On State Building and Wicked Problems: Stateness, Nationhood, and Mimicry

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ABSTRACT: Responding to a set of wicked problems pertaining to weak or failed states, state building remains circumscribed by many of the problems it strives to address. Despite the expansion of literature, the challenging task of (re)building states in a postconflict setting is characterized by inadequate intellectual and policy coherence. Engaging with the existing literature, this paper seeks to add clarity in ways which relate directly to the agendas of academic research and policy making. Casting into sharper relief what is distinctive and/or familiar in state formation processes in the West and the rest of the world, the analysis highlights the differing impact of nationalism. In considering the critique that contemporary international-led state building neglects nation building, the paper suggests that the stateness of polities undergoing state building is intrinsically linked with nationhood. State building resides in both international and national locations of politics that condition the constitution of national identity via multiple (unequal) exchanges between external and local actors which can be depicted in terms of mimicry. Multiple political locations of state building notwithstanding, the task of bringing the imagined community into being is more suited to national actors. Ongoing challenges of nation and state building require more acknowledgement that the realization of the nation cannot be a primary domain of international actors.

Introduction

More often than not state building tends to be understood as the obverse of state failure or state fragility. This is so particularly since the early 1990s when concerns with underperformance of weak states impinged firmly the security agenda. Not only is the aspiration of security the bedrock of state building, but strong state performance is a mediating factor to the provision of peace and security. Conflict, on the contrary, is understood to be a by-product of low state capacity (Krasner and Pascual 2005; Call and Wyeth 2008). More than one and a half billion people live in (failed) states that cannot maintain security and order, regional stability, or the rights and needs of their populations (Richmond 2014a, p. 12). At the same time threats from individuals and groups residing in failed states remain real. A key strategy of the international community in response to these threats has been to try to build more capable states that can

govern their own territories effectively. Hence learning how to do state building better is hoped to benefit long-term security and sustainable peace.

The link between state building and security is a constant in the existing literature (see, for instance, Lake 2016; Krasner and Pascual 2005; Call and Wyeth 2008; Edelstein 2009; Dodge 2006). Much has been written on how best to conceptualize state performance (Migdal 1988; Badie and Birnbaum 1983; Skocpol 1979) and the levels of the state's delivery of political goods (Rotberg 2004). Moreover, the understanding of statehood in terms of state capacity has led to a tendency to approximate the state with its institutions. In point of fact it is difficult to find a publishable piece on contemporary international-led state building that does not pay attention to state building as institution building (refer, for example, to Fukuyama 2004; Paris 2004; Hameiri 2007; Lemay-Hébert 2009, 2013). Another prominent faction of the related literature concerns itself with the quality of the emerging peace (Heathershaw 2008; Richmond 2014b; Richmond and Pogodda 2016; Visoka 2015; Lewis 2017) and challenges of obtaining a modicum of legitimacy (Lake 2016). The rapid growth of literature, nonetheless, has not resolved all the puzzles of state building processes. It is curious that, as Richmond (2014b, p. 12) notes, with the expansion of the literature and as state building has become mainstream, it has 'lost its policy and intellectual coherence.' Indeed, there seems to be no 'comprehensive understanding of the scope of the concept and of the conundrums that it presents for policy' (Chandler and Sisk 2013, p. xx). In the light of the vastness of the state building literature and the experience base of the process, one scholar openly declared: 'I make no claim to comprehensiveness' (Brinkerhoff 2014, p. 334).

Acknowledging the wide range of the relevant literature and the ambiguity in the understanding of the concept and practice of state building, this contribution seeks to add clarity with reference to two themes that are currently overlooked in existing publications. These two neglected themes pertain to lack of (1) a focused analysis of the genealogy of contemporary state building and (2) a systematic consideration of the correlation between state building (as institution building) and nation building (as national identity building) and the international state builders' positions to these. Consideration of these two themes relate directly to both the agendas of academic research and policy making—as Western administrations rethink their engagement in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and elsewhere, and draw lessons from the history of recent interventions.

Despite the vast literature, there is a prevailing ahistoricism in the existing appraisals of state building. Such an attitude resonates with an observable disinterest that International Relations (IR) as a discipline has in history given that investigations of the international order remain defined by the transhistorical condition of anarchy and the elusive quest for zero-sum security. IR is preoccupied with what nation states do to each other, but it eschews the question where the nation comes from. IR tends to 'freeze' the nation and prioritize instead the understanding of the state and its evolution. Moreover, IR scholars are not much concerned with what nations are, and how what they do produces their beings. Engaging with these overlooked questions this paper traces the genealogy of contemporary state building in *processes* of state formation in Western Europe. Offering a focused comparison between state formation in Western Europe and non-Western sphere the analysis suggests that the present neglect of an *explicit* focus on nation building as opposed to state building has a precedent in the processes of state formation in the West during the millennia preceding the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Although the expansion of the state system in the decolonization era led to more attention being given to the idea of the nation (refer for instance to Gellner 1983; Bhabha 1990), the latter still remains insufficiently explored. Moreover, in considering the critique that contemporary state building neglects nation building, this contribution emphasizes the mediating role of nationalism in the construction of the national community. It maintains that the stateness of polities undergoing state building is intrinsically linked with nationhood (and national identity)—a link that will be explored in the comparative context of postcolonial literature. Before developing these claims, the analysis casts a light on the meaning of key terms in order to clarify the terminology. It highlights that in responding to a set of 'wicked' problems pertaining to weak or failed states, contemporary international-led state building has been penetrated itself by some features of these problems. Indeed, state building as a strategy to consolidating internal order remains circumscribed by many of the problems it strives to address.

A 'wicked' problem and terminology
The existing literature indicates how ambiguous the terminology of state building is. Indeed, uniform definitions are lacking as it will become apparent below. In light of the prevailing ambiguity, 'wicked' is an attractive metaphor to characterize challenges of state building not only in terms of policy but also terminology.

State building refers to endeavours of national and / or international actors with the view of establishing, reforming, and enhancing state institutions where they have been consumed or

destroyed frequently as a consequence of armed conflict (Call 2008, p. 5). Institutions are thought to be central to the conduct of a state. Depending on their institutional performance states may be placed on a continuum of strength, belonging to various ideal types, ranging from strong or consolidated states to failed or collapsed states. The most desired, *strong*, states are those 'whose main features are strong linkages between the physical, attitudinal, and institutional components' (Holsti 1996, p. 90). A *weak* state is perceived as a polity that 'lacks institutional capacity to implement and enforce policies' (Lemay-Hébert 2013, p. 4). Similarly, a *fragile* state is characterized by a 'government [that] cannot or will not deliver core functions to the majority of its people' (UK Department of International Development, 2005). A *failed* state, according to Gerard Helman and Steven Ratner (1993, p. 5) reflects 'a situation where governmental structures are overwhelmed by circumstances'. As David Lake has pointed out failed states 'possess neither a monopoly of violence nor legitimacy' (Lake 2016, pp. 32-33). Former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1995, p. 9), for his part, has spoken of state collapse as 'the collapse of state institutions, especially the police and judiciary, with resulting paralysis of governance, a breakdown of law and order, and general banditry and chaos'. Failure and fragility, though related, are not coterminous. While state fragility indicates that there is a threat of failure, deterioration to warfare is not an automatic outcome (Hameiri 2007, p. 127). For instance, whilst all states of the East European block were fragile in 1989— and some of them even failed to provide basic services to their populations—only one of them, the former Federation of Yugoslavia, succumbed to violence during the post-communist transition.

Weak, fragile, collapsed, or failed states constitute a category of problems that can be referred to as 'wicked'. The term 'wicked problems' has been attributed to Horst Rittel who used it to refer to a class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, inherently complex, information about which is misleading, where decision makers involved have conflicting values, and where ramifications for the whole system are unclear.[1] The adjective 'wicked' describes the mischievous quality of these problems, implying that proposed 'solutions' may wind up worse than the symptoms (Churchman 1967, pp. B141-B143). 'Wicked' is used not necessarily to suggest that the problems concerned are ethically deplorable, but rather in the sense that 'they are "vicious" … or "tricky" …' (Rittel and Webber 1973, pp. 160-1).

State weakness/fragility and collapse/failure epitomize the essence of a wicked problem set: the weak states—as a category—cannot be precisely defined (as exemplified by the adjectives:

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'collapsed', 'failed', 'fragile', or 'weak'—states); (attempted) solutions tend to have internally conflicting goals, calling for (difficult) trade-offs; (attempted) solutions are conditioned by resource constraints and politically determined schedules; attempts at solutions produce unforeseen consequences, sometimes even unanticipated harm that leads to further disagreement over the nature of the problem and possible outcomes (Brinkerhoff 2014, pp. 334-5; also, Paris and Sisk 2009). Manifestation of these characteristics of wicked problems in the context of weak states can be found in virtually any case of such states.

What is more significant is that some features of wicked problems in the weak states' context find expression in the attempted solutions, including state building. For instance, there is a frequent tendency of (exogenous) state building to create local dependency on international actors, and to create state institutions that are more accountable to international parties than local populations (Lemay-Hébert 2009; Richmond 2014b). Furthermore, under the guidance of international actors the emerging state has not been, primary, a result of local power struggles and negotiations between national stakeholders, because the state's scope has been restricted (De Guevara 2008, p. 361; Chandler 2010).

The conceptual vagueness characteristic of the weak/fragile and collapsed/failed states is reflected in the process of tackling their problems via state building. The central definitional question pertaining to the latter relates to the definition of the state itself. In scholarly terms the meaning of state varies depending on the nature of the research question and the context of analysis. In general, there are two broad conceptions of state: a national-territorial concept according to which the state comprizes the whole territory denoted on a map and all which is within it (people, government, resources); and a more limited, institutional concept of state. As Anthony Giddens (1985, p. 17) notes the 'state' sometimes means the overall social system subject to the government or power and sometimes an apparatus of that government or power. The latter—institutional—conception of state is attributed to the work of Max Weber (1946) and disseminated via the works of Charles Tilly (1975a, 1975b, 1992), Randall Collins (1986), Joel Migdal (1988), and Theda Skocpol (1979). The former conception of state has been embraced in the works of Nicolas Lemay-Hébert (2009), and Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, Nicolas Onuf, and Vojin Rakić (2014) in what they call the legitimacy approach to state building.

While both conceptions are heuristic abstractions, they have varying implications for the conception and policy of state building. The narrow, institutional conception of state leads to

technocratic state building that focuses on state capacity through institutional reconstruction (Hameiri 2007; Lemay-Hébert 2009, p. 26). The broad conception of state, on the other hand, leads to what is known as the legitimacy approach to state building which 'concentrates on socio-political cohesion in the rebuilding process' (Lemay-Hébert and Mathieu 2015, p. 245). It ought to be noted, nonetheless, that the broader the conception of the state the more challenging it is to materialize such conception. The vast majority of state building literature concerns itself with questions pertaining to the institutional (re)constitution of states (a sample of this literature includes Fukuyama 2004; Paris 2004; Lemay-Hébert 2013). Consideration of such questions will not be replicated here. Instead emphasis will be placed on how the building of states has been approached in recent history, and whether stateness and nationhood have been detached in current state building practices.

State Building in Western Europe and Beyond: Some Relational Remarks
In a rare, albeit brief, consideration of historicity of state building, Catherine Goetze and Dejan Guziman (2008, p. 320) have suggested that it is the democratization processes of Southern Europe in the 1970s and in Latin America in the 1980s that offer the template for the policy programmes of today's state building. This view, however, takes a huge historical shortcut. For the genealogy of state building can be traced in processes of state formation in Western Europe, whose state model has served as a template for states in the rest of the world. The exportation of the Western state is evident in the following statistics: whereas in 1500 European states held political control over about 7 percent of the earth's land, their share of political control over Earth's land grew to 35 percent in 1800, and 84 percent in 1914 (figures from Headrick 1981, p. 3). It does not seem unreasonable, therefore, to suggest that since 'the modern state is a quintessentially European phenomenon … it is to … Europe's story that one has to look to explain it' (Buzan and Little 2000, pp. 20-1).

What the history of the West shows is that its corresponding process of state building, or state making, has been inherently violent.[2] 'In the pursuit of a monopoly of force, those agencies that came to stand as the state had to expropriate the means of violence from different social entities that competed with the emerging state' (Boege et al 2008, p. 5). Analysing state making in the European continent Charles Tilly argued that from AD 990 onwards, major mobilizations for war provided the chief occasion on which states consolidated, expanded, and created novel forms of political organization. Whereas war making was an activity in service of external stability, state making—or state building—served the internal order (Tilly 1992, pp. 52, 70).

Until the eighteenth century European statesmen were not very keen to attend to popular demands. While establishing direct rule, states in Europe moved from a reactive to a proactive form of repression. Rebellions were punished forcibly, and civilian populations were disarmed. At the same time, within their boundaries states imposed national languages, educational systems, and military services. Externally, European states controlled movements across boundaries and treated foreigners as distinctive kinds of peoples entitled only to limited rights. Consequently, 'life homogenized within states and heterogenized among states' (Tilly 1992, p. 116).

Two contemporary scholars have opined that state building 'historically was … for the most part quite endogenous' (Chandler and Sisk 2013, p. xxii). However, in his systematic consideration of the formation of the West European states, Charles Tilly has noted that the expansion of the European template ensured a move from 'a relatively "internal" to a strongly "external"' state formation process—a trend that has continued and accelerated through to the present era. Tilly (1992, p. 182 also p. 207):

> [C]ompacts of powerful states have increasingly narrowed the limits within which any national struggle for power occurred. … That narrowing restricted the alternative paths of state formation. Throughout the world state formation converged on the more or less deliberate construction of national states … according to models offered, subsidized, and enforced by the great powers.

In his study of state- and nation building in Europe, Samuel Finer (1975, pp. 85-6) opined that state formation in Western Europe shows that national states—in the European image—have come to acquire five salient characteristics: (1) they are *territorially* defined populations that recognize a common paramount organ of government; (2) the government consists of specialized personnel; the *civil* service that carries out government's decisions and the *military* service that backs these by force if necessary; (3) each state is recognized by other states as independent in its action upon its subjects (a recognition that constitutes 'international sovereignty'); (4) the population residing within the state forms a community characterized by a common *nationality*; and (5) members of the community—in principle, at least—mutually distribute and share duties and benefits. The first three characteristics are constitutive features of state building whereas the last two are associated with nation building. For the purposes of terminology clarification, it is worth noting that state building involves territoriality and function (closely associated with workings of government institutions), whereas nation

building refers to processes whereby state elites strive to render the boundaries of the state congruent with those of the nation (Mylonas 2012).

The above-mentioned five characteristics of modern states find expression in the notion of *stateness*, which can be conceived as a key feature of statehood. As the European model of state expanded, the world has moved gradually towards stateness, in that, the processes of state making have centered on 'consolidation of territorial control, differentiation of governments from other organizations, acquisition of autonomy (and mutual recognition thereof) by some governments, centralization and coordination' (Tilly 1975b, p. 70). By the nineteenth century virtually all West European governments had arrived at a relatively high level of stateness (Tilly 1975b, p. 34).

Moreover, the populace of the Western states was *relatively* homogenous in cultural terms due to processes of unification under the Roman Empire and (deliberate) institution by state elites of a national language, a state religion, mass public instruction, and sometimes expulsion of ethnic minorities (Tilly 1975b, pp. 27, 77; Mulaj 2016, pp. 542-548).[3] The relative homogeneity of populations in Western Europe was a facilitating factor in the emergence of West European national states particularly because it eased the division of lands into exclusive territories (although some of them were subjected to subsequent change). Furthermore, this relative homogeneity facilitated construction of unified states by lowering the cost of state making insofar as it rendered uniform administrative arrangements feasible, promoted loyalty of subject population, and made uniform communication systems available to the rulers (refer to Fischer and Lundgreen 1975).

Samuel Finer's definition of the state mentioned above incorporates nation building in the conception and practice of state making. But Charles Tilly has insisted on 'the analytic separation of state building from nation building' in the context of analyzing state formation in Western Europe because, here, nation building generally occurred after the formation of strong states (Tilly 1975b, pp. 70-1, 80).[4] This approach 'freezes' the nation with the view of better understanding the state and its evolution. Nevertheless, when state formation proceeds over largely heterogeneous populations as in the case of former colonial possessions, nation building becomes a significant part of state making. Therefore, analyzing processes of state formation that proceed over largely heterogeneous populations benefit from taking into consideration both aspects of state building and nation building.

Given that Western states acquired relative homogeneity in early stages of their state formation, which in turn facilitated drawing of boundaries and governance of populations, it is to be expected that nationalism—as an ideology that advocates congruence between state boundaries and ethnic identity of the people who live within them (Gellner 1983, p. 1)—did not play a crucial role in Western states formation processes. Indeed, it is from the French Revolution onwards that national or ethnic identity became important bases of mass mobilization. It follows, therefore, that nationalism (as a modern ideology) appeared only in the late stages of West European state formation, by which time Western states had already acquired a strong level of stateness. This is not the case with state formation in the rest of the world. The latter processes of state formation—particularly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—coincide with the consolidation, utilization, and manipulation of nationalist ideology.[5]

There is a general consensus that the idea of the nation is Western in origin.[6] This is also an idea that enabled anti-colonial movements to challenge their subservience to Western world views and obtain independence in the form of new nation states, although no clear break with the former imperial powers ensued. Indeed, just like the colonizers needed to create a class of locals capable of taking on colonizers' opinions and intellect—described as 'mimic men'—so were colonizers intent to make sure that they hand over power to those who could safeguard imperial interests in the postcolonial era.[7] In interrogating state building in the decolonized era, postcolonial theorists have been keen to emphasize that the West and the non-West have been 'constituted in the course of multifarious (unequal, hierarchical and usually coercive) exchanges, such that neither was left untouched' (Seth 2013, p. 20).

As postcolonial states emerged, they emulated—mimicked—the Western state model in a setting that was not entirely conducive to the new enterprise due to lack of Western liberal tradition and unformed national identities. Indeed, whilst the myth of the nation functioned as a useful resource of unity in opposing colonialism, the production of a unified national community has proved to be a daunting task. Most of the once-colonized nations have been plagued with problems emanating from fractured national identities, thus far failing to develop a national identity that reflects their cultural diversity (Kumaraswamy 2006, pp. 63-4). As Sankaran Krishna (2013, p. 124) observes, the postcolonial nation is cleft due to vast disparities both of culture and wealth. 'The postcolonial nation is a serrated—not smooth—space, led and represented by middle classes but not inclusive of vast numbers of society…'—ethnic,

religious, linguistic minorities, and also women. Whilst the image of the sovereign (Western) state is (broadly) maintained, postcolonial states do not function in accordance with the ideal-type polity found in the West (De Guevara 2012, pp. 4, 7). Postcolonial states' institutions combine colonial, local, and international elements and function non-uniformly according to international (systemic) and local logics. Hence, postcolonial nation states are agonistic spaces characterized by hybridity, unfinished projects, and persistent contestations and opposition.

Stateness, Nationhood, and Mimicry

The preceding section has indicated that although the genealogy of state building can be traced in processes of state formation in Western Europe, contemporary processes of state building are not carbon copies of those in the West. Indeed, most states outside the western sphere experience limitations of their statehood—evidenced in not so high levels of stateness, or state capacity—and also ongoing challenges of split national identities. In the context of contemporary praxis of state building, an increasing critique—particularly with regard to cases that are internationally-led—suggests that nation building is being undermined due to international actors' excessive focusing on institution building and 'favouring (of) technically skilled practices' (Lemay-Hébert et al 2014, p. 5) rather than working on societal cohesion. Such neglect of national cohesion appears to take place even as 'nation building' is frequently used to refer to 'state building', especially in the American scholarship, reflecting U.S. 'national experience and history, in which cultural and historical identity was heavily shaped by political institutions' (Fukuyama 2004, p. 99; Von Hippel 2000; Chesterman 2004; Boot 2017; Crowley 2017).

In definitional terms, as mentioned in the preceding section, state building and nation building can be separated. The former refers to actions undertaken by inter/national actors to establish, reform, or strengthen state institutions and their connections with society; whereas the latter implies actions undertaken (primarily) by national actors, to forge a sense of common national identity by (a) overcoming ethnic differences; (b) countering competing sources of identity and loyalty; and (c) mobilizing the population behind the state building project (Call 2008, p. 5). Both state and nation building are conscious undertakings that depend on political action.

However, few and far between have been scholarly interrogations of the impact of institutional building on nation building—including the mediating role of nationalism. In particular, the question of nationalism appears in the existing literature unfrequently, and mostly indirectly,

as part of the acknowledgement that state building is not simply about top-down construction or strengthening of state institutions but also about local influences and responses (refer for instance to Goetze and Guzinam 2008; and de Guevara 2008). A rare scholar to consider the role of nationalism on state building, Stephen J. Del Rosso (2013, p. 65) found that this role goes largely unnoticed due to nationalism's 'ability to "hide in plain sight"—as reflected in its relatively rare invocation in contemporary scholarly analyses on state building and even more infrequently citing in policy pronouncements and debates'.[8]

The empirical record of contemporary state building, nevertheless, shows that institutional (re)construction has impacted on cohesion of nations and consequently on nation building. Functioning institutions can facilitate national cohesion and strengthen stateness in the process.[9] Conversely, malfunctioning state institutions can impede nation building. Not infrequently, conception of institutions—and their working—have been underpinned by an ethnic framing of identity (Richmond 2014b; Hehir 2007). In Iraq, for example, the heavy population of state institutions with Shiites following de-Baathification, and subsequent under-representation of the Sunnis, has marginalized and alienated the latter inducing resentment and resistance with dire consequences for the cohesion of the Iraqi society and stability of the state (refer to Herring and Rangwala 2005; Dodge 2006).

Bosnia presents the most conspicuous example of institutions—mandated on the grounds of EU values and 'European identity'—directly involved in a *simulation* of Bosnian identity. It may not be an overstatement to suggest that exaggerated forms of simulation have been central to EU activity in Bosnia (Chandler 2014, p. 122). A glance at the Bosnian flag—designed in the image (same colours) of the EU flag, with the white stars on a yellow and blue background—may give the impression that Bosnia is more EU-orientated than are member states themselves. This despite serious ethnic frictions between Bosnians, Croats, and Serbs which inhibit societal cohesion, and with the country having virtually no prospects of joining the EU in the foreseeable future (Mulaj 2017). Here we have an example of the emulation of the dominant actors' image despite the discrepancy with the reality of the subordinate.

Power relations between dominant and subordinate actors in the contemporary state building projects exhibit interesting modes of emulations, and sometimes frictions in the form of contestations and even subversions. Mimicry is a useful concept for depicting these relations and their ensuing effects. Applied first to characterize power relations between colonizers and

colonized, mimicry refers to an elusive survival strategy for the colonized (Bhabha 1994, pp. 85-6). By allowing the colonized to try on 'the colonizer's reflected image in the body of the "native"' mimicry 'subverts the hegemonic convention that the colonizer is always separate from and superior to the colonized' (Ling 2004, p. 116).[10]

Mimicry menaced colonizers by disclosing the ambivalence of the colonial discourse. Similarly, the dual articulation of mimicry in the context of international-led state building— (1) as a strategy of reform (or rebuilding) in the image of the Western state model, and (2) as a sign of difference (incomplete, partial, hybrid replication of the real (Western model))—can undermine dominant authority and sow the seeds of disobedience, on the side of local (subordinate) parties. The dual articulation of mimicry enables the latter to shape agendas of dominant actors and reclaim (certain) terms of politics—revealing the mutual dependency of these two parties. Indeed, frames of governance and / or values introduced by international actors can generate contentious interpretations, challenges, discontent, and even resistance by local parties. Responses shaped by nationalist elites' encounters with external actors and their sponsored institutions have come to condition relations of power, legitimacy, and expression of national identity.

For instance, in Kosovo, despite 'substantive mimicry'[11]—i.e., deep engagement of local, governing parties with practices of Western state building—competition between the two sides, at times, became inevitable. The prolonged mandate of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) elicited competing national and international agendas that turned the state building project into 'a race for power' consequently detracting from its legitimacy (Richmond 2005, chapter 5). UNMIK's reluctance to facilitate the resolution of the status issue generated resistance from Kosovo's Albanian population, who came to view UNMIK as an obstacle to achieving their national self-determination (Mulaj 2011). Ultimately, violent riots in March 2004 put Kosovo's independence on a faster track (declared in 2008). In this case reaction to institutional practices of state building mandated by the UN inadvertently enhanced expression of the national identity of the majority group. Similar dynamics may be materializing with regard to the national identity of the Iraqi Kurds (refer to Owtram 2017).

In other words, the dominant and the subordinate parties in the context of international-led state building are bound up together in multiple and integral ways. Not only emulation allows the subordinate to try on its body the reflected image of the dominant, but resistance of the former

can alter agendas of the latter and shape outcomes. The local and the international inhibit interrelated spaces that foster mutually constitutive identities. The recognition of the mutually constitutive character of identity, in turn, requires an understanding of statebuilding as a multi-layered process that is grounded on multiple locations of politics.

Whereas politics of state building resides both in international and national locations, the task of bringing the imagined community into being ought to belong—*primarily*—to national actors. Their international counterparts are not really suitable to take the lead with this task. As David Lake has argued, state builders have limited mandates, limited powers, and crucially limited time (Lake 2016, p. 5). If international actors involved in state building become predominantly entangled with the construction of (others') national identity they stand to be criticized for being out of touch with local traditions or outright delegitimizing nation building. For these reasons it is right that international state builders do not expand *directly* to nation building. The ability of foreign powers to build nations is limited, although external impact and / or influence may be ever present.[12] National actors preoccupy themselves with questions of national identity—sometimes in response to international actors' involvement in national institutions and sometimes in order to legitimize local policies and agendas. National identity building activities are best assigned as a domain—mainly—of national actors.

Conclusion

State building has become central to the Western security strategy to address instability emanating from weak and failed states both at the international and national levels. The aspiration of security and peace remains the bedrock of state building processes—both international-led and home grown. The predominant part of the existing literature deals with challenges of institution building in fragile, post-conflict states; challenges of obtaining a modicum of legitimacy; and, overall, quality of emerging peace. What is missing in the existing literature is (1) a focused analysis of the genealogy of the contemporary state building and (2) a systematic consideration of the correlation between state building (as institution building) and nation building (as national identity building) and the international state builders' positions to these. This contribution has aimed to fill this gap.

The analysis has suggested that the genealogy of state building can be traced in processes of state formation in Western Europe. Sociological work has shown that as the European model of state expanded, the world has moved gradually towards stateness, in that, the processes of

state making have centered on 'consolidation of territorial control, differentiation of governments from other organizations, acquisition of autonomy (and mutual recognition thereof)..., centralization and coordination' (Tilly 1975b, p. 70). However, whereas nearly all West European governments have acquired a relatively high level of stateness, many states outside the Occident experience limitations of their statehood—evidenced in inadequate levels of stateness, or state capacity, and challenges of divergent national identities. Moreover, whereas nationalism emerged only during the final stages of the formation of West European polities, state formation outside the West has utilized (and manipulated) nationalist ideology throughout state formation processes. That nationalism's role on state building continues apace in the contemporary context is a testimony of the fact that stateness and nationhood are mutually related.[13]

The expansion of the European template has ensured a move from a relatively 'internal' to a strongly 'external' state formation process—a trend that has continued and accelerated through to the current era. In particular, international-led state building reflects an intensification of the external state formation process as a strategic response to wicked problems, wicked problems for both international and local stakeholders, emanating from inadequate governance—a persistent source of conflict, crime, and global instability. That outcomes have not entirely matched expectations may not be so surprising given the complex nature of fragile states, and disputed provision of public goods—including institutions—that state building seeks to offer (refer to Rittel and Webber 1973, p. 155).

The contemporary policy and praxis of state building in postconflict setting has a clear institution building component and a prominent external / international aspect. Less emphasis is being placed on nation building even if the terms 'state building' and 'nation building' are used interchangeably by some authors (see, for instance, Fukuyama 2005; Paris and Sisk 2009). One challenging aspect of state building pertains to the expectation that state building should go hand-in-hand with nation building. For state building is a complex enterprise, not just a matter of getting the institutions 'right', but a process of social transformation that, to be successful, ought to minimize the internal cleavages conducive to state failure (Lake 2016, p. 4). I share the view that state building is a process of social / national transformation that is bound to suffer inhibitions when detached from the needs and expectations of the local population/s. Linking state and society is central to state building. Even if this linkage in the contemporary international-led state building is imperfect, there is an observable correlation

between (re)construction of state institutions and nation building, with functioning institutions facilitating national coherence and strengthening stateness in the process. Conversely, malfunctioning state institutions can be an impediment to nation building.

This contribution has suggested that power relations between dominant / international and subordinate / local actors can be depicted in terms of a dual articulation of mimicry, which have enabled local parties to reclaim the discourse of national identity but deliver (at best, only) hybrid forms of statehood. At the same time, an equal representation of the (imagined) nation has been elusive; with nation continuing to inhibit an agonistic space characterized by heterogeneity and difference. However, the main responsibility for the construction of nationhood, or national identity, should rest with the national parties. When international actors have engaged *directly* with aspects of national identity—such as in Bosnia—those endeavours have tended to result on simulations detached from what (all) local people (wish to) ascribe to themselves.

As reasoned above, national identity is constituted via multiple exchanges with the other both outside and within the political community. Yet, the task of bringing the imagined community of the nation into being ought to belong—primarily—to national actors. If international parties involved in state building become directly entangled with the construction of (others') national identity they stand to be criticized for being out of touch with local traditions or outright delegitimizing nation building. For this reason, it is right that international-led state building does not expand *directly* to nation building but focuses mainly on state institutions and economic and security provisions. National actors, instead, preoccupy themselves (not exclusively) with questions of national identity. Stateness is intrinsically connected to nationhood in every state building setting, due to national actors' utilization of nationalism for their political ends, and the need to rely on national identity to legitimize their positions. Yet, whilst stateness and nationhood are intrinsically connected, it is necessary to recognize that the realization of the latter ought not to be a primary domain of the international community and actors operating on its behalf. National identity building activities are best left to local parties.

Notes

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[1] Horst Rittel developed the idea of 'wicked problems' in the context of planning problems (see Rittel and Webber 1973, pp. 155-169).

[2] In the context of this contribution, 'state building' and 'state making' are used interchangeably to indicate that both short- and long-term processes of bringing about states are conscious and interrelated undertakings that depend on political action, even if some unintended results may ensue.

[3] It bears emphasizing that what is stressed here is *relative* homogeneity rather than full homogeneity.

[4] In fact, Tilly acknowledges that the papers presented in his edited volume neglect the treatment of nation building in comparison with state building (Tilly 1975b, p. 80).

[5] Nationalism is considered here to be a modern phenomenon that seeks congruence between state boundaries and cultural identity of the people who live within them (as defined by Gellner 1983, p. 1), rather than a primordial phenomenon.

[6] It rose with the growth of Western capitalism and industrialization, and was a key feature of imperialist expansion (McLeod 2000, p. 68).

[7] Homi Bhabha has written of colonial mimicry as 'the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (Bhabha 1994, p. 86). Hence the ambivalence of mimicry. Importantly, mimicry is at once a resemblance and menace; it is the sign of a double articulation: 'a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualizes power', but also 'the sign of the inappropriate … a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power … and poses an immanent threat to both "normalized" knowledges and disciplinary power'(ibid).

[8] For Del Rosso, the most valuable role that nationalism can play in state building relates to the question of legitimacy: the 'greater the extent to which "the people" share or accede to the nationalist project of the state, the more likely it is that [the state] legitimacy will be established' (Del Rosso 2013, p. 75).

[9] The record of contemporary international-led state building offers more cases of failure rather than success (Lake 2016, p. 3; Richmond 2014c, p. 70). Nonetheless cases of qualified success exist such as Kosovo, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Somaliland. For the latter two refer to Lake (2016, chapters 4 and 5).

[10] For an application of mimicry in the context of Russia's power projection in Central Asia refer to Owen, Heathershaw, and Savin 2017.

[11] L.H.M. Ling (2004, pp. 116-7) differentiates between formal and substantive mimicry. The former replicates an affect of the self by the other (surface copying). The latter refers to situations where formal mimicry deepens into a cumulative strategy that fosters learning and produces a hybrid sense of self and other.

[12] As noted above, the external impact and / or influence can be manifested in forms of informal or substantive mimicry. International actors can advance nation building also by facilitating domestic compromises and creating incentives for domestic groups in fragile states to settle their differences peacefully and consolidate institutions conducive to good governance and national inclusion (Lake 2016, especially pp. 205, 208).

[13] The mutual impact of nationhood—and nationalism—on stateness can be observed also in some present state contestations in the West, as for instance, the Basques/Catalonia secession movements in Spain. Such impact shows that state and nation building are ongoing, never-ending processes even in well-established polities. Because the main preoccupation of this paper has been contemporary cases of international-led state building in postconflict setting and their historical context, space has been limited to consider here cases of home grown nation / state building either in the West or elsewhere.

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