OVERCOMING THE COST TO AFRICA OF BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR TO DENMARK: UNCONSTRAINED GEOGRAPHY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE END OF HISTORY

John Davies

Introduction

This chapter is intended to examine the multinational dynamics that impact on state-building and consider how notions of agency around state-building might be experienced by young Africans according to the globalizing practices and policies that are presumed to herald the end of history. It particularly considers the impact of certain globalized presumptions regarding the desirability of “... getting to Denmark” (Fukuyama 2004, 30) and contests the essentialism that presumes all nation states are able to follow a trajectory of institution building and development that will eventually result in a secure and safe capitalist society. In this context Denmark is examined and considered a specific nomenclature for any secure liberal democracy that operates as a capitalist market-driven society.

The chapter imagines a common post-modern border between an aged Denmark and a young Africa (Davies 2007). This very malleable device is then laid over various topologies and different geographies to deliberately contrive linkages between diverse discourses. This conflation between the various border discourses is intended to simulate a stream of consciousness regarding the interrogation of the imagined border rather than develop well grounded arguments. The interrogation is intended to ascertain how the bordering dynamics it attempts to engage with are visualized and experienced from above and below (Newman 2006). However like a Tennessee Williams play the principal characters in this chapter can suddenly change or present new and different attributes that can conflict with previously established parameters. These almost irrational realignments require immediate accommodation so the interrogation can continue uninterrupted to its eventual, raggedy conclusion.
Firstly the imagined border is considered to be a tool used by Denmark to subjugate constrained populations of the young so the value of their labour can be asymmetrically and disproportionately used to benefit an aged Denmark. This benefit to Denmark is achieved by deliberately denying young Africans the benefits of actual and social mobility (Abel and Bernheim 1991, Solon 1999). Consequently it is posited that the wealth and privilege that has been accumulated by the old in Denmark requires other subaltern non-Danish states to allow their young populations to be constrained so they cannot freely transact for the value of their labour. This chapter examines the use of the African border as a means of constraint, rather than other constraints such as conflict or under-education, so as to focus on this specific role of the imagined Danish/African border.

In particular the chapter contends that the purposes of a border should be named and articulated in the order of their impact on affected groups. In seeking to identify the order of impact upon different stakeholders this chapter considers the conceptual value of good neighbourliness in understanding African borders. This aspect of the apartheid canon specifically used the manipulation of borders to create un-free labour (Cohen 1983). The constrained geography ensured the availability of exploitable labour by constraining the target population within a diminishing and increasingly unviable economic space. This constrained space compelled the population to offer themselves for labour at wages dictated by those who controlled their containment. The chapter therefore examines the influence of Verwoerd’s apartheid notion of good neighbourliness as being an essential concept in building and sustaining Danish economic and political security.

Therefore this analysis crudely and bluntly posits aging Denmark as increasingly securing and protecting underserved privileges at the expense of young non-Danish people who are denied by constraining borders the ability to freely transact for the real value of their labour. Many other useful considerations, factors or nuances are laid aside or simply ignored in the pursuit of identifying this particular contest and contending for its preeminent place in offering an alternative to Denmark and the end of history. Notions of contested power and privilege have previously been articulated as the differentials between first and

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1 Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd was Prime Minister of South Africa from 1958 until his assassination in 1966. He is remembered as the man behind the conception and implementation of apartheid.