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State of the State in the Third World

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Introduction

The debate on the state has been on the increase within the second half of this century. The apparently lost concept of the state is now being slowly rediscovered and the debate is on bringing the state back in. But the idea of bringing the state back in cannot be held very valid for the Third World countries where discussion on the state is still in its gestation period relative to the developed countries. No matter what one may say about the debate of either bringing the state back in or rediscovering the state, or even establishing the state, the fact is that a sudden upsurge in the state has occurred in comparative social science in recent times. For most of the Third World countries, state building is the *sine qua non* for independence and development. The state in these countries led the formation of nations and national economies, but it is handicapped by a rather limited external autonomy, and its capacity to control society is much more restricted than that of the industrialised states in the east or in the west. Discussion of the state has been so pervasive that various authors and writers have treated several and different aspects of the subject. In this essay, I do not pretend to cover all aspects of the state as they relate to or affect the Third World. The task of the essay is to attempt a theoretical exploration of the state in the Third World. By Third World, I mean the countries of Latin America, Asia (minus the developed countries of Japan and China) and Africa. In the process, I intend to examine the dynamics and general patterns of state formation and development (with regional examples), as well as explain why we cannot use the same yardstick we use to assess state in the developed countries to assess the state in the Third World.

An Overview

Systematic and rigorous study of the state belongs traditionally to political philosophy and, more recently, to the social sciences. Questions of power, authority or domination, all of which concern the nature of the state, have always been at the centre of political thinking. For example, the philosophers of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, as well as Hegel, shaped the thinking of the state, before social scientists took up the subject in the nineteenth century, particularly the political economists, Marx and his disciples, and German historical sociologists, whose great figures were Max Weber and Otto Hintze. However, this great intellectual tradition, following Kazancigil,¹ has not

always been followed up, and until the Second World War the study of the state was influenced too exclusively by legal and constitutional approaches. An empirical analysis of the state was not positively considered because the concept was said to be too broad.

The reaction to this ahistorical trend came from several quarters. In the Third World during the 1970s, the question of the state became one of the major concerns of researchers, the initial impetus having been provided in the 1960s by Latin American theoreticians of *dependencia*². In the West, the renewal of political economy, historical sociology and political anthropology contributed to the advance of studies on the state, while Marxist research, which had never neglected the question was improved through the neo-Marxist schools.

Today, as Bluntschli³ puts it, political science in the proper sense is the science which is concerned with the state. Bluntschli's view on the state echoes a concern which goes back to Aristotle's *Politics*. This view is also echoed in some comparatively recent texts on political theory. For example, D. D. Raphael comments that the "political is whatever concerns the state"⁴ or as N. P. Barry puts it that "the history of political theory has been mainly concerned with the state."⁵

My assumption in this essay is that for any society, and especially in the Third World countries, an understanding of the state is crucial to the grasp of politics of the century. And as Andrew Vincent puts it, "even in those traditions which have reacted most critically against the state, such as Marxism or anarchism, there is still reflection on its profound significance."⁶

In Western Europe and the United States, one can say that the state is "now being slowly rediscovered"⁷ by political and sociological theorists, or as Theda Skocpol would put it, the debate on is "Bringing the State Back In."⁸ Though this viewpoint presupposes that the state had been well established and perhaps neglected or lost, it should be noted that the concept was not lost but rather, it fell into disuse in academic circles in the twentieth century, especially in the English-speaking world. Oddly, this has coincided with an increase in the practical role and function of the state.⁹

The idea of 'bringing the state back in' cannot be held valid for the Third World countries (especially those of Africa and Asia) where discussion on the state is still in its gestation period relative to the developed countries.

No matter what one may say about the debate (either bringing the state back in, rediscovering the state or establishing the state), the undisputable fact is that as Skocpol rightly notes, a sudden upsurge in the state has occurred in comparative social science in the past decade. Whether as an object of investigation or as something invoked to explain outcomes of interest, the state as an actor or an institution has been highlighted in an extraordinary outpouring of studies by scholars of diverse theoretical proclivities from all of the major disciplines. The range of topics explored has been very wide. Students of Latin America, Africa and Asia have examined the roles of states in instituting comprehensive political reforms, helping to shape national

economic development and bargaining with multinational corporations.¹⁰ Scholars interested in the advanced industrial democracies, she notes, have probed the involvements of states in developing social programmes and in managing domestic and international economic problems. Comparative-historical investigators have examined the formation of national states, the disintegration and rebuilding of states in social revolutions and the impact of states on class formation, ethnic relations, women's rights and modes of social protest. There have also been explanations about states as institutors of property rights and as regulators and distorters of markets.¹¹

There are a number of reasons why it is important to think carefully about the state. Following Vincent, I am of the considered opinion that it is very difficult now to conceive of life without the state. Statehood not only represents a set of institutions but also a body of attitudes, practices and codes of behaviour. Also, the state is neither a neutral institution which we can afford to ignore nor has it arisen out of pure chance or accident. There are customary features which have come about slowly by accretion. However, much of its form and structure can only be understood completely by grasping the legal and political theories embodied within them. Since it is ideas of the state which often determine both the form of the state and our attitude to it, it is crucial that some grasp of the basic theories of the state be part of any political education.¹² The third reason given by Vincent is that there is often considerable conceptual puzzlement surrounding the idea of the state, especially in relation to other concepts such as society, community, nation or sovereignty. Often these concepts are muddled together with the notion of the state. This muddle, he claims, is often the result of inattention to the diverse uses of these concepts within differing theoretical contexts. And finally, one of the paradoxical aspects of much recent political theorising is that it is premised on the state. Reflection on concepts such as law, rights and obligations implies the existence of some form of state. These concepts are meshed into the state. Hence, it would seem to be an essential preliminary to any study of such concepts to gain some familiarity with theories of the state.¹³

It is a known fact that nowadays, the state is rated very highly and, unlike the structures of the past, it fills the entire social space.¹⁴ Indeed, the pervasiveness of the state is one of the inescapable realities of our time, both for the industrialised countries (whether capitalist or socialist), and for the developing ones. And living without the state is certainly no alternative for societies that are part of the world system or that wish to be. For most (if not all) of the Third World countries, state building is the *sine qua non* for independence and development. The growing role of the state is a profound historical trend at the very centre of the world's dominant political and economic processes. Beyond its traditional functions of internal and external security, justice and sovereignty, the state makes itself felt in all societal spheres, in economic, social, ideological and cultural processes and even in the private lives of citizens.¹⁵

The hypertrophy of the state which provokes legitimate resistance and protest, is as Kazancigil¹⁶ puts it, not circumstantial. It corresponds to long-term structural phenomena, linked to major historical processes which have been shaping the world for nearly four centuries. This development which began in Western societies has spread to the socialist countries and the Third World.

In the Third World countries, the state leads the formation of nations and national economies, but it is handicapped by a rather limited external autonomy, and its capacity to control society is much more restricted than that of the industrialised states in the east or in the west.

My task in the essay is to attempt an exploration of the state in the Third World. By Third World, I mean the countries of Latin America, Asia (minus the developed countries like Japan and China) and Africa, that are often referred to in the literature as developing or under-developed countries. In the process, I intend to examine the general pattern of the state formation (with regional examples) in those countries from a Third World perspective. In these countries, like in the advanced societies of both the East and West, recent discussions on the state have been situated within various theoretical viewpoints. It is the contrasting viewpoints that shall be my concern in the next section of the essay.

Contending Viewpoints

The literature on the theory of state either in the developed societies or in the Third World is full of many contrasting viewpoints and approaches. Some authors consider the state from the ideological perspective, some others try to use a sociological approach. Yet, some use an institutional viewpoint, others talk of the developmental and structural dimensions. It is not my intention to review all these divergent views here. That is beyond the scope of the essay. Suffice it to say that all these various approaches have one thing in common: the explanation of the state.

Political theorists, right from the time of Plato and Aristotle, have in a way tried (either implicitly or explicitly) to theorise on the state. Recent writings on the state have broadly drawn upon two main streams of social and political thought: Liberalism and Marxism.¹⁷ For example, writing on the 'form of state', Chirkin¹⁸ says it has three meanings: it is a sociological notion, a category of the science of the state and an institution under constitutional law. Originally, most scholars supported a two-element approach, which distinguished the form of government and the forms of the state structure. He notes that of late, most authors have begun to include a third element, which is the political regime.

The political regime develops not only as a result of the activities of the state bodies but also of those of other political institutions, thus going beyond the form of the state.¹⁹ Writing on social policy and regime transition in Brazil, James Malloy and Carlos Parodi say the concept of political regime is a

complex issue. To them, the concept has two dimensions. One dimension sees regime as a set of more or less crystallized procedures to organise and deploy decision capacity, especially in terms of how civil society relates to those decisions articulated with the authority of the state.²⁰ The second dimension they recognize is the existence of a support coalition that under girds the regime, benefits from it and often but not always participates in decision-making.²¹ It should be noted that in whatever form it is discussed the state is not primarily a direct empirical entity. We cannot touch or see it. The state is nothing but a mental category. It can be known only indirectly through conceptually construed manifestations like the legal system, the state apparatus, public policies and the like. The concept of the state like other theoretical entities cannot be reduced to any concatenation of empirical manifestations.²²

The idea of the state is therefore open-ended. There are descriptive components to it and it can be used as a tool of analysis. Dyson's catalogue of features common to state theory best summarises this viewpoint. According to him the state idea,

*Is a generalising, integrating and legitimating concept that identifies the leading values of the political community with reference to which authority is to be exercised; emphasises the distinctive character and unity of 'public power' compared with civil society; focuses on the need for depersonalisation of the exercise of that power; finds its embodiment in one or more institutions and one or more public purposes which thereby acquire a special ethos and prestige and an association with the public interest or general welfare; and produces a social-cultural awareness of (and sometimes of disassociation from) the unique and superior nature of the state itself.*²³

One of those who contributed to the idea of the state was Hegel. Throughout his writings, he was concerned with the 'idea' of the state and not to any existing state. Any existing state, as Ayineri points out, cannot be anything but a mere approximation to the idea.²⁴ The idea of the state could not be identified with any given state. As Hegel himself puts it, "in considering the idea of the state, we must not have our eyes on particular states or on particular institutions ... On some principle or other, any state may be shown to be bad, this or that defect may be found in it ... The state is no ideal work of art; it stands on earth and so in the sphere of caprice, chance and error, and bad behaviour may disfigure it in many respects."²⁵

In his review of the approaches to the formation of what he calls the 'peripheral' modern states, Kazancigil criticises the developmental and diffusionist theories (generally known as theories of modernisation) for basing their intellectual legitimacy on a questionable interpretation of Max Weber, according to which the Weberian theory is built around the idea that at the source of social change are to be found exclusively cultural and ideological factors, particularly religion.²⁶ Such an interpretation comes from a strictly subjectivist and reductionistic view of Weber, which situates the analysis of structural elements of social change such as the state, the economy and the

classes, at the level of interpersonal relations.²⁷ This approach, which focuses on internal processes, makes implausible the development from within the modern state in non-Western societies. Its explanatory capacity is very low when it comes to the extension of the modern state in social formations of the Third World. This shortcoming must be attributed to developmental theories and not to Max Weber, whose analysis does not exclude structural factors.²⁸

Kazancigil thus put forward the diffusionist²⁹ approach as an alternative explanatory model. Despite the usefulness of the diffusionist analysis, it does not explain why the countries of the Third World, where the brutal imposition of foreign models through the use of force is nowadays the exception rather than the general rule and where the cultural and ideological influence of the centre is at least partly offset by an awareness of the drawbacks of mimetic behaviour, persist in their desire to construct modern states. The underlying difficulty of this approach comes from the primordial status given to the cultural determination of the modern state and the secondary importance accorded to economic factors and relations of dependence.³⁰

Kazancigil then goes on to use the structural approach for his theoretical analysis. The structural theories of the state, according to him, have mostly developed within the Weberian and Marxian scholarship. Though essentially inspired by Marxism, they owe a great deal to Weber as well. They give first place sometimes to the economic, sometimes to the political, but at the same time they try to integrate both these factors, and are well equipped to analyse the connections between internal and external dynamics.

In Marx, the processes of production and exchange and the formation of classes and states, had inter-societal dimensions. Thus Marxism generated approaches which took world time into account. In particular, most of the present structural approaches to the modern state can be traced back to this origin. With Weber, this aspect remains a weak point. The Weberian approach does not fundamentally take the world context into account. Weber's strength is to have developed concepts which shed light on the endogenous structural and cultural characteristics of non-European social formations.³¹

Marx's analysis of non-European pre-capitalist formations is marginal to his general theory of social change. To Marx, the social formation is characterised by the interactions between the infrastructure (relations of production) and the superstructure (the state, the law and culture). Though the former is more important than the latter, the autonomy of the state is not denied and the two-way relations between the base and the superstructure are stressed. To explain the non-European societies, Marx resorted to a model which differed from his general model of social change, by proposing the concept of the Asiatic mode of production (AMP).³²

When compared to the impasse into which AMP leads, Anderson³³ says, Weberian theories seem to be in a better position to explain the endogenous conditions that have prevented non-European societies from participating in the rise of capitalism and the modern state, in the initial stages of the process. However, once capitalism developed as a system in continuous expansion,

exogenous dynamics acquired exceptional importance, which they did not have in the proto-capitalist era. In this particular instance, Weberian theory is inferior to Marxian theory, which offers a conceptualisation better suited to exploring the connections between internal and external process. The Weberian perspective does a better job of showing the links between political and cultural processes within non-European social formations, while the Marxian approach is indispensable for linking the endogenous and exogenous dynamics. Thus, among the current theories of the modern state, as Kazancigil puts it, those inspired by both Marx and Weber and which are trying to take into account the politico-cultural and economic processes, as well as the endo/exogenous dynamics seem preferable and better placed to respond to the question of the globalisation of the modern state most especially in the Third World.³⁴

A number of other theorists have made intellectual contributions to the theory of the state as it affects the Third World. Some of these theorists, among others, include Gramsci, Althusser and Poulantzas. It is not my intention to consider in this essay, detailed theoretical contributions of these theorists (to the development of the state) as they affect the Third World countries. Suffice it to note, however, that they make some theoretical contributions. For example, Gramsci's emphasis is that ideas and ideology play a crucial role in the determination of economic structures and that bourgeois society is not simply controlled by open force, but that its mode of operation is through consent. Hegemony represents a subtle form of cultural domination. Power is redefined in terms of intellectual hegemony. The masses are co-opted and quelled by means of ideational domination. The state is, therefore, not just a political or institutional apparatus which coercively dominates one class. It is also a vessel of intellectual dominance which actually elicits a response from the masses. It wishes to be legitimate in the eyes of the broad masses.³⁵

The state for Gramsci is linked to the idea of class but not in the direct way in which it is often considered. Gramsci's theory of the state emerges from the Marxist notion of a superstructure rooted in the social class struggle. The state is not just an organ of class rule. It is an area where power is organised, struggled for, and debated over. In this sense the state is a key area of struggle and possesses a 'relative autonomy' from the economic base. It is also not just a set of institutions but rather a dominant ethos – an idea which "harks back to Hegel".³⁶

Gramsci's contribution to the class theory of the state lies in the fact that he broadened the whole Marxist perspective. Vincent sums up the broadening process as follows:

- (a) The notion of class domination had to be modified and reinterpreted. The state was not simply an instrument for one class to use to coerce another.
- (b) Any domination which did exist was far more complex than previously understood. Open coercion was not necessarily an overt feature.
- (c) The state was an arena for intellectual ideas and debate.

- (d) Revolution did not mean outright confrontation, but rather intellectual manoeuvre. The bourgeois hegemony had to be challenged by proletarian hegemony.

Gramsci, however, still suffers from overall ambiguity, not only on the concept of class, but also on the very concept of the juridical state. He, however, had far more grasp than many Marxists on the state but still within limitations.³⁷

The autonomous human subject, suffering alienation and seeking redemption in philosophical communism, is of no interest to either Althusser or Poulantzas. History is a history of structures not of autonomous human subjects. Althusser explicitly identifies *Capital* as the key text of Marxist analysis. This argument is said to have led structuralists to reject the more Hegelian reading of Marx which was advanced by Gramsci's account. Despite this it is still believed that both Althusser and Poulantzas identified themselves more or less as heirs of Gramsci's ideas.³⁸

From the discussion thus far, my preliminary conclusion is that no single theory or theorist can fully explain the formation and dynamics of the state. But, following Philip Resnick, one remark that the state, as the modern form of political power, is here to stay into the indefinite future regardless of whatever contrary view some people may have. The question then becomes what limits can be placed on its repressive qualities, and how much power can be devoted back to its citizens.³⁹ This point is particularly relevant to the Third World countries where the state and its apparatus are objects of coercion and intimidation in the hands of those at the helm of affairs.

The Heritage of the State in the Third World

The state as we know it today has its origin in Europe from where it spread its tentacles to other parts of the globe, the latest being the Third World countries and Latin America, Asia and Africa. To fully grasp the formation and development of the state in these regions, a brief discussion of the European experience might be necessary.

The European Experience

The appearance of the state in the medieval west is inseparable from the more or less simultaneous emergence of several collectivities of that type in the region. The fact that this unit materialised in multiple forms may be attributed not only to iteration but also to a rational dynamism peculiar to the political field itself.⁴⁰ The dynamism in question sprang from the pluralism of the structures of authority which was the characteristic distinguishing Europe at the end of the invasions from other Euro-Asiatic civilisations, and which was itself a factor in what Anderson has termed the 'detotalisation of sovereignty'.⁴¹

The emergence of the capitalist world-economy in Western Europe coincided with the territorial and administrative consolidation of the

nation-states. While there were five hundred political entities in Europe in AD 1500, not more than twenty-five nation-states existed in AD 1900. Every attempt to create empires in Europe failed. The colonial empires which marked the nineteenth century turned out to be a costly way for the centre to exploit the periphery.

The continued expansion of the capitalist world-economy has been accompanied by the expansion of the inter-state system, through the globalisation of the modern state. Whereas in the past very different types of political domination, such as tribal states, absolutist states and empires, could co-exist, today only the modern state is developing in three categories of country: capitalist industrialised, socialist industrialised and developing. Thus the modern nation-state imposes itself as the sole form of political, military and territorial organisation.⁴²

The development of the capitalist world-economy has involved the creation of all the major institutions of the modern world: classes, ethnic/national groups, households and, of course, the state. All of these structures create each other. Classes, ethnic/national groups and households are defined by the state, through the state, in relation to the state and in turn create the state, shape the state and transform the state. "It is a structured maelstrom of constant movement, whose parameters are measurable through the repetitive regularities, while the detailed constellations are always unique."⁴³

The birth of the state is therefore perceived as a result of differentiation which fostered the formation of an autonomised public area of structures peculiar to it which attest to a gradual institutionalisation. Tied to a particular history in a specific socio-cultural and religious context, the state was the result of a tremendous differentiation of social structures. Its advent overturned once and for all the organisation of a social system, which henceforth took its structure from the state.⁴⁴

In the Third World, the emergence of the modern state has often been achieved at the expense of the colonial possessions of the metropolitan states. While in the west the modern state was formed within autonomous social formations, situated at the centre of an expanding economic system, in Latin America, Asia and Africa the emergence of the state took place mostly within social formations that had previously been incorporated at the periphery of the world-economy and rendered dependent. The modern state in the Third World countries bears the marks of its late emergence, within the context of world capitalism.⁴⁵

Following O'Donnell, Kazancigil notes⁴⁶ that in some cases the modern state in Third World countries emerged in a dependent, but not colonised, social formation. Turkey and Ethiopia are examples of this type. But in most of the cases, the state in the developing countries is post-colonial – emerging after political (but in most cases not economic) independence. Most of the countries in Asia, the Caribbean and Africa fall into this category. Some other states have freed themselves from pre-capitalist empires. Examples include

the Latin American states which emerged from the Spanish and Portuguese empires of the nineteenth century.

Thus, any approach that looks at these societies as constituting a homogenous category is liable to all the criticisms that are usually levelled at modernisation theory. However, Badie and Birnbaum⁴⁷ justify such an approach in one respect. They argue that European culture and therefore the basic ideas behind the rise of the state are alien to the countries of the Third World. These countries must participate in an economic system that is largely beyond their control. Most of them have suffered military conquest and colonial rule. Hence, state building in these societies has largely been a matter of imitating models developed elsewhere, in industrial societies of either the east or west, and artificially superimposed, with or without local consent, on economic, social and political structures shaped by other ways of thinking.

Latin America

The development of the theory of the state in contemporary Latin America is part and parcel of a process of change governed by a new pattern of incorporation into the international system characterised by asymmetrical interdependence, the concentration of world power and the new international division of labour.⁴⁸ This is reflected domestically in the establishment and progression of late or peripheral neo-capitalist growth, the appearance of organic and endemic political crisis, state interventionism and neo-fascism in certain countries of the sub-continent.⁴⁹

In the vast majority of Latin American countries the classic colonial period came to an end more than one hundred and fifty years ago, to be followed by the gradual development of the nation-state. In many of the Asian and African countries, a similar process did not begin until the middle of the century. For example, in Africa, a majority of the countries were still under colonial rule by 1960. In addition to the differences in the international context at the formative and initial development stage, there are also differences in the diversity of structures, the intermingling of systems, the types and degrees of development of classes within the nation and their interrelations and links with the main actors in the international system. All these are reflected in different forms, stages of development, apparatuses and actions of the state.⁵⁰

Marcos Kaplan⁵¹ identifies different phases of the state development in Latin America. These include the researches in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century; from early twentieth century to the end of the Second World War: and the final period which was from the end of the Second World War to the present. This third period covers first the arrival and development of the social sciences from the United States and Western Europe, and also the beginning of the work of international governmental organisations and its results. During this period, Marxist ideas and thoughts progressed in various doctrinal forms. They became respectable and influential in academic and political circles and in international bodies, but at the same time critically affected by new Latin American and world phenomena, the emergence of heterodox views and attempts at improvement on various lines.⁵²

Marxism which took root in the region by the beginning of the twentieth century onwards lacked a well-developed and systematic theory of the state. It was adversely affected by the supremacy of post-Marxist dialectical materialism, set-backs in the publication of Marx's works and the predominance of reductionist, mechanistic and evolutionist trends, all perpetuated and reinforced after the Russian revolution of 1917 and the triumph of Stalinist theory and policy.⁵³

The course of recent events in Latin America and the world has caused certain adjustments to be made to the various forms of Marxist doctrine. Events have not been in accordance with forecasts and expectations. Classes, groups, institutions, political parties and states have developed a wide variety of forms and trends and produced different results. The Latin American-dominated classes have not necessarily joined self-proclaimed revolutionary parties, but on the contrary have sometimes given their support to populist-nationalist, developmentalist or liberal-democratic movements and regimes.⁵⁴

Kaplan also notes that the influence of Louis Althusser and his neo-Marxist approach makes itself felt as an ideology presented as a science. Intellectually and politically, Althusser's philosophy represents a strategic withdrawal, a hidden recuperation of official dogmas. This, together with a limited historical frame of reference and rejection of empirical investigation and active participation in social and political affairs, means Althusser's contribution to the development of a theory of the state in Latin America can ultimately be regarded as negligible. A more complex, stimulating influence is that of Poulantzas in his persistent attempt to combat economic reductionism, reinstate the importance of political factors and analyse the concept of the capitalist state and its degree of 'relative autonomy'.⁵⁴

The contribution from what Kaplan calls "the Fiscal Crisis of the State"⁵⁵ school of thought is its insistence on the need to introduce political and cultural-ideological forms of mediation into the infrastructure and operation of the system. It, however, lacks a structural theory of the place of politics and state in capitalism, pre-capitalist societies and post-revolutionary regimes.

Gramsci, with the differing reception to his ideas both inside and outside communist parties, has helped to reinstate the superstructure, hegemony, politics and the state as the articulatory elements of the historical block. This applies especially to problems relating to forms of power and domination; political practice and hegemonic processes; the wide range of contradictions, conflicts, antagonisms and problematic areas; the falsity of polarised alternatives and possible new forms of political life, the state and society. This positive influence has been curbed in Latin America by the seal set on doctrinal orthodoxy and support for its reinstatement.⁵⁶

Western input has made itself felt in two ways. As Kaplan puts it, the first represents a juridico-political view of the state, with emphasis on constitutional and administrative law and the philosophy of law. The other form has served as a vehicle for introducing into Latin America the ideas of

the 'Machiavellians'⁵⁷ and of Max Weber. The influence of the Machiavellians has acted as corrective to economic reductionism, but only to fall into political and elitist reductionism. Weber's emphasis on power relations and processes and sociology of domination and the state has had an impact in Latin America in view of its experience of government intervention.

In Latin America, as elsewhere, the state is born and develops from and through the transfer of powers previously held by the political structures which co-existed autonomously in pre-state societies. In all societies and in all periods, the state is the necessary result of and *a priori* solution to conflicts and crises arising from the differentiation of internal structures. As a neutral and independent arbiter, the state reconciles conflicting interests; it a functional substitute for community solidarity and spontaneous consensus. The state shapes and sponsors the cultural and political unification of the nation, giving full recognition to the complete differentiation between political and public, as well as between social and private life. As the product and superstructure of growth, industrialisation and social rationalisation, the only possible form of political modernisation transcending cultural diversities and historical praxis, the state becomes a universal category and a unique model of political organisation.⁵⁸

The African Dilemma: The Triple Heritage

The theory of the state in the Asian and African contexts must take as its starting point those situations which are common to the countries of both continents. Marcos Kaplan identifies these as frequent large-scale state intervention; transition from traditional colonialism to neo-colonialism; the adoption by administrative and political elites of a model of the state originating in the developed industrialised countries of the west and the east.⁵⁹ This external model of the state is superimposed on forces, structures and processes which differ from the premises of the original model. The local situations present the state with particular problems, without providing the resources and means with which to deal with them effectively. The state comes into being and operates under conditions of neo-colonial dependency; levels of growth and productivity are low; classes are weak; civil society and a properly organised and functioning political community are missing.

More than in the developed capitalist countries of the West, the state acquires crucial importance and state intervention is far more frequent and extensive in the countries of Asia and Africa. This is evidenced in the nationalisation of firms and companies, the ever increasing powers and functions of the state and the contagious military intervention in the political process and its accompanying coercive rule.

In many of the available theoretical analysis, Marxism in its various forms has acquired a certain ascendancy. But up till this time, events have shown that the Marxist tradition has not found solution to the problems afflicting the continents. And alternative approach at the other end of the spectrum regards class in Africa as shapeless and fluid, too weak to promote either capitalism or socialism. In short both socialism and capitalism have been found wanting

to solve the political and economic problems of the state in Africa. The situation on the state in Africa deserves some further comments.

In pre-colonial Africa, the state was not a universal category. From a political point of view, the African continent was a miracle of diversity – ranging from empires to stateless societies, from elaborate thrones to hunting bands, from complex civilizations to rustic village communities. Recently, Ali Mazrui attempted a classification of state formation in Africa into what he called the triple political and cultural heritage. These he identifies as indigenous, the Islamic and the western.⁶⁰

In Africa's experience, state formation has been linked to the broader triple heritage of Africa's history and culture – a heritage which encompasses indigenous, Islamic and western traditions. Some states in Africa were primarily products of purely indigenous forces; some were products of interaction between indigenous and Islamic elements; and others were outgrowths of a basic interaction between indigenous and western ideas. There have been occasions when the heritage has indeed been a fusion of all three – indicating a historical meeting point involving Africa, Islam and the west.⁶¹

Africa's interaction with Islam antedates European colonisation of Africa. After the Islamic conquest of Egypt in the seventh century, Islam started penetrating North Africa and spread down the Nile Valley. The politics of those societies responded to the impact of Islam and some of them began to evolve institutions which reflected this basic interaction between Islam and indigenous responses. Especially important in this process of Islamic influence of state formation is the balance between trade and warfare, between economic aspects and military dimension.⁶²

Islamic penetration of Africa continued the dialectic between the economic and the military. Through the combination of economics and military prowess Islam spread further south to West Africa. This spread into West Africa accompanied another economic process. The trans-Saharan trade that developed produced missionaries in the market places. The shopkeeper was at times the equivalent of the clergyman. Islam was spreading as an additional commodity accompanying the grand paradigm of trade.⁶³ Out of this began to emerge special kingdoms and emirates in West Africa. There is what Mazrui refers to as the Hobbesian concept in Islamic statecraft – encouraging obedience to those who exercise authority, provided they do no violence to the principles that Mohammed advocated and God willed. This side of Islam is concerned with submissive fatalism – a readiness to accept the inevitable.

Subsequently, Islam profoundly influenced the colonial policy of at least one major imperial power, Great Britain. As Mazrui rightly observes, the British policy of indirect rule was born out of a marriage of Islam, on one side, and the Anglo-Irish philosopher Edmund Burke, on the other. In a sense the legacy of Edmund Burke is what the British political culture is all about.⁶⁴ Political prudence, according to Burke, requires political sensitivity to history. British political culture is a reflection of this broad political philosophy. The

same Burkean gradualism in British domestic political culture came to influence British colonial policy. Indirect rule was based on a Burkean principle of gradualism.

This system of indirect rule, using Burkean principle was really demonstrated in northern Nigeria. It is not my intention to attempt a detailed discussion of the process in this essay. It might, however, just be enough to note that indirect rule in Nigeria aggravated the problems of creating a modern nation-state after independence. The different groups in the country maintained their separate ethnic identities by being ruled in part through their own native institutions. Northern Nigeria became particularly distinctive in its fusion of Islam and Africanity. Different sections of the population perceived each other as strangers, sometimes as aliens, increasingly as rivals and as potential enemies. The seed of the events that led to the military coup of 1966 was sown and ultimately led to the bitter civil war that took place between 1967 and 1970.

Another example was that of the Yorubaland explained by David Iaitin by a focus on the actions of a hegemonic state. He defines hegemony as "the political forging – whether through coercion or elite bargaining – and institutionalisation of a pattern of group activity in a society and the concurrent idealisation of that scheme into a dominant symbolic framework that reigns as common sense."⁶⁵ He expands Gramsci's⁶⁶ conception of hegemony control and applies it to Africa with emphasis on Yorubaland.

Another triple heritage is also discussed by Mazrui. This is the heritage of the city-state, the empire state and the nation state. In the history of Europe, the city-state antedated the empire-state. In African history it is more difficult to disentangle the origins of the city as against the empire. Some of the emirates in West Africa were at once city-states and part of a wider empire at the same time.⁶⁷ Subsequently, the names of some of the greatest African empires were used after independence as names of the new nation-states. Examples are the empire-states of Ghana and Mali whose names were adopted by the independent states of Ghana and Mali.

From the above discussion, I am inclined to conclude that one of the difficulties in the transition from a pre-colonial to a post-colonial state is the "normative and moral"⁶⁸ gap between them. The values have changed, the responsibilities redefined, new perspectives emerging and the policies demanding reformulation. The new nation-state in Africa provides a contradiction. It attempts to champion equality as they were in the traditional system and at the same time they explicitly expect identifiable rulers and assert what Max Weber calls the state's monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force.

One particular tension among the new states of the continent is that of territoriality. Most African states have a high degree of land reverence. This land policy was adversely reversed with colonialism, specifically at the Berlin Conference which laid the foundation for the Balkanisation and subsequent occupation of most of the continent. As I point out elsewhere,⁶⁹ arbitrary and

casual as the colonial boundary arrangements have been, they have come to determine in perpetuity the destiny of whole peoples and countless individuals. In spite of their indisputable attributes as arbitrary and artificial lines of demarcation, the boundaries have had to be accepted as legal alignments of the territorial framework of the post-colonial nation-state. The various conflicts and crises associated with the 1885 exercise are still in the continent today.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have attempted an exploration of the dynamics of state formation and development in the Third World countries with particular emphasis on the situation in Latin America and Africa. It is noted in the essay that most of the theories that adequately explain state formation in the developed societies do not fully help with the Third World countries. This is due to historical, political, cultural and economic differences of the societies concerned. The colonial experience has particularly been a set-back in the case of Africa. In these countries of the Third World, decisions by the state tend to be taken in accordance with a scale of priorities which favour the ruling elites; the overall rationality of the system; the most influential factions with the dominant class; the dominant class as a whole; organised factions and groups belonging to the subordinate and dominated classes; and certain specific *ad hoc* combinations of some of the previous elements.⁷⁰ The conclusions of Badie and Birnbaum are quite relevant in this instance, and because of the relevance, I rely and borrow heavily from them. As they put it, no matter how much local elites may have internalised western political ideas, the truth is that the western model has only been transplanted in an abstract and formal sense and has not really worked in Third World societies. It is a model that has been introduced artificially, most of the time by force and sometimes voluntarily. At present the state is no more than an imported artifact in the Third World, particularly in Asia and Africa. It is no more than what Badie and Birnbaum call it – "a pale copy of utterly alien European social and political systems, a foreign body that is not only inefficient and a burden on society but also a formentor of violence".⁷¹

Signs of failure are encountered first at the structural level. States in the Third World are usually no more than fragmented bureaucracies. Unlike their European counterparts, the various departments of these bureaucracies are not integrated into the political community and not counterbalanced by an autonomous civil society with a structure of its own. Countries of the Third World have weak institutional foundations, so that their rulers lack independent sources of power and legitimacy and therefore cannot stand up to their bureaucracies or use them as instruments of consistent and rational policy.⁷² At the same time the low level of economic development and social mobilization means that civil society is not sufficiently organised to benefit in any real sense from bureaucratic regulation and co-ordination. The fact is that

in most Third World countries, the bureaucracy has no control over the economy, which is largely dependent on foreign investment. Hence, the bureaucracy's functions are limited to routine matters of policy and administration.

Consequently the function of the bureaucracy is distorted. Isolated from the rest of the society, the bureaucracies of the Third World countries are mainly engaged in supporting and reproducing a political class which often governs what is in effect a mere marginal sector of the economy. The ruling class takes its power from many sources and, largely by way of corruption, confiscates most of the available wealth of the country.⁷³

Worse still, the bureaucracy and other western political ideas are incompatible with local traditions in many of the countries. Consequently, political development has split the Third World societies into two: one segment of society derives its legitimacy from the desire for modernization, while the other strives to preserve national traditions without any effect of adaptation or reform.

The failure of western political ideas in the Third World should not be attributed to only economic backwardness with the idea that further development could enhance success. The failure could be tied in a way to the economic dominance of the west which has undermined its cultural hegemony. These states in the Third World are currently forced to confront a western monopoly of much of the world's wealth; and their economic and technological dependence only serves to reproduce this state of affairs. Current political and economic conditions of the world persuades me to believe that the situation would likely get worse.

One important factor to note about the failure of western political ideas in the Third World countries is that economic, social and political problems faced by the Third World countries are very different from the problems faced by European countries when states first emerged in Europe. Europe had to deal with a crisis of feudalism involving the private ownership of land by feudal lords. On the contrary, most Third World societies, particularly in Africa, are currently faced with a quite different sort of crisis, involving the persistence of ethnic structures, the crucial importance of kinship and the limited individualisation of property rights in land. Also, while the European societies had to find ways to integrate already existing economic elites, the case is different in the developing countries. They need to create a market economy from scratch. And while in Europe the problem was only how to contend with a gradual increase in the demand for popular participation, an increase more or less kept in check by organised civil society, the countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa have to face a much more dramatic rise in the desire for participation, which traditional allegiances by themselves cannot hold back.⁷⁴

Certainly, such different problems deserve different solutions. Most of the leaders of these developing countries try to face the challenges through the acceptance of the ideology of development. The acceptance of the ideology of development by the leaders of the Third World countries helps to

perpetuate underdevelopment. In my considered opinion, there can be no development when those who are to bring development are themselves part of the structure of imperialism. Nor can there be development as long as class contradictions persist and grow. Any approach which makes the achievement of development in the Third World compatible with the maintenance of exploitative relations of production and with links to imperialism, can only hinder the developing societies. For example, when the developed societies are already talking of welfare states and welfare policies, the debate in these Third World countries is on how to pay debts and how to attain stable and democratic polities. And while the developed societies are concerned with space technologies and planning for the twenty-first century, the concern in the Third World countries is how to solve the problem of authoritarian military regimes.

Any discussion of the state in the Third World, therefore, should not use the same yardstick of assessment as with the advanced societies. This is because the states in these societies are still in gestation. They are incomplete and little differentiated from civil society, the formation of which depends on the action of the state. The formation of states in the Third World is uniquely complicated by the disarticulating impact of domination exercised by the centre of the world system on its periphery. As noted earlier, countries of the Third World do not have the advantage of the historical circumstances enjoyed by Western Europe when the modern state was formed simultaneously with the world capitalist system.

Footnotes

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5. N. P. Barry, *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*. London: Macmillan Press, 1981, p.46.
6. Vincent, op. cit. p.1
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8. Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research", Peter Evans et. al. eds., *Bringing The State Back In*. Cambridge (etc): Cambridge University Press, 1985.
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28. Ibid.
29. For a detailed analysis of the approach, see for example, Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. P. Anderson, Lineages of the Absolute State. London: NLB, 1974, pp.462-547.
34. Kazancigil, pp.128-29.
35. A. Gramsci (1971) cited in Vincent, op. cit. p.167.
36. Ibid. p.168-9.
37. Ibid. p.170.
38. Ibid. p.171.
39. Philip Resnick, "The Functions of the Modern State: In Search of a Theory", in Kazancigil, p.176.
40. Aristide R. Zolberg, "Strategic Interactions and the Formation of Modern States: France and England", International Social Science Journal, Vol. 32, No. 4, 1980.
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42. A. Giddens, A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism. London: Macmillan Press, 1981. For further exploration of this view, see also Kazancigil, pp.131-1333.
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44. Pierre Birnbaum, "States, Ideologies and Collective Action in Western Europe", in Kazancigil, ed., The State in Global Perspective. 1986.
45. Kazancigil, op. cit. p.132.
46. G. O'Donnell, "Comparative Historical Formations of the State Apparatus and Social-economic Change in the Third World", International Social Science Journal, Vol. 32, No. 4, 1980, pp.717-729.
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52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid., p.282.
55. For a detailed explanation, see J. O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State. New York: St Martin's Press, 1973, and The Corporations and the State. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
56. Kaplan, op. cit.
57. Those in this group include, for example, Mosca, Pareto, Burnham and Michels.
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61. Ibid.
62. Ibid. p.108.
63. Ibid. p.109.
64. For a detailed analysis of this philosophy, see E. Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France. Works, London: World Classics Edition, Vol. IV, 1909.
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68. Ibid. p.114.
69. Kola Olugbade, "Foreign Intervention in African Politics Revisited: The Paradox of African Self Determination", Round Table No. 302, April, 1987, p.234.
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73. S. P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, cited in Badie and Birnbaum, Ibid. See also James C. Scott, Comparative Political Corruption. Engelwood Cliff, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1972.
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