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State Failure, State Break Down and State Collapse in Sub-Saharan Africa: Structural Challenges to Democratizations and Consolidation

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The dramatic failure, break-down and ultimately the collapse of states in sub-Saharan Africa has become a common topic of academic and policy discussion. However, it is striking that the literature on African state failure largely neglects the connection between the state and democracy. The important connection between statehood and democratic rule cannot be denied and this paper assumes that functioning statehood is an essential precondition for democratic consolidation. Without doubt, the neopatrimonial inheritance left behind by authoritarian regimes poses serious challenges to the institutionalization and consolidation of democracy. However, this argument should not be taken to mean that the sources and implications associated with neopatrimonialism should not be problematized. This paper argues that a systematic connection exists between the observed problems of weak, failing, failed and collapsed statehood in sub-Saharan Africa and the lack of successful democratic transition. More specifically, the structural weaknesses of neopatrimonial states hinder successful democratization.

Introduction

The dramatic failure, break down and ultimately the collapse of states in sub-Saharan Africa has become a common topic of academic[1] and policy[2] discussion. Reports on the stability of sub-Saharan states show that more than three quarters are affected by serious structural weakness.[3] This weakness is well reflected in the academic discourse. The many facets describing weakness, failure, break down and collapse are discussed through the use of an abundance of metaphors, some of which include the following: "Predatory Rule" (Fatton 1992), "Politics of the Belly" (Bayart 1993), "Criminalization of the State" (Bayart/Ellis/Hibou 1999), "Africa Works. Disorder as a Political Instrument" (Chabal/Daloz 1999) and "Failed States" (Gros 1996). Bayart (1993) goes as far to question the statehood of certain African state-like structures: "Max Weber would have had his doubts" (263).

Villalan and Huxtable's title "The African State at a Critical Juncture. Between Disintegration and Reconfiguration" (1998) points to the fact that sub-Saharan continues to undergo a long process of democratization. However, it is striking that the literature on African state failure largely neglects the connection between the state and democracy. One possible explanation may be that despite some uncontestable successes[4], the process of democratization in sub-Saharan Africa has not been taken seriously. Patrick Chabal (1998) goes as far to challenge any relevance of problems associated with democracy. He maintains that the informality of neopatrimonialism is the actual problem of African politics and the analysis thereof (302). Without doubt, the neopatrimonial inheritance left behind by authoritarian regimes poses serious challenges to the institutionalization and consolidation of democracy. Ignoring the implications that neopatrimonialism has on democratization would mean to apply ahistorical and contextually inappropriate criteria to the democratization process.

Functioning statehood is an essential precondition for democratic consolidation. This includes the state's absolute sovereignty, the state's monopoly on violence and the rule of law. The contemporary debate on democratic transformation is rooted in a concept of democracy that requires a state based on the rule of law. There is evidence of a connection between democracy and the rule of law: together with universal citizens' rights, the rule of law guarantees individual freedoms. They are hence required elements of every democracy.

A functioning state is necessary to secure the state's external sovereignty, the state's monopoly on violence and the rule of law without each of which there can be no

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1 The discussion includes Klingebiel and Ogbamichael (2004), Rotberg (2004), Krasner and Pascual (2005), Alao (1999), Ayoob (1996), Dearth (1996), Gros (1996), Herbst (1996/7).

2 Examples include the UK's Prime Minister's Strategy Unit's publication "Investing in Prevention: An International Strategy to Manage Risks of Instability and Improve Crisis Response", DFID's "Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States", " USAID's "Fragile States Strategy" and the OECD DAC's "Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States".

3 Projects focused on the creation of indices of state fragility and failure include the Fund for Peace's Failed State Index (http://www.fundforpeace.org/), Country Indicators for Foreign Policy's Fragility Index (http://www.carleton.ca/cifp), Swiss Peace's FAST (http://www.swisspeace.ch), George Mason University's Political Instability Task Force (http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/pitf/).

4 Examples include, among others, the peaceful transition from military rule to successful democratic rule in Ghana, peaceful elections and democratic consolidation in Mali and Senegal.

long-term democratically legitimized governing[5]. Moreover, effective statehood is also necessary to ensure the legitimacy of the democratic order. More specifically, stable democracies require the state to delivery public goods to its people and satisfy the demands they have expressed through the democratic process (see Therkildsen and Semboja 1996). If a state has become ineffective in this role, the question of legitimacy will arise sooner or later. In this context, it is necessary to ask whose and what kind of legitimacy is at stake. How is the legitimacy of the government, the regime or the entire state being questioned either by its people as well as other internal and external stakeholders?

The argument I will put forward in this paper is as follow. A systematic connection exists between the observed problems of weak, failing, failed and collapsed statehood in sub-Saharan Africa and the lack of successful democratic transition. More specifically, the structural weaknesses of neopatrimonial states hinder successful democratization. While this fundamental weakness cannot obstruct regime change, it does create conditions that obstruct effective institutionalization and consolidation of democracy.

In support of this argument, the paper is structured into three main parts. The first section will establish three categories of sub-Saharan Africa's statehood. This will be followed by various explanations for the causes of these three phenomena. In the third section I will attempt to illustrate the effects these phenomena have on successful democratization and consolidation with a focus on the question of legitimacy. Here, the basic assumption is that consolidation of democracy[6] is not possible without the support of the majority of the population. This requires more than mere acceptance of democracy and includes democratic attitudes as well as democratic behaviour (Linz/Stepan 1996: 5). The paper will not engage in discussions of political community, the role of ethnicity or the problems that are associated with the concept of the nation state in sub-Saharan Africa. A brief conclusion will reflect on the paper's main points.

Forms of Statehood

The various forms of Africa's precarious statehood are usually mistakenly summarized with the one term of 'state failure'. However, this term includes numerous forms of statehood that are characterized by processes that differ considerably from each other: the deterioration of central authority, a loss or perpetual lack of control over some of the state's territory or simply the demise or uninterrupted lack of public services. All of these have different causes and can have varying consequences. Hence, this paper will differentiate between the phenomena commonly associated with 'state failure' by using

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[5] According to Brinkerhoff (2005) "legitimacy refers to acceptance of a governing regime as correct, appropriate and/or right. Without a minimum degree of legitimacy, states have difficulty functioning; and loss of legitimacy in the eyes of some segment of the population is an important contributor to state failure." (5)

[6] I employ a very wide notion of consolidation of democracy that goes beyond ensuring that democracy is the "only game in town" (Schedler 1998: 91). While a more minimalist definition may limit consolidation to encompass free, fair and competitive elections that avoid democratic breakdown, I understand a consolidated democracy as a system of rule that has been popularly legitimized, diffuses democratic values, neutralizes antisystem actors, stabilizes electoral rules and decentralizes state power. Additionally, consolidated democracies are characterized by civilian supremacy over the military and some degree of economic stability (see Schedler 1998)

the terms 'state failure', 'state break down' and 'state collapse'. These three phenomena have different effects on the economic, social and political order and hence on the transformation to democracy and the consolidation thereof.

State Failure

The term refers to a state's structural inability to act as a service provider. However, the state is still able to exert the monopoly on violence while the state's sovereignty over its territory and population is not under threat. It does inevitably lead to legitimacy problems. To what extent these problems concern the state, the regime or the government remains an open question. Most states in sub-Saharan Africa are at least in danger of state failure[7] and most are shaped by it if they have not been affected by one of the other two categories. Characteristics of state failure include the collapse of the health and education systems, omnipresent problems of administrative implementation which are compounded by corruption, free-fall decay of physical infrastructure (roads, railways, electricity and water supply), rampant crime and as a result the partial privatization of public security through the creation of militias which threaten the state's monopoly on violence (see Rotberg 2003).

State Break Down

The state's breakdown typically follows its failure but goes well beyond it. The decisive factor is the limitation of the state's territorial control and monopoly on violence and as a result the demise of other administrative services.[8] However, statehood itself is not questioned openly, hence there are no tendencies aimed at breaking up the state – the political community has not been eroded. The situation may well be described as para-statehood or para-sovereignty. I understand para-statehood to refer to situations in which non-state institutions have in part taken over the state's sovereign rights or some of its key functions without completely supplanting or publicly questioning it. These situations are characterized by informal decentralization and/or privatization. Institutions stepping in for the state usually include national and/or international NGOs as well as local forms of chieftaincy in the form of colonial and post-colonial intermediary authorities.

State Collapse

State collapse refers to the total collapse of state authority. I divide this term into two categories:
a) *Partial state collapse,* which describes territorially limited loss of sovereignty, accompanied by the complete loss of the monopoly on violence and simultaneous questioning of the state's integrity. This typically occurs during civil wars such as the one in Angola until 2002, the present-day Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern

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[7] The 2006 Country Indicators for Foreign Policy's list of the 40 most fragile states includes 30 countries from sub-Saharan Africa (see Carment et. al 2006). Of the Fund for Peace's Failed State Index 40 most failed states includes countries from 24 sub-Saharan Africa.

[8] There are instances in which authorities have been able to provide administrative services in regions that are not necessarily under the central government's control. In the DRC, for example, the central government's monopoly of violence does not extend much beyond the capital and stretches only into few provinces. However, the state is still able to deliver some administrative services in regions where it does not necessarily exert territorial control (see Mathews and Solomon 2001).

Sudan up to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In these situations the government still controls substantial parts of the state's territory and nominally holds the monopoly on violence in these areas while it is still capable of fighting for the other parts of the country.

b) *Complete state collapse* occurs in countries where none or only a very rudimentary central authority exists on a very small territory. Examples include Somalia, Sierra Leone and Liberia during their civil wars.

The typology of state failure presented above sketches a line of successive developments in which virulent state failure can lead to state breakdown that may ultimately culminate in state collapse. Historically, in most cases, phases of varying length of state failure and state breakdown eventually lead to state collapse. However, this line of successive developments is not inevitable and not every state failure necessarily has to lead to state collapse.

The Genesis of Precarious Statehood

Frequently, the phenomena I have described above are homogenously referred to as state failure, but a variety of factors can be utilized to account for state failure, state breakdown and state collapse. I will focus on three frequently used explanations:

1. poverty;
2. the artificial nature of inter-state borders[9];
3. the multiethnic fabric of states in sub-Saharan Africa, in which the process of nation building has not been successfully completed. In short, the absence of an ethnically homogenous nation-state[10].

Without going into much detail on each of these points, I will first present some general counterarguments. I will show that these counter-positions either lack cogency or are by themselves too broad and simplistic and even when they are combined miss the real structural connections.

Poverty

With the exception of Somalia, enduring processes of state collapse are not observed in the poorest countries. The poorest countries such as those of the Sahel region (Niger, Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso) typically undergo state break down. State collapse is most prominent in countries with considerable endowments of extractive resources such as oil, diamonds and other ores. In an extensive study conducted for the World Bank, Collier and Hoeffler (2001) use a large-n regression analysis to show that greed rather than grievances is the major cause of civil wars. Here, grievances refer to ethnic and religious differences, political suppression and inequality while greed refers to the people's desire to control material resources (diamonds, oil, etc.) that provide rents and opportunities to sustain the civil war, such as troop financing. Unlike popular perceptions, Collier and Hoeffler posit that ethnic and religious heterogeneity actually reduce the risk of conflict. Without specifying who the reference is – the state or the population or both – the poverty argument is not plausible. The poverty argument could also be understood to imply that due to decreasing tax revenues or declining development

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[9] For an overview of this debate see Englebert, Tarango and Carter (2002).
[10] See, among others, Jackson and Rosberg (1984), Tilly (1985), Herbst (2001)

assistance the state apparatus simply does not possess sufficient financial resources to execute its responsibilities effectively. However, as I will illustrate below, this explanation is also too lucid, as it important to specify how and for what available resources are used.

Artificial Inter-State Borders

The artificial nature of inter-state borders is by itself not a reason for state collapse. European borders were also created artificially. The important difference being that they were created with political will and defended through the use of violence (see Tilly 1985). It was only in these governmental casings that national identities of populations formed and the political community's national legitimacy developed. In his study "Peasant into Frenchman" Eugen Weber (1976) captures the state-led process to overcome multilingualism and multiculturalism in 19th century France. Until the mid-19th century, France was characterized by several 'nationes' such as the Provenceaux, Dauphinois and Aquitain. This means that the first European nation states developed from states and not vice versa. The notion that nations more or less willingly formed from states and manifested themselves in nation states is more applicable to the later nation state formation in Eastern Europe (see Linz 1993).

The argument on artificial borders can, among other explanations, refer to two ethnic groups living in two states which leads to win-lose demands for a change in border demarcation in favour of one group and at the expense of the other. However, state collapse usually does not occur due to disputes over border demarcations in one direction or the other that aim at fully including one ethnic group in only one state. More precisely, state collapse often is based on a dispute over the question of cultural hegemony and the state's 'culture'. These questions center on questions of inclusion and exclusion. But even states that are not subject to conflict over inclusion and exclusion are not free from the risk of state collapse. One of the continent's most homogenous countries, Somalia, is also the continent's most drastic example of state collapse. At the same time, there are examples of successful multiethnic state integration such as mainland Tanzania, Zambia or Malawi (see Clapham 1998).[11] However, these countries have in no way been spared some of the experiences associated with state failure. It seems appropriate to revise the thesis of lacking national identities in sub-Saharan Africa. I argue that politically polarized ethnic identities that question the nation state and demand their own state only play a minor role in the problems sub-Saharan African statehood is experiencing.

Multi-ethnic Fabric

The argument on the ethno-geographic artificiality of sub-Saharan African states cannot explain the widespread processes of state failure or state break down that are affecting more countries than just those that are ethnically segmented. At best, it can provide explanations for the break down of specific geographic areas. In addition to these almost stereotypical explanations for state brake down and failure, I will now present further contextual reasons.

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[11] Primarily, this refers to a situation in which the political community is not internally challenged by a sizeable ethnic group.

Additional Factors

A common explanation refers to the impact of structural adjustment policies[12] that are understood to aim at an intensification of sub-Saharan African countries' integration into the world market (see Nyang'oro/Shaw 1998) since the second half of the 1980s. From the point of view of sub-Saharan African leaders, these programs – typically including the downsizing of the state apparatus, privatization and liberalization – are indeed mentioned rightfully as a reason for their countries' precarious statehood. They can indeed intensify the already existing problems of sub-Saharan African states in the form of fragile statehood.[13]

Forrest (1998, 47 ff.) mentions four additional, specifically historical causes for the visible weakness of African states. However, he fails to explain if each impacted state weakness collectively or occurred individually at specific moments or in specific cases.

1. transformation of the international system after the end of the Cold War;
2. ultra-privatization of the African state through the implementation of structural adjustment programs;
3. reduced integrity of African armies;
4. a rising wave of sub-national movements and rebellions that lead to state break down and state collapse.

While all countries in sub-Saharan Africa are affected by the first two factors, only some have been influenced by the latter two. Without going into too much detail on each of Forrest's explanations, for the first point the question arises why states should have been fundamentally threatened in the relatively short period since the end of the Cold War. While the change in the international order made it possible for donor countries to reduce and attach conditions to development aid, this did not occur to the extent that would push the majority of countries into precarious situations. The reduction in development assistance may only have contributed partially to state failure by limiting states' ability to provide services and limiting domestic actors' ability to secure support through maintaining their clientelistic networks.

Regarding Forrest's second point the question needs to be asked what is meant by 'ultra privatization' and to what extent the widely cited privatization actually occurred. Without doubt, many sectors were affected by extensive privatization of state-owned enterprises. In fact, many African elites were able to obstruct and delay this process.[14] As

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[12] For an overview of structural adjustment policies in Africa see Mkandawire and Soludo (1999).

[13] In their analysis of 220 reform programs Dollar and Svensson (2000) find that success or failure of reform depends on domestic political-economy forces. For example, the International Monetary Fund's typically used examples of successful structural adjustment, Ghana and Senegal, did not achieve the anticipated results due to negative domestic factors, one of them being the negative impact of neopatrimonialism.

[14] It is crucial to consider the way in which governing elites handled adjustment programs. There are clear indications that the governing elites diverted state expenditures toward the political class, the elite core of the state administration and government and their own military and financial security. In short, governing elites misused public funds to secure their own immediate power. At the same time, expenditures for the lower ranks of the public service, the health and educational sectors as well as infrastructure programs were drastically reduced (van de Walle 2001). Donor countries had not intended this reallocation of funds but they blindly tolerated the elites' decisions. Hibou (1999) goes even further and argues that elites instrumentalized liberalization and privatization in a way that directly contradicted the textbook solutions originally introduced by donors. As a result, corruption, private appropriation of public goods and manipulation of public offices increased drastically.

a result, many of the privatization programs did not get completed in the form originally intended. Moreover, van de Walle (2001) illustrates that adjustment reforms were implemented only partially in most countries. He argues that these partial reforms were responsible for further weakening of some states as they strengthened neopatrimonial tendencies and rent seeking.

In summary, the first two points only provide superficial answers and do not actually explain the phenomena of state failure, state break down and state collapse. Concerning the last factor, the examples of the DRC, Sudan and Angola are cases that actually have a prolonged history of very specific conflicts that predate independence. They can be explained neither by the end of the Cold War nor by structural adjustment (ultra privatization).

Earlier Debates

During the early 1980s – prior to the end of the Cold War and the widespread structural adjustment programs – an academic debate focused on the fundamental problems of the African state at a time when government coups were the main reason for regime change. The latter point illustrates that the military in Africa has since independence always been 'unreliable', both for civil as well as military governments. The agenda of the debate in the 1980s did not focus on state collapse but rather on 'weak', 'underdeveloped' and 'predatory' states (Azarya 1988, Chazan 1988, Hyden 1980, Fatton 1992). The debate was initially concerned with state failure or at best state break down in reference to the lack of successfully planned and implemented development by the state. This earlier debate illustrates that the crisis of the African state did not begin in 1989 with the democracy movements and democratic transitions or hybrid democratic regimes.

In opposition to these arguments, I present the following thesis: the deciding factor for the state's problems, in particular for state failure and state break down but less so for state collapse, is the neopatrimonial character of state rule. Nevertheless, the reduction in development assistance since the end of the Cold War, the partial reforms and privatization in the framework of neoliberal structural adjustment policies in connection with the concentration of state finances on national elites all contributed to the fact that we have been witnessing increasing state failure, breakdown and collapse since the 1990s.

Neopatrimonialism in the Colonial and Postcolonial State

This leads me back to the core topic of neopatrimonialism and it seems appropriate to repeat a brief definition of the concept (see Chabal and Daloz 1999, Khan 2005 and Brynen 1995). Neopatrimonialism refers to a hybrid form of governance. Elements of patrimonial and rational-bureaucratic rule are interwoven with each other. The difference between private and public spheres exists formally but is not respected practically. Hence, two systems co-exist alongside each other: the patrimonial of personal relations and the legal-rational of the bureaucracy. In this parallel existence, the patrimonial system deforms the legal rational bureaucracy's functional logic.

I deem it essential to point out that, with the exception of perhaps South Africa, sub-Saharan Africa has not experienced a functioning rational state. While the modern rational state has a long history in Europe and North America, the success of rational

statehood in Africa has been limited. Perhaps for the two decades following the Second World War in the course of the "second colonial occupation" (Low and Lonsdale 1976: 12), there were attempts to create a modern, rational-bureaucratic state that could satisfy the colonial powers' demands. The basis of these efforts was the assumption that an effective exploitation of the colonies required internally driven development efforts in the form of basic investments that included an effective state apparatus that was capable of planning and guiding these processes.

These attempts to build a state bureaucracy with indigenous public servants and national elites were not particularly successful. Ultimately, they only affected a small group of countries and only for a short period of time. The colonial state was not a rational, modern state but rather a hybrid between rational and traditional statehood (see Young 1994). From the perspective of the population, the colonial state was closer to old traditional empires than to modern, bureaucratic states of Europe. Only the central administration reflected elements of legal bureaucratic rule. In its relations with the indigenous population, the colonial state made use of intermediary authorities in the form of real or invented traditional rulers. These governed their subjects through patrimonial rule.

After independence, two processes that intensified the weakening of the post-colonial African state occurred simultaneously. First, domestic elites took over the positions in the colonial administration previously held by Europeans. Second, the informal, clientelist, personalized webs of relationships and actions characteristic of patrimonial rule entered bureaucratic processes.

In sum, Africa's precarious statehood is an old problem that already existed in the colonial state. Post-colonial neopatrimonial forms of government have undermined the development of modern, rational-bureaucratic statehood through the years. In collaboration with neoliberal structural adjustment programs of 1980s this contributed to the present crisis of the African state. The weak, neopatrimonial form of post-colonial statehood are ultimately the structural cause for the processes shaping post-independence state failure, state break down and state collapse in sub-Saharan Africa. The following section will discuss the effects of these processes on democratisation and consolidation of democracy.

Consequences for Democracy and Consolidation

The consequences of state failure are quickly presented. They are the rise of warlords, whose rule often, but not in all instances, relies on violence. Theirs is a rule of war in which civilians' basic rights, participation and democracy do not play a role anymore. If not traditionally affirmed, legitimacy is secured through the threat and/or use of violence. Disorder caused by warlords is commonly based on the violent exploitation or looting of resources that require little investment or can be financed with venture capital such as the exploitation of coltan in the eastern DRC (see Montague 2002).

However, state collapse can also present positive opportunities to countries. For example, in Somalia, one might argue that state collapse offers the possibility to rebuild state institutions 'from below'. However, in light of Somali history this seems unlikely. The negotiations between the various self-proclaimed governments, clans, exile groups, parties and warlords have been on-going for years without arriving at a binding

agreement (see Bryden 2004). The reformation of the Somali state will likely occur through violent means and hence 'from above'.

Looking at the consequences of state failure and state break down for democracy and consolidation, I put forward the following hypothesis: with the state's diminishing ability to perform its core functions – security of its people, territorial control, guarantee of public security and order, provision of physical infrastructure, basic education and health services – the state risks losing its legitimacy vis à vis its subjects and their attitudes toward a state that is unable to deliver will turn negative. As a result, they may turn to war lords' armies and gangs for the provision of security, undermining and questioning the state's monopoly on violence and hence limiting the capacity of the rule of law.

As plausible as the arguments on the loss of legitimacy may appear, it can be shown that, first, it overgeneralizes and, second, it leads to further questions. First, the question has to be asked what is understood by 'state': who or what is losing legitimacy? The government (rulers), the regime (political order) or the state as political community or perhaps all three concurrently? Further, one needs to ask what the loss of legitimacy actually means. Undoubtedly, in the 1980s, state failure and in part also state break down resulted in the loss of authoritarian governments' and regimes' legitimacy. This loss eventually led to urban mass protests, democracy movements and ultimately to the many transitions to democracy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Voter turn out in the respective second democratic elections in the 1990s did not indicate that democracy or the state related to it had lost legitimacy. In some countries turn out continued to rise while it fell in others (see Bratton and Posner 1999). It is thus unclear what exactly is meant by the state's loss of legitimacy. It may seem plausible to conclude that the argument refers to state institutions, which, together with values and norms constitute part of the political order. However, Dia (2000) argues that sub-Saharan Africa's institutions are inefficient as they fail to generate loyalty and ownership among 'ordinary' people. On the one hand, state institutions are therefore disconnected and the consequent lack of 'moral legitimacy' has contributed to the manifestation of neopatrimonial rule (Dia 2000, 37). This perverted relationship between the governing and the governed has led to a loss of legitimacy not only of state institutions but also of those occupying official positions. On the other hand, traditional institutions may indeed display this legitimacy.

Bearing in mind the previously sketched development of the state in sub-Saharan Africa, one may question how much more legitimacy African institutions can possibly lose. They never did possess exclusive legitimacy as rational bureaucratic regulating institutions – in fact, quite the opposite has been the case. The relationship between the people and state's institutions has often been precarious as they rarely acted as primary regulating authorities. For this reason, the relationship with formal state institutions was characterized by personal, clientelist relationships. In everyday reality, the state's regulating authority has always been limited and never exclusive.

However, the neopatrimonial state can achieve a certain degree of legitimacy. Through functioning personal relations and clientelist networks the state is able to deliver certain services to its people even if these are very selective. Hence, despite Dia's argument on 'moral legitimacy', I propose that many authoritarian regimes do possess some degree of legitimacy. This implies that the neopatrimonial order, whether it is

authoritarian or democratic, can obtain a degree of legitimacy. However, this legitimacy can also be lost as the demise of authoritarian regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s show. Probably, these regimes only possessed comparatively unstable support as they were reliant upon specific people and their effectiveness. At the same time, one should not overlook that these informal processes of legitimization can attain institutional character: to a certain extent they can become extra-personal. Evidentially, these neopatrimonial authoritarian regimes[15] in their various forms did sustain themselves for a comparatively long time.

The state's loss of legitimacy can also be understood to include situations in which the state is no longer accepted as a political community. This could be implied by the thesis that the state is rarely viewed as the primary regulating authority as well as the success of para-statehood. The question is, however, whether the principle of a state-based political community has indeed lost its legitimacy. Even in extreme cases such as Zimbabwe, we have not witnessed mass uprisings questioning the state's legitimacy. State failure, state breakdown and eventually state collapse are not caused by public movements that question the state's monopoly on violence. Rather, they are based on the profane application of violence by competing elites that do not ask the population for its opinion.

My thesis thus amounts to the following: in the context of neopatrimonial rule it is concrete form of order and institutions – whether they are democratically legitimized or authoritarian – that lose legitimacy and not so much the principle of the state-based community. The legitimacy of state institutions hence obtains a core meaning for democratization and consolidation. A democratic order's legitimacy claim toward state institutions is one in which only impersonal, legal, rational-bureaucratic processes are valid. For a limited time, the weak legitimacy of state institutions can be compatible with a young democratic order. In the long run, democratic rule with not be able to survive without the practical legitimacy of state institutions. Without this practical legitimacy and value-based support, young democracies will remain weak, which makes the development of democratic principles unlikely. The further away the memories of authoritarian rule, the more likely an erosion of legitimacy becomes, hence obstructing the consolidation of democracy.

The stabilization of everyday acceptance of the rule of law, the regulation of legal-bureaucratic practices, and the recognition of formalized processes are necessary conditions for the consolidation of democracy. Under conditions of state failure, state breakdown and state collapse these conditions will not be met. Strategically, the institutionalization and stabilization of effective statehood through such core elements as rule of law, formalized processes and the establishment of a monopoly on violence are necessary preconditions for the consolidation of democratic successes in sub-Saharan Africa.

An ineffective state apparatus that is characterized by failure and break down and which cannot provide the basic needs for security, health, education and welfare can contribute to democratically elected governments losing popular support. If elected governments are not able to fulfill their campaign promises and deliver services the government's legitimacy vanishes. The loss of such specific legitimacy can, in the long-

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[15] Bratton and van de Walle (1997) distinguish between the following forms of neopatrimonial authoritarian regimes: 1) military oligarchies, 2) one party systems with plebiscite and 3) competitive one party systems.

run, lead to the loss of general legitimacy. In this light, the precarious statehood in the form of state failure and state break down poses a continuous threat to democratic development. In light of the general conditions in sub-Saharan Africa, simple demands for 'something different' are not helpful if they do not offer specific suggestions.

Conclusion

The internal connection between democracy and the rule of law posits that without a functioning state which can ensure sovereignty and the monopoly on violence as well as a series of public services there can be no long-term democracy. This paper has highlighted that democratization in sub-Saharan Africa is faced with structural problems connected with precarious statehood. The problems resulting from this situation are frequently underestimated as the academic debate is often limited to explaining state failure, state break down and state collapse by referring to recent historical events, reduction in development assistance and the effects of structural adjustment programs. Neither poverty nor the artificial nature of inter-state borders provides us with satisfactory explanations. Rather, the state's vulnerability in sub-Saharan Africa can be explained by the historical absence of a functioning modern rational state and the neopatrimonial character of state rule. This holds true for the colonial and the post-colonial state.

In this paper, I employed state failure, state break down and state collapse as the basis for my thesis on the loss of state legitimacy. I have shown that state institutions cannot suffer a great loss of legitimacy under neopatrimonial rule as the population has a precarious relationship with state institutions that have never been able to claim exclusive control over the entire population or territory. However, this does not preclude that the respective political order – democratic or authoritarian – can lose public support as witnessed in the late 1980s.

This paper has shown that sub-Saharan African state's precarious statehood poses challenges to the continent's emerging democracies for two reasons. First, with their ineffective bureaucracies it will be difficult for them to guarantee basic services such as security, health and education or even to implement economic innovation that would allow for sustainable economic growth. As a result, consecutive democratically elected governments face the danger of losing public support until the democratic regime itself is viewed as being illegitimate. This danger increases as the experiences of authoritarian rule are forgotten over time. For these processes to unfold there is no need for open support of authoritarian rule. Rather, a sufficient amount of political apathy to enable authoritarian elites to dismantle democratic order. Second, in close relation to the first point, democratic consolidation can only occur through the everyday recognition of the state bureaucracy's legal-bureaucratic processes that are not subject to the personalized influences of neopatrimonial networks. This is not possible without the monopoly on violence and the rule of law as core elements of democracy. Under the conditions of state failure, state break down and state collapse, democracy in sub-Saharan Africa will remain fragile. In conclusion, the continent's precarious statehood is not a barrier to democratic regime change but poses a structural problem for the consolidation of democracy.

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