Ethnicity as a Resilient Paradigm: Socio-Political Transitions and Ethnic Conflict in Africa

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ABSTRACT

The increasingly frequent appeal to ethnic and communal identities for purposes of political mobilization has made 'ethnicity' the reigning concept in the African state-building process. The Eurocentric state-reconstruction paradigm views the African variety of language-based ethnicity having distinct heritages as mostly primordial, a kind of ethnic immorality versus supposedly liberating forces, ignoring that Africans usually define their interests as citizens in terms of community. Adhering to various postmodern (not a neutral term), approaches, which are often conflated with poststructuralism opposing the rationalist worldview, and rejecting dichotomy that orders concepts in binary, oppositional pairs (West/East, the first term being superior), my study argues that ethnic movements in Africa have several functions as the instruments for political pressure and rectification of historical wrongs and also as the means of providing personal and collective identity. I would conclude that the convergence of the agreement about certain core sociopolitical values in state-building is more significant than divergence, and as such, some forms of accommodation among the opposing ethnically diversified communities, as well as between state and ethnic elements, are feasible. Additionally, it is claimed that whereas African indigenous people may accept the inevitability of their overall subordination, it does not imply that they regard it as just.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the postmodern deconstruction mode, three controversial ethnicity-related aspects in African state reconstruction project are ex-

amined: (a) indigenous concept of state; (b) religious factor in state building; and (c) indigenous economic practices and foundation of state. Mostly ill-educated, non-elite indigenous Africans are committed to the ideal of cultural relativism, stipulating that culturally distinct 'emic' values need not be superseded by modern imposing universal 'etics'. Etic values' imposition relates to power and influence, and derivative modern analysts of Africa's ethnicity are prone to it. Indigenous identity, having cultural distinctiveness, does not necessarily represent miraculously preserved pre-colonial traditions in Africa. Here traditions admit dissent as is testified by the Akan councils' macro management that relies on micro management of each affair through 'consensus', which logically presupposes dissent, an existence of opposing views.

The indigenous peoples (expressed variously in Western literature as primitives and uncivilized) or 'autochthonous' (African version, 'sprung from the earth') are ethnic groups, such as the rural Tongas (minority) in Zambia and Kpelles (majority) in Liberia, inhabiting a geographic region, generally face political and economic marginalization rooted in colonialism. For instance, throughout the 1990s, foreign investors, joined by Tanzanian political and economic elites and enjoying freedom from investment restrictions, flocked to Tanzanian rural area in pursuit of cheap land from the Massai herding communities and other natural resources (Igoe 2006). To the indigenous communities, the logic of stewardship has disappeared, giving rise to an obsession with maximizing developers' value over increasing degradation of nature. The nature-culture dichotomy is not a given reality, but a particular Western construction and not found in many parts of the world, including Africa (Engelen 2008: 128–133). The power of African elites has been consistently tied to their adeptness at engaging in what Bayart has termed 'strategies of extraversion', having access to external institutional structures (Bayart 2000: 217–267). And as such, the silent majority faces de facto discrimination based often on the subordination of agricultural peoples (*e.g.,* lack of access to education) in the state system. My study confirms that the term 'emic' refers to cross-cultural 'difference' only (Berry 1989). For postmodern Bhabha the active role of differentiation is to question the limits of sameness, while for social scientist Glissant, it explodes the cognitive into a social act (Bhabha 1989). The role Ethnic balancing can occur through bargaining or local

pacts because ethnic groups can form cross-cutting alliances and offer trade concessions. Of course, etic-imposition, being a natural cognitive process, does not reflect malicious intent. The Weberian bureaucratic modern state, depict many social conflicts in Africa as 'ethnic', unduly claiming that is destructive ethnicity is peculiar to Africa, and indeed exists nowhere else (Weber 1930). The fact that there are ethnic groups in Africa does not justify labeling African conflicts ethnic. Incidentally, Weber was incorrect in arguing that in polytheistic cultures people are indifferent to their societies' political order. In Benin, for instance, after the end of the turbulent period of political experiments ended by consolidation of the Second dynasty the kingship was firmly perceived as the only acceptable form of political regime. Ethnic elements did not count (Bondarenko 2006: 31–38).

POSTMODERNISM IN AFRICA

Observing the utility of postmodern thinking to the study of African studies, some scholars draw on postmodern insights but lament that there has been a lack of attention to Africa's political and economic structures (Cooper 1994: 1516–1545). The search to understand the complex 'mulitileveled realities' of Africa need not be ignored simply because the postmodern focus on discourse, diversity, and subjugated knowledge contradicts many long-held worldviews (Parpart 1995: 17). To postmodernism, Benedict Anderson's 'politics of universalism', which 'linearly connects' all social groups in 'imagined communities' (Chatterjee 2004: 7) is not the 'real space' in state formulation. In their book *Historians and African History: A Critique* (1981), two East African historians, Arnold Temu and Bonaventure Swal, have attacked 'nationalist' and 'pessimist' historiography, claiming that the postcolonial historiography has become tied to European assumptions by an over-reliance on Western academic 'lingo' (Igoe 2006: 1–9). Their attention to African initiative and agency harmonizes well with the 'subaltern' methodology, a postmodern group, in deconstruction, which implies that no text or context can totalize and no text is absolutely free from a context. In the same fashion, disturbed by the African chronic mismanagement of state, and speaking from a postmodern perspective, Kwame Anthony Appiah, in *My Father's House*, argues that theoretical alternatives must acknowledge three shared attributes:

first, that they are all provisional in nature; second, repeating a Foucauldian emphasis on the discontinuity of history that all products of historical contexts are at best contingent; and third, there is no essential truth in any situation (Appiah 1992). 'Post' in postmodernism means the collapse of the grand narrative to attach adequate significance to 'little narratives' (Hallen 2005). Of course, he admits that there is an anomaly, associated with the traditional kinship in kingship system in his state, Ghana, where the African 'practice of monarchy' reinforces 'illiberal views' that support social hierarchy and historical continuity (Appiah 2001: 50).

Appiah's constructions of postmodernism operate around the construction of differences. While the postmodern condition functions around decentering, a shift from meta-narratives to a vindication of multiple narratives as well as around constructs of difference, it is also justified by its vindications and celebration of difference (Hammond 1995). Colonial differences stood for the entrenchment of power inequalities and the domination of one group over another. These differences were used for purposes of subjugation, preventing the opening of possibilities for the majority (Chatterjee 1993a, 1993b). Being influenced by the Italian subaltern *guru* Antonio Gramsci ('Subaltern' comes from his *Note Books*), postmodern Parthia Chatterjee argues that any difference should find the derivative transplantation of 'state-craft' as mostly 'rational', but inappropriate, because it ignores the African image of 'ethno-cultural nation' (Patnaik 1987). Like Chatterjee, other postmodern subaltern scholars such as Ranajit Guha, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gyanendra Pandey and others, present the 'minority histories' in an oppositional mode to express the struggle for inclusion and representation. Drawing from structuralism's concern with knowledge, power and discourse (Chakrabarty 2000; Guha 1997), and following partly the analysis of Michel Foucault, they plead for the voices of subaltern classes such as peasants, women, and rural masses, providing need to deconstruct historiography on indigenous political and social policies, admitting that 'deconstructionist' methodology is a critical tool which is likely to lead to misinterpreted cultural relativism. The subaltern analysts reflect the fundamental restructuring of the political economy, and the emergence of a world where new voices can challenge Western hegemony and the universal pretensions of modern theories in state re-

construction. Africa is part of those changes and hence postmodernism has direct relevance here.

The concept of differences has elaborately been taken up by Dipesh Chakrabarty, a profound subaltern theorist, who introduces an intricate debate about 'provincializing Europe', attacking homogeneity in cultural interpretations. His is not uncritical valorization of the indigenous ethos; he is critical of modern reason's pretension to the exclusive monopoly of universalism as well as internal contradictions in 'tradition'. His prime book, *Provincializing Europe,* claims that subalternness is not, in itself, a substance but a status whose very existence derives from a situation of subjection; here 'difference' in groupings is not a fixed property of any social group but a process, an awareness of itself which it develops in its relation to others. In a different way, another Bengali subaltern Gayatri Chakarabarty Spivak, now a professor in U.S., points to the ways in which the cult of universal 'ahistorical difference' may constitute a new form of colonialism, with all its attributes of domination. For Sumit Sarkar, a former subalternist and now a strong critic of postmodernism, the postmodern analysis is to part of the contemporary struggle to democratize historiography on 'universalization of ideas' (Sarkar 1993: 163–167). Explaining the meaning of 'difference' another powerful subaltern historian, Gyan Prakash argues that historians studying non-Western social history should take a variety of shifting positions to demonstrate essence in differences. Modes of thinking which configure the less developed countries in such irreducible essences as religiosity, poverty, nationhood and non-modern-ness, are at all costs to be avoided. His 'foundational' is a work of history which is founded in some identity such as individual, class, and structure; it opposes modern 'derivative' homogeneity (Prakash 1990: 383–408). His assessment contradicts Rosalind O'Hanlon and David Washbrook, who argue that Western intellectual hegemony can only be overcome by objectivist Marxist approach (O'Hanlon and Washbrook 1992). In the same vein, but with a different angle, the social historian Fred Dallmayr argues that analysts need a serious rethinking of such basic philosophical categories as 'difference' in order to engage in a genuine process of dialogical learning (Dallmayr 1996). The subaltern model of the encounter of cultures is in common with H. G. Gadamer's theory of the 'hermeneutic experience', which is

based on the thesis that there exists an experience of truth outside the reality of science (Rorty 1991). Self-conscious recognition of 'difference' between two cultures becomes a difference that is different from relativist Rorty's 'universal democratic values' (Bhabha 1994). In agreement with this stance, but adding a new aspect in framing difference, Homi Bhabha's 'hybridity' calls for a more interactive approach, which recognizes the 'interplay' between those who 'control' discourse and those who 'resist', emphasizing that even the 'powerless' play a role in the making of their own history *(Ibid.)*. Thus, in response to the modern 'homogenizing' requirements of the nation-state in the face of ethnic and cultural diversity, the African culture historian Kwame Gyekye claims that 'interdependence and reciprocal obligations' of individuals seek an identity with a core communal value, implying that states are established by constructing a stream that is essential and natural, incorporating 'soul of the people'. He rejects the concept of Robin Horton who has made a distinction between African philosophical thought and indigenous concept (Gyekye 1996). Alongside this emerge ideas of ethnic minorities, marginal communities, or other elements.

In sum, the postmodern difference and deconstruction have two major interpretations. First, linguistic formalism, in which Jacques Derrida shows that all dualistic constructions of language can themselves, be 'deconstructed' to gain clear knowledge of events. His deconstruction-construction-deconstruction blurs the boundaries between clear-cut dualisms such as right and wrong and good and evil; its main target is 'totalized reifications' (Derrida 1997). Second, the postmodern interpretation claims that anthropological reductionism, in which Michel Foucault, who in contrast to Derrida's deconstructive analysis of knowledge emphasizing on genealogical analysis of knowledge, shows that all discourses posses various power relations. Both these philosophical enterprises underpin the power of the concept of representation and the text of postmodernism that challenges the established generalized rational knowledge of the twentieth century (Foucault 1980). Here neither language nor human intellect reveals things as they are, because meaning in a phenomenon is based on open 'differences', not on closed ethnic identities. For postmodern Homi Bhabha, difference implies a shift from the idea of cultural diversity to 'cultural differ-

ence', which in Fanon's language is an encounter with 'otherness' (Bhabha 1994; Fanon 1967). The significance of the shift becomes evident because the change in the way we imagine, think, plan, and rationalize is bound to have material consequences (Harvey 1992; Khalidi 1997). The significant issue in this instance is that simple categories such as 'bands', 'tribes', 'chiefdoms', and states are static descriptive types that are not of much use in analyzing the origins and functions of any event these labels loosely describe (Bondarenko 2007: 191).

METHODOLOGICAL RELEVANCE

Problems in various ethnicity-related paradigms examined in this study raise some interconnected philosophical and methodological issues. First, which is the motivating force in indigenous ethnic communities' state-building principles and practices: moral obligations with the members of the community or directly challenging the modern framework of state? What is certain is that indigenous equitable social, religious and political concepts and practices, despite their internal contradictions, are ideological tools to form a new political and communal solidarity to serve the utilitarian interests of the majority. Second, there exists a link between cultural ethnicity and civil conflict, but the relationship between causation and causative factors has always been controversial. The issue centers on whether a factor represents a causal nexus. The term 'explanation' adds little to the term 'cause'. We may appreciate Walker Connor, who is aware of the intense passion aroused by ethnic bonds, and Abner Cohen, who, writing about the Hausa traders in Nigeria, advances the instrumentalist (steps toward state power) approach to ethnicity related conflicts (Connor 1994). But we still know little about why the rural masses resorted to killings as huge a population as 800,000 in Rwanda in barely three months. Last, methodologically, the application of postmodern deconstruction to social sciences does not seek to improve and perfect those sciences. Rather, it tries to undermine their foundational claims by making their assumptions explicit. When used in conjunction with 'ethnicity' or 'culture', the political terms, such as state and nation, result in a curious ambiguity (Asad 1993). Indeed, the state failure is a non-linear process of relative decay. States fail when they are unable to provide basic functions for their citizens (Hagesteijn 2008: 82).

REVIEW OF CURRENT LITERATURE

First, drawing on the social identity theory of Henri Tajfel that stipulates that both groups and individuals are motivated mostly by 'recognition' of ethnic identity in any social activity, and also presenting the collective past almost in a linear pattern, a Kenyan historian supports the primordialist interpretation by arguing that in Kenya the Luo minority have been subjected to humiliation by the majority Kikuyu, a situation in which 'the tribe remains the defining feature of almost every African society' and 'creates a potential for a violent implosion'. Such grand narratives of ethnicity-induced conflicts accord well with the cognitive focus of an identity theory, earlier enunciated by the inter-actionists, such as Cooley (1933), Mead (1931) and Blumer (1986), who viewed diversified societies as 'unorganized', thereby ignoring the economic disparity and regional/geographical instincts (as in the case of Congolese secession in early 1960s). The notion of received knowledge is not supported by behavior science. Frans de Waal, who studies primates as a profession, observes that 'war is not our DNA' because 'interdependence between groups' is common and groups are aware that 'parties stand to loose if relationship deteriorates' (de Waal 2009). Harvard University anthropologist Richard Wrangham agrees and adds that primate violence is not compulsive, or 'instinctual', but 'extremely sensitive to context'. He makes a significant statement by affirming that human groups such as hunter-gatherers behave much more aggressively toward rival groups when they are confident that they can prevail (Horgan 2009: 16). Therefore, Thomas Hobbes's judgment – 'war of all against all' – in stateless societies appears to be a generalized modernist discourse. Arguing that political conflict in Africa is not a peripheral aberration, reflecting poor civic, discipline, and forcefully claiming that ethnicity is not even a central operational tool, Rene Lemarchand, who has extensively studied Rwandan genocides in 1994, argues that characterizing such brutal incident as simple 'tribal warfare' 'isolates' African societies and 'insolates' those holding state power. In attributing all brutalities to African society and all harmony to European culture, he adds, analysts ignore the myriad ways the killings have been molded. He laments that the primordialist narrative ignores that the imposed state structures, the massive arms trade and military training programs,

the class cleavages, and even a western-derived democratic process which are mostly promoted from abroad (Lemarchand 1995: 5). Robert Bates reports that the period of democratization in Africa was also a period of state failure (Bates 2000).

Second, many social scientists locate cultural identity in the competition between the urban elites for political power and economic resources and in the postmodern terms, ethnic agency may take a dominant role but not hegemonic (Sen 2005). The historian Tim Longman legitimately sketches out the way in which differing lines of identities come into play in two communities in Rwanda, drawn by class, client ship, religious confession, gender (only male participated in killing) and ethnicity. He thus rejects the rigid categories of 'tribal' imagery (Longman 1995: 19). African ethnic conflict has occasionally been designed by external powers and international organizations as the 'post-imperial ordering devices' for the 'new African states' (Lyon 1973: 41), in effect freezing them in their inherited colonial devices and blocking any social movements toward African cultural identity.

Third, the ethnic tool, which is the most common interpretation of African civil violence, is not the key to political action. Although the pro-Yoruba Action Group (AG) was successful in obtaining majority support among the Yoruba's in the Western Region in Nigeria in 1960, it failed to win support of Yorubas in Ibadan, Ilesha, and Oyo. Indeed, its vote share was largely reduced four years later due to non-ethnic factors. Likewise, during the 1994 and 1999 elections, the pro-Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party (IEP) failed to get a majority in Gauteng and Mpumalanga, and even in Natal, because in all these cases a substantial percentage of Zulus failed to support the IEP (Mackintosh 1966: 430, 514; Chandra 2004), testifying that benefit-seeking voters sought to obtain the greatest material benefits and psychological satisfaction from their own ethnic groups. African ethnic political parties often fail to attract the support of their target ethnic categories across space and time, even when the ethnic identities they seek to mobilize are politically salient. Thus, Homi Bhabha disagrees with the ethnic tool theory and relocates alternative in 'hybrid sites of cultural negotiation' (Bhabha 1994). It is revealing to understand that the competition for resources takes place within the modern state, and not at a regional level, leads the actors to organize themselves

in solidarity groups which go beyond the tribe or clan, in order to become more visible on the nationals scene (Roy 1994). In short, the postmodern theory of hybridity comes to resist the concept of totality in explaining ethnic violence.

Last, historian Galtung (1996) suggests that it is the 'structure' that allows violence to occur vertically. 'Vertically', in these structures, means that inequality and repression/exploitation are administered from the top downward. People in higher structure disproportionately deprive the needs of the lower structure. Penetration and segmentation as one group inhibit the development of a group identity in Sierra Leone (Leech 2001) and, as such, structural violence is the process of deprivation of needs and 'operates regardless of intent' (Galtung 1996: 93). His study concludes that 'blunt repression/exploitation is necessary but not sufficient' in conflict study. In other words, Galtung (1996) assumes that recurring violence in Sierra Leone is a symptom of a sick state, but it does not necessarily imply that the absence of warfare is a sign of good health for the West African state (Leech 2001). Thus, in a perceptive study, Fearon and Laitin (2003) warn scholars engaged in ethnic conflict study against inferring that ethnic diversity is the root cause of violence when they see rioters in a developing country who mobilize people 'along ethnic lines'. Theoretically stated, the entrenchment of authority is a response to the dialectic of local autonomy and centralized government control. There is hardly any need to pay exclusive attention to relationship between the governments of states and the kinship associations within their nations (Kurtz 2008: 134–135).

CONCEPT OF STATE

Nation-state's most recognizable form is Benedict Anderson's 'bourgeois' nationalism, which was reinforced in postcolonial Africa by educated elites and nationalist press, and was able to exclude the rural populace from leadership (Anderson 1993). The paradigm of official nationalism fitted well with the colonial situation as the local economic elites, anxious to have control over economic profits, loudly supported the inherited state system, which was soon corrupted by autocratic leadership in the name of unity to avoid 'tribalism'. A peculiar version of an African oppositional strategy appears in African history that emphasizes 'indige-

nous empires' as the primary achievement of pre-colonial peoples, as if to reassure Africans that they too were capable of conquest and subjugation. Some examples of the past so-called 'glories' were Asante or Benin in West Africa or Buganda in East Africa as well as several multiethnic empires. In all instances, the ideological orientation toward the nation/state and toward the creation of African 'Self' depicted a struggle within the nation between local and external dominators and the dominated. This struggle is between, as Ranajit Guha argues, 'elitist' history (bourgeois and nationalist) and the subaltern history in order to locate a new space for the rural majority.

Despite the existence of highly developed state-like features, including the Zulu kingdom in South Africa, there was no development of a large state structure, as in Asia and Europe, because there was no complex cash-based revenue system to support strong centralized political units. Africans did not seem to have established powerful ideologies which would have legitimized centralized control. In fact, national territory in Africa is traditionally viewed as parceled out lands in contiguous sections, each of which forms a rural home for an ethnic community, usually ruled by elders and chiefs whose political power has been diminished at independence. For them, the geographical myth of unity hides the reality of pluralism. 'Geoethnicity', argues the African historian Mawngi Kimenyi, may be interpreted as territorial boundary with mixed ethnic communities. Mahdis and Acholis in the border region of Uganda and Sudan, for instance, have retained multiple and overlapping ethnic identities within one geographical region. No boundaries are specified, the 'ethnic nations' do exist and are respected by communities, which live next to each other in peace (Kimenyi 1998: 43–63). Even stateless societies have devised many indigenous ways of regulating political power, and the Pygmies have successfully made symbiosis with their village-farmers neighbors. Their enemy is not an organized political culture, but man-made development oriented deforestation. Reconstructing autonomous small-scale cultural community from 'tribal' or ethnic minorities would be a complex process, because restoring a viable territorial state might require major changes in land tenure and significant changes in political administration. National governments, influenced by local ethics and global culture, can possibly treat

indigenous communities as a special structure, which has many variables, emotional and mundane.

The African projected state system, based on the implicit understanding of the relationship between national identity and traditional cultural essences, has three interrelated assumptions: first, there is indeed a core to a tradition, a core to values, practices, and codes of conduct; second, there can be a demonstrable access to that core; and third, the feature of such a core alone can determine the national identity of an adherent of the tradition in specific ways. However, the idea of essence encourages a confrontational attitude toward interpretations of tradition, which are taken to contradict the allegedly tenets of that tradition. In some regions, some options in state reconstruction have been tried with limited success.

First, in some 'soft states', there has been power sharing combined with decentralization, with identities being geographically defined, paradoxically trying to reconcile unity with separation (*e.g.,* Sudan, Namibia, South Africa, etc.). Second, Julius Nyerere stamped out 'tribalism' by fostering national pride in Tanzania. Third, with a relatively inconsequential diversity, Botswana reflects exemplary cohesiveness, democracy, stability, and growth. In this context, the African scholar Wiredu writes, 'untranslatability' of Western value system 'does not necessarily' mean 'unintelligibility' (Wiredu 1996: 25). Clarifying further, Pandey concludes, '[if] the provisionality of our units of analysis needs stressing, so does the provisionality of our interpretations and of our theoretical conceits' (Pandey 1997). Both the scholars seem to suggest that fluctuations and instability are integrated part of social rearrangement; they also warn us against the temptation of always seeking 'totalizing' explanations that mute subaltern agency and the inspirational will of the people. Last, both the decentralized state and the centralized state had been features in African state system. The Mboteni community in Rio Nunez area on the Atlantic coast developed decentralized political authority during the mid-eighteenth century, whereas the Mbulungish in coastal Guinea developed centralized state. What is interesting is that the language based communities exhibited the full spectrum of political centralization, with a developed rice-growing technology, demonstrating that distance between the states and stateless societies during pre-colonial era was not fixed; it was a fluid situation that had com-

plexity but not a modern dichotomy. By placing high value on urbanized centralized state, analysts have mostly ignored the African decentralized state (Fields-Black 2008).

In short, the African image of state does not pit modern against pre-industrial, or provincial against universal. The choice was between different methods. More fundamentally, the basic problem is how to incorporate, in a significant way, African concept of state system into the modern one.

AFRICAN RELIGION AND STATE: THE FORGOTTEN FACTOR

The religious dimensions of ethnic identities in Africa have been under-theorized. It is perhaps a Western bias to assume that religiously demarcated groups are in essence ethnic. It is really difficult to know where a religious identity ends and a cultural identity begins (Mitchell 2006). In South Asia, there is a tendency to view religious communities as ethnic and communal, whereas in Africa there exists a two-way relationship between religion and ethnicity, as in the cases of Nigeria and Sudan, each stimulating the other. At best religion plays a supporting role in civil conflict in parts of Africa. Indeed, the indigenous spiritual system seeks to give meaning to individual's political experiences as well as provide leadership for communal harmony, often speaking for individual morality and social justice. This gives religiously identified groups a powerful institutional anchor, agent of socialization, organization and guidance for state reconstruction. Although African traditional religion is not based on scriptures but is simply a body of practices and beliefs, which are oral, and as such very flexible and absorptive, it introduces a counter-ideology against Enlightenment, individualism and state's absolute authority in order to call for a moral 'accountability' in socio-political life.

Resisting the Weberian claim that the existence of a state demands the monopoly of force in all matters, including religion, African spiritual consciousness opposes his featuring the state mainly in terms of means, rather than ends (Weber 1930), and resists Francis Bacon's ideology of science with its distinct utilitarianism rooted in the Hermetic conception of man as a manipulator, commanding the power of natural resources. However, as Dipesh Chakrabarty claims, 'Europeanizing' does not imply a clear break with the West (Gurukkal 2008). Indeed, the idea that postmodern

religious faith is not only a source of truth but also discoverer of social justice gained ground in Dadaism, which began as a cultural movement in Zurich in 1916, as a protest against dehumanizing effects of technology. By its revolt against traditional societal and aesthetic standards, it reflected an anticipation of the postmodernist world in spirituality.

During the initial contact between the indigenous faith and Christianity in Nigeria, the indigenous people, especially the Yoruba did not want to give up their system of thinking. Gradually the African and Western Christian imaginations entered into a 'semiotic relationship', making the dialogue between the two a 'necessity'. While the worldview of the Igbo's and the Yoruba's in Nigeria, for instance, felt the need of incorporation of Western ideas, nonetheless, indigenous faith in magic and powerful words of the elders remained strong among the indigenous population. As the 'angel of God' appeared to Joseph (foster father of Jesus) in a Christian dream, so also in the Yoruba context, dreams were understood as a kind of knowing or perceiving beyond the five senses (Ayuk 2001). The indigenous spiritual imagination gradually transformed the tensions between the two systems to strategies of hybridization and dialogism. The deconstructive practices consolidate the double consciousness of the Christian Nigerians, indeed pursuing a form of postmodern cultural education that helps the emergence of cultural and religious hybridity in the Nigerian society (Ayuk 2001: 1–2). Aspects of indigenous cosmology suggested the shifting of the performance of indigenous knowledge across cultural/religious boundaries. Boundary, as Bhabha contends, is not that stops but 'that from which something begins its presenting'. Thus, there was the emergence of cultural and religious hybridity in the African indigenous societies. This position testifies the Chakrabarty's argument that there has been not clear cut dichotomy.

Nevertheless, conditions are different in Africa. The existence of the village tutelary spirit, 'the king of the below', becomes a social necessity in the absence of formal 'law' (Ellis and Ter Haar 2004). In sharp contrast with the Western tendency to define religion mostly in terms of a search for meaning in life, Africans use religion for social engineering. In this instance, Edward Said's asking the 'Orientals' to take back the power of representation from the current Western interpretations of culture assumes new

significance. The African stance thus accords well with Michel Foucault, who argues that culture is no more simple 'representation' keeping distance from the 'real life', and power is best understood not in larger blocs of class or state, but in the micro-spiritual terms of the networks of power-relations subsisting at every point in the religious life. Here anthropologists fail to consider the central element of religious belief because anthropological statement does not regard the 'invisible world' as real having a source of innovation and flexibility in political life (Ellis and Ter Haar 1998). The sociology of religion has stressed the positive contribution of religion to the maintenance of social order (Durkheim 1951; Parsons 1965; Wilson 1970).

Strong linkages between indigenous spiritual values and modern 'sociopolitical institutions and practices' (Gyekye 1996) is being observed by John Mbiti, an authority in African religion, argues that indigenous spiritual power is 'indefinable', but affirms that the relationship is essentially pragmatic and utilitarian rather than spiritual and mystical (Mbiti 1969). Van Binsbergen and Schoffeleers (1984) claim that African religious studies can be 'a field where new insights in social, political and economic relations are being formulated' for the analysis of non-religious aspects of modern Africa. Even vaguely defined holy spirits and myths recommend social and political behavior, affirming that the inner power of the 'Holy Spirit' can effectively meet existential needs in the African world (Behrend 1995).

Mozambique's President Joaquim Chissano, once a Marxist ideologue, attempted to liberate transcendental meditation for the public good in the national territory. Since 1994, his government required members of the police and armed forces to mediate for twenty minutes twice per day. Political elites used religious communities for the purpose of mobilizing voters, creating clienteles or organization constituencies (Ter Haar 1998: 3–34). Christian prophets, highly inspired by African cultish faith, such as Alice Lenshina and indigenous prophets such as Diola Alinesitoue Diatta, and partly by socioeconomic teachers/preachers such as the Sufi saints, including Cheikh Ahmadu Bamba, influenced the political behavior at the grassroots level. Van Binsbergen (1990) interprets Lenshina's Lumpa ('Visible Salvation') as an 'attack cult' to dislodge the threatening capitalist mode of production in

Zambia and Zaire. The church wished to displace outside (state) powers in a rural economic set up (van Binsbergen 1990). But in Mozambique, this class struggle idea was gradually given up in favor of cooperation between native churches and the FRELIMO government, which sought to cultivate better relations with traditional religion in a move to distance from the formerly official Marxist ideology (Haynes 1994). The implication is that there are no separate secular and religious compartments, as in the West, because in pre-modern societies, the rulers are both secular and religious leaders.

In conformity with the 'New Religious Politics' (NRP) paradigm, African politicians have used religion for selfish motives. The Nigerian Muslims and Christians fight intermittently each other in central part, whereas in Sierra Leone, Liberia and other West African states, Christians and Muslims live together peacefully. In any case, African religion attains a certain cultural particularality and independence from the implicit master narrative of Western religious history (Gable 1995). Some communities in Nigeria attach divinity to the central authority to enhance political power. According to the religious traditions of the city of Ife, *Ogun*, who is associated with both heaven and earth, a symbol of godly power on earth, reflecting dual entities uniting spiritual word with mundane political power? (Niehaus 1993) The *Mhondoro* medium spirit among the Shona in Zimbabwe declared, through in an interpreter, 'You have to realize our obligation to help the government also'. In this respect, the structure of the 'ancestral authority' would 'crack up' the established 'political legitimacy' of the undesirable 'highly centralized polity' in Africa (Lan 2003: 227–228). As anthropologist Isak A. Niehaus observes, the Lebowa people in South Africa have found it politically convenient to involve themselves in attempts to identify and punish witches in their quest to introduce a moral code. In all these instances, various contextual conditions constructed a postmodern 'social space' by a reflexible circulation of spiritual discourse (Horton 1997).

Unlike the Western religious order, in African ordinary people as well as trained diviners and local spiritual leaders, try to regulate the conduct of people for social solidarity; anthropologists and historians observe that the relations between 'secret societies', such as *poro* (for boys) and *sande* (for girls) in West Africa are intimate and influential in affecting local and regional governance.

In the Ivory Coast, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, these so-called societies' wide range of activities make them the dominant social force. These peculiar secret clubs, she legitimately contended, held back Liberia ideologically (Massaquoi-Fahnbulleh 1998).

Offering an earthly 'system of theory and practice', and seeking 'explanation, prediction and control' (Horton 1997), self-conscious religious revival in Kenya begins with a revival of Kikuyu religion, which has distinct economic overtone, recalling the Mau Mau social order for land re-distribution and peasant ownership. By their 'rejection of money and commodities' many unorthodox African cults set up new model of indigenous economic system, challenging the hegemony of the powerful modern centralized developmental strategies which ignore communal values (Comaroff 1984). Whereas Comaroff introduces African religion in direct connection with the mode of production and under-development, Colin Bundy and William Beinart, speaking from the development of African political economy, argue that peasantry as a whole explore ways of expressing their perceptions, aspirations and material interests, aiming at urban proletariat (Ranger 1986: 7–11; Comaroff 1985). In a postmodern version, Boudieu argues that the linkage between human experience and 'coded' religious context is beyond the grasp of secular 'consciousness' (*Ibid.:* 5).

In the postmodern term, social justice, being a promise only for the present, is a pursuit that will solve many of the African socio-political problems for the future as well. When Derrida insists on the 'impossibility of justice', or Dipesh Chakrabarty questions the possibility of 'a rational construction of politics', both of the postmodern thinkers raise a suspicion about this promise of justice in different ways (Derrida 2002; Chakrabarty 2000). Both believe that justice, based on religious code, connects today's faith with the valued past. They suggest that a more promising justice is only a promise deferred and here political 'political present is defined by that [religious] promise' (Comaroff 1984: 572; Comaroff Jean and Comaroff John 1991) of the past. In other words, the word 'post', being a reactive word, does not imply a clear break from the past. If questioning 'progress' is a defining feature of postmodernism, then anti-colonial thinkers such as Fanon and Cesaire would seem the key pre-cursors, but many thinkers in Africa as well as traditionalists dislike the reduction of religion to politics,

because one may lose sight of neutrality. Since social justice has not yet attended to all social and political inequalities in Africa, justice through religion has yet to deliver on its community promise. Its philosophical direction does neither forget nor regressively return to the past. The notion of the stagnant 'traditional' has itself been challenged (Horton 1967; Gable 1995; Wiredu 1980; Hallen and Sodipo 1986).

Using cultural and symbolic anthropology, Jean Comaroff introduces spiritual concepts in the context of the mode of economic production, class formation, and under-development (Comaroff 1984: 572). Following Foucault, she argues that the dissenting Zionist Church in South Africa modeled their resistance to industrial oppression on the physiological structure of human being, who had been increasingly objectified and reduced to a 'biological individual' in which religious faith became residual and materialism remained pervasive. She adds that the very forms of these religious movements reversed the Protestant ethic with its intense competitive free enterprise, believed to be destructive of communal equity. Worshipping the land, which provides food, of a village is equivalent to worshipping one's ancestors, a reflection of postmodern possibilities of indigenous myth and rituals into reality. Comaroff Jean and Comaroff John legitimately argue that despite 'the colonization of consciousness' among the indigenous people in Africa, there developed a 'pragmatic skepticism' for economic and political reforms (Gable 1995; Comaroff Jean and Comaroff John 1991).

The chief target of attack by peasant Christians was entrepreneurial Protestant ethic. Religious-social movements, such as Lenshina's grass roots preaching and activities during the 1960s in Zaire and Zambia denounced *boma* government, government courts, and traditional chiefs to introduce a counter-ideology of Western economic individualism. Along with other religious leaders, such as Chana and Mwana, she asked for remedial measures against the suffering of the villagers, and demanded economic moral behavior from all (Morris 1995). Additionally, indigenous faith contributes to positive environmental ethics in Africa. Among the Shona community, public confessions of guilt about destruction of trees are made by the ritual offered by the officers on behalf of all the participants. *Chimrenga* tree-planting ceremonies in Zimbabwe are based on the premise that states have the sovereign right

to exploit their own resources pursuant to their westernized princi-ples, but state policies need to be qualified by traditional belief sys-tem for economic balance and social justice.

In this inside track of indigenous religions, there is the concept of force or energy similar to the Indian 'chakras' in kundalini yoga. In the Yoruba tradition of Nigeria, force is called 'ashe'. The goal is to transmit negative wasteful aspects of energy into conduct and mindsets that serve as wholesome, virtuous examples of oneself and the greater community. This sentiment is echoed among the Mande tradition of Senegal, Mali and other regions of West Africa (Doumbia A. and Doumbia N. 2004).

ECONOMIC ORDER

The postmodern concept of differences in economic vision is use-ful in analyzing African ideas of projected economic order. Whe-reas Jeffrey D. Sachs argues that the 'underdevelopment' is caused by structural deficiencies (Khadiagala 2007: 210–213). Graham Harrison, of Sheffield, speaking against the indigenous system, adds that that indigenous economic struggle and resistance are not ordered, organized and purposive of political action; they are local-ized and 'ethnicized' and thus subversive of state power (Harrison 2002: 108). The 'high modernist' World Bank Projects Report of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s, de-politicized development and made it technical. The African political elite are very 'crafty' at using the reports to their advantage (Bierschenk 2008). Now that the West-ern economic authority is in a state of crisis, shaken by self-doubt, and challenged from outside, Africans may offer a paradigm that accords well with the postmodern thinking in economic design. Echoing the general depressing economic sentiment, a report ex-amining indigenous attitude claim that the 'capitalist banditry' in southwest Zaire and the emerging 'capitalist worldview' in Camer-oon have created social 'tension' within communities and kinship due to 'differentiation and forms of accumulation' resulting from neo-liberalism in economic activities (Fisiy and Geschiere 1996: 193–202). African seems to argue that capitalism is adept at turn-ing luxuries into necessities bringing to the masses what elites have always enjoyed, but the flip side of this genius is that 'positive goods' are in fixed supply; one can enjoy them only when others

do not. African economic dilemma has variously been well captured by African intellectuals.

Arguing that the logic of stewardship has disappeared and the modern long-term economic thinking has given way to an obsession with maximizing developers' value with increasing degradation of nature, the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe argues that like the pigs in 'Animal Farm by George Orwell', African political elites have created a good life for themselves at the expense of rural folks. Novelist Thiong'o (*A Grain of Wheat,* 1988) observes that the Kenyan path to development, departing from traditional norms, tended to lead to absolute rural impoverishment. Opposing random urbanization and selected modernization and being disappointed by the 'concrete socio-economic' realities in Kenya in the 1970s and the 1980s, the noted novelist describes, in his novel, *Matigari*, a prophet with a vision, that there has been an 'ethical universal' in moral Gikuyism and Marxist economic norms. He questions the existing contradictions and supports a postmodern view by arguing against the 'present order', which is nothing but political oppression and economic depression (Thiong'o 1998). As a prophet Matigari, as a chief character, invokes the spirit of the Mau Mau land fighters, seeking 'justice' and calling for resistance against economic oppression by large landholders; here the hero stands for the decentered post-modern views.

MORAL ECONOMY

In the modern economic vision, the lifestyles of the peasants, pastoralists, rural masses, and hunter-gatherers, who are mostly illiterate and poor, fall outside the dominant paradigm of production, and as such are largely ignored by state's development planners. Rather than forcing African culture into the mould of Western institutions planners may meet with more success if they advocate policies which allow indigenous institutions to work to their full potential. The indigenous economic order, based on 'moral economy' principles call for the World Social Forum instead of the World Economic Forum. Moral economy is not 'indigenous' norm *per se,* as often alleged by critics of the concept. This norm is created in response to external forces, such as harsh climate, imposing administration, and most significantly capitalist economy.

It takes shape as collective imagination inspired by the existing communal values, as demonstrated by eminent scholars, E. P. Thomson and James Scott who demonstrate that subsistence economy has a special need for traditional moral economy. The practice has not been static. In Tanzania, traditional farmers devised variety of unique forms of economic relation and concepts, which grew alongside the increasingly powerful economy (Tsuruta 2006). Some Swahili words such as *utani* (custom suggesting sharing property), *chama* (festive guilds; healthy social competition), *ujamaa* (African socialism for the right to subsistence and the norm of reciprocity), and *ujana* (survival economic strategy in urban settings), reflect Africa's forms of moral economy, opposing the disintegrating force of an unfamiliar capitalist economy (*Ibid.*, issues 1 and 2). Additionally, in moral economy there is also a concept of wealth accumulation in the Africans accumulate wealth just as Westerners do; the difference is in the form of accumulation. Wealth is accumulated in the form of cattle, wives, and farm lands. Sidamo men of Ethiopia aspire 'positions of wealth' (Hamer 1970: 197). Among the Igbo, wealth means prestige and influence, and achievement of political influence (Ayittey 1998).

The 'moral economy' theory defends its ahistorical character or 'naturalness' to protect the subsistence ethic against an external capitalism (Carlston 1968). Here the realm of the economic gives way to 'the cultural', and peasant action is guided, not by Marxist class structure, but by the subaltern/elite identities, and also by identities based on ethnicity and religion. In the end revolutionary idea is replaced by resistance. Thus, Ranajit Guha's category of the 'subaltern' encompasses all forms of 'subordinate' who do not belong to the 'elite, that is, all those "of inferior rank"' (Guha 1982). It is same 'subalterns' who correspond to Scott's 'weaker party', the relatively powerless indigenous groups (Scott 1976: ix). Thus, introducing cultural specificity in which institutions emerge, Bhabha's 'hybridity' and hyper-reality, examine the world placing all epistemological propositions within specific historic, cultural, linguistic and, especially power context. He recommends a shared commitment to non-dualist and constructive interpretations of local experience (Bhabha 1994: 7). This view represents the victory of sub-altern over the hegemonic. In economic terms, culture can be positioned outside 'the massive being of capital', upon which left-

wing economic theories are dependent. The development oriented 'prodigious new expansion' colonizes man's activity. The various 'master-narratives' of progress, such as positivist science, Marxism, and Structuralism, are defunct methods of achieving economic progress (Lyotard 1991).

Despite its methodological shortcoming with limited samples, a recent field research reported that in post-socialism era in Tanzania, the state-building approach with local help allowed ethnically diverse communities in rural areas to achieve considerable success in fund-raising, road construction and water wells. Ethnic minorities were assured minimum representation in village and district administrations to have some influence in policy formulation. In Zambia, regional economic activity was organized by 'Women for Change', a donor supported NGO, which raised money from villagers to enlist support. The 'Undugu (brotherhood) Society of Kenya' is now determined to provide shelter and health services to the poor in Nairobi and its environs. Nigerian and South African experiments demonstrate that organizations which have more direct mobilized constituencies with specific economic goals have succeeded more than organizations having abstract goals in democracy. Anglophone part of Cameroon operated a 'system of keeping the town clean' on the last Saturday in each month. Partly supported by the government but with local support, agricultural shows there demonstrated not only cooperative spirit but also attempts in economic self-help (Dolo 1996).

Likewise, in Buem-Kator, a farming community on the Ghana side of the Ghana-Togo border area, both the migrant and local workers co-operated and worked in the development of export crops – cocoa and coffee – with indigenous mechanism called 'Nugormesese' ('understanding' in Ewe), which facilitated binary relationships between the people either as members of the host community and migrants, as landlords and tenants, as creditors and debtors, as farm owners and farm workers, or as farmers and non-farmers. The governments in the area could imaginatively integrate some aspects of the farmers' norms of trust with those of the people's indigenous ones as a means of dealing with the exigencies of the modern situations (Fred-Mensah 2005). A group of geographers demonstrated that in the Machakos District in Kenya, healthy economic relationship and cooperation between local people and

modern management for two generations led to five-fold increase in population and 'substantial reduction in degradation of land' (Miguel 2004). Incidentally, separate development in varied local conditions does not mean ethnic cleavages. Surveys reported that only 3 percent of Tanzanians responded in terms of an ethnic, language, or tribal affiliation, whereas in Lesotho only 2 percent of the population reported in ethnic affiliation. These findings link up with two theories of diversity and collective action (*Ibid.:* 337–338). Cooper, writing on postmodern state and economy argues that in the postmodern world, *raison d'etat* and amorality of modern statecraft have been replaced by a moral consciousness in domestic affairs. This morality improves the expectation of least advantaged members of African indigenous societies (Cooper 1994).

In sum, as Frederick Cooper observes, the binary oppositions conceal inter-wined histories and economies across dichotomies, but the analysts must go beyond differences. Projecting opposition between the Western economic order and the indigenous community-based economy distorts the history of engagements by marginalizing everything that upsets founding economic values. Thus, Jacques Derrida's strategy to undo the implacable oppositions of Western dominance is of some relevance (Derrida 1997: 213; Prakash 1994). Dichotomies invoked by 'development within' and 'development outside' should not be categorical. Postmodernism demonstrates the message of counter between the institutionalized relationships of dependency, hegemony, and exploitation. African advocacy of the return-to-nature merges well with the 'moral economy' argument and the neo-populist vision of Africa's farm leaders. Author Lonsdale's main theme is that Africans do not look for 'the possibility of man' to change their surroundings 'at all costs' (Lonsdale 1986). The postmodern economic argument resists perpetuation of center-periphery dependencies (new colonialism and urban-rural divide), and general macro political economy, which work for over-utilization of resources.

WOMEN IN AFRICAN ECONOMY

Applying the subaltern theory of difference as a tool in evaluation of women's work, Ashis Nandy, a social critic, observes that in an economically advanced society, as production takes speed, women, children and the aged are disqualified. In the West, women-economy

discourse focuses on feminist debate, whereas in African economy, especially in agriculture and market place, women are active participants. Despite the fact that, indigenous African women are responsible for 50 percent of planting of the agricultural sector and 90 percent of food production, the modernization paradigm undermines their work. The feminist scholar Sudarkasa makes the indigenous women's position clear by arguing that the domains of women and men in any indigenous society should not be conceptualize in terms of ranking. In this instance, postmodernism observes that there is no sense of fragmentation occurring among indigenous women, who do not develop a sense of estrangement from society and culture it manifests. Here postmodern methodology calls for new consciousness that resists the given structures and strong refusal of otherness. In environmental protection, argues Ramachandra Guha in a postmodern tone, the poor in the 'South' do powerfully 'respond to environmental destruction which directly affects their way of life and prospects for survival'. The European concept of patriarchy fails to distinguish the key variations in the mechanisms of gender equality. Women in rich countries combat industrial assaults by altering consumption habits and recycling wastes, whereas in the poorer societies women protect traditional ways of agriculture to prevent damages done by extractive industries.

The traditional city state of Ara, for instance, has a community of forty towns and villages that are located on the Expressway of Ibadan-Osogbo in Nigeria. There men traditionally farmed their land whereas women assisted in planting, weeding and harvesting, but their major role was in the processing of agricultural products and women were known to have good knowledge in processing. Similarly, research in Chivi Communal Area in Zimbabwe found that women knew more than men about some crop varieties, and men knew more about local soil classification (Percival and Homer-Dixon 1995). So, the politics of articulating African women's economic knowledge and muteness are not well recognized by Sub-Saharan ecofeminists (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Women's special skill in certain areas in agriculture-related work does not imply that Sub-Saharan women have some mystical knowledge about nature and crops. What is clear is that although women are usually kept out of the decision-making process, their work in

farming is being utilized for general conservation practices. Women are not naïve or bystanders in specialized ecological knowledge. Unlike the Western counterparts, Ethiopians make informal experiments in small low-cost changes in local farming practices by digging infiltration pits in the backyard garden and finding cheaper alternatives, such as using a donkey instead of an ox for cultivation. Although social norms prevent African women from being as forthcoming as men in announcing why and how they make experiment, they obviously assume new power because of their skill in agriculture and environment (Robertson 1984). However, a report concludes that women at the upper end of the scale who have been financed by their husbands often do not show as much interest in joining together with other women Chamlee 1993: 81).

In sum, Boserup (1997) captures the African women's behavioral perspective by arguing that they seek a new identity as nature-loving, thereby presenting them to policy makers as productive agents contributing to economic development, rather than needy beneficiaries. Yet, despite African women's powerful economic mobilizing potential, the traditional approach in both agriculture and industry may become a self-defeating strategy in the long run, if modernization approach is bypassed.

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions need to be drawn to explain varied interrelated aspects on African ethnicity and state reconstruction.

First, admitting that thinking about state formulation is impossible without engaging in some forms of universal of 'European thought' (Dube 2002). Postmodernism opposes an antiessentialism approach which presupposes certain false dualisms in which 'agents' that do not fit are often actively repressed by the rational approaches. However, David Gordon White, a critic, argues that the hegemonic postmodern 'consciousness' is a 'consciousness without an agent', arguing that endless relocation to alternative sites of negotiation would once again reveal the irrationality of hegemony at that point. In response, it needs to be retold in the words of Lyotard that postmodernism puts forward that which 'unrepresentable in presentation itself and these new presentations' are given not in order to enjoy them but in 'order to impart a stronger sense of unrepresentable' (Lyotard 1984). Earlier, schol-

ars in African studies, using oral and written sources, have sought to draw on postmodern notions of the contingent subject, of authorship and agency within the contested area of constructed meanings (Vaughan 1992). As Kumar argues postmodernism is not a new era, but a new situation in which we are able to look back modernity, whose over-ambitious enterprise deserves new orientation (Kumar 1995: 121).

Second, as Ashis Nandy, a strong critic of modernity, argues the Western definition of ethnicity is merely 'psychologism', bringing psychological disruption in the existing integrated self. Ethnic groups, are defined by Horowitz, as 'ascriptive differences in language and religion', etc., a definition close to Max Weber's conception of 'subjective belief' in 'common descent' which means that ethnicity embraces groups differentiated by language, color, and religion and covers 'tribes', 'races, and nationalities', and thus, Kaufmann uses this definition to conclude that opposing groups in any civil conflict hold different views of the identity and 'citizenship of state'. Arend Lijphart's power-sharing 'consociotional democracy' assumes that ethnicity is somewhat manipulable, but not so 'frequently' as constructive suggests. There was not a single case where non-ethnic civil politics was created by reconstruction of ethnic identities, power-sharing coalitions, or state-building. High levels of intermarriage which produce children of mixed parentage could blur ethnic boundaries. In Rwanda, Hutu or Tutsi identity is inherited from the father. Ethnic identities are hardest, since they depend on language, culture, and religion, which are hard to change, as well as parentage, which no one can change (Kaufmann 2006). Thus, opposing communities do not seek to control a state 'whose identity all sides accept'. If the goal of the conflict is to divide the state itself, then the conflict may not be ethnic war at all (Horowitz 1985). There are differences between ethnic conflict and civil war in Africa. What is clear from the studies of various models of conflict, politics is more important than economics in causing civil war, and ethnic heterogeneity significantly increases the risk of such war. Some theories are better suited to explain ethnic conflict and there is hardly any development of a comprehensive theory (Sambanis 2001).

Third, the derivative transplantation of 'statecraft' projected as 'rational' is inappropriate, because it ignores the African image of

'ethno-cultural nation' (Patnaik 1987). The African governments' efforts emphasize the 'nation' and 'nationalism' at the total expense of the ethnos indicate their concern about instability of their political communities and the threat posed by that instability not only to individual governments, but to state itself (Geertz 1977).

Last, the state-building process in the continent has been basically the same as it was in Europe, a process that relied on domination of internal rivals and competing with external competitors. In Africa there is an image of statehood that challenges the Western model because even the Western style federation experienced in the Mali Federation and the Central African Federation failed. Likewise, the Western ideologies such as Marxism or socialism faced terrible consequences. Lonsdale's definition of 'moral ethnicity' as the 'internal standard of civic virtue' against which Africans can measure their personal habits should be contrasted from 'political tribalism' (Lonsdale 2000: 17–21).

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