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Examining its application in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Post-Cold War Era



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# Civilizational Hexagon as a pathway to Conflict Management: Examining its application in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Post-Cold War Era

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## Abstract

This paper examines the attempts of implementing components of the concept called Civilizational Hexagon as a pathway to civilizing conflict in the Sub-Saharan Africa in the post-Cold War period. Despite significant decline in the violent conflict and substantial progress socio-economic aspects in the period, most states in the region have been facing challenges in their way to civilize conflict related to absence of inclusive political system, weak state unable to monopolize the use of violence in its territory, and social injustice. On the other hand, states like Botswana and Mauritius managed to civilize conflict through significant improvement in democratic consolidation. Besides their relative success in implementing six elements, these states enabled to integrate traditional institutions with modern state apparatus that helped them to fill the gap created as result of exogenous state formation process and the resulting unfinished nation-building project. Additionally, traditional institutions contributed to managing diversity.

## Zusammenfassung

Dieses Papier untersucht die Versuche, Komponenten des Konzepts „zivilisatorisches Hexagon“ als einen Weg zur Zivilisierung von Konflikten in Afrika südlich der Sahara nach 1990 umzusetzen. Trotz eines signifikanten Rückgangs der gewaltsamen Konflikte und erheblicher Fortschritte in sozio-ökonomischen Aspekten stehen die meisten Staaten in der Region vor Herausforderungen, die mit dem Fehlen eines inklusiven politischen Systems, einem schwachen Staat, der nicht in der Lage ist, das Gewaltmonopol in seinem Territorium auszuüben, und sozialer Ungerechtigkeit zusammenhängen. Gleichwohl sind Staaten wie Botswana und Mauritius in der Lage, Konflikte durch signifikante Verbesserung der demokratischen Konsolidierung zu zivilisieren. Neben ihrem relativen Erfolg bei der Umsetzung der sechs Elemente haben diese Staaten es geschafft, traditionelle Institutionen in den modernen Staatsapparat zu integrieren, was ihnen half, die Lücke zu füllen, die durch den exogenen Staatsbildungsprozess und das daraus resultierende unvollendete Projekt der Nationenbildung entstanden war. Zusätzlich halfen die traditionellen Institutionen dabei, Vielfalt zu sichern.

## I. Introduction

The third wave of democratization that started in Southern Europe then turned to the post-communist Europe and Latin America and, afterwards, reached with remarkable speed to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA hereafter) in the early 1990s<sup>1</sup>. With the end of the Cold-War and the resulting New World Order under the Washington Consensus, liberal democracy with the free-market economy has been identified as the only rule in town and the end of ideological confrontation – prominently labelled as ‘the end of history’<sup>2</sup>. The post-colonial SSA governments, which had been getting huge support from either East or West, were forced to step down or open-up the political and economic space in the post-Cold War period with a combination of pressure from the West donors, the snowballing impact of democratization in the other part of the world, and the political demand from inside<sup>3</sup>.

For the region known for autocratic rule and military dictatorship, the triumph of liberal democracy and the resulting wave of democratization created a horizon of hope specifically from the beginning of the 1990s. However, the optimism did not last even for a decade in most of the countries in the region that started with both political and economic liberalizations. Instead, by and large, the states in the region entered into the dead-end situation of a political and economic crisis, democratic stagnation, and an even reverse move to autocratic regimes<sup>4</sup>. In comparison to the pre-1990s, however, interstate conflicts with direct military confrontation have declined in SSA. Nevertheless, intrastate conflicts and the resulting state fragility with political, economic, and social crises have increased<sup>5</sup>. According to the Fragile State Index of 2019<sup>6</sup>, more than two-thirds of the states with high alerts are from the region. On a general level, different scholars and policy implementers have been proposing and implementing various mechanisms to realize internal peace within the state as a pragmatic way to achieve internal and international peace. Dieter Senghaas as one of the pioneers of peace research identified six conditions (labelled as the Civilizational Hexagon) to civilize conflict and achieve perpetual/sustainable internal peace: the state’s monopoly on the use of force, control founded on the rule of law, interdependence and affective control, democratic participation, social justice and equity, and constructive conflict management. He based his argument and analysis on the European experience since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and argues about the possible applicability of the same path in other parts of the world. Although Senghaas is reluctant to confirm Fukuyama’s thesis of ‘the end of history’ as a final synthesis stage of innovation of modern society, he calls on the necessity of imitating the Western experience of ‘the democratic rule-of-law state’ as a viable arrangement to achieve internal peace<sup>7</sup>. In his illustration, he analyzed how the elements of the civilizational hexagon have been implemented with the challenges faced and progress made in East Asia, Latin America, East Europe, and Islamic World of Near East (the Middle East and North Africa – Maghreb region). Concerning SSA (he identified it as Black Africa), Seenghas uncovered his profound pessimism towards the region and worrying sources of conflict as the result of wrecking political institutions and economic potential<sup>8</sup>. However, as far as the researcher's review is concerned, he barely discussed the centrifugal forces behind the dysfunctional states in SSA and the resulting failures in civilizing conflict management in the region.

Therefore, this piece of work explores and examines the attempts of implementing elements (separately and/or in combination) from the civilizational hexagon and thereby identifies the challenges that states in the region have been facing in the post-independence time in general and post-Cold War period in particular. Furthermore, the paper explores the cases of exceptional success from the region and hence indicates an additional condition that enabled some

states to ensure constructive conflict management although sharing historical and structural challenges common to all states in SSA.

## **II. Understanding the Civilizational Hexagon**

### **1. Causes of Conflict**

Conflict is an inevitable and inseparable phenomenon in human history<sup>9</sup>. At inter-personal, intrastate, or interstate level, what matters most is how the conflict can be managed without being violent and instead transforming the very character of the conflict. This approach of transforming the nature of the conflict is named by Dieter Senghaas as civilizing conflict. However, before dealing with what and how society, either at the internal or international arena, can civilize conflict, it is important to understand the causes of conflict and the context it evolves as discussed by Seenghas.

The approach of dealing with the cause of the conflict to build the structure that can promote durable solution is mainly based on Alfred Fried's classical doctrine of 'causative pacifism'. The doctrine of causal pacifism builds on civilizing and transforming conflict at the international level with the assumption of a successful accomplishment of civilized management of conflict within the state<sup>10</sup>. Although realizing full pacifism of interstate relations at the international level is far from being fully achieved, interstate wars have become a rare event and significantly declined in the post-Cold War era. On the contrary, conflict within the state has been rising with various characters and manifestations. In identifying the causes of conflict, Senghaas disagree with both cultural essentialists<sup>11</sup> and with those who relate conflict with human nature<sup>12</sup>. Rather contemporary conflicts are mainly the result of social transformation and the resulting clash between tradition and modern society. Industrialization of the 20th century (including in 'extra- West') and the resulting de-ruralization and urbanization has dramatically changed the way of communication and political organization. Moreover, expansion in education further shackled the existing traditional social, political, and economic structure. As a result, plurality becomes an inevitable fact in almost every part of the world<sup>13</sup>. Thus, politicization and failure to manage the plurality/differences within the state often results in violent conflict and civil war.

### **2. Civilizational Hexagon as a Conflict Managing Artifact**

However, luckily, Senghaas came-up with conditions to manage the conflict by drawing the lesson from the laborious process in which the West went through – the Civilizational Hexagon. The artifact of the civilizational hexagon is a multifaceted project that combines constitutional, institutional, material, and psychological dimensions to realize internal peace. This artifact consists of six conditions to civilizing the inevitable conflicts<sup>14</sup>.

The state's monopoly on the use of force is the first condition necessary to civilize conflict. The modern notion on the state monopoly of physical force goes back to the seventeenth-century social contract political philosopher Thomas Hobbes. His basic justification for a state monopoly of violence and even an absolute sovereign state was to prohibit the situation by which individuals were free to use – even military – force and the resulting state of war all against all and the duty to create a peaceful state. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the German political sociologist Max Weber's definition of state indicated the state monopoly of violence as the foundation for the state<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, Senghaas reaffirmed the importance of state monopoly of violence within its territory to create an enabling environment 'to settle identity and interest [based] conflicts by argument not by force'<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless, Senghaas is



not the advocator of the absolute power of the state to use force. Rather he stated the significance of taming and controlling the state power through his second element of civilizational hexagon – the rule of law. In this point, he strongly contended Hobbes's emphasis on the absolute and unchecked monopoly of violence as the way to pacify the internal conflict and subscribed to Immanuel Kant's way of "the republican order" through the rule of law which vested in 'the republican civil constitution'. The rule of law as an important principle mainly addresses the aspects of when and how the state actors may employ force and restrains the state from using arbitrary force<sup>17</sup>. It ranges from the protection of fundamental human rights and equality before the law to political rights such as the right to elect and be elected. This rule of the game governs not only the relation between state and society but also between/among branches and/tiers of government. Thus, in a pluralist society with various identities and interests, constitutionally stated and fixed rule of the game is the base for civilizing conflict.

The state monopoly of violence and the rule of law as an institutional set up oblige individuals to control themselves or to self-control. According to Senghaas, beyond the institutional framework, the nature of modern society further strengthens the interdependence and the resulting in affect control. One of the defining features of modern society in comparison to the traditional ones in the rural area of geographically limited communication is a complex network of connection and the resulting interdependence. The interdependence with multiple role players makes tolerance and compromise as the rule of interaction. Thus the institutional and material conditions of modern society result in the third condition for civilizing conflict according to Senghaas – affect control<sup>18</sup>.

In modern societies, plurality becomes a reality and politicized, democratic participation is a necessary condition to include and articulate multiple and even contending interests and identities. By doing so ensuring democratic participation as the fourth condition is the base to civilizing conflict. Although the realization of the rule of law and democratic participation are necessary conditions to ensure equality of opportunity, it does not automatically result in inequality of distribution and social justice in its full sense. At this point, Senghaas criticized the capitalist market economy for creating inequality by its nature and indicated the necessity of intervention to ensure fairness of distribution. Thus achieving social justice is another most important condition to have constructive conflict management. Finally, the state monopoly of violence with a fenced principle of rule law and democratic participation, democracy develops to the level of culture not only of the state but the society too. This makes constructive conflict management as the culture of the society and the 'emotional basis of the community'. As a political culture, it is the latest stage in the historical process and indeed the product of the realization of all five components<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, the realization of all those six components and reinforcing one another result in civilization of conflict in a highly politicized plural society.

In his works, Senghaas recognizes the evolutionary nature of the development of the components of civilizational hexagon by citing the historical trajectories in Western Europe<sup>20</sup>. Although he has not explicitly mentioned the sequence of the components based on their importance, the state monopoly of violence, as the main pillar in state formation, is the most important element in civilizing conflict. The process of state formation through the monopoly of violence and the establishment of different institutions, as many scholars agree<sup>21</sup> went through a long and slow process in Western Europe. In some cases, it started in the pre-Wetephalian era despite the variation in time and the speed of consolidation of the state monopoly of violence in a defined territory. Moreover, the state formation in Western Europe was, by and large, the result of internal conflict and the state monopoly of violence was done

by the victory of the strong over the weak units. Here Senghaas agreed on the role of war in the political development and state monopoly of violence particularly<sup>22</sup>. In the development of rule of law arrangements, democratic political participation, and social justice also, as Senghaas stated, the clash had been within the civilization between different parties – mainly between those who wanted to maintain the status quo /reactionaries and those who seek for change/modernizers<sup>23</sup>. For the aforementioned process of the historical development of components of civilizational hexagon, it is fair to conclude that the conflicts that led to the realization of those components in Western Europe were largely endogenous.

On the other hand, SSA as a region, which consists of the latecomer states to the international system, if not the last ones, has a different historical trajectory. With very few exceptions (Ethiopia and Liberia – two never colonized states), all the states in the region are the product of colonialism. As a result, unlike states in the West, the territorial boundary and the state structure have not evolved gradually over a long time but were created within a short period by the interest of colonial powers<sup>24</sup>. Thus, the state formation process and its attempt of monopolizing violence had been significantly different from what happened in the West. Even in the time of ‘independence’, the power dynamics in the international system (the Cold-War contention) played a significant role in the recognition of the post-colonial states in SSA<sup>25</sup>. The triumph of the West and the resulting unipolar world under Washington leadership again pushed the countries in the region to democratize their political system (Western liberal democracy) with contents very close to components of the civilizational hexagon<sup>26</sup>. Therefore, given the significant variation in the process of state formation and other structural variations, the next sections of this paper will assess the attempts for implementing the components of the civilizational hexagon (in a way discussed above) in the post-Cold War era in the SSA and examining challenges and successes of democratization in line with civilizing conflict.

### **III. The Trajectory of Civilizational Hexagon in Post-Colonial Sub-Saharan Africa**

#### **1. Statehood and Colonization**

As the basic institutional ground to manage conflict constructively, the state is the most important human community in modern society. Although different scholars have a differing stand on the type of political community in pre-colonial Africa (in the form of Empires, Kingdoms, chiefdoms, and tribal organizations), they agree on the non-existence of a modern state with a monopoly of violence<sup>27</sup>. It was the Berlin Conference (1884-1885) and the resulting colonial partition that resulted in the formation of almost all the states in SSA and the region's integration into the international jigsaw puzzle of sovereign territories<sup>28</sup>. Even Ethiopia which claims its historic existence for about three millennia finished its state formation at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the colonization of all the surrounding neighbours<sup>29</sup>.

Beginning from the late 1950s, states in SSA started to get their independence and acquire the status of the modern state with international recognition. Both internal resistance and change in international power balance contributed to the decolonization of states in SSA. However, except for a few states (Algeria, Kenya, South Africa and the Portuguese colonies – Angola, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and Cape Verde), almost all other states got their independence as the result of the power shift from the old colonial empires (France and Britain) to the USA and USSR with their supportive stance for decolonization. And most importantly, the start of Cold-War contention between the two superpowers and their competition to deny ‘the others’ vacant position facilitated the process of decolonization<sup>30</sup>. As a

result, the modern states introduced by the colonial powers in SSA got their juridical statehood through political independence.

## **2. The nature of state as a challenge for civilizing conflict in the post-colonial SSA**

However, if we take the Weberian notion of the state or the Senghaas's condition of a monopoly of violence as criteria, the African states in general and states in the SSA region, in particular, would not qualify as a state. In the aftermath of their independence, many states barely claimed the monopoly of violence in their territorial jurisdiction. In some countries, the rebel groups have had control of parts of the state's territory while the international community continued to recognize the government in the capital. Biafra in Nigeria (from the late 1960s to mid-1970s), significant parts of Uganda and Chad, and Katanga in Congo were controlled by the rebel groups/secessionists that indicate extreme in the weakness of African states in civilizing conflict<sup>31</sup>. Even in the 1980s, some rebel groups<sup>32</sup> managed to have 'states within state'<sup>33</sup>. In their article that explains the reason behind the persistence of weak states in SSA, Jackson and Rosberg (1982)<sup>34</sup> dubbed the post-colonial states in the region as Quasi-State since they cannot fulfil one of the most important empirical statehood – monopoly of violence in their territorial jurisdiction.

The weakness of the post-colonial states in the region is one of the legacies that they inherited from colonialism. Besides their exogenous nature, the colonial state had a weak state-society linkage because of a lack of capacity to penetrate and effectively control the territory. The limited penetration capacity was mainly related to colonial powers' lack of desire to invest to ensure state power projection except on economically productive and strategically significant areas<sup>35</sup>. Thus, the post-colonial states inherited weak states with poor infrastructure, bureaucracy, and alien institutions.

The post-colonial weak states that could not garner legitimacy and project their power in their entire territory failed to endorse the rule of law and political participation as expected. As an exception, some states such as Botswana, Mauritius, and Namibia managed to establish a working state with rule of law, democratic participation (relatively free election), and with a moderately successful economy. As of the mid-1970s, more than half of the then independent countries in the region established a one-party system that closed the door for political participation irrespective of their alliance to the West or the East<sup>36</sup>. The authoritarian regimes had been exploiting the Cold-War contention as an international opportunity and patrimonial/clientelism as a strategy to fill the deficit of legitimacy at home. The horizon of hope that the society got during the early stages of independence was further shattered by pervasive military coups d'états. The oppressiveness of the system and the rise of rebel groups paved the way for military coups and the establishment of military regimes in various countries. Between 1960 and 1982, these states experienced 52 successful coups, 56 attempted coups, and 102 plots, making the military coup "the institutionalized mechanism for succession" in post-colonial Black Africa<sup>37</sup>. In the light of quasi-states in SSA with autocratic and military dictators that were ruling by iron and/or clientelism, it is fair to say that the components of civilizational hexagon as conditions for civilizing conflict were far from achievement with few exceptions.

## IV. Post-Cold War Period: A New Horizon of Hope for Civilizing Conflict?

When the brutal dictators like Siad Barre of Somalia, Mengistu Hailemariam of Ethiopia, Mobutu of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), Doe of Liberia and Kaunda of Zambia (the mild dictator) were removed from power after the end of Cold-War, it has seemed the reign of authoritarianism and rule by violence have ended<sup>38</sup>. The West's (specifically the US's) foreign policy shift from containment of communism to democracy and human rights issues (at least at rhetoric level) and the wave of democratization in South and post-communist Europe and countries in Latin America further pushed the process of democratization in the region as an important external factor. Even some identified the beginning as 'the second independence' or 'Africa's springtime'. From the late 1980s to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, near to three fourth of states in SSA had adopted democratic government at least at the procedural level which opened a leeway to democratic political participation<sup>39</sup>. Here I am not saying democracy is synonymous with the Senghaas's civilizational hexagon.

Nevertheless, the democratic government can fulfil at least three conditions (state monopoly of violence, rule of law, democratic participation) out of six and thus create a fertile ground for the others too. Scholars also accept democracy as a preferable (arguably the best) conflict management strategy since it provides a predictable procedure and participatory system of governance despite all the defects<sup>40</sup>.

According to Senghaas (2013), the clash within civilization between those who want to maintain the status quo (traditional society) and those favouring modernity because of the social transformation (industrialization, urbanization, and education) is the major driving factor for pluralization and politicization of tradition society<sup>41</sup>. He identified those six conditions to manage conflict in this plural and politicized society. True, the transformation from traditional to modern society in Western Europe happened mainly because of internal processes, mainly industrialization. Senghaas (2002) argues about similar paths in South East Asian countries and Latin America.

In SSA, however, the combination of internal and external factors contributed to the third wave of democratization (the second wave in the region) in the post-Cold War era. The post-independence autocratic regimes had faced rising resistance from the people. As Senghaas argues, this internal grievance has linked with rapid urbanization and education in the post-independence SSA states. However, opposition from the people, especially in the late 1970s and early 1980s was mainly emanated from frustration than the clash between tradition and modern values as Seghaas stated. Although the region identified as the least urbanized, SSA has experienced the highest growth in urbanization since the 1960s (up to 300%). The major factors for the highest urban growth rate have been rural-urban migration in search of economic opportunities as pull factors and conflicts and economic hardship in a rural area as a push factor<sup>42</sup>.

Moreover, education has also been expanded at a high rate in the region that reached up to 95%. In creating a job for rapidly increasing urban population and educated young people, the public sector has had a lion share that reached the level of 40-75%<sup>43</sup>. The post-colonial SSA states mainly followed a statist approach by which parastatals were at the forefront of industrialization, commodity production, and distribution. This policy direction has had an ideological explanation (from the 1960s-1980s, more than 16 states were socialist or in their way to socialist states)<sup>44</sup>. But beyond their ideological position, the states had been using the

public enterprises as an instrument of patrimonial clientelism to garner political legitimacy by creating job opportunities and providing other economic benefits – predatory state<sup>45</sup>.

However, the 1970s oil crisis and continued massive downturn move of commodity price resulted in economic collapse and highly smashed the public sector. Furthermore, the situation resulted in high unemployment and further worsened by the rising inflation and global recession. All these hardships increased people’s frustration especially in urban areas that undermined the legitimacy of the regimes and resulted in growing political revolt against the authoritarian regimes which contributed as an internal factor for the swift democratization in the 1990s<sup>46</sup>. Thus, the resistance against the regimes was mainly related to the economic crisis and the resulting frustration than to social transformation and subsequent pluralization.

The internal economic and political crisis had been further complicated by the collapse of the Soviet empire that used to be an important source of financial and military support for the authoritarian and self-proclaimed Marxist regimes in the region. Given the economic and political crisis with the collapse of the Soviets, they had no option, but to accept the unipolar global order and liberalize their politics and economy as a condition to get loans and aid from the West<sup>47</sup>. The role of an external factor for democratization in the post-Cold War *New Global Order* was not the exceptional push factor SSA<sup>48</sup>. Nevertheless, the post-Cold War neoliberal hegemony and the region’s heavy reliance on international financial support have created an exceptional ground for the international system. The snowballing effect of democratization in former Soviet satellites and Latin America further pushed the democratization process in SSA<sup>49</sup>. In many cases, the same authoritarian leaders took the initiative for the transition to democracy (with the opening of political space for democratic participation and rule of law)<sup>50</sup>. Thus, because of the combination of those aforementioned factors (both internal and external), the region witnessed democratization (at least procedural democracy with the multiparty election) with the highest unparalleled speed in the 1990s.

## **V. Challenges of Democratization as a way of Managing Conflict**

The democratization process has tended to fulfil at least two conditions to civilize conflict in Africa, i.e. rule of law and democratic political participation thereby ensure the state monopoly of violence. There is a general agreement that states in SSA have underwent democratic changes (with different adjectives) in the post-Cold War period<sup>51</sup>.

### **1. Ethnicization of party politics**

Ironically, however, political liberalization and democratization in the post-Cold War SSA have been followed by intrastate conflicts that resulted in state fragility in some of these states. The resurgence of identity politics based on ethnicity is one of the major factors that contributed to not only the retreat of democracy but also intrastate conflict. In Western Europe, the democratization process (democratic political participation) had been preceded by the state and nation-building project<sup>52</sup>. Unlike Western European nation-states, states in SSA have multiple ethnic groups, from Nigeria with more than 250 ethnic groups to four in Somalia with dozens of clan and sub-clans. Ethnic diversity is not the source of conflict per se. However, the politicization of ethnic identity has a divisive role. The politicization of ethnicity/clan had its root in colonial times. The creation of horizontal inequalities between the ethnic communities based on access to the economy, education, and public administration in the colonial states was purposely done by the colonizers as part of the divide and rule strategy<sup>53</sup>.

After achieving the political kingdom, the post-independence leaders were strongly disavowing ethnicity/tribalism as it was understood to be a divisive element for nation-building and in some countries, political organizations based on ethnic identity were legally disallowed (Ghana, Somalia, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, and Kenya to mention few). Although many leaders exploited this approach of nation-building as an excuse for a one-party state, it was identified as a clash between the 'traditionalists' (those who wanted to sustain ethnic-based organization) and 'the modernizers'<sup>54</sup>. With the emergence of multi-party democracy in the post-Cold War democratization, states in the region have witnessed the emergence of ethnically/regionally organized political parties since it is the easiest way to mobilize support. This particularistic organization has resulted in voting and allegiance to political parties based on 'politics of belonging' and moving away from issue-based pluralism. This further deepened the pre-existing social cleavages because of unfinished nation-building. Moreover, the state's failure to manage diversity and heterogeneity impartially and taking a partisan position in the distribution of resources (political and economic) have been further reinforcing the politics of identity and pushing people to be more loyal to their ethnic group than the state. Among other factors, this not only undermined the institutionalization of democratic participation and rule of law but also highly contributed to the intrastate war in the post-Cold war SSA<sup>55</sup>.

Ethnicization of the party politics and administrative decentralization along identity line resulted in the rise of a sense of nativism/local/man of the soil and identifying 'the others' as outsiders, settlers, migrants, or aliens. This exclusivity has resulted in intrastate war/confrontation in Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa, and Ethiopia to mention some<sup>56</sup>. Besides its deleterious effect on democracy, rule of law, and further weakening of the state capacity of monopolizing violence, heavy reliance on identity based political mobilization has been breaking the bridge of interdependence as one condition of civilizing conflict.

## **2. Economic Growth at the expense of Social Justice**

Since the mid-1990s, growth in sub-Saharan Africa has considerably outpaced that of the global economy with an average of 5.3 % which had been between -2.2% and 1.2% from the 1980s to the early 1990s. That move has declined in 2016 to 1.3% as a result of the plunge in commodity price, drought in East Africa, and a decline in global economic growth. In 2017 and 2018, economic growth has been rebounded and reached 2.8% and 3.2% respectively<sup>57</sup>. However, SSA states still have the lowest human development index with the majority of people under poverty. Besides, the region is known for countries with high-income inequality.

As identified by Senghaas as a capitalist market economy, the post-Cold War neoliberal economic order resulted in social injustice in terms of distribution. Poverty is one of the major indicators for the prevalence of social injustice and the imbalance of economic growth. Despite the progress in economic growth, the region has 27 poorest countries out of 28 in the world with a poverty rate above 30%<sup>58</sup>.

The region is also one of the most unequal in the world. According to the Human Development Index (2019)<sup>59</sup>, almost all the bottom twenty countries are from SSA. Some states such as Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, and Ghana are on the contrary to the gloom despite the variation in their achievement. At the same time, these countries have managed to establish a functioning democracy that realized constructive conflict management. On the other hand,

countries on the bottom of all those indicators, from the failed state of Somalia to South Sudan, Chad, and the Central African Republic have been struggling with intrastate conflicts and using violence as an instrument to manage conflict. Although the capitalist market economy contributed to high economic growth in the region (average economic growth rate of 5% in the last two and half a decades), the system failed to significantly reduce abject poverty, the highest income inequality, and the low progress on human development<sup>60</sup>. From this trend, it is fair to deduce that ensuring social justice (justice of distribution) is the necessary condition to realize democracy not only as a system of government but also as a way of civilizing conflict.

### **3. State Fragility, Legitimacy Deficit and Clientelism**

State fragility is another major challenge for constructive conflict management in the post-Cold War SSA. There is a lack of consensus on the definition of a fragile state because of the relativity of the concept in both the academic arena and donors' circle. In a widely used definition, the International Monetary Fund defined a fragile state as 'a state which is unable to deliver basic services and security to the population'<sup>61</sup>. Although state fragility in the post-Cold War era has been slightly declining in SSA, the region still has the largest share of fragile states. According to the Fragile State Index Annual Report of 2019, out of 31 countries under alert, high alert, and very high alert, 21 states are from SSA. The state fragility in the region has its root in colonialism. Colonial states were not mainly created to be a functioning state but were rather designed for the sake of resource extraction for colonial powers in an exclusive manner. The creation of the colonial state also resulted in the discontinuity of pre-colonial institutions that contributed to the emergence of conflict-induced political fragility in postcolonial Africa<sup>62</sup>. The post-colonial states inherited this institutional design that was created as weak in terms of its link with the society (legitimacy deficit) and unable to provide basic services. As mentioned in the preceding sections, at independence, the governments in the region tried to implement the assimilationist nation-building approach and tried to create a nation-state as a way of tackling a legitimacy problem and enhancing the state capacity. However, in most cases, it ended up in creating/reinforcing the patronage network based on the narrow ethnic line and further widening the ethnic tension in the region<sup>63</sup>.

Rather than addressing the problem by building an inclusive and accommodative political system that would be able to manage the diversity, many post-Cold War regimes in the region have continued on the way of neo-patrimonial clientelism and partisan posture that further eroded the state legitimacy. Without impartial institutions (supposedly state) to vent grievances, the affected groups are forced to restore violence as a way of rectifying the imbalance and injustice or organization themselves based on ethnic/another identity line which further eroding the state capacity and legitimacy<sup>64</sup>. With the assumption of building state capacity as a grand way for fragile state resilience, various international donors have been mainly supporting and reinforcing the illegitimate and patrimonial states from the top<sup>65</sup>. This has been further hampering the prospect of building an inclusive and accommodative political system that can create a sense of statehood.

Creating and nurturing a democratic system (mainly liberal democracy with a multiparty election) has been implemented as a panacea to build a strong state with an inclusive nature of political pluralism thereby civilizing conflict in the post-Cold War period. However, in most countries, the advent of multiparty democracy has opened the possibility of full-scale politicization of ethnicity that added fuel to already weak national identity and fragile/weak/failing states in the region. Unlike 'issue-based' political participation, it is difficult to accept the election results for the losing ethnic group. This even resulted in post-election

intrastate conflict in Mali (2011), Central Africa Republic (2012), Nigeria (2011), Cote d'Ivoire (2010-2011), Kenya (2007-2008) and Zimbabwe (2008) to mention few<sup>66</sup>. Thus, despite ensuring of political participation of the people, in many cases, a multiparty election under liberal democracy (among other factors) reinforced vitriolic ethnic divergence that exacerbated the existing social tension than solving the political quagmire of fragile states in the region.

To conclude, despite progress in some countries in SSA, the absence of an inclusive political system, high-income inequality and low human development (social injustice), the politicization of ethnic identity (regardless of the progress in political participation), and state fragility (both capacity and weak state-society linkage) contributed for de-civilization of conflict in the region.

## **VI. Any Prospect for Constructive Conflict Management in SSA?**

Despite all those glooms that have been aborting and obstructing the attempts of democratization as a way of civilizing conflict, some success stories in the region defied the odds and the common narrative of 'a Hopeless Continent'.

### **1. Botswana**

Among other emerging democracies, Botswana, Mauritius, and Namibia are the major ones that managed to build a stable system and institutions that manage conflicts in a constructive and civilized way. Botswana is considered as one of the African Miracle in terms of political stability and democratic consolidation<sup>67</sup>. A combination of economic, social, and political factors contributed to the success of Botswana.

One of the unique features of Botswana's system and its democracy from the very beginning in 1966 is its successful combination of the traditional culture of consultation with a liberal democratic element of participation but with a consensus-building approach. The constitution also established a House of Chiefs that advises parliament on cultural and customary matters. The inclusion of the traditional aspect facilitated the country's smooth transition to democracy that has been adapted to the local conditions<sup>68</sup>.

Historically, the *kgotla* / traditional parliament played a critical role in governance since it is the place where decisions were taken. It is in this sense that the new state retained the *kgotla* and at the same time allowed chiefs to play an important part in governance<sup>69</sup>. Although the House of Chiefs lacks real legislative power, it has an enormous role in enforcing customary laws while modern state institutions implement modern laws<sup>70</sup>. This inclusive and utilizing traditional institution enabled the state to have a monopoly of violence without significantly excreting physical violence and to ensure the rule of law within a participatory democratic system<sup>71</sup>. An extended enfranchisement and an independent electoral commission in the post-Cold War era further deepened both the process of inclusion and the depth of democracy<sup>72</sup>.

On economic governance, the post-colonial state of Botswana picked a capitalist market economy with the state's commitment to human development which was further strengthened by the discovery of diamonds<sup>73</sup>. The active role of the state in the economy enabled it to balance economic growth with the provision of social protection. Unlike most of other SSA states, state in Botswana has one of the most extensive role in terms of both the range and coverage of social programs<sup>74</sup>. Thus, as indicated as one of the conditions for civilizing con-



flict by Senghaas, ensuring social justice of distribution within the growing economy contributed to the viability of rule of law and consolidation of democracy thereby guaranteeing internal peace of the country.

## **2. Mauritius**

Mauritius is another exception in building a stable democracy in its post-colonial SSA. According to the Democracy Index of 2019, Mauritius is the only African country that achieved the status of 'full democracy' and even 18th in the World<sup>75</sup>. One of the unique achievements of Mauritius, which many other SSA states failed to achieve, is accommodating ethnic diversity in their way of democratization. Mauritius is an ethnically divided society with ethnic groups from Creole African descendants, Hindu, China, and French descendants. When the country got independence from the British in 1968, initially, the post-independence government faced the problem of accommodating diversity that manifested in the identity-based confrontation that even resulted in violence<sup>76</sup>.

Despite the shaky start, it managed to build a relatively consolidated democracy without denying the ethnic diversity (as most of the post-colonial African states did though they failed to form a nation-state) nor politicizing ethnic identity. Initially, the state incorporated traditional elites from different ethnic groups with the modern state institution as a way of managing conflict and legitimizing state institutions. But later when the system became more complicated, they smoothly transformed the system of incorporating ethnic communities through civic organization and civic network. This not only helped the inclusion of diverse ethnic groups in the decision-making process but also supported the evolution of political parties as multi-ethnic organizations<sup>77</sup>.

A poor country with appalling sugar economy at the time of its independence has become a consistently growing economy with one of the highest per capita income in Africa. Like Botswana, the consecutive economic boom within the market capitalist system in post-colonial Mauritius has been balanced by the state's active role in the economy and the provision of social security. The state commitment to social security even depicted the post-Cold War neoliberal austerity policy prescriptions by the guidance of the Bretton Woods Institutions (International Monetary Fund and World Bank) that forced most of SSA states to cut their public spending and social expenditure. According to the Human Development Index of 2019<sup>78</sup>, Mauritius is one of very few countries in Africa that reached high human development categories. Besides, the welfare system helped to defuse social tension among different ethnic groups that rooted in horizontal inequality created by the British colony by ensuring social justice<sup>79</sup>. This undoubtedly contributed to the internal peace and consolidation of democracy in the country for more than three decades.

## **3. Namibia**

Namibia is another success story of democracy in the region. The country started its democratic road as a pathway to achieve a stable political system and a vibrant economy after getting independence from an apartheid rule of South Africa in 1990. Namibia is a multi-ethnic state with a history of confrontation and racial domination. A synthesis of political leadership, economic, historical, and international factors contributed to the effective fulfilment of conditions to civilize conflict and ensure internal peace in post-colonial Namibia. Notwithstanding the combinations, the post-independence constitution of Namibia adopted liberal democracy with special emphasis on decentralization of authorities to different regions with

ethnic identity. Like the other two cases (Botswana and Namibia), it also balanced the de-ethnicization of national identity/citizenship and inclusion of ethnic cultures and values. Decentralization of authority to the local level permitted traditional local authorities to exercise political and judicial power<sup>80</sup>.

This conciliatory and cooperative approach between state and society side-by-side with liberal multiparty democracy contributed to political stability and democratic consolidation. Namibia is an upper-middle-income country with one of the most comprehensive social protection systems in Africa within a free-market economy<sup>81</sup>. The inclusion of ethnic/racial diversity and multiparty election with a strong welfare system abetted the country in building a culture of democratic and constructive conflict management.

#### **4. Integration of traditional institutions as the seventh edge**

The same trend of integrating traditional institutions at state level into the constitutional set-up with the modern state institutions and multiparty democracy in Ghana has a significant contribution to the ongoing consolidation of democracy<sup>82</sup>. The Republic of Somaliland (broke away from Somalia in 1991 and a de facto state since then) has successfully combined the clan-based tradition institution (*Guurti* – the Upper House) with modern state institutions. Among other factors, this helped the country's success of peace and strong democracy in East Africa (the most conflict-ridden region in SSA if not in the world)<sup>83</sup>.

Most African states followed the approach of transplanting formal/modern institutions in a traditional society that resulted in structural discontinuity within exogenous post-colonial states<sup>84</sup>. The democratic success with some variation in those states, however, share one additional component for civilizing conflict in addition to the six conditions identified by Senghaas – integrating tradition to modern institutions in the state structure. This component has helped those states to strengthen the state-society linkage and the culture of constructive conflict management as an emotional base of the society in a bottom-up approach. Besides, it saved the multiparty democracy from ethnicization and turned it to 'idea politics'. In contrary to the pessimistic assessment of their incompatibility with democracy and the dichotomous clash between 'modern' and 'traditional' institutions, the traditional institutions proved their positive role in facilitating inclusion and tools for managing diversity. Consequently, among other factors, the inclusion of traditional institutions helped them to facilitate the state and nation- building without compromising the mosaic identity. Thus given the peculiarity of the nature of the state, its existing diversity, and from the experience of aforementioned successful states in the region, SSA states need civilizational heptagon to ensure internal peace thereby consolidating their democracy.

## **VII. Conclusion**

A swept economic and political liberalization and the resulting wave of democratization across SSA in the post-Cold War era created great hope for the region ravaged by violent conflict and autocratic regimes. Despite the decline in the level of violent conflict and progress in socio- economic aspects, the process of managing conflict constructively in the region (civilizing conflict) has faced various challenges. Among myriad of factors that contributed for the weakness of the post-colonial African states, the weak state-society linkage inherited from the colonial era has taken the leading part. The poor infrastructure of the colonial time highly hampered the state capacity of power projection to its entire territory. The weak bureaucracy and alien state institutions created by the colonial powers by uprooting the indigenous/local institutions further contributed to the weakness of the linkage and the

resulting weak state that failed to ensure the state monopoly of violence and ensuring the rule of law in its territory. Although democratization is not equivalent to components of civilizational hexagon, the realization of democratization fulfils at least two components (the rule of law and democratic participation) and creates a fertile condition for others (legitimate monopoly of violence by the state and constructive conflict management). True, with the third wave of democratization that started in the late 1980s in the SSA, three-fourth of states in the region subscribed to the liberal democracy at least on a procedural level within less than two decades. However, with the colonial legacy of horizontal inequalities based on different identities (mainly ethnic), political liberalization and multiparty election further aggravated *ethnicization* of politics and the resulting intrastate conflict. The neoliberal market economy which most states in the region implemented in the post-war period has succeeded in bringing an average of 5% economic growth for more than two decades. The swift economic growth, however, has failed to reduce abject poverty, glaring income inequality and to promote human development. Hence, many states were unsuccessful in ensuring social justice which is necessary to realize democracy as a system of government and a way of civilizing conflict.

However, states like Botswana, Mauritius, and Namibia (Ghana and Somaliland also in good progress) managed to consolidate their democracy and hence civilize their conflict management. In addition to applying all of the components of the civilizational hexagon, almost all those states share one additional element in common – integrating traditional institutions with modern state apparatus. This substantiated not only the compatibility of an aspect of traditional society with modern institutions but the bridging role of traditional institutions to fill the historical discrepancies of the state formation and nation-building in the region. Moreover, the local institutions facilitated the inclusion of diversity without politicizing identity within the multiparty democratic system. Thus, given the exogenous nature of modern state institutions to SSA and the resulting unfinished state and/or nation-building project within a diverse society, SSA states need civilizational heptagon to ensure internal peace thereby consolidating their democracy.

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