

Cultural diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa

**Enhancing South Africa's contribution to conflict
resolution, peace-making and peace-building in
Africa**

Draft research proposal
submitted to the
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Regional and intra-state conflicts in Africa have resulted in the death and suffering of millions, and continuous economic and social crises. Conflict prevention and resolution are key objectives on the agenda of African governments and multi-state organizations. Cultural diversity appears to play a complex role in these conflicts, often entrenching struggles over resources through ethnic violence and social exclusion.

Problem statement

The relationship between cultural diversity, conflict and peace is complex and dynamic. This is evident from the reality that some conflicts in the world are between groups that are culturally quite similar, while many different groups and countries have developed ways to cooperate peacefully. Although international interventions have resolved conflict in some countries, similar interventions have failed in others. There are obviously more factors in conflict and peace making than culture, and some of these are more dominant (e.g. the nature of the African state, power struggles or unequal access to resources). In addition, culture itself is a complex concept, and there is no single explanation of how it is transferred and works, and there are within-culture variance problems. An understanding of the relationship between cultural diversity and conflict and peace therefore requires clarity on historical and structural aspects of culture, conflict and the state, within specific geo-political situations and regional contexts and beyond, and the relationship between these aspects.

Key factors in conflict and war in Africa

Research highlights the following key factors in conflict and war in Africa:

1. Spill-over of local conflicts across national borders, affecting whole regions (e.g. Great Lakes)
2. Colonial legacies of division of cultural groups in different states

3. The nature of the African state as non-representative of its citizens or as predatory for the benefit of the elite
4. The emphasis on enforced nation-building with a single dominant cultural identity to the detriment of cultural identities of different groups.
5. The failure of nation-building through democratic processes
6. Internal and regional economic and institutional fragmentation and lack of economic cooperation between states
7. Use of ethnic and cultural difference for political support by the elite in power and the recruitment of soldiers.
8. The high prevalence of the use of cultural identity as emotional mobilizing instrument in civil wars

Cultural diversity as a tool for conflict resolution and peace making

Cultural diversity can be mobilized in conflict resolution and peace-making processes. Diversity can be used for more cross-balanced negotiations, traditional conflict resolution methods deliver more sustainable peace than western approaches, and cultural diversity allows for celebration and entrenchment of peace.

Short-term mitigation of conflicts in Africa could be implemented through:

1. Revitalisation of African traditional conflict resolution mechanisms
2. Institutional integration to promote state reconstitution and state-society relations through inclusion of cultural diversity issues
3. Promotion of cross-border trade and mobility to promote regional integration, founded on cultural cohesion
4. Better definition of property and cultural rights
5. Promotion of socialization measures that facilitate intercultural interaction and relations
6. Promotion of education that is based on respect for cultural diversity and tolerance

Proposal

The principal goal of this study is to carefully examine the most critical causes of African conflicts and especially the possible impacts of cultural diversity on conflict and peace making. It is hoped that the study will produce specific institutional and policy suggestions that would help South Africa and other peace facilitators in mitigating the conflicts and in managing cultural diversity in a manner that it ceases to become a negative factor, and rather become a positive one in the conflicts.

The proposed study will include a selected number of countries in which South Africa is involved in conflict resolution and peace making. Methods proposed are surveys, interviews and focus group discussions. Units of analysis will include traditional leaders, leaders of political parties and opposition groups, policy makers, government administrators, academics and common people.

Research team

Name of team member	Institution	Country representative
Prof Kidane Mengisteab KMengisteab@la.psu.edu	Center for Land and Community Development Studies (CLACDS), a center within the Alliance for Earth Sciences, Engineering and Development in Africa (AESEDA) at the Pennsylvania state University	Core team
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		Burundi
		Angola
		Somalia
		Côte d'Ivoire

Proposed research areas

The following geo-political areas are proposed for selection:

Area in conflict	Area in post-conflict
1. Sudan 2. Ivory Coast 3. Somalia	1. DRC 2. Burundi/Great Lakes 3. Angola

Proposed approach for initiating the research process

	Objective	Responsibility	Partners invited	Date	Venue
1	Selection of countries	HSRC/CLACD DAC		July/Aug 2006	
1	Identify partners in six countries and request Expression of Interest	HSRC/CLACD, DAC, SA embassies ACCORD	Socio-Cultural agents Academics NGOs Centre for Conflict Resolution Accra	Aug/Sept	
2	Invitation to participate; set up core country research partner teams	HSRC/CLACD		Aug/Sept	
3	Request writing of six country reports	Core partner in each country		Sept	Local
4	Organisation of workshop	HSRC/CLACD		Oct – 1 st week Nov	Pretoria
5	2 day workshop: a)deliver country reports b)determine format for research	HSRC/CLACD	Country partners DAC Wits Centre for Conflict Studies UCT ACCORD	2 nd week Nov	Jhbkg
6	Consolidate country reports and research proposal	HSRC/CLACD Rapporteur Partners		End Nov	Pretoria
7	Discussions of consolidated report in	Country research teams	Stakeholders in each country	Dec 2006-Feb 2007	Local countries

	countries				
8	Visits to countries for seminars/workshops for developing country-specific research plans	HSRC/CLACD/country partners	Research teams in each country	Feb 2007-	Local countries

Cultural diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa

1. Introduction

As Adedeji (1999) notes, Africa continues to be devoured by various types of conflicts. According to Deng (2005) 20% of the sub-Saharan population lives in countries that are at war within themselves. The continent now accounts for more war-related deaths than the rest of the world combined (Human Security Report, 2005). The conflicts have led to state collapse, genocide, entrenched xenophobia, and gross human rights violations, including gruesome mutilations of large numbers of people in several countries, including Sierra Leone, Rwanda, the DRC, Angola, and Uganda. In several countries, the conflicts have produced millions of refugees and millions of internally displaced people. There are also growing indications that the conflicts are contributing to the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in various ways.

In addition, African conflicts have caused severe economic dislocation and disruption in the provision of public services, contributing to economic crisis and debilitating poverty in many countries. A typical civil war that lasts seven years is estimated to lead to a 15% decline in income and approximately 30% rise in the incidence of absolute poverty (Collier et al., 2003). These conflicts are important reasons for the low performance of African countries in the global economic, political and social environment, despite their abundant natural resources. The losses in human capital due to the direct and indirect effects of the conflicts are difficult to estimate but they are certain to be large. African countries can hardly sustain such losses. Prevention and resolution of conflicts are, therefore, critical priorities in African development. Peace making has become a key objective on the agenda of African governments and multi-state organizations (AU) and initiatives (NEPAD), such as the *Post-Conflict Resolution Policy Framework* (2002) and the ongoing *Conference on Security, Stability, Development and*

Cooperation in Africa (1999). South Africa, under the leadership of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, is playing a leading part in conflict resolution in several African countries (Burundi, DRC, Ivory Coast), using its own experience in conflict resolution and its resources to establish peace forces, fostering favourable environments for negotiations and strengthening weak peace processes. The main instrument here is the International Relations, Peace and Security Cluster.

Conflict resolution and peace-making and building processes are very complex and time and resource consuming. Success stories are extremely rare (Kaufman 2006). On the road to peace there are often more failures than successes. One reason may be the assumption that leaders make rational choices about the costs of war and the benefits of peace (Kaufman 2006). Where a more comprehensive approach is adopted, as noted in the South African White Paper on South African participation in international peace missions (Department of Foreign Affairs 1999): "... the broadening of traditional concepts of security – hitherto limited largely to the military dimensions – to include political, economic, social, cultural and personal security... (*taking care of*) ...emergence of new ethnic rivalries, the resurfacing of old ethnic, religious, historical and regional differences ..." (DFA 1999:6), in practice it is often ignored. This research proposal deals with one of these concepts that is probably ignored most: *culture*.

Culture, and particularly cultural diversity and identity, have become integral elements in the debates around conflict and peace making world-wide. The concept of culture refers to 'ways of living, values, customs, religion, mother-tongue use, ethnicity and heritage. The interest in cultural diversity in conflict is directly related to the promotion of cultural diversity world-wide, starting with the UNESCO 1995 report "*Our creative diversity*", and culminating in the adoption of the UNESCO *Convention on the promotion and protection of the diversity of cultural expressions* (Unesco 2005). The latter is presented as a set of guiding principles for the creation of a more peaceful and equitable society.

In the above documents and the many publications accompanying them, cultural diversity seems to be promoted as something inherently good, a common heritage of humanity, a source for innovation, exchange and creativity, and an important source of identity. Cultural identity has become a human right issue (Human Development Report 2004). Whereas many conflicts seem to have cultural or ethnic elements, the general message is that cultural diversity should be cherished. Indeed, the promotion of cultural diversity has become a key element in maintaining or restoring peace throughout the world. Particularly the acceptance of cultural diversity in nation-building has been offered as a solution to intra-state wars in Africa. As the chair of the African Union Commission, Prof. Konare recently stated (2006, par. 11): "We should consider ethnic and cultural diversity as one of our strengths". South Africa, as a founder member of the International Network for Cultural Policy (INCP) in 1998, and its civil society counterpart, the International Network for Cultural Development, have been at the forefront of promoting cultural diversity, both at home and internationally.

However, opinions about the specific role of culture in conflict and peace making vary. On the one hand there seems to be an uncritical, almost romanticized, acceptance of the positive value of cultural diversity. This may have two causes: a) the universal positive view of biological diversity in environmental debates, which is directly applied to cultural diversity (UNESCO 1995; 2000); and b) the tendency in cultural diversity debates to emphasise economic issues within a global context, e.g. the focus on cultural industries, culture as tourism attractor, and international trade of cultural goods. On the other hand, there are strong arguments that cultural diversity plays a divisive role in conflicts, particularly in Africa. A number of studies highlight the ethnic basis of many conflicts. Although the 2005 Dakar meeting of the INCP addressed issues of cultural diversity and social cohesion, ministers noted the urgent need to recognise and understand the links between cultural diversity, sustainable development and social cohesion at the national and international level (INCP 2005).

Although the White Paper on South African participation in international peace missions (1999) mentions culture as one component of peace making and building, this aspect features in few peace missions. For example, the Government's Programme of Action 2006 of the International Relations, Peace and Security Cluster focuses on the development of continental institutions (AU Peace and Security Council), military missions (African Standby Force) and mediation between parties, but no reference is made to cultural aspects which could probably explain why peace making processes are so difficult (GCIS, 2006). If one would take the concept of culture as in the UNESCO conventions, even military action would be culturally determined.

The South African Department of Arts and Culture has requested the Human Sciences Research Council, together with relevant organizations from Africa and abroad to conduct an investigation into the role of cultural diversity in conflict and peace making in Africa within a broader analysis of causes of conflict and war. A critical engagement may deepen our understanding of the *positive and negative* roles of cultural diversity in conflict, reconciliation and post-conflict (re)construction processes. In terms of the White Paper on SA Participation in international peace missions, such an investigation would encompass the full continuum of conflict instigation to conflict resolution, peace making and peace building. For practical purposes this proposal will refer to conflict and peace making as the encompassing term. In view of current international studies on cultural diversity in conflict it is clear that DAC can play a significant supporting and complementary role in South Africa's peace missions by linking two major areas of interest in South Africa's own constitutional development: cultural diversity and peace making.

2 Aim of the proposed research project

The principal goal of this study is to carefully examine the most critical causes of African conflicts and especially the possible impacts of cultural diversity on conflict and peace making. It is hoped that the study will produce specific institutional and policy suggestions that would help South Africa and other peace facilitators in mitigating the conflicts and in managing cultural diversity in a manner that it ceases to become a negative factor, and rather become a positive one in the conflicts.

3 Structure of the research proposal

Following a summarized problem statement, the rest of the paper has four parts. The first part describes the different types of conflict in Africa and the main factors causing them. The second part sketches a theoretical framework that aims to explain why the frequency of armed conflicts in Africa continues to rise while armed conflicts in much of the rest of the world are on the decline, and why cultural diversity has become an integral part of many conflicts. The third part introduces some tentative propositions on key institutional and policy changes that promote better intercultural relations and thereby reduce the incidence of armed conflicts. The fourth part outlines a methodology for testing the propositions suggested in section three.

4 Problem statement

The relationship between cultural diversity, conflict and peace is complex and dynamic. This is evident from the reality that some conflicts in the world are between groups that are culturally quite similar, while many different groups and countries have developed ways to cooperate peacefully (Ross 1997, 2004). Although international interventions have resolved conflict in some countries, similar interventions have failed in others. There are obviously more factors in

conflict and peace making than culture, and some of these are more dominant (e.g. the nature of the African state, power struggles or unequal access to resources). However, the issue of cultural diversity keeps emerging in analyses of conflict, particularly in its relation to emotion-laden symbolic processes (Kaufman 2006). Culture itself is a complex concept, and there is no single explanation of how it is transferred and works, and there are within-culture variance problems (Ross 1997). In addition, cultural diversity has a strong local flavour, and it is risky to generalize. This also explains the tension between cultural rights as universal human rights and local phenomena and practices. Yet, the need for African peace making processes highlights the imperative to investigate the African nature of conflict, i.e. its cultural identity. An understanding of the relationship between cultural diversity and conflict and peace therefore requires clarity on historical and structural aspects of culture, conflict and the state, within specific geo-political situations and regional contexts and beyond, and the relationship between these aspects. Such understanding may enable stakeholders in peace-making processes to apply principles and methods in practical and sustainable ways.

5 Key factors in conflict and wars in Africa

Post-colonial Africa has faced both interstate and intrastate wars. The number of **Interstate Wars** has been relatively small compared to that of the intrastate wars. Nevertheless, Africa has seen several interstate wars, including the Ethio-Somali wars of 1964 and 1977-78, the Tanzania-Uganda war (1978-79), the Ethio-Eritrean war (1998-2000), and the interventions by Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Angola in the civil war of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1998-2002). The factors for these wars vary from case to case, however, while the Ethio-Somali and Ethio-Eritrean wars involve, at least manifestly, territorial and boundary disputes, all the cases relate to internal ethnic and political conflicts spilling over to neighboring countries or inviting the intervention of neighboring states.

Despite the apparent small size of African interstate wars, African countries, for various reasons, have engaged in proxy wars that destabilize their neighbors. Examples of African proxy wars include; Liberia in Sierra Leone and Guinea; Libya in Chad and Central African Republic; Burkina Faso in the Ivory Coast; Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda in the DRC; Chad and Sudan against each other; Chad and the CAR; Sudan and Uganda; Sudan and Eritrea; Sudan and Ethiopia; Eritrea and Ethiopia; and Ethiopia and Somalia. One cause of transborder conflict is the cultural links and interactions that exist between ethnic groups that have been artificially divided since the Berlin Congress in 1885.

A large number of African countries also face border disputes. Among such disputes are: Benin with Togo, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso; The Republic of the Congo with the DRC; Sudan with Egypt, Ethiopia, Chad, and the CAR; Libya with Niger and Chad; Equatorial Guinea with Gabon, Nigeria, and Cameroon; Nigeria with Cameroon and Chad; Botswana with Namibia; Swaziland with South Africa; and Tanzania and Malawi have squabbles over the border of Lake Nyassa. Some countries have managed to settle their border disputes peacefully through arbitration mechanisms while others, such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, allowed the border dispute to erupt into a devastating war. With growing demand for resources, it is reasonable to expect that the border disputes, along with the spilling of intercultural conflicts over national boundaries, would lead to a growing number of direct and proxy wars unless effective institutions are deployed for the peaceful management of these disputes.

Intrastate Wars

By far the most frequent armed conflicts in Africa are intrastate wars. These wars are of two types; communal conflicts and civil wars. **Communal conflicts** are non-state-based armed conflicts among various ethnic, clan, religious, racial, and regional entities within a country and between countries.

Most African countries are culturally diverse with many racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious entities. While the diversity of identity, in itself, is not a sufficient factor in generating conflicts, there are complex historical and contemporary, socioeconomic conditions that spoil relations among various cultural groups engendering conflicts.

Colonial regimes have been recognized as a major cause of ethnic war and communal conflict. Coexistence between culturally different communities has been thrown in disarray through the Congress of Berlin (1885) where Western colonial powers drew boundaries between colonies irrespective of existing cultural groups. Redrawing of national borders in the 19th century has been a crucial determining factor for the definition of nation-states in Europe, but even more in Africa. Western powers ignored existing ethnic, linguistic and religious affinities between groups of people, destroyed culturally-based governance institutions, imposing artificial zones of influence, which led to an increase in ongoing conflicts and wars, ethnic cleansing or the mass movement of refugees (E.U Consortium 2005). The Berlin congress led to either the division of established communities or the uniting of dissonant communities (UN 1998; Deng 2005:259). Through divide-and-rule policies colonial powers based identity on European racial classification and made opposing identities more rigid and unequal (Rubin 2006). One historical condition, especially in the settler economies of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Kenya to some extent, relates to the privileges granted to settlers by the colonial state, the colonial state's land policies, and its practices of 'divide and rule.' Many similar measures poisoned relations among communities and established a context for communal conflicts in many parts of Africa.

These conflicting positions were intensified through the involvement of the super powers in the Cold War and the decision of several ex-colonies to align with the Soviet Union or the West. African countries did not have much choice, due to trade and financial links with the super powers. In most cases opportunities

emerged for the new elite to enrich themselves through international alliances, either with a regional or an international focus (Ghebremeskel 2003; Matlosa 2006). The provision of weapons by the West and the Soviet Union to conflicting states led to a piling up of instruments for subsequent interstate and intra-state conflicts, as well as oppression and criminal activities. Since 2004 the latter has proliferated in countries that experienced peace, such as Kenya and Tanzania (Baregu & Ramadhani 2005).

The post-colonial state's failure to address adequately these conflict-engendering conditions, its inability to clarify property rights among communities and integrate fragmented economic sectors, and its neglect of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, along with changes in demographic and climatic conditions have all contributed in intensifying the competition for and conflict over resources among communal entities in many countries. Such conflicts are not always limited to distinct cultural entities. The recent deadly conflicts over land in southern Ethiopia between pastoralist Borena and Guji clans, who are both Oromo, for example, can hardly be explained by differences of ethnicity. Communal conflicts among various Somali clans are also over resources, including political power, rather than over cultural issues (Ghebremeskel 2003). Even when there are discernable cultural differences, as in the case of Darfur, the underlying factors are disputes over scarce land and water resources exacerbated by divisive government policies. With rising competition over scarce resources, however, cultural identities easily become rallying points that further polarize the competing parties.

Civil Wars

The most destructive and perhaps more intractable wars in Africa are civil wars. The number of these wars, which are fought between the state and ethnic or political sub-state entities, has shown little indication of abating over the decades since Africa's decolonization (see Table 1).

Table 1: Frequency of Intrastate Conflicts in Post-Independence Africa

1960s	1970-79	1980-89	1990-2004
Angola	Angola	Angola	Angola
Burundi	Burundi	Burundi	Burundi
Cen Afr Republic	Cen Afr Republic	-	Cen Afr Republic
Chad	Chad	Chad	Chad
Congo Brazzaville	-	-	Congo Brazzaville
-	-	-	Cote d'Ivoire
Congo (DRC)	Congo (DRC)	Congo (DRC)	Congo (DRC)
-	Equatorial Guinea	-	Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
-	-	-	Guinea
Guinea Bissau	Guinea Bissau	Guinea Bissau	Guinea Bissau
Kenya	-	-	Kenya
-	-	Liberia	Liberia
-	-	-	Mali
-	Mozambique	Mozambique	Mozambique
-	-	Namibia	Namibia
Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria	Nigeria
Rwanda	-	-	Rwanda
-	-	-	Senegal
-	-	-	Sierra Leone
-	-	-	Somalia
South Africa	South Africa	South Africa	South Africa
Sudan	-	Sudan	Sudan
Uganda	Uganda	Uganda	Uganda
-	Zimbabwe	-	-
Totals: 14	13	13	24

Sources: www.genocidewatch.org/genocidetable2003.htm;

The factors that cause civil-wars are also complex and often differ from case to case. In most cases, however, these wars are manifestations of the absence of broad agreement among the various ethnic and other sub-state entities on the terms of their incorporation into the state or their place within the state. These entities may consider cultural identity an important issue in these contestations, even if only as symbolic of economic or political ones. African civil wars are, therefore, largely challenges leveled against the state by disaffected entities. Civil wars including those in Angola, Burundi, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, apartheid South Africa, and Uganda were fought by groups that challenge the state. These conflicts often emanate from the proto-colonial nature of the African state and its failure to devise institutional arrangements that accommodate various cultural and political entities. The post-independence African political elite largely inherited the structures of a highly predatory colonial state with its extractive institutions and repressive security apparatus. Instead of reconstituting the state so that it becomes an agent for the advancement of broad social interests, the political elite, which came to control the extractive institutions, often used them to advance its own interests reducing the state into a semi-private apparatus that advances the interests of those who control it.

When faced with challenges by sub-state actors, the African state usually attempts to suppress the challenges by means of force, which rarely advances state building. Far from leading to long-term peace and stability, military victory, if attained, leads only to a temporary lull in violent conflicts accompanied by intense resentment and resistance, which are likely to be followed by a new cycle of hostilities.

Several African civil wars were concluded after they run their course with a military victory of one party or another. The Nigerian civil war (1967-70); the

Angolan civil war which ended in 2002 with the death of UNITA's leader, Savimbi; the Ethiopian conflicts between the Mengistu regime and rebel groups, including the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which ended in 1991, are some examples. The Rwandan civil-war, which ended with the victory of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1994, and the conflict in the Republic of the Congo, which ended in 1999, are other examples. In some cases the wars came to an end with external intervention. The conflicts in Chad (1979-94), Sierra Leone (1991-2002), Liberia (1989-1996) and the Katanga (1960-63) and the Shaba (1977-1978) wars in the former Zaire are such examples. However, the military settlements of these civil wars have hardly translated to success in state building as many of these countries remain embroiled in new conflicts or face growing ethnic and civil strife.

Despite the general persistence of intrastate wars, remarkable progress has been made in specific cases, often by fostering peaceful relationships between conflicting parties through traditional 'home-bred' processes and institutions, along with international support. Table 2 indicates the current state of the most successful areas.

Table 2 Sites of conflict resolution and peace making in Africa

Region/ country	State of post-conflict
Angola	Resolved, democracy established, country in peace-building phase
DRC	Democracy established, most conflict resolved, elections successful
Mozambique	Resolved, democracy established, country in peace-building phase
South Africa	Democracy established, advanced nation-building
Mali	Peace building and reconstruction
Burundi	Negotiations led to agreement; peace building and reconstruction
Comoros	Democracy established

Sources: Matlosa 2006; DFA 2006

6 Theoretical framework

As noted, the incidence of armed conflicts at the global level has declined significantly since the early 1970s (Human Security Report, 2005). Among the factors that have contributed to the decline are; the end of wars of decolonization, advances in state-building, decline of despotic rule and spread of democratic governance, economic integration and growth, and development of institutions of conflict resolution. Africa, like the rest of the world, has seen the end of wars of decolonization. It has also seen an increase in the involvement of international institutions of conflict resolution, as a great deal of diplomatic effort and peace keeping missions have been invested to settle African conflicts. Such efforts, however, have had rather limited success and conflicts in Africa have shown little indication of a decline.

Many factors, including poor economic performance, dependence on primary commodity exports, uneven distribution of resources, competition over scarce resources within different ethno-religious entities, especially under conditions of environmental degradation, and bad leadership, accompanied by weak institutions of governance, are given as factors that raise the risks of civil war (Collier et al. 2003; Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000; Avruch & Black 2001; Newbury, 2002). Some studies view culture and ethnic and religious diversity as central to understanding the aetiology of civil war and violent conflict in Africa, and even refer to ethnopolitical warfare (Leith & Solomon 2001; Chirot & Seligman 2002; Deng 2005; Mandara 2005). Such a list of factors, however, does not give us a full understanding of African civil wars unless the individual factors are related to the underlying structural and historical conditions that characterize the continent. Without the structural context, it is unclear why reliance on primary commodity exports, for example, would raise the risk of civil war. We also would not have an explanation why poor governance afflicts African countries disproportionately. And we would not be able to explain why in some countries cultural difference is accommodated, and in others lead to disproportionate

hatred and violence. We suggest four general structural conditions to help us develop an explanation for the high incidence of African intrastate conflicts.

These are;

- a) the extroverted and predatory nature of the African state, which has impeded state building and democratic governance;
- b) the internal institutional and economic fragmentation that characterize most African countries;
- c) the regional fragmentation of African economies; and,
- d) on a more socio-cultural level, the nature of culture as a strong emotional motivator.

These structural factors clearly do not tell us what sparks individual civil wars at a given time but they tell us the underlying conditions that generate the factors that spark conflicts.

The Nature of the African State and State-Building

The process of state building entails two aspects. One is integrating different segments of the citizenry, including various ethno-religious entities, under a shared socioeconomic system to form a political community. The second aspect refers to and enhancing the capabilities of the state in advancing the wellbeing of citizens. Historically, at least the initial process of state building was attained largely through coercive measures while economic integration and democratization consolidated the process. In the present era of democratization and human rights, however, coercive measures are neither viable nor legitimate. As Okafor notes, coercive approaches to state building fail because in ..."contemporary view of human rights, violent coercive unification and repressive homogenization are morally and socially bankrupt" (2000:525). State building in Africa, thus, has to take place within a democratic context. Unfortunately, various internal and external factors have impeded the development of state building in Africa. One critical internal factor is the nature of the post-colonial

African state. Ideally, the state, especially one that is created through a liberation struggle, as the African state was, is expected by its citizens to be an agent for their empowerment. In such a state, which is an overarching organization of all citizens, the terms of membership (incorporation) of different entities into the state would be subject to inclusive decisions. Policy decisions also would be subject to a democratic process that at least creates an environment conducive for cooperation among various identities and actors, including the government, the private sector, civil-society, the intelligentsia, and various ethno-religious entities. It is only such an inclusive, accountable, and transparent process that makes it possible for policy decisions to be based on broad societal interests and that the leadership and governance infrastructure of the state are accountable for their decisions and act as neutral arbitrators of competing interests of the various segments of society. It is also such characteristics that give the state the internal dynamics to nurture a cohesive political community and to develop its own governance capabilities.

African realities rarely replicate these characteristics and policy decisions are seldom made through a democratic process. One of the most conspicuous characteristics of the African political landscape is that the state has not been brought under the control of its citizenry. Instead it has remained imposed upon the population, in a manner similar to that of the colonial state. This independence from the citizenry has enabled many African leaders not only to engage in gross corruption but also to behave as if they own the state and to use it as they wish in a self-serving manner. Segments of the counter elite (elite not in power), on the other hand, see the state as a prize to be won in order to get access to the privileges of power. Rebellions, such as those led by Jonas Savimbi in Angola and Foday Sankoh in Sierra Leone were clearly motivated by blatant drive to capture state power for self-serving purposes. Many of the military coups that took place between the late 1960s and early 1980s were also motivated by similar, if less conspicuous, ambitions. Leaders of opposition

parties and armed rebel groups in many African countries are often driven by similar goals.

Another characteristic of the African state is related to its inability to project itself as a neutral arbitrator of the competing interests of the various entities within its constituency. Whether the state is a neutral arbitrator of various conflicting interests, as the liberal conception of the state suggests, or it is an instrument of domination, as the Marxist view asserts, remains a contentious issue. Perhaps, as Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, and Evans, (1985) suggest the state plays these different roles at different times depending on the balance of power among social classes. In any case, the state is the principal dispenser of resources and privilege. As such, fairness in this role is a crucial element in the process of state building and equitable development. The African state has not acted as a neutral arbitrator nor can it be a neutral agent without being inclusive. The present Ethiopian government, for example, is widely viewed by the population as a Tigrean government while those preceding it were viewed as Amhara governments.

In multi-ethnic countries, especially where civil society is not well developed, it is perhaps not possible to create a completely neutral state. It is, for example, hardly feasible to use all the languages in the country as official languages or as mediums of instruction in schools, as in Nigeria with its more than 250 languages (Leith & Solomon 2001). It is, however, essential that the state does not advance the interests of some ethnic groups at the expense of others and that it creates an inclusive polity instead of preserving ethnic hierarchy or privilege.

Expectations for state fairness and neutrality in the allocation of resources and opportunities are perhaps greater on the African state than on most other states due to the deprivation of indigenous people under colonialism, scarcity of resources and the limitations of the private sector in creating alternative means of

access to opportunities. Yet the state has to rise to the challenges. The experiences of some African countries, such as Mauritius and South Africa, suggest that a democratic state is achievable in Africa and that there exists a strong relationship between democratic governance and state neutrality. Fairness and impartiality are hardly compatible with dictatorial rule, especially since dictatorial regimes have the proclivity to manipulate ethnicity in order to extend their tenure in power.

A third problem that characterizes the state in much of Africa is its inability to develop appropriate vision and strategy of state building and development. Following decolonization, state building in Africa was widely perceived as forging a nation-state with a single cultural identity. Nations and ethnic groups were expected to assimilate into a common national culture, which essentially meant the culture of the dominant nation (or ethnic group). In the process less dominant groups were often expected to transfer their political and cultural loyalty from the nation or ethnic group to that of the state. With few exceptions, such as Nigeria, African leaders of the era of decolonization viewed federalism and other forms of decentralization that give various groups cultural autonomy as well as participation in self-governance as divisive arrangements that would reinforce ethno-nationalism and lead to secessions. Even multi-party political systems were viewed as divisive and incompatible with the goal of state building (Shaw, 1986). As a result, a centralized unitary strategy of state building was widely adopted.

Ethiopia and Sudan are two good examples. These two countries are among the many African countries that pursued such a strategy and are facing serious and chronic state building crisis. During the last two regime's Ethiopia's different national entities, especially the ethnic groups in the southern parts of the country, which were incorporated through conquest, during the last decade of the 19th century, were allowed little space for autonomous cultural development much less for self-rule. They were instead expected to assimilate into the culture

of the dominant nation, the Amhara (Mohammed Hassen, 1999). Ethiopia's successive governments have yet to implement a fundamental policy change in favor of genuine decentralization.

Sudan is another country, where, in an attempt to reverse colonial policy of isolating the south from the north, adopted a policy of centralization and assimilation of the south to the dominant culture of the north. Despite resistance by the south, which culminated in an intractable civil war, the successive regimes in the country essentially maintained a policy of centralization, although the country was able to stop the civil war for a decade (1972-83) by granting limited self-rule to the south. If implemented properly, the recent settlement reached between the government and the SPLM seem to repudiate the assimilation approach to state building.

Given the characteristics of the African state, cooperation among the different identities and success in state building (beyond oppressive incorporation) are unlikely to be achieved. Needless to say, in this era, where the concept of democracy has gained universal acceptance, it is not surprising that various ethnic and religious actors would resist incorporation if they perceive that they have no mechanism of ensuring that the state serves as an agent for the advancement of their collective interests. As Ross (2004) suggests, there appears to exist an inverse relationship between a government's level of accountability and the likelihood of a civil war. However, recent development in Sudan, DRC and Burundi seem to point to an emerging age of hope. Interestingly, in all three countries the issue of cultural diversity was recognized as part of the peace-making process.

Internal and Regional Economic and Institutional Fragmentation

Another structural condition that makes an impact on the incidence of armed conflicts in Africa is the internal and regional economic fragmentation. A growing

number of quantitative studies have claimed that economic ties promote interstate and intrastate peace by promoting interdependence and mutual benefits (Mansfield, 2003; Oneal, 2003; Gartzke and Li, 2002; Polacheck, 2005). It is possible that the impacts of the conflict-engendering nature of the state as well as the dangers from competition over scarce resources could be mitigated by the gains from economic interdependence. The economies of most African countries, however, remain fragmented and largely reliant on the exports of primary commodities. Despite the proliferation of regional economic integration schemes, African economies also remain regionally fragmented. Intra African trade, for example, remains less than 10% of their total trade. African countries pursue development strategies that are largely externally imposed through conditionalities. Such strategies, which largely advance the interests of a small domestic elite and external actors, have remained incapable of promoting internal and regional economic integration. Economic fragmentation, along with poor economic performance and widespread poverty, thus, continues to contribute to both intrastate and interstate conflicts. The recent focus of AU and NEPAD on Regional Economic Communities is pointing towards the required interstate and regional economic cooperation (van der Merwe 2006).

Economic fragmentation is also often accompanied by fragmentation of the institutions of governance. Large segments of the rural inhabitants, the overwhelming majority of the population in most African countries, continue to adhere principally to traditional institutions and leadership. Mamdani mentions how, during recent conflicts in Africa, communities changed sides following the changing positions of their chiefs, who often had non-cultural motives (Rubin 2006). The post-colonial state, on the other hand, essentially emulates western institutions of governance, which are based on the assumed free choice of autonomous individuals (Nyamnjoh 1999), and which are often at odds with traditional African cultural values, community institutions and the region's contemporary socioeconomic realities. The fragmentation of institutions is also likely to contribute to the crisis of state building and conflicts. The institutional

fragmentation has also led to the neglect of the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms beyond the local level.

Cultural diversity as an emotion-based mobilizer

Although cultural diversity and ethnicity are seldom roots or direct causes of conflict, their easy use for the mobilisation of support often makes them an integral part of the dynamics of conflicts, and they can easily become the main motivators for sustaining the conflict and become obstacles to peace (UNDP 2004). Weinstein (2002) highlights ethnic and cultural identities as a critical avenue through which rebel organizations can reduce the costs of conflict and sustain their wars. Kaufman (2006), again, link cultural diversity to emotion-laden symbolic politics. This easiness of mobilisation is due to a) the nature of culture and ethnicity, and b) to contextual factors.

The nature of culture

Culture is usually defined in two ways: a narrow one, focusing on cultural products and expressions, such as traditional dance, theatre, sculptures or buildings, and a broader one, which views culture as ‘the way we live’. The latter, which is applied in this proposal, is all-inclusive of human endeavour. Within this broad definition military action would even be culturally-embedded. Culture is a constructed phenomenon, created through the human endeavours to transform nature and the environment in order to sustain and enrich life. As human beings are social beings, culture becomes established through groups and communities adopting particular ways of living. Culture is transferred through human interaction, from trans-generational ones (e.g. through family and tribe) to inter-group ones (cultural interaction). In this transferral process culture is often adapted to new circumstances or restructured, e.g. to address new beliefs,

opportunities, a crisis or a threat. As a construct, culture is continuously reaffirmed and/or redefined.

Culture can be self-ascribed or assigned, something that has great relevance to the origins and sustaining of conflict in Africa. Self-ascribed culture is the way people define their own culture and identity, usually expressing pride, self-awareness and protection *vis à vis* others. It is here where the link with ethnicity is strongest. A combination of self-awareness based on origin, kinship, cultural uniqueness, a share history and possibly a shared language, forms the basis of ethnicity (Leith & Solomon 2001). Colonial powers used their Western cultural views and definitions to assign cultural characteristics to indigenous communities, often based on derogatory perceptions of the ‘natives’. The challenge of indigenous people to redefine themselves as worthy people in the post-colonial era, resulted in a strong awareness of being African. The acceptance of this challenge is visible in the origin of the Cultural Charter for Africa up to the concept and promotion of the African Renaissance. However, in many regional and national situations the differences between competing groups were increasingly emphasised. Assignment of cultural identity often occurs through perceptions of the ‘others’. When this perception is negative or stereotyped, it becomes, according to Galtung, one of the three necessary components for conflict (the other two being ‘incompatibility of interests’ and ‘behaviours of coercion or gestures of hostility’ (Kotzé 2002).

Definitions of culture vary, from a narrow one that emphasises artistic and cultural expression and production (ERICarts 2005), as well as traditional knowledge and practices and linguistic diversity, to a more general one as ‘the totality of values, institutions and behaviour within a society’, ‘ways of living’. The broader definition tends to dominate current debates, particularly where the concept is linked with democratisation processes. The result is that culture and cultural diversity have become vague terms, to be interpreted within specific contexts in order to make it useful. This need and potential for re-interpretation

makes the concept vulnerable to misuse within conflict situations. Leaders interpret the concept through their own specific historical and political perspective on relationships between competing groups.

One typical use of culture in mobilisation of support is in its combination with the concept of human ‘identity’. Cultural identity then defines people’s cultural bonding, the group to which they belong. Within mobilisation tactics cultural identity is usually portrayed as a fixed characteristic, which must be defended against ‘others’ who are generally viewed as competing for the same resources, power or status. Most contemporary definitions of identity denote a move from bounded or fixed objects in the natural world — namely that identity (singular) is essential, fundamental, unitary and unchanging — to the idea that identities (plural) are constructed and reconstructed through socio-historical actions (Lapid, 1996:8; Kaufman 2006). Hence identities are emergent and constructed — not fixed and natural; contested and polymorphic — not unitary and single; and interactive and process-like — not static (Du Plessis, 2001:14). It is generally found that for effective mobilisation of cultural diversity in conflict situations, leaders emphasise the fundamental and unchanging aspects of culture, which can be simplified and contrasted more easily with other cultural communities.

National governments tend to emphasise national identity to increase social cohesion, national consciousness and nation building. The challenge then is to make diverse cultural identities an integral part of the national one. This is particularly important in countries such as the DRC without a history of statehood, dominated by warlords related to neighbouring countries (Rubin 2006:17). Cultural identity implies freedom of association with groups, communities and ideologies which can go beyond national boundaries. People can and do have multiple identities that are complementary, e.g. ethnic, social, gender, religion, work. Research has highlighted that cultural identity and national identity can coexist. In fact, success stories of peaceful societies worldwide highlight the positive results of this coexistence. Acceptance of cultural

identity within national identity prevents stifling of social relationships and promotes dynamic interactions, creativity, critical thinking and the acceptance of history as a shared legacy and the future as shared aspirations. Suppression of cultural identity by national governments or inequity in recognition can lead to resistance, conflict and civil war (Sudan). Recognition of cultural identities through proportional representation in institutional arrangements easily entrenches cultural identities and does not motivate for national integration. This may increase tensions, rather than resolve them (Kotzé 2002).

Despite its vagueness as a concept, culture exists as a determining factor in society, structuring people's vision of 'others' in terms of history, traditions, language, customs, values and products. It is for this reason that culture has become a key concept in development, democratization and nation-building. Culture influences ideas about community, (common identity), authority and conflict in at least five ways (Ross 1997):

- Culture frames the context in which politics occur: culture offers an account of political behaviour through shared worldviews; understanding a party's culture leads to better understanding of motives and ways of thinking
- Culture links individual and collective identities, based on identification, a sense of common fate, linking individual and collectivity. Common identity is one precondition for mobilization of communities (Ellingsen 2000:229). Cultural attachments are connected to very primary emotions about identity, which may convince people to participate in conflict despite general normative objections (Kaufman 2006). Cultural attachment can be used for all types of engagement in conflict, from funding by supporters in the diaspora to recruitment for participation in conflict (Weinstein 2002).
- Culture defines the boundaries and organizes actions within and between groups. Cultural norms regarding inter-group relations can be elaborate and ambiguous, and cultural learning involves messages about groups'

motives, expectations about their behaviour, and how one is to act towards members of each out-group.

- Culture provides a framework for interpreting the actions and motives of others. This framework is often manipulated by leaders to ensure compliance with their own interpretation and strategic direction.
- Culture provides political resources for political organization and mobilization, by defining group distinctiveness, communication means and messages, offering decision making mechanisms, providing authority, ideology and discipline.

Analysing these influences can strengthen our understanding of cultural identity in conflict and war, particularly in the African context, with its history of cultural ascription, racial discrimination and divide-and-rule strategies. In particular, understanding cultural diversity can explain in many cases why conflict resolution initiatives succeed or fail.

Contextual factors

There seem to be at least two contextual factors that make cultural motivations so pervasive: a) the slow process of enshrining democratic principles and institutions, and b) the long history of traditional cultural and ethnic communities in Africa.

As argued above, citizens would justifiably expect the leaders of liberated states to involve civil society in decision making through democratisation processes. Under the best circumstances these processes are slow, partly due to undermining colonialist legacies, partly due to lack of resources, as well as self-enrichment attitudes of the elite. In many cases new leaders do not intend to include all citizens, but rather reward their own supporters. In the mean time excluded communities and ambitious leaders expect faster results in order to benefit from liberation. If democratisation processes appear to fail, communities

are easily convinced that alternative leaders may offer opportunities for participation. Frustration of these attempts heightens tensions and may lead to eruption into violence. In this process cultural identity is often used to mobilise support.

A second factor contributing to the use of cultural diversity as emotional mobiliser is the reality that African societies have consisted of many different cultures for centuries. Africa is not different to other countries in this regard (UNDP 2004). Awareness of cultural difference is thus historically embedded, and strengthened in particular by differences in language and religion. The latter has been, and still is, a potent instrument for mobilization, from the European Crusades of the 11th and 12th century, to conflicts between Muslim and Christian communities in Northern Africa in the present.

The drawing of boundaries during the 1885 Berlin Congress resulted in the division of cultural communities and groups in terms of nationality, but this could not end the social linkages. Since identities constitute transnational networks as well as sub-state collectivities, the set of policies to reduce conflict among identity groups and promote peaceful cultural diversity has to include regional and global as well as national policies. This approach challenges models of conflict prevention based primarily upon strengthening national states and polities (Rubin 2006).

In using cultural differences for the mobilization of support leaders often combine a number of approaches that focus on motivation, often to disguise their own focus on opportunity for self-enrichment (Weinstein 2002). Political leaders wield emotive ethnic symbols to rally their followers (Kaufman 2006). History is rewritten or re-interpreted to show evidence of long-standing and deeply-rooted differences that have led to incompatible claims over land or resources, and shows the ‘others’ as threats to the safe future of one’s own community. Smith refers to the myth-symbol complex, a combination of myths, memories, values

and symbols that define the history of a group (Kaufman 2006). When memories of oppression or hatred are very recent, the emotions of followers are readily incited, and the more difficult to reconcile. Communities tend to return to their cultural historical origins through a reinterpretation of an idealized or selective past, the creation of emblems and symbols that emphasise differences, and the use of metaphors and chosen traumas for helping groups to define the threats they face, e.g. the sacred covenant in the Biblical story of Exodus (Unesco 2000: 33; Ross 1997). In this way, the struggle becomes a battle for cultural identity and pride, which may be promoted to a national issue from which the ‘others’ are excluded (Ross 1997). Real or perceived threats or deprivation often makes people revert to their cultural identity, and leaders exploit this tendency to emphasise cleavages between cultural communities rather than the shared future and historically embed the notion of ‘others’ in cultural groups’ perceptions (Rubin 2006:13). Once the conflict breaks out, the cultural differences are usually magnified and become mechanisms for sustaining the conflict. The Sudan North-South conflict, for example, has often been described as a conflict between Arabs and Africans, as religion and language have become major issues that mobilized at a deep emotional level (Deng 2005). Such entrenched cultural cleavages are often obstacles to mediation processes, as negative perceptions of supporters have to be changed without visible changes in the conflict situation.

The emphasis on cultural identity and violence appear to be mutually-reinforcing phenomena. On the one hand cultural differences are used to instigate conflict. While cultural features distinguish one group from another, political dynamics are then central in deciding the relative importance of particular cultural features in any time and place (Ross 1997). On the other hand conflicts may sharpen the formation of cultural identities when claims are incompatible or irreconcilable. Struggles over cultural identity, if left unmanaged or managed poorly, can quickly become one of the greatest sources of instability within states and between them and in so doing trigger conflict that takes development backwards (Unesco 2004:2).

Cultural diversity in peace making

Peace is more than the absence of war, as Einstein argued (Sandy & Perkins 2002). In a positive sense, it involves the building of trust, compassion and justice, both in informal interaction and embedded in institutions. Although this necessitates global dimensions (international law and justice organizations like the UN), there should be an equal focus on local solutions through mediation and education. Both processes include a cultural dimension. Mediation in general has its limitations and a definite end date. Eventually stakeholders in the conflict must take up the challenge of compromise and tolerance, often after a long period of hatred. Leaders must often find ways out of the symbolic politics trap that they have created during the mobilization process (Kaufman 2006). Such retrogressions are not always possible in the short term. It could, therefore, be posited that any attempt to resolve conflict may in most cases only provide a situation of balance, convincing warring parties that the cost of maintaining conflict is higher than that of making peace. An important milestone is thus making conflict and tension manageable. This also applies to the role of cultural diversity in peace making. Cultural diversity can play a positive role in peace making. Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000) even argue that highly diverse societies are significantly less prone to violent conflicts than polarized countries, as in the former it is very difficult to organize or sustain a rebellion. Larger numbers of diverse sub-groups allow governments to negotiate more easily. However, culture is only one part of the system.

Cultural aspects can contribute throughout the peace-making and post-conflict reconstruction processes. Even after political peace has been restored through formal agreements, underlying cultural tensions and seemingly incompatible cultural and religious identities make it difficult to develop national unity. Improving national social cohesion would necessitate knowledge about each other's views of 'others' and 'self', e.g. through narratives on suffering and

indigenous bargaining forums (Kaufman 2006). Ross (1997:321) argues that a focus on culture enables parties to take the first necessary steps towards conflict resolution before institutional arrangements are finished. As Kaufman (2006) argues, this role of culture may be necessary for many years to instill a culture of peace. Shared cultural practices may build social cohesion at community level, while politicians negotiate for national unity.

The success of building a culturally diverse base for peace relies on a number of acknowledgements and commitments by rivaling parties. First, where cultural diversity is clearly not a basic cause of the conflict, cultural identity should be dissociated from the power struggle. Where cultural intolerance or discrimination is clearly a cause for conflict, inclusion of cultural diversity in peace agreements contributes to sustainability of peace, e.g. Sudan/Darfur (Deng 2005). An agreement must grow that cultural diversity is an asset (UNESCO Convention: article 1; Konare 2006). Second, Africa's heritage includes cultural institutions and traditions that promote social cohesion and peace, such as *ubuntu* ('*a human being is a human being because of other human beings*') and reconciliation customs that offer more sustainable solutions than Western legalistic approaches (Zartman 2000). Avruch/Black 2001:26: (referring to Druckman et al.) point to the importance of cultural differences that influence bargaining behaviour. Elbadawi & Sambanis (2000) point to the advantages of cultural diversity in bargaining processes through ethnic balancing and cross-cutting alliances and trade concessions. Cultural diversity and identity thus influence the methods for conflict resolution and peace making, and local culturally-determined methods for reconciliation can contribute to sustainable peace. Third, a growing awareness of a shared past among communities in conflict strengthens opportunities for a shared future. Thus heritage celebrations offer opportunities for peaceful co-existence, social cohesion and inclusive policies and practices. To achieve this shared view on the benefits of cultural diversity, conflicting parties should first make sense of the others' view of society and human relationships (Ross 1997). International experience shows that where

cultural diversity is accepted as an asset for the nation, peace initiatives become more entrenched in society, and societies become prosperous. Culture can thus play a constructive role in building unity in post-conflict situations. The examples from Mozambique, Angola and South Africa offer promising opportunities for Africa.

6 Institutional Changes to Mitigate African Conflicts

The foregoing theoretical discussion suggests that Africa's intrastate conflicts are fought mainly by various cultural entities and political groups against the state over terms of incorporation into the state or against each other over resources. The conflicts, however, occur under specific characteristics of the state and in the absence of conditions that bring about economic and institutional integration of the various ethno-religious and other cultural identities.

Mitigating the incidence of conflicts in Africa, thus, would require institutional and policy changes in order to address both the triggering factors as well as the structural conditions to bring about; (1) reconstitution of the state, (2) internal and regional economic integration, (3) integration of the fragmented institutions of governance; and (4) promotion of socialization programs that advance intercultural understanding and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Some of the required changes, such as those that promote internal and regional economic integration are likely to be longer term projects, although steps, such as investments for the transformation of the subsistence sector, can be undertaken rather quickly to expedite the process. There are, however, other changes that can be implemented in the short run. However, the realities in conflict and post-conflict countries must be carefully investigated. We suggest the following propositions for changes that can be instituted in the short term.

1. Revitalization of African traditional conflict resolution mechanisms:

Although the AU Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development does not explicitly address the issue of culture, commentators refer to the need of African countries to explore whether there are any cultural resources within their own traditions that can assist them with putting in place a process of post-conflict reconciliation to heal the traumatized communities (Murithi, 2006). Traditional conflict resolution mechanism can contribute a great deal in resolving communal and civil wars, and contribute to post-conflict systems of governance. Traditional leaders can at least serve as early warning mechanisms for quick intervention. They can also provide information as they are more likely to have better understanding of issues than government administrators. Kaufman (2006) refers to at least two examples of conflict resolution mechanisms. On a formal level truth and reconciliation commissions could provide opportunities for hearing victims' stories. On an informal level theatre and traditional community reconciliation practices may enable constructive communication and interaction between opposing parties (changing perceptions, promoting respect, tolerance, trust, cooperation, social cohesion), and trauma therapy and cleansing rituals for perpetrators (*Gacaca* and *Abunzi* in Rwanda) and returning ex-combatants during and post conflict (Nantulya 2006). Important is to get on board the media through journalist education to ensure unbiased reporting.

2. Institutional integration to promote state reconstitution and to improve state-society relations: Adoption of the traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution as well as decision making that is based on narrowing differences is crucial in dealing with conflicts over terms of incorporation of ethno-religious or cultural identities into the state. Modern elections which produce winners and losers and which often tend to subjugate the interests of minorities are not suitable for establishing terms for incorporation. Constitution-making for example, need to be made through consensual mechanisms rather than through electoral outcomes where

minority votes may not affect the outcome.

3. Promotion of cross border trade and mobility of people to promote regional integration: Top-down integration mechanisms have had little success. It may be necessary that bottom-up strategies of integration that would allow freer interaction between ethnic and cultural entities that are split by national boundaries may facilitate greater regional integration complementing the top-down mechanisms.
4. Better definition of property rights and respect for communal land, water, and cultural rights.
5. Promotion of socialization measures that facilitate intercultural interaction and relations. This should take place simultaneously at at least three levels: a) leaders creating or using public appearances to show conciliatory gestures (e.g. Mandela and de Klerk shaking hands), b) offering opportunities for middle-range leaders to discuss reconciliation; and c) active intervention by governments and non-governmental organizations to develop socialization mechanisms at a community level that would advance intercultural interaction and opportunities to hear each other's stories of suffering. Through cultural events different communities can express their identity, and expose themselves to other identities (Kaufman 2006).
6. Promotion of education that is based on respect for cultural diversity and links indigenous knowledge systems to modern ones. This would require close cooperation between departments of arts and culture and those of education, and the development of culture-sensitive curricula.
7. The provision of resources for reconciliation processes, including meetings for leaders, workshops for middle-range leaders, youth camps,

cultural events, media training, etc.

7 Methodology

The overall goal of the methodology is to examine against empirical evidence the hypotheses suggested in the theoretical framework as explanations of the conflict-engendering factors and the propositions outlined as possible measures for mitigating African conflicts. In other words, a number of conflict cases would be selected and carefully examined to see if the hypotheses suggested in the theoretical framework explain the conflicts and if the proposed policy and institutional changes address the factors that lead to the conflicts.

For this purpose the proposal includes the establishment of a core research team consisting of the leaders of research teams in six countries. The case studies will enable the country teams to make their own contextualised definitions and models of cultural diversity, and the collation of these local definitions into a generic framework. Conversely the country teams, which should include cultural agents, government departments and academics, should provide opportunities for relevant input in local policy formulation, in an implementable way.

It is proposed that the six countries are selected from those conflict situations in which South Africa has been involved. This will enable the research teams to use the existing mediation platforms for entry into the processes.

8 Data Collection

The study will employ several data collection methods including surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. The proposed process is as follows:

- a) establishment of core research team, consisting of SA researchers and representatives from six countries
- b) Production of six country reports

- c) Collation of country reports into consolidated report through a workshop in South Africa
- d) Presentation of country reports and consolidated reports in six countries, and to multi-country forums and departments.

Data generated through these methods will be complemented with insights from documentary and archival sources in order to develop a general grounded theory.

- **Sampling**

The project has several units of analysis, including traditional leaders, elders, ethnic, religious and clan leaders, leaders of political parties, leaders of opposition groups, policy makers, government administrators at different levels, and common people. A multistage stratified sampling method that allows different sampling approaches to the different units of analysis will be appropriate as the overall sampling method for the pilot study.

- **Questionnaires**

A wide range of questions reflecting the hypotheses outlined in section two and the propositions specified in section three will be developed and translated into the appropriate languages of the research sites.

9 Implementation of research

The project should include strategies for implementation and testing of findings. This should occur through intense cooperation between country research teams and local stakeholders in the peace-making processes. Implementation should occur in a next phase, which can only be planned as the current research project unfolds.

10 Proposed research areas

Although it must be accepted that it is impossible to define a distinct differentiation between conflict and post-conflict, it is proposed that these two categories are used for the selection of geo-political areas/regions/countries. Taking into account that the DAC would probably become involved in the selection of areas, the following are proposed:

Area in conflict	Area in post-conflict
4. Sudan 5. Ivory Coast 6. Somalia	4. DRC 5. Burundi/Great Lakes 6. Angola

11 Proposed approach for initiating the research process

	Objective	Responsibility	Partners invited	Date	Venue
1	Selection of countries	HSRC/CLACD DAC		July/Aug 2006	
1	Identify partners in countries and request Expression of Interest	HSRC/CLACD, DAC, SA embassies ACCORD	Socio-Cultural agents Academics NGOs Centre for Conflict Resolution Accra	Aug/Sept	
2	Invitation to participate; set up core country research partner teams	HSRC/CLACD		Aug/Sept	
3	Request writing of country report	Core partner in each country		Sept	Local
4	Organisation of workshop	HSRC/CLACD		Oct – 1 st week Nov	Pretoria
5	2 day workshop: a)deliver country reports b)determine format for research	HSRC/CLACD	Country partners DAC Wits Centre for Conflict Studies UCT ACCORD	2 nd week Nov	Jhbkg
6	Consolidate country reports and research proposal	HSRC/CLACD Rapporteur Partners		End Nov	Pretoria
7	Discussions of consolidated report in countries	Country research teams	Stakeholders in each country	Dec 2006-Feb 2007	Local countries
8	Visits to countries for seminars/workshops for developing country-specific research plans	HSRC/CLACD			

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