STATEHOOD AS A GLOBAL RELIGION

OR HOW THE WORLD IS MADE NATURAL

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Abstract

How did states, as an arbitrary form of governance deriving from a particular historical circumstance, become the natural form and type of governance across the world? Why did it oust other forms of order, and why have they not reemerged in a meaningful fashion? Drawing on sociological literature, this thesis argues that the evolution and spread of states across the globe was a function of imperial interests that established a hierarchy that extends between and within states. This hierarchy was consecrated and 'naturalized' through developing moral, legal and normative frameworks and interrelated forms of practice. This naturalization, however, does not remove the imperial hierarchy, but makes it fundamentally misrecognizable within its paradigmatic structure. The *habitus* of 'statehood' in which states evolve and act thus takes on a religious quality through defining the boundaries of possible forms of order. Recognizing statehood as a system which is both structuring and structured, and with inherent contradictions which sustain the global hierarchy, is an important step in understanding the hegemony of Europe and the corresponding reproduction of other states as flawed and ineffective modes of governance, both in theory and practice .

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Introduction

What, fundamentally, are international relations? Why do they exist? From a 'real-world' perspective, what is practiced and made real? And, from a scholarly perspective, what is studied within the academic disciplinary silo? In the modern world, relations are complex and layered, with various organizations and entities being integral to the functioning of the 'international system': from multilateral institutions to multi-national corporations and from the rise of social media to the development of international law. The world holds an immeasurable number of diverse ways of being and conceiving, some of which are harmonious and others of which exist in tension with each other. These can exist formally or informally, and be important to one small town or writ large across the face of the earth. Human interaction is structured by a vast number of different rules and regulations stemming from various sources, which are constantly reinterpreted or recreated based on the lived experience of the world. The way in which the idea of 'humanity' is constructed is constantly defined through the relationship of the individual with the community in a cyclical fashion, as social processes fit themselves onto the psyche of humans who then interpret them and acts according to that individual interpretation to recreate and alter practices as is deemed 'appropriate'. In such a system, which is constantly being defined and redefined, how do we make sense of the world?

To answer the opening question: as the name suggests, international relations (IR) is based on the interactions between nations, or, more precisely, states. The fundamental building block of the international system, states cover almost the entirety of the landmass of the earth and constitute the most deep-rooted part of the international. In fact, they define

it: the borders of states are what separates the 'domestic' internal matters from those that are 'international,' or across those borders.

The discipline – helped along by interventions from outside sources – has been interrogating the nature, form and structure of states, as well as its inherent tensions and problematics, to try and better understand how the world fits together. This has involved a deconstruction of various aspects of statehood and their relationship to each other: from the notion of territoriality, to the foundations of sovereignty, to their historical creation, states as a category are being analyzed and reconceptualized continually in academic thought. This deconstruction is then further deconstructed to show how academia further recreates the international system and states through its practice, as it makes the state known and knowable: it constitutes it as fact. Scholars, then, are occupied analyzing all facets of what is known as 'the state'.

In contrast, this thesis does not analyze the state as the *unit* of authority, as this (as noted) has been and is being done extensively. Rather, it investigates how the state became *the* unit which both makes and is made by the international. Essentially, it tries to find a way to interpret what, at its core, statehood is – both as a theoretical and practical category. This thesis thus deconstructs the nature of the idea of state*hood*: the field which states simultaneously created and were created in – and in which, crucially, they act. This gives scope to analyze the way in which the world is purportedly structured and the 'natural' prominence of states in contemporary practice and academia, as well as the ahistorical mythologizing which accompanies it. It tries to make sense of the significance of the transition of the state from an explicitly coercive apparatus to an abstract authority type, which subsumes or takes primacy both politically and symbolically over all others: a

typology and category which creates the structure and form of the international. To do this, one central claim is made: that statehood has moved beyond a paradigm of politics or government to become – at least in a sociological sense – religious.

To make this claim, this thesis takes an interpretative historical approach while drawing on sociological theory, primarily that of Bourdieu. Such an approach keeps with the recent trend in IR to draw on inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to develop new frames of interpretation and understanding of world events, an intervention desperately needed by the discipline in the wake of the Cold War.[1] IR, particularly the more 'classical' schools such as liberalism, realism and constructivism, has come under critique at a most fundamental level and along various lines: from its founding assumptions (which, not coincidentally, include states and statehood), its overly rationalistic and unitary approach, its political/interpretational bias (most particularly, Eurocentrism), and its ahistoricism, the discipline has been shown to be highly problematic.[2] This thesis, therefore, participates in this trend towards opening the discipline up to new influences and incorporating interdisciplinary knowledge, in an attempt to perceive phenomena and ideas which shape the contemporary world environment outside of those able to be elucidated through traditional IR.

As such, the historical method used in this thesis, through reference to historical events and patterns, aims to align with the sociological claim that such phenomena give

[1] John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security*, 17 no. 3 (1992): 5-58; Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, "International History and International Relations Theory: A Dialogue Beyond the Cold War," *International Affairs*, 76 no. 4 (2000): 741-754.

[2] For example, see George Lawson, "The Eternal Divide? History and International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations*, 18 no. 2 (2012): 203-226; Jens Bartleson, "Short Circuits: Society and Tradition in International Relations Theory," *Review of International Studies*, 22 no. 4 (1996): 339-360; John Anthony Pella, "Expanding the Expansion of International Society: A New Approach With Empirical Illustrations from West African and European Interaction, 1400-1883," *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 17 no. 1 (2014): 89-111; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

shape and meaning to the social, but that these are contested and (re)presented in form and place.[3] It is these contested interpretations and responses to history which underly Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* and *field*, which are structured with reference to such events but also restructured according to the abilities of agents to create and frame actions within that field in their own time.[4] Based on such a model, this thesis will use an understanding of history not as a unidirectional path but as the confluence, divergence, creation and destruction of ideas, patterns, and behaviors which are brought together not by some inherent nature but by the connections drawn between them, both by historians and academics on one side and by people and practitioners on the other.[5] Taking such an approach, however, does not mean that what follows is a historical narrative. On the contrary, the aim is to situate the developing forms of state and statehood within a historical milieu to elucidate not only how statehood became religious but the ways in which this religiosity is reproduced. As such, each section draws in various parts on history, contemporary phenomena, and theoretical interpretation as required to demonstrate the sedimentation of statehood from its beginnings in Europe[6] to its current naturalized and universalized position, and how this position is sustained and altered in the present day. For clarity, however, it primarily draws on examples and analyses of post-colonial African

[3] Robert Goodin and Charles Tilly (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); chapters 22-26: 417-508.
[4] Elliot Weininger, "Foundations of Class Analysis in the work of Bourdieu," in Erik Wright (ed.), *Alternative Foundations of Class Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 119-121.
[5] Joseph MacKay and Christopher LaRoche, 'The conduct of history in International Relations: rethinking philosophy of history in IR theory,' *International Theory*, 9 no. 2 (2017): 203-236.
[6] While it would be more accurate to locate the origins of statehood as coming from parts of Europe and Asia, the main forms we see today are structured by the European imperial encounter (as outlined below). As such, Europe is cited as the originary point of statehood through this thesis despite the more historically precise genesis which has been offered in some literature.

states, as explicit examples of where statehood was arbitrarily imposed and where its effects can be clearly seen.

Correspondingly, this thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter focusses on the interpretation of states within IR, outlining the myth of Westphalia, the recent trend towards historicizing and deconstructing the state as a unit, and how IR still makes states the primary issue of world politics. The second outlines Bourdieu's sociology of religion and its role, focusing on how religion makes hierarchy and dominance misrecognized and consecrates this dominance in a structured and structuring manner; essentially, how religion goes about achieving the 'naturalization of the arbitrary' social order. The third chapter demonstrates the arbitrariness of the state as an authority type and the historical processes by which it became 'universal.' The fourth focusses on the ways in statehood as a global type was consecrated as natural and continues to be upheld as such in the international system, before tying together the concept of statehood as religion. The fifth gives an outline of the misrecognition of power dynamics and problematics caused by the religion of statehood in the African post-colony, arguing that many of the problems seen across the continent can be linked to the religious reproduction of statehood. The sixth uses a short case study to demonstrate the impacts of this religion of statehood in the context of Sierra Leone, arguing that its continuing problems and 11-year civil war were all directly impacted (if not underpinned) by this religion.

Chapter 1 – States as International Relations Orthodoxy

1.1 The Myth of Westphalia

International relations, both in policy and academics, has several founding assumptions, the most foundational of which is the canonical myth of Westphalia. Based on the Peace of Westphalia, a combination of two treaties signed in 1648, the myth is constructed as an "ontological big bang" of international politics: the Peace is claimed to have created the 'sovereign state' out of the ashes of the religious wars of the time,[7] and correspondingly ending the universalist aspirations of empire and religion, through containing the aspirations of Spain, the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church.[8] This sovereign system is supposed to have expanded across the world over the following four centuries up until 1919 (with the 'inception' of international relations as an academic discipline[9]) and then 1945, with the historical process which this involved being largely glossed over.[10] The notion of statehood which it emphasized was then codified with the creation of the United Nations as the institutional representative and guardian of modern sovereignty. This myth of Westphalia and the expansion of sovereignty from this point in history gives rise to concepts of rationality and boundedness, to anarchy, to self-interest – all of which are sedimented into the very core of the way the social world is constructed, conceived and codified.

The underpinning of both the theory and practice of states, as a unit of authority, by this Westphalian myth and the corresponding inherent teleology of statism as an

[7] Benjamin de Carvalho, Halvard Leira and John M. Hobson, "The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919," *Millennium*, 39, no. 3 (2011):735-758.
[8] Andreas Osiander "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth," *International Organization*, 55 no.2 (2001): 252-3.
[9] de Carvalho, Leira, and Hobson, "The Big Bangs of IR."
[10] de Carvalho, Leira, and Hobson, "The Big Bangs of IR."

authority type shapes the world as it is perceived today. It makes the spread of states seem a natural development of politics and the partitioning of the world into discrete units and the corresponding bounding of community the 'proper' way of ordering the world. Further, it gives rise to particular ways of conceptualizing order and power: seemingly unquestionable ideas about peace and war, economics, development, human rights, and the experiential aspects of life (communal and individual) all stem from the notion of statehood enshrined in the Westphalian myth. Through the historical gap between 1648 and 1919 and the noted obscuring of hierarchy, this form of statehood therefore becomes universalized as the correct method of politics, and the natural way in which the world should be defined.

1.2 Academic Context

The role of Westphalia as a mythic foundation has been soundly demonstrated by much scholarly analysis, usually originating from historical or historiographical studies conducted from outside international relations (with a few notable exceptions).[11] The critique largely describes the importance of Westphalia as being invented by the Swiss jurist Emerich de Vattel in the 18th century as a development of 'positive' as opposed to 'natural' law, with a corresponding re-write of history to show the state not only as an internal sovereign but also as the 'representative of the people' at an international level.[12] It further shows that Westphalia was in many ways a *retreat* from principles of sovereignty established more firmly at earlier points in history (notably the Treaty of Augsburg).[13] Yet

[11] See prominently the works of Stephen Krasner (for example, Stephen Krasner, "Westphalia and All That," in Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohane (eds), *Ideas and Foreign Policy* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1993)).
[12] For a further discussion of this, see Turan Kayaoglu, "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory," *International Studies Review,* 12 no.2 (2010): 193–217.
[13] Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth," 256-7.

further, several critics have described the way the Westphalian myth obscures relations of dominance across Europe and the globe, with various protectorates and colonies being controlled by powers nominally supporting principles of sovereignty.[14] However, while these facets of (and various other problems with) the mythology have been pointed out, Westphalia remains an enduring part of international relations through its relation to the state.

Over the past approximately forty years, the state, as a concept, has been undergoing a reformulation in international relations. International relations scholars, drawing on various frames of analysis, have made great progress deconstructing the state as a unit of governance and order. Historians, of course, have analyzed the ways in which the state was created and the contingent environment in which this took place, and the ways this shapes modern state systems and structures.[15] Realists and liberals have redefined their respective theories of interpretation to show how the state functions in the contemporary world order post-Cold War bipolarity and the growth of the UN as a functioning body.[16] Critical scholars, from Gramscian theorists,[17] gender theorists,[18] region specialists,[19] and

[14] Krasner, "Compromising Westphalia," 115-7.
[15] See prominently Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishing, 1992); John Hobson, "The Historical Sociology of the State and the State of Historical Sociology in International Relations," *Review of International Political Economy*, 5 no. 2 (1998): 284-320.
[16] See, for example, Kenneth Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security*, 25 no. 1 (2000): 5-41; and Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and US Grand Strategy after the Cold War," *International Security*, 21 no. 4 (1997): 49-88.
[17] Notably Robert Cox, "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory," *Millennium*, 10 no. 2 (1981): 126-155; Robert Cox, "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method," *Millennium*, 12 no. 2 (1983): 162-175.
[18] Notably Charlotte Hooper, *Manly States: Masculinities, International Relations, and Gender Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); J Ann Ticker, *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).
[19] For example, Susan Harmon and William Brown, "In From the Margins? The Changing Place of Africa in International Relations," *International Affairs*, 89 no. 1 (2013): 69-87; Achille Mbembe, "Provisional Notes on the Post-Colony," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 62 no. 1 (1992): 3-37.

various Marxists[20] (among many others) have all made contributions to how states are constructed both internally and as units in the international system.

Scholars have also effectively deconstructed various components and elements of the state in their individual parts to better understand what constitutes the state. Notions of sovereignty[21] and territory,[22] anarchy, hierarchy and national interest,[23] identity (of and within states),[24] have been questioned and rethought in various contexts.

What remains after all this, however, is the fundamental nature of state*hood* as an organizing category. International relations, at its heart, remains a paradigm which is underpinned by this social fact, a form of relations both structured and structuring by/of historical and contemporary engagement at all levels of existence. Despite being deconstructed, rethought, attacked, and defended (both in the 'real world' and in theoretical terms) the state remains the accepted, natural, *orthodox* unit. Statehood, as a category, form and mode, remains central – despite its flaws – to human existence and thought.

[20] Robert Nichols, "Disaggregating Primitive Accumulation," *Radical Philosophy*, 194 no. 1 (2015): 18-28; Tony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey* (London: Routledge, 1991).
[21] Janice Thomson, "State Sovereignty in International Relations: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice," 39 no. 2 (1995): 213-233; J Samuel Barkin and Bruce Cronin, "The State and the Nation: Changing Norms and the Rules of Sovereignty in International Relations," *International Organization*, 48 no. 1 (1994): 107-130.
[22] Jens Bartleson, *The Critique of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); John Agnew, "The Territorial trap: The Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory," *Review of International Political Economy*, 1 no. 1 (1994): 53-80.
[23] David Lake, *Hierarchy in International Relations* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2009); Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).)
[24] William Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1993); Robert Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Chapter 2 – A Sociology of Religion

How should this category, then, be understood? The foundational nature of statehood and the resultant paradigm in which states have become the natural unit of government, in essence, *depoliticizes* the state; politics is fixed separately both inside (in the particular political structures of a state, be it democratic or totalitarian) and outside the state (as international relations and diplomacy). As such, there is an artificial separation perceived between external hierarchies (those between states, namely 'developed' and 'developing') and internal hierarchies within state borders: the 'natural' state serves as a barrier through which norms, laws, ideas, and – most importantly – culture and morality are perceived to be bounded. This is not to say, of course, that such politics are not linked and understood as such; however, the state becomes symbolic of the differences between and across various groups, while also simultaneously symbolizing their similarities and equality by definition of being states. To interpret this position of states within the system, the sociology of Bourdieu provides an important analytical framework; however, it comes from an unexpected point.

2.1 Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion

Bourdieu, one of the most influential sociologists of the twentieth century, devoted remarkably little time to religion in his work. Despite this, he does attribute one of the most expansive roles in the social milieu to it; it is a cornerstone of the social construction of authority and hierarchy through symbolism which naturalizes the world. For Bourdieu, in short:

> the *structure of the systems of religious representations and practices* belonging to the various groups or classes contributes to the perpetuation and reproduction of the social order (understood as the established structure of relations between groups and classes) by contributing to its consecration, that is, to sanctioning and sanctifying it.[25]

Religion, in this sense, is not tied to particular typology, but instead is a field wherein symbolic capital is generated and ordered to *naturalize the arbitrariness* of the social hierarchy.[26] Religion, in this sense, *maintains the social*.[27] To envisage statehood within this paradigm, it is necessary to deconstruct the major influences on Bourdieu's conceptualization of religion, notably Durkheim and Weber.

Bourdieu bases his interpretation of religion as a form of power in the sociology of Weber, particularly as a form of power that is fundamentally intertwined with both politics and economics.[28] Religion and religious discourse/symbolism are therefore attached to particular interests: it serves a particular purpose which is not strictly political or economic, but interrelates with both.[29] It further is used by specialists to "conceal that their struggles have political interests at stake."[30] Bourdieu particularly combines this with a Marxist analysis, to argue that religion is another means by which the elite controls the lower classes.[31] This thus makes religion a site of struggle, between religious 'specialists' who

[25] Pierre Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," *Comparative Social Research*, 13 no. 1 (1991): 19.
[26] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972): 164.
[27] Bourdieu, *Genesis and Structure*, 37.
[28] Erwan Dianteill, "Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion: A Central and Peripheral Concern," *Theory and Society*, 32 no. 1 (2003): 529-549.
[29] Dianteill, "Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion.".
[30] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 20.
[31] Dianteill, "Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion," 532-3.

claim a monopoly on religious symbols and ideas, and those who try to redefine or escape the paradigm set by those specialists.[32]

Simultaneously, Bourdieu appropriates (with alterations) Durkheim's understanding of religion as the system of norms, values and symbols which provide the common basis of society.[33] Instead of focusing on codified/scriptural religions, Durkheim posits religion as the worship of community as a mechanism for reinvigorating social ties.[34] This social is linked to individuals through the construction of sacred and profane: the sacred (which can be both totemic or imagined) are the symbols, patterns or ideas which are imbued with meaning by the community as representational of the social, while the profane relates to the interests and actions of individuals. The two become 'unified' through ritual practice, which incorporates the 'sacred' into the experiential lives of individuals.[35] This creates what Durkheim calls 'collective effervescence,' a phenomenon in which the individual and the community collectively experience the celebration of the sacred (and hence the community itself).[36]

Through the combination of these two theories, Bourdieu conceptualizes religion as creating (and religious agents as exercising) symbolic capital and symbolic power. Symbolic capital is important in society through its ability to structure the social through

[32] Dianteill, "Bourdieu and the Sociology of Religion; see also Bourdieu's synthesis, in Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 14-15, 20, 22-3.
[33] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* trans. Karen Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995).
[34] Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*; see also James Dingley, *Nationalism, Social Theory and Durkheim,* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 92-3.
[35] Bernhard Giesen, "Performing the sacred: a Durkheimian perspective on the performative turn in the social sciences," in Jeffrey Alexander, Bernhard Giesen and Jason Mast (eds), *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 325-367.
[36] Giesen, "Performing the sacred"; see also Romi Mukherjee, "On Violence as the Negativity of the Durkheimian: Between Anomie, Sacrifice and Effervescence," *International Social Science Journal*, 58 no. 1 (2010): 15-21.

the reproduction of the "conditions of existence" of a group; it structures the boundaries and practices which constitute society.[37] Symbolic power, while only loosely defined, is therefore the use of capital which is "endowed with symbolic efficacy."[38] Essentially, this means that through reference to a physical or metaphysical thing (or symbol) endowed with meaning, an agent can create or enforce a power structure which provides them dominance, or mediates/legitimates existing dominance within another sphere (political, economic, cultural, etc.). To weld these ideas together: *a la* Durkheim, religion is at once an emanation of the ideas/morals/norms of society (and is hence structured by it), but simultaneously, *a la* Weber, is a mechanism through which society is controlled through symbolic means and the demarcation of the boundaries of social reality (and is hence structuring of society). This, of course, creates a particular *habitus* within a particular *field* with its own particular *doxic beliefs and practices*: the habitus, the system of 'dispositions' which are both structured and structuring, which exists within a particular field which both creates and is created by agents, based on the acceptance of certain unquestionable, 'doxic', rules.

Religion, however, constitutes a particular form of field, as one which legitimates the arbitrary social through reference to a 'universal cosmology'.[39] It becomes "the ultimate and paradigmatic form of symbolic power in human society" for Bourdieu,[40] because it structures the way humans perceive the world and *consecrates* the order of society into a 'natural' form:

> The effect of consecration . . . also causes the system of dispositions toward the natural world . . . in particular transmuting the ethos as a system of implicit

[37] Bourdieu, *A Theory of Practice*, 167
[38] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 5.
[39] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 32.
[40] Terry Rey, *Bourdieu on Religion: Imposing Faith and Legitimacy* (London: Routledge, 2007): 84-5.

> schemes of action and appreciation into ethics as a systematized and rationalized ensemble of explicit norms. Thus, religion is predisposed to assume an ideological function, a practical and political function of absolutization of the relative and legitimation of the arbitrary.[41]

This consecration represents the unification of hierarchies and structures of politics, economics, culture and dominance (among others) into a natural order bounded by forms of morality and practice – into orthodoxy, or *legitimate* belief, structure, and form.[42]

Consecration, in this sense, is a dually physical and metaphysical explanation which structures and is structured, which changes the system of dispositions, even the very nature, of the social and 'natural' world.[43] According to Bourdieu, religion achieves this effect in two ways:

> (1) It consecrates by converting into limits of law, through its sanctifying sanctions, the economic and political limits and barriers of *fact* and, in particular, by contributing to the *symbolic manipulation of aspirations*, which tends to ensure the adjustment of actual hopes to objective possibilities. (2) It inculcates a system of consecrated practices and representations whose structure (structured) reproduces, in a transfigured and therefore misrecognizable form, the structure of economic and social relations in force in a determinate social formation.[44]

This returns to Bourdieu's key concept of misrecognition: he argues that societies are structured so that the dominated parties misrecognize their submissive status as

[41] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 14.
[42] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 26; Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 164, 170-1.
[43] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 14.
[44] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 14.

legitimate rather than arbitrary and enforced, which religion does by creating symbolic systems which make this domination appear natural.[45]

Such a construction of religion – as the consecrating force of the social – also leads Bourdieu to reconceptualize the notions of sacred and profane. Contrary to Durkheim, who sees the sacred as the representation of the social, Bourdieu sees it as the representation of the 'naturalized arbitrary' – that is, the social *order*.[46] It is those ideas, positions, symbols and values which are imbued with symbolic capital. The profane, conversely, is that which is "dispossessed" of such capital.[47] Bourdieu further reinterprets the concept of 'sacrilege' as the inversion or recharacterization of the sacred, which involves the repurposing of symbolic capital.[48]

Ritual is slightly more complex through its relation to practice, and through its simultaneously unifying and dividing process. As with most religious phenomena, "the taxonomies of the mythico-ritual system at once divide and unify, legitimating unity in division, that is to say, hierarchy."[49] As in Durkheim's theory, ritual is a method of unification between sacred and profane, and between individual and society: it is a practice which provides for the "canonization" of religious belief and itself becomes invested with symbolic meaning (hence, 'ritual').[50] However, ritual also emphasizes the division of society into a hierarchical structure, linking the 'natural' social order to the experiential world of the individual, through either a ritual transgression of the borders constructed around society ("the transgression of social barriers [as] sacrilege containing its own

[45] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 19.
[46] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 24.
[47] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 9.
[48] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 13, 24.
[49] Bourdieu, *A Theory of Practice*, 165.
[50] Bourdieu, *A Theory of Practice*, 30.

sanction"), or conversely to render such transgression unthinkable.[51] Ritual inculcates, in essence, a respect for form: the physical embodiment, arbitrarily imposed and imposing through an arbitrary order, which extends from the micro to the macro.[52]

The combination of a sacred order and ritual as a unificatory process allows Bourdieu to conceptualize a mechanism for breaking the order or a radical deviation from normalcy: sacred *disorder*. For Bourdieu, sacred disorder revolves around the departure from the "static, regulated, and calm" – the normal, 'natural' state of being created and maintained by religion and religious order.[53] It is a period where order is shattered, and actions become "dynamic, free and violent". It is, in essence, a departure from the norm in a radical and sudden fashion, and thus exists in fundamental opposition to this norm. This departure, however, is imbued with energy and with creative capacity: whereas religion naturalizes the arbitrary but maintains the system of dominance, sacred disorder is a ritual practice which can, through the radical use of social capital, create, displace, and alter.[54] This, of course, is dangerous to the system; however, as a ritual practice it fulfils a particular goal:

> "…because of its inherently explosive nature [sacred disorder] cannot remain dominant *for anything more than a very brief period of time*, the time it takes *to purify* and also to *revivify*, to '*recreate'* the [normal order] in a single *tumultuous irruption* of energy."[55]

[51] Bourdieu, *A Theory of Practice*, 33.
[52] Bourdieu, *A Theory of Practice*, *33.*
[53] Bourdieu, *Genesis and Structure*, 36.
[54] Bourdieu, *Genesis and Structure*, 37.
[55] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 36.

Sacred disorder is thus a short-term suspension of the norm, of the *habitus* of society, which allows for improvisation by agents of that society. Its controlled release is thus a way to reproduce the norm through its temporary absence, thus imbuing it with capital. Such a process can be used to "make good an accident" or to re-establish an "interrupted" pattern of behavior; in essence, it is a short-term departure from the norm which is simultaneously recreated through that very departure.

The final element of this sociological religion that must be mentioned is Bourdieu's conceptualization of myth, as it is vital to the simultaneously structured/structuring habitus of the religious field. Myth is a form of historical religious discourse which (re)produces the patterns and symbols which are invested with meaning which constitute religion; it gives these symbols a form of scientism and establishes a framework for knowledge and knowledge production (within the religious field and, correspondingly, the 'natural' physical and social worlds).[56] It is constructed through a continual interaction between various religious suppliers (experts/specialists) and diverse religious consumers (the laity), with the suppliers competing for the 'monopoly' over religious/symbolic capital to create an "*ideological alchemy* by which the transfiguration of social relations into supernatural relations operates and is therefore inscribed in the nature of things and thereby justified."[57]

2.2 A Religion of Statehood

Considering the above conceptualization of religion, we can see how statehood in many ways fits the paradigm. If the state constitutes the boundaries of legitimate political authority both in practice and in thought, then it in many ways aligns with Bourdieu's sociological construction of religion; it is an arbitrary system which has yet become natural

[56] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 2.
[57] Bourdieu, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field," 5.

– in essence, both constitutive of and constituted by the system. The next two sections elucidate this claim further by deconstructing the notion of statehood and its expansion from Europe (with a focus on colonialism and imperialism) to demonstrate the way the dogma of state and associated practices structure the world and – as Bourdieu argues – obscures the arbitrary nature of contemporary hierarchies and structures of dominance.

Chapter 3 – Universalization and Naturalization of Statehood

This chapter outlines the history of statehood from its orginary context in Europe to show its arbitrary and contingent nature, and notes some external forms of order which represent alternate paradigms of governance. It then outlines the historical events by which the state was universalized and the basis of its later naturalization (explored primarily in the next chapter) was constructed, drawing examples from the colonial dominions of Africa.

3.1 States and their Critics: Historical Forms of Order

States, as conceptually and practically understood today, came about through a process based in quite specific historical and environmental contingencies. The most well-established theory of historical state-making is that of Charles Tilly and his academic followers, and best described as 'coercion-contention' theory. Focusing on European states, Tilly breaks down the formative processes into four general parts: war making, state making, extraction, and elite absorption.[58] War making involves the elimination or defeat of external rivals who lay claim to territory claimed by the ruler of a proto-state; state making revolves around the elimination of internal rivals to the dominance of a ruler; extraction involves the construction of systems to facilitate central command of resources and the garnering of finances; and elite absorption involves bolstering and protecting the power of the ruler through gaining the support of local elites. These four parts all are achieved through a combination of violent force, 'coercion', and negotiation with other factions, 'contention'. Further, all the parts are interrelated and impact each other (for

[58] See primarily Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* and Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1992*.

example, increasing resource extraction and taxation may fracture peaceful relationships with local elites, thus making them an internal rival to be eliminated).

This contingent process created a very specific type of order, based in the notion of territory as the basis of political authority.[59] Rather than an authority type focused on the respect for that authority by persons, the state established itself as the dominant power over an extent of land, within which persons were essentially a type of resource. The borders of the state – the extent of the territory which it could control – were determined by the state's 'empirical' ability to assert itself as sovereign, and were constantly under threat from both internal and external rivals. While this claim to sovereignty was seldom absolute, it represented an ideal type, particularly from the 18th century onwards.[60] Proto-states were constantly made and destroyed through the shifting power dynamics of the time, in a manner reminiscent of what is now understood as anarchy.[61]

The creation of states in this manner has distinct repercussions for the way in which identity is conceptualized by persons within this structure. Through the construction of their authority as absolute, proto-states could not tolerate any extra-state group to exist within its territory which may capture the loyalty of people or provide an alternate source of order. The project of statehood thus contained an implicit homogenization of peoples within the state structure through the targeting of non-state forms of community as potential competitors to its power.[62] These organizations could only continue to exist inasmuch as their existence fit into the structures determined by the state, and correspondingly were

[59] John Gerard Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations," *International Organization*, 47 no. 1 (1993): 139-174.
[60] Kayaoglu, "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory.".
[61] Brian Taylor and Roxana Botea, "Tilly Tally: War-Making and State-Making in the Contemporary Third World," *International Studies Review,* 10 no. 1 (2008): 27-56.
[62] Engin Isin, "Citizens without Nations," *Environment and Planning D-Society and Space,* 30 no. 3 (2012): 450-467.

subject to its practices, norms and morals. As Isin argues, this places the state (at least as an ideal-type, if not necessarily in actuality) directly above the family unit as a source of identity; the practices, customs and rituals of everyday life are regulated by the state and reinforced through state-run social institutions.[63]

While the predominant form today, states are not the only form of political order; alternate authority types have existed, and arguably still exist despite their lack of legitimacy in the international system. In both sociology and international relations, there has been a recent attempt to historicize and understand these different forms of order which arose from non-European contexts and the impacts they still have on society.[64] While this literature is broad and diverse, it clearly demonstrates the varied ways in which historical societies conceptualized people, land, power/authority, and legitimacy all led to alternate conceptions of society. Most particularly, it demonstrates that notions of territory and sovereignty are not absolute but instead are contested and malleable; for example, the *tian xia* system which existed in what is now China conceptualized sovereignty as relational and overlapping – as *non-binary* – where "land can have several masters or no master at all."[65] Perhaps more strikingly, conceptions of power and authority also differ substantially. Geertz, through an analysis of pre-colonial Bali between the 14th and 20th centuries, characterizes it as a 'theatre-state' bound together through ritualistic practice where "power served pomp, not pomp power;" namely, that it was ritual that constituted

[63] Isin, "Citizens without Nations."
[64] See, for example, Erik Ringmar, "Performing International Systems: Two East-Asian Alternatives to the Westphalian Order," *International Organization*, 66 no. 1 (2012): 1-25; *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 17 no. 1 (2014): 89-111; John Anthony Pella, "International Relations in Africa before the Europeans," *International History Review*, 37 no. 1 (2015): 99-118.
[65] Ringmar, "Performing International Systems," 13.

the overarching political form of society, and not the ability to exert military or other coercive force.[66]

Not only have other forms of order existed, but potentially more suitable ones outside of the original political geography which gave rise to states. One of the most notable investigators of this is Jeffrey Herbst in his analyses of African states, who argues that the challenge of statehood in the continent for "precolonial, colonial and independence leaders as exerting authority over distance given low densities of people," considering the vast and often inhospitable amounts of land.[67] Noting that Africa only reached the level of population density of 1500s Europe in 1975, he argues that there is correspondingly different relationship across history between people and land due to the significantly different political geography;[68] this thus makes extending power over people of significantly higher importance than over a given tract of land.[69] Sovereignty, correspondingly, could be and often was constituted very differently: instead of being defined across territory and distinct from forms/concepts of authority, the two were fundamentally intertwined.[70] Herbst therefore argues that control was characterized by an "unbundling of sovereignty and control."[71] Political order, therefore, often looked markedly different, and manifested itself in significantly different forms which were more organic to the political and physical geography of various parts of the African continent.

[66] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980).
[67] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014): xv.
[68] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa,* 15-21.
[69] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa,* 35.
[70] See, for example, Kenneth Wylie, *Temne Government in Sierra Leone* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1977), 55; Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975): 191-2.
[71] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa,* 56.

These distinct forms of political organization all had correspondingly different forms of identity. While European states created a particular form of identity (as noted above) which was slowly enforced through policy and inculcation,[72] the progression and formulation of identity was tied with political and other developments across the world and thus resulted in various different formulations. Herbst notes the different kinship, ethnic, and familial ties across various parts of Africa in his work, including in contemporary Nigeria and Kenya.[73] Pella, in his survey of several types of pre-colonial African authority, notes various types of order which had different relations between peoples and constructions of identity, often based on lineage.[74] Such ties were similar to the non-codified and overlapping identities in medieval Europe,[75] but went through very different processes and forms resulting in different conceptions of person and community.

Statehood, correspondingly, should not be seen as an inevitable – teleological – outcome of political struggle, but one that came about through the interaction of highly contingent historical phenomena. While no form of social order can be 'natural' in the sense that Bourdieu ascribes it, each form of order outlined above emerged in a particular manner due to social and political interaction and circumstance, and correspondingly was a more or less 'organic' production. The interaction – both structuring of and structured by – of political routines, geography, and identity all create different social organizations which are equally as constructed – as arbitrary – as their counterparts.

[72] See most prominently Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) for a comprehensive discussion of how this occurred.
[73] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa,* 45, 130.
[74] Pella, "International Relations in Africa before the Europeans," 99-118.
[75] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, 37.

3.2 Expansion and Universalization: The Colonial Encounter

Despite their contingent historical origins and arbitrary nature, states have expanded across the world until almost the whole global landmass is (at least claimed as) part of a state structure. This essentially occurred through a form of export: the state system was expanded from its European points of origin through the imperial designs of the more durable powers which arose from this environment. Driven by the ever-growing need for resources and peoples to exploit, the imperial powers captured (through various means) control of most of the world at some point between the 15th and 20th centuries.[76] This European domination/expansion was far from steady or unchallenged; throughout much of the colonial period, "Europe's contact with the rest of the world took place on a variety of terms, including inferiority."[77] Despite this historical patchiness, the gradual expansion of statehood and sovereignty was imposed through the 'European' encounter with other societies:

> In the Americas and later in Australia, and up to a point southern Africa, European settlers violently pushed aside indigenous populations and set up colonial states that eventually gained independence. They were largely people by Europeans and took a broadly European political form. Much of Africa, the Middle East, and South, Central, and South East Asia were later forcefully colonized by European powers, and had European political form imposed on them as a condition of their decolonization during the twentieth century.[78]

[76] Antony Anghie, "Finding the Peripheries: Sovereignty and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century International Law," *Harvard International Law Journal*, 40 no. 1 (1999): 1-80.
[77] Barry Buzan, "Universal Sovereignty," in Tim Dunne and Christian Reus-Smit (eds.), *The Globalization of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017): 227-247.
[78] Buzan, "Universal Sovereignty," 230.

While the duration, penetration and brutality of colonial domination varied wildly, in almost all cases there has been a lasting impact on the construction of (post)colonial society. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the construction of Africa by the European powers. Whereas originally the 'scramble for Africa' was characterized by violent competition between the colonial empires (although of course usually resulting in the deaths of Africans rather than Europeans), relations slowly became more regularized and peaceful as a result of formalization and division. As sovereignty developed and territorial demarcation occurred in Europe – particularly in the nineteenth century – so too did these ideas spread to the colonial periphery.[79] This was eventually codified and institutionalized at the Berlin Conference of 1885-6, when the colonial powers drew borders onto the African continent which both reflected their current dominions yet further resulted from political bargaining over who had *claim* to as yet unconquered stretches of land (or, consequent to this division, territory).[80]

This method of constructing the state, however, created an entity fundamentally different to the European model. As noted above, the European state was created through the interaction of various coercive influences and the competition between various groups, thus making it a cohesive, centralized form of government which was the primary exploitative power. The colonial African states, however, were constructed in a manner designed to reverse this; they were created for the sole purpose of facilitating colonial rule, exploitation of resources and extraction of capital for the benefit of the colonial

[79] Anghie, "Finding the Peripheries: Sovereignty and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century International Law."
[80] Anghie, "Finding the Peripheries: Sovereignty and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century International Law," 10.

homeland.[81] Such a strategy meant that the colonial state never developed the cohesion of their European counterparts, with the resources only being used to ensure colonial dominance and not to sustain or develop the apparatus of government beyond this point. As the coercive apparatus of the colonial powers was funded and sustained from the country of origin, all the necessary support could be acquired by cooptation and bribery of local elites and processes; this was usually achieved through a form of 'decentralized despotism', or through the construction of many small units within the colonial state which, once sufficiently bribed, funneled resources through the colonial government and onward to colonial advantage.[82]

These internal units were further constructed as mutually exclusive by the colonial powers in what was essentially an 'enforced primitiveness'. Based in a European paradigm of modernity, the colonial powers had preconceived Africa as inhabited by a particular form of primitive society, and reconstituted societies (which, as noted above, took various forms and had complicated social structures) to fit this conception through the imposition of laws and cooptation of customs.[83] As Berman writes, for the Europeans these created 'primitive' societies

> represented a form of social order and culture… regarded as 'natural' for Africans. For colonial officials 'every African belonged to a tribe, just as every European belonged to a nation', and they believed they confronted 'an Africa comprised of neatly bounded, homogeneous tribes'.[84]

[81] Crawford Young, "The End of the Post-Colonial State in Africa? Reflections on Changing African Political Dynamics," *African Affairs* 103 no. 410 (2004): 23-49.
[82] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996)
[83] Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism," *African Affairs*, 97 no. 388 (1998): 305-341.
[84] Berman, "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State," 305.

While the extent to which the population was remade varied according to colonial necessity and capacity, this fracturing of communities fundamentally altered the structure of colonized societies. Further, as it was linked to colonial exploitation, these groups became part of a competitive structure designed to keep them off-balance and unable to unify; essentially, the colonial powers wanted each group to be antithetical in custom, belief and law to others.

It is worth noting that at the opposite end of the primitive-modern conceptualization of society used by the Europeans is, of course, the European model of the social: the state. This teleological construction, of which the state was the end result, was strongly present in European thought at the time (albeit in a contested position in relation to developing normative values).[85] It was further fostered through, as Anderson argues, the invention of the printing press, the standardization and spread of common national languages, the newspaper, and the inculcation of an 'educated' elite who could further recreate national ties through both politico-economic and more soft social means.[86] The colonial powers utilized several of these strategies in their dominions, most particularly the codification of languages and the education of a 'native elite'.[87] These, of course, however had the opposite intent and result to the European experience, and were used to reinforce the boundaries between communities (through language differences) and historicize the primitive-modern teleology and conflictual relations into a local elite who could support

[85] Steven Seidman, "The Colonial Unconscious of Classical Sociology," in Julian Go (ed), *Postcolonial Sociology* (Bingley: Emerald Group, 2013): 35-54.
[86] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
[87] Berman, "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State," 325-7; for a comparative example from Sierra Leone and South Africa, see Zimitri Erasmus, "Creolization, Colonial Citizenship(s) and Degeneracy: A Critique of Selected Histories of Sierra Leone and South Africa," *Current Sociology*, 59 no. 5 (2011): 635-54.

the colonial rule.[88] This creates an interesting duality around the naturalization of the state, as it both becomes a natural evolution (justifying colonial borders) but also the internal divisions are naturalized through these socializing processes.

This creation of colonial states and the artificial primitivization of Africa therefore creates further layers of arbitrariness within the paradigm of statehood. Not only is statehood itself an arbitrary construct, but it was further arbitrarily imposed (rather than evolving through social interaction) over the African continent as a direct manifestation of colonial interests. Further, the model of statehood directly reflected this colonial interest, and was designed as fundamentally different to the cohesive European model as controlled through a decentralized despotism, functioning through chains of people who were arbitrarily grouped and categorized. The interests of external powers are thus codified and collectivized into the very core of the colonial state and its peoples, who have been divided and re-divided according to those interests. The multiple layers of arbitrariness in the colonial state (firstly, that of statehood, then the arbitrary imposition of such, then the arbitrary construction of peoples) thus create a mutually intertwined dynamic where each requires the others for their continued propagation. This has distinct repercussions for the development of individual/communal/national habitus in the post-colony, with the multiple layers of arbitrary governance constituting a fundamental problematic in the experiential lives of people.

[88] Bruce Berman, "'A Palimpsest of Contradictions': Ethnicity, Class, and Politics in Africa," *International Journal Of African Historical Studies*, 37 no. 1 (2004): 24.

Chapter 4 – Consecration and Codification of Statehood

Continuing from the previous chapter, the following sections outline the frames and practices which consecrate the state into a natural form of government.

4.1 Legal, Normative, and Moral Frames

It is from the early twentieth century that statehood can begin to be seen to take on its religious nature. Throughout history, states (as seen above) were the direct results of political events and interactions, but not accorded special or supercedory status compared to other authority types: they were just the most effective manifestation of interests and recognized as such. While naturalized somewhat in European thought, it is only through the events of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that this system became globalized (as above) and, importantly, *consecrated*. As noted in Chapter 2, religion consecrates in two ways which are strongly associated with statehood: through a legalization of the arbitrary and symbolic system so as to define the barriers of fact or possibility, and through the inculcation of practices and rituals which sustain the system. The UN (among other institutions and interactional processes, but, arguably, as the most important of them) is an integral part of the consecration of states in both these manners. While a somewhat artificial separation which will entail a degree of overlap, this section will focus on the bounding of possibility through legalization and the development of norms, while the next section deals with the practices which reinforce statehood, particularly from the post-WWII and UN environment.

The codification of statehood as the foundation of global authority reached its zenith following the two World Wars, in the United Nations system. As a successor of

various organizations enshrined (to a large extent) with conceptions of sovereignty,[89] the UN represents a durable part of contemporary international society which is symbolic of a fundamental turn in international practice: the legalization and 'naturalization' of the concept of statehood. Membership of the UN – as given even in the organizational title – is determined by the recognition of statehood of an ascending party, as determined by Article 4 of the UN Charter.[90] For many colonized nations, this 'recognition' was determined through the UN Trusteeship Council, which provided the legitimate framework through which independence from colonial domination was facilitated.[91] Article 77 of the UN categorically defines the trusteeship system as applying to territory, implicitly drawing on the logic of state.[92]

The UN Charter thus codifies, through textual and legal means, the international system based around the organization of states. Bourdieu addresses codification briefly in several of his texts, as a mechanism by which indeterminate, porous concepts and practices become clear and hard; "[t]o codify means to banish the effect of vagueness and indeterminacy, boundaries which are badly drawn and divisions which are only approximate, by producing clear classes and making clear cuts, establishing firm frontiers…"[93] Codification, through this meaning, can be both implicit and explicit, from elementary categorization to rationalized legalization;[94] interestingly, however, in his

[89] For a discussion of internationalism and international organizations prior to the UN (particularly those that impacted the European conception and codification of sovereignty) see Akira Iriye, *The Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 9-59.
[90] United Nations Charter, Article 4 (1945).
[91] United Nations Charter, Chapter 13 (1945).
[92] United Nations Charter, Article 77 (1945).
[93] Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990): 82.
[94] Weininger, "Foundations of Class Analysis in the work of Bourdieu," 143-7.

discussion of religion he makes no mention of scripture, despite relying on scriptural religions (most notably Catholicism, but also Islam) in his discussion of the religious field. Scripture, however, can be seen as part of both the practical and legal aspects of codification, through its naturalization of both social order and law and through its construction of practice as related to them.

The United Nations, as a codified and codifying body, achieves this on several levels. The Charter, as a codifying document, is also codified according to the 'norms' (i.e. the interests of the major powers, or in the terminology of Bourdieu the dominant elite/class) of the system; it is at once structured by and structuring of. To focus again on consecration through the legalization of the arbitrary and the implicit, the Charter – as noted above – sanctifies and codifies (implicitly and explicitly) several key concepts in relation to statehood. Implicitly, it makes the state the formal legal entity of governance and the foundation of the international system, with the associated paradigms of territorial governance, sovereignty, and development. It makes statehood a social reality by making it the 'objective' means of self-governance and communal construction. The Charter, in some ways, can be considered a form of scripture: it makes a claim of how the world 'is' and derives the legal and practical formulation of politics from this construction of objective possibility. This makes the borders and boundaries drawn through the interests of the elites – both in Europe and in the colonial/expanded dominions – the boundaries of objective *fact*; in the interest of 'peace and security', these borders become unchangeable without the consent of the elite (namely, those within the United Nations).

The codification of sovereignty and demarcation of 'official' borders (which can only be changed through similarly 'official' means) fundamentally splits the concept of

sovereignty into two parts: firstly, the 'empirical' (as in the historical European model) and based on the ability of the state to create or *enforce* its sovereignty; and secondly, the 'juridical', the *claim* to empirical sovereignty based on the *mutual recognition* of state sovereignty by other states.[95] Codification emphasizes the juridical at the expense of the empirical; the claim made to sovereignty and the borders which are correspondingly institutionally recognized constitute the bounds of sovereignty, in many ways *regardless* of whether the empirical aspects of sovereignty inherent to this claim exist in a meaningful fashion.[96] The 'fact' of statehood as an abstract, natural authority with clearly demarcated borders – the juridical, legalized state – therefore becomes more important than the existence of a functioning state apparatus, or the 'empirical' state. This juridical, legalized state is continually reproduced through international law, which both limits and is limited by states.

The juridical, or legal, nature of statehood is what underpins the international system and the sociological religion of state; these borders become sacrosanct, or sacred – the demarcation of a global field according the enforced and 'naturalized' interests of the global elite. To return to the notion of sacred as it relates to Bourdieu's religion: it is an emanation of society which reinforces the dominance of the elites over the remainder of society through investing ideas, concepts or things with symbolic capital, as part of the structuring and structured habitus. The borders of the juridical state amalgamates all these forms of the sacred through combining a concept (of bounded community) with an idea (of 'nation' and the people) with a thing ('territory/land'); the demarcation of borders is

[95] For a more in-depth construction of 'empirical' and 'juridical' sovereignty, see Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
[96] Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*

(nominally) constructed as a representation of a bounded community of people, who are bounded by their shared inhabitance of these territories and a culture tied to (and often nativized within) this territory.[97]

Along with the legalization of statehood, these borders are sustained through moral precepts which reproduce the state as legitimate. There are several mutually interconnected moral and normative frameworks which reproduce the environment of statehood, most notably the international commitment to 'peace and security' and human rights. Peace and security explicitly delegitimize violence and war as mechanisms of politics; war is no longer considered an acceptable "politics by other means."[98] As one of the major mechanisms by which states were historically both made and unmade, delegitimating these processes serves multiple roles in sustaining the state system: firstly, it delegitimizes attempts by states to conquer each other, but secondly, it also delegitimizes the creation of new states by similar processes within the juridical system. Take, for example, the rise of ISIS: the use of violence (which was illegitimate because of its perpetration by a non-state actor) allowed the international community – states, organizations, media outlets – to create the impression that ISIS was acting out of "blind, destructive religious fanaticism," when instead it was making the claim to statehood in much the same way as historical states.[99] Peace and security thus become sacred: they are representations which moralize and naturalize (through the inculcated aversion to death and pain) the system as it exists.

[97] For example and discussion, see Anna Stilz, "Nations, States, and Territory," *Ethics*, 121 no. 3 (2011): 572-601.
[98] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).
[99] For a more indepth analysis of ISIS within this context, see Sebastian Ille and Dina Mansour, "Rational Atrocities and State Formation: A Game Theoretic Approach to the Case of ISIS," *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal*, 10 no. 2 (2015): 21-30 (quoted from p. 21) and Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "The Dawn of the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, 16 no. 1 (2014): 5-15.

The claim that human rights support the religion of statehood is slightly less clear, as usually sovereignty and human rights are seen as existing in tension.[100] This, however, makes sense in the religious framework when human rights are interpreted as a fundamental mechanism through which the *misrecognition* of power and dominance is achieved. Fundamentally, human rights shift the paradigm of the international from states to humans, or makes *humans* appear the primary beneficiaries of international order. They provide a frame of reference to conceptualize the world, and the actions of states, which makes humans – or human life/freedoms – appear as the protected, the *sacred*, in society.[101] The state, therefore, reinforces its position as the nominal representative of the community (and nation), and masquerades as the protector of its people and the fundamental guarantor of their rights, despite its role in propagating the systems and structures which maintain the domination of elites within both domestic and global fields. It thus links into the same frame as those which require 'peace and security' within the system, but focusses on the human cost as the foundation of these precepts rather than explicitly recognizing that it upholds the state system. This frame of reference penetrates from the most international to the most local aspects of society.

These two moral conditions (and codification of the state) tie through the idea of systemic stability. It is the point at which the above two doctrines come together in an institutional framework, which explicitly legitimates the idea of states as order. Stability adopts the above concepts to make this 'state' order appear the most effective way of

[100] See, for a discussion, Helen Stacy, *Human Rights for the 21st Century: Sovereignty, Civil Society, Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), particularly 75-90.

[101] The stream of literature known as human security supports this claim; see for examples and discussion: Roland Paris, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" *International Security*, 26 no. 2 (2001): 87-102; Sandra MacLean, David Black, and Timothy Shaw (eds), *A Decade of Human Security: Global Governance and New Multilateralisms* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006).

ensuring peace and security, and resulting maximum protection of human rights. The doctrine of stability, as with both 'peace and security' and 'human rights', is contested at both academic and policy levels (for example, the realist debate between whether a unipolar, bipolar or multipolar system is the most stable);[102] however, the core value of stability and its construction through the state is largely taken as dogma. Other options for stability and governance are normally not even considered, let alone on the same level as statehood; even in reassert the dominance of statehood is reasserted as the paradigm of order.

These moral precepts are bound to the codified system of laws that consecrate the system through the 'founding myth' of international relations: that of the Peace of Westphalia. The Westphalian myth creates sovereignty as a product of equal agreement between established powers against the tyranny of universalism, and invests symbolic capital into states as the epitome of order and peace. It historicizes the concept of sovereignty as part of a natural evolution of the social which stretches back to (at least) 1648, and embeds states with the notions of peace, order and stability from their 'creation' at this time. Further, through the implication of Westphalia as a treaty between equal sovereign powers and the three hundred year 'gap' in international relations history until the establishment of the UN allows for the implication that states spread naturally: that the borders codified and recognized by the UN evolved as delineations of sovereignty in the same manner as at Westphalia. This historical gap exists, of course, because of the disorder and violence which occurred within the intervening period: to show the period of sovereign expansion as one of instability and violence would be counterproductive to the

[102] William Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security*, 24 no. 1 (1999): 5-41.

reproduction of statehood as natural. While the World Wars periodically get mentioned, it is, in simple terms, to legitimate the contemporary system – to say that this mass violence is unacceptable and reaffirm an international commitment to preventing it ever reoccurring.

Thus, in sum: through moral and legal precepts which both structure and are structured by institutions such as the UN, and which are both embedded ahistorically into the Westphalian myth, states became universalized and consecrated as natural. The UN, as a body both created through and creating law, codifies the historical – 'natural' – borders and structures of authority into a legal-normative and moral framework which is structured and structuring of statehood and states. This framework both delegitimizes the forms of violence or 'disorder' which could unmake states or challenge their supremacy, while fundamentally framing this in a manner which makes it misrecognizable – i.e. through focusing on human lives and rights. This represents a form of recognition of an arbitrary order and authority which fundamentally misrecognizes the inherent interests and power structures of that system, but is sustained through its claim to naturalness.

4.2 States and Symbols: The Practice of Statehood

The second aspect of consecration is the inculcation of practices which sustain and make misrecognizable the structure of economic and political relations and their associate hierarchies. These practices are invested with symbolic capital through reference to the legal-normative moral system outlined above; following Bourdieu, they are both structured by this framework and (re)structure it through their repeated exercise. Further, Bourdieu sees practices as creating simultaneously unity and division: hierarchy is created through dividing agents and actors but unifying them into a system where hierarchy becomes

possible. While making an exhaustive list would be beyond the scope of this paper, outlining some types and typologies of these practices is germane to the subject at hand. Most particularly, there are three typologies of practice which are both codified and customary – and in some cases, ritualized – which sustain the myth of statehood: sovereign recognition, development, and the experiential.

The sustenance of a system where a 'juridical fact' is more important than empirical exercise requires its actors (states) to accept the rules of the game – which, of course, they do, as it is in their interests to do so. Most primarily, this require the *recognition* by actors of the legitimacy of their counterparts; a top-down, most-powerful-actor recognition. States must mutually recognize both the legitimacy and the juridical sovereignty of other states in order to 'peace and security' and systemic stability; states can no longer simply be made and unmade according to political fortune.[103] Each state has an arbitrary yet recognized claim to its 'natural' territory which must be considered sacrosanct by the other parties in the system; using force to expand and claim territory is no longer considered 'acceptable'.[104] This is aptly demonstrated through the continuing shape and form of borders in Africa; despite several conflicts and political struggles (which sometimes remain domestic yet often spill over borders) the boundaries between states are almost identical to their colonial predecessors. This includes the Tanzanian-Ugandan border, which remained the same despite the invasion of Uganda in 1979 by Tanzania to overthrow Idi Amin.[105] Further, the recognition of juridical sovereignty gives rise to the notion of the 'failed state': a concept which implicitly recognizes the 'natural' right of that state to exist despite the

[103] Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World.*
[104] Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World.*
[105] Jeffrey Herbst, "War and the State in Africa," *International Security*, 14 no. 4 (1990): 117.

complete breakdown of all functionality (compared to the historical environment in which the territory and resources of any failed authority would have been taken over by a stronger power.)[106]

Practices of recognition divide the system quite explicitly, by making each unit – state – a separate entity along constructed borders. This separates the internal from the external and allows the artificial bifurcation of morality and law, with each state having distinct internal dynamics which, while intertwined, are considered integral to sovereignty and thus separate from external dynamics. While each state is sustained through recognition and through reference to the underpinning legal-normative habitus of the system, the internal structure is considered to be created according to the 'culture' of the state and thus allows for deviation and interpretation – and potentially misuse – of the constructed systemic tenets. While dividing, however, along these borders, practices of recognition also unify states in two ways. Firstly, through the act of recognition itself: states only recognize other states, and this process of recognition requires the majority of states to accord recognition to the recognized party. Secondly, this process only recognizes *other* states – units of like type. This returns to the myth of statehood as natural: all states that are recognized are considered to have the same empirical properties (notably sovereignty, cohesion, and community) to a greater or lesser extent simply through being recognized as having juridical sovereignty. Unity is thus created through the a) making of a claim to b) juridical sovereignty and statehood, c) the general acceptance of that claim, and d) the delegitimization of other authority types.

[106] Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* and Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States AD 990-1992*.

The second typology of practice described are those related to 'development'. Underpinned by both ideas of peace and security and human rights, the idea of the international community sustains practices which reproduce the state and the hierarchy of states. Through drawing on the moral orders outlined above, the idea of the development inculcates the state into a teleological pattern by which the dominant states are perpetually reaffirmed in their position, while the majority of weak states are continually prevented from rising up the global hierarchy. The practices which fit into this typology, such as infrastructure funding, the practice of the Bretton Woods institutions, and the nationalization of currencies, usually revolve around governance and governmental support and regularly economic support. While done on the pretext of 'help', however, often this help is anything but: for example, the free trade proposals pushed by the Bretton Woods institutions: these neoliberal reforms fail to achieve their dedicated goals, make the exploitation of 'developing' states easier, and also ignore the historical mercantilism and protectionism which allowed the 'developed' states to exist.

As an example, 'humanitarian' aid (or development aid) is highly problematic under this conception of society: while usually sent to governments (or potentially nationally-based NGOs), it is premised on improving outcomes for humans as individuals. This is not, of course, to say that this 'humanitarian' goal is not sometimes achieved, but that it is constructed through the state and with reference to moral precepts which sustain the state. Practices of development are not always as explicitly reproductive of statehood as aid; they often take more symbolic forms which reaffirm the idea of peaceful relations, equality and cooperation. While some such types may not be seen as involving 'development' in the economic sense, it is worth remembering that the development of

European states occurred only with war and violence as catalysts for centralization. Practices around equality and cooperation thus fit into this paradigm for two reasons: firstly, by making social development be towards an 'ideal type' (for example, democratization), and secondly, through removing the catalyst which made the state an authority type in itself. Take, for example, the 'democratic' nature of the international system, particularly in the UN. In all UN bodies apart from the UNSC, each state is accorded equal voting power, despite the vast disparities (both in capacity, population, territory, and functionality) between them. This invests the UN with and its decisions with legitimacy through reference to the 'equality' of all members within the international community, but fundamentally a) excludes non-state actors, b) hides that underpinning all these decisions is a notion of statehood which is inherently unequal, and c) makes war and violence illegitimate as 'peaceful negotiation' underpins the system. These symbolic reforms, however, often come tied to the more pressing economic aid and thus become mutually intertwined.

Development practices thus also create unity and division and reinforce the global hierarchy. They create unity through placing states on a teleological pathway towards a goal, 'development,' which symbolizes order and peace. All states are nominally somewhere along this pathway, with the 'developed' states being the furthest in front and the 'developing' notionally trying to catch up. States which are 'developed' are accorded symbolic capital for this development, and are able to both exercise their independence and use their capital to reinforce the system (and thus their dominance). Developing states, on the other hand, are dispossessed of both symbolic and other forms of capital and must try and follow the 'natural' pathway towards becoming 'developed' set out by their developed

peers despite the fact that this is often counterproductive (for example, the current debates in political economics around liberalization and free trade as vital for development despite the fact that most developed states became so behind mercantilist barriers)[107]. While unified through being on this developmental pathway, states are divided according to their position on it: the 'developed' states are more hierarchically dominant and less prone to being forced to adjust internal policies by external actors, while the developing states – often through heavy reliance on aid and loans from financial institutions – are forced to accept a lower position in the hierarchy and regularly have counter-productive policies foisted on them through institutions.

The third typology can be seen simply as the 'experiential' set of practices which constitute borders. These include more general patterns of interaction such as trade, immigration control, and military cooperation (or, in more limited cases in contemporary times, interstate war). These practices all imprint the physical 'location' of borders into the psyche of the human individual, as well as onto the (national) community. Through this location, and particularly the practice of 'crossing', borders go from an abstract demarcation to a physical point that 'exists.'[108] For example, immigration controls: as Salter argues, the process of border control "is a dialogue between body and body politic requiring the confession of all manner of bodily, economic and social information," which is "mediated through the administrative bodies of the sovereigns."[109] The passage across a border by persons is made at a single, physical point where a person is 'identified' by being

[107] Tandeka Nkiwane, "Africa and International Relations: Regional Lessons for a Global Discourse," *International Political Science Review,* 22 no. 3 (2001): 279-90.
[108] Mark Salter, "The Global Visa Regime and the Political Technologies of the International Self: Borders, Bodies, Biopolitics," *Alternatives,* 31 no. 2 (2006): 167-89.
[109] Mark Salter, "The Global Visa Regime," 170.

reduced to their national origin – the constructed set of borders in which they were born/naturalized. It makes physical the dichotomy of 'inside/outside' the state, with the experience of entering and exiting making the border 'real': while socially constructed, it becomes physically important and 'real' through the mechanisms of control.[110] The same is true (in an altered form) for goods and capital: borders are a point at which goods can be (re)valued through trade law and where currency (physicalized capital) can become meaningless unless converted to a recognizable form.

Such practices extend from the macro- to the micro-level (and also link into many practices controlled at a sub-state level), but fundamentally connect people and communities to the notion of the state. They create unity within the system between states, through the reinforcement of recognition and the interconnectedness of the apparatus by which they are conducted. They also, however, reproduce division through the reinforcement of statehood as an underpinning construct of personhood and community: the ability of people and communities to interact is fundamentally mediated through their state affiliation. Essentially, division is created through the unequal division of symbolic capital between states and its sedimentation into communities and individuals, while unity is created through the processes by which this capital is recognized and experienced across the borders and boundaries of the state.

[110] Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory*.

Chapter 5 – A Fundamental Misrecognition: Statehood and Colonialism

From the previous chapter on universalization and naturalization and the above discussion of consecration, it is evident that statehood has the necessary elements of a sociological religion. States, as an arbitrary form of government evolving in a particular historical context, were universalized through the European encounter – either direct colonialism or through contact with European borders and their solidification. This system was consecrated through being welded into a moral system (which through various events became legal-normative) which made the state the fundamental unit of political order and community: a social 'fact' of which there is no outside. The practices of statehood, of which a few typologies were outlined above, reproduce this social fact through being both structured by it and structuring it. Contained in this universalized system, of course, is a hierarchy which contains various forms of political, economic, and symbolic capital which are unevenly distributed. However, the consecration of the system exists within and creates paradigms through which the methods of preserving this hierarchy are misrecognized and this inequitable division perceived as natural. To begin to see the import of this claim, this chapter will weave together the examples of colonialism to show how colonized peoples were inculcated into the state paradigm and misrecognize their position in the world order, while the following and final chapter will show conversely how the religion of statehood impacts major global events.

5.1 Colonialism and Independence

As noted previously, while in Europe the state and the nation evolved to largely align with each other (if not entirely in tandem), the arbitrary borders drawn by the colonial

powers and the communities internal to them were designed to be fragmented into 'tribes'.[111] The colonial state survived based on its continued (re)production of this fragmentation and arbitrary division of peoples within these constructed borders (often through a system of decentralized despotism), thus creating a second imposed layer of arbitrary social structures and paradigms. These arbitrary communities and structures fit together in often convoluted and complex manners, sometimes aligning and sometimes creating tension between both different tribes and with the state. While creating and inculcating the structures, processes and paradigms which would lead to future problems, the system was held together through colonial coercive capacity and the judicious use of resources to create and maintain a caste of elites in colonial societies, who could be used to maintain control of the majority of the population.

At the time of independence, it was still the colonial powers who upheld and reinforced this divisive system and who defined the environment in which independence could be achieved. Independence, when achieved directly by a colonized power and whether peaceful or revolutionary, was thus constrained by the demarcated borders which represented colonial authority. Correspondingly, in the pursuit of independence, most movements were willing to legitimate national borders as constructed by the colonial powers, particularly as many pre-colonial forms of government had been highly co-opted and altered.[112] When independence was institutionally fostered through the UN Trusteeship Council, it also focused on making dominions independent of colonial masters within the

[111] The term 'tribe' is used here to refer to the primitivization of African peoples and the bounding of them into discrete units; however, it also encompasses ethnicities, chiefdoms, and other forms of colonially co-opted/created governance.

[112] To see an example of such cooptation in Sierra Leone, see Richard Fanthorpe, "Locating the Politics of a Sierra Leonean Chiefdom," *Africa: Journal Of The International African Institute*, 68 no. 4 (1998): 558-584; Pauline Peters, "Conflicts over land and threats to customary tenure in Africa," *African Affairs*, 112 no. 449 (2013): 543-562.

borders created by those masters both as those were the 'natural' territories and because the UN recognizes only states as forms of government. Each colonial dominion thus achieved its independence as a state, which was further legitimated by the Organization of African Unity in 1963 when the organization recognized – and therefore sanctified and consecrated – these borders to recognize the work of individual independence groups and preserve peace while the newly independent states tried to fill the necessary institutions.[113]

This recognition and reproduction of statehood constitutes a *misrecognition* of the way in which statehood impacts states where statehood was imposed, namely colonial dominions, after independence. Adopting the borders created by the colonial powers and taking over the apparatus of state they created does not fundamentally alter the purpose for which such structures were designed: to keep populations fragmented and competing for scarce resources and to facilitate external exploitation and plundering. Further, these states often can only survive by reproducing the system of decentralized despotism imposed by the colonial powers, thus reinforcing the fracturing of the 'national community'.[114] By recognizing the boundaries and forms of statehood imposed upon them for the convenience of legitimating a form of government and independence, independence movements legitimated a system which continually reproduces their communal and economic status through practices of development, recognition, and experience, but became unchangeable (even within the religion of statehood) without violating legal-normative principles around juridical sovereignty, peace and stability, and human rights.

[113] Cameron Thies, "International Design And State Building In Sub-Saharan Africa," *World Politics*, 61 no. 4 (2009).
[114] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject.*

5.2 Post-Independence Practices of Statehood

African states have, of course, tried to fill their domains with the requisite aspects of statehood – or, in other words, attempted to develop symbolically, politically and economically. As noted above, however, building and exerting the necessary authority and capital (politically, economically, symbolically) to both be able to centrally control the population (which, as noted previously, is difficult across the political geography of Africa) and to wrest control from these sub-state authorities (who are usually able to profit from their position) remains well beyond the capacity of many new states.[115] In the political/symbolic sense, most African states have made normative and practical efforts to democratize, to both garner symbolic capital internationally and to legitimate their rule internally. However, the fractured community and continuing tribal structure required to maintain even a semblance of statehood, peace and order have fundamentally undermined such efforts in many states, leaving democratic governments impotent and open to co-optation by elites into (both implicit and explicit) dictatorships.[116] These structures are further often reproduced through mechanisms seen as developing and homogenizing: for example, educational institutions are often segregated, reproduce narratives of competition between different tribes, and designed to ensure an educated elite exists which can exert dominance over the rest of society.[117]

Economically, African states have also made efforts to develop, but have faced both internal and external obstacles. Internally, much of the continent is difficult to reach and

[115] Herbst, *States and Power in Africa*, 56.
[116] See, for a discussion, George Ayittey, *Defeating Dictators, Fighting Tyranny in Africa and Around the World*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
[117] See, for example, a discussion of educational development in Sierra Leone, in Kingsley Banya, "Illiteracy, Colonial Legacy and Education: The Case of Modern Sierra Leone," *Comparative Education*, 29 no. 2 (1993): 159-170.

hard to exploit without capital (as noted above). However, as they have been continually dispossessed of such capital through colonial occupation, a large proportion of the resources used to facilitate this penetration come from outside the country – thus meaning that any profits from economic activity also flow out of the country.[118] Further, due to the impediments around efficient control of borders, many states are also being deprived of resources and taxes through illegal imports and exports.[119] At a more structural level, African states are highly dependent on international aid and monetary loans from multilateral institutions (particularly the Bretton Woods institutions).[120] Such loans, and many forms of aid, come tied with required political and economic reforms, usually involving trade liberalization and the opening of economies.[121] Such reforms facilitate the continued exploitation of Africa by foreign states and businesses, who can (as above) provide the capital to exploit Africa's rich resources and then export the profits out of the relevant state.

5.3 Post-Colonial States and the Maintenance of Hierarchy

As can be seen in recent history, this process was not without major upheaval: the continent has been wracked by conflict, violence, and illness and remains at the bottom of global development rankings.[122] Several points can be made about these conflicts. Firstly,

[118] For a discussion of such programs, see John Mbaku, "Africa and Global Financial Institutions," in Martin Shanguhyia and Toin Falola (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 855-879; Mohamaden Ould-Mey, "Global Adjustment: Implications for Peripheral States," *Third World Quarterly*, 15 no. 2 (1994): 319-336; John Loxley and David Seddon, "Stranglehold on Africa," *Review of African Political Economy*, 21 no. 62 (1994): 485-93.
[119] For example, see William Reno, "Clandestine Economies, Violence and States in Africa," *Journal of International Affairs*, 53 no. 2 (2000): 433-459.
[120] Mohamaden Ould-Mey, "Global Adjustment: Implications for Peripheral States."
[121] John Mbaku, "Africa and Global Financial Institutions," in Martin Shanguhyia and Toin Falola (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of African Colonial and Postcolonial History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018): 855-879.
[122] United Nations Human Development Program, *2018 Human Development Index and Its Components*, 2018, < http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/HDI>

they are usually seen as sparked by the deprivation and poverty of African communities and the inherent tensions this causes between tribes. Such tensions, however, were created as integral to maintaining statehood in Africa, and are endemic to the continuing existence of these states, while the economic deprivation is a function of the manner of the construction of statehood in colonial society and is reproduced through continuing practice. This violence and conflict, then, can be directly tied to the imposition of statehood. Further, if conflict reaches a point where the state boundaries must be redrawn, it is still done within the paradigm of statehood and respecting the broader juridical sovereign design of the area. Take, for example, states such as South Sudan, the newest member of the UN. South Sudan still fits within the colonially created borders of what was Sudan, but represents a division of this territory; while the pretext of this division was 'self-determination',[123] approached systematically it can also be seen as the preservation of the *principle* of juridical sovereignty (as the borders of other states were not changed). This returns to the idea of states as both structured and structuring: this division of Sudan was a necessary restructuring of the sacred boundaries within the structure of the system as a whole to ensure its continued existence when under threat from profane (or anti-systemic) violence.

The recognition and naturalization of the state system and its reproduction through legal-normative frameworks and practices represents a consecration of statehood in Africa, not just by the colonial powers but also by Africans themselves at the time of independence. This represents a direct "symbolic manipulation of aspirations" *a la* Bourdieu, as the aspiration of freedom from colonial domination was still symbolically constructed through reference to those same powers and the juridical borders they established. This

[123] Lotje de Vries, "Fettered Self-Determination: South Sudan's Narrowed Path to Secession," *Civil Wars*, 19 no. 1 (2017): 26-45.

manipulation legitimates a paradigm in which the location of power and dominance is fundamentally misrecognized: whereas most analyses of economic weakness, political instability, and violence focus on internal dynamics around tribalism, economic exploitation and inequality and dictatorial government, these factors are themselves caused by the continuing reproduction of statehood as a religious construct. The dynamics caused by this interestingly create a contemporary reflection of the primitive-modern dichotomies of the colonial times, and reinforce the construction of Africa as divided, dominated, backward, primitive, and barbaric – or, as is now common parlance, 'Global South' or 'Third World'.

Chapter 6 – Humanitarian Intervention: A Theoretical Case Study

This final section presents a theoretical case study on how the religion of statehood directly influences contemporary world events. The object of the study, humanitarian intervention, is fundamentally interwoven with various tensions arising from the religion of statehood outlined above, and exists within the depoliticized zone between international and national. However, through its relation to both it becomes a highly politicized practice in the contemporary environment. The following section outlines how humanitarian intervention fits into the contemporary system as an extension of the religion of statehood, and how the various discourses and concerns around it are both situated within this religion and its tenets. To do so, it introduces one final theoretical concept to the religion of statehood, that of *sacred disorder*.

6.1 Humanitarian Intervention: Conceptual Framework

Humanitarian intervention exists in a troublesome conceptual position for contemporary academics and policy-makers. It is conceived as existing in the fundamental tension between two aspects of the international system: human rights and sovereignty.[124] This is because of its dual parts: the 'humanitarian' part takes as its explicit rationale the moral need to protect human rights from grievous abuse, be it at the hands of a state or from some other catastrophe.[125] The 'intervention' part, conversely, exists because of the international nature of the practice: it involves using forms of capital (physical, economic,

[124] Helen Stacy, *Human Rights for the 21st Century*; also Roland Paris, "The 'Responsibility to Protect' and the Structural Problems of Preventative Humanitarian Intervention," *International Peacekeeping*, 21 no. 5 (2014): 569-603.
[125] Paris, "The 'Responsibility to Protect' and the Structural Problems of Preventative Humanitarian Intervention."

and symbolic) across borders and into the domestic sphere of other state/s.[126] The tension, therefore, exists inasmuch as it requires a choice between central tenets of the system: either domestic matters are left to being domestic matters and humans will die, or sovereignty is temporarily undermined to save human lives. At its most controversial, this is done without permission or against the explicit objection of the state in which the humanitarian crisis is occurring.[127] Humanitarian intervention thus explicitly and intentionally breaks the boundary between national and international: it crosses through the borders made 'natural' by the religion of state.

The 'grievous abuse' of human rights fundamentally involves mass violence, and usually violence perpetrated by humans. It must also reach a certain scale: the targeting of an individual or small group, while objectionable, does not constitute grounds for humanitarian intervention.[128] Essentially, the violence must be felt at the systemic level; it must involve a significant enough usage of capital (usually physical or symbolic) outside the bounds created as natural and legitimate – or, in the religion of statehood, outside the boundaries of legitimized state violence. This is not to say that the violence is necessarily out of state control, but that if the state is involved in the violence it must fundamentally undermine the state's naturalized role as the protector of its citizens.

To recap, briefly, on the role of human rights and sovereignty in the international system. Human rights, as argued above, are a legal-normative framework which both interlinks with discourses of peace, security and stability to delegitimize violence, which

[126] Paris, "The 'Responsibility to Protect' and the Structural Problems of Preventative Humanitarian Intervention."
[127] It is this form which is addressed in the remainder of this section; while the arguments contained do apply to more consensual forms of intervention, it is in a related but different manner.
[128] Martha Finnemore, "Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention," in Peter Katzenstein, *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 153-186.

is a potential threat to the system. Simultaneously, human rights as a moral concept shifts the paradigm of perception away from states as the center of the moral system and puts humans as individuals in their place, thus making misrecognizable their role in the system. Sovereignty is instead a claim to have the empirical ability to exert authority over the territory of the state (the recognition of which, in the contemporary system, is the consecrating and primary part compared to the ability to manifest such authority). Humanitarian intervention, therefore, is caught between two consecrating aspects of the system, and relies on the temporary abnegation of one (i.e., to not act allows the continuing abnegation of human rights, while to act abnegates sovereignty).

6.2 Deconstructing Humanitarian Intervention

Considering the above dilemma, humanitarian intervention is not undertaken lightly, nor viewed as unproblematic in the system – something highly visible in contemporary debates. The very conditions which make it contemplatable threaten the international *habitus*, the religion of statehood, by undermining the consecrating principles which sustain its naturalized arbitrariness. Humanitarian intervention, therefore, is not simply a debate between two contesting moral positions (those who support human rights and those who support sovereignty) but is more central to the religion of statehood: which choice is more likely to destabilize the system in a manner that reveals the arbitrary structures which underpin it? Failure to intervene weakens the veil, constructed through human rights, that states are the guardians of their communities and that the international system is explicitly designed to *protect* humanity, rather than the structures which *dominate* it. Intervention, contrastingly, attacks the naturalized arbitrary directly, and shows it to not

be able to hold true on its sovereign claim: it is a *recognition* that the state being imposed upon cannot back its juridical claim to sovereignty with an empirical manifestation of that sovereignty, thus undermining the claim.

Further, both intervention and non-intervention require the expenditure of capital by states. In the case of intervention, physical and economic capital is expended through military presence and symbolic capital through the impingement of the consecrating principle of sovereignty; however, through showing support for human rights, symbolic capital can also be gained. In the case of non-intervention, economic capital is expended through aid (and is likely to be higher than usual levels to provide resources manage the abnormal crisis), physical capital through personnel support, and symbolic capital through the choice to ignore human rights – a choice which can be highly contentious to individual humans, particularly in the 'developed' states (usually democracies) which have most successfully aligned themselves with the consecrating normative structure of human rights.[129] Conversely again, however, capital can be gained through showing support for sovereignty, self-determination and independence. These calculations add a more familiar question to the debate, albeit with slightly different implications and connotations: in intervention/nonintervention, is it worth the expenditure of capital for the system or should such capital be conserved (and if necessary, used later to recreate or maintain position in the system)? This question is similar to the usual debate on whether humanitarian intervention is a pretext for powerful states to pursue their interests by undermining the sovereignty of weak states; however, interpreting it with reference to statehood as a

[129] For a discussion of this, among other similar arguments, see Neil MacFarlane, Carolin Thielking and Thomas Weiss, "The Responsibility to Protect: is Anyone Interested in Humanitarian Intervention?" *Third World Quarterly*, 25 no.5 (2007): 977-992.

religion, as a naturalized systemic property, also makes explicit the various forms of capital being accrued and expended on both sides of the debate and the rationale for the various positions of actors beyond the normal paradigm of pure 'self-interest'.

These two questions lie at the heart of humanitarian intervention as a concept and as a practice. The connection of both to the religion of statehood, however, makes explicit the connections between them both and the forms of capital being garnered and expended even during debate over intervention. More crucially, it shows that the arguments based on humanitarian as a moral dilemma (as it would be understood in liberal theory) or a dilemma of interests (as it would be understood in realist theory) fundamentally miss the underlying paradigm in which the debate occurs and which connects the two: the naturalized system of order, the religion of statehood, itself comes under threat whichever choice is made. To repurpose Morris' argument, humanitarian interventions 'swing like a pendulum': as the amount of symbolic capitals states can expend to prevent damage to the system through intervention can be exhausted and the damage to the system (through the violation of norms of sovereignty) would be too evident, the pendulum swings away. The pendulum swings back as symbolic capital is recreated and acquired and the damage of non-intervention to the system rises.[130]

This is easily seen in the ritualized process in which (legitimate) humanitarian intervention is discussed in the United Nations Security Council. The UNSC represents the most legitimate guardian of both 'peace and security' (meaning sovereignty) and 'human rights' in the system, and as controlled by some of the states with the most to lose if the naturalized arbitrary becomes exposed: namely, the veto powers. The position of these

[130] Justin Morris, "Libya and Syria: R2P and the Spectre of the Swinging Pendulum," *International Affairs*, 89 no. 5 (2013): 1265-1283.

states on the Council, however, also reflects their ability to expend capital; while not unparalleled, these states control – in varying degrees – high military, economic and symbolic capital. More importantly, however, the ritualized arguments around sovereignty and human rights (again, seen in their mutually antithetical form) overlay a more profound discussion about the degree to which the system itself is under threat from the abuses in question when compared to the potential damage caused to the system by intervention. It is also through this ritual through which intervention made legitimate: it returns the decision to the realm of statehood, rather than the decisions of a particular state actor.

6.3 Humanitarian Intervention as Sacred Disorder

One final concept is necessary for this discussion; humanitarian intervention, considering its place in the tension between human rights and sovereignty, can be interpreted through Bourdieu as a form of *sacred disorder*. Whereas the religion of state maintains the social hierarchy through consecrating it through practice and law, humanitarian intervention – despite springing from the same framework and also being concerned with systemic reproduction – temporarily abnegates these forms. In the case of non-intervention, the normal practices of the system are continued (albeit in a more intense form); however, intervention (as Bourdieu puts it), is "dynamic, free and violent."[131] It is, in line with his concept, an *improvisation* which temporarily suspends the rules of the field – the rules of statehood – in order to reconstruct and reconstitute it in a given environment. And, as Bourdieu makes clear, the practice is dangerous: if sovereignty is not restored in a short enough time span, its abnegation becomes a rallying cry for the disadvantaged of the

[131] Bourdieu, *Genesis and Structure,* 36.

system, both those who could not resist such an intervention of sovereignty (i.e., states at the bottom of the hierarchy) and those excluded from the system of statehood altogether. Humanitarian intervention, of course, is followed by various forms of reconstruction of the state; its institutions, its communities, and the experiential ways of life which tie citizens to it. The way this occurs is diverse and *ad hoc*; there is little by way of formal procedure.[132] However, it always involves the gradual recreation of the consecrating aspects of statehood: the reintroduction of the legal-normative frameworks of sovereignty and human rights and practices of development, recognition, and experience of state.

6.4 Broader Relevance

The ritualized practice of humanitarian intervention as sacred disorder has several implications for the broader conceptual argument made in this thesis. At a most basic level, it is a ritual practice which unifies seemingly contradictory ideas to reinforce and rejuvenate the religion of statehood through a brief suspension of the associated *habitus* of that religion – it provides a form of consecration that can only come from outside the 'natural' structure. At a broader conceptual level, analyzing the practice in this manner makes explicit the way in which seemingly contradictory doctrines (in this case, human rights and sovereignty) both contribute to and consecrate the naturalized arbitrary (the state) as part of the religion of statehood. These perceived tensions are in fact fundamental to the perpetuation of this religion, as they both legitimate the existence of states but provide frames through which actors can justify actions within the system, both purposive and constraining. Finally, at a scholarly/academic level, it shows that through

[132] There is, however, a debate in scholarship as to whether state-building should be part of any intervention plan, particularly post the passage of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine.

understanding statehood as a religion and identifying consecrating moral, legal and normative frames and their associated practices and rituals allows for the elucidation of these tensions which underpin many debates in academia through a form of deconstruction to find a deeper meaning than those given by traditional IR theories and paradigms.

Conclusion

This thesis has made a conceptual claim on the nature of state*hood* as an organizing category, form, or mode of international relations theory and practice: that it constitutes, from a sociological perspective, a religion. Drawing on the sociology of Bourdieu as a theoretical structure, it demonstrated that statehood constitutes an arbitrary form of social relations which has been made natural through consecration.

From its genesis in the contingent European historical environment and the interplay of coercive and contentious aspects of politics, the state evolved over time to be a territorial unit of government which can manifest authority over this territory to the sovereign exclusion of others. This process was inherently violent and competitive, with many proto-states rising and falling over the course of time. Some of these states managed to carve out a durable form for themselves and expand outwards, both within Europe and into other continents, in an imperial quest for dominance and resources. Through colonization, invasion and more general encounters, these expanding powers shaped and demarcated the world in their image; however, this image was constructed without the same substance which made the European state able to function. These structures further overtook various other forms of government, creating the potential for misalignment between state forms and pre-existing modes and mores of authority. This demarcation into distinct, 'state-like' units was then naturalized through a "symbolic manipulation of aspirations," which inculcated these structures of state*hood* into the independence movements of dominated groups. This was then consecrated through legal, normative and moral frameworks based in paradigms such as human rights, peace and security, and stability, which define the limits of acceptable behavior and social fact. These frameworks

are combined with associated practices and rituals which reproduce these frames into individuals and communities, from state-level recognition to various levels of development to the experiential aspects of life within the state. The interaction between these frames and practices created a *habitus*, a structured and structuring set of dispositions, which are constantly both arising from and constructing states as a natural type in the contemporary world. They further delegitimize various processes, particularly violent processes, which could overthrow states as agents and consequently state*hood* as a global type.

Understanding statehood as a religion in this manner then allowed two short conceptual analyses, one into the internal mechanisms this created in colonial states and one into the ways in which humanitarian intervention is approached and conducted. This allows for a conceptual interpretation both 'above' and 'below' the level of states in the system. From the internal mechanisms of colonialism and their relation to the religion of statehood, it becomes apparent how hierarchy and division are naturalized and repeated through practices of state, and the colonized citizen is made to fundamentally misrecognize the source of his dominated position in the contemporary world. Contrastingly, from the deconstruction of humanitarian intervention it becomes clear how seemingly contradictory elements of the international sphere are unified through their roles in upholding and consecrating the religion of statehood, and how these contradictory elements link into a \ dogma which underpins international institutions and relations.

This conceptual claim thus provides a framework through which practices from the macro- to the micro-level can be interpreted in the modern world. This leaves open various avenues for future research into the problematics which shape contemporary human experience. For example, terrorism and forms of post-colonial violence could be

interpreted through their construction and expenditure of symbolic capital as compared to state structures, norms and practices, or social media could be analyzed for its potential threat unmask the naturalized system or spread fake news which delegitimizes processes which are rooted in the habitus of statehood. More generally, the conceptual framework provides significant resource for interpreting the contradictions of modern society both in single cases and in comparison, through investigating how these contradictions fit into typologies of practice or moral frameworks which sustain the world.

Perhaps more fundamentally, however, this conceptual framework opens up international relations as a discipline to broader understandings which can move beyond the bonds of history. Without understanding this field in which states function as both structured and structuring, and without recognizing that global norms, values and practices are inevitably bound up in the hierarchical structure created by the imperial powers, international relations will struggle to fundamentally understand non-occidental international relations and phenomena. The states at the weaker end of the global hierarchy will reproduce, because of their naturalized design in the field, the very paradigm through which they are dominated. By recognizing that this field of statehood which underpins international relations is fundamentally unequal, it becomes possible to problematize more effectively the nature and existence of that field. Further, it becomes possible to interrogate more deeply the ways in which unlike states are made like and thus naturalized within the system, and to approach an alternate paradigm or logic which weakens the entrenched hierarchies of the world.

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