

Identity and cultural diversity in conflict resolution and democratization for the African Renaissance

**Report on the workshop on
Cultural Diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa
and
*Identity and Democratization in Africa***

**9-10 November 2006
Johannesburg**



Introduction

This report summarises the proceedings of a workshop on two projects currently registered in the Society, Culture and Identity Research Programme (SCI) of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa:

- the role of cultural diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa
- identity and democratization in Africa

The workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 9 and 10 November 2006, and was attended by 17 representatives from organizations in several African countries, the USA and Europe. A workshop programme is attached as Annexure A and a full contact list of participants as Annexure B.

Background

During 2006 the South African Department of Arts and Culture requested the HSRC to initiate research on the role of cultural diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa. The South African government has been involved in peace missions and conflict resolution initiatives in several African countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi, Somalia and the Sudan. Although international literature on African civil and communal wars often refers to the role of ethnicity and culture in these conflicts, the matter has received little official attention in peace missions.

The project Identity and Democratisation in Africa, also registered in SCI, deals with cultural, political and other identities that influence people's participation, or non-participation, in democratic processes. Although elections often successfully mobilize the voters, during the periods between elections, there seems to be a decrease in participation in governance issues, and an alienation of the electorate from the elected governments. This project investigated the dynamics of these relationships.

As the two projects showed several overlaps, it was decided to organize a workshop in which introductory papers on several countries were presented and discussed, with a view of possible convergence or integration of the projects. Contributors to both projects from nine African countries participated in the workshop, which led to a decision to integrate the projects and the acceptance of a research plan.

Participants

Table 1 provides information on participants:

Name	Institution
Prof Kidane Mengisteab	Center for Land And Community Development Studies, Pennsylvania State University
Prof Sinfree Makoni	SCI, HSRC
Dr James Muzondidya	SCI, HSRC
Dr Mcebisi Ndletyana	Democracy and Governance Research Programme, HSRC
Dr Gerard Hagg	SCI, HSRC
Dr Freddy Samupindi	Independent researcher, Zimbabwe
Mr Máte Kovács	Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa
Dr Abdulahi A Osman	Department of International Affairs, University of Georgia
Prof. Isaac N Mazonde	University of Botswana, Project Leader OCPA: Culture and Peace: The Search for Indicators
Dr Abdal Mageed Ahmed Abdul Rahman	Department of Sociology Neelain University, Sudan
Dr. Hubert Kabungulu	Centre for Strategic Management Peace, Defence and Security, University of Kinshasa
Dr Wilson Akpan	Ford Foundation – IFP Scholar, University of Fort Hare, South Africa
Prof Philippe Ntahombaye,	Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences, Bujumbura University, Burundi
Mr Kwezi Mngqibisa	The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)
Mr Karanja Mbugua	ACCORD
Dr Sama Christopher Molem	Department of Economics and Management, University of Buea, Cameroon
Mr M P Bona	Director: NOCPM (National Office for Co-ordination of Peace Mission)



Workshop procedures

Prof. Sinfree Makoni, Executive Director of SCI, welcomed all participants particularly those from abroad.

Participants introduced themselves and the organizations which they represented.

The workshop was structured in four sections:

1. Overview of the project *Cultural diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa* and country studies on cultural diversity in conflict and peace making
2. Country studies on Identity and Democratisation in Africa
3. Other culture and peace initiatives in Africa
4. Formulation of research approach and methodology

Part 1: Project overview and country studies

Project overview

Gerard Hagg presented an overview of the Cultural Diversity project (see Annexure C for full text of base document):

- a. Background:
 - o Cultural diversity has globally received much attention, partly due to the work of UNESCO, leading to the 2005 Convention on the preservation and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. South Africa is also one of the signatory members of the International Network for Cultural Policies, represented by the SA Department of Arts and Culture.
 - o The focus of global cultural diversity initiatives is on the cultural industries, economic growth through the arts and culture, market trends and copyright issues.
 - o The importance of cultural diversity as a human asset has been emphasized in several UNESCO and African Union (AU) documents, linking cultural diversity to conflict resolution and peace making (Konare: "ethnic and cultural diversity as one of our strengths")
- b. Research conducted for this project highlights the following factors in conflict and peace making in Africa:
 - o The nature of the African state and state-building: States are not under control of citizenry; states do not act as neutral arbitrators of the interests of various population groups; there is insufficient view of statebuilding and development

- Internal institutional and economic fragmentation in states, leading to competition over resources and abuse of power
 - Regional economic fragmentation which leads to isolationist or conflictual foreign policies between African neighbouring states
 - The use of cultural diversity as an emotive mobiliser within civil wars
- c. The role of cultural diversity in conflict is characterized by the following:
 - The reference to issues of culture, ethnicity and identity by leaders in conflict
 - The nature of culture as a vague, socially constructed concept, which enables its manipulation for conflict purposes
 - There are contextual factors, such as the slow process of democratization, during which culture is often used as a mobiliser for support of particular sections of the population; and the reality that traditional cultures and ethnic communities have been in existence for centuries
- d. Cultural diversity can be used in peace making initiatives, such as:
 - Celebration of the richness of different cultures and customs
 - The use of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Africa, e.g. gacaca in Rwanda
 - Capitalizing on cross-border cultural relationships for regional interaction
- e. The project has proceeded as follows since March 2006:
 - Request to HSRC by DAC for research into cultural diversity in conflict and peace making
 - Development of partnerships as reflected in the participation in this workshop; this process is ongoing to ensure optimal capacity for the research
 - Commission of country studies for Sudan, Somalia, DRC, Nigeria, Burundi and Cameroon
 - Submission of project proposal to DAC, which led to a decision by DAC to proceed through a tender process due to the high budget
 - HSRC decision to carry on with the research up to a publication based on country studies and workshop report
 - Negotiations with the Identity and Democratisation project for possible convergence or cooperation
- f. Challenges to the project
 - The need to clarify concepts
 - Obtaining access to local knowledge to ensure the validity of findings
 - Broadening of the basis of knowledge by inclusion of more participants in country studies
 - Dissemination of findings to ensure implementation in peace making processes
 - Broadening of the partnerships in the research team

- Linking the project to other projects and possible convergence or integration with Identity and Democratisation project
- Obtain buy-in of governments to ensure implementation or inclusion into policies
- Obtain international funding

Country reports

- a. Sudan: Despite its diversity along ethnic, linguistic, regional, religious, cultural, mode of production, and social classes, Sudan's vision of state-building has been based on the conception of "unity through conformity" to the dominant culture. Given the obvious failure of this vision, an alternative vision of "unity in diversity", which recognizes the right to self-determination of the various entities, is emerging in the current peace process. The paper defines and elucidates the major competing conceptions of unity and diversity in the Sudan.
- b. Somalia: Somalia is often viewed to be one of the few African countries that is ethnically, linguistically, culturally, and religiously homogeneous. This widely held view makes it difficult to explain Somalia's conflict and the disintegration of the state. A counter view argues that Somalia, with 13 living languages, six clan groups, and different sects of Islam is not a homogeneous society. According to the paper, among the contributing factors for the Somali conflict are; competition for power among the clans, especially between the Daroud and Hawiye clans, the destruction of the Heer, Somalia's traditional conflict resolution mechanism by colonialism, especially in the south, economic decline, rising inequality, and availability of large quantities of weapons in the country.
- c. Burundi: The major factors in Burundi's conflicts include; economic stagnation and inequality, cultural diversity, and psychological differences, and competition for power among the elite with ethnic dimension. Addressing the conflict is likely to involve creating a political formula of power sharing, application of the traditional conflict resolution mechanism (Bashingari), and re-socialization through education.
- d. The DRC: The Congo with some 250 ethnic entities is ethnically and culturally diverse. However, ethnic diversity in-itself is not a major factor in the conflicts. According to the paper, the peoples of Katanga and Kassai, for example, are not ethnically distinct. They have common ancestry, language, and culture. At best, there are regional specificities of the same culture between the two peoples. The two groups are, however, separated geographically by the colonial policy of classification of groups. The conflicts in the Congo are largely political, economic, and ideological. The conflicts originate in the urban areas, such as Lumumbashi but have wider ramifications. The conflicts are also fueled by prejudices. The

Kassai, for instance regard the people of Katanga as lazy and the Katangans view the Kassai as invaders.

- e. Nigeria: With some 510 living languages, Nigeria is an ethnically, linguistically, religiously, and culturally diverse country. Preliminary findings, however, suggest that the ethno-linguistic diversity in-itself is not the root cause of conflicts. The paper classifies conflicts based on ethno-linguistic diversity into “passive” and “active”. The findings also suggest that ethno-linguistic diversity in-itself is “passive” with respect to conflict. It is, however, transformed to “active” conflict when it is consciously moderated by ethno-cultural political entrepreneurs. Socioeconomic problems of inequality, poverty, and environmental degradation have created fertile ground for the transformation of “passive” conflicts into “active” conflicts.



Session Two Country Papers for Identity and Democratization

- a. Zimbabwe: Four types of identity, namely race, ethnicity, class and religion, have played a major role in influencing the politics of democracy in Zimbabwe. The impact of the identities, however, has evolved overtime. During the colonial period, black Zimbabweans were united by

their oppression and resistance to colonialism. During this period race was the crucial identity that mattered. Nevertheless, the anti-white supremacy movement included white participants. As the liberation movement gained momentum and recognition, politics of identity began to gain ground as the elite began to compete for power. ZANU and ZAPU emerged from the National Democratic Party due to ethnic rivalry within the elite. In the post independence era all four identity types have continued to affect the politics of democratization.

b. South Africa:

The study focuses on the management of racial and ethnic tensions within the ruling ANC. From its very founding days, the paper argues, the ANC leaders not only denounced tribalism but also denied the validity of ethnic identities. They repudiated their characterization by the colonial state as tribal beings and considered any political or economic claims based on these ideas as primitiveness. In the eyes of the ANC nationalists, the ANC was a progressive organization fighting to bring a common African identity among all South Africans. However, race and ethnicity have always been significant in the history of the ANC. Between the 1940s and 1960s, the ANC appointed about 5 commissions of enquiry to investigate allegations of ethnic bias within the organization. The ANC has been seen as a Xhosa-dominated organization. Since 2000, there has been raging debate about the Xhosa's alleged dominance in both the ANC and the government. More recently, ethnicity threatened to tear the ANC apart when Jacob Zuma, the party's Zulu-speaking deputy, was fired from government and charged for rape and corruption. Zuma's supporters, mainly drawn from a Zulu-speaking constituency, charged that this was a ploy by his Xhosa detractors to prevent him from ascending to the top leadership position.

c. Ethiopia: The paper explores the relationship between identity politics and democratization. It suggests as a working proposition that the relationship between identity politics and democratization is mediated by a complex interplay of many factors, including historical relations between identity groups and the state and among identity groups, the nature of the state, the level of development of state-building, and the state's approach to state-building. Based on this proposition, the paper explores if Ethiopia's ethnic-based federal arrangement has advanced state-building and democratization by transforming state-identity relations, the nature of the state, and the state's approach to state-building. Preliminary findings suggest that state-identity relations remain poor and that, despite some changes, the nature of the state and the state's approach to state-building have not been transformed. The paper concludes that democratization remains unattainable under the circumstances.

Current culture and peace initiatives in Africa

a. Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa

Máté Kovács presented the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa as the organization that acted as the cultural monitor for Africa, with a focus on culture in development, and the cultural industries. OCPA was established in 2002 after a consultative process since 1998. OCPA is a service-oriented resource centre and a regional co-ordinating and monitoring body for a network of experts and institutions involved in policy and decision making, cultural administration and management as well as research, training and information. It operates through a website (<http://www.ocpanet.org>) which contains basic information concerning cultural policies and activities, produces an electronic newsbulletin to some 6,500 addresses twice a month, it has a documentation centre and data bases, and conducts research through associates leading to bibliographies, guidelines, strategic documents and cooperation networks with over 120 organisations. A number of publications are available, including reports on important meetings at global, continental and national level. One focus area is the development of cultural indicators of development in Africa, including health, poverty eradication and conflict. The OCPA website is available for publication of workshop reports and country studies.

b. Culture and Peace: the search for indicators

Isaac Mazonde presented the project, which is the result of a workshop of experts on the search of indicators, February 2006. Four themes had been identified:

- Culture and peace
- Culture and health
- Culture and poverty
- Culture and governance, especially traditional governance

Peace is more than absence of war. Numbers of peace missions exist in Africa, as well as peace initiatives by universities and NGOs. Peace deals with how people live together, interact and flourish in harmony. There is a need to manage cultural diversity to enhance a culture of respect and tolerance, and human rights. Indicators refer to cultural issues in land reform, public investments, decentralization of government, public services and housing. Important indicators are respect and freedom of use of language. The debates have shifted from definition to measurement, which is problematic in terms of the quantifiability of culture. Disaggregation of existing indicators is required with a focus on freedom, ability to take part in cultural life. There is a need for setting goals and overcoming of inequalities in the enjoyment of cultural rights and freedom.

The theme of *culture and health* is important as 3 out of 8 Millennium Development Goals deal with health: reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB etc. The primary objective is to link culture and health/illness, particularly cultural practices and methods. *Culture and poverty* deals with the need to make culture integral to development, e.g. creativity and traditional knowledge systems, which may stimulate anti-poverty strategies, policies and practices. *Culture and governance* deals with the need to explore alternative models of peace building and the building of nations. Five empirical studies are conducted in four Africa regions.

c. African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)

Kwezi Mngqibisa highlighted the role of ACCORD in peace initiatives in Africa. ACCORD is a conflict management organization, a learning organization with a focus on research from an activist position, policy development, advocacy and capacity building. ACCORD has a strong focus on training for conflict resolution, often at an early stage of conflict and with a focus on civil society organisations. Other foci are on preventative programmes, gender and intervention. Conflict resolution has become a complex discipline, with a need for conceptual grounding, multiple timelines and approaches. Cultural diversity can play a significant role in conflict and peace making, particularly the link with identity and democratization. More information is available on <http://www.accord.org.za>. The organization publishes monthly newsletter (*Conflict Trends*) and an academic journal (*Journal of Conflict Resolution*)

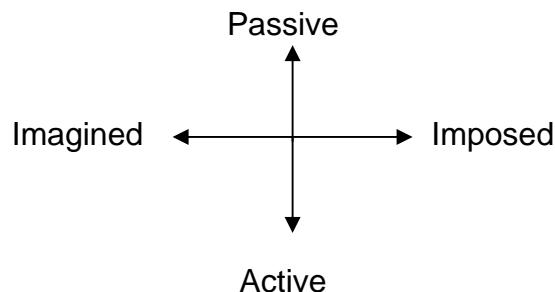
d. Department of Foreign Affairs, South Africa

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) deals with peace missions in an operational way. Chief Director Soliza Bona highlighted the complexities of international roles in peace making. The DFA is not policy oriented but focuses on supporting parties in conflict to reconcile. The initiatives are based on the premise that African countries supported South Africa in the struggle for democracy, and having reached democracy the SA government is obliged to help other countries to do the same and achieve a better life for all in Africa. One focus is the establishment of good governance, another is the need to work within the ideals of the SA Constitution, the African Renaissance and NEPAD. Another reason for contributing is the fact that SA is a member of the AU and UN families, which organizations are involved in peace missions. SA contributes its fair part while recognizing the leadership of the AU and UN, as documented in the Post-Conflict Strategic Policy Framework. This implies that regional conflict must be firstly addressed by regional players. DFA takes into account the need to support countries in economic, social, political and land reform developments to ensure sustainable peace, recognizing the historical background of each country.

Discussion of overview and country reports

During the discussion of the project overview and country studies the following issues were highlighted:

- a. The need to retain the focus on the development of people, not cultural diversity or identity per se
 - o The concept of diversity originates from the biomorphic sphere, and is usually viewed as positive per se. Within the social sphere it can be negative or positive.
 - o Language is a fundamental element of identity, and plays a significant role in cultural dialogue at global, continental, regional, national and sub-national levels
 - o Dialogue is key to conflict resolution, but can be abused to postpone solutions
 - o Language is a means for communication and an expression of culture; it can play a negative or positive role.
 - o Interventions should focus on human development, not cultural development
 - o The research project should deliver results that can be implemented in peace initiatives, e.g. training guides and manuals
- b. Although diversity is important, equal attention should be paid to commonalities and shared values; e.g. the conflict between Anglophone and Francophone in Cameroon could be viewed as a legacy of colonialism and an acquired class identity. National identity is equally important.
- c. Cultural identity can be both positive and negative, complimentary or contradictory. The following diagram shows at least four aspects or types of diversity:



- d. Domination by the elite does not imply that the mass population cannot think for themselves. Elite domination can be symbolic, or be enabled through access to resources by minorities; manipulation can be subtle, e.g. through control of information media. However, local indigenous knowledge can be powerful if used effectively

- e. Besides the categories of majority and minority, and of elite and the masses, one finds a middle level category that can mediate reconciliation, e.g. industry and the middleclass.
- f. Due to the all-encompassing nature of culture, the focus of the study can be lost; there is a need to limit the study on cultural diversity to a manageable mass
- g. Like cultural diversity, democratization is a vague concept; the development of a nation takes decades and needs certain conditions, e.g. sufficient peace and economic growth
- h. There is a dire need to define concepts such as culture, identity, democratization, conflict resolution and peace from an African perspective to overcome the limitations of Western definitions.

Conclusions

The workshop participants agreed that there is sufficient overlap in the two projects to justify their integration into a single project.

It was agreed to use the following provisional title for the project, subject to revision as the full texts for the book would become available:

“Identity and cultural diversity in conflict resolution/transformation and democratization for the African Renaissance”

Part 2: Methodology

Overarching Research Question: While each paper formulates its own research question(s), the workshop suggested a broad and overarching research question that ties all the papers together.

What are the roles of identity politics and cultural diversity in the resolution/transformation of conflicts and democratisation, which are essential for Africa's renaissance?

1. **Methodology:** The project explores the relationship between a) identity politics and cultural diversity and b) conflict resolution/transformation and democratization. The methodological question deals with the types of information (data) that are needed in order to determine if and how the identified two groups of variables are related.
 - a. one type of sources of information (data) is archival and literature review along with various documents and reports,
 - b. Other sources of primary data are surveys and interviews.

1. Conceptualization:

- a. Identity: Among the markers that define a community, are continental (Africa), national, race, ethnicity, clan, language, religion, social class, political persuasion, family, gender, individual traits, etc.
- b. Culture: consists of arts, literature, value systems, human rights, beliefs, religion, ideology, rituals, knowledge systems, life systems, processes and products, institutions, political systems, economic systems, rights, customs, and customary laws.
- c. Democracy: Participatory governance that gives citizens (individuals and groups) control of decision-making through various mechanisms. Types of democracy range from the African consensus-based traditional democracy, to consociational, popular and liberal democracies. The workshop also suggested that economic and cultural democracy be incorporated into the analysis of political democracy.
- d. Conflict Resolution (Conflict Transformation): A consensus emerged that conflict resolution should not be viewed merely as cessation of hostilities but rather transformation of conflict by addressing the structural root causes and democratization of the dialogue and the arrangements for coexistence and cooperation among diverse entities.

3 Process

- a. The project remains open for additional partners at a local and international level. Current partners will make recommendations
- b. Participants will make recommendations for possible donors. Examples are Volkswagen Stiftung, Nelson Mandela Foundation, Ford Foundation, AU
- c. Each researcher responsible for country studies will ensure that their proposals and research designs are approved by local ethics committees
- d. Participants will make recommendations for the inclusion of female researchers as the team is skewed with regard to gender

4. Time Line of the Project

The Project has three phases:

First phase:

- a. Workshop report for HSRC
- b. One page report for OCPA web page

- c. First drafts of country and other papers are due by February 1, 2007.
- d. Papers will be circulated to teams for comments; comments are due by Feb. 28, 2007.
- e. Inquiries for grants will be written and sent out in January 2007.
- f. Final draft of papers are due 31 March 2007
- g. Possible article
- h. Short article for *Conflict Trends* (ACCORD)
- i. Book

Second Phase (if Project is funded)

- a. General survey
- b. Cooperation with ACCORD where relevant
- c. Workshop
- d. Special issue of ACCORD's *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- e. Book

Third Phase: Dissemination of Products of the Project

- a. Videos and other training materials
- b. Brochures
- c. Web page

Session Five: Organizational Issues

- a. Establishment of core coordinating committee: Drs. Gerard Hagg, James Muzondidya, and Kidane Mengisteab will coordinate the project.
- b. The core committee will draft the workshop report and a grant proposal for dissemination among all participants
- c. HSRC will act as the clearing house for the first two phases of the project.

ANNEXURE A

THE ROLE OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN CONFLICT AND PEACE MAKING IN AFRICA

Workshop on country studies and project planning
9 and 10 November 2006
Indaba Hotel, Fourways, Johannesburg

Workshop programme

Thursday 9 November	
08h30	Registration
09h00	Welcome (Sinfree Makoni) Introduction of participants
10h00	Session 1: Overview and country studies; Sinfree Makoni, facilitator Overview of project, (Gerard Hagg) Sudan (Abdelmagied Ahmed Abdelrahman) Somalia (Abdulah Osman) Burundi (Philippe Ntahombaye)
11h30	Teabreak DRC (Hubert Kabungulu) Nigeria (Wilson Akpan) Cameroon (Sama Molem) First discussion
13h00	Lunch
14h00	Session 2: presentations on country studies for Identity and Democratisation project; James Muzondidya, facilitator Zimbabwe (Freddy Samupindi) DRC (Hubert Kabungulu) South Africa (Mcebisi Ndletyana) Ethiopia (Kidane Mengisteab)
15h00	Teabreak
15h15	Session 3: presentations on current culture and peace initiatives in Africa; Gerard Hagg, facilitator Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa (Máté Kovács) OCPA project on indicators for culture and peace (Isaac Mazonde)

	Role of ACCORD in peace making in Africa (Kwezi Mngqibisa)
	Institute for Security Studies and peace making in Africa (Carole Njoki)
	Role of SA Department of Foreign Affairs in conflict resolution in Africa (MP Bona)
	Discussions
17h00	Closure
19h00	Supper
	Friday 10 November
0830	Session 4: Formulation of research approach and methodology; Kidane Mengisteab, facilitator
	Key issues in cultural diversity, conflict and peace making in Africa
	Format for comprehensive country reports
	Linkages with other programmes, projects, disciplines
	International Partnerships
	Local partnerships
	Publication of report
	Country workshops?
	Dissemination of findings
	Implementation of findings
	Formulation of research plan
	International funding
	Ethics committees
11h00	Teabreak
11h15	Continuation of discussions
13h00	Lunch
14h00	Continuation of discussions
15h15	Session 5: Organisational issues; Gerard Hagg, facilitator
	Establishment of core management team/committee
	Formalisation of partnerships
	Network maintenance
16h00	Closure
16h15	Departure

ATTENDANCE LIST WORKSHOP 9 AND 10 NOVEMBER

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