that comes with it (i.e.: the state), even if initially instituted with relative ease[62] face significant challenges in establishing effective control over its presupposed population and territory.

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

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[62] As initially no prior claim on authority or power at that (i.e.: state) level has existed and therefore no direct opposition can be exercised, even more so, as the local or traditional forms of authority may not even understand or recognize the newly-created level.

That totalizing comparison brings with it a deeper problem. What if in the existing *plurality of otherness(es)* no comparable epistemologies and ontologies exist? That may be the case with most of the colonized territories, where the solution has been to create the '*less than*' component of the comparison, instead of attempting to comprehend any existing '*otherness.*' These practices become more than a comparison. They become a futile and conscious attempt of re-creating self within a territory which cannot, in fact, become '*the imagined other,*' let alone transcend the boundary of *otherness*; furthermore, a territory which continues to exist as an 'ignored' but meaningful *self*, in spite of its perceived irrelevance.

At a first sight, bringing such a view in the discussion on statehood, reveals the entrapment of the postcolonial state in between, internationally, an impossible, nevertheless perpetual process of becoming western and, locally, a confrontation with an alienated society which may oppose such transformations. However, the postcolonial processes at play are revealing "alternative visions" which fracture "imposed European master narratives and perspectives. […] This is particularly the case for "indigenous peoples" (India, Africa) who are able "to challenge European perspectives with their own metaphysical systems [Tiffen in Paolini *et al* 1999]." […] Behind the mask of European domination lies a native identity ready to be utilized and deployed back at the West" (Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 79).

At a closer look, the local opposition Paolini refers to hides the existence of local meanings given to the state structures and additional 'political' institutions which cannot be captured by western epistemology and conceptual frameworks (e.g.: role of traditional leaders and beliefs and witchcraft). The West's 'orthodoxy in seeing itself in the non-western' leads to missing out on what may be out there beyond the West-induced institutional construct. This problem transcends ignoring the local, and reveals a strong bias in the West's capacity to analyze and understand its localized others. The Western tools for analysis are based on western concepts and histories. They respond to western needs and questions. The resulting lacuna can be seen from an epistemological perspective as a limited potentiality for understanding 'alterity' on its own terms, but solely through its inclusion in the self and redefinition as 'alterity'. Abeche's view on universality is revealing this limitation:

> "as Chinua Abeche puts it, when remarking that Western critics often fault African writing for lacking "universality": "Does it ever occur to these universalists to try out their game of changing names of characters and places in an American novel, say, a Philip Roth or an Updike, and slotting in African names just to see how it works? But of course it would not occur to them to doubt the universality of their own literature. In the nature of things the work of a Western writer is automatically informed by universality. It is only others who must strain to achieve it. So-and-so's work is universal: he has truly arrived! As though universality were some distant bend in the road which you may take if you travel out far enough in the direction of Europe or America, if you put adequate distance between yourself and your home." (Abeche in Said 1994[1993], p. 216)

The various understandings of these interplays of identities can vary widely. Marechera's pessimism: "I still speak English and sound quite foreign to myself. […] The English language, […] has certainly taken over more than the geography of the African image" (Marechera in Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 112), can be contrasted to Appiah's optimism "[i]n Appiah Africa is a meeting point for various cultures in which the future is bright precisely because of the African ability to adapt,

accommodate, and rework the modern and the strange" (Appiah in Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 115). Facing such diversity Leys' advice seems sensible "the most positive response is for the rest of the world "to start thinking about Africa in terms that correspond to what is really happening there"" (Leys in Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 117).

Nevertheless following up on Leys' advice proves most of the time more difficult than it may seem at a first sight. 'What is really happening there' may receive different interpretations and meanings which may not be accessible or properly considered. As Hannerz notes:

> """[t]here is surprisingly little of a postcolonial ethnography of how the Third World people see themselves and their society, its past, present and future, and its place in the world; a cultural analysis of their fantasies and what they know for a fact" A global analysis, without a specific and nuanced sense of time and place, merely replicates the Western experience." (Ulf Hannerz in Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 158)

While my approach is not to provide an ethnography of the EDF or of the ACP counties, my research will tackle this problem from the 'in-between locus' created at the intersection of the three dimensions (SSA state, SSA society and international community). This in-between locus brings together not only the logics and meanings at play within each of the three dimensions but as well the discrepancies which unfold in their interaction. The research will therefore provide an analysis of discrepancies at the level of meanings attributed to SSA statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices.

1.4.2 Meanings and discrepancies at the intersection of the three dimensions

The international relations literature on the relevance of norms and ideas has expanded considerably with the substantiation of the positivism—post-positivism

debate and the growing relevance of constructivism (Guzzini 2000, Wendt 1999, Onuf 1998, Hopf 1998, Smith *et al* 1996, Vasquez 1995). The focus on norms and interpretation is particularly advanced in the work of several European Studies and international relations scholars (Puetter and Wiener 2007, Wiener 2007, Finnemore and Toope 2001, Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).

Although, both IR theory and the study of norms in international relations are perceived to be western-centric and a-historical (Milliken 1999, Legro 1997, Walker 1993), of particular relevance for this research project is Wiener's (2008) work on the 'invisible constitution of politics.' In her work, Wiener compares "the input of cultural practices in an *emerging* transnational arena with those in *enduring* domestic arenas" (p. 68) showing how the meanings attributed to norms persist in spite of increased transnational interaction. Wiener attributes substantial relevance to norm contestation in transnational settings, which increases the relevance of her work for this research project.

While Wiener's research focuses on the EU, the salience of specific cultural contexts in determining the meanings attributed to political ideas is useful in making sense of the interplay between the three dimensions conceptualized above. Hall asserts that "while political ideas are spread across boundaries, they are interpreted anew and often quite differently depending on their new social environment of implementation" (Hall 1989 in Wiener 2008, p. 70). In the case of SSA domestic

arenas, the western ideas of statehood and development get reshaped both in the interaction among the three dimensions and within each of them separately.

It becomes relevant, at this point, to discuss how more specifically the meanings at play in the EDF context are shaped within the SSA domestic arenas, why they are relevant, and how to capture them. Drawing on Gadamer (1989) and Taylor (1985), Gibbons (2006) argues that "ideas, concepts, and beliefs embodied in language become central to understanding the behavior of human beings, including an account of what they are doing, why they do what they do, and the point behind their behavior" (p. 565). Furthermore, "language must further be interpreted against the background practices within which those ideas develop and which in turn shape and form that complex background" (p. 565) In more specific terms, interpretive approaches maintain "that beliefs and practices[63] are constitutive of each other" (Bevir and Rhodes 2005, p. 22) and that "meanings or beliefs are holistic" (p. 22).

From this perspective, each of the three dimensions: the international community, the SSA state, and the SSA society, represent specific articulation(s) of background practices or traditions (in Bevir and Rohdes' terms). Those belonging to each of these dimensions possess from an interpretive point of view "historically situated and socially engaged human agency" (Gibbons 2006, p. 566) which enable specific interpretations of their beliefs and actions. However, the capacity to explain "behavior, ideas, beliefs, and so on requires reference to the larger complex of

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[63] Bevir and Rhodes' conception of 'practices' can be considered synonymous with Gibbon's 'complex background.'

background practices, historical situation, and linguistic community that helps constitute and define the behavior in question" (Gibbons 2006, p. 566).

The current research will not focus on any of the three dimensions in particular, but rather on the locus where they intersect. From a methodological point of view that in-between locus requires further attention as it is fundamentally inter-cultural. Applying western concepts, deemed to be universal, to the study of non-western practices and institutions has been criticized from as early as the 1960s (Gibbons 2006, Winch 1964): "to avoid misunderstanding those cultures and their social practices, we need to take account of their ideas about what they are doing and at least initially formulate our account in terms common to their way of life" (Gibbons 2006, p. 565).

The capacity to perform such a task, i.e.: to formulate one's account in terms common to other's way of life, poses however important challenges. Drawing on Gadamer (1989) and Taylor (2002), Gibbons (2006) provides the solution in the so called 'fusion of horizons.' This is seen as a "dialogical process in which we treat the other as a partner in a dialogue in which we attempt to extend our categories of understanding to encompass the ideas, beliefs, or way of life of the other" (p. 567). While the EDF practices do not reveal dialogic processes as described above and therefore no proper fusion of horizons may be considered to form, my contention is that EDF policy-makers, NGO employees, and beneficiaries inhabiting the in-between locus at the intersection of the three dimensions are socialized through

common practices and face common practice-related challenges[64]. We can assume therefore that the policy-makers and the NGO employees are not autonomous, possessing a certain degree of agency, which can be characterized as situated agency (Bevir and Rhodes 2005). As Bevir and Rhodes (2005) argue: "[t]o reject autonomy is to accept that traditions and discourses influence individuals. […] To accept agency is, however, to imply that people have the capacity to adopt beliefs and actions, even novel ones, for reasons of their own" (p. 25). As such, in spite a lack of fusion of horizons and of not fully understanding the 'other,' the policy-makers and NGO employees are facing experiences which reveal potential contradictions at the level of meanings-in-use. The argument of the thesis becomes, in these terms, that the ethnocentric character of the EDF inhibits exactly the capacity on the side of EU institutions and policy-makers to access the 'way of life' of the SSA state and SSA society dimensions so as to be able to 'formulate one's account in terms common to other's way of life.'

The perceptions and beliefs of EDF policy-makers and NGO employees become therefore relevant as they are constitutive of statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices. The discourses encountered in the EDF interactions (re)produce (on Milliken's (1999) terms) "a language for speaking about (analysing, classifying) phenomena, […] some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular 'regime of truth' while excluding other possible modes of identity and action" (p. 229).

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[64] Common practices may indeed be seen to lead to the development of a dialogue based on instrumental objectives. Such a dialogue however, does not necessarily lead to a fusion of horizons.

Bevir and Rhodes' (2005) approach to situated agency is similar to Wiener's (2008) approach which refers to more specific institutional frameworks. Within their institutional settings, "actors operate within a context that is constituted by the interplay between structures of meaning-in-use and individuals" (Wiener 2008, p. 71). The purpose of this inquiry is therefore to uncover the meanings behind certain core concepts and practices at play in the EDF development interactions unfolding at the intersection of the three dimensions.

In order to do so, the focus of the research is put on 'meaning' as understood by constructivists: "things do not mean (the material world does not convey meaning); rather, people construct the meaning of things, using sign systems (predominately, but not exclusively linguistic)" (Milliken 1999, p. 229). It is expected therefore that specific meanings are attributed to statehood- and development-related practices both within the realm of each of the three dimensions and within the locus opened up at their intersection. A plurality of discourses comes therefore together in the attempt to (re)produce statehood and development. Milliken, drawing on Weldes and Saco (1996), views these discourses as structures of meaning-in-use' which "implies that discursive studies must empirically analyse language practices (or their equivalent) in order to draw out a more general structure of relational distinctions and hierarchies that orders persons' knowledge about the things defined buy the discourse" (p. 231).

Each of the three dimensions exists as a life-world nurturing specific structures of meaning-in-use and contributing to the (re)production of a SSA reality which it can influence but never fully contain. More specifically, each of these dimensions generate, through interactive and intersubjective processes, ontologies, and structures of meanings-in-use about not only statehood and development but equally important about the normative and institutional frameworks which constitute them.

In addition, in the interactive processes among the three dimensions, a similar process unfolds as specific conceptions of institutions and processes (social, political, economic, and cultural, etc.) clash, condition, or reinforce each other in various ways. These dynamics enable a double process of signification as interpretation is "derived from the social practice of enacting meaning that is used in a specific context" (Wiener 2008, p. 4). Meanings for the same institutions and processes get generated both at an interactive level and within each of the dimensions. This thesis argues, therefore, that lack of alignment in structures of meaning-in-use attributed to relevant norms, institutions, and practices leads to lack of understanding among those involved as their capacity to connect to their interlocutors' understandings is limited. In addition such lack of alignment may potentially lead to the failure of statehood and development in SSA, given the plurality of meanings-in-use which constitute diverse and potentially contradictory practices.

The theoretical discussion from the previous sections proposes that such a lack of alignment exists. In order to capture that lack of alignment one's research strategy may analyze the interactions unfolding at the intersection of the three dimensions. The intersection of the three dimensions represents a transnational and inter-cultural locus which brings together the SSA state, the SSA society, and the international community in an attempt to negotiate the realities of the SSA existence. The negotiation and implementation of EDF strategies (and of broader development strategies) can be placed within this locus. The aim of the empirical analysis becomes therefore to uncover the discrepancies at the level of meanings-in-use that EDF policy-makers and NGO employees perceive.

The intercultural and transnational characteristics of this in-between locus at the intersection of the three dimensions open a possibility for contestation of meanings and norms. As meanings "evolve through interaction in context. They are contested by default" (Wiener 2008, p. 63). In the context of this thesis contested meanings are referred to as discrepancies, and are defined as both "situations where legal text and social context of interpretation do not overlap" (Wiener 2008, p. 63) and situations where meanings generated from distinct social contexts of interpretation do not overlap. Analyzing the EDF comes, therefore, with two significant limitations. First, a focus on the in-between locus at the intersection of the three dimensions cannot fully reveal structures of meaning in use generated by any one dimension. A different research approach with a focus on the respective dimensions would be needed for uncovering structures of meaning-in-use. The analysis of the in-between

locus can however reveal the discrepancies created when the different structures of meaning-in-use collide, aspect which takes place in the interactions of actors pertaining to different dimensions. It is assumed first, that actors pertaining to any one dimension are aligned with the structures of meaning-in-use prevalent in their respective dimension. And, second, in consequence, those actors can partially perceive the existence of differences in meanings[65] in their interaction with other actors or settings embedded in different dimensions.

Second, a focus on analyzing the in-between locus at the intersection of the three dimensions partially decouples those inhabiting that intercultural locus and particularly their practices performed in the in-between location from the background context of their respective dimension. This aspect hampers the employment of a full-fledged interpretive approach as the potentiality for interpretation is limited. The alternative is to rely on a thick description of the perceptions and beliefs of those interviewed as they should reveal discrepancies at the level of meaning. May such discrepancies exist interviewees will themselves provide an interpretation of the encountered contested meanings.

Policy-makers, practitioners, and beneficiaries, who participate in the negotiation and implementation of the EDF strategies, carry their respective "constituted normative baggage into international negotiation environments" (Wiener 2008, p. 69). The perceptions and beliefs of such policy-makers, practitioners, and

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[65] Perceiving *difference* in meaning is regarded as a distinct phenomenon from perceiving meanings which may be different.

beneficiaries become therefore relevant in uncovering the meanings or meanings-in-use (but *not* the *structures* of meaning-in-use) which the three dimensions generate. Equally important in the context of this research, the perceptions of those participating in the negotiation and implementation of EDF strategies become relevant for uncovering the alignment or lack of alignment in structures of meaning-in-use at the intersection of the three dimensions as discussed above.

It is, therefore, the aim of this research to describe and understand the interaction between the three dimensions through an analysis of EDF practices and related meanings. The purpose is to uncover potential discrepancies at the level of meanings attributed to statehood and development norms, institutions, and practices. Such discrepancies are invisible; however, they may indicate two important aspects. First, they may indicate a lack of understanding of SSA states and social dynamics by Commission officials. Second, such discrepancies in meanings and beliefs may be constitutive of the failures of statehood and development in SSA.

1.5 Conclusion: research question and research assumptions

The above theoretical framework has been created for addressing the following research question: *how does western statehood ethnocentrism, reflected through EU development policies, contribute to limiting the EDF policy-makers' understanding of SSA state and social dynamics?* This research project will look into the implications of the EU using western concepts and frameworks for sustaining EDF engagements in SSA. Four assumptions rest at the core of this research:

1.   EU development policies and the EDF in particular are based on western conceptions and frameworks.

2.   The SSA states, created through a western sovereign decision, have developed (a) logic(s) of their own that is/are not understood by the western donors and that cannot be grasped with western conceptual frameworks.

3.   The creation of the SSA state through a western sovereign decision posits it in a state of exception and, as such, against both the international community and their respective societies. In consequence, there are three dimensions at play within the SSA national arenas: the SSA state, the SSA society and the international community on the ground.

4.   The intersection of the three dimensions reveals lack of alignment in the meanings attributed to fundamental state- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices, leading to a lack of understanding of SSA states and societal dynamics on the side of Commission officials.

My attempt, while incapable itself of transcending the western bias which is inscribed in current academic work, can nevertheless identify the discrepancies between the statehood- and development-related western assumptions and perceived local differences. These discrepancies will further enable the identification of the non-western localities which necessitate further attention in subsequent academic work. Once showing the existence of the distinct dimensions conceptualized above, it becomes possible to engage in a more substantial discussion on the relations between the West and SSA 'states,' which shall provide evidence for the exception-

based argument and the lack of alignment in meanings attributed to political institutions within the three dimensions. In order to facilitate such a discussion I will develop in the next chapter an analytical framework and research design.

Chapter 2: Analytical framework and research design: operationalizing the dynamics at play at the intersection of the three dimensions from SSA domestic arenas

2.1 Introduction

The ingrained tension between order and justice within ES theorizing indicates the existence of three dimensions within the SSA domestic arenas: the international community, the SSA state, and the SSA society. These dimensions comprise a plurality of actors, processes, and institutions, which interact or co-exist in various ways. Furthermore the internal dynamics of each of these dimensions are characterized by (an) own logic(s) of action, generating particular and localized meaning-in-use for the governance institutions which are at the core of the statehood and development projects. The first section of this chapter will advance a reconceptualization of the 'international' which can accommodate an analysis of the intersection of the three dimensions. The second section will propose the analytical framework and research design which will enable and structure an empirical analysis of the space located at the intersection of the three dimensions. The third section of the chapter will focus on the research design.

2.2 Redefining the 'international'

The transformation of the 'international' on the SSA territory can be traced back to the decolonization process, in which, according to Jackson (1993), underdevelopment moved from being a domestic issue to being an international one: "[d]uring the colonial era, however, development and underdevelopment was a

domestic rather than an international issue, if it was an issue at all. Decolonization therefore did not create the North-South gap which has been in evidence for several centuries. Instead, it internationalized it" (p. 110). The internationalization of development within the African context remains evident today through the multiple examples in which development projects designed on an international level (sometimes in cooperation with national and/or local partners) leave deep traces on the newly defined locality *in development* – its identity, material reality, ideology, etc.

As Paolini *et al* (1999) rightly observe, international relations "tends to ignore a range of issues in contemporary political and social analysis, such as identity, subjectivity, space, and modernity, […] this is of course not true of postmodern or critical international relations, but even in these areas there are problems regarding the place of the non-Western world" (p. 30). Going a step further Paolini *et al* bring in the individual, asserting its central position in the constitution of the international realm: "international relations […] fails to take into account the subjective and cultural, which also affect interactions between states and nations. It refuses to recognize that subjects at the level of everyday practices are involved in international relations" (p. 202). Integrating the everyday non-western subjectivities and practices within international relations is a prerequisite for discussing development and statehood in SSA. International elements such as a water pump, solar energy, or technical assistance permeate local communities (considered remote from the international proper), where they receive localized meanings and create profound

changes in the life of respective communities. The re-conceptualization of the international is also necessary from an ES theoretical perspective, if the ES' openness towards cultural diversity and inter-civilizational relations is to be taken serious.

Paolini *et al* (1999) raise a fundamental question: "[w]hy is it that international relations, a discourse that sets out to explain the character of contemporary world politics and theorize the behavior of states, makes so little space for questions of identity, subjectivity, and modernity, in particular as they apply to non-Western places such as Africa?" (p. 5) Aiming to discuss the functioning of the 'state' in its non-western form requires international relations to go "beyond relations between states that are assumed to conform to a given (and ahistorical) set of internal structures and behavior. […] Such expectations of a universal standard of behavior fail to capture the logic of weak state organization" (Reno 1998, p. 16). Therefore, this failure of dealing with the central ontology of international relations (i.e.: the state, albeit in its non-western form) should convince even the most conservative of the international relations scholars, that there is a legitimate need to deepen the theoretical engagements of the discipline.

SSA development and statehood-related practices reveal subjectivities and intersubjectivies which blur the main-stream definition of the international. A plurality of elements assumed to belong to either the local, national, or international level, can be spotted next to each other producing mutations in everyday practices.

Such transformations and reconstructions of actions and meanings lead to a postmodern and at times intersubjective picture, in which the global, the national, and the local collapse into each other. More subtle but nevertheless profound changes occur at the level of identity and subjectivity. The placement of a foreign presence in various shapes within the context of everyday local practices brings with it novel (inter)subjectivities which displace and at the same time re-align realities. The outcome is realities in which the "global and the local form a nexus: It is not merely a matter of place as the manifestation of the local giving substance to an empty global space. The local is always implicated in the global (and vice-versa), and various in-between sites exist that are constitutive of differences and adaptations, mostly unpredicatable and unintended" (Paolini *et al* 1999, p. 206).

Such in-between sites open at the intersection of the three dimensions conceptualized in the previous chapter. In analyzing such in-between sites, it is important to identify instances of "diversity and commonality of meaning of fundamental norms [and institutions] at a level of desegregation that allows for the empirical assessment of meaning" (Wiener 2008, p. 69). The following sections will take on the task to design an appropriate analytical framework.

2.3 Analyzing the intersection of the three dimensions

This section attempts to make sense of the in-between locus; that is the flows and interactions at the intersection of the three dimensions (the SSA state, the SSA society and the international community). To this end, I will bring in Buzan's structural approach to the international/world society. It has been argued above that

the current understanding of the SSA development realities is based on western concepts and structures of meaning-in-use. While these conceptual tools are not sufficient for a proper understanding of what transcends the West's engagement in SSA, they are nevertheless useful in identifying both the main dimensions involved in the development interplay and the discrepancies between western engagements and local reactions. A structural approach is suited therefore as, based on the theorized dimensions, it allows the identification of the main actors involved in the development process. In addition a structural approach offers the necessary space for an inductive approach: first, to the structural dynamics within each of the identified dimensions, second, to the generated structures of meaning-in-use, and third, to the roles and actions of the actors involved in the interactions between the respective dimensions. This research will focus on the third aspect with a particular focus on the discrepancies generated at the intersection between the respective dimensions.

The ES, in its structural form, lends itself to such an approach, through its notion of world society, as it allows for the possibility that the TNA-world and the inter-human world become prevalent while the importance of the inter-state world recedes in the background. This flexibility is in line with the above re-conceptualization of the 'international' where non-state actors and local elements are brought to the fore. The transition from international society to world society is justified as while international society refers to the expansion of statehood as a global model, world society opens up the analytical possibility to recognize processes, actors, and

meanings generated through the skewed enactment of statehood in non-western areas.

Development aid relations were identified above as practices which unfold at the intersection of the three dimensions. The aid relationship, I argued, reveals the intersection of meanings-in-use at play in the preponderant failure of statehood and development engagements in SSA. Certain EDF practices represents a more specific locus where the three dimensions come together and where the discrepancies among structures of meanings-in-use may be identified. The figure below shows the locus of the EDF negotiations and implementation in-between the three dimensions:

Figure 4: The EDF located in-between the three dimensions
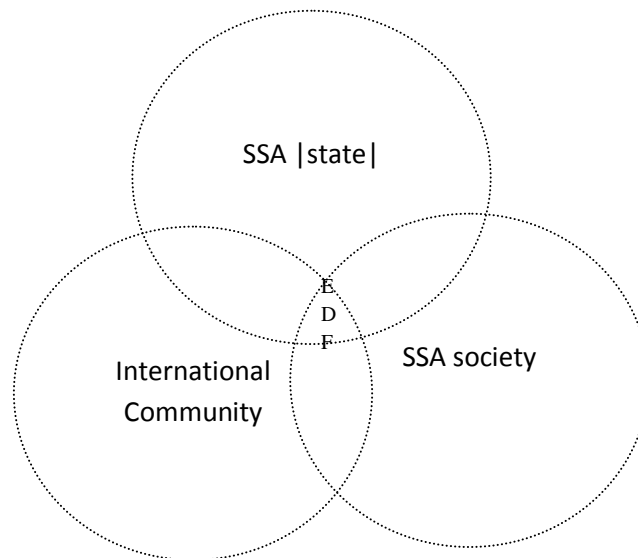
In the practice of aid, from high level negotiations to project implementation and impact assessment, international elements come together with national and local elements in a concerted action of recreating the national and the local (i.e. a trial to

produce development). As such, the loci of interaction and negotiation spread from the international level to the local environment. In consequence, the structure of these loci is embedded within trans-national, national, and/or local settings. In what follows I will attempt to further operationalize these areas of interaction. In doing so, I will draw on Gibson *et al.* (2005) for portraying the way donors and recipients interact. I will focus on two aid-related aspects. The first refers to the relationships between the actors involved in the development process and the second to the related financial flows.

In what regards the relationship between the actors involved in development, Gibson *et al.* (2005) propose an international development cooperation octangle as presented in the below figure.

Figure 5: The International Development Cooperation Octangle (Gibson *et al.* 2005, Chapter 4.2):
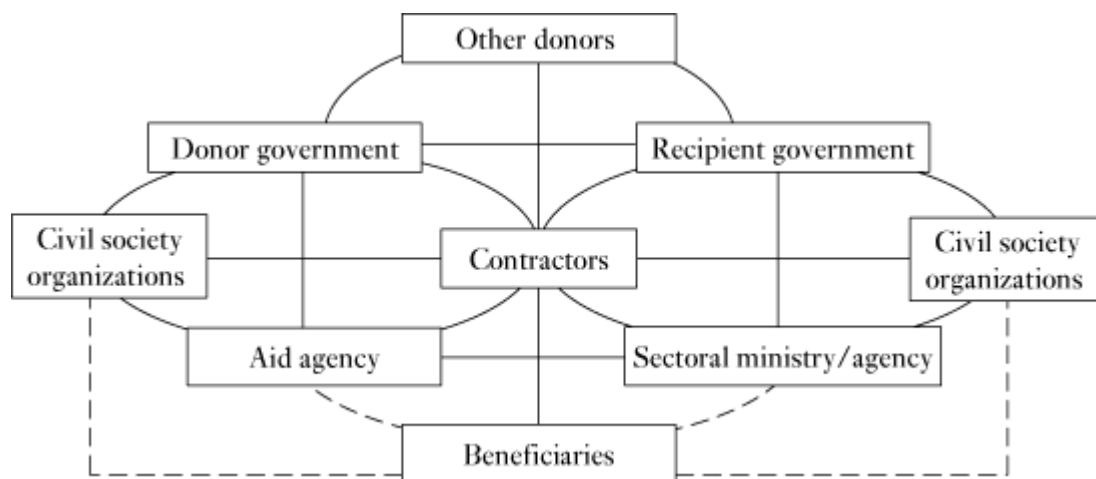
Elements derived from both the donor and the recipient state are present in various forms. An important aspect is that these elements are intertwined. Moreover, it is

visible that actors pertaining to the international community and SSA state dimensions are more prominent in development aid interactions, while actors pertaining to the society dimension are less visible. Nevertheless, the above figure shows how the three dimensions are connected in various ways in dealing with development (aid). In order to capture these interactions, it is important to target specific processes unfolding among the actors. In the case of the EDF, the processes which bring together the actors from the three dimensions are the negotiation of strategies and their implementation.

All three dimensions are tied together, among others, by the fact that aid means resources (primarily of a financial nature). The trajectory of the financial flows offers substantial insights about the relationships portrayed in the octangle above. The below figure shows the kinds of actors involved in development aid interactions and represents a good guidance for carrying out the empirical analysis. In the case of the EDF, the first four columns will guide the selection of the actors relevant for the empirical analysis. While engagement with beneficiaries is considered important, it cannot be captured by the current research as a different research design would be necessary, e.g.: ethnographic research.

Figure 6: The Chain of Aid Delivery (Gibson *et al.* 2005, Chapter 4.1):

Other donors← →Donor →Recipient →Contractors →Beneficiaries

Other bilateral donors	Parliament	Government	Foreign implementation organization	Target group
Multilateral donors	↓ Government	↓ Ministry of finance	NGOs Private firms	Other recipient country beneficiaries
Private foundations	↓ Aid agency	↓ Line ministry	Local implementation organization	
Charities	↓ Management	↓ Local agency	Government Bureaus	
NGOs	↓ Desk officer		NGOs	
	↓ Field mission		Private firms	

It is important to note that this array of interactions between donors and recipient states is permanently engulfed in a political process. The political characteristics of development relations are well articulated in the literature and in the institutional setup which at times joins together foreign policy and development responsibilities.

The EDF represents the European assistance to the ACP states. It reveals, at the level of the negotiation and implementation of the Country Strategy Papers (CSP) and National Indicative Programs (NIP), an interaction between the European Commission (donor, part of the international community dimension), the national government (part of the SSA state dimension), and NGOs (part of the SSA society dimension and of the international community dimension), while having as the beneficiary in most instances the local society and NGOs (part of the SSA society dimension).

Those who inhabit this in-between space of development strategy negotiations and implementation are the policy-makers, NGO employees and sometimes experts and academics. Their perceptions and beliefs are relevant as they project the structures of meanings-in-use at play within each dimension and the potential discrepancies formed at the intersection of the three dimensions. The figure seven below shows these interacting actors and the dimensions they belong to:

Figure 7: EDF actors and the three dimensions
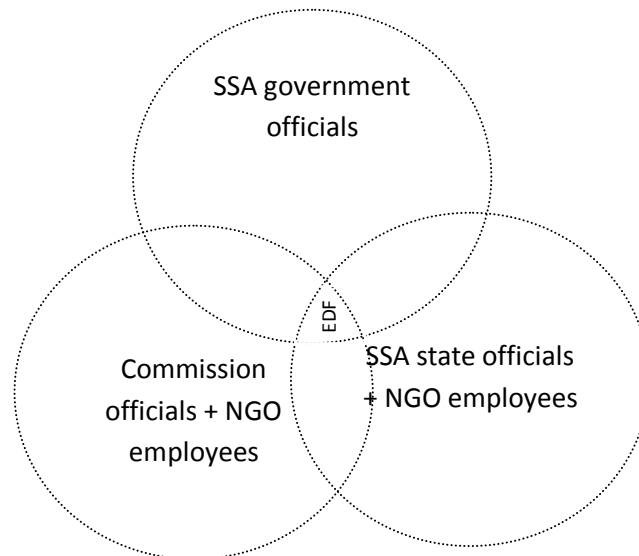
The dynamics which unfold at the intersection of the three dimensions merit further attention as they are the context in which the identified actors carry out their activity. That in-between locus is determined by the temporal and spatial overlap of the three dimensions. The unfolding dynamics therefore concern the interaction of (at least) three life-worlds through the structures of meaning-in-use they generate. The actors inhabiting this in-between locus are best placed to provide understandings of the

characteristics these dynamics acquire in various contexts. Therefore, the empirical section of the thesis will focus on analyzing perception of policy-makers and NGO-employees. The meanings and understandings resulting from the field interviews will be the basis for uncovering the meanings that statehood and development-related norms, institutions, and practices acquire and for identifying and analyzing potential lack of alignment between distinct structures of meaning-in-use. The below table presents the focus of the empirical analysis:

Table 3: Focus of empirical analysis:

Level of interaction	Focus of analysis
The intersection of the three dimensions: international community – SSA state – SSA society	Perceptions of the western—non-western interplay of meanings (regarding statehood and development in SSA) in the negotiation and implementation of the CSPs and NIPs.
	Perceptions of the interaction between donor agencies and local actors (recipient government, state institutions, nongovernmental organizations, traditional structures, etc).
	Perceptions of the discrepancies in meanings-in-use attributed to statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices.

To conclude, the EDF interactions comprise a wide array of actors who engage in a plurality of practices. The material side of these interactions translates into institutional structures, financial flows, and project outcomes, while the entire dynamic is deeply political. The actors range from international to local and the practices they engage in can be characterized as ranging from intersubjective to

divergent. Before advancing with the development of the analytical framework it is important to clarify the research design and methodology to be employed.

2.4 Research design and methodology

The ES provides guidance for choosing the appropriate methodology for analyzing international phenomena. Being at the core of the second great IR debate – between behaviorists and historicists/interpretivists – the ES' focus on methodological discussions is fundamentally historicist/interpretive (Dunne 1998). In addition, the centrality of meanings and beliefs for the current research accentuates the necessity for employing interpretive methodology.

The EDF interactions lend themselves as appropriate for capturing the meaning-in-use attributed to statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices prevalent in the in-between locus of the three. Therefore the research will be based on a single case study research design, decision justified in more detail below.

2.4.1 Case selection: the EDF negotiation and implementation processes

The EDF represents a natural focus of this research project (given that the thesis addresses an EDF-related puzzle). In addition, there are several other reasons which make the EDF a relevant case study from an empirical point of view as shown below.

2.4.1.1 Why the focus on Europe as a donor?

There are several reasons for the decision to consider Europe as representative for both the western statehood model projected globally and the western donor

community. The theoretical discussion has emphasized the centrality of the European state-model for the expansion of international society. The former colonial powers in SSA (all of them European), currently major donors, have contributed in fundamental ways to shaping the SSA polities. The European powers have colonized, transformed, and granted independence to the SSA territories. The western sovereign power at play in deciding over the constitution of SSA states and which currently supports their existence is mostly European or of European decent (e.g.: USA, Canada). In addition, the European Union is viewed as a model of successful regional integration, becoming in some regards a model of a post-nation-state societal organization.

The above theoretical framework has also proposed the appropriateness of development aid interactions for analyzing the challenges of development and statehood in SSA. European aid appears to be best placed for conducting such an analysis. The EU (European Commission and EU Member States) is the largest donor in the world, providing more than 50% of the total ODA. The EU portrays itself as an international leader in advancing the development agenda. 20% of EU aid provided in 2009 is managed by the European Commission, making the Commission the sixth largest ODA provider globally[66]. Furthermore, from among western donors, the EDF (the European Commission aid) is considered one of the most

[66]Data   from
http://www.developmentportal.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/FAQ/FAQ_DevPortal_20110216.pdf; accessed 9/2011

developmentally-oriented (Lancaster 2007) which implies, among others, that it provides a significant space for decisions to partner governments.

Lastly, the long history of over 50 years of ACP-EU cooperation provides us with practices and institutions which have evolved into a complex partnership, i.e.: established debates, well regulated processes of interaction (e.g.: a series of agreements e.g. Lomé, Cotonou), well documented process of negotiations and assessment (process of producing the CSPs and NIPs, evaluations, etc). These aspects are considered sufficiently substantial for justifying the empirical focus on the EDF.

2.4.1.2 Why the EDF negotiations and implementation as the unit of analysis?

The EDF represents a financial instrument delivering the development aid provided by the EU to the ACP states. The EDF is regulated by the Partnership Agreements, currently the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. It has been established more than 50 years ago and is constituted by contributions from the EU Member States, being however managed by the European Commission. In the period under analysis the Directorate General for Development and Relations with the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (DG Dev) has been the administrative structure in charge of EDF programming. The EDF has been identified above as a specific locus at the intersection of the three dimensions.

Equally important, the EDF consists, among other, of negotiation processes between donors and partner states. These negotiation processes refer to either the content of strategies or modalities of implementation. Therefore, from among the different processes unfolding under the EDF, the negotiation of the strategies and their implementation are of particular interest for this research. The relevance of the EDF processes rests in that they bring to the table all the actors identified in the above figures. Of particular relevance in this context are the EDF actors presented in Fig. seven: the donor, partner governments, and the NGO personnel. In addition, the EDF processes give voice to the SSA governments, non-state actors, and beneficiaries. This aspect bares relevance as it is exactly the perceptions and beliefs of these actors which represent the core focus of this research project as they can indicate potential discrepancies between the meanings-in-use generated by the three dimensions. By analyzing the perceptions of policy-makers and third parties (e.g. NGOs, academics) located within the context of the EDF one should be able to observe views on the following:

- The content of the development policies – including perceptions on the fundamental institutions and processes which underpin statehood and development in SSA;

- The nature of the dialogue and the opinion of the actors about their partners-in-negotiation;

- The transposition in practice of the content of the agreed documents (implementation) and related challenges;

- Additional relevant aspects.

In consequence, analyzing the EDF can reveal the dynamics between the three dimensions. Such an analysis can show whether the meanings-in-use generated within the three dimensions align or rather diverge, leading, potentially, to development and statehood failure.

Finally, carrying out research on the EDF comes with specific limitations. First, the EDF is financing a high number of countries. Second, there are a reduced number of policy-makers involved in the negotiations of EDF strategies on the side of each partner state. This represents a potentially important limitation for the thesis. In order to address this aspect, I have tried to carry out research in a higher number of SSA countries so as to capture the views of partner state government officials as well, as explained below.

2.4.1.3 Unit of observation and country selection

The EDF strategies are negotiated at national and regional level. This research will focus on the national level given the focus on statehood and given that the intersection of the three dimensions appears most evident within domestic arenas. The experience with negotiating CSPs and NIPs varies with certain characteristics of the partner country. The involvement of partner countries in the negotiations of CSPs and NIPs is expected to be influenced by several criteria, among which: general relations with the EU, natural resources, aid-dependence, and government ideology.

In spite of this expected variation, there are important similarities. The EDF consists of standard procedures across most of the ACP partner states as will be shown in the

next chapter. Furthermore, this research focuses on the EDF negotiations not to provide technical evaluation or assessment, but rather to capture the perceptions and beliefs of the involved policy-makers and NGO employees. The three broad categories of perceptions and beliefs from Table three are relevant in this discussion.

An important focus is put on perceptions and beliefs about the institutional processes at play in the relations among actors (particularly so in the negotiation and implementation of CSPs and NIPs). From this perspective, some of the main factors generating variation are: amount of EU aid, nature of political relations with the EU, sectors of concentration, institutional capacity of partner state, and inter-personal relations. Chapter four focuses on the perceptions of interviewees with regard to the negotiation and implementation of CSPs and NIPs.

Another important focus is put on perceptions and beliefs regarding statehood and development in SSA. From this perspective, some of the main factors generating variation are: current experience and nature of current job, development prospects of the respective partner state, experience with other partner states, country of provenience, number of years spent in developing countries, and field of expertise. Chapter five focuses on these aspects. By focusing in chapter four on the discrepancies encountered at an operational level (negotiation and implementation of CSPs) and in chapter five on broader discrepancies encountered at the level of statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices, the thesis shows how the ethnocentric EU policies and the challenges and lack of

understanding encountered by the Commission officials are related to broader conceptual and theoretical frameworks which underpin western thinking on statehood and development.

The following countries were considered an appropriate focus as they present variation on a series of characteristics as presented in the below table: Burundi, Cameroun, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Data for additional countries has been collected depending on the field experience of the interviewees.

Table 4: **Country characteristics:**

	Fragile situations[67]	Economic development[68]	GDP per capita 2010[69]	Mineral rich countries[70]	ODA as % of GNI 2009[71]	Net ODA per capita 2009[72]	Total EU ODA 2009 (mil. cur. US$)[73]	Legitimate state[74]	Development capacity index[75]	Good governance index[76]	Horizontal state legitimacy[77]	State like nature of precolonial systems[78]
Burundi	Yes	LIC, LDC	373	No	41.2	66.1	131	Yes	-0.79	-1.60	0.98	3.00
Cameroun	No	LMIC	2303	Yes	2.9	33.3	59.2	No	-0.41	-1.01	0.8565	1.50
CAR	Yes	LIC, LDC	741	Yes	11.9	53.6	54.6	No	-	-	0.1865	1.33
Chad	Yes	LIC, LDC	1518	Yes	9.2	50.1	118.9	No	-	-	0.4793	2.00
Congo B	Yes	LMIC	4183	Yes	4.1	76.8	26.1	No	-0.85	-2.51	0.2474	1.40
DRC	Yes	LIC, LDC	414	Yes	23.9	35.6	232.7	No	-1.37	-4.10	0.3734	1.71
Kenya	No	LIC	1745	No	6.1	44.7	84.3	No	-0.35	-0.72	0.6428	1.83
Madagascar	No	LIC, LDC	916	No	5.2	22.7	55.6	No	-0.64	-1.27	1	2.00
Mali	No	LIC, LDC	1144	No	11	75.7	101.7	No	-1.24	-3.42	0.1346	2.00
Rwanda	No	LIC, LDC	922	No	18	93.5	104.5	Yes	-0.90	-1.78	0.99	3.00
Senegal	No	LMIC, LDC	1711	No	8	81.2	134.4	No	-0.77	-1.40	0.2022	1.67
Somalia	Yes	LIC, LDC	-	No	-	72.4	108	No	-1.11	-2.88	0.0250	2.00
Tanzania	No	LIC, LDC	1411	No	13.7	67.1	138.4	No	-1.01	-1.23	0.7406	1.67
Uganda	No	LIC, LDC	1422	No	11.4	54.6	128	No	-1.27	-2.86	0.6341	1.83

[67] Data from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTLICUS/Resources/511777-1269623894864/Fragile_Situations_List_FY11_(Oct_19_2010).pdf accessed 9/2011.
[68] Data from http://www.unctad.org/templates/Page.asp?intItemID=3641&lang=1. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/CLASS.XLS; accessed 9/2011. LDC – Least developed countries, LIC – low income countries, LMIC – lower middle income countries.
[69] Data from http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/data-statistics/table-1-basic-indicators-2009/; accessed 9/2011.
[70] Data from Njikam (2008, p. 18).
[71] Data from http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.GN.ZS; accessed 9/2011.
[72] Data from http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.PC.ZS; accessed 9/2011.
[73] Data from http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DC.DAC.CECL.CD; accessed 9/2011.
[74] Data from Englebert (2000, pp.129-131) – the legitimacy of the state is calculated based on the interaction between pre-existing, colonial, and post-colonial forms of political organization.
[75] Data from Englebert (2000, p. 31).
[76] Data from Englebert (2000, p. 29).
[77] Data from Englebert (2000, p. 158).
[78] Data from Englebert (2000, p. 163).

It is equally important to note that the aim of the current research is to identify whether there is alignment or non-alignment among the meaning-in-use generated by the intersection of the three dimensions. Therefore particular attention will be given to identifying discrepancies between the meanings and beliefs of interviewees and their experiences. As all interviewees are considered to have been socialized in the in-between locus opened at the intersection of the three dimensions, their views will, in general, not be compared or contrasted; rather the discrepancies they themselves perceive are going to be the focus of analysis.

2.4.2 Research methods[79]

The aim of this research is to explore the EDF policy-makers' limited understanding of SSA state and society by uncovering discrepancies at the level of perceptions and beliefs policy-makers and NGO employees hold about statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices. From a methodological point of view interpretive approaches are best suited for this endeavor. For Bevir and Rhodes (2005), while "[a]ll political scientists offer us interpretation [, … i]nterpretative approaches differ in offering interpretations of interpretations" (p. 21).

In order to provide an interpretation of the EDF policy-makers' and NGO employees' interpretations, I have decided to use semi-structured interviews as the research method for collecting data. Semi-structured interviews are deemed appropriate, as they enable data-collection on similar questions or topics, while at the same time offering the interviewees the necessary space for personal reactions. The

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[79] The discussion on methodology has been included in Chapter 1.3.2 as it relates in substantial ways with the theoretical argument.

semi-structured interviews targeted experts and practitioners involved in EDF-related processes. The following categories of interviewees have been considered: DG DEV desk officers and heads of unit, EU delegation personnel (cited as ECFI), national authorizing office personnel (cited as GOFI), and third parties (NGO employees (both local and international – cited as NGOFI), international policy makers (cited as INTFI) and academics – cited as ACADFI).

In addition to semi-structure interviews the following methods have been at times employed: a) document analysis: Cotonou Agreement, Country Strategy Papers, National Indicative Programs, and other relevant documents; b) observation – field visits to EU delegations, NAO offices, EU funded development projects and to developing contexts of relevance; c) secondary literature and official documents, where appropriate.

2.4.3 Data collection and analysis

Within the negotiation process, given the financial implications and the political nature of the partnership agreements, there are relevant decisional dynamics which reveal strong and diverse interests on both sides (the EU and partner country). As such, ideas and interests are deeply entangled. Negotiations are not only a formal process of interaction based on financial allocation for various sectors or programs. Rather, where the amount of resources is deemed considerable, the entire exercise becomes a process of shaping the behavior and realities of the recipient state. Therefore, the perceptions and beliefs of the EDF policy-makers and NGO

employees, constituting development practice in SSA, become relevant in the broader context of the development process.

Between 2008 and 2010 I have carried out filed work in Burundi, Kenya, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda, as well as in Brussels. I have conducted 76 semi-structured interviews out of which: 30 in Brussels, nine in Senegal, five in Rwanda, six in Burundi, nine in Uganda, ten in Kenya, and seven in Tanzania. Of these interviews, 52 interviews were carried with Commission officials, six with partner government officials, 21 with NGO employees and academics and two with other international officials. The interviews carried out with the Commission officials cover the following countries: Angola, Botswana, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo Brazzaville, Cameroun, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

I have as well conducted participant observation (informal interviews, direct observation, and collective discussions) in Brussels, Mali, and Senegal which included: discussion with EU and NAO officials and visits to various projects financed by the EU. Finally I have made short field visits to Goma (DRC) and Zambia.

The interviews were aimed at capturing the perception of the interviewees on their engagements with the partners, on the functioning of SSA states and institutions, on

the outcome of the development process, and on the challenges encountered in their work. The interviews followed the following structure: general issues of cooperation between the EU and the partner state with regard to the EDF; specific issues regarding the EDF procedures and the negotiation process; the development of the CSPs and NIPs and the involvement of the relevant actors in the process; issues regarding the implementation of projects and perceptions of state- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices; and local aspects which are relevant for the implementation of projects and development interventions (involvement of civil society, role of traditional structures of authority, implications derived from cultural practices – e.g. family relations, religious practices, perceptions of state authority, etc.).

The focus on the EDF and more specifically the negotiations taking place between the EU and the SSA states allowed for gathering the necessary data for answering the research question. The EDF interactions are located within the in-between space created among the three dimensions. By analyzing the perceptions of those located in this in-between space one can grasp the discrepancies and misunderstandings occurring when the meanings-in-use from different dimensions collide.

The central focus of the analysis is the perception of the policy-makers involved in the process of negotiation and the perceptions of third actors (to these negotiations) – the NGOs, academics, or experts. These perceptions, when spanning across several countries and institutions, reveal the core of the nexus between policy and practice

within the EDF institutional framework. At the same time they offer access to the specific shape that development interventions take on the ground and to the understandings and meanings held by the involved actors.

The perceptions of those interviewed present localized understandings and meanings for both the type of interaction which characterizes the negotiations among the donors and recipient states and for the transfer of norms and practices from the western to the SSA non-western spaces. In addition, the substance of development strategies and action plans reveals the content of the interaction between the donor and the recipient state. Finally, the perception of the interviewees with regard to the implementation of development strategies and the problems of institutional misfit indicate the successes and challenges of the development process and the converging or diverging meanings attributed to state- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices.

Specific groups can be identified among the interviewees: Commission officials, partner government officials, NGO employees, and academics. Since the EDF represents a space opened in-between the three theorized dimensions, these groups, in spite of belonging formally to one dimension, cannot be seen as being representative for any specific dimension, but rather being placed at their intersection. This localization, in addition to their expertise and experience, is what makes their perceptions relevant. It is expected that their views will not only approximate the understandings from within one dimension but also reveal if those

understandings and meanings are contested, if in the negotiation and implementation interactions these meanings encounter alternatives. Furthermore, as these policy-makers are the ones with authoritative decision over the content of the analyzed documents, it is expected that their views also reveal how they make sense of the discrepancies encountered in their interactions. Therefore, while these groups are to some extent relevant, it is expected that there will be great variation between the respondents within any one group. I have decided not to focus on intra-group differences and contestation of meanings, as the main aim of this research is to uncover discrepancies at the level of meanings between the three dimensions, rather than within the groups of policy-makers and NGO employees pertaining to any one dimension who have been socialized in inter-cultural contexts. As the provenience of each interviewee bears nevertheless importance, I have decided to indicate this in the way interviews are referenced. Regarding the EU officials I have decided to treat them as one group irrespective of whether they are placed in Brussels or in the field, as most officials from Brussels also held field-experience.

The data resulting from the semi-structured interviews consists in interview transcriptions. Topic coding (Richards 2005) was employed. Through this process text passages were allocated to specific topics. Topic coding is considered adequate as it enables grouping and contrasting meanings attributed to specific state- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices. Specific attention has been given to text passages which in themselves reveal that a discrepancy exists at the level of meanings-in-use. The perceptions of the relationships between actors and the

self-understanding of actors are targeted in order to show the existence of the SSA state dimension, the ways in which the SSA state dimension relates to the other two dimensions, and the unfolding dynamics.

In order to enable the interviewees to present personal views and perceptions all interviews are anonymous. This approach is required as the aim of the interviews was to collect personal 'expressive' (Wiener 2008, p. 76) reactions rather than reproductions of official institutional discourses. The case study allows therefore the identification of discrepancies at the level of meanings through individual perceptions of those inhabiting the space created at the intersection of the three dimensions. The below table presents the analytical framework:

Table 5: **Analytical Framework**

RQ	Assumptions		Object of analysis
How does western statehood ethnocentrism reflected through EU policies contribute to limiting the EDF policy-makers' understanding of SSA state and social dynamics?	EU development policies are based on western conceptions and frameworks.		Analysis of official documents.
	The SSA states, created through a western sovereign decision, have developed (a) logic(s) of their own that is/are not understood by the western donors and that cannot be grasped with western conceptual frameworks.	**DEVELOPMENT AID - the European Development Fund AS A LOCUS AT THE INTERSECTION OF THE THREE DIMENSIONS** / Perceptions of policy-makers and other relevant stakeholders.	Evidence of western decisions and exceptional situations in the perception of donor-recipient relations and their outcome.
	The creation of the SSA state through a western sovereign decision posits it in a state of exception and, as such, against both the international community and their respective societies. In consequence, there are three dimensions at play within the SSA national arenas: the SSA state, the SSA society and the international community on the ground.		DISCREPANCIES: Lack of understanding (of actions, behavior, etc). Conceptual miss-understandings. Perception of incoherent actions. Disconnect between actors. Dual behavior. Lack of trust. Perception of different goals.
	The intersection of the three dimensions reveals lack of alignment in meanings attributed to fundamental state- and development-related institutions and practices, leading to a lack of understanding of SSA states and societal dynamics on the side of Commission officials.		Specific examples of perceptions which support/contradict the theoretical arguments.

2.5 Conclusion: Structure of the empirical analysis

The above analytical framework represents the basis for structuring the empirical

analysis which will consist of two parts. The first part presents an in-depth take on

the EDF and the broader framework it is a part of – the agreements between the EU

and the ACP states. The second part illustrates the lack of understanding and

discrepancies observed in the analysis of the CSPs and NIPs negotiations and implementation.

The coming chapters will therefore unfold in the following manner. Chapter three provides a brief overview of the EU development policy and EU—SSA relations in order to show the context and relevance of the EDF-related interactions. Chapter four focuses on the interviewees' perceptions of CSPs and NIPs negotiation and implementation. Chapter five will focus on the interviewees' perceptions of the state and how it relates to donors and society. Finally, chapter six will present and analyze the perceived discrepancies and lack of understanding characterizing the EDF.

Chapter three starts off with the general context of the EU – Africa relations and the evolution of EU development policy targeting SSA states. It puts a special emphasis on the EU-ACP relations and the latest agreement – Cotonou Agreement, which is the legal framework of the EDF. Thereafter it focuses on the processes at play within the Cotonou-EDF context, which in brief refer to EU's political, economic, and development relations with the ACP states. The chapter highlights the importance of the CSP and NIP negotiation process and places these negotiations within the broader EU-ACP relations.

Chapter four focuses on the perceptions of the negotiations of the CSPs and NIPs and of the implementation capacity of SSA governments. The chapter starts with an in-depth look at the formal processes at play in the negotiation of the CSP and NIP; thereafter it shifts the focus on the negotiation dynamics as they are perceived in the

field. In doing so, it focuses on the way each of the major identified actors are involved in these processes, the way they perceive each other and the outcome of their common engagement. In the second part, the chapter brings in aspects related to perceptions of implementation – how much of what is negotiated is perceived to actually take place in practice. As implementation is one of the major perceived development problems the chapter brings forward some of the challenges which are perceived to limit the impact of the negotiated strategies.

Chapter five engages with the exception-based argument and shows the perceptions of interviewees and various meanings attributed to statehood and state-related institutions. Equally important, the chapter discusses the perceived interaction processes which unfold at the intersection of the three dimensions. Through discussing the perceptions of statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices, the chapter illustrates how the operational challenges encountered in the negotiation and implementation of CSPs are related to broader western ethnocentric conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter six, based on the EDF-related experience shifts the discussion back to a more general level. It focuses first on the discrepancies which stem from the analysis of the EDF practices and second on discussing in-depth the perceived lack of understanding characterizing development relations in the EDF interactions. The chapter provides the necessary empirical illustrations for sustaining the theoretical argument by showing how the lack of understanding of Commission officials rests

on identifiable discrepancies which in their turn rest on western ethnocentric conceptual and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter 3: EU Development Policy and the EDF

3.1 Introduction

In order to substantially engage with the perceptions of those interviewed, so as to build up an interpretive narrative, it is necessary to provide the institutional and policy contexts where the targeted processes unfold and where statehood- and development-related meanings are revealed. This chapter focuses on those contexts in which the analyzed EDF interactions take place. Doing so will reveal the mechanisms at play within the international community dimensions and how these connect to the other two dimensions. The characteristics of the in-between space which opens at the intersection of the three dimensions will be highlighted in this process.

I start with emphasizing two relevant aspects. First, I look at how the practice of providing development aid has evolved over time. Also I look at how the EU, as one of the major donors, and the European Commission in particular, has changed its development policies, interventions, and actions. Second, it is equally important to understand how relations between the EU and the SSA states have commenced and transformed over time. While chapter one centered on the theoretical and historical perspectives on the relationship between European states and SSA, this chapter takes the discussion at a policy level.

Both the evolution of the foreign aid regime and the EU (European Economic Community – EEC)—SSA relations originate in the post Second World War period.

Both aspects are highly relevant for framing the current development relations which, in their turn, are embedded in the broader dynamics explored in chapter one.

3.2 Relations between the EU and SSA and the transformation of the aid regime

The relations between the EU and the SSA region have received significant attention since the Union was established. At the time of the Treaty of Rome several of the signatory states where having colonial possessions (some of which in SSA). Therefore the relationship with these colonial territories was on the agenda from the beginnings of the EU[80]. With the granting of independence and the formation of new independent states the relations between the new entities and the EU were codified in treaties and became the object of several EU policies.

The EU(EEC)—SSA cooperation framework dates back to 1957. Over several decades the cooperation was structured mainly on five-year agreements[81] between the EEC and, in the beginning, some of the African states (which became over time the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group – ACP[82]). The EDF is closely related to these agreements. It started in 1958, slightly before the 1963 Yaounde Agreement and represents extra-budgetary development aid funds allocated by the EU member states to the ACP.

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[80] See the attention given to the relationship with the colonies in the Treaty of Rome and the formation of the Treaty of Rome Association.

[81] Extended to ten years with Lomé IV and to twenty years with the Cotonou Agreements.

[82] The ACP group was formed in 1975 trough the Georgetown Agreement.

The EDF is the major component of the development funds managed by the European Commission. The Commission, the sixth largest donor globally, was in charge of 20% of the EU aid in 2009[83]. The amounts disbursed through the EDF in the period 2008-2013 are close to 23 billion Euros, aspect which underscores the significance of the EDF. In the period under analysis (2008-2010), the EU Development Policy was coordinated by DG Dev whose mission was "to help to reduce and ultimately to eradicate poverty in the developing countries and to promote sustainable development, democracy, peace and security" (European Commission 2004b). Besides its main prerogatives, DG Dev also works on the thematic and sectoral areas connected with development policy, among which trade and development,

> "regional integration and co-operation, support for macro-economic policies and promoting equitable access to social services in coherence with the macro-economic framework, supporting transport, promoting food security and sustainable rural development and support for institutional capacity building." (EC Doc. 2004a)

Since 2000 the EU-Africa Summits bring together EU member states and African states (including states from Northern Africa). In 2005 the EU adopted the *EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development* (European Commission, 2005). This is a fairly complex document which should guide the action of the EU in supporting the African states in various areas. The strategy runs through 2015 and targets the following areas: peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, trade and regional integration, the MDGs, energy, climate change, migration, mobility and employment as well as science, the

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[83] Data from http://www.developmentportal.eu/wcm/dmdocuments/FAQ/FAQ_DevPortal_20110216.pdf; accessed 9/2011.

information society and space (Michel 2006). Based on the EU Strategy for Africa, the cooperating members (EU and African states) adopted a Joint Strategy and an Action plan in Lisbon in 2007. One important characteristic of the new approach is that all EU institutions are involved, while the African Union (AU) is recognized as the main interlocutor. There are several principles underpinning EU-Africa cooperation. It is seen as a "partnership based on international law and human rights, equality and mutual accountability. Its underlying philosophy is [based on] African ownership and responsibility, including working through African institutions" (Michel 2005, p. 10).

Of all the cooperation frameworks, the successive set of Partnership Agreements between the EEC/EU and ACP countries is one of the most substantive and long-lasting avenue for interaction between the international community dimension (represented by the EEC/EU) and the SSA state dimension (represented by SSA governments). Furthermore, these partnership agreements are the ones regulating the functioning of the EDF. In consequence I will provide an overview of the ACP-EU cooperation in the next section.

The former development Commissioner, Louis Michel, writes in his 2006 book on EU-Africa relations that Africa appears to be a continent in the midst of important changes. Africa is increasingly partnering with all major international actors. The continent is seen as an area with important resources. Michel highlights the long history which represents the basis of Europe's commitment to help Africa by

providing aid and preferential trade agreements. The former Commissioner perceived, however, several challenges faced by the European Union in its relations with the African counterparts. These are institutional complexity, lack of policy consistency and coherence, and Afro-pessimism (Michel 2006, 2005).

The former Commissioner recognizes that more needs to be done on both sides of the partnership. Europe "must ensure that policies such as agriculture or trade help build rather than brake Africa's development" (p. 35). While Africa "must strengthen the governance and effectiveness of its states, anchor the individual and collective duties and freedoms of its citizens in impartial institutions, guarantee basic public services, share out more fairly the wealth created by a sound management of its natural resources and encourage the emergence of vigilant civil societies" (p. 35). These expectations from the African partners show the state-centeredness of EU policies and prescribed western institutional norms. Furthermore they reveal an important discrepancy in the western/EU development policies. While donors are aware that states in the SSA context are (mainly) not well governed, not effective and do not provide impartial institutions or sufficient public services; donor policies are based on the assumption that they should or could become as expected. In order to have a better understanding of the broader donor practices, it is helpful at this point to briefly consider the way the foreign aid regime has evolved over time.

The transformation of international relations to accommodate the development of wide-spread gift-giving practices, i.e. foreign aid, originates in the period immediate

after the Second World War[84]. Several events played an important role in establishing the practice of aid-giving as an acceptable international behavior and more recently as a full-fledged international regime. Some of the most important such events are the US assistance towards Europe – the Marshall Plan and the transformation of Bretton Woods Institutions so as to provide support to countries in need beyond Europe. While the main state actors on the foreign aid scene have not changed much since the early after-war period, the significance of aid-giving has grown and transformed considerably. This transformation refers to ever larger amounts of disbursed aid (both public and private), an increasing number and more complex international infrastructure and relations for supporting the development process, the qualification of development as a field of study or as a sub-field of other disciplines (e.g. development economics) and maybe most importantly the constant evolution and increasing strength of development-related international norms and rules.

Aid practices are nevertheless paradoxical for IR theory as argued in chapter one. Various theories of IR attempt partial explanations for aid-giving practices. IR theories are challenged as donor policies do not seem able to transcend practices which represent outright interventions in the internal affairs of third states (Harrison 2010, Watson 1997, Jackson 1993). This intervention blatantly contradicts the mainstream upheld understandings of sovereignty and the policy principle of ownership.

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[84] There are nevertheless important gift-giving practices, especially of a private character, which took place in the pre World War II period i.e. foundations, etc.

Current trends in the shaping of the foreign aid regime came to include in the last decade an increasing attention paid to ownership, donor coordination, and aid effectiveness. These three principles which lead the day in international aid forums (Rome, Paris, Accra, etc) become currently translated in actual policies and institutional setups. In this context, the EU considers itself a leader in pushing forward the aid efficiency agenda.

This section has provided a brief picture of the broader development policy context and EU-SSA relations where the EDF is located. The next section will provide a more in-depth view on the ACP-EU relations.

3.3 ACP-EU relations and the related development architecture[85]

The beginnings of the EU Development Policy are to be found in the 1957 Treaty instituting the European Economic Community (art. 131 and 136). This Treaty created the Treaty of Rome Association with the colonial territories of EEC Member States and also the EDF which is "aimed at giving technical and financial aid to African countries still colonized at the time and with which some States of the Community had historical links" (European Commission *2005a*). The first EDF was developed for the period 1958-1963.

The Yaounde I Convention was signed in 1963. It ran for a period of six years and was covered by the second EDF. The recipient countries were grouped in the so

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[85] An earlier version of this section has been published in Cibian (2010).

called EAMA group (Associated African and Malgache Countries). The aim of the Convention was to give "commercial advantages and financial aid to African ex-colonies". The second Yaounde Convention, again for a period of six years (1964-1969), was covered by the third EDF (European Commission 2005a). Holland (2002) and Lister (1988) provide an in-depth analysis of the Yaounde Convention.

The Lomé I Convention, signed in 1975, refers to the EU/EEC cooperation with the newly constituted ACP group. The cooperation is based on the following principles: partnership, the contractual nature of the relationship, and the combination of trade, aid, and political aspects. Lomé I (covered by the fourth EDF—3 BECU) deals with the inclusion of some of the Commonwealth countries in the cooperation program and addresses "the non-reciprocal preferences for most exports form ACP countries to EEC; equality between partners, respect for sovereignty, mutual interests and interdependence; the right of each state to determine its own policies; security of relations based on the achievements of the cooperation system" (European Commission 2005c). STABEX system[86] is as well introduced by Lomé I.

Lomé II, signed in 1979, (with the fifth EDF—4.542 BECU) introduces a system for helping ACP countries heavily dependent on the mining industry – SYSMIN. Lomé III, signed in 1985, (sixth EDF—7.440 BECU) changes the focus from "the promotion of industrial development to self-reliant development on the basis of self-sufficiency and food security" (European Commission 2005c).

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[86] STABEX System is devised to "compensate ACP countries for the shortfall in export earning due to fluctuation in the process or supply of commodities" (European Commission 2005c).

Lomé IV and IV revised are covered by the seventh (10.8 BECU) and eighth (14.625 BECU) EDFs. Overall they insist on

> "the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance; strengthening of the position of women; the protection of the environment; decentralized cooperation; diversification of ACP economies; the promotion of the private sector; and increasing regional cooperation." (European Commission 2005c)

It is important to note that Lomé IV became "the first development agreement to incorporate a human rights clause as a 'fundamental' part of cooperation (article 5)" (European Commission 2005c). Holland (2002), Lister (1997, 1988), and Frey-Wouters (1980) provide special attention to the Lomé Association Agreements in their studies.

In 2000 the ACP and EU countries agreed upon the "world's largest financial and political framework for North-South cooperation" (European Commission 2005c). This is the Cotonou Agreement which runs until 2020. It is seen as "a global and exemplary Agreement, introducing radical changes and ambitious objectives while preserving the 'acquis' of 25 years of ACP-EU Cooperation" (European Commission 2005d). It holds the general goal of fighting poverty and is structured on five interdependent pillars: "an enhanced political dimension, increased participation, a more strategic approach to cooperation focusing on poverty reduction, new economic and trade partnerships and improved financial cooperation" (European Commission 2005d).

The Cotonou Agreement is the most recent legal framework governing EU-ACP relations. It was adopted in 2000 and modified in 2005 and 2010, being in force until 2020. It has been covered up to date by the 9th EDF (13.5 billion Euros) and the 10th EDF (22 billion Euros) which runs until 2013. The 2005 modification of the Cotonou agreement needs to be mentioned as it has brought significant changes to the ACP – European Community cooperation. The agreement is seen to have improved several components among which: political dialogue has been strengthened and enlarged to include security issues, the participatory approaches for the involvement of civil society have been deepened, specific development strategies have been strengthened with regard to sectoral strategies, the implementation and management procedures have been revised and the Investment Facility improved, and finally a new Multi-annual Financial Framework has been agreed upon (European Commission 2007). Flint (2008) and Holland (2002) pay significant attention to the Cotonou Association Agreement in their research.

This set of agreements reveals the change in ACP-EU relations from the postcolonial era of the 1960s to the equality and partnership assumption of the 2000s. Moreover, contrasted with the western thinking and scholarship in development theory and development economics, these agreements reveal the western drive behind western donors' engagements in developing countries. From a policy perspective, this path has not only been long, but also characterized by several significant substantial transformations as one Commission official mentions:

> "I think the big revolution was in 1975 with Lomé with the accession of the Commonwealth countries to the ACP and also this idea of partnership and

ownership. [...] So progressively from this very nice idea of your ideas are our priorities in 1975 we move to a system already in the 1990s where we put much more emphasis on democracy, human rights, multi-partism, open political society, on the one hand, and second we came with our own priorities. Not in terms of development policy, but in terms of the broad political agenda." (ECFI041)

The focus on human rights and democracy has followed the broader changes in development theory (the rise of alternative development), illustrated by similar changes in the policies of most multilateral and bilateral western donors. These changes have been followed by a subsequent increased focus on poverty, as the same Commission official explains:

"[w]e reinvented something which was obvious, development is about fighting poverty. Well that was not so obvious for many people. So with this emphasis put on fighting poverty it was a clear signal to the new powers coming into government in the post 1991-2 coups or democratic elections or some kind of open elections which took place in the first half of the 1990s, those governments had to put their priorities right, that is not only seeking rents and benefiting from the fact that they were in power implementing any kind of policy. No. The first priority for them as for us was to fight poverty. That was really the objective of all donors and it took us some time to put fight against poverty at the top of our EC/EU agenda." (ECFI041)

The cooperation is seen to have moved from aid and aid plus trade to a relationship encompassing an important political dimension (ECFI041). In time, the political aspects become not only relevant but moved to the core of the ACP-EU cooperation, as a Commission official details: "in 1995 we had the Mauritius revision of Lomé where we introduced articles on the possibility to suspend aid on the basis of infringement of basic values and principles linked to rule of law, human rights etc" (ECFI041).

The perceived transformations of the nature of the cooperation through these agreements and associated EDFs led to a move from a Commission driven relationship to a "kind of an instrument for partnership, [and a] much more balanced

cooperation" (ECFI043). In this new setup "civil society […] has a strong role to play" (ECFI043). Furthermore, this shift includes a transition from "technical cooperation [… to] also playing a role in more soft sectors like education, health, water sanitation, economy, management, all these" (ECFI043). It is the point of view of the interviewee that these shifts have occurred due to the institutionalization of the principle of ownership.

The internal dynamics of the EU also play an important role in how these agreements and the EDFs are shaped. One relevant example is the debate around the budgetization of the EDF. While, it was decided that the EDF will remain a separate fund, however, procedurally it has been mainstreamed (ECFI038).

The ACP-EU partnership agreements mentioned above are legal agreements among states on the one side and the EEC/EU on the other. Their very legal nature is conducive to a state-centric framework in which non-state entities are at times made relevant but only sporadically and partially and in which non-western governance structures have no role to play (i.e. traditional governance structures). The focus of these agreements on western governance processes, trade, and international politics accentuate their western state-centric character. Moreover, most of the financing instruments, particularly so general/sectoral budget support, recognize only the established and recognized states as potential partners in the development process. While non-governmental organizations are part of the process through public consultations or as implementing partners, these NGOs represent themselves a piece

of the western statehood concept, i.e.: organized civil society being duly registered with state authorities.

The process of establishing agreements with the ACP countries has not been without faults. The major problem is the inequalities in treatment and evolution of economic relations between the two regional blocks. McComrick (2004) identifies several specifically problematic aspects. Half of the ACP imports (mainly oil) to the EU came from seven ACP countries (Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Ghana, Mauritius, Gabon, and Kenya). Economic growth slowed down in most ACP countries. The ACP EU-market-share was 6.7 % in 1976 and it decreased to 3% in 1998. The EDF is assessed to have worked slowly and disbursed small amounts to specific locations: "[t]he program had neither helped address the ACP debt crises nor really changed the relationship between the EU and the ACP states" (p. 350). Smith (2003) brings another dimension—inequality in the treatment of the different SSA countries: "the EU reduces aid to some third countries for human rights violations, violations in others are often ignored if it is the political, security, or economic interest of one or more member states" (p. 241). These examples, coupled with the more recent debacle of the MDGs in SSA, indicate the reduced positive impact of the aid offered to SSA countries.

The worrying statistics indicating a decline in economic relations (Commission's 1997 Green Paper) and a decrease in aid (European Commission 2005c) coupled in practice with limited success (Flint 2008, Santiso 2003, Lester 1997) led to a

thorough rethinking the aid mechanism. The reform puts up several common objectives and develops specific tools (country strategy papers and joint multi-annual programs) to be used by the Commission as well as the MS in coordinating their development work (European Commission 2005e). The employment of these tools puts the Commission "in a central and highly visible role" (Smith 2003, p. 233).

Carbone (2007, 2009) offers a detailed overview of the latest reforms in the field of EU development policy. He advances the views that the European Consensus on Development and the EU Code of Conduct for the Division of Labor adopted in 2007 represent an unexpected positive policy transformation (2007, p. 51). Furthermore the adoption of these documents "provide a framework not only for a better co-ordinated policy, but also commit Member States and the European Community to a common view in the promotion of international development" (2007, p. 59). The efforts in making this reform a reality become evident in the field interviews as well, as one Commission official observes:

> "we started redefining EU aid policy and we are already formally at the 3rd change. Because we had the changes in the treaty of Maastricht which mentions development policy as a policy and then you have Niece and Amsterdam which for the first time ever mention fight against poverty as the main objective of the development policy. But, that's the treaty. And then we put on the table different papers on EU Development policy which progressively became owned by the ACP." (ECFI041)

The field experience does not appear as positive as Carbone may imply. What grasps our attention in the above quote is the belief that "we put on the table different papers on EU development policy which progressively became owned by the ACP" (ECFI041). This assumption, that the policies designed by the western donors (the

European Commission in this context) can and are appropriated or become owned by the development partners, comes at odds with both the principle of ownership (which presupposes that partner states design the policies) and with views highlighting challenges such as lack of institutional capacity, lack of political will, and lack of adequate knowledge infrastructure.

One interviewee, NGO employee, holds the opinion: "[t]e PRSP, it's already set. There are certain policy parameters that are almost set in stone" (NGOFI063). What from the European perspective appears as appropriation, from the SSA NGO employee's perspective is perceived more as either imposition (e.g.: "policy parameters that are almost set in stone") or acceptance based on lack of knowledge-production capacities, as s/he continues:

> "what is even more frightening, we do not have resources in development around economic development institutions. So there is a knowledge deficit […] Many of our governments no longer have reliable statistical offices, because the data they rely on is the data generated by those who give the money. And the research capacities have also been seriously eroded. Especially research on economic policy, under-funded, seriously eroded. Actually we've ended up with an externally driven, in the sense that it is responding to the resource availability question as opposed to the critical needs on the ground." (NGOFI063)

These aspects are complemented by a further perceived dimension – lack of will: "there is a political will problem – the politicians are aimed for the short run" (NGOFI063). Corruption is also mentioned as a barrier: "lack of transparency also means often they are corrupt" (NGOFI063). All in all, the result is perceived to be failure: "[t]his set of policies don't work" (NGOFI063). Therefore, the partner states are seen as *prima facie* objects of the development policies designed by the western donors: "I call them aid-alcoholic, they get huge amounts of money" (NGOFI063).

These aspects are accentuated in situations of fragility where the capacity of the partner states is further reduced:

> "in fact we have to do things, the roads, rebuild agriculture, rebuild health, than the work has to start but at the same time we have to train Burundian people, in order for them one day, not today because they don't have the training, but one day to become the leader of this reconstruction. And in fact we have to help them manage that and it is very difficult and which is impossible if you want to respect the principles of ownership." (ECFI043)

This perceived impossibility of respecting the principle of ownership uncovers an important discrepancy between the EDF and other official development policies of western donors and realities on the ground. If the partner states lack the capacity to understand the development process, how can they own it? And if they don't understand the development process and related institutional frameworks, what meanings do they attribute to those institutions, what motivates their actions, and what do they strive for?

The principle of ownership poses problems from the donor perspective as well. While an old principle, "this idea of partnership and ownership […] was really key already 30 years ago" (ECFI041), it comes with challenges. A first important challenge is the perceived mismatch at the level of values between donors and partner states: "yes, it's good to base a relationship on the priorities of the partner, bur if the partner is not democratic, is not in fact willing to develop socially with equity and within a system of rule of law and democracy, access to everyone to basic social services, do we really have to base our priorities on their priorities?" (ECFI041). A second challenge concerns the perceived tendency to underplay the priorities of the donor: "it is a reciprocal, a mutual agreement, so why should we be

ashamed or shy because we have our own priorities. Adding our priorities to their priorities, it is more equal" (ECFI041).

Both the entanglement of development, trade, security, and political aspects within the ACP-EU agreements and the increasing external affairs prerogatives of European Commission lead to an accentuated politicization of development relations. It is basically impossible to separate development issues from political, trade, security aspects in the ACP-EU relations, as a Commission official describes: "they've moved the relationship from one with aid with a little bit of political engagement to a political relationship which involves many things: security, peace and security" (ECFI029). This political relationship is perceived to be nevertheless unbalanced: "you have a very asymmetric negotiation situation. You always have an asymmetric situation because we [the EU] have the money" (ECFI014). While this section has so far presented the general framework of ACP-EU cooperation, the next sub-section will be concerned with the focus of the empirical research – the 10th EDF and the Cotonou Agreement.

3.3.1 The Cotonou Agreement and the EDF

As indicated above, the Cotonou Agreement was adopted in 2000 for a period of 20 years and is the current legal framework governing ACP–EU relations. The associated 10th EDF represents the financial framework through which more than 22 billion Euros are being disbursed in the period 2008-2013. This section will briefly review the main Cotonou Agreement-related processes at play in the ACP–EU relations such as the dynamics around the adoption of the Partnership Agreements

and financing frameworks, the political dialogue, the economic partnership agreements (EPAs) and the negotiation of the programming documents.

At a first sight these four processes can be seen as mechanisms for socializing the SSA states in the western designed international society. At a closer look however, they represent more. These processes (political dialogue, trade agreements, development strategies, legal agreements, etc.) embody several fundamental aspects. First, they are a part of the structure and content of the international community dimension. Second, they illustrate instances of western agency attempting to create and further shape SSA states. This is a processes through which the West projects its own image onto the SSA other, in more specific terms, the western image of what SSA states and also societies should be(come).

Third, these processes, through their content, are the western impulse which generates the structuring of the space at the intersection of the three dimensions. This happens through the dynamics between the impact on and (lack of) reaction of the SSA state and society dimensions to the western presence. The section will insist on the political dialogue and more particularly on the procedure for the negotiation and adoption of the CSPs and NIPs as they are the very specific context in which the interviewed policy-makers are carrying out their activity.

3.3.1.1 The adoption of the Cotonou Agreement and financial protocols

There are several fora involved in the formal approval of the ACP-EU agreements and adjacent financial protocols. On the ACP side there is the ACP Council of Ministers and the ACP Committee of Ambassadors. These fora are supported by the ACP Secretariat and most of the operational work on the ACP side is done by this institution. The ACP secretariat is the main interlocutor for the European Commission (ECFI014) and presents interest in this context as it represents an extension of the SSA state dimension in Brussels. The dynamics within the ACP Secretariat as perceived by Commission officials indicate two aspects: the challenging cooperation between the Commission as a western donor and SSA governments and the incapacity of donor-generated structures to acquire a life of their own (the ACP group is perceived as irrelevant and soon to be potentially abolished).

This cooperation between the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat is affected by several problematic aspects (Lister 1988). The ACP secretariat is perceived by one Commission official as "entirely politicized, [...] So because it is politicized it's basically very weak" (ECFI014). Another limit to the functionality of the ACP Secretariat is perceived to be intra-institutional frictions: "because they have their own interest as Secretariat, so they want to amplify their own role to the detriment of the Committee of the Ambassadors or the Joint Council" (ECFI014). In the view of the Commission official the subjectivity in the way they carry out their work impedes consensus-building (ECFI014). Furthermore, that capacity to build

consensus is lacking at the level of the decision-making fora as well as, for example,

in the Committee of Ambassadors:

> "it is more difficult for them to find consensus within the Committee of Ambassadors because we have 77 countries with highly divergent interest […] the Committee of Ambassadors is something which is basically unmanageable, you have 70 ambassadors around the table, some of them do not understand what they are talking about, don't know Cotonou in detail, so they are easily manipulable, so the Committee of Ambassadors is dominated by few strong characters." (ECFI014)

A further weakness is perceived to be the leadership of the ACP Secretariat

(ECFI014).

All these challenges weaken substantially the position of the ACP states vis-à-vis the

EU in negotiations. On a broader scale, these weaknesses lead, in the opinion of the

Commission official, the ACP Group to irrelevance in international affairs,

irrelevance which puts a significant question mark on the existence of the ACP

Group in the long run: "[t]he ACP on the world forum doesn't play any specific role.

You have G20, G77, but the ACP never speaks with one voice on the international

scene, because of these internal weaknesses in fact which is by the way a problem

for the existence of the ACP group beyond 2020." (ECFI014).

3.3.1.2 The Article 8 dialogue

Political dialogue between the ACP states and the European Commission is governed

mainly by Article 8, Article 9, Article 96 and Annex VII of the Partnership

Agreement signed in Cotonou[87] in 2000 and revised in Luxembourg in 2005 and

Ouagadougou in 2010. Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement defines and specifies the

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[87] European Commission (2007).

framework under which political dialogue should be carried out – the "[p]arties shall regularly engage in a comprehensive, balanced and deep political dialogue leading to commitments on both sides" (Para. 1, Art. 8, European Commission 2007).

The same Article 8 enumerates a series of objectives for the political dialogue, among which: "exchange of information, to foster mutual understanding, and to facilitate the establishment of agreed priorities and shared agendas" (Para. 2, Art. 8). Furthermore the dialogue shall:

> "cover all the aims and objectives laid down in this Agreement as well as all questions of common, general, regional or sub regional interest […] contribute to peace, security and stability and promote a stable and democratic political environment, it shall encompass cooperation strategies as well as global and sectoral policies, including environment, gender, migration and questions related to cultural heritage" (Para. 3, Art. 8).

Thereafter, Para. 4 of Art. 8 lists specific political issues which are of mutual concern as "arms trade, excessive military expenditure, drugs and organized crime, or ethnic, religious or racial discrimination" as well as "regular assessment of the developments concerning the respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance." Finally Para. 5 of Art. 8 touches upon issues related to peace and prevention, management, and resolution of violent conflicts.

Art. 8, through Para. 6, describes how the political dialogue should be carried out: "[t]he dialogue shall be conducted in a flexible manner. Dialogue shall be formal or informal according to the need and conducted within and outside the institutional framework." Striking the right balance between formal and informal political

interaction proves out not to be easily achieved in practice, as one Commission official mentions:

> "[t]here are normally about four formal meetings per year. Last year there were only two. But article 8 is not about only formal meetings, but it is also about having dinner together or cocktail, so the new Head of Delegation is particularly keen that we get away from these formal meetings where everybody is on his guard, and have a lot of informal meetings with the ministries. I think that there was some frustration that there weren't enough of formal meetings, and I think that it was on our side." (ECFI039)

Furthermore, the implementation of Art. 8 dialogue requirements tend to vary considerably across countries with varying degrees of success. A Commission official explains the progress made in Tanzania: "[a]rticle 8 is [advancing] slowly, slowly we had the first in 2008, in 2009 we had two more, you see that we have more interaction, some people called us now, which was a real novelty, I mean it's coming" (ECFI071). The relevance of the Lisbon Treaty is being felt at the level of ACP-EU cooperation in general and in particular in the political dialogue – the increasing role of the EU delegations completes a long-lasting struggle for the European Commission to establish itself as a politically relevant actor, in the words of the Commission official: "it's also after Lisbon that the governments start to realize that they can talk with us as the EU presidency which makes it in a way somewhat easier for them then to see all the member states individually if they want to talk about foreign policy" (ECFI071).

Para. 7 of Art. 8 stipulates that "regional and sub-regional organizations as well as representatives of civil society organizations shall be associated with this dialogue." In practice, this aspect encounters substantial resistances from the partner state officials, particularly so with regard to the involvement of civil society. Some of the

delegations have ventured in trying to establish political dialogue with the civil society organizations, however this proves limited due to the perceived lack of capacity of civil society actors (ECFI071).

Art. 96 emphasizes the rules for how dialogue should be conducted in case one of the Parties breaches the Agreement. Annex VII further details how both Art. 8 and Art. 96 are to be carried out and how they inter-relate.

Finally Art. 9, entitled "[e]ssential elements regarding human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, and fundamental elements regarding good governance" spells out the centrality of the human person for the ACP-EU cooperation, understood through the "respect and promotion of all human rights. Respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including respect for fundamental social rights, democracy based on the rule of law and transparent and accountable government are integral part of sustainable development" (Para. 1, Art. 9). Other important aspects covered by the article are commitment to gender equality, commitment to democratization, development and human rights as "interrelated and mutually reinforcing" principles, definition of the state (Para. 2); and definition of good governance (Para. 3).

In what regards the understanding of statehood, the Partnership Agreement sets forward a clear-cut western universalistic understanding of the state:

> "[d]emocratic principles are universally recognized principles underpinning the organization of the state to ensure the legitimacy of its authority, the legality of its

> actions reflected in its constitutional, legislative and regulatory system, and the existence of participatory mechanisms. On the bases of universally recognized principles, each country develops its democratic principles. The structure of government and the prerogatives of the different powers shall be founded on the rule of law, which shall entail in particular effective and accessible means of legal redress, an independent legal system guaranteeing equality before the law and an executive that is fully subject to the law." (Para. 2, Art. 9)

The centrality of statehood for the ACP-EU cooperation is clearly understood by the EU officials, as it comes up in several of the conducted interviews, for example: "[o]ur cooperation is very much government to government, it's Commission to government, and if you follow the history of, you know, first Yaoundé, Lomé and then Cotonou, it's very much a government to government relation" (ECFI071).

The above definition of statehood is complemented by Article 10 "[o]ther elements of the political environment" which postulates the necessity of "sustainable and equitable development involving, inter alia, access to productive resources, essential services and justice" and "greater involvement of an active and organized civil society and private sector" (Para. 1) for ensuring the "maintenance and consolidation of a stable and democratic political environment." The same Art. 10 underscores the commitment to market economy – "the principles of market economy, supported by transparent competition rules and sound economic and social policies, contribute to achieving the objectives of the partnership" (Para. 2).

Good governance, one of the bedrock principles of the 10th EDF as will be shown in the next chapter, is understood by the Partnership Agreement as:

> "the transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for the purposes of equitable and sustainable development. It entails clear decision-making procedures at the level of public authorities, transparent and accountable institutions, the primacy of law in the management and

distribution of resources and capacity building for elaborating and implementing measures aiming in particular at preventing and combating corruption." (Para. 3, Art. 9)

Besides the clear language of the Partnership Agreement and the neat definitions to statehood and good governance, the realities faced by the EU officials in the field seem to be more diverse, constraining, and conflicting. Political dialogue is perceived as a tool for appeasing conflict as a Commission official working in the field mentions: "[w]e do [political dialogue]. Things are good. But, in fact there are more talks […] these meetings are used to appease the relationship in order to avoid conflict, because there are many topics in which there can be conflict" (ECFI043). Perceiving this political dialogue as "more talks" has to do with its limited impact, as the same official goes on to argue:

> "[b]ut the feeling I have is that in Burundi people agreed. They are recognizing all the faults; they are recognizing what is not going well. So when we are discussing with them, 'O yes, corruption is a big problem. What we can do?' In fact dialogue in Burundi is not enough. It's not enough. They need to have a little more pressure not only dialogue. And not only pressure […] When we say that we do what we have to do it and at the same time we have to guide them in order to improve the way in which they are working." (ECFI043)

While pressure and guidance are considered a solution for some officials, others have a different view. A number of interviewees have pointed to the lack of understanding of the way in which politics works in partner countries. This aspect complicates the existence and functioning of a meaningful political dialogue and triggers more substantial question marks with regard to the EDF and other western development policies towards SSA countries. In the opinion of one official what is needed is a change "form a dialogue about the country to a dialogue with the country" (ECFI071). The same official explains: "I think that if we want to be seen as a serious player by them we have to make more effort in understanding their world, we

have to understand what the constraints are of the president, of the prime minister. His life is difficult. He has to worry about *things that we probably don't even see*[88]" (ECFI071).

The Cotonou Agreement, through its articles 8 and 9, reveals the western ethnocentrism of the EDF through the definition of statehood, good governance, and related processes. The Article 8 dynamics reflect in addition an important discrepancy between the legal framework governing the EDF and the experiences of the EDF policy-makers. If Para. 2 of Art. 8 calls for 'mutual understanding' the above quoted official believes that such understanding does not take place in practice. The perceived lack of understanding of the political world of the partner states, as well as the assumption that there are "things that we probably don't even see" (ECFI071) represent discrepancies which are evidence for the distinctiveness of the SSA state dimension. I will further analyze these discrepancies in chapters five and six, after a more in-depth understanding of the policy-level interactions and negotiations between the European Commission and the SSA governments.

3.3.1.3 The EPAs

The EPAs[89] are the trade and development agreements between the ACP Group and the EU which were supposed to replace (and partially have replaced) the Lomé and Cotonou preferential trade clauses between the two parties. This change was required as the Lomé and Cotonou clauses were not fully in line with the World Trade

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[88] My emphasis.
[89] For a more extensive analysis of the EPAs see Flint (2008).

Organization's (WTO) Generalized Scheme of Preference (GSP) and the Art. 1 of the GATT on the Most Favored Nation treatment. Beside this lack of regulatory congruence, the development Commissioner Luis Michel recognized the partial failure of Cotonou Agreement with regard to the ACP-EU trade relations: "[t]he trade preferences of the Cotonou Agreement, while well intentioned, have not succeeded in their objective of helping to integrate the ACP countries into the world economy, nor protected our trade relationship with ACP from challenge by others in the WTO" (2008a, p. 3).

As such, the Commissioner continues, the ACP states are regressing in what concerns their integration in the world trade. Their share in EU imports shrunk from 7% in 1975 to 3% more recently, moreover, trade with EU is of high relevance for the ACP group as the aggregate level of exports to the EU is close to 30% while imports close to 28%. On the EU side, this however translates into 2.9 % of foreign trade in 2006 and is characterized by trade of a limited number of products, mainly natural resources. EU foreign direct investment to the ACP region is also not encouraging, accounting for approximately 3% of European foreign direct investment (Michel 2008a).

The Commissioner underscores that "development policy is about much more than financial assistance. It is about supporting sustainable integration into the world economy" (2008a, p. 3). This specification further highlights the impossibility of detaching development from economic relations in the ACP-EU dynamics, aspect

which will be further made evident through the conceptualization of the EPAs presented below. This focus of development assistance on economic and trade affaires is substantiated by the generous development aid budgets for economic- and trade- related programs. Three billion Euros from the over 22 billion Euros of the 10th EDF are earmarked for developing economic infrastructures in order to link regional markets and build trade capacity. Of the 1.8 billion Euros for the Regional Indicative Programs about 60% is going to be used for "economic regional integration – such as productive capacity building and regional infrastructure networks – and accompanying measures for the implementation of the EPA, such as compensation for the net losses of customs tax revenues and trade technical assistance to reach foreign markets" (Michel 2008a, p. 5).

In this context the aim of the EPAs is to

> "help developing countries to build larger markets, foster trade in goods and stimulate investment. Opening up progressively to neighboring countries, exploiting economies of scale and reorganizing their industries will help prepare them for the big step of integrating into the world markets and taking greater advantage of opportunities and international trade." (Michel 2008a, p. 4)

The EU commits in this context to "remove the final restrictions to the ACP exports, including in sugar and bananas. [… to change the] rules of origin to ensure that ACP countries can use in reality the preferences they receive" (p. 4). This understanding of the EPAs impacts the conception of development assistance on the EU side. As the Commissioner notes: "[w]e firmly believe that this is the way forward for development policy, enabling countries to help themselves to grow rather than continuing to grant aid eternally in a "donor-beneficiary"- manner" (p. 4). This strong development-trade connection in the EPAs is reflected as well at an

institutional level as the negotiations on behalf of the EC are carried out by the DG Trade with the support of DG Dev. In practice, however, the negotiations are not easy and the adoption of the EPAs has encountered much more trouble than initially expected on the EC side. One Commission official summarizes this experience: "[i]t's a difficult process" (ECFI008).

The approach of the EC with regard to the evident loses of the ACP states in the short run, has been to offer additional aid packages. As one official mentions: "[w]e've been offering them a big package of aid for trade measures, one billion euro to the ACP over the next years, difficulties because the ACP feel that there should be additional money from the European community in addition from the EDF" (ECFI008). An example in this category is the negotiations with the West African region, as another Commission official describes: "I think the region has been very week in the last round of negotiations which took part in Brussels two weeks ago. […] The region, under the leadership of Senegal wanted clearly to associate development aid at the EPA agreement in order to insist on the agreement on the aid package as a pre-condition for the signature of the EPA" (ECFI032).

There are other examples of negotiations, as in the case of Kenya, where the cooperation with the private sector and the civil society is seen to have brought additional strength for negotiating the EPAs (ECFI069). At the same time the perception of the EPAs among parts of the civil society in Kenya is not positive, as an NGO employee points out: "the Europeans were there […] misinforming […]

around what the benefits would be and they were not willing to allow democratic processes, dialogues within national parliaments" (NGOFI063).

3.3.1.4 Programming: CSPs and NIPs

Programming is the next process to discuss. The EDF procedures are of particular interest for this thesis. They include, among others, the negotiations between the ACP states and the European Union on a variety of levels comprising alignment on general strategy papers, programming documents, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation reports. The component I focus on and which is considered to be relevant for rendering a better understanding of the donor-recipient relations is the negotiation of the general strategy documents, in particular the CSP/RSP and the NIP/RIP. As I focus on national level I will be referring to the CPSs and NIPs.

3.3.1.4.1 The CSPs and NIPs

The Cotonou Agreement defines and sets the content for both the CSP and NIP in Annex IV, chapter one. The CSP represents the basic document on which the development cooperation between the EU and a partner country is based. It consists of the following: country diagnosis, overview of cooperation, political dialogue, complementarity and consistency, and response strategy. The CSP comes always together with an NIP, which details the financial instruments, focal sectors, budget support, other relevant programs as well as the indicative timetable for commitments and disbursements, and the chronogram of activities (DG Dev 2006).

This practice of developing CSPs and NIPs started several decades ago and has since constantly evolved. As one official points out:

> "[a]lready in the 1990s we had NIP based on policy papers of the country, now it was not called a strategy, it was not made with the country, but we had already a basis for developing NIPs. Already in the 1970s we had NIPs, what is new probably is a process where the country is much more closely associated to the process. But this idea of having CSPs is not new" (ECFI041).

The elaboration of the CSPs and NIPs in its current form is a long process, taking between 12 and 18 months. Such a process involves drafting, consultations, and decisions at various levels of the partner state and European Commission hierarchies as presented in Figure eight below:

Figure 8: **Country Strategy Paper drafting and approval processes**[90]**:**
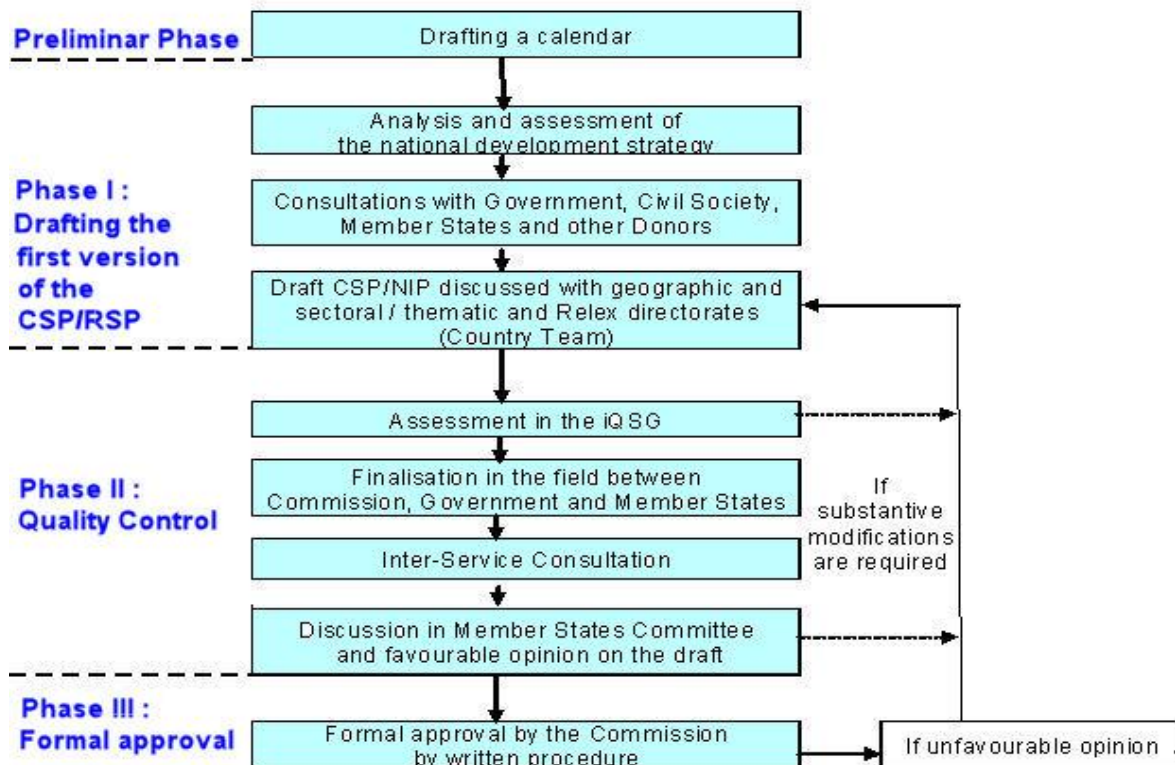
3.3.1.4.2 The main actors involved in the negotiation of CSPs and NIPs

The main actors taking part in the initial drafting of the CSP and NIP are the European Commission delegations, the geographic desks in DG Dev, and the national authorizing offices (NAO). As the draft is discussed in the various committees, it is always sent back to the European Commission Delegation and the NAO for consultations. Once the draft passes through all necessary processes: Country Team, iQSG, inter-service consolations, EDF Committee (Member States), it is formally approved by the Commission and signed by the legal representatives of the partner state.

3.3.1.4.2.1 The NAO

The NAO is a particularly relevant unit as it represents the link between the EU and the local government/society, being the negotiating entity on the side of the partner government. The role of the NAO is defined by the Cotonou Agreement in Art. 35 of Annex IV. Its role has changed across the years from a merely technical one to a role comprising more policy and strategic attributes. With regard to the CSP and NIP, the NAO is the unit in charge of coordinating the national input, of negotiating with the EU the content of the CSP and NIP, and of overseeing their implementation. The abbreviation NAO[91] can be used for both the National Authorizing Officer and National Authorizing Office. To make a distinction between the two, I will refer to the National Authorizing Office as NAO and to the National Authorizing Officer as NA officer. The NA officer is the person (usually minister) appointed to represent the partner country in the EDF-related relations with the Commission. The NAO is

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[91] Some interviewees may use the French abbreviation – ON (Ordonateur National).

the office at the disposal of the NA officer. This office is placed usually in the ministry where the NA officer comes from and consists of a number of staff members (nationals and sometimes international consultants). In practice the NAO is often placed within the Ministry for Economy and Finance, Ministry for Planning or Ministry of Foreign Affairs[92].

The NAO is the main unit of attention for my research as it is placed in between the EU (as the donor) and the partner country (as the recipient). The NAO is of crucial importance for managing both the direction of aid as well as its implementation. As such the NAO employees must master both the donor language as well as be well rooted in the local politics and society. This also means that there are important pressures being put on the NAO both from the local interest groups and from the EU institutions. Of course, the importance of the NAO is determined, among others, by the amount of EU aid offered for the respective country as proportion of that country's budget and the relevance the partner state attached to the political dialogue with the EU. Therefore we can expect a difference in the NAO's involvement and interest in dealing with the EU when we talk of an oil reach country or of an aid-dependent country.

The NA office is a fairly centralized bureaucracy where the top officials assume a decision role. As a Commission official describes: "I think that the top two, the permanent secretary he's the NAO and the deputy NAO they are serious highly

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[92] For an extensive analysis of the NAOs' activity see Frederiksen *et al* (2007).

intelligent people who are also rather frank about what it is they want and they were very open" (ECFI027). The majority of the office staff is however of operational nature, therefore their involvement in the elaboration of strategies and negotiations with the EC is limited (ECFI027).

The overall significance of the NAO within the national sphere, as revealed by most interviewees, is closely related to the position of the NA officer within the government. The relevance of the Office in its relations with the EU Delegation depends on the personal relations between the NA officer and the Head of Delegation (HoD): "all depends on the inter-human relations and the personality of interlocutors at the level of the delegation and of the partner government" (ECFI033).

3.3.1.4.2.1 The European Commission, the EU delegations, and the non-state actors

The immediate counterpart of the NAO is the EU delegation. In general terms the structure of the EU delegation as described by one official is: "[h]ead of delegation, operational sections (infrastructure, transport and rural development, governance, social etc, finances and contracts, administration, political and economic section) […] in each one of these sections there is a senior official, a number of contract agents and local agents and a secretary" (ECFI001).

The competences and role of the EU delegations have also changed significantly over the past decades. From being merely technical offices throughout most of the

cooperation period, in the recent years, a significant process of decentralization has taken place. This allows EU delegations to play a more significant role in the political and strategic cooperation between the EU and the respective partner state. The role of the head of delegation is primordial as defined in the Art. 36 of Annex IV of the Cotonou Agreement (see Annex 3):

> "[t]he Head of Delegation shall represent the Commission in all spheres of its competence and in all its Activities. […] shall be the main contact for the ACP states and bodies […] shall have the necessary instructions and delegated powers to facilitate and expedite all operations under the Agreement. He shall cooperate and work in close cooperation with the National Authorising Officer. [… and] shall inform the national authorities of Community activities which may directly concern cooperation between the Community and the ACP States." (Para. 1—4 of Art. 36 of Annex IV to the Cotonou Agreement)

Even if the deconcentration process has brought much more competences at the level of the head of delegation and delegations, the Brussels headquarters still plays a fundamental role in the negotiation of the CSPs and NIPs. At the level of the Commission in Brussels, the desk officers and the heads of unit are those who are most involved in providing directions to the delegations and ensuring a proper flow of information.

Besides the positive outcome of the deconcentration of Commission responsibilities at the level of delegations, aspect noted by most interviewed ACP government officials, there are as well negative trends pointed out by several of the Commission officials. These negative trends concern primarily a perceived drop in the quality of Commission personnel at the level of both the delegations and the Headquarters (ECFI014).

Another important drawback at the level of delegations is perceived by several interviewed officials to be the imperative to meet the financial commitments. This aspect is both a political issue, as commissioners need to prove they have impact during their mandate, and as well a credibility issue – is the Commission adequately managing the funds given by the Member States (ECFI010)?

Other relevant actors in the negotiations of the CSPs and NIPs are the non-state actors. However at the level of consultations with the non-state actors there are serious challenges as the relationship between the SSA governments and the non-state actors, primarily the NGOs is tensed. Most of the interviewees observe that NGOs are perceived negatively by the partner governments and in consequence are not wholeheartedly engaged in any governance-related processes except under pressures from the EU or other western donors.

3.4 Conclusion

As it can be observed in the above sections, there appears to be a significant contrast between the international principles and text of the official agreements on the one hand and the experiences of the policy officials on the ground on the other. The challenges posed by the negotiation and implementation of CSPs and NIPs represent a relevant aspect for this thesis as they engulf discrepancies at the level of meanings attributed to political institutions and processes. At the same time these challenges constitute a fundamental component of the context in which the analyzed negotiations take place. Chapter six will approach this aspect in a more comprehensive and systematic manner by uncovering (based on the experiences

derived from the CSP and NIP negotiations and related practices described further in chapter four) a profound lack of understanding and related discrepancies perceived at the level of meaning-in-use which characterize the statehood- and development practices in SSA.

This chapter has accomplished two important goals. First, it set the broader context in which EDF relations unfold. The conclusion of partnership agreements, particularly of Cotnou, and the processes it comprises: adoption procedures, political dialogue, EPAs, and programming represent the more specific processes which frame the CSP and NIP negotiations and implementation. Second, the chapter has shown the western ethnocentrism of the EU's approach to development and statehood based on the analysis of legal agreements and of the conduct of economic and political relations. In this context, an important aspect is revealed. The literature discussed in chapter one appears to be much better informed of the SSA local conditions than the EU policies. This indicates a substantive lack of contact between policy and academic literature in the areas of statehood and development. The following two chapters will unfold as a thick description and interpretive narrative based on the conducted interviews aimed at bringing empirical evidence for the theoretical claims advanced in the first two chapters.

Chapter 4: The EDF and SSA – negotiations and implementation

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three has presented the broader context in which the EDF functions. I have shown how in the EU—SSA relations development cooperation is intrinsically connected to political, security, economic and trade agendas. Analytically this poses a serious problem for understanding policy practice and implementation as it comes close to impossible to strictly delimitate the various fields. However, such a situation adds further relevance to the current research. The policy-makers involved in negotiations between the EU and SSA governments are experiencing the broader range of relations which unfold between the two parties. Furthermore, they become active in shaping both the policy content and implementation and the political dynamics between the parties. The perceptions of these policy-makers are therefore extremely informative with regard to several aspects: how the treaties and policy prescriptions are applied in practice; how strategies and policies are built and modified; how negotiations are carried out; how the political dynamics unfold within and between the parties, how implementation works, and most relevant what challenges and discrepancies in meanings are encountered in all of the above. While perceptions of policy-makers and NGO employees tend to be focused on individual professional experiences, being embedded in such a complex web of interactions (development, political, economic, cultural, etc.) enable a relevant contribution to be made at more general levels of policy-making and theorizing.

The previous chapter presented the formal processes through which the CSPs and NIPs are adopted; this chapter will focus on the perceptions and beliefs of the policy-makers involved in those processes. Based on the perceptions of policy-makers and NGO employees, the current chapter will present three aspects related to the CSPs and NIPs. The first section deals with a particularity of the 10th EDF, the Governance Incentive Tranche (GIT). The second section presents the perceptions concerning the negotiations of the CSPs and NIPs. Finally, the third section shifts the attention to how implementation of strategies is perceived by the interviewees.

If the previous chapter presented modalities through which the western donors (i.e.: the European Commission) attempt to socialize or define the SSA states, this chapter shows their failure in doing so. The negotiation- and implementation-related interactions among the international and domestic actors reveal that the western imagery of statehood and development does not entirely apply to SSA, but rather that it remains 'on paper,' while action is perceived to unfold according to different logics. While this chapter focuses on the discrepancies policy-makers and NGO employees perceive at an operational level, the next chapter will show how these discrepancies are related to a higher level of abstraction – perceived discrepancies related to the statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices in SSA.

The chapter presents the experiences and challenges that policy-makers and NGO employees have while being involved/or not involved in the CSP and NIP-related processes. The identified challenges are of particular relevance as they show how current policy-frameworks and broader theoretical stances are insufficient for making sense of the EDF-related practices. These identified challenges will enable me to bring evidence in the next chapter for the theoretically conceived dimensions. The argument is based on the substantial contradictions and discrepancies which arise in the development encounters in SSA and the connected pervasive lack of understanding.

4.2 The CSP-related formal processes

4.2.1 The formal processes and the evolution of the CSPs

The formal process of developing the CSPs and NIPs was presented in the previous chapter. The way a Commission official summarizes them is, however, instrumental at this point:

> "[s]trategy papers they are written in the delegations with the desks. […] You have a country team meeting where the desk is supposed to organize with the relevant services depending on what's in the strategy paper, if you have focal sector on energy then you contact your relevant counterparts there, also RELEX, AIDCO, all the relevant papers from different DGs come. And then after you've had the CTM you have the IQSG. […]After IQSG there is the inter-service consultations, and that goes to, again, all relevant DGs, it's wider than the CTM it goes to budget, etc. Then you have the formal procedure of getting it agreed by the College and partners, then you start to implement it." (ECFI000)

It is important to highlight that this process has evolved substantially over the years. The transformation of formal procedures encompasses both the number and the role of the involved actors and, as well, the overall relevance of the designed strategies. As one EU official mentions, more than a decade ago the strategies were much more flexible as new projects could be added without much procedural hassle. As well, the

number of actors involved increased over the same period. The Member States, the various DGs and the NA Offices became significantly more relevant, to a point where now the construction of the strategy and most modifications strictly regulated by formal approval procedures (ECFI041).

These changes reflect in particular the application of the principles of ownership (that partner countries should decide on development priorities) and partnership (implying equality between donors and partner countries) in the ACP-EU cooperation.

The increasing role of the NAO is fundamental for the current institutional and political dynamics and has been accommodated through the implementation of significant institutional changes. In addition, these transformations are a relevant indicator for the increasing role of recipient states in their interactions with donors. However, because of their formal institutional character, they are insufficient for understanding the actual dynamics between the EU and SSA governments or NAOs. From this procedural perspective it is not possible to discern how the NAOs carry out their share of the partnership; how they are de facto involved in this cooperation; or how much their input gets to be incorporated into the final strategy documents which guide the allocation of resources. All these aspects are relevant as they would indicate alignment in the structures of meaning-in-use prevalent within each of the three dimensions. It is therefore important to analyze policy-makers' perceptions with regard to how negotiations are carried out and how implementation works.

From a procedural perspective, however, there is one significant aspect which requires further attention before moving to the negotiations and implementation of CSPs and NIPs. The 10th EDF comes with a strong focus on budget support and a policy-innovation under the leadership of Commissioner Luis Michel – the GIT. The GIT represents the specific focus put on governance in the EU-ACP relations, translated into additional installments of aid disbursed upon specific government commitments in the field of governance. The SSA governments had the chance under this new mechanism to receive up to 25-30% more EU aid by making solid governance commitments.

The GIT illustrates an important shift in the Commission's approach to providing aid. The innovation rests in the move from an approach based on sanctions to one based on incentives. The aim of the GIT is twofold, first to incentivize, through additional aid, the ACP governments to be more proactive on governance issues, furthering the insistence on a western understanding of governance processes. Second, equally relevant, the GIT is meant to elevate the political dialogue between the EU and ACP states to a new level, as the Commission Staff Working Paper (2008) notes: "[t]he Governance Initiative aims at creating incentives for a deeper political dialogue focused on governance" (p. 5). The next sub-section will provide a brief analysis of the GIT.

4.2.2 The GIT – moving from sanctions to incentives in providing EU aid

Part of the broader 2007 Governance Initiative for the ACP countries and Africa, the GIT is defined as "a new incentive mechanism that gives ACP partner countries access to additional funding, based on their commitments to achieve tangible results in their democratic governance programmes" (European Commission 2008, p. 4). 2.7 billion Euros have been allocated for the GIT under the 10th EDF and 70 ACP countries benefited from this initiative.

The Commission Staff Working Paper *Supporting Democratic Governance through the Goveranance Initiative: a Review and the Way Forward,* a report conducted after 24 month of experience with the GIT, defines democratic governance as follows:

> "[d]emocratic governance requires a State that is capable of delivering key functions, accountable to its people and, lastly, responsive to the needs and express wishes of its people. It can be seen at many levels from the national to the community. Local authorities and civil society are key drivers to make the state more accountable. Poverty reduction and long-term development are best promoted within a framework of democratic governance: a method which promotes inclusive decision-making. Democratic governance is not determined by any specific set of institutions but is characterized by an agreed set of principles – rule of law, accountability, fair representation and effective participation and voice as well as a set of values which recognize the individual and collective human rights." (European Commission 2008, p. 5)

The 10th EDF's focus on governance originates from former development commissioner Luis Michel`s insistence on the establishment of this additional financing instrument. As one interviewee explained: "Commissioner Michel has a strong interest in governance, which he pushed strongly, and insisted to be a part of the focal areas" (ECFI008). Procedurally, the GIT functions based on two documents: the governance profile and the governance action plan. The governance profile is mainly an internal EU document developed by the Commission and the

Member States. It functions as an analytical tool for providing an overview of several areas of governance and for identifying the related weaknesses, priorities and needs for reform. The nine areas covered by the governance profiles are,

> "(1) Political governance: human rights, fundamental freedoms, electoral process, constitutional democracy; (2) The rule of law: judicial and law enforcement system; (3) Control of corruption; (4) Government effectiveness: institutional capacity, public finance management; (5) Economic governance: private-sector/market-friendly policies, management of natural resources; (6) Internal and external security; (7) Social governance: decent work, gender, HIV/AIDS; (8) International and regional context: regional integration, involvement in regional initiatives, migration; (9) Quality of the partnership: political and programming dialogue." (European Commission 2008, p. 6)

The governance action plan represents the document developed by the partner country which contains the "relevant, ambitious and credible commitments to reform" (European Commission 2008, p. 6) of the partner governments. The governance action plan is attached to the CSP in order to formalize its content and is qualitatively assessed in the framework provided by the governance profile and on the ambition and credibility of the presented commitments. The financial incentive is allocated based on this assessment and it tops the A envelope under the EDF[93] (European Commission 2008).

As mentioned, the aim of the initiative is two-fold. First, to improve governance in the recipient country and second, it has an implicit focus on stimulating political dialogue between the EU delegations and the partner governments (raising both the political profile of the delegations among other present western stakeholders and the capacity of influence on the partner state). One Commission official highlights the

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[93] An extensive description of the GIT processes can be found in the Annex 1 – Guidelines – Governance within the 10th EDF aid allocation criteria of the Commission Staff Working Paper (European Commission 2008, pp. 14-16).

high political stakes related to the GIT: "[t]he GIT was an incentive process and incentive to enter a political dialogue, not about aid per se, not about governance reform; it's about an incentive to enter political and policy dialogue in order to further governance reform" (ECFI029).

Delegations played an important role – to write the governance profiles and sometimes even the governance action plan. As mentioned above, if the governance profile and the governance action plan are evaluated positively, the respective country may benefit of the GIT which brings a surplus of up to 25-30 % of the total allocation for a specific financing cycle. As the governments are aware of this, it is assumed that they become more involved in the political interactions with the European Union – Article 8 of the Cotonou. The relevance of this increased political dialogue based on the GIT (where it exists) is perceived to open up more concrete possibilities for holding partner governments accountable (ECFI014).

Getting the GIT up and running was not unproblematic. As presented by one of the interviewees there were three main challenges. The first one has to do with the proposed move from sanctions to incentives. The second challenge relates to the move from aid to political relations: "[i]n one way that was kind of seen as an aid program but it's not, it's actually a political relationship so we're moving out of this EDF-Cotonou kind of some politics but mainly about aid into a political relationship which also includes aid. […] quite fundamental" (ECFI029). The third challenge is related to the perception of the GIT by the partner ACP governments. Some of the

ACP states perceive it positively as they appreciate the move away from sanctions; however a fear of conditionality is perceived to still exist (ECFI029).

In what regards the implementation of the GIT, one example considered successful is Rwanda. Here most of the commitments were appreciated as on track by the review as both Commission officials and Government officials illustrate. A Rwandan government official mentions: "in terms of governance we were rated positively, in terms of social response we were also rated positively and in terms of economic environment also rated positively." (GOFI048) This view is confirmed by one Commission official, who also mentions the problematic aspects of the review: "accountability is the area where there is a little less progress […] In all areas besides accountability you see dramatic improvement" (ECFI039).

The GIT and the important focus put on governance appear as an imposition for some of the interviewees. As one Commission official notes: "for the 10th EDF, the importance of governance went up, I am not sure that this issue is shared by the majority of the African countries. It is imposed" (ECFI011). On the partner government side the perceptions of the GIT vary. There are governments who consider the GIT an important issue and are involved in producing real government action plans, other governments are less involved. In some cases, the small amount of the GIT is not helping in making it more attractive for the partner governments. For several of the partner governments the government action plan has been a significant challenge, aspect which naturally triggered substantive political reactions:

"[t]he Governance Profiles is a big issue" (ECFI017). The Commission Staff Working Paper (2008) summarizes some of the encountered challenges and proposes potential improvements. Among these, one could note the negative impact of the GIT procedures on the development of the GIT-related documents. The procedures gave insufficient time for consultations with other stakeholders (e.g. civil society, etc). Also, the political relevance of the GIT is viewed more as desired than actual, as Article 8 dialogue itself is to be further strengthened in most of the partner states.

Overall, as one Commission official mentions, the implementation of the GIT appears to be "a tough exercise" (ECFI027) in which the accent is put more on the analysis than the response. This view is supported by both the results of the 2008 review (European Commission 2008) as well as another interviewee which advances further the criticism of how the GIT was implemented. It is claimed that the way of implementing the GIT has annihilated its impact, leading to a loss of incentivity which was supposed to be its most important principle:

> "[f]or me this Incentive Trance, the idea was very very attraction, but in fact we managed that very badly because this Incentive Tranche was identified on the actor, when we discussed about the NIP, but in the result it is mentioned, and is integrated with the NIP, and in the document which has been signed there is no word on incentivity. For all the countries when they discovered the amount in the NIP, all of them forgot […] At the MTR, oh, they did not respect at all what they said, but what can you say? What can you do? Nothing, because the money is committed. The idea was good, but it has not been thought enough to be put at good use. It is no more about incentivity, the money is there. And now we are starting the MTR as if there were not an incentive tranche." (ECFI043)

A further problem related to the GIT is its state-centric approach, based on the western principles of governance and presupposes a strong relationship between the

state and the citizens. This understanding of the state and of the principles of democratic governance are significantly removed from the realities of most SSA states as the theoretical part of this thesis proposes and as evidence from the field comes to support. A Commission official points out to the reactions that the partner governments have with regard to the GIT. These reactions show that it is exactly those principles and practices which are at the core of the western assumptions on statehood and democratic institutions which are being challenged: "the conditionality around democracy, they consistently said they [Africans] don't like that, not quite rightly so. Number two is their concern about elections, though often in Africa elections go with instability. They create instability" (ECFI029). This and the following empirical chapters will show that basing development policies on specifically western understandings of institutions and practices leads in practice to two problematic outcomes. First it leads to significant discrepancies between agreements, strategies, and contracts and implementation and second, between expected versus the actual impact of development policies.

This section has discussed the centrality of governance for the EDF. It has further underscored that the western understandings of statehood are the bedrock of EU's conception of governance. The rest of the chapter will focus on two main aspects – the perception of policy-makers of how negotiations and implementation work and the encountered challenges.

4.3 The CSP and NIP negotiation dynamics

This section presents the interviewees' perceptions about the negotiation of CSPs and NIPs and other related documents such as the mid- and end-term review (MTR, ETR) reports and the joint annual report (JAR). The process of negotiations is considered important for the overall argument of the thesis as it represents the very specific interaction which brings together the international community and the SSA state dimensions. The section will commence by briefly describing the actors involved in these negotiations, it will move to presenting the general dynamics of the negotiations processes and will end by highlighting the encountered challenges.

4.3.1 The main actors taking part in the CSP and NIP negotiation processes

Before providing an overall picture of the perceptions about CSPs and NIPs negotiation process, it is important to insist on the role and positions of each main actor. These descriptions of the actors will be instrumental in better capturing and understanding the challenges that negotiating EDF-related documents encounter and the meanings at play in these processes. The section will discuss the role of the European Commission, EU Member States, EU Delegations, partner governments, NAOs, and civil society or non-state actors.

4.3.1.1 The European Commission, EU delegations, and EU member states

The European Commission holds a central role in all aspects dealing with the EDF as it manages the fund. However, the Commission represents, in practice, a bundle of actors which play various roles in the EDF-related processes. The desk officers in

relevant DGs, the heads of units and directors in relevant DGs, the commissioners and the college of commissioners are all relevant in several ways.

The College of Commissioners plays a formal role in adopting relevant documents, including the CSPs and NIPs themselves. However, the relevant commissioners – primarily those focusing on development, humanitarian affairs, external relations, trade – are fundamental actors in how the development and political relations with the partner governments are shaped. The political agenda of the commissioners has a strong and direct impact on EU—SSA relations and more specifically on the way strategies and procedures are designed and developed.

In the case of the 10th EDF, Commissioner Luis Michel has had an important contribution to make through his strong focus on governance and budget support; aspects which have triggered specific negotiation targets and procedures on behalf of the EU. These in their turn have influenced thoroughly the relations and negotiation dynamics between the EU delegations and NAOs or partner governments (be it on EDF, trade, or political affairs). Related to the relevance of the commissioners, it is important to note as well the important role played, on most issues, by the commissioners' cabinets.

The Commission personnel based in Brussels (at the headquarters) are also extremely important. The desk officers, heads of units and directors, primarily from DG Dev and AIDCO have been key actors in shaping the EDF procedures and in

assisting the EU delegations with implementation. Feedback on all documents, ensuring that the part of the EDF procedure to be carried out in Brussels takes place properly, consultations on all relevant issues and determining and/or transmitting political positions represent some of the main actions where these actors played an important role.

The EU member states hold a special relevance. They are the ones providing the funding and deciding on the most important aspects primarily so at the headquarters level in the EDF Committee meetings. Within the EDF Committee each member state has a specific number of votes proportional to its EDF contribution. The member states play an important role in the field as well. There are regular consultations and information sharing between the EU delegations and the member states present on the ground (ECFI006).

The EU delegations are the main actor on the side of the EU involved in the negotiations and managing the relations with the partner governments. The delegations are in contact particularly with the NAO for the EDF-related activities. As discussed above, the reform of the EU delegations have transformed them from technical office into institutions with broad political, policy, and technical attributes. Deconcentration at the level of delegations has led to a multiplication of roles which these institutions have to play in the EU relations with the partner states. The Cotonou Agreement gives wide attributes to the heads of delegation, who becomes the main interlocutor for a wide array of issues as discussed above. Moreover it is

important to note that most of the EDF-related procedures are to be carried out or monitored by the EU delegations. The work done by the delegations tends to sometimes compensate for the lack of involvement of the partner state institutions. In this context, the EU delegations get to be central in the shaping, negotiation and implementation of the CSPs and NIPs.

4.3.1.2 The partner governments

The partner governments fulfill two functions, that of being a beneficiary of the EDF support and that of leaders of the development process. In both capacities the governments of the partner countries have an authoritative decision to make on several aspects dealing with the EDF. In institutional terms however the presidencies, governments, and ministries are most involved. The parliaments are not usually part of the process, most of the time not even being consulted on aspects related to the CSPs and NIPs. Given the overall governance structure in SSA, the presidents and sometimes heads of government or relevant ministries get to play the primordial role in taking decisions on policy priorities. Some constraints are coming from the side of the internationally sanctioned development strategies, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and others. However, the will of SSA political leaders appears to matter more in the national context than these strategies.

In the CSPs and NIPs negotiation process, the intra-governmental dynamics are not always unproblematic. The NAO faces at times "huge amount of pressure" (ECFI027) primarily so in what concerns the decision on the focal sectors (i.e.: sectors where most money will be allocated). In some cases the NA officer or his/her

hierarchy decides on this, in other cases the EU has an important word to say, yet in other cases there are substantial consultations with various national stakeholders. In Kenya for example, there were "over 18 participatory meetings to arrive the current scheme, all government driven" (GOFI068). In all these negotiations the political relevance of the NA officer as well as the capacity of NAO are fundamental. Of relevance for both negotiations and implementation of the CSPs and NIPs are as well the ministers of the focal sectors and their ministries' operational capacity.

4.3.1.3 The NAOs and NA officers

The NAO is the most important actor on the side of the partner government when it comes to the EDF-related aspects. The NA officer[94] is the main interlocutor for the EU delegations and coordinates all the intra-governmental discussions. The NAO maintains important attributions on the implementation side, as it is supposed to oversee all implementation activities. These roles are further shifting as the EU aid gets disbursed increasingly as budget support, questioning altogether the necessity of a specific unit as that of the NAO. A Commission official mentions: "NAO is more on the programming side, programming, policy, that side of things, and that requires a different kind of capacities, and also don't necessarily require a separate unit, but rather that there are some people in the normal units that look into the dialogue" (FI 039).

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[94] The NA officer is usually a minister appointed by the partner government.

With this development, the provenience of the NA officer and of the staff of the NAO becomes important, as staff coming from different ministries have different perspectives and interests with regard to aid modalities and purposes. The Commission officials perceive the NA officers coming from the ministries of planning or finance to be preferred (ECFI041).

NAO's capacity remains however insufficient as the procedures of the European Commission tend to be extremely demanding. When the NAO capacity is deemed inadequate, the Commission provides support by creating an additional office – the NAO support office[95]. This support office is seen by a Commission official as "an outside the national administration, parastatal body, half way between us and them, in other cases it is part of the ministry of finance or planning" (ECFI019). This technical assistance office, called support office, plays many times a crucial role. As the staff is hired on competitive salaries, the capacity and motivation is increased. Furthermore, as the salaries are mostly paid by the Commission, the inclination to strive to achieve targets, deadlines, and to be involved in the adjacent procedures is ensured (ECFI019).

The formal process of establishing and supporting offices to act in order to maintain a dialogue and implement specific strategies does not come without faults. One Commission official explains: "[i]n many cases these […] distinct technical assistance offices are outside the administration, kind of excrescence, in which case

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[95] The French abbreviation which is used by some interviewees is 'cellON' – *Cellule d'appuis a l'Ordonnateur National*.

that means that we have supported NAO offices for the last 20 years and most of these NAO offices are still as weak as 20 years ago" (ECFI014). Technically, the success of a NAO appears to depend on the size of the cooperation and the personalities of the NA officers and of the heads of delegation as an official explains: "[t]he NA officer is an important figure according to the Cotonou, formally s/he is important, however in reality it does not always work very well, it depends on the personality of the NAO and HoD. […] There are different cases of NAOs, it depends on the importance of the EC cooperation for the respective country" (ECFI011).

Finally, when the institutional capacity of a specific country is virtually inexistent, the EU Delegation acts as NAO. In Somalia a Commission official explains:

> "the delegation is its own NAO. We have assumed the responsibility of the NAO and I think it is a really exceptional situation. […] So the special envoy of the Commission, he is the NAO, so he basically signs on both sides of the contract. Administratively it is much easier, and there are no delays in disbursement, but of course, they have an impact in terms of local ownership. And in some sense I think the capacity of these people to kind of develop their own system." (ECFI059)

Another such example is the DRC in the early 2000s: "2002-2005/6 there was no NAO, the EC was the NAO" (ECFI018). Once the institutions regain their strength, in this case once the conflict was over, the EU Delegation supports the relevant ministry to rebuild their capacity: "[t]he NAO needed a lot of capacity building – technical assistance. The 10th EDF funds for that as there was no experience. Technical assistance was given to help them with what they needed to know about how the process works and about the complexity of the FED" (ECFI018).

4.3.1.4 The non-state actors

The non-state actors refer in principle to NGOs and the private sector. The Cotonou agreement projects an important role for the non-state actors as they should be consulted in the process of developing the CSPs. In practice however the situation varies. Most interviewees have reported weak or inexistent involvement of non-state actors in the negotiations of the CSPs for the 10th EDF.

The Commission makes efforts to involve civil society in the negotiations and other processes related to the EDF. These efforts include funding their participation in conferences, negotiations, and other relevant processes. The interviewed civil society employees acknowledge this fact while at the same time highlight the opposition of the government in most cases to their involvement, as for example in Burundi: "the government does not want that we are informed. It's really the Commission which asks that we have a say" (NGOFI045).

At the same time the private sector is perceived to be much better connected to the government officials and therefore more influential. One Commission official states, referring to Kenya: "we interact a lot with private sector […] who are very active in government related issues, very much so. And on trade for sure, they have simply their own channels and there seems to be at personal level excellent channels between them and the government" (ECFI067).

4.3.2 General negotiation dynamics and the negotiation of the 10th EDF assistance and financing modalities

From the above discussion it can be well understood that the Commission, the EU institutions and Member States more generally play a fundamental role in the setting up of the principles, agreements, strategies, and contracts with their development partners. Given the asymmetrical nature of the negotiations the role the partner governments get to play is pre-defined and, in consequence, their influence gets to be limited.

The prevalent importance of the EU side in these negotiations is evident; however, it is important to understand the way in which the partner governments play their role. A good point of departures is the very principles and agreements the EU establishes with its development partners. These principles and agreements are based on an international legal framework which requires that juridical equal parties exist and hold adequate capacities for contract-making. The existence of equal sovereign states is presumed. In the current context of development relations this presumption is further strengthened by the principles of ownership and partnership which not only create a space for the recipient states at the negotiations table but even more put their '*volonte*' at the core of what is negotiated, at least formally. Furthermore, the equal statehood presumption creates not only a space for the partner governments in these negotiations it constitutes and regulates their existence and involvement.

That statehood presumption *requires* the existence of the partner states. This requirement is strongly visible in the continuous efforts of the EU and other western donors to create and support dialogue partners (e.g.: regional associations, states, bureaucratic bodies, or civil society organizations) in the exact form required by the principles the EU has decided upon. The fundamental relevance of this aspect for the entire aid delivery machinery is revealed as well by the way in which the EU substitutes the negotiating partners in situations of extreme fragility and state failure (e.g.: Somalia) in parallel with deploying substantial efforts for *re*-building states that never existed for real before (Englebert and Tul 2008). In addition, this aspect reveals the western sovereign power at play in international interactions.

Procedures are one of the areas where the role of the EU institutions is decisive. The EU institutions are playing the leading role in deciding on the procedures and uphold procedural aspects as extremely important. Procedures are important as they structure the potential actions of the actors involved in the negotiations. The roles for the various actors are assigned through authoritative documents issued by the Commission, sometimes under the pressure of other EU bodies pursuing a control function. As one Commission official notes:

> "[c]lear instructions were given from Brussels for the preparation of the CSP, it was clearly specified who should lead, what percentage should be given to government, the country evaluation was done and a number of materials were prepared to support negotiations with the NAO. Impressive detailed information was given on deadlines and the NAO was given the lead to call for meetings to invite Donors and NGOs but NGOs were not too present. We had NGOs complaining to us." (ECFI050)

The procedures tend to be complicated aspect not appreciated by partner governments. Striking the balance between oversight on how EU funds are spent and

a level of complexity which would allow for partner countries to be meaningfully involved appears as a problem for the Commission. The pressures are obvious. EU institutions want to secure that money are spent adequately, while partner governments want, among other aspects, to limit the amount of the work-load putting pressure on their bureaucracies. Unsurprisingly the EU pressures are decisive. One official summarizes this aspect: "unfortunately the EC is often seen through the perspective of very complicated procedures, very complicated and strict deadlines, quite difficult to follow" (ECFI013).

There are important debates within the Commisison on how procedures should look like. The pressure gets to be placed primarily at the level of EU delegations and desk officers in relevant DGs that need to ensure that procedures are met. In practice this means that whatever work is not done by the partner governments is going to be done by the delegations or desk officers in relevant DGs, amounting at times to significant work-loads. The issue of avoiding excessive work-loads by the concerned EU institutions is visible in the debate on the focal sectors for the CSPs and NIPs. One EU official explains at length what he understands as 'the move to sector of least resistance:'

> "very often you start programming, identify your focal areas, you have started identifying all the forms required in that sector to move ahead in a sustainable way, you come to an agreement with the government on a couple of reforms but of course you end up stuck, because government in the end resists reforms. So what are you doing, do you stick to your position, that's what was agreed, you don't move before these reforms are in place, or do we say, sector X is a nightmare, too labor intensive, too political sensitive, difficult, forget about this sector, let's move to another sector, so that's the move to sector of least resistance. […] people are sometimes not even ashamed of or unaware of what they are doing." (ECFI014)

A related problem which arises on the side of the Commission is what the same interviewee calls 'people turn native' (ECFI014). This implies that the officials working on specific countries tend to "defend the governments of the countries where they are or for which they work here, which is a very strange attitude. And it's very rarely to have desks here or heads of delegation who can take distance and have an objective analysis on the situation" (ECFI014). This strange allegiance of some Commission officials towards the countries they deal with has significant impact on the internal Commission debates. The same official explains how in his perspective this subjective approach towards supporting given countries leads to a procedural focus on financial performance which is detrimental to carrying out proper analyses:

> "everybody wants to present his country as the best which means that if you don't have very rigorous indicators which are quantified and therefore standardized, and objectively measurable the end result is that you turn towards focusing on financial performance, because that's the only one that is clearly, easily measurable" (ECFI014)

This internal debate reveals the unfolding contradictions between the bureaucratic objectives of the Commission at a policy level and the uneasiness of the policy-makers who have experience in the field. Understood as people turning native, or pursuing other types of interest, this interaction may as well indicate a discrepancy between the Brussels-determined policies and their inapplicability in the field.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the discussion of the content of strategies undergoes a complicated route from a procedural perspective. Taking between 12 and 18 months, the CSPs and NIPs go through a complex cycle of negotiations, discussions, assessments, reviews and decisions. The EU institutions are substantially engaged in fulfilling these procedures. The EU institutions benefit from

substantive capacity and equal political and bureaucratic will to follow through. However, most of the interviewees observe that on the partner government side there is often significant lack of capacity and, at times, equally (or more) significant lack of political will. This translates in practice in a set of initiatives on the side of primarily the EU delegations to involve the NAO or partner government in negotiations on the CSP and NIP, with various degrees of success.

According to the Cotonou Agreement, the NAO is supposed to be the main actor on the partner governments' side in drafting and preparing the CSPs and NIPs. The practice is significantly different. For reasons varying from lack of interest to lack of capacity, most of the work gets to be performed by the EU delegation. As one EU official explains: "[m]y impression is, to say the truth, that most countries are not active in the preparation of the CSP. They react to things already prepared" (ECFI024). Not only that the NAO is often not involved in drafting of the CSPs, but even the reaction to the documents prepared by the delegations is perceived to pose serious challenges, another official notes: "[i]n practical terms they [NAOs] are supposed to do a lot, in reality about 85% is done by the delegation and the input from the NAO is in some cases zero" (ECFI023). Furthermore, even in cases where the NAO is involved, at times the outcome of the negotiations tends to reflect substantially the views of the Commission. One partner governments official mentions: "the initial paper had a lot of content from the government part, government driven, there was emphasis on budget support, emphasis on infrastructure, emphasis on agriculture and rural development, these are the

government priorities at the moment. The final details of it, yes, there was quite a lot of input from the EU as well, as well as guidance" (GOFI068).

In spite of this lack of involvement of the NAOs, things are made to work well form a procedural perspective. Documents are developed and signed, procedures are completed, and projects are seemingly implemented. Aid is paid; as an official notes suggestively: "I think the results are the same, with a good NAO, the delegation has less to say. If you have a mediocre NAO, the delegation has to work more, but the work is done and the dialogue exists, from a technical point of view" (ECFI026).

In more specific terms, the relationship between the EU delegation and the NAO is a mixture of political and administrative connections. The quality of political relations has been mentioned by several interviewees to be of relevance in how the NAO contributes to the strategies and reports. Where the political relations are good, a compromise on the texts of strategies and primarily reports is found. Where political relations are not positive it can happen that on the same issue two different versions of the text are included in order to present both views (of the Commission and of the partner government). In more extreme cases where an agreement on including both views is not reached, a restrained cover letter is issued by the respective head of delegation (ECFI000). The centrality of the personal factor in conducting institutional relations reveals its relevance for issues related to procedures and implementation. Paying attention to the NAO's and NA officer's needs is perceived to provide the solution for obtaining a good relationship and in consequence good

results on developing and implementing strategies and respecting procedures: "[t]he challenge and key to work well with the NAO is to respect the weaknesses and the needs and to help improve performance. This builds trust, and makes them feel that they are part of the team" (ECFI023).

Lack of capacity represents one of the main perceived inhibitors for a quality involvement of the NAO and government in negotiating the strategies and writing the various kinds of required reports. Most of the interviewees have touched upon this issue and all of them saw it as a fundamental challenge. Naturally the degree of capacity varies among different countries and among various governmental institutions. As illustrated by one Commission official: "[t]he NAO needs support/assistance. From the point of view of institutional support, the NAO is usually understaffed so assistance needs to be provided on human resources, equipment, cars, things which the government cannot provide" (ECFI023).

The EU delegations insist substantively on supporting the NAOs to the extent that in some cases, they assumes themselves the prerogatives of the NAOs (as presented above). This support provided by the Commission to SSA governments is showing how the EU's will to have a dialogue partner is becoming reality through the provision of resources. This is a clear indication of how western-driven views on institutional set-up are transposed into practice. The results however are far from satisfactory as presented. In many cases the EU delegations have to overtake most of the programming and reporting work presumably being within the remit of the NAO.

This argument is further supported by the widespread employment of technical assistance. The EU offers technical assistance to NAOs in order to enable them to fulfill their requirements (ECFI067).

Some of the interviewed Commission officials hold however a different view. For them lack of capacity is not the main issue as in their work they meet highly qualified and trained government officials. They underscore however the relevance plaid by lack of (political) will in the way the existing capacity is employed.

There are two main aspects perceived to determine the political relevance of the EDF assistance. First, the size of the EDF allocation is extremely important and varies substantively in different countries. While in Burundi the amount provided by the Commission (one of the few donors in the country) is considered significant, in Congo Brazzaville or Gabon (resource-rich countries) the size of the cooperation is close to insignificant. Referring to Gabon one interviewee mentioned: "our cooperation is probably two days of petrol production" (ECFI013). Countries which are resource-rich, do afford to ignore the development recommendations of the European Commission and of donors more broadly: "[a]ll aid is less than 3% of the budget so they don't care. The relations with Congo Brazzaville are essentially political" (ECFI012).

Second, the political position of the NA officer within the home government is considered equally important. It needs to be mentioned that the importance of the

NAO minister is evidently linked to the amount of resources and/or size of the donor cooperation s/he oversees - but not only. These aspects have a direct impact on every single issue related to negotiations and implementation.

In this context, the interviewed EU officials mention a wide array of both positive and negative specific experiences encountered in the negotiation process. The dynamics of the negotiations vary as we can see above with every single location and configuration of the negotiation teams. The development of these strategies for the 10th EDF represent positive interactions in several countries among which Madagascar where negotiations were "very good very well prepared and very constructive […] they try to agree if they try to make a point […] they try to make concessions, very constructive trying to go forward" (ECFI006). Negative experiences occurred as well as for example in Sierra Leone where as one Commission official points out: "there was a change of government and there was a sort of vacuum so we were supposed to do a lot of things ourselves" (ECFI015).

Finally, a big challenge to the CSP and NIP negotiations is lack of proper involvement of civil society. While the Cotonou Agreement and adjacent procedures require that civil society is consulted in these processes, the practice uncovers significant divergence over this issue. The Commission pushes substantially for the consultation with civil society to take place. However, the capacity of civil society to provide adequate input is perceived to be limited. As well, the capacity of the

Commission to reach to the relevant non-state actors is also reduced, while the partner governments tend, in general, to oppose vehemently such consultations.

For the ACP group one of the most important aspects in the negotiations with the EU was the amount of financial support. In spite of a nominal increase from 13 billion of the 9th EDF to over 22 billion under the 10th EDF, as indicated by one Commission official, for the ACP group "the amount which was put on the table was not enough" (ECFI038). This expectation is met with skepticism by the EU officials, primarily as they perceive that the absorption capacity on the ACP side is limited.

Besides the size of the EDF, a related aspect becomes important – the financing modalities. In principle donors have to choose between project aid (i.e.: aid financing specific projects mainly run through the donor procedures) and program aid in the form of sectoral or general budget support (i.e.: direct foreign exchange transfers to the treasury of the partner state with the aim of supporting the sectoral or general budget of the respective government). The perceived advantage of program aid relates to the direct usage of the institutions and procedures of the partner governments. A reduction in transaction costs is expected and, at the same time, the partner institutions are strengthened. At the level of the EU there have been fierce debates related to budget support. Commissioner Luis Michel has embraced budget support as one of his priorities and has pushed significantly for a raise of up to 50% of the 10th EDF (up from little over 20% for the 9th EDF) to be disbursed in the form

of budget support. Several MS have been reluctant to budget support out of fears for misappropriation of funds.

Sectoral and general budget support is perceived to substantially contribute to increasing the ownership of the partner government in line with Paris declaration on aid effectiveness. However the procedures for both delivering budget support and monitoring the achievement of indicators seem to pose serious problems. The donors providing budget support engage in a contract with the partner government where the partner government agrees to advance on several mutually agreed indicators in specific periods of time. An important aspect to remark is that budget support can be offered to countries which may apparently seem incapable of efficiently handling aid through their institutions and procedures, as budget support is meant to increase the quality of the respective institutions and is offered against the solid commitment of political elites to make the needed improvements. Obviously within the EU internal debates, several MS are skeptical of the commitments made by some of the partner states and therefore an entire debate unfolds.

In negotiations with the partner governments, budget support was not received as expected. While the expectation was that partner governments would appreciate budget support and the increase in ownership it brings about, several Commission officials have reported unease on the side of the partner governments' negotiators with the high percentage of budget support proposed by the Commission. One such example is Tanzania, as one Commission official mentions:

> "[w]e sat with the NAO, first time, first meetings to talk about the 10th EDF program. We had been sent targets by DG Dev of 80% budget support in the program […]. We committed to budget support we harmonized with other donors we want to have a dialogue etc, etc. And there was quite a difficult debate, in which we had to persuade them that we would be building on the difficult experiences of the first two generations of budget support, but we'd be going ahead with it anyway […] From that point it was clear that the general budget support was going to be the dominant direction where this is going." (ECFI027)

The skepticism on the partner governments' side is related to several aspects. Some of these are connected to donor dependence and reduction in resources for investments. As one Commission official explains: "[i]f you put money to the budget which is a poor budget, the priority of the budget […] is to pay urgent expenditures, so a lot of the budget will got into urgent payments of salaries, electricity, [etc], but no money will be left for investment" (ECFI006).

In general, the experience with budget support is far from being a smooth one. Another Commission official underscores the prevalent lack of understanding of what budget support is and how it functions and moreover how it triggered more challenges than expected:

> "with real general budget support what I think Tanzania thought would be a very smooth system of disbursements on time predictable, large, built into the annual sort of budge cycle did not really work out because we had so many problems with governance, with public financial management, with obtaining data on MDG, in fact it took quite a lot of time to disburse this general budget support and we had a lot of interaction. Every payment was an agonizing process, probably because we were at the beginning of using a new instrument. From the Tanzanian perspective what they wanted was money on time guaranteed, this wasn't reducing transaction cost, it was creating a new challenge." (ECFI027)

4.3.3 Challenges encountered in the negotiation process

The above discussion on actors and negotiation dynamics reveals substantial divergence in practice from the texts of the ACP-EU agreements and the written procedures described in chapter three. Given the significance of this divergence, this

section will summarize some of the main problems encountered in the CSP and NIP negotiations.

On a general note, one has to keep in mind that the entire context of development relations is problematic – the needs are perceived to be greater than the available resources (GOFI068). This constraint alone frames the practice of aid-giving and development strategy negotiation as challenging.

In more specific terms, there are challenges encountered at most levels. Those considered more relevant will be reviewed starting from the EU-related challenges, moving to the NAO and the recipient government. This will not be a comprehensive analysis of the problems negotiations face, but rather a brief overview of the perceived challenges which indicate substantial gaps and discrepancies between the assumptions which form the bases of EU development policies and practice. These discrepancies will be analyzed in more detail in chapter six and represent evidence for the advanced theoretical claims.

The Commission puts forward complex procedures for ensuring that EDF funds are properly spent. These complicated procedures represent a challenge in themselves, primarily so for the administrative capacity of the partner states. Nevertheless, these complicated procedures reveal a more fundamental gap concerning the conception of work between the Commission and partner governments. In more specific terms the gap refers to the approach toward work, planning, timeframes, and deadlines. As one

Commission official mentions: "[m]aybe we have just a different level of attention to planning processes, reporting processes. That very often these initiatives and the reminder of these things needed to be done I think comes from the Commission. […] the kind of timeframes, the deadlines […] are very much driven by the European Commission saying these and these need to be done rather than the initiative standing here and being taken by the government side" (ECFI069).

The importance of procedures comes with strings attached. As discussed above there is a high pressure on the EU delegations to disburse aid. Several of the interviewed Commission officials have mentioned this aspect as problematic. Primarily so in the context of negotiations, where this pressure increases the leverage on the side of the partner governments. As one of the Commission officials presents it:

> "[w]e have an incentive to deliver against the plan that we submit to our own headquarters, so if we see that things are stuck and we don't sign contracts, we don't pay. We told Brussels that we would disburse so much money, that we would have so many new contracts this year, let's move, if they don't do it, ok, we will do it. And we do it. And it's, of course, you want to do something positive. Are you going to stop your good intentions and possibly the good things that you want to do because you have these administrative problems with a few people in the Ministry of Finance for the good of the people? You just do it." (FI 71)

The normative stance the interviewee exposes indicates a perceived EU responsibility for citizens of third states, responsibility which justifies an authoritative resolution of administrative challenges. This aspect is fundamental as theoretically it illustrates how fundamental principles engrained into the practice of aid-giving contradict fundamental principles related to the sovereignty of the developing states. Furthermore, this contradiction illustrates how donors become involved not only in guiding but in effectively overtaking the duties of SSA

government in order to implement western understandings of what SSA states should do.

The authoritative resolution of administrative practices translates in the EDF world in EU delegations assuming the attributions of NAOs. One Commission official explains: "[s]o in practice what very often happens is that the delegation de facto takes over a lot of creational work which in fact should belong to the NAO" (ECFI014). As discussed above this happens on a large scale leading first to questioning whether the application of the ownership principle is ever possible. And second, to the transformation of the authoritative decisions in a series of perceived impositions. As the same Commission official mentions:

> "Very often we have our self imposed, our focal areas, a lot of countries the choice of focal sectors was not based on a real dialogue with the [government] and other donors in terms of division of labor and complementarities. They have been often very much influenced by directives from headquarters and by what I call the bureaucratic inertia." (ECFI014)

One concrete example of such perceived imposition is the substantial increase of budget support. Budget support came about through significant political pressure and most of the Commission officials interviewed point to its relevance for increasing the intensity of political dialogue. The officials have also pointed out several challenges, among which: budget support not being a good experience in general, not being well understood and not being clearly implemented, that donors became more critical of the partner governments, that it is unclear who the real beneficiaries are and that there is has reduced donor visibility in front of the citizens of partner states.

Another example of perceived authoritative decision is the attention paid to civil society. While most partner governments in SSA appear to be against such practices, the Commission has over the years put increasing pressure on this aspect. As several interviewees observe, there is a fundamental disagreement between the partner governments and the Commission's approach towards civil society. This disagreement translates in many SSA countries in arbitrary arrests and even more severe forms of punishment, as the local meaning attributed to civil society appears to be at times as opposition to the party in government.

In the light of the above, the relations between the EU delegations and the NAO are perceived as challenging. The stance of the Commission on various aspects ranging from procedures to principles of good governance and protection of human rights appears to be inflexible. This puts significant pressure on the NAO as it is the unit to negotiate strategies with the Commission, to monitor implementation, and to ensure that national institutions align to the agreed upon priorities.

In spite of the formal relevance of the NAO, its performance appears to vary substantially – from NAOs that are involved and drive the cooperation process to NAOs that are disengaged. As one Commission official explains, "[t]here are countries who don't care at all, who are ready to sign any kind of papers, others who are really involved and do care about it, others who are involved and do not care after" (ECFI041). At the extreme we can find NAOs that avoid all communications

with the delegations, "[t]he contact person from the NAO, his email never worked, no replies to calls" (ECFI050).

There are two main aspects to insist on in this context. First the fact that there are several cases where NAOs are perceived not to care about the provided assistance indicates that there is a more substantial problem related to how donors relate to SSA governments. Second, the perception that some partner states are ready to sign any kind of agreement (implying that the content does not really matter) equally shows the more fundamental gap between the western donors and the SSA states. This gap related to basic legal agreements will be analyzed further in the next chapter.

These two aspects are further accentuated by a lack of understanding on the side of the Commission officials regarding the lack of involvement of the NAO, as one Commission official notes, "I wonder, they don't understand what is at stake just to give a reply on the draft" (ECFI050). Overall, these challenges indicate difficult relations between the NAO and the delegations. One Commission official illustrates at length but extremely suggestively these challenges as follows:

> "[p]roposals, of all kind of reporting, very often done by delegation and endorsed by the NAO, which of course lead to a loss of ownership, of a lot of things, mainly to create friction, maybe to delays, if you are doing things and submit to the NAO for kind of political endorsement and since he hasn't been involved, of course we think he's not competent […], he takes it badly and then the relationship is sometimes difficult for that particular reason. So you have difficult relationships and this of course has impact on the stake of ownership in whatever we do and sometimes on quality. So there's a trade off. Sometimes, you maybe advocate now we entrust a specific thing to the NAO where it belongs and then you have result which is so weak that then an opposite problem that you have to correct whatever has been written from A to Z, which creates even worse irritation. A typical example are the Joint Annual Report (JAR), […] [B]ut basically it's an overwhelming majority of cases where the delegation coordinates the exercise and puts everything together, if it's not done by the delegation, the report is very weak and comes with huge delays.

[…] And sometimes we have what is called difficult partnerships where in fact the partner country which asks to be actively involved (which can be even worse, e.g. Eritrea) the reports which are produced are clearly initiated by the NAOs office. Cause they are so weak and political they are missing any political credibility; cause the government is so stalinistic and backwards that they would never accept joint reports which is slightly more objective than that. So in my personal view these reports don't even meet the minimum standards of acceptability." (ECFI014)

Another set of challenges relates to the essential political nature of the relationship. The intra-governmental political relevance of the NAO is of high importance as it can trigger significant delays or blockages. The political dynamics in general are of relevance as the frequent change in ministers affect the way the relations with the delegations are shaped, as on official recalls: "when I arrived 4 years ago, with the setting up of the new government, there were three different ministers of finance, four. Now we have the same one since 2 years so it's good" (ECFI042). On this political level, the capacity of the NAO to coordinate the relations among ministers concerning development priorities is fundamental. The challenges in this regard are underscored by another official: "[m]inisters are fighting each other. There is a big problem with the creation of development hubs. […] The NAO is not efficient in coordination therefore there are delays" (ECFI011).

A last challenge related to the NAO concerns its perceived incapacity in some contexts to become a strong link between the delegations (EU) and their governments. Such lack of connection can occur even in cases where support units are put in place, as one interviewee mentions, "[i]n fact we have a strong link between the delegation and the cellON but a weak link between the cellON and the technical ministries, because they are also very weak" (ECFI076).

Lifting the discussion at the more general level of the government there is an additional (sometimes related) set of challenges which affect the negotiations between the Commission and the partner governments. Most of the Commission officials interviewed agree that there is a capacity problem on the partner government side. This lack of capacity is perceived to affect negotiations and refers among others to the partner governments not being articulate enough, not producing sufficiently coherent plans, not possessing a sufficiently profound understanding of programming, and not being able to design functional local systems (GOFI068).

Besides lack of capacity, several officials also pointed out that the real challenge is lack of political will. One Commission official indicatively explains:

> "I would be cautious in terms of capacities, because I think they've got the capacities, I think they don't want to use their capacities. Because they've got other priorities – they want to get reach they don't want to develop their country. I think sometimes, frankly, in my experience, the people I have in front of me on the other side of the table, negotiating with me the NIPs or details of a project, they are as good as educated as capable as we are. I can tell you that in Ivory Coast, half of the ministers, half of the higher levels of the administration they had masters and PhDs from all American, Canadian or French [universities], so capacities were excellent, but the objectives were probably not the same. I would say we were less qualified on paper than they were." (ECFI041)

If one accepts that lack of capacities is not the real issue at stake, alternative explanations need to be provided. The same interviewed official explains, "I think that in many countries […] the objectives of the government is to stay in power […]. So the priorities are not the same. We want to fight poverty in rural areas, they want to make the civil servants happy to be reelected" (ECFI041). This view is shared by several of the interviewees from all categories – Commission, government, and civil society. Having different objectives impacts the CSP and NIP negotiations as the partner government appears to be altogether disinterested in the development

strategies (ECFI052). The relevance of this objectives-related discrepancy goes however beyond their impact on the negotiation of strategy papers or pure divergence in political goals. It indicates that a more substantial gap may exist between the donors on the one hand and the SSA governments on the other, aspect which will be further analyzed in the next chapters.

The political pressure exercised by both parties poses significant challenges to the negotiation processes. The Commission makes significant demands in administrative and procedural terms as well as adherence to specific sets of values (human rights, good governance, etc). The partner governments are interested in the Commission funding specific areas or projects or in their international image. As a NAO official mentions:

> "[t]here is a lot of pressure but because essentially the system does not function too well. Especially from the EU of course … there is pressure from the EU to implement projects, there's pressure from the EU to reveal corruption… From the government itself there is pressure to get resources from the EU there is pressure to reduce the conditionalities of aid, there is pressure to hasten the implementation of activities. Most of the pressure is from the EU" (GOFI068).

These pressures constrain negotiations and their output.

A final challenge relates to implementation. The vast majority of those interviewed point to the aspect that even in those cases where the partner governments are considered capable of setting up priorities, implementation becomes a fundamental challenge. One interviewee summarizes this as follows, "[t]hey set up their priorities. How to implement them? They are unable" (ECFI042). The next section will provide an analysis of the way the interviewees perceive implementation and related challenges.

4.4 The implementation problem and related challenges

Almost all interviewees have claimed that implementation represents one of the core problematic aspects of the ACP-EU cooperation: "[t]here are good projects, good vision, good ideas, but the problem is at the level of implementation" (NGOFI066). Implementation is perceived to be problematic by the NGOs as well, which are one of the main actors dealing with implementation, one interviewee notes, "[w]e can have the plans, with the donors and the country; the implementation becomes a nightmare" (NGOFI074).

There are of course positive aspects and experiences related to implementation. What appears to have contributed to improving implementation relates mostly to procedures, to the professional quality of personnel, or to ensuring more functional accountability mechanisms. The reform of the EU delegations, implying devolution on decision-making is perceived as having contributed substantially to facilitating better implementation. Partner government officials being on the job for long periods of time, exchange of good practices among the various officials working on the EDF, and concern for improving practices has helped implementation particularly in Rwanda and Tanzania. The involvement of some parastatals in some of the Commission-related projects is appreciated positively by Commission officials in Kenya. Finally, the adequate involvement of citizens/people[96] is appreciated to have led to sustainable results. One such case is the Ubudehe project in Rwanda, where as

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[96] In the context of this research 'citizens' will be referred to as 'people' given the conceptual discussion in Chapter one.

a government official mentions: "we have here what is called Ubudehe, it involves the community to choose a program and to choose a family in that community which is the most vulnerable. This is not civil society as such, but the community, this is also a very successful way to let people choose for themselves what they think is good for development" (GOFI048). In spite of these positive aspects most of the interviewees have pointed to substantial challenges facing implementation of development strategies.

Given the substantial amount of aid backing development engagements in SSA, it is expected that there are such positive experiences, however as global indexes and trends of various development indicators show, these positive experiences do not add up to sustainable development. It is therefore assumed that there are more fundamental challenges this thesis tries to uncover based on the opinions of policy-makers and NGO employees.

The above discussion on the lack of relevance of contractual agreements for the SSA governments announces these problems related to implementation. The produced documents tend not to matter in given contexts:

> "[i]n the past it was imposed, the government swallowed, they signed, but not necessarily happened. […] National documents for poverty reduction, required by the World Bank was done because donors insisted but probably not important for the government. […] It is hard to develop the CSP with the government. There is no mid or long-term strategy." (ECFI028)

The commitments undertaken by the partner governments are perceived to be at times rhetorical, without adequate follow through. As one Commission official explains, "[r]egarding the Government commitments, they are not interested; these

commitments are declarations by the political leaders" (ECFI020). One such example is Senegal where: "they do not stay by the documents, the president comes up with things out of the blue and the administration has to integrate them, e.g.: GOANA – program focused on agriculture – excessive PR. Deal with that and try to impose coherence" (ECFI024).

The problem of implementation represents an important challenge for donors, who in most cases could ensure that implementation takes place through their own procedures. This option however would negatively impact the capacity of the partner governments and is at odds with the current international norms regarding aid delivery (e.g.: Paris Declaration). One Commission official summarizes this dilemma as follows, "[t]he challenge is a dilemma between long term capacity building through national administration, and the option of doing quickly through our own means, in practice there is combination in order to enhance capacity" (ECFI001).

Naturally, several reasons can be identified in order to account for deficiencies of implementation. A first candidate is lack of capacity, aspect discussed above in more detail. The assumption of capacity where it does not exist leads donors to facing substantial implementation challenges. One example provided by a Commission official relates to financial management in CAR and Cameroon:

> "[y]ou cannot ask CAR to adopt the plans, etc, in a country where there was no central budget. The strategy is imposing the world's most advanced tools with a basis on IT and network communications between ministries – this is premature. Let's start from the basics: expenses and revenues – line budget. […] For example the World Bank supported Cameroon with project based budgeting. The danger is that the agencies impose things that become incoherent with the capacity available to make use of them. First the capacity needs to be brought in line." (ECFI012)

This lack of capacity is accentuated by the partner government's underdeveloped analysis capacity, as a Commission official describes, a "[t]here is no capacity to evaluate the impact of a public policy. As they try to do the evaluation of poverty. But we see that they don't have the necessary instruments" (ECFI031). This observation uncovers potentially a more fundamental discrepancy at the level of meanings attributed to knowledge production and use.

Lack of implementation equally illustrates a more fundamental gap at the level of values and norms between donors and partner states. One specific example is human rights, a Commission official details, "CAR always says to donors that human rights are important and the strategy is clear, however it does not mean that they follow, but pretend to" (ECFI011). This discrepancy between agreement and implementation, accompanied by simulating compliance raises further questions regarding donor-partner state cooperation. This aspect will be further analyzed in the next chapters.

There are also several aspects related to donors which hinder implementation. As suggested in one of the quotes above there are instances of perceived imposition (ECFI028). This view is supported by the government officials interviewed, as one of them mentions: "[s]ometimes it's clear lack of ownership, it is something imposed on us by a donor or the NAO and really we'll just do it for the motion" (GOFI068). The impact of the perceived impositions on ownership is evident. That kind of donor attitude is seen to disempower officials and lead to problems of implementation (NGOFI075).

Lack of ownership appears to take significant proportions. Furthermore it is considered to be closely related to how development strategies are created, as one Commission official describes: "documents are not really shared, not discussed with civil society, sometimes not discussed with the parliament […] too much theoretical and not sufficiently owned by the political class, administration, the line ministries, and the people" (ECFI003).

Other challenges related to donors have to deal with the high number of agencies, projects and accompanying procedures. All of these add significant stress on the weak capacity of partner states. Donors appear not to be efficient themselves when it comes to proper reporting on disbursements, aspect which impacts negatively on budget cycle management. The disbursements report significant delays, which are augmented in the cases where governmental systems are employed. Plans put together by donors and partner governments are sometimes perceived to be overambitious, lacking realism, and not taking sufficiently into account the obstacles which may arise during the implementation stages. Lastly, the heavy focus donors put on NGOs as implementing partners leads in cases where governmental institutions are close to inexistent (e.g.: northern Kenya, northern Uganda, etc) to undermining the very governmental institutions which are supposed to be strengthened. One Commission official presents the situation in northern Uganda, "[t]he bulk of the funding goes towards the NGOs and the international agencies;

local government is many times left aside. The presence of the NGOs undermines the consolidation of the state in northern Uganda" (ECFI051).

Another relevant aspect is that on paper the implementation rates are perceived to look much better than in reality. There are cases where reports are properly filed, however they do not reflect reality. One example is provided by the Kenyan debacle on implementing universal access to education, as one interviewee explains,

> "[s]o when it comes to actual meeting the requirements, the government will meet the requirements that are on paper. It meets the requirements on paper, submitting the reports, audit reports. […] when further investigations are carried out they found out that actually nothing happened and the receipts are whatever are fictitious." (NGOFI060)

This apparent lack of honesty is even more relevant as it is reported as a challenge faced even by local NGOs in their work. An NGO employee mentions how "[t]he obstacles we encounter in the implementation of projects is the people. The vast majority does not want to show what they think for real" (NGOFI049). This aspect indicates how both government officials and people in general, may choose to purposefully stay away from the development practices proposed by the western donors, aspect which will be analyzed in the next chapters.

There are as well several institutional challenges related specifically to the EDF. The NAO administration is perceived to be stronger than general government administration, however, still weak for the fulfillment of its attributions. Some of this weakness is perceived to be structural, coming from the way the Cotonou Agreement establishes it. The structure put in place to ensure coordination between the Commission and partner governments is perceived to be ineffective. As one

Commission official describes: "I have not seen the coordination structure that through the Cotonou Agreement is recognized as being a coordination partner having power to coordinate nor capacity to coordinate over the line ministry, so they almost become an additional administrative partially a dysfunctional link in the whole process" (ECFI069).

This structural aspect triggers several additional challenges. The same official highlights the relevance of individual employees in ensuring that tasks are fulfilled: "I really see it that it's very much dependent on the individuals involved and then on the determination of making things happen" (ECFI069). This leads in practice to significant delays in most cases: "[w]e just came from the MTR of the CSP, and on the EDF related funds and basically everything is delayed, […] they are not even able to absorb the amounts of money" (ECFI067). Furthermore, this context leads to a perceived lack of understanding on the side of all actors. This lack of understanding is revealed by how Commission officials are puzzled when faced with how partner governments deal with the procedural requirements: "[w]e had to send a reminder to the government to ask for budget support. Since November we are waiting, they have sent something in January but only partial […] big mystery for me" (ECFI050).

This 'mystery' has several perceived causes, some more specific ones were already discussed above, others, more general will be pointed to in what follows. Such more general causes perceived by the interviewees include: a precarious state of law, lack

of good governance, lack of will, a generalized lack of capacity, lack of accountability, and others.

Human resources are perceived to be one of the main problems related to capacity. This human resources problem refers as much to the competence of the governmental employees as to the general institutional context in which they carry out their activity, which proves sometimes hard to comprehend. Official employees are perceived to have a "complex status […and] own interest[s], you have bureaucratic interest, you have political interest, you have ethnic interest, you have all kinds of interests which intermix and make it very difficult to understand all these conflicting interests and what's at stake. Very often we don't understand what's happening behind the scheme because of all these intertwined things" (ECFI014). This lack of understanding on behalf of the Commission officials will be further explored in chapter six as it represents an important indicator for a significant gap between donors and partner governments.

The governmental employees of partner states are perceived to be inadequately remunerated and to have few opportunities for professional development. A Commission official mentions "[o]nce the person told me 'they pretend to pay us and we pretend to work' which is fair enough" (ECFI014). Another Commission official observes the little chances for professional development governmental employees have, "if this person stays in the administration, this person does not have many chances to progress from a professional and economic point of view. […] many of

these people have better chances in the private sector" (ECFI001). This aspect of insufficient pay for officials is noted by NGO employees as well: "Kenya has underpaid civil servants who only come and put their jacket there and then go and make money elsewhere because their salaries won't last till the end of the month so they have their business on the side, they are working just to cover" (NGOFI063). One practice which partially compensates for the underpayment of government officials is participation in workshops. This aspect is not appreciated by the Commission officials as it is perceived to be excessive and to negatively impact the time invested in carrying out one's job: "[t]hey often go to workshops, to seminars so they spend very little time in the office, because they get paid for that." (ECFI073).

Lack of resources is at times considered mainly by partner government officials to be a problem at a more general level. However, Commission officials seem not to be convinced that this is always the case (particularly so in donor darling countries). One Commission official explains: "some people would argue also that another problem is inadequate resources. […] it's difficult to persuade somebody on this line because we know that even the little money, if there were less inefficiency in the system and less loss and less waist, because of corruption, because of all sorts of problems, then we probably would not be facing the problem of lack of money" (ECFI052). Accountability and good governance appear to be seen as more significant problems than lack of resources. This view is shared by several of the interviewees, and is strongly stressed upon by NGO employees: "I think the primary reason is still lack of accountability" (NGOFI064).

The issue of accountability relates in fundamental ways to how donors cooperate with the partner governments. Several of the SSA interviewees have perceived their government being more inclined to be accountable towards the donors rather than towards their own citizens. This competition in terms of accountability between donors and citizens is ventured as one of the main reason for lack of adequate implementation:

> "[i]s now the country accountable to its people or accountable to the donors, that is one big question. […]Accountability mechanisms are quite weak all over and also because the government is very very centralized. It's very very difficult to exercise accountability over a government that is very centralized like ours." (NGOFI060)

The challenge here rests also in that donors while having the means to hold governments accountable, stop short of doing so due to their declaratory commitments on respecting partner states' sovereignty. In addition, citizens lack both the resources and the social and political positioning that would enable them to hold their government accountable.

The broader issue of good governance is of equal importance. Most interviewees highlight the negative impact of corruption. As one Commission employee presents the issue: "I think there are serious governance issues, I mean latent corruption at all levels, and that corruption, even at times when the culprits are apprehended, there has not been a case where people accused of corruption have been successfully prosecuted, […] it's really governance issues which are really critical" (ECFI052). The significant impact of corruption and especially lack of proper justice mechanisms to control corruption indicate a high importance of the political sphere.

The same NGO employee underscores the negative impact of the politicization of development issues,

> "[t]he educational agenda, the health agenda is politicized, the agricultural agenda is politicized, so at the end of the day you have a situation where technical people who actually designed strategies and policies cannot implement what they have set out to do in the first place because the politicians grab the agenda and want to do their way. Now in most cases you would notice that the way politicians want something done that is not how many of the technical people want to do. So that [… is] actually a very serious problem." (ECFI052)

Addressing the accountability and governance issues is not an easy task. Reform is perceived to affect the power balance which in many cases leads to failure or inappropriate implementation. A Commission official refers to the partner states' administration as "a very big bureaucratic machinery with its own inter-dynamics with its own interests, particularly around the hot areas of call reforms. Public sector reforms has always been difficult to implement in many countries, because the reform might make sense from an outsider's point of view but it touches with some very delicate power balances which are not necessarily to be tempered with" (INTFI070).

It has to be acknowledged however that there are significant differences among sectors. A government official explains this variation by providing an example from Kenya. "let's look at the ministry of justice for example, they are doing an extremely good job with implementation, they are motivated to take ownership, they push the agenda through, very seriously, and the result is success. You look at another sector, altogether roads for instance where […] no drive there's no motivation, there is nothing, the result is disaster" (GOFI068). Leadership appears to be of significant importance in such cases. However such leadership which would be conducive to

reform and advancement is limited from several perspectives as "[s]ometimes there is political instability, political orientation, interest of the government, […] lack of political continuity [… or of] political will" (ECFI003).

The leadership that the partner governments and the NAO show in their negotiations of the CSPs, NIPs, JARs, MTRs and ETRs reveals several aspects some of which have been noted above. Beyond doubt, the cases of involvement and taking leadership shows the importance given to this process – what kind of importance it is not clear, however. Is it purely instrumental? Or, does it convey a genuine interest in the development process, and therefore real ownership?

The instrumental approach may take several forms – providing resources, electoral results, or broader political support (ECFI012). However, the central question remains – does this instrumental interest (apparent in the way the partner governments and the NAOs take the lead on certain issues) add up to ownership? Skepticism prevails in this regard among those interviewed, as one Commission official notes: "[t]he big question is to which extent countries feel a sort of ownership. They do not feel a lot of ownership" (ECFI024). If lack of ownership is perceived to be a problem at a governmental level, it is further more accentuated when discussing the involvement of the general public (NGOFI060). The ownership issue is accentuated by a deeper problem, indicating an even more significant gap between donors and partner governments. As one government official remarks, "sometimes people […] don't even have time to understand the framework in which

they have to exercise their expertise. And if we talk of a general vision, sometimes, there is not the necessary experience nor capacity to understand, in fact *there is no interest to understand*" (GOFI047, my emphasis).

The aim of this section was to present how implementation is perceived by the policy-makers and NGO employees involved in shaping and implementing development strategies, particularly the CSPs. The section shows how implementation is perceived as a problem. Furthermore it provides an overview of several implementation challenges perceived by those interviewed. This brief review of such challenges suggest first that there is a mismatch between the modus operandi of the EDF and underpinning conceptual frameworks and the practices encountered in SSA contexts. Second, that the policy and operational discrepancies indentified (both in the negotiation and implementation processes) are linked to broader conceptual aspects related to the how statehood- and development-related norms, institutions and practices are understood (the focus of the next chapter).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter started by providing a brief overview of the evolution of the CSPs over time and the particularities of the 10th EDF with regard to the GIT. It built, thereafter, a link between the formal processes as they appear in various agreements and the practical experience of policy-makers and NGO employees. The chapter provides a description of the perception of the interviewed policy-makers and NGO employees of two important processes – the negotiation of EDF strategy documents and the implementation of strategies and projects. Both processes encounter challenges,

some of which are presented and briefly interpreted. Through providing this thick description of the above mentioned processes and related challenges, the chapter makes a substantial point in that it shows that there are fundamental gaps and discrepancies between the donors, partner governments and the citizens of the partner states. The next chapter will show how these challenges are connected to broader discrepancies related to the perceived meanings-in-use attributed to development- and statehood-related norms, institutions, and practices.

The CSP negotiations and implementation provides solid empirical evidence to substantiate the ES concern with the gap between de facto and de jure statehood in SSA. Furthermore the empirical evidence related to CSP negotiations reveals the significant differences between the international community dimension and that of the SSA state. At the same time the empirical evidence concerning implementation reinforces the donor–SSA state distinction and brings in the additional dimension of the SSA society. In practice what these discrepancies lead to is a substantial lack of understanding faced by Commission policy-makers.

The next chapter will build on the exception based argument regarding the genesis of the SSA states dimension in order to present how different meanings are attributed to statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices in the SSA context. Equally relevant, the chapter will provide a description of the perceptions regarding the interaction among the three dimensions. The subsequent chapter will

further engage with the identified discrepancies and the pervasive lack of understanding which accompanies them.

Chapter 5: The SSA state and the structuring of the SSA domestic arenas

5.1 Introduction

Chapter three has set the stage for conducting the empirical discussion by touching on three issues. First, the chapter provided the broader context in which EU-SSA development relations are carried out. Second the chapter has shown the inter-relation of political, economic and development dynamics between the EU and SSA governments. Third, the chapter has identified broader challenges which face EU development policy.

Chapter four provided a description of the CSP and NIP negotiations and implementation. The chapter insisted on two fundamental aspects. First, it underscores the perceived challenges encountered in the negotiation process with the aim of revealing the different understandings on the donor and partner state sides. Second, it emphasizes the perceived challenges encountered in the implementation process in order to show the elusiveness of the donor policies based on unsuitable conceptual frames.

This chapter shifts the discussion to the more general level of West—SSA relations in order to connect the operational challenges described in chapter four with broader discrepancies at the level of meanings-in-use of development- and statehood-related norms, institutions, and practices. The chapter shows the existence of the SSA state dimension and how it relates with the other two dimensions.

5.2 Understanding SSA statehood and development dynamics through an exception-based argument

The theoretical argument advanced in chapter one proposes an ES understanding of the relationship between the west and SSA based on the concept of exception. The ES acknowledges the expansion of the international society at a global level, however fails to adequately deal with the nature of this expansion. The above empirical account of perceptions of EDF officials reinforces the theoretical discussion which considers this expansion is at best formal. The assumption that SSA is integrated in the global international society rests more on western imageries – seeing states in the form in which they do not exist – than on a genuine attention and understanding of local realities, as this chapter shows. This first section will continue the argument of the thesis by showing how SSA states and their relations to the west can be understood through the concept of exception. It will do so by pointing to specific elements indicating exception and by elaborating on how the SSA state dimensions is created and relates with the other two dimensions.

The presentation of the SSA state dimension and its relations to the international community and SSA local society dimensions is not aimed as an in-depth description. A different research design would be required for such an attempt. This chapter will rather be based on the perceptions of the policy-makers and NGO employees who inhabit the in-between space at the interference of the three dimensions. More specifically, a plurality of meanings can be identified within the

institutional contexts in which policy-makers and NGO employees they carry out their activities. Providing a perspective on these three dimensions from an in-between locus (the EDF experience) enables a view on how actors functioning within one dimension understand their own universe, on how they perceive various aspects pertaining to the other dimensions, and on the discrepancies they encounter at the level of meaning-in-use. This approach will enable building on the operational and institutional discrepancies identified in the previous chapter in order to show how they relate to broader incongruities in understanding statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices unfolding at the intersection of the three dimensions.

The theoretical chapter has argued that SSA can be characterized by exception from a legal, political, economic, and cultural perspective. The EDF experience contributes to strengthening this argument. Exception in this context is understood as practices which are framed in contradiction to expected norms or laws; situations where laws are inapplicable and where decisions are based in consequence on extra-legal basis.

Evidence for maintaining an exception-based argument can be identified at the level of both legal frameworks and operational practices. There are elements indicating that the EU-SSA relations as defined through the Cotonou agreement fall in the area of exception. As a Commission official explains: "[i]f you stick to the Cotonou agreement you would not spend one percent euro a year" (ECFI023). This implies in

practice that it is authoritative decisions rather than the Agreement which rule over EDF practices.

Furthermore, from a procedural perspective, the manner in which the EU is building dialogue partners through authoritative decisions illustrates both how western sovereign power is at play in SSA and also how it fails in establishing control. In such contexts international principles, norms and agreements fail to be functional. The Cotonou establishes the NAO. In practice this administrative unit seems not to be able to face the EU procedural demands, therefore the EU creates a support unit for the NAO, which comprises technical assistance for enabling the NAO to perform its expected tasks. That also gives at best mixed results. In more extreme situations, the EU delegations undertake the responsibility of the NAO, as a Commission official explains referring to Somalia:

> "the delegation is its own NAO. We have assumed the responsibility of the NAO and I think it is a really exceptional situation. […] So the special envoy of the Commission, now, he is the NAO, so when he basically signs on both sides of the contract. Administratively it is much easier, and there are no delays in disbursement, but of course, they have an impact in terms of local ownership. And in some sense I think the capacity of these people to kind of develop their own system." (ECFI059)

A similar example concerning the 'creation' of civil society (organizations) has been explored above.

The interventions and practices of donors, governments, and civil society result in specific governance mechanisms. While from a democratic and constitutional perspective the citizens are at the core of such mechanisms, in the SSA context these governance mechanisms leave 'citizens' perplexed. The interference of the three

dimensions produces a generalized space of indistinction where 'citizens' are perceived to be trapped. An NGO employee explains: "[t]his citizen, if you take him as an example of everybody else, he feels helpless, he knows that he should question and he has made an effort to question but he is completely blocked" (NGOFI064). It has been argued in the theoretical chapter that this state of indistinction encapsulates the SSA 'state' into a world of its own – the SSA state dimension. In what follows that dimension will be further analyzed.

5.2.1 The SSA state dimension and related dynamics

The western understanding of statehood enshrined in the ACP-EU partnership agreements (as described in chapter three) is prevalent among the interviewed Commission officials, in spite of the contradictions they perceive on the ground. This leads to a highly specialized development and statebuilding language which is perceived to have negative impact. The development specialized language is perceived to have no substance, to be far from the development needs of the partner countries, to be too abstract and in consequence little understood by development partners. One Commission official explains:

> "[there is] an international vocabulary of statebuilding that is so pervasive, it's so difficult to actually talk about what is going on. […] we are all talking in a language which is extremely far away from the actual needs, I don't know, coordinating, cooperating, tracking donors, […] and I think the Paris declaration and all that has done nobody any favor, because of the language […] and then you have endless definitions of what it means, but it has nothing to do with what needs to be done […] But it does go in a way that takes too much time. You know like, especially for a government now on aid coordination, to learn this language it may take them a year, when the problem is quite a simple one like there is no transparency." (ECFI059)

The concept of statehood appears as such fixed guiding not only legal texts but as well the normative standing, understandings, and actions of most Commission officials in the field. Discussing the issue of budget support for Burundi, a

Commission official mentions: "we have to do [budget support], because if not there is no budget, a state without budget is collapsed, we don't want it collapsed" (ECFI043). The conceptual fixation of the Commission is so extreme that even in contexts where the state does not really exist, it is assumed or imagined. Such an example is Somalia – a failed state, where such assumptions would be least expected. A Commission official summarizes extremely well the donor assumptions of statehood in Somalia:

> "[i]n theory it's the transitional federal government who covers everything but in practice its confined to south-central Somalia, because we close our eyes and think that really they could cover a number of areas, but in actual fact it's even more confined to Mogadishu […] So we are all so concerned with building a state, when anybody, most people know that that's not a feature of Somalia, the centralized state that fulfils all these functions." (ECFI059)

The state in SSA is perceived to diverge substantially from the EU and western assumptions. Surveying the interviews one can identify a large number of meanings that the state and state institutions acquire. Therefore no particular understanding of the state can be advanced to serve as a bedrock concept for development policy. The institutions which were brought into existence by western will and decision become partially appropriated in ways which appear to escape the understanding of their initiators and at times even of those using them. This suspended realm between donor imagination or illusions and local realities comes to be inhabited by a wide array of politicians and policy-makers that remain engulfed in a world of their own making. The interests, institutions, and dynamics at play construct a particular logic which while hard to comprehend is essential for any worthwhile attempt at generating change. Current development policies fail to do so and therefore the outcome cannot be successful. While it is beyond the scope of the current research to

provide a systematic understanding of any particular state-like entity, this section will engage with the various meanings and beliefs projected by the interviewees in order to show the distinctiveness of the SSA state. The contribution of such an approach is to substantiate the discrepancy between development policy assumptions and on-the-ground realities, and in the context of the theoretical framework, between the SSA state dimension and the other two dimensions.

5.2.1.1 Different understandings of the SSA state

Both positive and negative perceptions of the state are advanced by the interviewees. The state is sometimes perceived to be strong and powerful through its military and policing capacities. As well the bureaucratic apparatus is perceived as a tool which renders power to those who control the state. The state is perceived to be sovereign by virtually all of those interviewed however most of the interviews indicate severe limitations of the perceived sovereignty. Furthermore, the state is perceived to bring about peace. For people living in a situation of war a government which is capable of restoring stability signifies peace. Important as well, the state is perceived as a source of resources and money. For those working for the state and others who contextually benefit from the existence of the state, the available resources is what is at stake.

The negative views are however predominant. The state is perceived to be foreign, imposed, above the citizens, not independent, not committed, corrupt, coercive, not accountable, not legitimate, not capable to deliver, parasitical, not sovereign, disconnected from the society and people, not suited in the African context, a colonial legacy, not understood, as representing different interests, lacking capacity,

as a tool for maintaining international connections, as a construction outside the community, as a cost, or being dysfunctional. These understandings will be further explored in this section.

The SSA state dimension acquires a plurality of meanings in various contexts. The state institutions which are required by the western conceptualization of statehood are appropriated in accordance with local cultural dynamics so as to benefit specific interests or to broker specific power-sharing arrangements. These institutions are viewed as a copy of western prototypes, as simulacra of an irreproducible western experience. An NGO employee notes: "[w]hy do we have to act as if we are schizophrenic? Which implies that we would have a white, European face, the face of a European democracy, if the values of the people which are the basis, are completely different from those we represent at an international level?" (NGOFI036). These questions reveal the crux of the significant split between the international community and the SSA state dimensions. This discrepancy between the international values and institutions and the local values and understandings of institutions opens up a split between the international world and the local world. This gap is filled with the skewed appropriation of the state.

The institutional setup which constitutes the state escapes both external and internal control. Internationally, the direct control of the international legal norms and institutions over SSA states is auto-annihilated by the external recognition of their sovereignty (sovereignty being itself one of the fundamental international norms).

Internally, the control of people or local or traditional structures of authority over SSA states is blocked by differing territorial jurisdictions[97]. This double exception which circumscribes the existence of SSA 'states' undermines its donor-desired functionality. The same NGO employee concludes: "as long as the state remains based on an amorphous structure which is alienated from the people […] it cannot represent" (NGOFI036). The state is portrayed as an 'amorphous structure alienated from the people.' This depiction illustrates both the incapacity of policy-makers and people alike to make sense of this structure as a coherent institutional complex (i.e. a state) and as well, the distinctiveness of the SSA state dimension from the SSA society dimension.

The genesis of the state in SSA is of particular relevance. It is broadly discussed in the literature that the colonial administration was based on coercive and extractive institutions, which after independence became the state administration (Reno 1998, Englebert 1997). The persistence of the colonial institutions, laws, and policies is perceived to have contributed to maintaining a skewed western state model and to accentuating the alienation between state administration and people. One interviewee explains: "during colonial times, the politics in place was 'divide and rule,' Kenya was divided into different regions and these regions were made to be ethnically homogenous. […] what ended up happening was that the then government did not break those borders and kind of continued to use for a time the colonial

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[97] The traditional authorities, where they exist, are not covering the entire territory of a state. This differentiation in jurisdictions lifts the national level above the authority and normative codes of such traditional authorities.

policies" (INTFI065). Furthermore, those who became the new 'owners' of the colonial heritage failed, if they ever attempted, to bridge the western models of governances with the local value systems and societies. The 'highjacking' of independence by those who were schooled abroad or who had connections with the colonial administration (INTFI065) not only further alienated the population from the state administration, but is seen to have generated specific incentive structures which have not yet led to bridging the gap between state and society.

The state in SSA is seen therefore as an 'artificial state' (FI. 013). This artificiality is recognized by Commission officials; however the predominant view is supporting the western conceptualizations of statehood underpinning current donor policies, in spite of their inapplicability. As one Commission official briefly summarizes: "I think that the real issue is to build the state as such, and to show people that the state is there to protect them, deliver the services, unfortunately with the leaders - they have to have the leaders" (ECFI013). This indicates that in spite of the appealing democratic governance models that the state may bring about, the political will to enact such models is, in fact, perceived to be lacking.

The importance of elites takes however a specific twist in the SSA context. In the absence of a public-private distinction (Englebert 2009, Mamdani 2002), the state is viewed as personalized[98] by leaders. The popular perception transcends institutional boundaries focusing on the personality of the leader. As one NGO employee

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[98] The personalization of public institutions and offices can be symbolically illustrated by the prominent inscription of the names of institutional leaders on most of the publicly funded monuments.

observes: "[t]hey don't see it as government, they see it as a person, a person has done this, the president has done this" (NGOFI055). The impact on institutions is fundamental, leading to the creation of what could be called 'private institutions.'

The privatization of institutions and the cult of personality have implications for the way the role of the state is conceived, particularly so for the distribution of resources. The perception of the state as a 'pot of resources' is the most widespread among the interviewees and takes several nuances. Leaders, as discussed above, appear to see the states as 'milk-cows' (ECFI013) diverting resources for private interests with little concern for the development of their countries. The state can be understood as an opportunity for cash – be it per-diem, travel allowances, or fictitious employment. While for the Commission officials this appears fundamentally problematic, the partner government officials insist on the relevance of such cash-providing practices for enabling anything to happen in practice. Finally, in some contexts, the state can be perceived as a resource provider for broader communities, without much meaning otherwise. As a Commission official notes: "the state has to provide. It's a resource to be shared between communities, and it's somehow seen as a self perpetuating element within day to day life often with very little meaning" (ECFI061).

A last important dimension to be noted at this point refers to the competition between the state and alternative sources of authority for the loyalty of their subjects. While traditional powers in the SSA context have transformed their meaning and practices over the years, their relevance is by no means perceived to be obsolete. On

the contrary, in several respects they are perceived to play a fundamental role in structuring the life of some SSA societies and communities. The state intersects with the traditional authorities in a plurality of ways that bear an overlooked, nevertheless extremely relevant significance for both governance and the development processes in SSA.

The traditional authorities are seen in general to be more embedded in the SSA societies than the state, being more organic governance, juridical, cultural, or religious structures. They are perceived to be not only closer to citizens but also to benefit from their subjects' loyalty and deference. They appear as the authorities which in most contexts structure the social space and in fact determine the behavior of their subjects. As one interviewee observes: "[i]n Senegal, the place which is supposed to be occupied by the state is occupied by the religions" (NGOFI036). Therefore, these traditional authorities are an important component of the SSA society dimension. The relations between the state and these traditional authorities mark another significant gap which indicates that the dimensions of the state and of the society are distinct. Furthermore, these relations become of major importance if one is to make sense of the lack of implementation of development and governance strategies. This relationship will therefore be the subject of a future section of this chapter.

This section has presented in brief the meanings the state acquires in SSA as perceived by the interviewees. It has pointed to several characteristics and specific

meanings that are usually attributed to the state by those interviewed. These meanings relate to the state as colonial legacies, artificiality of the state, privatization/personalization of the state, the state as an instrument for various other aims, and the state in relation to traditional authorities. The next sub-section will provide a more in-depth look on the meanings attributed to state institutions and particular western institutions which development policies attempt to implement or improve.

5.2.1.2 Different understandings of state institutions

As the state acquires different meanings in various SSA contexts, so do the various institutions it consists of. This sub-section will take a closer look at how state institutions are perceived in general as well as to how some specific institutions are understood. In the view of some interviewees institutions are properly understood, however they are instrumentalized for various purposes diverging from public interest. A Commission official illustrates how institutions are instrumentalized in practice: "I think they understand the institutions perfectly well, they are also prepared to instrumentalize them […it is] interesting to explore how much money [they] get out of the capital; [they have a] natural tendency to become rent takers" (ECFI005). However, it is the prevailing view among the interviewees that state institutions in SSA function in a significantly different way from the institutions in the western countries. One Commission official describes suggestively this difference: "[i]nstitutions should work more or less in the same way they work here [in the West], it's really nothing like that, well the powers which are attributed to the

institutions are the same, in the constitution it looks perfectly ok, but in practice it's not really the case" (ECFI013).

Institutions appear to be improperly defined (NGOFI060) and therefore not easy to understand. Several interviewees point to how the functions and roles of major political institutions overlap leading to an incomprehensible institutional dynamic. One NGO employee illustrates this view in an indicative manner: "there is an intermingling of different arms of the government, the executive's within the parliament, and the parliament doesn't really hold the executive accountable, and I think multipartism hasn't helped us because now everybody is going the party line" (NGOFI054).

Furthermore the state institutions as conceived by donors appear even to some of the Commission officials to be close to an imposition. Donor strategies are perceived to advance an idealized and specialized state apparatus which does not exists in practice nor is it likely to come about. The ideal type state bureaucracy, modeled after the western experience and the advancements of western economic and political thought, become a conceptual imposition with little results on the ground. This is suggestively illustrated by the following words of a Commission official: "we are in fact trying to export a model of state with a budget, economy, possibly an independent judiciary – but there are countries where this does not exist" (ECFI012).

Most of the interviewees hold the opinion that the lack of clarity of state institutions leads to them holding little meaning in the eyes of the citizens. As a consequence these institutions tend not to be used according to their official roles or to be circumvented whenever possible. For those who are involved in running these institutions however these institutions acquire specific meanings and are employed to serve specific interests. Along the understandings of the state discussed in the preceding sub-section, institutions can be "unattainable […] for certain people for others it's an array of hope" (NGOFI064). In the views of a few interviewees, this 'hope' translates most often into financial or material resources or into stability or peace. Nevertheless, the unattainable institutions reach out for most of the citizens whenever coercive actions are to be exercised, as one interviewee explains suggestively:

> "[f]or many citizens unfortunately they see mostly the coercive element of the government, they see it in the form of taxes, they see it in the way of security operating bodies, the police, or the coercive arms of the government. There is not the government as such. There is a feeling of a bit of distance. I think citizens generally do not feel connected, they feel alienated from, a degree of alienation, at a general level, which is different saying as Ugandans, because there is a lot of nationalism in that sense, people feel concerned about Uganda as such, but I think they feel that with the government that is largely ripping them off – they are ripping them off [...] important taxes […] informal taxes, or coercing them or preventing them from either freedom of expression, association or any any of these kinds of liberties." (NGOFI053)

In the above quote, the interviewee makes a distinction between national awareness and people's relationship to government. This distinction is of importance as it shows that feelings of national belonging are not necessarily accompanied by allegiance or loyalty towards state institutions[99]. In briefly discussing several

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[99] This view supports Englebert's (2009) conceptualization of 'inclusive nationalism' – nationalism as a claim of belonging to the community of citizens, claim which provides entitlements to resources or social positioning.

specific institutions and the meanings they acquire on the ground, I will start with this particular aspect of national identity.

The 'national question' refers to African citizens identifying, from a national perspective, with the mostly arbitrarily created states. Numerous efforts have been done in nurturing national sentiments which are expected to contribute to structuring more cohesive national societies in spite of tremendous internal diversity. The outcome up to date appears to be not only mixed, but in fact contradicting initial expectations. While in several countries national feelings appear to indeed be a reality, they are seen first to coexist with the pre-existing identities and second to fail to bring about the expected social cohesiveness and trust in state institutions. As several of the interviewees point out, the national question is far not only from being resolved, but from even being properly addressed. An NGO employee presents this issue suggestively: "we don't know each other, there's no space to know each other, and our politicians prefer to talk about national unity as an alibi or an excuse for not dealing with national integration" (NGOFI063).

In more concrete terms while citizens of most SSA states may be proud of their nationality, they are perceived not to feel close to the state institutions. As discussed above these institutions appear to be little understood as in the way they are used they end up being devoid of their formal western-derived meanings. A Commission official illustrates extremely well several of the challenges resulting from the inter-mingling of the functions of different institutions:

"I think that everything is related here, politics, religion, tradition, all is related here, we cannot speak of a, well the state is for sure sovereign, but we cannot say that the state is independent. As the judiciary, in the western tradition, we know that here the judiciary does not have this independence. Even the parliament, I went to a meeting with 5 members of the parliament, but they speak in the name of the head of state, they speak, they thank every time they say something to the head of state, therefore they represent a party rather than representing the people, they represent the party rather than the parliament, they do not have, they do not take distance from the tradition and the leader, here there is a leader and the leader is related to everything be it the religious, the parliament, or the legislative or the judiciary. Everything is related. There is no independence." (ECFI032)

The first striking contradiction in the above quote relates to the assumption of sovereignty on the one hand and lack of independence on the other. As discussed in the above section, this is a clear example of how western concepts are applied even in contexts where they are of little significance. A second contradiction is between the constitutional roles/functions of the institutions and the meaning institutions receive in practice. These two contradictions illustrate how referents are labeled with inappropriate terms, leading to conceptual stretching. Centralization of power, the role of leaders, and fundamental political institutions are going to be succinctly analyzed below.

5.2.1.2.1 Leadership and centralization of state power

Power in SSA contexts is perceived to have multiple facets; nevertheless a preponderant characteristic is its centralization. The role of the leader becomes therefore fundamental to understanding power dynamics. This sub-section will discuss these two aspects – centralization of power and leadership.

As discussed above, the state's capacity to distribute resources is perceived to be one of its core functions. Power and the use of power are entangled into the authoritative access to deciding on the use of resources: "power equals money, money equals

power" (ECFI013). The use of power for distributing resources, however, is not seen relate to a general public good, but rather to private interest. One Commission official explains: "[i]n Africa when the party has power it is not for the good will of the people or for the improvement of the quality of life of the people but sometimes it is for themselves, it's direct interest" (ECFI042).

In most cases power is viewed to be centralized at the level of presidency. This aspect is seen to have significant implications on several aspects including how state institutions function and how development strategies are implemented. Several of the interviewees have pointed to the extreme power of the president. In Chad, "it is only the presidency or the advisor close to the presidency who have the real political but also financial and economic power" (ECFI010). In Rwanda the power of the president reaches authoritatively the communal level. The annual meeting where the Rwandan president convokes all mayors becomes evidence in this regard, as one of the Commission officials observes: "if in that meeting the president tells you at the end of the year 'I want to see that.' Whatever they put in the budget, whatever they've decided, whatever they have agreed to with anyone else, that is what is going to happen" (ECFI039). Similarly in the Ugandan context, the power of the president transcends any kind of technical advice, as one NGO employee explains: "we tell our party secretary what the situation is, which way we should go, but everything is said and decided by the president, and once he calls and says this is what should be done, that is what is done, irrespective of the technical advice which is coming out of the ministries and that is the dilemma" (NGOFI 54).

There are of course exceptions in what concerns the existence of strong presidents. Burundi is such an example where "[t]he president here is on the opposite completely. He is a business man not a president. Vision … no. It would be difficult if you have no head. […] We are like in a ship without captain" (ECFI076).

In spite of such exceptions, presidents of SSA 'states' are seen by interviewees to be above legal arrangements. One Commission official indicates how the president is seen as the "head of everything. […] with the permission of the president everything is possible, even the impossible" (ECFI013). This total arbitrariness in using power offers substantial evidence for a generalized state of exception, where authoritative decisions disregard legal or normative frameworks. The ruling based on authoritative decisions which characterizes SSA 'states' sustains also the theoretically advanced argument that the state in SSA has itself been the outcome of a western authoritative decision (internationally recognized sovereignty and decision on borders leading to the constitution of political entities). The SSA 'states' perpetuate, as such, the ruling modality which generated their existence. In consequence, rather than holding sovereignty on their own, the SSA 'states' become a proxy of the western sovereign which guarantees their existence through unconditional recognition.

The authoritative employment of power to decide over virtually everything what needs to be enacted in practice is perceived to have a strong impact on the entire state system and society at large. With regard to the state administration, the heads of

official institutions become the central figures in the decision-making process. As a Commission official explains: "the higher levels in a ministry have not time to think, and the lower levels are not allowed to think, […], so if the political decision makers don't consider this important and don't take any decisions in this then the lower echelons will not be able to provide any guidance" (ECFI071).

Power dynamics are perceived to be relevant for the manner in which an entire society is structured and governed. Power dynamics become relevant therefore for how the development process becomes owned not only by leaders but by society at large. The gap between institutions and people can be identified as well at the level of leaders, as an NGO employee concisely points out: "I don't know why but there is a cleavage which exists between the leaders and the citizens. It's part of the history because, because of all the crises which succeeded each other in our country, the leaders were preoccupied with divisions, prestige and private interest" (NGOFI045). However referring to how citizens relate to president's decisions, a Commission official notes: "I observe that there is no important contestation form the public" (ECFI032). Beyond doubt the societies of SSA oppose and react state power in a plurality of ways. The incapacity of donors to properly observe and transpose into policies this aspect shows how the donor ability to relate to the SSA communities is conceptually and operationally limited.

Finally, the way state power can be employed is revealed in the way the state interacts with the traditional authorities. The state is seen to possess at times the

necessary capacity to impose itself as relevant in the relationships with traditional authorities. An interviewee suggestively explains:

> "[k]ings have never been government machinery anyway, not in Africa, […] and don't forget that [… the states] have the machinery and they can use it against you. They can destroy you. [… T]he king is a human being, they can weaken you strategically for example by arresting many of your subjects, or subjecting your subjects to such hardship, that if you manage you realize later 'wait a minute, people are going to be killed because of me, this is not what I want.'" (ECFI052)

However, as the recent Ugandan experiences[100] show, the traditional authorities benefit (especially so in Buganda) from popular support to such an extent that it becomes an efficient deterrent on the state's use of force against traditional authorities.

The president is perceived in some contexts as a king or even as a god. In Senegal, as an interviewee explains: "[t]he president, we call him buhr, and buhr is the king" (GOFI034), while in Gabon, "the president is like a God" (ECFI013). This popular understanding of leaders justifies to some extent why the centralization of an alienated state structure is not outright opposed. Such an understanding uncovers as well the difficulty to oppose, complete, or challenge leaders' decisions or opinions which generates a specific type of governance dynamics which comes fundamentally at odds with the western understandings of democracy.

An important aspect about leadership in the SSA state context is its perceived embeddedness in broader varieties of ruling classes. These ruling classes appear to be defined by belonging to specific ethnic groups, families, or casts or by the level of education attained (which in itself can be determined by one of the categories

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[100] The Baganda uprising in 2009 in support of the Buganda King.

mentioned before). Leaders are perceived to be intellectuals. However, because of their education and status, they are at times perceived to be alienated from the local communities they should be representing. This gap suggests two fundamental aspects. First, the views and interests of the leaders and citizens may diverge substantially, in which case the state state's capacity to transform society towards development-related goals would be limited, rendering ownership at the level of society impossible. An NGO employee explains:

> "[t]he thing for most of the intellectuals and the people in government is that they think they know what the people want so they give the people what they think that the people need. Of course in such kind of development they don't succeed. Which is why the people don't feel part of it, because they are made by the government that they don't have what to contribute." (NGOFI035)

Second, that fundamental gap may incapacitate representation both at an individual and institutional level. As a Commission official mentions with regard to the citizens of SSA states: "once the electoral campaign is over they are all forgotten" (ECFI013).

In this context, leaders are perceived to be taking advantage of the ignorance of the citizenry (NGOFI054). In the suggestive words of a government official: "the quality of representation is extremely poor, […] I would say that their [the citizens'] voice is heard but whether it is acted upon it's a different issue. The ruling class here has contempt for the rule of law, so often we can speak up as much as we want but nothing will be done" (GOFI068). Furthermore, leading to a dichotomous perception of the state itself, leaders become agents for either rent taking or corruption: "the layman's view of the state it's either something that we must get one of our

tribesman into so that maybe we can get [… something out] of it, or it is something that is so bad I have nothing to do with it, usually a bunch of thieves" (NGOFI060).

5.2.1.2.2 Elections, political parties, parliaments, and the juridical institutions

Elections are on the development agenda of most western donors, particularly so the EU. Nevertheless, the implementation of elections is perceived to diverge substantially from the expected donor norms, as a few interviewees note, the participation rate in elections tends to be low (ECFI013) and the results are perceived to favor specific social groups (ECFI041). The difference between donor expectations on election practices and local enactments is perceived to be much more substantial as another Commission official illustrates: "but what they mean by elections and what we want them to mean is not the same thing. […] It's a bit like syncretism - double play, happy to use one set of vocab" (ECFI014).

The perceived disfunctionality of the electoral process adds another limitation to the above-discussed impossibility of representation which comes to characterize fundamental political institutions. Relevant is the case of the parliament. A Commission official observs: "[t]he parliamentarians do not really represent their constituencies. […] people would not complain to the parliamentarians 'could you pass the message to the government that the situation has not improved since the last elections.' This, people would not do. […] Because it's useless I guess" (ECFI013).

Political parties are seen to be fundamental in the governance mechanisms of SSA 'states.' They are mentioned by several interviewees as the relevant institutions where relevant decisions are taken. However a few commission officials have pointed out that donors do not have access in fact to the 'world of the parties' and in consequence are detached from the core of the political process in the SSA states (ECFI069). Citizens are also perceived to be detached from the internal dynamics of political parties; as such they are seen to hold a negative view of the contribution that parties make to the development of their countries (NGOFI045).

Government parties are viewed to have access to more resources than opposition parties. One Commission official explains: "opposition parties would have an office like half of this office with, you know, horrible stains on the walls and if you go to the ruling party of course they have places" (ECFI013). The amount of disposable resources impacts directly the potential to win elections: "people don't really believe in these alternatives. If they invest their votes in these opposition parties that they can do something for them in return" (ECFI013). In some contexts the idea of opposition is perceived to be pure mimetism, as in the case of Rwanda: "some people say even the opposition is part of the ruling party, you have a ruling party split up in different pieces to conform to the requirements" (ECFI039).

The official juridical institutions are perceived to also present a significant difference between donor prescriptions and the way they function on-the-ground. This difference is made evident by the high amounts of aid invested in justice sector

reforms and related policies. Policy makers on both sides are evidently aware of this difference (ECFI032).

The political influence exercised on judicial institutions is seen to curtail their desired independence. Such interferences are illustrated by a high number of cases many of which deal with corruption or disrespect for human rights. One Commission official provides a telling example from Burundi:

> "[t]he vice-president of an NGO has been killed last April and no progress with the inquiries. […] And everybody knows that, so when we discuss with them, they don't try to hide, they say they won't be punished for this so they give orders to the judges, as long as they are in power. If things change in the coming months, then they can go to jail, but they live the country before" (ECFI042).

The preponderant view among the interviewees is that "the judiciary is not working and there is no political will for it to start working" (ECFI067). Faced with an unreliable and dysfunctional justice system people are perceived to maintain traditional justice mechanisms or to do justice for themselves on their own. A Commission official indicates how: "[t]he modern justice system exists [… but] people do their own justice themselves in the *cartier*s. […]people don't bother, don't use it, don't trust it, don't trust its efficiency" (ECFI013).

This section so far has discussed various meanings attributed to the state and state institutions in SSA. The rest of the section will underscore some positive aspects and several challenges related to the functioning of the state in SSA.

5.2.1.3 Positive aspects and challenges related to the functioning of the state

There are nevertheless positive perceptions with regard to the functioning of the SSA state according to western development policy requirements. An interviewee points out that a certain level of motivation and ethics has developed among policy-makers, as some institutions deliver and as corruption gets uncovered in some contexts: "[t]hat can only be explained in terms of an ethic or belief that I am doing this job for the country and not for self [...] So there is a degree of what you'd call national commitment to ensuring that some things are done properly" (NGOFI053).

Such national commitment is apparent in some more recognizable form in the case of Rwanda. Rwanda is a particular example of how leaders' belief in the modern state can lead to the development of apparent functional state institutions. The state's perceived ardent fight against corruption shows the existence of partially functional accountability mechanisms, as a Commission official explains: "they are really driving against corruption as well, there was and still is a zero tolerance to corruption which is probably a good thing but also has some negative consequences in terms of very good people were put aside for minor incident" (ECFI039). Furthermore, Rwanda is perceived as a good example for basing formal institutions on traditional practices which leads to increasing the legitimacy of the state while at the same time enabling ownership. A partner government official explains: "then it's almost half of the projects where Ubudehe, and another part was for Gacaca. But we cannot say that we did the Gacaca with EC support, but EC support contributed to the Gacaca and to monitor the Gacaca" (GOFI048).

Most interviewees however take a critical stance on the functionality of the state. Their views confirm not only the substantial distinction between the SSA state dimension and donor imagined institutions, but furthermore underscore the placement of the state in a zone of indistinction characterized by its incapacity to function.

Several views, discussed in some detail above build the case for substantial limitations in how the state meets its western assumed role. The excessive corruption, the pervasive lack of capacity, the related lack of political will which triggers failures of implementation, the perceived lack of vision of leaders and centralization of power and decision-making, the substantive differences in the meanings institutions acquire in the SSA context lead to a perception of complete collapse. An NGO employee expressively explains:

> "I think it goes with the whole collapse of systems in this country and intuitions, you know, everything, when you say everything people don't believe you, but there is a complete collapse […] The system is rotten, there are some politicians who genuinely join and go to represent the people, the values, and these people like see improve the communities but then they get sucked into this whole rotten system […] vis-à-vis what they are mandated to do, but at the end of the day they misbehave they get corrupt." (NGOFI054)

The material factors regarding the limits of the spread of the state accentuate this collapse and is seen to lead to exclusion as explained by one interviewee: "I think if you could go to Northern Kenya where the state is limited really and I think that even state agencies there, that they are there for not doing, they are only there for statistic reasons […] Probably they [citizens] don't see themselves part of Kenya, they see like they are very much excluded, which is true, they are very much

excluded" (INTFI065). Even in such areas which are beyond the reach of the state administration the coercive arms of the government are perceived to make themselves present (though not with enough capacity or the purpose to ensure the security of the region). The prevalent presence and abuse of coercive state institutions convey citizens a particular understanding of the state, as one interviewee notes: "[f]or them the state represents something that is imposed and it is something which is coercive" (NGOFI053). This aspect is seen to impact the way citizens relate to institutions and civil servants, and shifts loyalties to the traditional institutions which are perceived to be more reliable, as another interviewee mentions: "a government officer is seen as an intruder or in most cases a government officer is only seen as somebody who is coming to punish people and people do not confine in government officers they prefer their traditional leaders" (NGOFI060).

These dynamics lead to an overall perception of the state as being neither accountable nor legitimate. As an NGO employee explains, the state remains more a reminiscence of the colonial past than an organic structure appropriated by society: "the state is not legitimate from the point of view that the state does not make part of our own social organization, it is a thing which we received from the colonial period which was imposed over time, in this sense it lacks legitimacy" (NGOFI037).

The lack of accountability and legitimacy plays its negative impact on the way SSA states interact with donors. Development and development aims become aspects which the state is viewed incapable to deal with. A Commission official explains:

"[t]hey don't know how to develop themselves. […] Maybe Senegal does not believe in its own evolution, it is not enough confident in its development way and counts too much on the others for supporting its development" (ECFI032). More substantially, even when the state through its leaders and institutions manifests specific choices or goals these are seen as fundamentally at odds with the basic principles of development. The same Commission official continues: when "[t]he state decides alone on the priorities. We see that it is for the construction of a *corniche*, for a statute, *ode a la liberté Africane*" (ECFI032).

There are two fundamental discrepancies ingrained in these dynamics. First, it shows how donors cannot develop countries without local participation. An NGO employee suggestively mentions: "[t]hat means that if the EU comes to help us, if we do not have the will to develop our country, it is very difficult for the aid to achieve something" (NGOFI045). Second, it shows how the capacity of the partner governments to decide on development issues is limited and at odds with the principles underscoring the particular western understandings of the development process. While, donors are limited by their own norms and international frameworks for engaging in completely determining the decisions of partner governments, the partner states appear to have embarked on disintegration route. A Commission official notes: "[t]o put it simply the system of the government together with the institutions have become weaker and weaker throughout the years and the ordinary citizens have lost faith in politicians, in institutions, etc and attempting to take things

in their own way because they see the democratic process is not followed through"
(ECFI020).

In more extreme cases, the disintegration goes even further: "sometimes the state is
very weak or inexistent" (ECFI033). Even in such contexts, as illustrated best by
Somalia, it is important to keep in mind that donors remain engaged in a number of
ways. The work in contexts of weak or inexistent statehood is not always perceived
to be problematic from a practical perspective as lack of government may enable a
better functioning of institutions. A Commission official explains: "I was in
Madagascar at the moment of change of power, 2002, and it was surprising that we
had two governments, two presidents etc, and we never had such good security and
things did not work as well as when there was no government, the neighborhood
committees worked well" (ECFI033). The crux of the matter is perceived to be the
sovereignty of such SSA states. An NGO employee suggestively elaborates on how
the states cannot possess sovereignty when divorced from citizens:

> "[s]ee when you go back to our constitution [… it] departs right from the people, so
> here we have a juridical intuition we have the constitution which is supreme and we
> have the people who are sovereign, so at the end of the day, when you actually go
> back […] it is the people who are sovereign, not the government, not the
> constitution. And those intuitions that the people identify with and the institutions
> push and see as representatives could actually be argued to be the 'emanation' of the
> sovereignty of these people." (NGOFI054)

The aspect of sovereignty and contest for over the loyalty and legitimacy of citizens
raises the issue of how states relate to contending powers – traditional authorities.
The relation between the existing powers is neither obvious, nor simple. As a
Commission official notes with regard to Somaliland: "the right way to ask the
question is probably not whether the elders are part of the state, but whether the state

is seen as part of the clan system. I don't want to exaggerate, but for example, there is power sharing within the cabinet, between the clans" (ECFI061). The way the traditional and state institutions intermingle and coexist raise significant questions with regard to the ability of western concepts to capture local realities and transpose them in institutional and policy frameworks. Formalized attempts have nevertheless been made to bridge the two systems. In Somaliland the second chamber of the parliament is reserved for the traditional religious elders (ECFI061). In Gabon and Kenya the distribution of official positions and resources take into account the ethnic composition of the country.

Informal relations between these structures, while relevant, are in general escaping the attention of development policy-makers. Family ties bridge in important ways the world of the state and the traditional structures. The transfer of resources from the state to the traditional authorities is another important connection to note. An NGO employee notes: "[t]here are also the customary authorities, the personalities, which the state supports, to whom the state gives money, cars, gas, the state supports them from the public money because they are some personalities, but who have nothing to do with the institutional system of the republic" (NGOFI037). The power of these traditional authorities, while ignored by development policy-makers, plays a significant role in most SSA contexts in the views of most interviewees. The same interviewee explains: "even at the level of the head of state, we can see that there is a religious leader who makes the mediation and fixes the problem. These authorities

religious-customary have a lot of power. They have a big power, they have a big power within the society, they play a certain role of regulators" (NGOFI037).

The SSA state dimension is described suggestively by one Commission official: "this world is personal, this world is by definition not transparent and this world is very subjective; right? This is probably where the real decisions are being taken" (ECFI071). Several of the interviewees hold the views that they do not have access to this world or that they cannot properly understand the dynamics at play. The same Commission official continues: "so how does this work? Since it is personal and not transparent – very difficult, because nothing is written down, it's difficult to study" (ECFI071). In the context of donor—partner state relations, this view shows not only the donors' lack of understanding of the SSA state dimension, but as well the incapacity of the western sovereign to fully control its creation – the SSA state. The space open by the recognition of sovereignty is utilized by those inhabiting it in various ways which are perceived to be at times not only incomprehensible but also inaccessible to western donors. As the above section has shown, the space opened by the recognition of sovereignty enables SSA state to create and maintain logics and an agency of their own. The next section will focus on how the SSA state dimension interacts in the SSA domestic arenas with the international community and the SSA society dimensions.

5.3 The dynamics at play in-between the three dimensions

So far the chapter has described the perceptions that policy-makers and NGO employees hold about the state and state-related institutions. This description has revealed the discrepancy between the western conceptions of statehood underpinning development policies and statehood practices in SSA. This section will look closer into the dynamics which unfold among the SSA state dimension and the international community and SSA society dimensions. The section will further substantiate the distinctiveness of the logics at play within each dimension through focusing on how they interconnect.

5.3.1 The relations between the SSA state and the SSA society dimensions

In the above discussion, it is described how statehood and related institutions acquire various meanings in the SSA environments. That plurality of meanings reveals differentiation in how the state, leaders, and state institutions relate to other actors involved in the governance and development processes. The section will address these connections, focusing first on the perceived relations between the SSA state and traditional authorities and second on the perceived relations between the state and its assumed subjects.

5.3.1.1 Two governance systems – the SSA state and the traditional authorities

As discussed above, the SSA society dimension is decoupled from both international community and SSA state dimensions. Instead of integrating the post-colonial state, parallel traditional governance structures are perceived to remain, in general, relevant. As well, new informal dynamics develop. In the view of most of the *local*

interviewees, these informal and traditional systems will take precedence over the modern state and development models proposed by donors. The state appears to be tolerated due to the (primarily material) benefits it provides. One interviewee explains suggestively how resources are transferred from the state and development projects to the informal systems people create for themselves. These informal systems are perceived to be in line with the local values and norms and as such valid and functional, at the same time, however, they are perceived not to comply with the donor requirements and as such remain in the grey area of the 'informal,' not being understood even by the SSA state - "our national policy does not quite understand the informal sector" (NGOFI063). The interviewee explains:

> "[w]hy do people not adopt this system [European/donor system], because as this model does not take into account the local values, we follow it as long as it works, or as we have the interest, or as it gives something, but once it does not give anything anymore, the parallel model remains functional. For example there are women groups which receive funding for various things, this funding is based on certain criteria, criteria which do not allow for the parallel system to be included, so what is being done, is that the dividend, what comes out from the development project with strict, rigorous criteria, we put it here in a fund which we call *'le tantine,'* the women put there once a day or once a week a certain sum and that sum is given to one person and that person must open something or should make commerce which is parallel from the one where the initial profit comes from. Therefore we take from here what we can take, and we put it into the structure because it functions as we traditionally want it to function." (NGOFI036)

The two systems (state and traditional) are substantively different. However, sharing the same societal space they develop particular links and connections. Given the relevance of both, traditional authorities and state institutions, it becomes close to impossible to understand the governance of SSA societies without understanding both systems and the way they are related. In the light of the above discussions the design of development strategies and policies is based on conceptual tools capturing solely the international community meanings ascertained to institutions and

practices. Such strategies cannot lead but to investing substantial resources in supporting institutions to fulfill functions and roles they might never be able to in their local contexts. Those resources determine a foreclosure of the institutional space leading to a spatial and sometimes even ontological segmentation as illustrated in the above quote through the creation and growth of informal mechanisms of various sorts. This spatial segmentation represents the genesis of a plurality of dimensions. While they overlap from a territorial (physical space) perspective, institutionally and functionally they remain apart, upholding specific values and generating specific norms which add up to intrinsically coherent logics characterizing and governing the respective spaces.

The incompatibility between the traditional and the modern governance systems is noted by virtually all interviewees. This incompatibility is reflected in a strongest sense in the belief on the side of some of the local interviewees that donors cannot access and understand the traditional aspect of their societies, as well as in the belief of some of the Commission officials that this impossibility cannot be transcended. This assumed impossibility to understand illustrates an empistemological limitation. A Commission official explains substantively this incompatibility between the SSA state and traditional systems:

> "[…the two systems are s]eparated. It is very difficult, because due to the fact that we are now in a state of law, and these traditions are not law, and it was kind of case by case and there is a full contradiction in the law. The law has no flexibility, the law is the law, and the traditional system was very flexible, they cannot work together at the same time. And I think that it is not the first time, in Mauritania, in Niger, and Mali, it was the same. The two systems are not compatible even though sometimes both are existing. If the law has to be applied; they cannot have a judgment of the Bashinganthae if there is a judgment of the judge." (ECFI043)

As pointed out above, however, these two systems inhabit the same physical and societal spaces. Therefore, in spite of their distinctiveness and incompatibility they come together in numerous ways. Their co-existence determines specific modes of engagement. As an interviewee underscores: the "question then becomes how does that decision or the authority of the village elders relate to the authority of government" (INTFI065). At times there are perceived synergies between the two systems, other times there is cooperation, yet other times, they conflict. The coming sub-sections will briefly describe these three modalities of engagement.

5.3.1.1.1 Synergies between SSA states and traditional systems

There are several ways in which the state is perceived to connect to the traditional system. The resulting synergies and commonalities vary from structural to functional ones. One such commonality is, *in some contexts*, the ruling class. One interviewee explains in detail how the same ruling families lead, in some contexts, both the state and the traditional systems:

> "basically most of the people who went for western education are people from the privileged families, so when you look into government you will find that it is the same people who are leading the government and they are the people that are from the traditional families, and that is why you would think it is easy to make this traditional system work. But it is not, because it makes it difficult for the traditional to hold the formal also accountable, because it is the same people who are ruling at the traditional and the formal. So you will find out that it is the same family, the same class of people, so you will find that when they are now finished with the formal sector they come back and they take on traditional responsibilities and they still control political power because they have strong influence on the people in their own communities and therefore can say who they can vote for. So it's a circle of the same people in the government in the private sector, in the traditional sector is the same group of people that are just circulating themselves." (NGOFI035).

Such monopoly over power and institutional control is further perceived to preclude access for those coming from different social backgrounds. Equally important, it is perceived that such an institutional arrangement limits substantially the ability of the

traditional system and community mechanisms to hold leaders accountable. This limitation is reinforced by traditional values which, as discussed above, lead to a strong centralization of power: "[e]verybody who is a leader is venerated. We don't contest the decision which he takes and we keep a certain distance" (ECFI032).

The authority of traditional leaders becomes therefore not only important but also necessary for the functioning of political institutions. In consequence the political leaders design strategies to engage with traditional leaders in order to acquire their support. The relevance of traditional leaders does not go unnoticed as the ability of traditional leaders to politically mobilize makes them important actors in the political battle-field, as noted by one interviewee: "the government has finally come to understand that right now the people [who] are citizens with the formal structures are now [...more] in the traditional cultural intuition and if you want to win their will the best entry point are these traditional intuitions. The people follow the traditional leaders and the kings more" (NGOFI054). These leaders are in several contexts materially supported from state resources (NGOFI037).

Additionally important is to note the perceived relationship between statesmen and traditional authorities. Several instances such as the relationship between the Senegalese President A. Wade and the Marbout of Tuba or that between the Buganda King and Baganda state officials illustrate that in various ways state officials are subjects of the traditional institutions as well. As explained by one interviewee, belonging to a specific traditional group (be it religious, ethnic, etc) leads to

compliance with traditional authorities in several SSA contexts: "one thing, you will always be a Buganda but you'll not always be elected. And that's one example, so at one time you will need the king, and if the king gives you a recommendation to the electorate you can't lose an election" (ECFI052).

Juridical institutions represent as well an important area of co-existence and synergy between the formal and traditional structures. The widespread and functional juridical functions of traditional institutions complement the low capacity of formal juridical intuitions (courts, etc). Examples of such institutions are the Gacaca in Rwanda, the Bashinganthae in Burundi, or elders in many communities in SSA. These traditional institutions with juridical functions are perceived to have a substantial history and to be deeply respected by people. Their power is significantly strong at times being required for state officials to respond in front of traditional 'courts' – one such example are the Meru in Kenya: "they have what they call the Njuri-Ncheke elders, Njuri-Ncheke elders they even have their own court, where a minister was asked to apologize" (INTFI065).

It is important to note however that the traditional judicial institutions embody a different approach based on conciliation and healing. The case of the Rwandan genocide is revealing in this regard as a partner government official indicates:

> "Rwanda has its own ways to solve its problems, because it was done by Rwandans to Rwandans […] and I think that it worked because when you see the most important cases are given to the normal procedure but those of those little people who have been manipulated to do something which is wrong are solved by gacaca and people are reintegrated in the society via a system where they talk to civil people, the victims, some who were there during the event and some of their families. And a kind of healing process, not only justice to punish people but also a

> healing process where people talk what happened. I hope and I think that they are not contradictory and they easily work together and they achieve good results in terms of healing the society." (GOFI048)

These traditional institutions are perceived to become at times respected by the state and so do traditional customary laws (ACADFI072). Customary law remains relevant in specific areas as those of land and marriage (ECFI074, FI 075). Recognition of customary laws leads to their codification: "there are remanences of customary traditions which are now recognized by law, that's all codified" (NGOFI075). Furthermore, legal principles steming from these customary processes characterizing the traditional system may become relevant for the state institutions. The traditional judicial institutions appear to remain particularly relevant at the level of communities, while inter-community conflicts may be taken to state courts (NGOFI075).

The interplay between the state and the traditional system can be best exemplified by the interaction between the government and areas which are not fully under the control of the state. One specific example is Northern Kenya where for decades the government is perceived to have had a coercive approach to relating to the local structures of authority. That approach has transformed recently into a form of syncretism based on recognition: "[b]ut recently they started realizing that those people have evolved their own systems they have their laws, they have their own systems and somehow there's kind of respect, a government official is sent there, there is negotiation there is sitting together and dialoging so they are seen as partly accepted" (NGOFI060).

The interplay between formal state institutions and traditional ones unfolds as well in a plurality of fashions. One telling example is local authorities and traditional village councils which in several countries share overlapping attributions. One interviewee mentions South Africa as an example of successful integration and transformation of the local traditional structures:

> "for example in Kenya there is a parallel structure in place, you will have the local government authority to have a mandate to implement ABCD but then you still have the kind of councils of elders and chiefs of villages who still have a lot of leverage into the actual implementation of this. And maybe one way of looking, and I think that South Africa [... can be seen as a] model to an extent [as] the more traditional councils have a role to play in the decision making processes at local economic development agenda, and things like that, so they are finally part of the consultative structures and processes" (ECFI069).

An even more integrated approach towards bringing together the formal and traditional institutions is observed in Somaliland. There, as mentioned above, the second chamber of the parliament is formed of high ranking traditional religious leaders (ECFI071). The interconnection of formal and traditional elements is seen to be also used for furthering national integration, the Rwandan case being a good such example. The attempt to build on traditional cultural practices has been prominent in the interviews with both partner government officials and NGO employees. Even Commission officials note this aspect: "this is a very strong attempt to make Rwandans be proud of Rwanda, they have their own culture, they are reinventing old things and repackaging it" (ECFI039).

5.3.1.1.2 Cooperation between SSA states and traditional systems

In addition to the synergetic instances where the boundaries of formal and traditional institutions blend, there are instances where these stay distinct, however are

perceived to cooperate. While cooperation represents a milder form of engagement, it is nevertheless based on a de facto recognition of the traditional authorities.

Traditional leaders, as discussed above, are seen to be instrumentalized in a variety of forms. One specific modality of engagement is represented by the utility of traditional leaders in ensuring a meaningful/functional connection with local communities. Traditional leaders are used for communicating to the people (INTFI065).

The role of traditional leaders widens as their community-level authority is perceived to be relevant for ensuring legitimacy for both government and donor interventions. An interviewee provides an illustrative example of how elders are used for promoting school attendance: "they are using those elders now, instead of educating the children about why they need to go to school, they start educate the elders about why it is important for these children to go to school" (INTFI065).

A further dimension of the cooperation between formal and informal institutions is transfer of information. The co-existence of the two sets of institutions as well as the community-embedded nature of traditional authorities endows the traditional leaders with significant information. Therefore, in the view of one interviewee "some kind of informal arrangement whereby the formal institution of government can get information from the informal institutions, village officials" (INTFI065) crystallizes over time.

Traditional authorities maintain sometimes international engagements. In such contexts the relationship with the government becomes of high importance as access to the international sphere is geared primarily through formal state institutions. A few interviewees refer to the Mourides' international connections and the role the state plays in securing their interests. A Commission official notes: "[b]ut the Mourides […] they care about the price of peanuts, and peanut oil and as long as you let them import duty free what they want and what they need they will be happy" (ECFI041). Equally relevant an NGO employee explains: "[t]he Marabou is an institution within an institution. He has an international presence, he travels to the US and the only institution which can allow it to be in connection with the world is the state" (NGOFI036).

The capacity of the formal and informal institutions to cooperate is perceived to be at times significantly limited by material factors such as the capacity of government to provide security for extensive areas of a country's territory. In such contexts the traditional authorities, *de facto*, replace the state functions and authority. The following extensive quote suggestively describes how the relevance of the traditional authorities competes in fact with that of the state:

> "[f]or example recently there was a government declaration for people in Northern Kenya to return their arms, […] amnesty for people, everyone had to return their arms, the media went there to interview people. Although there is nobody in the traditional authority who said they should not return arms, everyone who was interviewed were saying one thing: `We can only return our arms if government comes and puts up security for us, and if government is willing to take care of our animals.` Because they secure themselves with the guns because they have been left at the mercy of other people who come and rape them and kill them. So in a place like that one if you have a traditional leader who says 'don't disarm,' everyone will

listen to him. They have government representation there, but the government representation have not power whatsoever, […] because the government has never been seen to be working in that area. Where the government is working people will listen to government leaders, but where it is not working, sorry. So even now, if we weaken the government capacity to work, we will just see the entire country not listening to the government and that's when you begin to realize how states fail. […] We have not seen [contradictions] yet, but it will just be a matter of time, because the more the government fails in meeting his obligations, the more the traditional leaders are being created, and the more government fails to do certain things, the more you see people coming up, and sooner or later you begin finding people actually contradicting government directly, when that day comes, we will have known that the country is gone. So far even where there are traditional leaders they don't go and contradict government, they don't do that. There's still some understanding that we have an overall government. What is simply these people do, is to go ahead and just do what they think is right for their people […] they do what they have to do to survive. It's all a survival tactic" (NGOFI060).

The various modes of engagement between the state and traditional authorities change over time. A suggestive illustration can be the relationship between the Ugandan Government and the King of Buganda. The Government has promised the restoration of kingdoms and handing back properties and wealth (ECFI052) in return for electoral support. Once the kingdoms have been reinstated, the Government has not followed through with handing over properties and assets as promised. This leads in the current period to raising tensions. Sporadic incidents led to violent riots in 2009 and to the Government shutting down the King's radio station in 2010.

Conflicting situations may be understood, as an NGO employee explains, as specific communication strategies: "when you hear that they [traditional leaders] rebel against the government often it's about a hybrid kind of political language, they try to communicate, you know why because they are like the symbol of a community and if you touch them as a politician you are messing up" (INTFI065). However, on a more attentive look, they uncover a deeper incompatibility which will be explored in the next sub-section.

5.3.1.1.3 Conflict between the state and the traditional system

Just as cooperation is perceived to take multiple forms, so are the conflicting situations between the state and the traditional authorities. Traditional leaders are viewed as tolerated by the state due to the lack of interest in fulfilling the functions which the traditional system assumes (ECFI067). Equally relevant, however, this attitude may cover a profound uneasiness with the power that the traditional leaders acquire. An NGO employee explains: "I think that the power of the traditional bothers the state power, they tolerate the traditional power in certain respects but it is not something which they like. […] The state would like to get read of these powers but for the moment is not possible because these people are real" (NGOFI037).

The impact of the traditional authorities on election results is one of the main causes of conflict. As discussed above, the Ugandan case is telling in this regard. The strong impact of the traditional authorities on elections triggers government intervention. As another NGO employee notes: "when the Kabaka, the king, whether directly or indirectly shows that he is supporting the other side, the people goes the other side, [… therefore] the government has discovered that he needed to come in and regulate the powers of the kingdoms" (NGOFI058). The result of the coercive intervention of government leads however to mounting frustration on the side of the traditional authorities which further impacts the expected election support: "[t]he government is finding them very difficult to manage. The government finds that it cannot have the support of the kingdoms and the support of their people" (NGOFI058). In extreme cases it leads to open violent conflict as the Ugandan revolt of 2009 proves. Such

events reveal the substantive authority that traditional structures may acquire, as an interviewee explains: "[a]nd the king in his humanness, he's not going to stop his subjects, because his subjects, said, for them they would die, they were ready to die, that's crazy, but they were ready to die, they said they will not part, you are the king" (ECFI052).

The most extreme engagement is the trial of governments to abolish traditional authorities. Several such examples can be identified, among which Tanzania, Uganda, and Burundi. The Burundian case is among the most recent and refers to the Bashingantahe which in the view of one interviewee "the government tries to fight with all its last energy. […] Officially they say that in Burundi the Bashingantahe do not exist" (NGOFI045). This process is in more suggestive terms described by an NGO employee:

> "there is a law where the intuition of Bashingantahe is dismantled. The national institution of Bashingantahe asked for the law to be reanalyzed […] But at the level of the grassroots I think they have more trust in the intuition of the Bashingantahe than in the local elected. What we see is that the people continue to go to the Bashingantahe for judgments, but the local elected officials do not recognize these Bashingantahe. And the judgments of the Bashingantahe are not considered executable. […] The national power […] gives power to their locally elected officials in order to ensure that they would direct the electorate towards supporting the power." (GOFI047)

Ethnic affiliation plays its share in generating conflict. Kenya serves as a good example in this regard. Several interviewees have noted how political support is granted based on ethnic affiliation rather than political performance: "[y]ou will find that these ministers are not being supported because they are right; they are supported because they are ethnically related" (NGOFI060). Ethnic affiliation is perceived to influence official affairs to such an extent that it incapacitates

institutional activity: "it gets to a point whereby now the citizens lose out on what is the protection of the public good, they end out protecting the corrupt leader: 'oh the guy is, he is from our community, he is our leader'" (INTFI065).

5.3.2 The relationship between people and SSA states

The above section focused on the perceived relationships between the state and traditional authorities. The unfolding complex engagements show that the functioning of agency within each of the two dimensions is guided by distinct institutional structures and related logics. A second component of the SSA society dimension is represented by the 'people'. As illustrated above, people belong to the traditional realm sometimes being perceived as belonging to their traditional leaders. It is therefore of relevance to describe the way people relate to the state as perceived by the interviewees. This relationship follows similar patterns as the one above – there are several positive aspects, nevertheless the vast majority of perceptions are that people are fundamentally disconnected from the state and state institutions.

In spite of the generalized perception that the state fails to deliver on people's expectations, there are opinions which depict an improving situation. A major role is played by the improved access to public information (NGOFI064). A few of the interviewees have noted that people are 'deferential' to the state and that they increasingly follow on their duties such as paying taxes. One specific example is Rwanda where the modalities of engaging the grassroots in the governance process are seen to convey a higher level of trust in state institutions:

"I think most average Rwandans buy into that, you find vision 2020 written in the back of a minibus or vision 2020 hats. Abstraction of a better world, if we all work hard we will all have a better world, I think people really buy into that and they have like community work here. The last Saturday of every month, and you come together and you have to clean the road and to level the road, and at the end of that people come together and talk about issues." (ECFI039)

The prevailing view is, however, that people are substantively disconnected from the state. As an NGO employee explains: "[t]here is a clear detachment between them and the state. The state is something up there only for the elites, […] and they continue living largely in poverty" (NGOFI054). The connection to the state is perceived to take place through private networks (ECFI030) while a proper understanding of the state perceived to be missing (NGOFI063). This disconnect leads to a strong feeling of helplessness, disillusionment, and alienation: "[a]ctually it looks helpless, the whole arrangement makes the citizen look helpless, their voices are never heard" (NGOFI060). Even those who hold the opinion that people's voice may be heard are skeptical with regard to the impact it may trigger: "their voice is heard but whether it is acting upon it's a different issue. The ruling class here has contempt for the rule of law, so often we can speak up as much as we want but nothing will be done" (GOFI068). In addition, the failure to deliver public services is seen to lead to further loss of hope: "the ordinary people have lost hope in any institution because it does not deliver anything to them at the end of the day" (NGOFI054).

The vast majority of the interviewees believe that people have no confidence in the way the state works. People are in the view of one interviewee "[v]ery skeptical, very low opinion that the state is working for them, […] in many places actually the

state is not even visible, there is very little confidence here" (NGOFI066). This generalized dissatisfaction combined with the experience of state coerciveness leads people to be "afraid to demand from government because they think that […] automatically they will be ostracized, imprisoned" (NGOFI055). In consequence the interviewees perceive that state institutions "do not mean much, no, […] they do not mean much" (GOFI068) besides redistributing resources. The same interviewee explains: "[t]hey mean for as long as my tribesman is there, that institutions is perceived as ours. […] generally the supposition is that it is our ministry and because generally tends to go there to get favors because one of our own is there (GOFI068).

There are however instances where people are critical, organize themselves, and protest. Media has been perceived as developing quickly in the recent period and contributing positively to enabling critical voices to be heard at large in society: "newspapers that start to be more critical, newspapers that start to hold government to account" (ECFI071). One major impediment to enabling critical voices among the people is perceived to be poverty – lack of basic food limits the demands for accountable leadership (NGOFI058).

This section has analyzed the unfolding interconnections between the SSA state and SSA society dimensions. In more specific terms the section has focused on relations between the state and traditional authorities and that between the state and people. The section has brought more evidence to support the distinctiveness of these

dimensions, some of the dynamics at play within each of them, and some of the ways in which they inter-relate.

5.3.3 The relations between the international community and the SSA state dimensions

The above section has portrayed the relations between the SSA state and SSA society dimensions, revealing the fundamental gaps and complex inter-relations at play. The following two sections will add to these dynamics by introducing the international community dimension and the dynamics it generates. The discrepancies ensuing in the interactions among donors and both the SSA sate and the SSA society dimensions will be further underscored.

The constitution and existence of SSA states is intrinsically related to the former colonial powers and current western donors. That umbilical relationship brings together donors and SSA states in multiple ways – normatively, institutionally, financially, politically, economically, etc. The practical experience of statehood in SSA, however, produces a rupture which development policies appear not to be able to perceive and adequately tackle. This dynamic is captured suggestively in the words of a Commission official:

> "[t]he countries have generally taken over the former colonial administrations and then graft the don to that constitutions and institutions generally copied from the north: panoply of ministries of this and that, parliament etc, copy of the grafting on their societies over many decades […] sometimes they have really adopted them like in Botswana, maybe that is not true, they have accepted them as their own, fits perfectly […] in other countries it is still more of a graft which hasn't made it to the body *politique* [… remaining] but a recognition that there is a necessity to connect to the outside world." (ECFI005)

The graft the Commission official refers to is a perfect illustration of the rupture between the western former colonial powers and current donors and SSA states. It shows the fundamental distinction between the western concepts and understandings of statehood and related institutions and their hybridized, mutated, or transformed life acquired in the SSA context. In spite of this distinction the donors (and international community more broadly) remain fundamentally relevant as their international recognition of SSA states and resources opens up the very space where this hybridized governance institutions are located (the SSA state), enabling their perpetuation. It is important therefore to further uncover the relation between the main drivers of the development process in SSA – the SSA state and the western donors.

That relationship cannot be easy, given the fundamental distinction pointed to above, as an interviewee explains:

> "I actually think that the relationship is problematic in many ways in general, problematic in both ways. I see a donor community which is not able to coordinate its actions and its stand points and especially when things get really serious often we are talking of lack of accountability of some kind, lack of political will to implement that which is being funded and so on. And we see all other kinds of interests than exactly the development objectives […] On the other hand you also have the recipient side, and I think they take advantage of it, they play out the donors against each other and it's the fact when you look around in many countries that the rate of corruption is growing. Now I'm only talking corruption, but somehow that is a kind of entry point to discuss everything else." (NGOFI074)

In more specific terms, the relationship between donors and partner governments is perceived to be influenced by many factors. Several of these factors were discussed in presenting the EDF-related negotiations. Some of these are: aid levels, donor expertise, political relations, institutional capacity on both sides, political will, and others.

The priorities of donors and partner governments are perceived to converge in some regards and diverge in others. Donor priorities are perceived, mainly by the NGO interviewees, to be driving the agenda: "the whole arrangement is that the requirements of the donors is what actually drives the fashioning and the development and the design of the given interventions within the country" (NGOFI060). The Commission officials and the partner government officials, while recognizing that donors' agenda matters, they refer to the aid effectiveness and ownership as desideratum – the moment when the partner government decides fully on the aspects they invite donors to support. The issue of ownership which comes at the core of the donor—partner state relations exemplifies well the above mentioned divergence between donors and partner states: "donors continue to feel that they are being let down by government. […] From a government point of view they wouldn't really say they are letting down the donors, they would say they are doing what we've agree in Paris and Accra" (INTFI070). This discrepancy translates at an institutional level in a more general and profound manner, as a Commission official indicates:

> "but what they mean by elections and what we want them to mean is not the same thing […] It's a bit like syncretism - double play, happy to use one set of vocab. But underground there are different values, the whole international community tends to like to hear the words they like to hear […] double speak, […] wonderful dialogues on human rights form people who in reality are completely failing to observe them." (ECFI005)

These substantive discrepancies, however, do not appear visible at the level of specialized language-in-use. The development language appears to be a *lingua*

franca which enables the entire development architecture to function in spite of the problems encountered on the ground. As pointed out by a Commission official:

> "people are so used to talk the language of development because the donor community is so enormous. There are as many vested interested in the donor community as there are in governments and sort of talking this language it becomes as a reflex. Penetrating this language and trying to get to a real commitment to change? I don't know, I sort of think it is an impossible question to answer." (ECFI027)

The perceived superficiality of the conversation based on a wooden development vocabulary uncovers not only the potentiality of different objectives but a fundamental lack of trust which becomes part of the donor—recipient government relations. This lack of trust has been discussed in the previous chapter as relating to fake reporting, lack of political will to follow up on agreements, and perceived lying. A Commission official suggestively explains this deep lack of trust between donors and partner governments:

> "[y]ou should speak Kirundi otherwise you don't understand anything. They never tell the truth, because they lie all the time. It is the thing in Rwanda, the same. For example I speak a bit Kirundi, and they dislike that. They don't like a foreigner knowing what they think. They always try to please and so they will try to tell you what they think you expect from them. […] What to speak about plans, they don't care. If there are plans here in the country is because it's an import by the UN or the WB. Because they need money for their budget so WB is here you can get the budget support provided that you implement this, this, this and you make calls for investment, calls for public procurement and so on. They are adopted of course because they are obliged, to get the money, it's not because they are convinced." (ECFI042)

Naturally, this lack of trust and the related discrepancies indicate an unsatisfactory quality of the dialogue between donors and partner governments: "you might have a perfectly good structure but if you go to a joint coordination group meetings with ambassadors and heads of cooperation and government sends one permanent secretary, a few directors and lower ranking officers then you are not having any dialogue, then it's just a meeting and the same trickles down" (INTFI070).

There are converging interests between the donors and state elites which transcend the development agenda, but which nevertheless are perceived to have a substantive impact on the development of SSA countries. There is a perceived convergence between the economic interests of the donors (i.e.: companies coming from donor countries) and elites of the SSA states. These converging interests may however undermine the development of partner countries as expressed by an NGO employee:

> "the representatives of the donor community whose countries have companies with interest here were mobilizing themselves to try argue for maintaining the status quo when it is coming to the arrangements around the mining sector, and they went up to the parliament and met with some officials trying to safeguard the interests of their companies at the expense of the general community" (NGOFI074).

Economic and political interests are perceived to impact substantively the normative coherence and verticality of donor states. Breaches of the upheld western norms of rule of law and human rights are ignored in such contexts where specific donor interests are at play, as the same interviewee continues: "[s]ome countries in Central Africa, Rwanda, Burundi, or even DRC, there have been a lot of arguments that there has been a lot of lack of rule of law, in human rights and so forth, but because some players within the donor communities have some interests in the region, they will close their eyes" (NGOFI074).

The dimensions of the international community and partner states revealed through the above discussion as well as the attempt of donors to implement development policies through a series of decisions on situations of exception reveal the isolation of the donors from the dimension of the state. Donors become marginalized through various strategies, among which, improper translations (e.g.: Burundi) or overly developed cooperation institutional frameworks (e.g.: Tanzania).

Recalling the discussion on the synergies between the state and the traditional systems from the preceding section, it is important to note its relevance in what concerns donor activity. One interviewee mindfully warns:

> "[t]he traditional, social relations, which are not necessarily legally binding, have a very strong overtone onto everything there is. Ethnic balance influences government relations and government formation. The donors should not be naïve as to their relation to the government, because most of the time they will be dealing with an ethnic enclave and not necessarily with the government of a people." (NGOFI060)

Most of the NGO employees interviewed hold the opinion that from the people's perspective the partner governments appear more accountable to donors than to citizens. However donors are perceived to fail in exercising their authority over partner governments in soliciting accountability: "we have a civil society, we have the media making waves about how funds are really spent, and still the donors are going ahead and give more money to the government. So I think they don't have the hold on keeping donors accountable to what they have promised in terms of their priorities" (NGOFI054). The government – donor relations are perceived to lack transparency and as such donor support appears to carry a substantive negative impact: "[i]n countries that systems haven't evolved as to become equal to everyone, every time they support a government they should be very aware they are either abetting justice or they are actually influencing a way to injustice" (NGOFI060).

This section has provided a brief description of the interviewees' perceptions of the relations and interconnections between the international community and the state dimensions. In discussing the dynamics at play it emphasized the manner in which

the two dimensions are distinct and how actors functioning within one dimension do not have access to the other. The next section will focus on the relations between the international community and the SSA society dimensions.

5.3.4 The relations between the international community and the SSA society dimensions

As perceived by the interviewees, the relationship between the EU (and donors more broadly) and the SSA societies appears preponderantly superficial or close to inexistent. The recognition of the state as the sole main interlocutor and the implicit state-centeredness of development policies lead to ignoring traditional structures and people more generally (NGOFI058).

Even work with civil society on some sectors proves to be inhibited by the technical language which is not all the time accessible and by the capacity of civil society organizations to assist and engage in such technical discussions. A Commission official presents a suggestive example dealing with security sector reform:

> "I was there trying to explain to the civil society and to the representatives of the civil society the security sector reform that we are intending to do, asking them their opinion, and frankly speaking it was totally impossible to get input from them because they are not present. We were talking during hours and hours and hours and you get nothing, nothing, nothing at all, that is the reality we have to work with, and it is very complicated." (ECFI016)

The lack of valuable input from civil society organizations in development-related conversations is perceived to be more general, as another Commission official explains: "[t]he non-state actors, to be very frank the impact is minimal. We are meeting with them at the end of the programming exercise and in these meetings

they never, never propose something concrete, useful. […] the value added is very bad very bad" (ECFI030).

The lack of contact or connection between the donors and the traditional authorities is noted by almost all the interviewees. Several aspects are of relevance: first, the creation of alternative parallel development models (NGOFI036), second, the perceived incapacity of the donors to understand the traditional dynamics (ECFI030) and third, the operational incapacity of some donors (including the EU) to disburse aid to non-registered entities. These aspects are perceived to keep the two dimensions – of the international community/donors and of the society – distinct. It is important to note that there are isolated cases where donors work with traditional authorities as for example in Northern Uganda donors such as DIFID work together with the traditional leaders (NGOFI054). The EU engagement in Eastern Chad has been constructed in a more bottom-up fashion (ECFI010). Finally western-funded NGOs sometimes engage more directly with the elders providing various forms of support (NGOFI063).

The idea that donors should be engaging with traditional structures is not seen to be easily acceptable to SSA partner governments. The support of parallel sources of authority is perceived as a threat, as an interviewee describes "where do the donors fit in, because the donors never reach this structure, there is almost no linkage, and I don't think the government would want the donors to reach out to those structures,

because then it would be weakening the government itself" (NGOFI060). Equally important is the reaction of a partner government official:

> "I would be very prudent with the donors approaching them. Because the state is sovereign. The state is the first interlocutor. It's good to have the civil society, but the public power should be left to the state. If parallel public powers are created or help such people, I think it would create internal problems. Because if they do that, the state would react. It is true that they deserve attention but there is a limit." (GOFI034)

The gap between donors and the traditional system can be identified as well at the level of development projects. While several of the goals of development are perceived as intrinsically good and appreciated, the intervention and prioritization modalities lift all these efforts above the local realities (NGOFI037). This gap between the aims of development and local realities is perceived by many of the interviewees as leading to failure, at times even to underdevelopment, as one NGO employee notes:

> "I have the impression that all the donors have remained in a schema above the realities, they see everything from a macro perspective, there are things which take place underneath, there are everyday realities which the development model does not take into consideration and therefore it does not have an impact. They make efforts, but there is no real impact, on the contrary we have the impression that it brings more underdevelopment. This is because they do not take all the dimensions in consideration." (NGOFI037)

This approach is seen to annihilate the relevance and political existence of people. It incapacitates action and deepens alienation. People's "voices are down there, they are weak, they are not being heard and as a result you see a lot apathy among the citizens, and helplessness, and we don't have a solution to these things, and the donors actually remain up there to fund the government to eat their priorities" (NGOFI054). This is not to say that development efforts have no impact at a social level: "many taboos have been broken down; before, men and women did not take part in common activities and men did not talk in the presence of women (ECFI077).

While development efforts do have an impact, it does not add up to the expected aims and objectives.

The disconnection between people and development projects or donors can be traced back to the above discussed gap between people and the SSA state. The creation of the state in such a way as to imitate western political institutions, without a genuine connection to the local values and governance practices has decoupled people from the donor-supported state institutions. However it is exactly these state institutions which in the eyes of the donors are expected to represent people and drive the development process in their societies. There is, therefore, a structural inconsistency. Institutions designed according to external models, which do not take into account the internal dynamics are expected to have an impact exactly on the very social dynamics they are disconnected from. While the state institutions do, over time, get embedded in the local social environment, given their disconnection from the people, the meanings they acquire and their lack of legitimacy incapacitate them to perform their constitutionally (western) enshrined functions.

In this context, people are perceived to organize themselves outside the state in order to ensure what is needed for their lives. One illustrative example is Northern Kenya where "people have managed to bring the society together outside the state" (NGOFI066). In more specific terms people in Northern Kenya "have actually managed to come up with a local traditional sector that borrows from clan structures, they have set a mechanism for these people of the region [...] and they have their

own way of ensuring security is maintained, they have their own way ensuring that

the country resources are shared among the community (NGOFI066). These very

mechanisms represent the genuine structuration of the social space which is ignored

by development policies, however, without which it may be impossible to build

sustainable governance practices, the same interviewee explains suggestively:

> "[t]hose are the mechanisms that are working in many parts of Africa and that's
> why if you want to build a successful state you need to build from what is already
> working on the ground even where the state does not exist. And you can find the
> exactly the very same form even in urban area where people organize themselves to
> ensure security. [...] Locally they are accepted, of course they have a lot of
> weaknesses when you come from the [...] western perspectives of, you know these
> institutions meet the standards of fairness and certain notions of justice that I think
> form a western point of view you may have, they may not fit them, but they are
> working in a difficult context, they get accepted locally maybe not as the most ideal
> but what works for the people." (NGOFI066)

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the perceptions of policy-makers and NGO employees

reveal the existence of the three dimensions and their inter-connections. In providing

a description of the dynamics at play among these dimensions, the chapter has shown

that distinct logics of action characterize the dimensions of international community,

SSA state, and SSA society. Inhabiting the same physical and social space leads

however to various modalities of engagement – synergies, cooperation, or conflict –

and generates distinct meanings for statehood- and development- related norms,

practices, and institutions.

Based on the perceptions of those working at the core of development interactions,

the chapter establishes the distinctiveness of the three dimensions and illustrates how

the EDF and other western-driven development policies are challenged in

understanding SSA social dynamics and producing development. The SSA state is

revealed as an artificial construct suspended in a space of indistinction outside both international and customary legal frameworks. While the state retains some of the western-inspired roles, its functioning is driven primarily by localized meanings attributed to state institutions and related practices. The state becomes embedded in a local socio-cultural environment which hosts other governance mechanisms of its own. As such, a mainly destructive dynamic unfolds between a plurality of contenders to authority over the loyalty of subjects, social practices, and resources. The perceived prevalence of traditional authorities is suggestively described by one interviewee: "[w]ithin the cultural context – traditionally in West Africa government had always laid with the traditional institutions, the chiefs etc, the level of government that really has more respect from the people because they are directly from the people" (NGOFI035).

Western development policies in SSA rest therefore on incomplete and many times wrong understandings and conceptualizations of local norms, processes, and institutions. This aspect coupled with the exceptionality of the creation and functioning of SSA states contributes to widespread challenges and many times failure at an operational level as discussed in Chapter four.

Chapter 6 Western ethnocentrism at play: discrepancies and lack of understanding in the development encounter

6.1 Introduction

The thesis has so far shown first, that the EDF and broader EU development policies are conceptually derived from western statehood experiences. Second, that the existence of state-like entities in SSA leads to the creation of three dimensions: international community, SSA state and SSA society. And third, that the dynamics among the three dimensions, show that each of them produce distinct meanings for the development- and statehood-related processes and institutions. This chapter completes the argument of the thesis by focusing on discrepancies derived from the interviewees` experiences in order to show how the perceived lack of understanding on the side of western policy-makers is accentuated by the ethnocentric conceptual frames employed.

6.2 Discrepancies between western concepts and SSA practices

The discussion of the CSP negotiations and implementation, in chapter four, and of the various meanings the state- and development-related institutions and practices acquire in SSA, in chapter five, reveal significant discrepancies between the western conceptual frameworks underpinning the EDF and SSA on-the-ground experiences. This section will further analyze the identified discrepancies. Based on the issues which rest at their core, one can distinguish development- and statehood-related discrepancies. These discrepancies represent diverging meanings colliding in the development practices as constituted by the perceptions and beliefs of EDF policy-

makers and NGO employees. Lastly, these discrepancies show how western EDF policy-makers and western development policies fail to understand and take into account the meanings generated by the appropriation of SSA statehood and development experiences (i.e.: the impact and transformation that statehood and development brings about).

6.2.1 Development-related discrepancies

It must be emphasized that development aspects are part of broader political dynamics and in consequence the discrepancies which are going to be analyzed partially reveal these broader dynamics. The fundamental difference between western experience of statehood and development and SSA ones is by no means something new, especially so for the scholars and policy-makers working on the region. The debates underpinning development theory and development economics make this point clearly. While this discrepancy between western models and SSA realities is acknowledged and debated, the concepts which frame the very debates tend to be based on universal conceptualizations of social relations. As one Commission official observes regarding Chad:

> "[w]e are in a medieval reality, […] even if in all our analysis we say there are the puzzles of ethnic groups, of factionalism, because maybe more than ethnic group you have to talk about factionalism, or armed groups or what so ever, where there is no government but there is only a presidency basically with different faction armed groups." (ECFI010)

This quote shows how development theory, development policy and IR theory more broadly appear not to be properly equipped to deal with environments which do not fit the cannons of western imageries about statehood and related societal dynamics. The "medieval reality" that the Commission official describes is approached through concepts such as 'government' and 'presidency' even if such concepts are perceived

not to reveal much about the phenomena at play. Such an approach is seen to preponderantly lead to failure, if one considers the sustainability of the statebuilding and development engagements in SSA. The same Commission official explains:

> "whereas we are in a medieval area so there is really a historical gap in my opinion that is one of the key issues basically, why, apart from transport and maybe water supply all of the rest of our cooperation has no any impact. Apart from infrastructure where we've improved from let's say 100 km now we have more than 600 km and the water supply that was assessed because 35 percent of water supply is ensured by our project a very basic program of manual water pumps. Apart from that there is no any concrete result. […]The problem is the end results, the results. Take the cooperation, you can say that you have results in cooperation that is true you can say you have results in water supply, you cannot say you have any results, sustainable results, in any way. Sometimes you see some openings, sometimes you see some steps forward, but basically the oil revenues, basically, apart from these two sectors, have been burned out. All our capacity our governance projects are failed, are doomed to fail, or at least we have to see the results, maybe it's too early for the 10th EDF." (ECFI010)

The policy makers' hesitation in using western concepts to depict SSA institutions and practices implies that local dynamics function differently than assumed. While the Commission official quoted above notes that there is no impact, one has to underscore (drawing on Foucault (1979) and Ferguson (1997[1990])) that potentially there is no impact in the way impact has been prescribed by the adopted policies and programs. However, the amounts of resources backing the EU's development policies produce an impact, even if not the expected one. As development is about social transformation, at the most basic level about how people make certain choices, policy-makers observe that SSA societies do transform, even if this transformation is understood or perceived to be shallow or instrumental. The ways in which development relations are framed make these transformations real in spite of inadequate concerns for understanding the outcomes. One Commission official reflects on Burundi:

"[t]his society in Burundi is much more converted to the occidental system than in Niger or Mali. In Niger or Mali they are more Africans. I think that the type of colonization. Look on the street, people dress like us. If you go to Bamako it's not like that at all. It's much more Europeanized, Occidentalized. […] It is superficial. Because it's only a look. And in a sense they are animists even Christians. The violence which is part of the feature of Burundi, because killing the enemy is normal, […] so in fact there is a very superficial adaptation with our rules, because it's really our rules, our behavior, but in depth they are still like long time ago and I believe that all our concepts it's really foreign for them. Are foreign concepts totally. They use them because if they are not following that they will lose everything and they know that but they don't want to leave the money, they don't want doing that." (ECFI043)

This discrepancy portrayed by the Commission official represents exactly the ES gap discussed in the theoretical section. The shallow or instrumental adoption of concepts, institutions, and practices creates a fundamental rift between the SSA societies and their modality to connect and communicate with the international community, i.e. the state. The 'foreign concepts' that the official refers to reveal several important dynamics: first, a skewed or sometimes simulated appropriation i.e.: the appropriated western model becomes in the new SSA cultural context something different. Second, the instrumentalization of the state as a relational practice employed for communication purposes and for access to resources. Third, an indirect western disregard for the cultural content of SSA societies – what is observed is the simulation and reasons for simulating, no credit being given to the content of SSA societies. And fourth, a direct disregard of the potentiality that the appropriated western elements or models receive particular meanings in their new cultural locality.

Commission policy-makers perceive in the activity of their institution this disregard for local cultures and practices, which ranges from ignorance to outright opposition. One Commission official observes: "CAR Delegation noted that witchcraft is

penalized. The EC believes that it should be erased from the penal code. There is a basic misunderstanding. The traditional is the standard approach to governance issues. What is lacking is to take into account sociological and anthropological expertise." (ECFI011) What is implied is that the understanding of e.g. governance takes place through 'traditional' lenses. While these are not properly taken into account, the donors push forward specific understandings leading to the construction of a parallel reality which comes in competition with the local society instead of supporting its development. The outcome, rather than being qualified as development is seen, as the same official suggestively explains, as a 'pure illusion of development.' Western universal values are perceived enter in a competition with local values that they cannot win: "[t]he approach is very much donor driven and country driven. In weak countries we drive the process. It is too pretentions from the Community to want to change the culture of the country. It is pure illusion of development assistance to change the culture of the country through competition between universal values and local values." (ECFI011)

The discrepancy and competition between universal and local values appear in how policy-makers try to make sense of their experiences. One Commission official presents his/her experience in Burundi:

> "[s]o we are here in a construction of the system and in fact I believe that development is that. It's exactly that. We are too much in a hurry with the development process, it will take time. In Europe, democracy, how long was used for getting a kind of democracy, because it is not perfect. So we are pressing them so much to do that quickly, *it is not so easy to become a democrat*[101]. And at the same time work to manage the economy of the country, for the population not for some people. But if the population believe and see that there is some kind of link

[101] All text in italics represents my emphasis.

between this kind of democracy and the improvement of the quality of life, *they will believe in it much more even.*" (ECFI043)

There appears to be a strong conviction that the development aims and desired outputs are not only right, but as well necessary for developing countries. At the same time there is an understanding that people at large do not connect entirely to that vision. The perception that the benefits of 'democracy' need to be proved, brings about the hope that the proposed system will be accepted:

> "it is true that you can be much easier a democrat if your children are educated if you have a good health system, because things are running, if there is a collapse like Burundi, *what does it mean a democracy*. So, we have to help the country to go out of this collapse in which it has been put by themselves. The Burundian civil war, not coming from the outside due to oil or so, it has been really internal, they have destroyed the country. And now the country is destroyed, the economy is destroyed, the mentality is destroyed, there is no any truth, there is no any confidence, they are all the time lying for surviving." (ECFI043)

The proposed western system, i.e.: democracy, is, however, seen as not being accepted and the outcome is perceived to be destruction. That lack of acceptance translates in practices which keep SSA away from the western imageries – i.e.: 'they have destroyed the country.' One may question however whether what the interviewee refers to is a 'country' or a western-imagined country.

The perception that "there is no any truth, there is no any confidence, they are all the time lying for surviving" (ECFI043) is a strong indicator that there is a fundamental gap between the reality of the donors and that of the people on the ground marked by the donors' lack of access to socio-cultural contexts which transcend survival practices. The lack of confidence has been reported by policy-makers working in several countries and is, in some contexts, taken to extreme. One such example is exactly Burundi where the donors employ private interpreters to translate the official

discussions as they do not trust the official interpreters[102]. Such practices reveal not only an epistemological gap between the donor assumptions and the societal dynamics at large, but as well between the donor community and the state-like entities that the international community maintains in existence.

That duplicity translates in various ways at the level of more specific development projects. Some governments and communities manage to instrumentally engage with donors others do not. Such experiences reveal that there is an important discrepancy between the aims and content of development projects and the needs of people and communities in developing contexts. An NGO employee provides an example where a local community in southern Senegal manages to make instrumental use of a donor and government proposed project:

> "[i]n the past years there was not much water; therefore there was a state project to build water pomps in the villages. There were donors, I think the EU. So the state institutions came to the village, told the people that this will be built etc etc. People have said ok. But in order to build the water pomp, it is necessary to build the roads. They built the road, and they have built the water pomp, but people continued to use their own sources of water. When we asked them why, they have said: 'Well listen, for a long time we have been asking for a road to help us get our products to the city market, if we had said no, we don't want the water pomp, we would have not had the road.' They needed the road and not the water pomp. Evidently these projects are not well connected to the life and the culture of the people." (NGOFI036)

People learn to engage with donors in order to provide for their needs, the strategies of engagement are seen to be duplicity and instrumentality. As leads the NGO employee to see development practices as "not well connected to the life and the culture of the people" (NGOFI036).

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[102] Aspect indicated by an interpreter in Bujumbura and confirmed by EU official (2010).

Another NGO employee provides an example where a specific local community did not manage to make use of donor and government support. The NGO employee provides as well an analysis of why such projects are perceived as imposition and therefore cannot be appropriated:

> "[t]hat is where the problem of the development project is, […] cultural transformation. […] The approach should be the fact that we help community A, and community A has challenges which should be addressed. That we work with community A to find what are the difficulties so that they do the analysis themselves. That the choice of what should be placed in their community, how it should be placed, where it should be placed, who should place it, should rest as much as possible with the people. Then you are not making a cultural transformation even though it will bring it, not something brought externally, but a definition and acceptance by the people of the fact that we need it. […]Let me give you an example from my community. They came and said ok we are going to give you water. So what they decided to go to the compound of the chief. So the chive has decided that the borehole must be in front of my house because as a chief I must not be going far. They dug the borehole in front of the chief house and there was no water and we lost it because the resources have been already spent." (NGOFI035)

Several aspects are of relevance in the above description. Development is seen as a process with deep implications for cultural practices leading in one way or another to cultural transformations. As such it is important to address not only the moral entitlement of engaging in determining such cultural transformations, but as well the modalities of engagement through which cultural change is (re)produced. While in principle and at a policy level the EU insists on the relevance of 'people,' in practice a real connection to 'people' who are supposed to benefit from development is perceived not to materialize.

Losing sight of people's values and practices raises significant question marks with regard to the understanding and implementation of the principle of ownership. As development relates to cultural transformation and social change, it needs to be appropriated by people, not by governments alone. This lack of appropriation at local

community levels indicates furthermore a substantial gap between SSA governments and the people they are supposed to govern.

The above example is also relevant for showing how in spite of upholding principles of democracy, the donor modalities of engaging with people in developing contexts fail to observe the very promoted principles. The decisions on development strategies are taken at inter-governmental levels without both access to and potentiality of access[103] for people at large. The distinction between the international and the local spheres lifts most development decisions in the realm of the former precluding democratic processes to take place. In addition it leads to practices which collapse the very distinction. The 'construction of a water pomp' represents a specific action which indicates this collapse of the international – national – local distinction, as the financial resources, decisions on allocation and procurement, implementing partners, and locus of implementation brings ontologically the three realms together.

Also, the constructed meanings of the respective water pomp indicate that the local community and people are at times circumvented in the process of development. Ignoring what people are, what their culture is while at the same time attempting to change it leads to a perceived failure of appropriation. The same NGO employee mentions:

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[103] Access to discussions on development strategies is precluded not only by objective procedural limitations. There are more fundamental conceptual- and knowledge-related limits (e.g.: high percentage of illiteracy, specialized language).

> "[w]hen you don't build on the people's lifestyle to improve it, but you would rather bring in something that looks like an alternative to their life-style that is not complimentary, then you don't give people a choice, if you approach development by saying the people don't know what they are doing, we are going to give them what we think they do. The ordinary African attitude is, ok fine! I am happy with my own life, and if you think it is not good for me you bring your own life. And they will not do anything to ensure that what you are doing is working, because you have not recognized their own life." (NGOFI035)

This aspect is recognized by several of the Commission officials. As one official notes: "we have agreements like Cotonou, we're recognizing basic principles and we have development theories, but I actually believe unfortunately that in many countries we're working on development cooperation there isn't a genuine commitment by the elite in power and the influential forces in the society" (ECFI069). The western theories and policies do not recognize those 'forces in society' which actually matter: "I have the feeling that we […] are not necessarily holding the discussions with the right structures and powers" (ECFI069). The dialogue is maintained with the state and state institutions to which the West attributes specific meanings and tasks. The official implies however that the structures and powers existing besides the state are the ones which may be more relevant as they are the actual structures having power over both people and the way societal practices are (re)produced.

The discrepancy between the western understanding of development and the SSA experiences is equally highlighted by a partner government official: "[t]he problem is not a Kenyan problem, it's an African problem, […] and I don't have an answer. But we do have a serious problem with the people long term planning; following through plans, with sticking to rules and regulations [...] I can't tell you why" (GOFI068). All these requirements which appear problematic in the SSA context relate

fundamentally to how the state functions (or does not function). Therefore the next sub-section will focus on the discrepancies related to understanding the state in SSA.

6.2.2 State-related discrepancies

The 'state' – in its western conceptualization – rests at the core of the EDF development paradigm. The EU explicitly states its adherence to working with governments, while most donors carry out their assistance through state institutions or NGOs registered with state authorities. However, the 'state,' as it is conceived in the West and as it appears in donor policies, differs fundamentally from the SSA state-like entities. These differences lead to a series of discrepancies encountered by the policy-makers and NGO employees dealing with development strategies and their implementation.

A first such discrepancy relates to EDF strategies and the related implementation process – as discussed in the chapter four, strategies tend to be at best partially implemented. This evident gap between what is planned and what is happening in practice is explained, as discussed above, through a variety of reasons ranging from lack of capacity to lack of will. Lack of capacity is evident, however as several officials have noted, in many cases even the existing capacities are not put at work – aspect which takes us back to political will. Assuming that a strategy had not been implemented due to lack of will does not project any more clarity on the matter, as what is relevant is to actually understand why there is no political will to have strategies implemented. Therefore, both lack of implementation and lack of political will are symptoms of a deeper problem. I will show how they both indicate a

discrepancy between the western conception of what state institutions should do and the meanings those institutions acquire in SSA contexts.

This discrepancy is well captured by the words of one Commission official discussing the EU's approach to Chad: "we want to deal with a non-existent state, with a *non-existent government*, and so *we think there is a government* legitimized through election in a way or another we want to consolidate the rule of law" (ECFI010). This is a clear example of assuming statehood where it is not perceived to exist in reality, or if it does, it takes forms which are not captured by the western conceptual tools. Ethnocentric state-related concepts appear deeply engrained in the western approach to development and broader relations with SSA. Epistemological limitations are revealed by how moving beyond these concepts appears unconceivable irrespective of the contradictions and failures encountered in the field:

> "[b]ut sometimes it's a little bit frustrating when you don't see that after 60 years […] they are going down like Sierra Leone or Liberia and we are supporting the security sector reform and the military […] The question is if the democracy of western societies can work there. That is the main issue. What do we do […] when we try to impose election and these kinds of things which are strange to them. But of course on the other hand *you can't have Africa without states* with local communities." (ECFI015)

These conceptual struggles are perceived to have been transferred to the western-educated elites who have played a central role in the establishment and functioning of African states. Their failure to ensure a proper translation of western institutional structures within their home context and also to help the western policy makers to decipher the African cultural characteristics is extremely well pointed out by one NGO employee:

"I think that the generations of politicians who have assumed the state affairs in Africa after the colonial period are from abroad, *we are all from abroad*, we have been formed in a specific school which enables us to see things in a specific way. *It is not always lack of will, on the contrary, we repeat the same discourse that the colonists have repeated in the colonial era.* Therefore we were formed in those schools. The knowledge of new technologies – that they are capable of leading the country, that is not true – we have seen that for 8-9 years we have technocrats at the leadership of the state, it does not work – so it is not this. […] I think therefore that it is not always the incapacity but *it is the way we have learned to see* and which makes us learn, it makes us valorize what we have in order to be able to offer a model of society and for being able to have a dialogue with the donors." (NGOFI036)

The interviewee sees him/herself and other elites trained abroad as foreigners who have failed to enable a genuine connection between the state institutions and citizens and also between both of these and the international community. The result is a state-like entity functioning in direct contradiction to western assumptions underpinning development policies: 'an amorphous structure which is alienated from the people that it cannot represent.' The point of contention in this context is that while the state is perceived to be an 'imported' 'European face,' its existence blocks not only the creation of culturally sound governance mechanisms, but also, and more profoundly, the cultural affirmation of SSA peoples – 'we don't want to be who we are.' This view may further indicate a double normative and epistemological discrepancy along the three discussed dimensions between the western state understandings, the western statebuilding concepts applied in SSA contexts (that is the meaning and normative implications they acquire on the ground) and the local governance and social SSA practices. The NGO employee continues suggestively:

"[i]f we look at China, it is up and running, China is based on its own values. *Why do we have to act as if we are schizophrenic, which says that we would have a white, European face, the face of a an European democracy, if the values of the people which are the basis, are completely different from those we represent at an international level?* We cannot have such a state in a functional state, which would allow Senegal to be competitive at an international level. Actually this is the big handicap which we continue to maintain everywhere in Africa, that of not wishing, *we don't want to be who we are*, and being who we are would make us much more competitive than wishing to do things which are understood by at the most two

percent of the population. Therefore I think that *as long as the state remains based on an amorphous structure which is alienated from the people that it cannot represent.* And this is what we are doing." (NGOFI036)

Underscoring this discrepancy between the state and local values brings to the light another fundamental discrepancy. The existence of such a distinct set of local values cannot be maintained into existence without a specific societal structure. In some countries the traditional structures are called cultural powers, in others they are more diffused and do not play a formal role, yet in other countries there is an open conflict between the traditional structures and state authorities. In most African countries these traditional authorities play a specific role in ensuring that the traditional values are maintained (even if in a continuous process of change) and therefore, the matrix of traditional values is the one perceived to determine (as discussed in the previous section) the localized set of development- and state-related norms, institutions, and processes.

The traditional elements structure the social space in various ways and bear significant influence on the formal institutions. As discussed in chapter five, a Commission official suggestively observes with regard to Somaliland, that: "the right way to ask the question is probably not whether the elders are part of the state, but whether the state is seen as part of the clan system" (ECFI061). The comment holds however for states considered more functional as Tanzania and Kenya as a Commission official indicates: "I have the feeling that we are often, we are not necessarily holding the discussions with the right structures and powers […] so I think these structures of power are a lot more traditional if that's the right word to

use, in these societies than they are in the European societies" (ECFI069). These traditional structures are perceived to be completely ignored in the official development strategies in spite of their relevance. The western donors' conceptual limitations preclude policies to take these structures into account. The same Commission official continues:

> "and I think that we don't do that because of the *weight and the importance that we give in our governance structures and systems to a technically qualified state administration* that is serving the political goals of government in power and the leaders in power. But I think the alliances are working in a very different way but because we obediently follow our agreements […]I believe that we've drafted our Cotonou agreement and our CSP and a whole process of cooperation with the assumption that we have equivalent structures in place to deal with issues of accountability and representativity and planning." (ECFI069)

As pointed out by the Commission official, the donors' assumptions encounter a different reality. Several of the Commission policy makers remark this difference in various ways. For another official, while the state is organized and functions in a different way, the EU development policies are "based on our understanding of the state" (ECFI071). Significant differences are perceived to exist at the level of development objectives: **"**in my view it is partially because the development agenda of the country is set on different objectives than what we would kind of assume it is and would like it to be" (ECFI069). Furthermore, the institutional mechanisms is perceived to function in different ways and to play different roles in the broader political context: "[a]nd I feel that the machinery established around the development cooperation processes is not necessarily the machinery that keeps the country ticking" (ECFI069).

The discrepancy between the western assumed state-ness of SSA state-like entities and on-the-ground realities is prevalent in the perceptions of most interviewees. It is therefore important to point to several aspects which further strengthen the argument that the state-like entities in SSA present a separate logic from both the international community (and its assumptions on statehood) and the SSA society dimensions.

A first significant difference of the SSA states from their western counterparts is represented by the validity and applicability of constitutional norms. As an NGO employee explains, the constitutional setup in Burundi is not reflecting the *de facto* institutional dynamics:

> "in spite of the constitutional guarantee of the division of powers, that is to say, the legislature, the parliament, the executive, but in practice, everything is blurred, this means that all what the government wants it is going to do […] It's a problem of culture, related to the way we have lived, therefore the way our culture is influences strongly all these issues." (NGOFI045)

The same interviewee goes on and talks about the freedom of speech which is the fundament of the western understanding of democracy and civil society but which comes significantly at odds with local practices: "who accepts to critique the bad practices of certain leaders, we are considered dead-men walking. We say that it is impossible to speak, that if there is a mistake made by whichever authority, we cannot speak. If no, you are going to be imprisoned, you are going to be killed, you can't find a job or anything to do" (NGOFI045).

The connection between people and the state is viewed as problematic. The novel state-like entities are still competing in many contexts with the prevailing traditional

structures for the loyalty of their 'citizens'. While a national identity is creeping in, the connection to the state is rather inexistent, as one NGO employee explains:

> "[t]he organization has changed, now it's a state, the territory has been defined, but in reality it was different during the kingdom, there was a certain homogeneity, now …they…are corrupt, we talk of casts, and there are 12 million Senegalese. […] At the basis there is a community, […] organized on the basis of big families and there was a certain harmony, a certain felling of common belonging. But today, because when we talk of a state, there is the feeling of belonging to the same nation, that is true that today we identify ourselves with the term of Senegalese. But the entity Senegal which has 12 million of Senegalese, governed by a state, which is far from our cultural realities and it is very difficult in spite of 50 years of independence we don't manage to be represented by this entity and to assimilate it. If you see now the administrative buildings, they are the most deteriorated." (NGOFI037)

This lack of connection to state institutions, for which the metaphor of degraded administrative buildings is suggestive, uncovers a deeper discrepancy. The conception of public and public spheres and the distinction between public and private spheres do not hold in this context. As the same NGO employee describes:

> "[h]ere it is connected at the social organization, at our culture; it's a society […] where your neighbor has the right to even criticize what you have prepared to eat, to see at what time you go to bed, to be interested in the details of your own life because this is the tradition. We have the reunion where all the village meets to resolve the problems of each of the families of the village, of everybody, therefore public space, private space, do not really exist in the Senegalese society. We discuss the problems at the same time, which touch the general interest and problems which concern the life of an individual, therefore there is not this distinction."(FI037)

The inapplicability of the public/private distinction is evident in other respects. The intermingling of public and private aspects is also evident at an institutional level. Another NGO employee mentions: "I think in a nutshell the state institutions have become private institutions, so to speak, for certain individuals, if you get there well and good, have fun, make the best out of it and move on and let somebody else and take the best out of it" (NGOFI064). The role of public institutions is assumed to be for private benefit. In this context, an important question which is relevant for

designing efficient policies is how is it possible to develop functional public

institutions and public policies, if the public/private distinction is collapsed?

Change, especially change of power appears an illusion in this context, the western

democratic approach to power change (i.e. elections) even more so. A Commission

official perceives the situation in Chad as follows:

> "[t]o change, I don't know, from an external point of view to try to import
> governance from outside, if there's no ownership and ownership is very difficult in
> countries and environments that are weak, the problem that the system in change is
> not able to change, but also because to change would be for Debby to suicide
> himself, […] the day he opens he's over. The thought to be able to transit a smooth
> transition is a dream, he has 2% of population. […] So we really are in a different
> world, we say we set up a new independent body, we set up a new electoral system,
> fine, we support the parties, we support the civil society we want to do lesson
> learning and so on, there is this factionalism this ethnicity, and so ..2% and let's say
> it's not 2% it's a rally of interest around it goes up to 5-8%. The thought that he can
> open up in a system like that, the day he opens he's over or the day after … unless
> to think a new kind of alliance, reconciliation, consensus. If he falls down because
> somebody shuts him. There cannot be a smooth transition." (ECFI010)

This impossibility of change reveals, once again, that the gap between the western

approach to statehood and development in SSA faces problem not on a policy level

but rather on a conceptual level. Devising institutions which take into account the

local realities and which would enable self-government and ownership becomes

unlikely through current approaches. As the Commission official continues: "[it] is

not enough to have the money to change the things, to change the power relations

[…], the history of the people you don't change putting money in. They don't change

in 24 hours. Basically these systems absorb the money but they don't change, maybe

they windows dress […] Or in the long run, but then it's a historical process"

(ECFI010).

These realities which 'do not change' represent, as this thesis has shown, separate dimensions. They are distinct and as such persist in spite of interacting in various ways. The western donors and the adjacent development policies are conceptually limited to the international community dimension and therefore fail to relate adequately to both the meanings the 'state' acquires in SSA and to the people inhabiting those 'states.' A Commission official notes: "we talk about partnership, about coordination, aligning, and it's like there are several realities, there is one where it's about the way we talk and what is politically correct and then some realities on the ground" (NGOFI074). The discrepancies analyzed above indicate that the meanings-in-use produced at the intersection of these dimensions diverge and inconsequence blur the understanding of policy-makers as the next section will show.

6.3 Western ethnocentrism and the pervasive lack of understanding encountered in SSA development policy contexts

This section will analyze the lack of understanding encountered at the intersection of the three conceptualized dimensions – donors (international community), SSA states and SSA society. The previous chapters have shown how distinct meanings underpinning the SSA development- and statehood-related processes are generated by each of the dimensions; the previous section has discussed the discrepancies which appear when such meanings intersect. This section will focus on the prevalent lack of understanding generated by the above discussed discrepancies.

It is important to underscore that most of the interviewees seem to assume only one dimension in which the EU—SSA relations unfold. This undermines the capacity of the officials and the institutions they work for to understand the dynamics at play in various contexts and as such augments the lack of understanding which can be identified at various levels as will be shown below. It is important to note that there is a reduced number of Commission officials who both understand and try to make sense of the different dynamics at play, as discussed above. On the partner governments' side, both the officials and the NGO employees are aware of the existence of a plurality of worlds as they are themselves part of those worlds in different capacities. However, in spite of this awareness, a significant level of lack of understanding nevertheless persists.

The Commission officials encounter in their everyday relationship with the partner governments situations which show a high level of lack of interest. As one Commission official notes: "[s]o there is very little guidance for the division of labor, and government seems not to, I don't know, care too much or not to be able to provide strong leadership in that whole debate, so you end up with us making proposal and the government saying ya, that's not too bad" (ECFI071). More important however, the Commission officials are puzzled by this lack of interest, and the implied lack of understanding is of relevance. As discussed in the previous chapter, the lack of government involvement in a context where the partner government is dependent on donor aid represents a "big mystery" for the interviewed Commission official. That 'mystery' at a policy-operational level is coupled with a

significant gap in understanding the field, as mentioned by an official: "to be honest I 'don't really know how it works at a village level" (ECFI071).

As mentioned above, some of the officials are aware of the distinctiveness of the partner government administrations. They attempt to make sense of the characterizing dynamics; however they are not very hopeful. The diversity of factors and interests at play appear hard to make sense of, as explained by one official: "[v]ery often we don't understand what's happening behind the scheme because of all these intertwined things." (ECFI014)

The perception of entangled and cross-cutting interests, hard to understand from a donor perspective appears as a 'machinery' of its own which ensure a specific kind of 'functionality' to the partner governments. Naturally such an institutional complex defines objectives which may be divergent with those proposed by donors. Access to seeing and understanding how partner governments function is perceived to be precluded. And given the divergence of objectives, what should be political dialogue is perceived to become rather monologs 'missing each other.' A Commission official explains:

> "I think that it is the party processes that are taking things forward and it's very centralized decision-making processes, where we, I feel the donors don't even have access to and I think that these ones are functioning on basis of different objectives, we would like to kind of see our objectives being similar, but I think that at the end of the day, the dialogue that we are having is actually not a dialogue because we somehow missing each other. […] I don't think I fully understand. I don't have a clear picture in my mind on what the motives and the objectives are, and how their machinery functions." (ECFI069)

This lack of access to seeing and understanding how the partner governments function takes various shapes in various contexts. In Tanzania, the officials perceive that the partner state officials have developed an 'art of dealing with donors' which enables them to actually keep donors away from what matters: "they have made this into an art, the art of dealing with donors, a personal relation is not part of that, they like to keep this as clear at a distance impersonal" (ECFI071). In Kenya there are a series of incidents revealing fake reporting and a prevalent perception of high levels of corruption in using donor funds. In Burundi the donors need to employ private interpreters to provide them the real content of the discussions of the partner government. In most contexts one can encounter instances where donors appear to be ignored especially so at a political level by the partner governments. As a Commission official summarizes: "[s]o it's difficult to break through their barrier, so we have very clean discussions about meeting indicators" (ECFI071).

These modalities of keeping donors away from the internal dynamics fully reveal the distinctiveness of the donor (international community) dimension and that of the SSA state. The solution is perceived to be political dialogue, as the same Commission official explains:

> "we should then try to do is to see if we can understand some of the decisions that we see at so called technical level from a more political perspective. I mean like road blocks, we've been building roads in this country for the last 45 years, one of the biggest donors in the road sector, but we see that the speed in which trucks move is actually not improving at the same pace as we build roads, why is that, why is it still taking…. From Mombasa to Mbeya and it takes a truck something like 11 days, it should take 4 days, why, […] is that a technical issue, no, it's probably more a political issue, so I think we have to smarter in trying to use our political intelligence in understanding some of the technical constraints that we have." (ECFI071)

When the existence of these different dimensions is realized by Commission officials, there appears a strong desire to be able to understand what is going on. The NAO is perceived in this context rather pertaining to the donor sphere than to the governmental one and providing little added value in properly understanding the dynamics at play. The same commission official mentions: "would be great if we would have an NAO that would be a real interlocutor if you could exchange views and if you could put these things on the table, [...] so, you know, how do you think, how do you perceive that. I'm afraid we don't' have that" (ECFI071).

The capacity of donors to comprehend the broader societal dynamics of the partner countries is also perceived to be reduced. While the relevance of the traditional structures of authority is recognized by some of the officials, as discussed above, these are almost never part of the formal relations. A Commission official explains: "[t]rying to at least understand the minimum not necessarily of all this intertwining networks but at least the relevant networks playing and that part of the apparently un-understandable reactions may be linked to these sometimes converging, sometimes conflictual old networks"(FI014). The approach of dealing solely with the governmental counterparts may be misleading (ECFI069). The relevance of the traditional structures can be best observed at the local level where they play a significant role which usually cannot be ignored – e.g.: in some contexts development projects need the approval of traditional leaders.

From a local perspective this situation appears more complicated. It is not only that

donors don't understand the traditional aspects, and as such, the way recipient

societies function, it is rather that donors are perceived to actually be unable to

comprehend these aspects. One NGO employee explains:

> "[t]he dilemma for most western donors is that they never went beyond the cold war in terms of understanding of the African state and certainly they have always wanted to recreate little Europes, little Frances, little Belgiums, it is not possible for them to conceive what's a society that's in development, and that's why China remains an enigma to them, and same other people who live in a traditional society. My sense is mainly because they are safer dealing with local government authorities or national authorities. There is an incomprehension of why does this [traditional part] matter, and does it matter at all." (NGOFI063)

Several Commission officials believe that the traditional structures while relevant in

society are not relevant in formal development relations. These views are

strengthened by the interviewed partner government officials. They identify the issue

of traditional structures as an extremely sensitive one which goes to the core of the

sovereignty of their states. While the relevance of these traditional structures is

evident from a social perspective, their role and involvement is considered

unimportant or inadequate in dealing with any attributions which from a western

perspective should belong to the state. One Commission official presents his/her

views on traditional structures, also highlighting the impossibility of understanding

the traditional aspects and reiterating the state-centric view of the EU policies:

> "[o]f course they are very strong in the country, especially the religious, but we are blind, we don't know, we have no idea. *I'm not sure that it would help us to go too deep on these issues because what we could find we would not understand.* So in my view, it's better to maintain our vision …not to begin to deal with these dimensions which are extremely difficult to understand. *We are an institution which respects the government institutions.*" (ECFI030)

This sub-section has presented the perceived pervasive lack of understanding of the

Commission officials about how both the partner governments and recipient societies

function. Some of the reasons for this lack of understanding can be identified in the

donors' commitment to statehood and dealing with governments. The western ethnocentrism of the development efforts render irrelevant what SSA societies are at any given point in time – what is important is what these societies shall become. Furthermore, the perception that it is impossible to understand the SSA societies indicates further epistemological limitations and obstructs a real engagement with the actual fabric of the society and the ingrained governance norms and mechanism. It limits the capacity of western donors to conceptually connect to the locally-generated meanings for statehood- and development-related processes and institutions. These aspects have a strong impact on the relations between SSA and the western donors. As a Commission official notes: "I think that if we want to be seen as a serious player by them we have to make more effort in understanding their world" (ECFI071).

6.4 Conclusion

The discrepancies presented above, which characterize deep gaps between the three dimensions, illustrate how locally acquired meanings of state- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices fail to be properly understood by the EDF Commission officials. The resulting pervasive lack of understanding encountered at the intersection of the three dimensions shows the ethnocentric conceptual limits of the EU (and potentially other western donors) in relating to SSA social dynamics (state and society). Furthermore, it suggests the impossibility of development policies to become functional in SSA contexts while being based on western structures of meaning-in-use.

Conclusion

The thesis proposed in chapters 1 and 2 a theoretical and analytical framework for analyzing the lack of understanding of SSA states and social dynamics encountered among EDF policy-makers. The ES dilemma between ensuring international order and internal justice in the 'ministates' has been employed to theoretically connect the identified EDF puzzle with the broader theoretical discussion around statehood, sovereignty, and development. The main research question driving this inquiry was *how does western statehood ethnocentrism, reflected through EU policies, contribute to limiting the EDF policy-makers' understanding of SSA states and social dynamics?* Asserting the centrality of IR theory for understanding statehood and development dynamics in SSA and building on the ES debates, the thesis proposed, therefore, an argument which enables us to make sense of how western ethnocentric EU policies contribute to European EDF policy-makers' difficulty in understanding SSA statehood and social dynamics.

In order to make sense of how western ethnocentricity affects the capacity of EDF policy-makers to understand the 'objects' of their policies (i.e.: SSA state and society dynamics), the thesis proposed a theoretical argument based on three main contentions. A first element of the argument addresses the exercise of western sovereign power in international interactions and is based on employing the concept of 'exception' (Comaroff 2006, Agamben 2005) within the ES theoretical boundaries (Astrov 2011). Through such an argument we can better grasp the relationship

between the SSA state-like entities and their western counterparts. This relationship helps us understand the specificity of SSA states as the result of a western sovereign decision. This leads to a generalized state of exception which encompasses both colonial and post-colonial SSA, incapacitating SSA states to function within legal parameters by placing them in a state of indistinction vis-à-vis both international law (e.g.: see the sovereignty dynamics of SSA states) and domestic customary rules (e.g.: see the fundamental gap created between state and society in SSA contexts). That placement in exception leads to the creation of a specific dimension of the SSA state.

The second element of the theoretical argument proposed a conceptualization of SSA domestic arenas based on three dimensions – the international community present on the ground, the SSA state, and the SSA society. The creation of a SSA state dimension as argued above, posits the state in a 'world' of its own. As such, it enables the creation of (a) specific logic(s) distinct from both the international community's and SSA societies' normative and institutional makeup. The three dimensions are relevant for theorizing and policy work as proposed by the third element of the argument. The three dimensions, while representing different 'life-worlds' in Habermasian terms (Habermas 1987), are spatially and temporally coterminous implying therefore that statehood- and development-related practices in general, and the EDF-related practices in particular, unfold at their intersection. Furthermore, each dimension generates structures of meaning-in-use which if not

aligned may lead to more than lack of understanding. Potentially such misalignment may lead to a failure of the statehood- and development-related practices.

As EDF interactions (and aid practices more broadly) presuppose the participation of international, national, and local actors and elements, the analytical framework developed in chapter 2 was based on a reinterpretation of the concept of 'international.' That reinterpretation allowed advancing a structural ES approach to capturing aid interactions comprehensively. Equally relevant it enabled identifying the actors at play in the EDF dynamics. The research design, based on an interpretive methodology, enabled an analysis of the locus opened at the intersection of the three dimensions.

The empirical analysis narrowed the focus on the perceptions and beliefs of EDF policy-makers and NGO employees which, from an interpretive perspective, are constitutive of EDF-related development and statehood practices in SSA. The policy-makers and NGO employees engaged in the negotiation and implementation of EDF strategies inhabit the in-between locus of the three dimensions. Based on 76 interviews with targeted policy-makers, NGO employees, academics or other international officials the empirical analysis revealed substantial inconsistencies and discrepancies between the meanings attributed to development and state-related norms, institutions, and practices. Two main aspects have received attention in the empirical analysis, first, the perceptions and beliefs of EDF policy-makers and NGO employees with regard to the negotiation of CSPs and NIPs and the related

implementation process; and second, the perceptions and beliefs of EDF policy-makers and NGO employees with regard to statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices in SSA. Such an approach enabled me to show that the discrepancies observed at an operational-policy level are connected to discrepancies at a more general conceptual level and that both such discrepancies are partially determined by the western ethnocentricity of the conceptual frameworks underpinning EU development policies.

Chapters 3 to 6 have engaged with the empirical material by providing the general context in which the EDF unfolds and by bringing the necessary evidence to sustain the advanced theoretical claims. The thesis has shown that the EU development policies towards SSA are based on western conceptions of statehood; that CSP and NIP negotiation and implementation processes reveal significant discrepancies between the western concepts and local SSA practices; and that a pervasive lack of understanding of SSA states and social dynamics characterizes the European EDF policy-makers.

By further analyzing discrepancies at the level of meanings attributed to statehood- and development-related norms, institutions, and practices, the thesis pointed out first that the SSA states being created through an external sovereign decision are incapacitated to perform as states, aspect which renders the statehood assumptions of the EU development policy (i.e.: positive sovereignty) as inaccurate. Second, the thesis has shown that the diverging meanings behind the analyzed discrepancies

uncover the three theoretically proposed dimensions: SSA state, SSA society and international community. And third, the thesis has shown how the concepts employed in EU development policies fail to account for the meanings-in-use that state-related norms, institutions, and practices acquires within SSA state and society dimensions. Therefore, the exception-based take on state fragility and failure; the resulting three dimensions; and the discrepancies in meanings encountered at the intersection of the three dimensions present a valid explanation of the lack of understanding of SSA states and social dynamics encountered among European EDF policy-makers, i.e.: the EDF puzzle presented in the beginning of the thesis.

At an EDF level the thesis has shown how the EU policy-makers encounter substantive challenges in understanding SSA states towards whose development they are hoping to contribute. This aspect has broader implications for both the coherence and the impact of EU policies. Deciding on aid allocation without an accurate understanding of local normative and institutional dynamics is perceived by the EU policy-makers themselves to lead at best to lack of sustainability, if not to outright failure.

That lack of understanding suggests that the link between academic and policy work is minimal. While academic literature on aid, statehood, and development in SSA offers substantial insights regarding the local societal dynamics, these appear to fail to inform policy-work. The challenge is, however, bigger, as this thesis has shown, much of the western academic literature remains within the same western conceptual

frameworks which underpin policy-work. Transcending this western bias encountered at an academic level is necessary for enabling proper understandings of local SSA contexts and adequate policy engagements.

The presented discrepancies at the level meanings attributed to the state and state institutions indicate that a process of appropriating western-derived governance institutions is unfolding in SSA. However, the meanings that such institutions acquire in their new cultural settings are distinct from the western conceptual frameworks. In addition, such appropriation leads to the integration of the respective institutions in local normative-institutional contexts, generating resilience for both – the 'traditional' conceptions of governance and the western-perceived dysfunctional state-like apparatus. This implies, in line with much of the critical literature, that development is not as EU policies assume, i.e.: a linear progression towards western norms, standards, and practices. Rather 'development' takes place away from the authoritative imagined impact of donors into the concealed realm of social practices which are hardly perceived let alone understood by western policy-makers and theorists.

It is therefore, not the impact of western statebuilding and development policies which generate change in governance in SSA contexts, but rather their unintended consequences mediated through the meanings-in-use assigned to state-related norms, institutions, and practices and derived strategies. The western institutional imageries (e.g.: sovereignty, parliaments, elections, etc) are integrated in matrixes of social

practices being made to make sense into local 'lifeworlds.' The resilience of African statehood Englebert (2009) describes uncovers the struggles encountered by the local SSA lifeworlds in making sense of and ascribing meanings to western imageries which cannot be circumvented. The outcome is neither statehood nor development, not in their western understanding. The result approximates a Foucauldian (1979) image of ignored lifeworlds ingrained into an extensive international setup which failing to achieve its goals, does succeeds to enable transformation.

These dynamics imply as well that the ES dilemma between international order and internal justice in the ministates makes sense solely on western grounds. Internal justice in the ministates stands for a western-derived normative structure which fails not only to encompass norms and practices derived from SSA local lifeworlds but to even acknowledge their existence (beyond non-conformity with the western 'ideal'). In addition to the historical approach of the ES, which enables it to point to such dilemmas, the ES scholars need to address more substantially the inter-cultural character of international relations. This would enable the ES to transcend its current shallow focus on inter-civilizational and inter-cultural relations. This research, through the conceptualization of the three dimensions on ES grounds, opens up avenues for engaging with non-western dimensions such as the SSA state and SSA society. The structural approach undertaken in this thesis opens up a conceptual and theoretical space where the normative-institutional composition of these dimensions can be approached and explored in further research.

Engagement with non-western spaces and conceptual frames is a concern for broader IR theory. In this context, the perceptions of some of the interviewees, that the lives of SSA peoples are ignored in the western-proposed development process, can be helpful in uncovering a potential contact point between non-western spaces and IR theory. This aspect connects directly with Paolini *et al*'s (1999) contention that the individual should be at the core of IR theory. However, at this level of discussion, the understanding of the generic individual transcends Paolini *et al*'s (1999) framework being *neither* seen as agency, *nor* as the basis for intersubjectivity, but rather *as bare life* (this time *not* in Agambean (2000) terms) understood as human beingness, i.e.: human nature. Such a theoretical move implies a shift from focusing on the state of nature, to a focus on the conception of human beingness a certain cultural context maintains. The implied claim is that the non-western understanding of human beingness are constitutive of non-western social realms and as such can contribute to both uncover the meanings social norms and structures acquire in those respective contexts and provide a contextual understanding of human life to which the structuring of the social space must respond.

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