

The continuous task of state-making could be considered one of the toughest everyday jobs for a state's elite or rulers, a task corresponding in difficulty to the degree of a state's people liberalization.

Taking the make-up of our contemporary world into nation-states as a given and as an equally reasonable means of international organization, those controlling these nation states, whether democratically elected or not, face the task of turning their part of the globe into a cohesive unit. In the past, or in selected cases in contemporary world affairs, Myanmar or North Korea to name two, this task has been considerably easier than in today's first or somewhat openly globalized world. Brute force, discrimination, forced isolation and propaganda have proven valuable in the process of state-making, whereas advocates of liberalism generally prefer as little state as possible in as many aspects of life as suitable. Even though the past or contemporary isolated, uncloaked process of state-making by oppression or propaganda appears questionable by outside standards, numerous people in Pyongyang actually believe that the outside-world is cruel, Kim Jong Il a respectable fellow and fate kind, as there are many worse places in the world to reside than North Korea. Cohesive state-making is relatively easy if you choose the North Korean way and have the luxury of uninformed and oppressed customers, your people. All 22 millions, or 19 million if famine strikes again, of them might be individuals, but considering the task of state-making at hand, it helps that they do not happen to be individuated individuals, the product of liberal self-making.

Liberal self-making poses a challenge for those trying to succeed with state-making. "Sovereign selves", the products of liberal self-making, tend to emancipate themselves from society, favour self-realization over the realization of anything else, wish to maximise themselves and, to make matters worse, feel relatively autonomous with regard to their surrounding society. If you wish to create a state with millions of such customers, the marketing effort required to create the common, shared identity of a state becomes challenging, especially as these customers appear to spend their whole life calculating. If everybody is munching over endless options and choices, believes in corresponding interstate interdependence and reciprocity in the name of internationalism and recognizes the maximisation of his, or his families, personal benefits as an end in itself, a state might become an annoying appendage. State-making just happens to be easier outside binding, fully-appreciated frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights or Civil and Political Rights.

Nevertheless, the task of state-making is of tremendous importance, as states have proven valuable as feasible means to structure the world and offer regional governance. It seems questionable that an anarchic world made up out of six billions individuated individuals without overarching states, offering governance, public goods such as education or health services or social services, would be a pleasant world to reside on, just as some end-results of the process of state-making, North Korea once again comes to mind, appear of equally inferior quality. Nevertheless, critics claim that state-leaders just devote time and energy into the process of state-making as long as it suits elitist interests. Supposingly, state-leading is not about a state's people, as it ought to be, but about the interests of those at the top. If 1.734+ young soldiers from overwhelmingly poor families die in a war that should have never been and the only benefiting parties seem to be the Commander in Chief's friends, state-making becomes an acrobatic manoeuvre, but proves nevertheless that even individuated individuals can collectively "reason" and calculate in ways supporting elitist interests. State-making in the face of liberalized individuals is the continuous task of influencing the equations, so that the calculated conclusions become what they ought to become.

But how can you convince Heinz Krümel, a small-scale farmer close to the German-Czech. border, that he is "closer", identity-wise, to Josef Ackermann, the CEO of the Deutsche Bank, than to Wojciech Jastrzebowski, another small-scale farmer just across the border, residing a mere 723 meters to the East?

Education is a key, as both Heinz and Josef learned about their shared ancestors, the country's World Cup of Soccer heroes in 1954 and much alike. Heinz and Josef also share a language, even though they would have little to say to each other and theoretically communicate in relatively unintelligible dialects. It does not help that Heinz just knows about cows and crops and Josef knows equally much about Boston Consulting's Cash Cows and layoffs. Wojciech would be a better pal for Heinz, but unfortunately, Wojciech identifies more with Pavel Nedved, the Czech football superstar, than with Heinz. Pavel does not know about cows either (I assume), but if Pavel heads for the German goal during the next World Cup of Soccer, it is "us" (Heinz and Josef) vs. "them" (Wojciech Jastrzebowski and all his friends whose names you cannot pronounce anyway). At that stage, state-making has succeeded, even though its artificiality is appalling. Of course, all three, Heinz, Josef and Wojciech, happen to be individuated individuals, but through the well-oiled machinery of media-control, shared education and other means, the individuals can be incorporated into the increasingly tenuous structure of a man-made states, which's borders have often been drawn quite arbitrarily. The task of controlled identity-building in the case of those three is more challenging than in North Korea, where Wojciech would be drilled and forced to worship the North-Korean equivalent of Pavel Nedved, whereas our Czech. Republic's Wojciech could make a free choice to cheer for Germany's Jan Ullrich during this year's Tour de France and celebrate a potential tour win with his German neighbour. Hopefully, both learned English at school in order to overcome international communicative barriers.

In conclusion, the liberation of the individual from its society threatens national identities. Without national identities, the whole concept of nation-states could become obsolete. Common interests and myths are often artificial and connect otherwise unconnected individuals underneath the umbrella of an artificial, man-made state, whereas similar individuals across borders refer to each other in terms of "us" and "them". This is not natural, but the product of state-making, considerable as state-marketing. The more freedom of choice and thought exists, the more reasoning by calculating individuated individuals dominates their actions, the less appealing a strong nation-state might become. The tension between state-making and liberal self-making appears obvious.