United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

**Diversity Management
in Africa:**

Findings from the
African Peer Review
Mechanism and
a Framework for Analysis
and Policy-Making

2011

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Governance and Public Administration Division

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Preface

Considered to be the most innovative and important element of African Union's NEPAD initiative, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) was launched in March 2003 to address governance challenges facing Africa including systemic issues such as political rigidity characterized by executive dominance, political exclusion, especially in the executive and legislature, economic governance and conflicts, pointing to an urgent need to improve all aspects of good governance in the continent. The mechanism is the first of its kind in Africa, indeed in the world, that takes a comprehensive view of all the aspects of a country's governance system. This is why some analysts have observed that the APRM has the real potential of playing a decisive role in "collective self-governance" thereby unleashing the continent's economic and political energies for sustainable development.

One of the most significant achievements of the APRM to date has been its ability to diagnose systemic and structural issues that confront most African States in their governance systems. These are issues that require a holistic approach in the search for solutions because of the wider impact they have on the quality of governance in all its dimensions. Thus, the APRM country process has unveiled some major systemic issues that hamper governance, one of which is managing diversity.

It is with this in mind that the UNECA as a strategic partner of the APRM; and in line with its analytical and advocacy work in support of the APRM, initiated an introspective, analytical and diagnostic study on Managing Diversity in the context of the findings from the APRM process. The main purpose of the report is to utilize APRM Country Reports as a point of departure in identifying the main challenges confronting African states in managing diversity; and isolating the best practices within and outside Africa with the primary objective of improving governance practices on the continent.

Nearly all the countries that have been peer-reviewed face challenges in managing diversity, which is reflected in the form of race, ethnicity and/or religion, political competition and social inequality. It cannot be gain said that these countries stand to benefit tremendously from the full potential of managing diversity effectively at political, economic and social levels. UNECA believes that this report and the proposed framework for analysis and policy-making will guide APRM participating countries managing diversity adequately and as such ensure democratic and well-governed States in Africa.

This report on "Diversity Management in Africa: Findings from the African Peer Review Mechanism and a Framework for Analysis and Policy-making", is an Ad Hoc Expert publication of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

I.   Introduction:
Problem Statement and Objectives

1.   The Nigeria APRM Report (2008) remarks incisively that managing diversity has been both a "scourge and a challenge" for many African countries. It has been a scourge because of the human, material, and social costs of diversity-related conflicts. The second North-South civil war of the Sudan (1983-2005), for example, is said to have produced some 2 million deaths, 420, 000 refugees and over 4 million displaced.[1] According to various human rights organizations, the casualty figures of the Darfour conflict are also estimated to be around 300,000 deaths and 1.5 million displaced (Qugnivet, 2006).[2] The wars in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are said to have caused over 5 million deaths between 1998 and 2003. The genocide in Rwanda is also said to have claimed over 800,000 lives. Numerous other conflicts have occurred throughout much of the continent causing unknown numbers of casualties. In addition, the conflicts have precipitated various other gross human rights violations, huge social dislocations, and economic ruin in many countries. The economic leakages occur in various forms including disproportionately high military and security expenditures, destruction of property, and disruption of economic activity. There are hardly any reliable estimates of the different aspects of economic costs. Uganda's estimate of the costs of its conflict against the Lord's Resistance Army, might give some indication, however.   The country puts its war costs over the 1986-2002 time period at $1.33 billion, roughly 3% of its GDP (Uganda, APRM Report, 2009).

2.   Managing diversity has also been a difficult challenge for a number of reasons. Poor diversity relations are essentially a reflection of governance-deficit, as will be demonstrated later in the paper. Yet, poor identity relations, especially those involving violent conflicts, also undermine the state's ability to address the problems by dispensing equitable citizenship rights and equitable access to resources for development among all identity groups. Breaking such a vicious cycle has been a daunting endeavor.

3.   This paper has four principal objectives. The first is to conceptualize diversity of identities and to briefly define identity relations. Since identity is a complex concept encompassing various elements, its conceptualization is essential for identifying the parameters of diversity management. The second objective is to compile and classify into typologies the empirical findings from the African Peer Review Mechanism

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1   Casualty figures in most African conflicts are highly imprecise. The figures also include direct battle deaths as well as deaths due to war triggered non-battle related factors, such as deprivation of health services or even food.

2   The government of Sudan strongly disagrees with this estimate of casualties. Its own estimate is in the tenth of thousands only.

(APRM) process on diversity-based conflicts in 13 countries, which have completed the review process. The third objective is to construct an empirically grounded theoretical framework that explains the conditions, which transform diversity into a source of violent conflicts. The fourth objective is to compile the various recommendations of the APRM reports, explain their relevance, and to complement them with lessons learned from the best practices of African countries, which have made notable progress in diversity management. The structural and institutional changes that the theoretical analysis identified as having the potential to transform the diversity-related conflicts are also used as a road map in strengthening the APRM policy suggestions. The paper is organized into four parts, each dealing with one of the four principal objectives.

2. Conceptualizing Diversity

4.   For the purposes of this paper, diversity refers to the plurality of identity groups that inhabit individual countries (Deng, 2008). Identity also refers to real or imagined (often socially constructed) markers that social groups attribute to themselves or to others in order to set themselves apart from others (we/they) and to distinguish others from one another. The distinguishing markers of identity groups are moving targets and difficult to pin down. Nevertheless, they can be classified into primordial and social categories. While primordial markers constitute the network into which every child at birth finds itself to be a member, social identity markers can be formed across primordial markers.[3]

5.   Primordial identity markers have several levels. At one level are the exclusive identity markers, such as race, ethnicity, religion, language, kinship, clan, and region. Primordial identity markers, however, are not limited to the exclusive markers. Nationality or citizenship of a country, for instance, is an identity marker, which distinguishes the citizens of a given country from those of others, while binding together the diverse identities within that country, as a community of citizens, depending on the level of development of nation-building. While the exclusive markers can lead to sub-nationalist narratives, which accentuate identity citizenship, the inclusive ones lead to narratives of national unity, national citizenship, and patriotism.

6.   Different identity groups develop disparate cultures, which are forms of expression of a given identity. While culture is defined in different ways, it is essentially an identity signifier and encompasses a worldview, a system of values, norms, attitudes, beliefs, orientations, and underlying assumptions of an identity group. Like other identity markers, culture also has national (inclusive) and sub-national (exclusive) dimensions, which may be inversely related with each other, depending on the level of nation-building and the political environment that exists in a country.

7.   Many of the primordial markers of a given identity group overlap with those of other groups, as linguistic and religious communities often extend far beyond the kinship or ethnic entity. Race, ethnic, kinship, and clan identities also do not necessarily constitute homogeneous groups, since such groups may practice different religions, operate under different modes of production with different institutional systems, and belong to different social classes. Race, ethnic, and religious identities also are not confined to the jurisdiction of a given state. The Fulani people, for example, are spread over some 19 countries, the Hausa are found in five countries,

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3   The line of demarcation between the two categories is not always clear, however. The reason is, in part, due to the fact that individuals and groups can change their identity overtime. Membership in a social class, for example, can be both ascribed (primordial) and attained. When people change their religion also, the new religion, which is adopted by choice, blurs the line of demarcation between primordial and social identities.

the Luo live in Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Tanzania, while the Somalis are fragmented into four of the Greater Horn countries. As noted, some of the primordial markers are also not rigid over time. Individuals or even groups may change their mode of production, economic and political systems, institutions, religion, and in some cases even their clan and ethnic identities. Some ethnic and clan groups split into different groups. Others are absorbed by or assimilated into other groups over time.

8.   Most African countries are highly diverse with respect to some of the exclusive primordial markers, especially ethnicity. If we take language as proxy for ethnic identity, Nigeria is said to be home to some 470 languages (APRM Report, Nigeria, 2008). The Democratic Republic of Congo hosts some 242 languages, Sudan (both North and South) is said to have 134 languages and Ethiopia is said to have 89 languages. Even a small country, like the Gambia, hosts 10 languages. Many African countries are also religiously diverse. Christianity and Islam enjoy the largest following in much of the continent. However, even these two major religions have several denominations, which have contributed to conflicts in cases, such as Algeria and Somalia.

9.   Other important identity markers, which are largely neglected in the literature, are modes of production and institutional systems of governance. The modes of production that prevail in the African continent range from fairly advanced capitalism, symbolized by modern banking systems and stock markets, to subsistence peasantry and pastoral systems. Pastoral communities in rural areas and business communities in urban areas, no doubt, represent different identities with different institutional systems and cultural values even when they belong to the same ethnic or religious groups. Such fragmentation of the modes of production, like ethnic and religious diversity, creates different economic, political and cultural spaces within countries as well as within ethnic and religious identities. The diversity of modes of production also perpetuates diverse institutional systems. Institutional fragmentation is manifested in the adherence of rural populations, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population in most African countries, primarily to traditional (informal)[4] institutions, such as customary law of land ownership and practices of conflict resolution. The post-colonial state, by contrast, operates on the basis of modern (formal) institutions of governance, which are largely imported and often are at odds with African traditional cultural values and socioeconomic realities. Findings by the Country Review Mission (CRM) of the APRM, for example, show that most citizens, especially in rural areas, in countries such as Benin and Burkina Faso, shun the modern justice system, which is slow and often inaccessible, in favor of the traditional system. A recent four-country study (funded by the International Development Center of Canada) also shows that

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4   Traditional institutions may be considered to be informal institutions in the sense that they are not state sponsored. They are otherwise formal within the communities that operate under them.

an overwhelming majority of survey respondents in rural and peri-urban areas (71.2% in South Africa, 65% in Kenya, 59.2% in Somaliland, and 78.7% in Ethiopia) take intra-community conflicts to traditional institutions instead of to formal courts for settlement (Mengisteab, Hagg et al, 2011). Since institutions govern behavior and social relations, parallel institutional systems represent different and often conflicting norms of behavior and social relations, even though they complement each other in many respects. The imported state sanctioned institutions are also transplanted outside their cultural and socioeconomic milieus. The institutions of liberal economic doctrine as well as liberal democracy, for example, are characteristics of advanced capitalism and their compatibility with pastoral and peasant settings is highly doubtful. The incoherence between the traditional and formal institutional systems with respect to land ownership, for instance, have contributed significantly to state-identity and inter-identity conflicts and to the problems of state-building and peaceful governance in many African countries. According to the APRM reports, the land issue has been a major source of conflicts and tension in many countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Uganda (APRM Reports of various countries). Sudan and many other countries that have not completed the APRM process also face widespread tensions and communal conflicts over land.

10.   African societies, like other societies, also embody other identity markers, such as those based on gender, age, sexual orientation, and origin (indigenous and migrants). The conflicts that arise from lack of proper management of such identity markers are likely to be limited in scope compared to those that arise from the exclusive markers, such as ethnicity, clan, and religion, although immigrants and refugees have been victims of exclusion, denial of rights, violence, and abuse in many countries. A number of countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Ivory Coast have also experienced violent conflicts between indigenous and immigrant populations. The tragic May 2008 xenophobic incidents in South Africa are other examples. Women also continue to face exclusion from access to resources and decision-making. In many societies they are denied rights of inheritance and even the rights of child custody in cases of divorce. In many cases also, the practice of bride-wealth places women in bondage, where they cannot abandon abusive marriages unless their parents pay back the bride-wealth paid by their husbands (Gray, 1960).[5] Denial of rights and equitable access to opportunities to such identity groups can lead to serious violations of human rights, which may have broader destabilizing effects even if they don't lead to large scale violent conflicts. The youth, who often encounter a host of problems in many African countries, can, for example, contribute

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5   Bride price is often viewed as a practice that facilitates the oppression of women since they cannot abandon bad marriages for fear that the parents would be forced to return the bide wealth. However, some survey research also shows that bride wealth is viewed as a mechanism that elevates the importance of women in society. Bride wealth is also generally not returnable if the marriage has resulted in children.

to broad social instability. One important challenge the youth face is the failure of the educational systems to prepare them for gainful employment. Lack of access to land and/or off-farm employment also exposes them to rural-urban migration and hardship. Exposure to foreign culture through various media outlets during their formative years also alienates them from their own culture. Under such conditions the youth can easily become a source of social instability by leading or participating in anti-regime and anti-establishment protests, riots, and revolutions, as in Ethiopia in the 1970s and in Egypt and Tunisia recently.

11.   The second group of identity markers are often referred to as social identity markers (Martin, 1995). This type of markers is expansive in the sense that they can be formed across the primordial identities as well as across national citizenships. These markers are often based upon purposive choices, tactical necessity, and common interest or incurred moral obligation (Geertz, 1963; Rex, 1995). Among such markers are; occupational associations, political affiliation, media groups, business organizations, labor unions, academic associations, human rights and various other civil society groups. It seems that the more the social identity markers develop, the more likely interdependence and networks of interaction among primordial identity groups are promoted. The expansive social identity markers are, however, more developed in countries where state building, economic diversification and interdependence, educational facilities, communication networks, and social capital (civic institutions that lie above the family and below the state) are more advanced. Unfortunately, social identity markers are rather weak in most African countries, in part due to limited diversity of the economy and failure of governments to allow the establishment of the political space that facilitates the development of civil society organizations. One problem stemming from the underdevelopment of social identity markers is that many political parties are organized along the lines of primordial identity markers, such as ethnicity, religion, or region. Competition for power among such parties, in turn, tends to lead to problems of relations among primordial identities. Governments in Africa, especially those with severe inter-identity conflicts, such as that of Rwanda, thus, face a dilemma of how to promote political pluralism and multi-party systems while ensuring that political parties do not become sources of further ethnic divisions in already polarized societies (Rwanda APRM Report, 2006).

12.   In summary, African societies are diverse along a range of socially constructed primordial and social identity markers. As the APRM reports note, among the most important markers are race, ethnicity, religion, region, gender, modes of production, social classes, institutional systems, occupations, political affiliation, professional organizations, and civil society organizations.

2.1   Identity Relations

13.   Despite their diversity, identities can live in peace, as a community of citizens, cooperating with each other in order to advance their mutual wellbeing. However, as actors in the socioeconomic arena, they also compete for access to political and cultural power and economic resources. Such competition, no doubt, creates conflicts of interests and ideas, which are normal and can be handled peacefully by an effective system of governance, which ensures that the competition takes place within legal bounds that ensure a level playing field and that no identity group is marginalized from equitable citizenship rights and access to opportunities.[6] In the absence of effective governance, however, identity groups, especially ethnic and religious groups, can engage in violent conflicts both against the state and against each other. The social sciences, thus, generally agree that diversity of identities by itself does not shed much insight in explaining or predicting inter-identity relations, since identity groups are not homogeneous and identity markers are often shifting social constructs. In other words, identity relations are largely determined by the nature of the socioeconomic arrangements that govern societies. The APRM reports concur with this general social science view and see diversity as a resource rather than a problem.

14.   Under conditions of governance-deficit, where access to opportunities are not equitable, however, diversity, especially racial and ethnic diversities, which claim blood ties among their members, can be transformed into direct or indirect source of violent conflicts. Inter-identity relations are often expressed through the narratives that identities project in their relations with other groups. When inter-identity relations are poor, identity narratives may blur intra-group differences and exaggerate the differences with adversarial groups. Identity narratives of the various entities in Darfur or in north and south Sudan, for instance, often exaggerate the Arab-African divide and minimize the ethnic and other differences within each divide. Similarly, the narratives of various mobilized sub-nationalist groups tend to exaggerate the magnitude of the problems their group faces relative to those faced by other groups or overemphasize the differences of their groups from others and underemphasize their group's heterogeneity. Often identity narratives are built with the intention of redressing access to resources perceived to be unfavourable (unjust) or reversing a balance of power considered to be detrimental to the interests of a group. At other times they arise when a given identity is engaged in competition with other identities for control of power or control over dwindling resources, such as land, water, or scarce resources, such as jobs, public services, etc. Narratives are continuously re-told, confirmed, adapted and reinforced or transformed through social interaction across

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6   Conflict, which refers to the state of opposition of interests or ideas among groups or individuals, usually occurs and is resolved in a peaceful manner. It becomes a social problem when it takes a violent form.

generations and become deeply embedded among the members of the group, as Tilley (1997) notes.

15.   Empirical evidence from the APRM reports reveals that polarized identity narratives and violent conflicts in Africa revolve, mostly but not exclusively, around racial, ethnicity, clan, religion, and region; although religious conflicts are often mitigated by overlapping ethnicities and regional conflicts are tempered by ethnic diversity within regions. In some cases racial, ethnic and clan narratives may become highly polarizing by relating the goals they intend to achieve to group survival. In such circumstances, as in Rwanda, the narratives may engage in dehumanizing the adversary and in defining the inter-ethnic conflicts in a zero-sum terms, which create conditions for horrific violence, including ethnic cleansing and genocide.

16.   When identity-based conflicts arise they are generally of two types. One type relates to riots by an identity group or groups against the state, which is perceived by the group to be dominated by or biased in favor of other identities[7]. Riots in some cases escalate into civil-wars, where an identity-based armed political organization engages in a violent conflict against the state.

17.   The second type of conflicts (communal conflicts) consists of violent inter-racial, inter-ethnic, inter-clan, inter-religious, or inter-occupational (farmers vs. pastoralists) conflicts. Such conflicts are mostly but not exclusively, over resources. Often inter-identity conflicts are triggered by resource-shortages exacerbated by environmental degradation, along with rapid demographic growth. Such shortages undermine the customary property rights and resource allocation mechanisms and propel conflicts. The magnitude of inter-identity conflicts is generally smaller than the state-identity civil wars. They are, however, highly destructive since their numbers are greater. When the number of identity groups in a country is small and the groups compete for political power, inter-identity and state-identity conflicts converge and become deadly, as in Rwanda's genocide.

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7   In some cases states may be constructs of specific identities and may be highly partial in their dispensation. Under such conditions, diversity management and effective nation-building involves transforming such dispensation and building an inclusive system of governance.

3.   Empirical Findings

18.   The Country Review Mechanism (CRM) of the APRM process provides a wealth of empirical findings on the nature and causes of conflicts and tensions witnessed in the 13 countries, where the process has been completed. While the specific factors and how they arise vary from country to country the conflicts essentially emanate from grievances by different identities over real or perceived relative deprivation in access to economic and cultural resources and representation in governance. In other words, the grievances largely relate to deficit in governance, which fails to address uneven access to various resources, including political power, cultural rights, and land rights. Other conflicts are related to problems of poverty, clashes between traditional and modern institutions of governance, and divisive politics and election related disputes (see Table 1).

Table 1: Findings of the CRM on the Major Factors for Internal Conflicts and Tensions in Countries that have Completed the APRM Process*

Categories of Conflict Factors	Specific Factors
State and Governance Structures	Lack of autonomy of the different organs of the state from the executive branch of government, and Lack of genuine decentralization of power
Problems of leadership and agency	Leaders promoting personal rule instead of developing institutions, Leaders hindering transition of power to extend their tenure in power by disregarding term limits and often through rigging elections, corruption
Grievances	Real or perceived uneven access to economic resources, Uneven access to cultural rights, including religion and language rights, and Absence of or uneven access to political representation
Divisive Politics	Elite manipulation of primordial identities, and Political parties organized along primordial identity-basis
Structural and Institutional Problems	Fragmented modes of production, which marginalize rural communities, Fragmentation of Institutions of governance, and Poor relations between traditional authorities and government administrators
Historical Legacy	Pre-colonial and colonial legacies of uneven development, Institutional fragmentation left behind by the colonial state, and Cultural prejudices
Resource Constraints	Communal conflicts over land, water, and pasture and livestock, Competition among occupational groups, like farmers and nomads
Pervasive poverty	Disproportionate poverty among certain primordial identity groups, and Widespread social poverty
Conflict between indigenous and immigrant populations	Conflict over citizenship rights, Conflict over access to land rights, and Conflict over access to jobs

Source: APRM Reports of 13 Countries that have completed the report, including Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Uganda.

4.   Theoretical Framework

19.   As noted, there is a general consensus that diversity, in itself, is not a cause of violent conflicts. There are hardly any countries in the world that are not characterized by diversity and yet most of them do not experience diversity-related violent conflicts. The problem is rather attributable to the conditions that govern the relations among diverse groups. Empirical evidence from the APRM reports also makes it abundantly clear that it is only under certain socioeconomic conditions and arrangements that diversity has become a source of conflict in the African continent. What then are the governance-related conditions that transform diversity into a source of conflict? The APRM reports identify a large number of intricately related conflict generating factors, the most important of which are captured on Table 1. Some of the factors relate to historical legacies of enduring structural and institutional systems as well as historical memories that continue to engender diversity-related conflicts. The core factors, however, relate to the nature of the post-colonial African state, which has perpetuated the inherited conflict-generating factors and in most cases compounded them through its governance-deficit. Africa's regional governance systems, which have the potential to address factors that cannot be effectively dealt with by individual states, have also, so far, failed to realize their potential in mitigating diversity-related violence. The overriding objective of this section of the paper is to explain the reasons why diversity has often become a source of conflict in many African countries. Needless to say, understanding the factors is critical in rectifying the problem. The explanation effort is undertaken in three steps. The first examines how pre-colonial empires and the colonial state planted the seeds of diversity-related conflicts in the continent. The second step explains how the governance-deficit of the post-colonial state and African inter-governmental organizations have perpetuated and compounded the factors that foster diversity-related conflicts. The third attempts, on the basis of the APRM empirical findings, to construct a list of propositions that attempts to identify the key socioeconomic conditions, sources, and causes that transform diversity into a source of conflicts.

4.1   Legacy of Pre-colonial Empires and Colonialism:

20.   Our knowledge of the nature of identity relations in pre-colonial Africa is less than complete. However, there is little doubt that many parts of the continent were torn apart by various wars, during that era. Many of the pre-colonial wars revolved around state formation, empire building, slave raids, and control over resources and trade routs. The slave raiding and looting empires and kingdoms, including those of the 19th century, left behind complex scars in inter-identity relations. It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail the nature of pre-colonial empires in Africa. The

examples of the Abyssinian Empire and the Mahdiyya state in Sudan provide a glimpse of the impacts of pre-colonial empires on the prevailing problems in inter-identity relations. The Abyssinian Empire, for example, is credited for creating the modern Ethiopian state during the second half of the 19th century and defending it from European colonialism. However, it also left behind a deeply divided country where the populations in the newly incorporated southern parts of the country were ravaged by slave raids and lootings and, in many cases, reduced into landless tenants, who tilled the land for northern landlords (Pankhurst, 1968).[8] The Empire also established a hierarchy of cultures where the non-Abyssinian cultures in the newly incorporated territories were placed in a subordinate position. There are claims, for instance, that it was not permissible to publish, preach, teach or broadcast in Oromiya (language of the Oromo people) in Ethiopia until the end of the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie (Baxter, 1978, 228). It requires a great deal of sensitivity to teach Ethiopian history in the country's schools, since the empire-builders of the 19th century are heroes to some identities while they are viewed as villains who brought destruction and oppression by others. Similarly, Sudan's Mahdiyya state, which professed Arab identity and was supported by slave raiding communities, left behind complex scars in inter-identity relations, which still plague the country (Francis Deng, 2010).

21.   The report on Uganda (2009, ix) relates the diversity-related conflict factors in Africa to the continent's colonial legacy and, especially the nature of the formation of the African state. No doubt, the most enduring structural and institutional mechanisms that foster inter-identity conflicts were established by the colonial state. Four critical conflict-breeding colonial legacies can be identified. One is the splitting of various ethnic groups into several countries. National boundaries often are rather arbitrary and few countries in the world are made up of single ethnic groups or nations. The degree of arbitrariness of boundaries and the resulting fragmentation of ethnic groups, however, seems disproportionately high in Africa, where the states are essentially colonial creations.[9] Often times the fragmentation of ethnic groups involves not only the disruption of their social and cultural ties but also of their economic lives, especially when border crossings are impeded by poor inter-state relations. While fragmentation of the Somali people, which has led to various conflicts, including three major wars with Ethiopia, has been the most conspicuous problem, many of the fragmented ethnic groups in the continent face problems with their states.   Fragmentation of ethnic groups often raises citizenship and identity problems and leads to the marginalization of those groups. The Afar people, for example, are marginalized as minorities in Ethiopia, Djibouti and Eritrea and so are the Baja in Sudan and Eritrea. Many more examples can be cited. The split of ethnic

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8   The Abyssinian Empire played a double role in the slave trade. It curtailed the slave raids by the Oromo kingdoms, which it conquered in the late 1880s, giving relief to the victims of those kingdoms in the southern parts of the country. At the same time, however, it engaged in slave trade itself.

9   The young age of African states, along with their low levels of nation-building, also makes the arbitrariness of their boundaries and the fragmentations of their ethnic groups seem more prominent.

groups has also contributed to various proxy wars, especially among the states in the Greater Horn of Africa.

22.   A second legacy of colonialism is the problems of boundaries. Colonial boundaries are often poorly delineated and in most cases rarely demarcated on the ground. The vagueness of boundaries has caused a number of border disputes. The Eritrea-Ethiopia border war is the biggest of the border wars the continent has seen. However, border disputes are rather rampant throughout the continent. Although British colonialism, for the most part, kept South Sudan apart from the north, the boundaries between the two remained unclear and are likely to pose serious challenges as South Sudan consummates its independence following its vote to secede in its January 2011 referendum. While border conflicts are mostly inter-state conflicts, they also have serious implications on state-identity and inter-identity relations as they entail various types of hardships on border communities, especially when their loyalty to their states is questioned. The Misseriya and Dinka Ngok identities in Sudan's Abeyei region, for example, are likely to have conflicting positions on South Sudan's independence and whether Abeyei is part of the north or the south.

23.   Another legacy of colonialism is the uneven development among regions and ethnic groups that exist within countries. The primary objective of colonialism was the extraction of resources from colonies. Areas rich in mineral resources and those with fertile land in accessible locations were targets for investments, while areas deemed not profitable were marginalized. The Buganda areas of southern Uganda were privileged compared to the rest of the country (Mutibwa, 2008). In Kenya also the British identified central Kenya and the Rift Valley area as profitable, while the western and northeastern regions, which were viewed as unprofitable, were marginalized (APRM Report, Kenya, May 2006; Mwaura, Baechler, and Kiplagat, 2002). Southern Sudan, northern Uganda, northern Nigeria, northern Chad, and northern Mozambique were among other regions that were relatively marginalized by the colonial state.

24.   Classification of ethnic groups, some times into superior and inferior races, as in Rwanda and the Congo, and changing the balance of power among identities by transferring political power from uncooperative to cooperative leaders and entities, along with the practice of divide and rule, compounded the effects of uneven development in poisoning inter-identity relations in the continent.

25.   A fourth legacy of colonialism, which has received less attention than it deserves in the literature but has proved difficult to overcome, is the fragmentation of the modes of production as well as the institutions of governance. The colonial state's export-oriented production of primary commodities fragmented the economic system into the modern (capitalist) and traditional modes of production. The colonial state also introduced its own institutions of governance without completely destroying the traditional institutions, which differed from place to place, depending on the

political system that existed. With decolonization the post-colonial state maintained the fragmented institutional system, including the colonial economic structures and the highly centralized colonial institutions of governance. The traditional institutions, on the other hand, continue to operate primarily but not exclusively in rural areas, where non-capitalist subsistence modes of production predominate.

26.	The institutional fragmentation has created a number of problems. One serious problem pertains to the conflicting property rights laws and resource allocation mechanisms, which are particularly serious with respect to land allocation. Under conflicting customary and state laws land-based conflicts have become common occurrence in much of the continent. Lack of recognition by the state of the traditional institutions of land ownership has also exposed customary holders of communal land to land-takings by the state with little or no compensation. The land-takings, which are taking place at a growing rate, are generally for concessions to foreign firms engaged in extractive industries and large scale commercial farming and they are intended to promote development. However, such measures while they facilitate wealth-creation in some sectors they bring about evictions of customary owners, unemployment, and misery in others.

27.	A second problem relates to the existence of parallel systems of conflict resolution mechanisms. Often, communities operate under the local customs of conflict resolution, which are administered by local authorities, by-passing the formal judicial system, which often is congested and not easily accessible. The traditional system is generally geared towards reconciliation of disputes while the modern system relies on the adversarial system of winners and losers and on the punishment of offenders. As a result of the parallel systems, sometimes it is common to find three court systems (state or official courts, traditional courts, and *sharia*/religious courts) operating side by side. Often the different systems complement each other. However, as the CRM findings indicate, the traditional institutions are generally neglected by the state and operate with little oversight or uniformity, in part because customary law is rarely coded or officially recognized. More importantly, customary law, which often is not recognized by the state, does not protect communities from the state's possible transgressions. A good example is that the state often is not hindered from appropriating land customarily owned by communities when it does not sanction customary property rights laws.

28.	The parallel institutional systems also cause administrative duplication. In Kenya, for instance, the chiefs, who are the lowest level of the state's administrative structure (and not traditional chiefs), appoint their own village elders to assist them when the communities they administer have their own organic elders, such as the *Kaya* elders of the Mijikenda, the *Njuri Checke* of Meru, and the council of elders of

Pokot. In other cases there is the problem of lack of clarity of the responsibilities of traditional leaders and the official local administrators.

29.	Fragmentation of institutions has also significant implications to the democratization efforts underway in the continent. The segments of the population that adhere to the traditional institutional systems largely operate outside or on the fringes of the purview of the state's institutional system. As a result, they live largely outside of the modern institutions of democracy, although their institutional systems may also be democratic in content. As we will see in section four of the paper, the institutions of liberal democracy are unlikely to bridge the parallel institutional systems that prevail in Africa and are largely confined to the sphere of the formal institutional system.

30.	Lastly, the parallel institutions also impede the formulation of economic policy that coordinates resources with broad social interests. The tools of resource allocation (both the market and policy)[10], which are utilized by the modern institutional system, are hardly effective in the traditional institutional setting. Under such conditions, the problems of uneven development remain largely unattended, especially when the formal institutions are aligned closely with the neo-liberal economic doctrine, which attempts to limit the role of the state in redistributive activity. Diversity management is unlikely to succeed without addressing the problem of uneven development, however.

4.2. Nature of the Post-colonial State

31.	All four of the identified conflict-engendering legacies of colonialism have largely remained in tact under the post-colonial state. The ethnic groups which are split by national borders have seen little arrangements that would help alleviate the burden of their fragmentation.[11] The regions and identity groups, which were victims of uneven development under pre-colonial empires and during colonialism, continue to bear the burden of structural inequality and marginalization. It is, in fact, likely that the level of their relative deprivation might have intensified due to the multiplier effect of inequality. Southern and western Sudan, northern Uganda, western and north-eastern Kenya, northern Chad, and northern Mozambique are among the most obvious examples of marginalized areas and all of them remain areas of conflict.

32.	The post-colonial state also continues to operate on the basis of imported institutions largely oblivious to the institutions adhered to by most of the population.

10	The market remains largely underutilized in the traditional economic systems, which are largely subsistence. Policy also remains negligent of the traditional sector since communities in that sector have limited political influence.

11	The split of Ethnic groups by national boundaries may cease to be a serious problem as such groups may undergo identity transformation. Such transformation may, however, be impeded by the problems of marginalization they face.

Efforts at transforming the traditional economic sectors and, thereby, harmonizing the fragmented modes of production have also been grossly inadequate. Failure to transform the subsistence sectors of the economy, along with continued reliance on the export of primary commodities, whose production is often location-specific, perpetuates the uneven development that characterizes most African countries. Wealth in oil and minerals are generally location-specific. Even the production of cash crops, such as coffee and tea, are concentrated in certain areas. Excessive reliance on primary commodities, along with lack of economic diversification, especially in poorer areas, perpetuates uneven development, often in favor of the better endowed areas. In some cases, however, the resource-rich areas might also be impoverished if their access to the resource wealth is limited by governments and foreign investors, as the case of the Niger Delta indicates. In some cases populations in resource-rich areas may also face evictions and devastating environmental degradation.

33.   Beyond failing to address the inherited structural and institutional problems, the post-colonial state has its own debilitating structural problems. The state is an overarching set of interlocking organizations that collectively organize socioeconomic relations of a given society. Among the state's set of organizations are the military, the bureaucracy, the judiciary (and the constitutional court), the central bank, an electoral commission, and the government (the executive and legislative branches), which administers the different organs of the state. A properly functioning state requires independence of the different organs of the state from (excessive control by) the government). Autonomy of the different organs of the state from the government ensures some level of checks and balances on the government. The government itself is also supposed to have a built in system of checks and balances with separation of powers.[12] Autonomy of the organs of the state is also expected to ensure the protection of society from any excesses of the government and create a political space, where civil society organizations and political parties can be established and operate freely. Such political space also ensures the rule of law that facilitates the protection of the rights of diverse groups of citizens. The organs of the African state have little autonomy from the government. Often the government itself has little separation of powers for checks and balances and accountability. The executive branch dominates the other branches of the government as well as all the organs of the state. Moreover, the executive branch itself is often dominated by individual strong men. Under the circumstances, there is little genuine representation of the different segments of the population in governance since the legislature, to which representatives are elected, does not have

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12   The need for autonomy of the different organs of the state from the government is easy to understand during elections. Political parties competing to unseat the party in power clearly would not like to see the electoral commission, the central bank, the military, the constitutional court, and the bureaucracy, as organizations, lose their autonomy and serve as agents for the reelection of the government. The expectation of neutrality is based on the recognition that the state and the government are not the same thing and that the different organs of the state need to have autonomy from the government.

much autonomy from the executive branch. Political space for civil society is also limited, if it exists at all, since the different organs of the state, which are supposed to ensure the existence of such a space, are often subverted by the executive branch. Genuine decentralized governance under such conditions is also not feasible, even if nominal structures of decentralization exist. Of course, African states are not all alike. Some, indeed, have made commendable progress. In most cases, however, there is conspicuous absence of separation between the state and the government. Without the checks and balances that such separation provides, it is hard to envision a system of governance that is accountable, respects the rule of law, and meets the expectations of 21ˢᵗ century societies. Under the circumstances, it is also hard to envision proper diversity management.[13]

34.   The diversity problems in much of Africa are then products of governance-deficit, resulting from the confluence of institutional and economic fragmentations as well as the state's structural problems. Under such conditions the state can hardly be accountable to the population; the pervasive uneven development can hardly be addressed. Synergy in state-identity relations, which is necessary for nation-building and viable democratization, can hardly emerge. Compounding the problem of governance-deficit further is the nature of the functionaries of the state, who often are "ethnocratic", as Ali Mazrui (1975) noted. In many cases they are also self-serving autocrats, whose primary preoccupation is to preserve their perpetual stay in power. In some cases, such self-serving leaders may even perpetuate inter-identity conflicts, as a matter of policy, when they find them to be instrumental in extending their tenure in power by either securing identity-based support or by using the conflicts as justifications for deferring democratization of the political system. In such cases the African state remains a "formidable threat" to everybody except the few who control it, as Claude Ake lamented (Deng, 2008:41). In such cases, the state remains the principal source of grievances by identities, which often culminates in diversity-related violent conflicts.

4.3   Role of Regional Governance

35.   Africa's intergovernmental organizations have considerable potential to contribute in mitigating the continent's diversity related conflicts as well as in transforming the nature of the post-colonial state. Unfortunately, they have not yet realized their potential. No doubt, several of the continent's regional economic integration schemes have attempted to promote the diversification of the economies of member states. Some, like the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community, have also begun to tackle the problem of

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13   Another danger with the lack of separation between the state and the government is that when a government falls the whole state falls with it, since the subversion of the state by the government does not allow the building of the institutions of the state.

conflicts within their members. Such efforts have so far fallen short of what is needed for success, however.

36.   Despite differences in their performance, the regional organizations have not been as proactive as they need to be in preventing border conflicts by establishing a clear framework and mechanisms for resolving border disputes and by establishing an agency that oversees the settlement of border disputes before violence breaks out. In a number of cases resolution of border conflicts has been outsourced to non-African actors, although conflict resolution is one of the strengths of African traditional institutions.

37.   The intergovernmental organizations have also not been able to develop mechanisms that would ease the burden of fragmented ethnic identities, although this is a widespread problem. Somalia's attempts to redraw the colonial boundaries in order to unite all Somalis under one state received little support from other African states or the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the early 1960s. The OAU adopted the principle that colonial boundaries are sacrosanct since tempering with them is likely to open a Pandora's Box, which would likely lead to wars all over the continent. Undoubtedly, redrawing the colonial boundaries would have been highly risky. However, the OAU and its successor, the African Union, have yet to institute any mechanism that would enable ethnic identities divided by national boundaries to maintain their socioeconomic ties with each other through various arrangements including flexible borders. It is a critical conflict resolution imperative that such a mechanism is put in place. The intergovernmental organizations have also not been able to shelter their members from conflict-engendering economic and political interferences by external actors.

4.4. Explanatory Propositions

38.   As already noted, diversity-related conflicts are essentially of two types. One is conflicts between identities and the state. The factors for state-identity conflicts are many and complex. However, as Gurr (1993) notes, identities generally rebel against the state because they are dissatisfied with the terms under which they are incorporated into it. The goals of some of these wars include secession, which changes the territorial identity of the state. In most cases, however, the grievances are about lack of access to resources and opportunities and the struggles are aimed at changing the real and perceived deprivations (Ndulo, 2010; Stewart, 2000; Klugman, 2000). In other words, the conflicts in most cases are essentially reflections that the state has yet to establish effective political, economic, social, and cultural governance systems that accommodate the interests and aspirations of its diverse identity groups and enable the various groups to cooperate and to compete peacefully. Along with such broad theoretical framework, the empirical findings of the APRM reports allow us to

identify a list of specific conditions and grievances that compel identities to challenge (or resist) the state. Among the specific explanatory factors for state-identity conflicts are the following:

- Some identities view the state as a predatory apparatus that suppresses their interests in favor of other identities. Such identities challenge the state's sovereignty over them and their territory. Biafra, Eritrea, Southern Sudan, the Ogaden, and Western Sahara are among the key examples.

- Other identities challenge the state in order to attain power or to ensure their proper representation in it, if they perceive themselves to be underrepresented, or if the absence of decentralization of power prevents them from advancing their political, economic, and cultural interests.

- Marginalized identities challenge the state, which they perceive to be incapable or unwilling to address their marginalization or is biased against their economic interests and their cultural values (religion included). Such challenges occur, especially if the state attempts to impose cultural conformity through a policy of assimilation to the dominant culture in an attempt to build a single national identity for national unity and cohesion. Sudan's policy of unity-in-conformity (El-Battahani, 2007) and Imperial Ethiopia's strategy of assimilation, which denied certain groups, such as the Oromo, cultural expression (Mohammed Hassen, 1999) are good examples.

- Identities also rebel if their traditional institutions (customary laws and norms), for instance, customary land tenure systems, are violated by the state. Some of the groups that encounter such problems may be too weak to challenge the state. Yet the state loses legitimacy in the eyes of such groups.

- In addition, identities rebel against the state if they perceive the state's institutions to be corrupt and ineffective in promoting broad social interests or if a peaceful and legal transfer of power is nonexistent or subverted by the elite in power through various means, including rigging elections. In the latter case identities may attempt to broaden resistance against the state by building coalitions with other identities.

- Finally, in order to rise up to challenge the state, an identity group, regardless of the nature of its grievances, needs identity leaders who play a pivotal role in mobilizing it by articulating the interests and grievances of the group through various forms of narratives. In some cases the identity leaders might be political entrepreneurs who manipulate identities for their own selfish interests. In other words, competition for power among the elite can instigate identity conflicts, especially in cases, where there is widespread perception that the state is not neutral with respect to inter-identity competition.[14]

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14 In other cases identity-based rebellions may be led by extreme elements who do not necessarily command support from identity groups that they claim to represent. Such groups may simply be war profiteers who have no interest in peace or in the liberation of marginalized identities. The LRA

39.   The identified propositions can be summarized as follows:

$$IDS_c = f(\ DTC_s\ , EC_m\ , PO_m\ , Cl_m\ , INS_m\ , LDINE_{ST}, AB_{rltp}\ , IDL_{pr}\ , VS_{ir})^{15}$$

- **IDS_c** represents state-identity conflicts.
- **DTC_s** represents disputed territorial composition of the state. This is when an identity group does not agree with its incorporation as part of a given state and struggles to free itself from that state.
- **EC_m** represents economic marginalization of an identity group or groups of identities. Among the manifestations of marginalization are; inequalities in the distribution of income, poverty levels, public services, and opportunities for economic diversification.
- **PO_m** represents political marginalization, manifested in lack of adequate representation in decision-making, lack of decentralization and sharing of power, and the political system not being open enough for free expression of interests.
- **Cl_m** represents cultural marginalization, manifested by real or perceived inequality in cultural rights and the presence of cultural chauvinism of identity groups that dominate political power.
- **INS_m** represents institutional marginalization manifested in the neglect of customary laws of land tenure, customary mechanisms of conflict resolution and decision-making, and chauvinism against those who operate under traditional institutional systems.
- **$LDINE_{ST}$** represents legitimacy-deficit and ineffectiveness of the state, manifested in the failure of the state in harnessing economic development by coordinating policy and or resources with broad social interests, in providing democratic governance that is free of corruption, and in ensuring neutrality of state institutions with respect to inter-identity competition.
- **IDL_{pr}** represents presence of identity leaders who mobilize identity groups to act in defense or advancement of their interests. This is evident from the type of narratives of identity groups, i.e. whether they are sub-nationalist or broad based and if political parties are organized along the lines of primordial identities, and if state functionaries engage in sectarian discourse in mobilizing support.
- **AB_{rltp},** represents absence of rule of law and mechanisms of peaceful transfer of power.

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of Uganda seems to have degenerated to such a situation. Such groups, however, can be isolated if the government wins the support of the marginalized identity groups. Without a base of support it would be hard for such rebel groups to exist for long, especially if regional neighbors also effectively deny them external support.

15   This list of factors is not exhaustive. Rather it attempts to identify the most important.

- **VS$_{ir}$** represents violent suppression of identity-based demands and protest by the state. This is evident by how the state reacts to demands and protests by an identity group or groups and how it treats the civilian population in the event that violent conflict breaks out.

40.   The second type of diversity-related conflicts consists of inter-identity (communal) conflicts. Such conflicts can be deadly, especially if the state is involved by supporting one side or the other, as in Rwanda's genocide and in Darfur's conflicts. Inter-identity conflicts arising from threat to group survival are likely to generate a zero-sum view of the conflict, which then becomes difficult to settle, due to the "non-realistic" (uncompromising) nature of the claims and counter-claims. In this case, the narratives of the conflicting identities can easily revert to dehumanization of adversaries and justification for their destruction or elimination, if the state does not bring the conflict under control promptly.

41.   When the state does not take sides inter-identity conflicts often have a limited scope, partly because the overlap of identities often mitigates the intensity of conflicts. Traditional authorities also often intervene through mediation, although their efforts are increasingly undermined by the growing availability of small arms. More importantly, timely intervention by the state can stem out the violence.

42.   Among the most common factors for communal conflicts are:
   a.   Competition for various resources including land and water,
   b.   lingering historical animosities and mistrust perpetuated by uneven access to resources,
   c.   presence of religious and cultural intolerance and chauvinism, stemming from poor historical relations, and
   d.   spillover from state-identity conflicts

43.   Again the above stated propositions can be reformulated as follows:

$$IID_c = f\ (\ CPR_{id},\ RICC_{id},\ HAM_{id},\ SOE_{sic})$$

- *IIDc* represents inter-identity conflicts
   - **CPR$_{id}$** represents competition for resources and power among identities manifested in disputes over land, political appointments, and jobs, and distribution of public service.
   - **RICC$_{id}$** represents religious intolerance and cultural chauvinism among identities manifested in the presence of unequal distribution of cultural privileges, such as language, religion. The presence of cultural chauvinism is usually a legacy of past imbalances in power relations.

- **HAM**$_{id}$ represents historical animosities and mistrust among identities often stirred up by competition for resources or by political entrepreneurs competing for power. Such animosities are evident from the types of narratives of different identities.
- **SOE**$_{sic}$ represents spill over effect of state-identity conflicts. State-identity conflicts can degenerate into inter-identity conflicts, especially if the elite in power or the counter-elite exploit the situation and manipulate their identities to come to their support. The spillover can also occur if identities in conflict with the state perceive that other identities are supporting the state.

44.   Regardless of their causes, managing diversity entails a host of measures on the part of the state. Among such measures would be transforming the structures of the state, addressing inherited structural and institutional bottlenecks, mitigating political and economic disparities among identities, respecting customary property laws, especially with respect to land, engaging in conflict resolution measures in a timely manner, and diversifying the economy in order to create employment opportunities and to alleviate poverty. Section four of the paper provides a more detailed discussion on diversity management.

5. Mitigating Diversity-Related Conflicts

45.   Managing diversity is a serious challenge, especially when identity relations are already poisoned and conflicts have been unleashed. Force is hardly effective in resolving state-identity conflicts, although states often resort to force when confronted with the challenge. In the present era of democracy and human rights, force has become increasingly unpalatable both at the domestic and global levels. African countries also lack the means to end the conflicts quickly through military means, especially since the conflicts often invite various forms of external intervention. As the conflicts drag on, they create more animosity and more economic ruin and in the event that governments succeed in suppressing the conflicts, military solutions rarely stand for long.[16]   As long as the grievances persist, identities are likely to rise up again and challenge the state. African countries are, thus, faced with the daunting task of inventing new political and economic governance structures conducive for diversity management and nation-building in a peaceful and democratic manner. Developing such governance structures is certain to require extensive dialogue among various stakeholders, so that they forge arrangements that safeguard both group rights and individual liberties in a consociational manner.

46.   Needless to say, in countries that are already engulfed in violent conflicts the violence has to be brought under control through negotiations as new consensus-based governance structures can hardly be established amid war. Governments are also unlikely to be able to address grievances, such as poverty and uneven development, while they are engaged in violent conflicts. Negotiated cessation of hostilities, when achieved, presents an opportunity for building potentially transformative governance structures but it does not, by itself, mark an end of the conditions of marginalization or the mistrust harbored by the aggrieved identities. Francis Deng (2008), for example, notes that the psychological scars of diversity-based conflicts are especially difficult to deal with, even when agreements are reached on the tangible aspects of the conflicts. It is, however, likely that the psychological scars also heal, albeit with a time lag, if governments show the commitment and make progress in addressing the tangible aspects of the problems. Unfortunately, negotiated settlements of conflicts often are not accompanied by substantive changes. Instead, the elite in power often attempt to co-opt the leaders of the rebel groups (counter –elite) by incorporating them into the ranks of the political elite and by integrating the rebel army into the national army without serious effort at addressing the underlying factors for the grievances of the identities involved in the conflict. In such cases the precious opportunity created by the negotiated settlement of conflicts gets squandered.

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16   Leaders whose main preoccupation is extending their stay in power may not be too concerned about future conflicts.

47.   Building consensus-based structures of political and economic governance, which address the factors for diversity-based conflicts, requires carefully crafted measures and strategies that address the conflict-engendering factors identified in the second and third sections of the paper. As Deng (2008) notes, among such measures is crafting a consensus-based constitution that enshrines equitable political, economic, cultural, and institutional rights (i.e. equitable citizenship rights) upon all citizens and identities. This process is critical not only because it establishes a binding legal framework for addressing grievances but also because it mobilizes stakeholders to work together in establishing the new governance framework. Some post-conflict African states have based their process of change on broadly supported constitutions. Among such countries are South Africa, Mozambique, and recently Kenya.

48.   As the legal framework is put in place a range of measures need to be implemented in an expeditious and systematic manner. The nature of the necessary changes is likely to differ from country to country, since conditions and the nature of grievances differ. The dialogue among stakeholders, which shapes the changes, is also likely to produce different arrangements and priorities. Nevertheless, given the commonality of many of the factors of diversity-related problems in the continent, a composition of the essential aspects of the relevant changes can be mapped out. The recommendations of the CRM, which are grounded on extensive empirical analysis of the most important sources of conflicts in the countries that have completed the APRM review, provide a useful guide in identifying some of the essential changes. Lessons that can be learned from the best practices of some African countries, which have registered notable progress in diversity management, also provide useful insights that complement the CRM recommendations.

49.   The CRM recommendations are many and vary from country to country. Listed below are the most important recommendations, along with elaborations of what they entail.
- **Promoting and strengthening institutions of democratic governance:** No doubt, the development of democratic institutions is essential for diversity management. Countries that have made progress in democratizing their political systems, such as Botswana, South Africa, Ghana, and Benin, have made notable progress in diversity management. The APRM recommendation in this regard assumes liberal democracy, however, given Africa's low-levels of nation and state-building and the fragmentation of its modes of production and institutional systems, building democratic institutions in the continent is likely to require contextualization of the democratization process as well as building an infrastructure that is necessary to sustain it.

  - One indispensable contextualization measure is adopting a consensus-based decision making systems on key issues. Until economic diversification and the development of civil society create social

identities, which build bridges among primordial identities, political parties in much of Africa are likely to be expressions of ethnic or religious identities, even when they are not overtly organized along the lines of such primordial identity markers. Under the circumstances it is imperative that key decisions are made utilizing the traditional consultative approach of consensus building among a wide range of stakeholders, including political parties and identity leaders. It is likely that such contextualized approach to democracy would serve as a venue for diversity management and nation-building instead of fostering conflicts, which have become common occurrences during and following elections, which are based on the majority rule system.

- An essential component of building infrastructure for building democratic institutions is strengthening the autonomy of the various organs of the state (the electoral commission, the judiciary, the central banks, the bureaucracy, and the military) from the executive branch of the government. Such autonomy serves as checks and balances on the government, reduces the power of the executive (and the strong men that dominate the executive), promotes accountability, the rule of law, and institution-building and allows decentralized governance. It also fosters the development of civil society, which builds bridges across primordial identities, and thereby facilitates diversity management as well as the development of democracy.

- Building infrastructure that sustains democracy also requires addressing the problems of fragmented modes of production and institutional systems. As noted, different modes of production and institutional systems represent different socioeconomic spaces and democracy would be hard to sustain in a country with fragmented socioeconomic spaces. A new economic strategy, which transforms the traditional modes of production and uneven development by narrowing the gap between rural and urban areas, needs to be charted. Such measures would bring rural communities into the political and economic processes and engage them more fully in the democratization endeavor. In contrast to the development approach projected by the neoliberal doctrine, the role of the state remains critical in transforming the subsistence sector and the fragmented modes of production in Africa. The specific policy measures of such a strategy would include poverty alleviation, equitable distribution of public services, prioritization of agriculture in the development process, and promotion of economic diversification, especially in the poorer areas. Governments have to assume these tasks, which are not areas of strength of the market mechanism.

- **Addressing poverty problems:** Many African countries face pervasive poverty, which affects certain ethnic groups disproportionately. They also face widespread grinding social poverty, especially in urban areas. Both kinds of poverty pose serious risks of social instability and require active policy intervention and mobilization of the affected communities to participate in tackling the problem.

- **Correcting problems of inequitable political representation:** The specific measures recommended by the APRM reports in this regard include decentralization to devolve power, electoral reforms to include proportional representation, and establishing organizations that enhance minority protection, such as council of minorities. Needless to say, all these measures are essential; however, they need to be accompanied by reforms that bring about the transformation of the state to ensure autonomy of its various organs from the excessive dominance by the executive branch of government. Without the autonomy of the different organs of the state from the executive branch of government, institutional rule gives way to personal rule and devolution of power and equitable representation become unattainable. Elected members of parliament, for example, would provide little real representation to their constituents since under personal rule parliaments tend to be mere rubber stamps for autocrats.

- **Embracing institutional reforms to enhance the participation of women:** Some African countries, including South Africa and Rwanda, have made notable progress, especially in placing women in visible government positions and parliaments. Far reaching changes in this regard would also require incorporating traditional institutions and reforming some of their practices, especially those that exclude women from participation in decision-making and deny them inheritance rights.

- **Protecting cultural rights including religious and language rights of minorities:** In the aftermath of decolonization, nation-building in much of Africa was perceived to entail assimilation of the various cultures into a dominant (homogenizing) culture ('unity in conformity'). Such a strategy, however, often fails since identity groups tend to cling to their cultural expressions. In addition, building a community of citizens does not require cultural homogeneity, especially an imposed one. A proportional system of representation and a decentralized system of governance can be useful venues for protecting minority rights.

- **Rationalizing access to land and respecting customary land rights:** Rights and access to land have been amongst the most common conflict factors in Africa. In many countries lack of appropriate agricultural policy and a stagnant off-farm employment have created land shortages and conflicts in many countries. Rapid population growth and deepening land degradation

have also exacerbated the land-based conflicts. In many countries the state's lack of recognition of customary land rights and its appropriation of communal land have also added to the problem. Large scale land concessions to investors in extractive industries and commercial farming have also compounded the problem. The land concessions are intended to promote development. However, they also lead to displacements, unemployment, and poverty of a growing number of customary holders of land. Given Africa's rising population and the fact that agriculture is likely to remain the main employer, African countries need to carefully consider their land and agricultural policies so that poorly conceived land policies do not add to the misery of their rural populations.

- **Recognizing and regulating traditional institutions of governance, especially those dealing with dispute resolution:** Traditional institutions of governance play critical roles in much of Africa. Most African countries, for example, lack the capacity to extend (formal) judicial service to their rural populations. This void is filled by traditional authorities who play a critical role in conflict resolution and in the provision of judicial service in rural Africa. It is critical that African countries incorporate the traditional authorities and traditional judicial practices with their local governance systems and provide training to traditional authorities to ensure that rural communities obtain equitable and fair justice. Reconciling the parallel institutions of governance so that the traditional institutions of property rights and conflict resolution mechanisms, which already are widely operational, are respected and upgraded is prudent. A compelling reason why institutional reconciliation is indispensable is that rural communities, which operate under the traditional modes of production, can be better integrated into more active political and economic life within the context of the institutions that correspond to their modes of production and to which they can relate. Ignoring traditional institutions amounts to neglecting rural communities.

- **Develop and adopt legal framework for the role of traditional and religious authorities:** As noted, traditional authorities are the main providers of judicial service to rural communities. This makes them indispensable agents of diversity management as they are principal players in conflict resolution and prevention in rural areas.[17] Developing strong conflict resolution mechanisms, especially in rural areas is likely to require their continued service.

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17 The Nigerian APRM report notes that traditional authorities are excluded from participating in politics in order to shield them from the divisiveness of politics. Traditional institutions of conflict resolution and property rights can still be applied even if traditional authorities do not participate in the political process.

- **Promotion of inclusive narratives and socialization mechanisms**: Narratives play a major role in poisoning or mending identity relations. It is important that governments use their educational systems and mass media to promote inclusive narratives. Such effort, however, needs to be accompanied by real commitment and effort on the part of governments to address grievances. In the absence of concrete effort, however, narratives would likely be a source of cynicism.

- **Inter-governmental Organizations:** The continent's many regional integration schemes can also serve as useful devices for diversity management. They have the potential to reduce the burden of identities fragmented into different states by allowing them freer engagement with their ethnic members across boundaries. In the case of marginalization of fragmented ethnic groups, changes that may take place in one country are unlikely to be sufficient to stem out the problem of conflict. Regional organizations can also be useful mechanisms for developing social identities and social capital that build bridges across primordial identities both at the regional and domestic levels.

50.   Many of the above listed policy suggestions are supported by the experiences of African countries, which have made notable progress in diversity management. Among these countries are Botswana, South Africa, and Mauritius.[18] Although not recognized as an independent country, Somaliland has also charted a novel strategy of reconciling traditional and formal institutions and has devised a seemingly promising mechanism of diversity management.[19]   It would be too hasty to celebrate this group of countries as success stories. They still face challenges that can derail their achievements. Nevertheless, the progress they have registered is evident and lessons can be drawn from their experiences.

51.   The common lessons from their experiences with respect to diversity management include;   (1) the institution of democratic governance under a leadership that recognized its historic role and committed itself to advancing public interest instead of self-interest[20]; (2) reconciliation of the modern and traditional institutions of governance, which may be essential in transitional societies; (3) regular

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18   This is not to suggest that these countries have overcome their diversity-management problems or that they are unlikely to face diversity-based conflicts. Rather it is to suggest that they have made notable progress and that their experiences can provide some lessons.

19   Somaliland's House of Guurti, where representatives of the different clans (selected by the clans) can exercise a veto on any bill by the legislature drafts and exercise some controls on the power of the executive. In addition, the Guurti is responsible for resolving conflicts, especially inter-identity conflicts. The Guurti, obviously is not going to be emulated by other countries. However, there are lessons about how the African state can be brought under the control of citizens.

20   The contributions of leaders, such as Sir Seretse Khama and Nelson Mandela to the progress their countries have made can hardly be overemphasized.

consultation between state leaders and identity leaders in order to promote state-identity relations; (4) the establishment of electoral systems designed to bring about equitable representation of minority identities in parliament; and (5) institution of various programs in order to address inequalities, although a lot more needs to be accomplished (Carroll, 1997; Samatar, 1999).

6.   Conclusion

52.   There is little doubt that diversity management is indispensable for socioeconomic transformation. It is a requisite for nation-building, which entails integration of the different identity groups into a community of citizens under a shared system of institutions. It is also both a requisite and an outcome of state-building, which involves building up state institutions so that they are effective in advancing the security and socioeconomic wellbeing of citizens. For obvious reasons, state institutions cannot become effective under conditions of diversity-related divisions and conflicts. Moreover, without effective diversity management, which facilitates nation-building and state-building, neither democratic governance nor economic transformation is likely to succeed. Needless to say effective diversity management is a critical building bloc in the socioeconomic transformation of African countries. As noted, instituting the changes in state structures and governance systems, which are essential for fostering proper management of diversity, is difficult. However, African countries have little choice but to face up to the challenge.

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