STATE-BUILDING AND NON-STATE CONFLICTS IN AFRICA[1)]

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Abstract

Contemporary state building intervention in weak states is based on the assumption that once a capable state is instituted, it will be able to ensure peace. Extant literature on state capacity and civil war onset tends to confirm this assumption. However, the relation between state capacity and the onset of non-state conflict is not adequately examined in this literature. This article, which is based on findings from research undertaken by the author at the African Leadership Centre, aims to extend the existing knowledge on state capacity and civil conflict by examining the relation between state capacity and non-state conflict in sub-Saharan Africa using mixed methodological approaches. A statistical analysis of the correlation between three aspects of state capacity and non-state conflict is supplemented with a detailed qualitative analysis of selected states that experience non-state conflicts and those that did not. State capacity is dissected into state effectiveness, legitimacy and monopoly of the means of coercion. The result reveals that the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state are negatively correlated with non-state conflicts in a statistically significant way. However, the qualitative analysis indicates that the role of state capacity in reducing non-state conflicts should not be over-stated. The occurrence or absence of non-state conflicts is influenced by the interplay of multi-faceted factors related to the level of resource scarcity, the strength of customary dispute resolution mechanisms, patterns of intercommunity interaction, nature of state policies and political actors' stake in a conflict.

1. Introduction

The end of the Cold War ushered in the resurgence of internal conflicts that wrought humanitarian disasters, and the breakdown of political authority across the developing world, notably in Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cambodia, former Yugoslavia and the Caucasus in general. In response to these dynamics, peacebuilding and state-building has become the twin goal of Western intervention policies and United Nations (UN) programmes toward conflict prone countries. There is an ongoing debate regarding the feasibility, desirability, successes and failures of these programmes of state-building and peacebuilding both in academic and policy circles (see for example Wienstein 2005; Pugh 2005; Paris 2004; Chandler 2006). Notwithstanding this debate, the agenda of state-building and peacebuilding continues, with its own ramifications for peace and development in the weaker states of the world.

One distinctive feature of these interventions is their top-down approach, and their overriding concern with state institutions to the detriment of local dynamics that are central to non-state conflicts. The emphasis on restructuring the state is the result of two major factors. First, the agenda is driven by a concern for international security posed by conflicts and instability across the Third World. Second, there is an assumption among international state-builders embedded in their liberal institutionalist paradigm of engagement. This approach presumes that well-functioning institutions generate economic and social processes that are supportive of peace (Newman 2011). Accordingly, once an effective state embodying properly functioning institutions is in place, peace is expected to ensue.

The extent to which this holds true regarding non-state conflicts is not yet empirically substantiated and hence the effect of state capacity on the prevalence of non-state conflicts needs to be examined. Do state-building interventions geared to create accountable, effective and legitimate states contribute to reducing the occurrences of non-state conflicts? Do such measures need to be supplemented by other distinctive local level strategies that foster inter-communal peace and reconciliation? Existing literature on the topic falls short of scrutinising this pertinent question in the quest for human security. Hence, this work is a modest attempt to fill this lacuna by investigating the association

between the capacity of states and the prevalence of non-state conflicts employing mixed methodological approaches from sub-Saharan Africa. A statistical analysis of the correlation between state capacity and non-state conflict is supplemented with an in-depth qualitative scrutiny of the relationship between the variables in states that are chosen to this end. The review of extant literature is employed to analyse the case studies, whereas the correlation analysis is undertaken using statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) software.

The term 'non-state conflict' is defined using the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme (Version 2.4-2012). It entails "the use of armed force between two organized armed groups, neither of which is the government of a state, which results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in a year". The armed group could be formally or informally organised, and the arms used could range from any manufactured weapon, sticks, and stone to water. The dataset indicates that most of these conflicts in Africa are related to ethnicity, religion, clan, or even sub-clan that are often dubbed sub-national conflicts or transnational conflict, which states definitely have a role to play in addressing.

The findings reveal that certain aspects of state capacity are weak, but in a statistically significant way, correlated with non-state conflicts. Reinforcing this, the qualitative analysis indicates that state capacity is not the only factor that determines the prevalence of non-state conflicts. The prevalence or otherwise of non-state conflict is a product of multi-faceted factors including the level of resource scarcity, the strength of customary dispute resolution mechanisms, patterns of intercommunity interaction, nature of state policies and political actors' stake in conflict. The article begins with an introductory section setting the background of the article. The second section focuses on discussing state-building, state capacity and conflict followed by a description of the measures of state capacity employed in the article in the third section. After discussing the results of the quantitative work in the fourth section, some cases of non-state conflict and peace are examined in the next two sections. Finally, the article concludes that the presence or absence of a non-state conflict is influenced by multi-faceted factors that are not reducible to state weakness or strength. Hence, policy interventions designed to boost state capacity should not be assumed to have significant effect on the occurrence of non-state conflicts.

2. State-building, state capacity and conflict

The state is a contested concept. Marxist scholars consider it as an institution that stands for the interest of the dominant class (Pierson 1996). Others view the state as a political society constructed through an implicit social contract to provide certain basic functions to its members (Einsiedel 2005). The Weberian view portrays the state as an array of administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive institutions that monopolise the legitimate means of violence (Skocpol 1985). Another commonly used definition views the state as an embodiment of people, territory, government and sovereignty. For the purpose of this article, the term 'state' is understood as a territorially embedded set of institutions that perform certain basic functions essential for the existence of a properly functioning political community. The low level of institutionalisation in many African states has meant that privately motivated actions and decisions of individuals holding various positions in the state could be expressed in its name. Hence, the definition employed here does not exclude the personnel working in the institutions of the state.

The concept and practice of state-building evolved out of the recognition of the dangers of state failure and weakness. Understood as states that are unable or unwilling to provide political good to their citizens (Carment 2003), these states are considered to be dangerous for their own people and the international community. The logical response for state failure and fragility is state-building. It entails building the capacity and institutions of the state to make it effective in discharging its core functions. Notwithstanding that contemporary state-building interventions focus on institution building, state-building also entails the strengthening of social contract and a sense of belonging, duty and entitlement. A number of interrelated measures are identified to this effect. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development — Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) (2008) advocates promoting democratic governance, economic liberalisation or marketisation, and increasing its functional capacity. The United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DFID 2010) understands state-building in terms of addressing the causes of fragility and conflict, supporting inclusive political settlement, enhancing the delivery of core state functions, and responding to public expectations. According to the

Crisis Challenge Research (Putzel and John 2012), state resilience is ensured through the monopoly of legitimate violence, the territorial embeddedness of state administration, state monopoly of taxation, and institutional hegemony. Call (2010) disentangled the practice of state-building in terms of addressing the three major gaps of statehood: the security gap, capacity gap and legitimacy gap. The Center for Global Development measured each gap in terms of battle deaths, childhood immunisation, and voice and accountability respectively (Rice and Patrick 2008).

The practice of state-building is presumed to boost the capacity of states, which in turn is accepted to dampen the onset, reduce the duration, and facilitate the resolution of conflicts (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Braithwaite 2010). State capacity supposedly reduces conflict by influencing two of the most popularised categories of motives for conflict: opportunity or feasibility and grievances. The opportunity structure of violence is argued to be the primary driver of conflict, meaning that the onset of conflict is determined by the feasibility of rebellion. Rebellion will not occur unless its opportunity cost outweighs the gain from peace (Collier 2007). For other scholars, political, economic and cultural grievances are the primary driver of conflict (Heger and Selhyan 2007; Stewart and Brown 2007; Gurr 2007). Notwithstanding the debate, state capacity influences the two categories of causes of violence. It not only increases the repressive capacity of states and thereby reduces the opportunity cost of rebellion but also increases the power of states to address grievances that could potentially lead to conflict. Though the findings mentioned above apply only for civil wars that cause 1 000 or more deaths per year, a similar outcome is expected with non-state conflicts.

3. Method and measurements

In this article, state capacity is dissected into three dimensions along the line of Call (2010): monopoly of violence, institutional capacity to deliver core functions, and the legitimacy of state institutions. These elements are essential because a state that successfully claims a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence is able to manage non-state contradictions in non-violent ways and legitimately deal with violent contenders using instruments deemed appropriate for the task. The prevalence of adequate justice delivery institutions buttresses this

legitimate monopoly of the means of violence, and the legitimacy of a state's institutions reinforces the process of non-violent management of conflicts. A state's capacity to deliver basic services to its people could reduce scarcity driven tensions by devising coping mechanisms that assist communities to live side by side. State-building geared toward these aspects of state capacity is thus presumed to reduce the incidence of non-state conflicts. Hence, states that have fared well in these dimensions are likely to encounter fewer incidents of non-state conflicts.

Measures of state capacity (weakness or fragility) have been undertaken by various organisations. However, many organisations started to measure state capacity only recently. This precludes an analysis of their relation with conflicts for an extended period. For instance, the World Bank's (WB) country institutional assessment has been made public since 2003; the fund for peace index started in 2005; and the Bertelsmann Stiftung (BTI) began in 2003. On the other hand, the Uppsala data base on non-state conflict covers all incidents of conflict since 1990. Moreover, most of these proxies measured state capacity in terms of the outcome a capable state achieves, thereby conflating state capacity with other factors that could potentially contribute to the same outcome (Hanson and Sigman 2011). Hence, the study on which this article is based adopts an attribute-based measurement that assesses state capacity through the attributes a capable state exhibits.

Accordingly, the coercive capacity of the state is measured in terms of military spending as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The data is collected from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data set. The average for the years between 1996 and 2010 is considered for the three variables of state capacity. The state's administrative capacity is measured by using the Worldwide Governance Indicator's (WGI) measures of government effectiveness. The WGI data is collected from a range of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and private sector firms. It measures governance performance of states in a range between -2.5 and 2.5, the two extremes representing weak and strong performances respectively. In relation to governance effectiveness, it measures the quality of public service, the independence of the civil service, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of government commitment to such policies. These serve as a proxy for a state's capacity to undertake key functions. The legitimacy aspect is measured by using WGI's data on voice and accountability,

and rule of law. Voice and accountability focuses on the ability of citizens to vote for their government, and the degree of respect for freedom of expression, association and free media. The rule of law is measured using the quality of police, court, contract enforcement, and citizen's confidence in, and adherence to, the rules of the society. The incidence of non-state conflicts is measured by using the Uppsala database on non-state armed conflicts. The study has also examined other variables, mainly ethnic fractionalisation and population number, and their correlation with the prevalence of non-state conflicts. While the data for ethnic fractionalisation is acquired from Fearon's (2003) ethnic fractionalisation index, the population of the states is assembled from Google sources.

At the outset it should be noted that these may not capture the totality of the phenomena under study. Measures of legitimacy, for instance, may not capture the issue of legitimacy in its entirety as it could be secured in various ways ranging from democratic participation and guarantee of rights, traditions of statehood to service delivery. Similarly, the military spending/GDP ratio may indicate a regime's perceived security need rather than its coercive capacity.

4. Results

Since most of the variables are ordinal scale with significant outliers, in place of the Pearson coefficient correlation, a spearman rank correlation was employed. Accordingly, the incidence of non-state conflict has no correlation with the coercive capacity of the state, coerciveness measured in terms of military spending/GDP ratio (rs=0.084, p=0.577). Statistical assumptions suggest that this could be due to one of the following factors. First, there may not be any systematic correlation between non-state conflicts and the level of security capacity of the state. Second, there could be a systematic relationship that is not linear. However, a scatter plot of the two variables does not indicate the prevalence of this kind of relationship. Third, there might be a problem in the measurement of the variables. As noted above, the amount of military spending is not a guarantee to its effectiveness in monopolising the means of violence. In fact, it could signify the regime's perception of its security need. This logic cannot be excluded from the analysis. Finally, either or both of the variables may be too similar and thus zeros the relationship. The data on conflict incident has cases ranging from

0 to 63 with the majority of the cases (60 per cent) having zero values whereas the military expenditure data is fairly diverse. The identification of correlation between conflict incident and other variables discussed below indicate that this could not be a reason for the above result. Hence, it is difficult to conclude whether this is a product of measurement error or the actual lack of correlation. Previous studies on the subject in relation to civil war came up with inconclusive results (see Hendrix 2010; Collier and Hoeffler 2004).

The incidence of non-state conflicts and regime legitimacy are negatively correlated in a statistically significant way at 0.05 level of confidence (Rs=-0.296, p=-0.02). This confirms the theoretical postulate that the more the state is legitimate, the more the people will be reliant on the state to resolve domestic discontents. It also concurs with WB's (2011) contention that the degree of government legitimacy is an indicator of a country's vulnerability to conflicts. Hence, state-building efforts directed at boosting the legitimacy of the state not only reduce state-society tension but also ease tensions within the society at large. A legitimate state could be considered as a neutral arbiter and hence groups revert to legal procedures for resolving their contradictions. However, this correlation is not a strong one, which could be the result of the limited number of cases.

The statistical correlation between government effectiveness and conflict incidence is weak, albeit statistically significant (r=-0.250, p=-0.04). Like legitimacy, government effectiveness is not strongly correlated with the prevalence of non-state conflicts. This could be because of two major reasons. First, state effectiveness could be territorially limited, and as such, a country scoring high on government effectiveness could actually have spatially differentiated results. Second, effectiveness by itself does not imply the will to use that capability. A fairly effective state may not have the will to proactively intervene in potentially violence generating societal tensions.

Ethnic fractionalisation is associated with the incidence of non-state conflicts in a statistically significant way (r=0.433, p=0.03). This correlation is stronger than what is observed for legitimacy and effectiveness. This concurs with Vanhanen's (1999) argument that some kind of ethnic conflict is inevitable in ethnically divided states. Even if he lumped both violent and non-violent conflict together, the finding here applies only to the violent ones that resulted in 25 or more deaths per year.

Similarly, population number and non-state conflicts are strongly correlated in a statistically significant way at 0.01 level of confidence ($r=0.581$, $p=0.00$). It is interesting to observe that this correlation is very strong, and statistically the most significant of all the variables examined in this article. Fearon and Laitin (2003) and Urdal (2006) also concur with the above result; the former do so even after controlling ethnic fractionalisation. Large populations may signify large territory, which is difficult to control by the state, and a high level of ethno-linguistic diversity that makes conflict occurrence easier. However, ethno-linguistic diversity is found to be statistically unrelated to civil war onset (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). This ruled out the idea that the relationship between population number and conflict could be through its effect on ethno-linguistic diversity. The strong correlation could be explained by the combined effect of an ethno-linguistically diverse and large number of people occupying different ecological niches that are administered through similar policies and institutions.

The analysis so far reveals that a state's functional effectiveness and its legitimacy in formulating and implementing policies are negatively correlated with non-state conflicts. An increase in the legitimacy and effectiveness of states is observed to go together with a slight decrease in the incidence of non-state conflicts. However, this correlation cannot be taken to indicate causality, the assertion of which requires controlling other potentially relevant variables. Even when the correlation is used to infer causation given the theoretically compelling base of the relationship between state capacity and conflict, the contribution of the two aspects of state capacity is minimal in policy terms. Hence, policy interventions designed to increase state effectiveness and legitimacy should not be assumed to significantly reduce the incidences of non-state conflicts.

5. Case studies on state capacity and non-state conflicts

Selected states that experience non-state conflicts (Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia) and those that did not (Tanzania, Senegal and Niger) were analysed to substantiate the results of the quantitative analysis. In the former category, causes of inter-communal conflicts were studied to identify the role of the state in it. In the latter groups of

states the factors explaining the absence of a non-state conflict and the role of state capacity therein is explored. To this end, an analysis of the extant literature is undertaken. The review indicates that though the state contributed to the occurrence of non-state conflicts in various ways, the effect of state (in)capacity on the prevalence or otherwise of non-state conflicts should not be overstated. There are a number of factors other than state (in)capacity that have bearing on non-state conflicts.

Based on the nature and extent of state involvement in these conflicts they can be categorised into conflicts driven by state policy, those accentuated by state elites, and conflict driven by local agenda only.

5.1 Conflicts driven by defective state policies

State policies designed for administrative purpose, at times, generate or accentuate conflicts in these countries. In Kenya, a land tenure system that failed to ensure land security is often cited as a factor for the various land related conflicts in the rift valley area (Wakhungu, Nyukuri and Huggins 2008). The division and re-division of administrative boundaries has also caused conflicts in the pastoral areas. In the Mandera area of Kenya, the provincial administrators' decision to create locations and sub-locations triggered destructive competition between the Garre and Murrule in their respective elite's bid to dominate these institutions (UNDP 2010). In Ethiopia the ethnic based federal arrangement has legally limited the movement of pastoralists, and aggravated agro-pastoral conflicts (Boku and Gufu 2009). It also heightened ethnic identity and mistrust, increased inter-group and inter-clan rivalry, caused conflict in border demarcation, and accentuated the existing inter-group conflicts (Asnake 2009). In Sudan, administrative division and re-division led to endless tribal conflicts in the conflict ridden Darfur region (Young *et al* 2005; Sørbø 2010). The government divided the region into tribal *Dar* (an arrangement that considers every tribe as a territorial unit) that were granted local councils and tribal administrations based on their political loyalty to the center, and Islamic commitment of the local chiefs (Manger 2006). The result is that "every single tribe … should know every inch of its land or should acquire by all means new lands that could give its identity among other tribes" (Takana 2008, 10). Consequently, each tribe has engaged in at least one conflict with other tribes over territorial issues (Takana 2008).

Furthermore, discriminatory state policies that favour some regions and marginalise others set the background for these inter-communal conflicts. The eastern and south eastern part of Ethiopia, the north eastern and western part of Kenya, the northern part of Uganda and the western, eastern and southern part of Sudan are all marginalised areas both politically and economically. These are the areas where the majority of the conflicts are taking place. State policies that fail to prioritise national integration and equitable economic growth contributed to inter-communal violence in these regions.

5.2 Conflicts accentuated by state elites

Sometimes, government elites incite conflict for their own selfish interests. Local level inter-communal conflicts are often incited by local level ethnic entrepreneurs, who are vying to control local state institutions. In some parts of Kenya, conflicts among ethnic groups flared up during election times through the manipulation of local grievances and tensions. A study indicated that the Garre-Murulle conflict often re-ignites during elections due to local elites' manipulation of parochial identity (UNDP 2010). Likewise, the recent conflict between the Garre and the Borna was partly caused by the desire of local ethnic/clan elites to dominate the Marsabit County. In these pastoral areas, local politicians have used conflict as an instrument to uproot the political base of their opponents, to build their support base, and to collect money for election campaigns (Kratli and Swift 1999). Though not reducible to ethnic manipulation alone, the 1990s ethnic conflicts in the rift valley region of Kenya were the result of the political elites' desire to uproot members of non-Keljin ethnic groups who by default are supporters of the opposition (Osamba 2001, Kanyinga 2009). Likewise, the confluence of politicians' desire to uproot supporters of the opposition, and the indigenous elites demand for more opportunities and resources resulted in conflict between the Luyha and Sabaot in the Mt Elgon area (Lynch 2011).

In the Ethiopian case too, the various inter-communal conflicts are accentuated or triggered by local elite's manipulation of ethnic identity. The federal restructuring ushered in the Gedeo elite domination of local administration in Gedeo Zone generating grievances on the part of the Guji elite which finally leads to rounds of violence (Assebe 2007). In Gambella Regional State the restructuring generated rivalry

between the Anuwak and the Neur elites to control the regional government resulting in substantial inter-ethnic violence (Lubo 2012, Abbink 2011). Similarly, in the Benishangul Gumuze regional state, the competition between the Gumuze and the Berta elites to dominate the regional administration resulted in inter-ethnic clashes between the two groups (Asnake 2009). Local elites could also trigger inter-ethnic or inter-clan conflict because of their repression of, and discrimination against, minority groups in their domain. The conflict between the Keffa majority and the Manja occupational minority group in Keffa Zone was caused by the former's institutional domination of, and discrimination against, the latter (Alemayehu 2009). Likewise, in the Darfur region of Sudan, the conflict among the various tribes and ethnic groups was aggravated by local government officials' alliance with, and bias toward their own tribe or ethnic group (Sørbø 2010).

5.3 Conflicts driven by local community agenda

A number of conflicts in these countries were caused by stress related to scarcity of resources and they exhibit certain patterns throughout the region. Population pressures, environmental degradation, change in climatic conditions and cultural practices are the underpinning factors in these conflicts. They usually occur between pastoralists and settled agriculturalists, and among pastoralists themselves (Amutabi 2010; Leff 2009; UNDP Sudan 2007). In the north western and north eastern part of Kenya, the various pastoralists are in a perennial state of conflict among themselves and with pastoralists of Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan. The conflicts between the Marakwet and the Pokot and the Pokot and the Karamajong, as well as among the various Somali clans are a case in point. These conflicts are related to access to pasture and water (Leff 2009). The conflict in the Karamoja area of Uganda is also driven by competition over pasture and water, which is reinforced by the practice of cattle raiding and counter-raiding. Though the practice of cattle raiding was used as a means of redistribution and maintenance of balance among pastoralists (Jabs 2007; Krätli and Swift 1999), it has recently acquired a commercial purpose. In Ethiopia, the conflict between the Afars and Somalis in the Shenile Zone, and the Afars and the Keryu Oromos in the Awash valley were also related to access to grazing land and water. Similarly, all of the 23 conflicts recorded in Kordofan region of Sudan in 2001 were resource based, and all were

among settlers and pastoralists (UNDP Sudan 2007). These local level resource based conflicts were at times interwoven with national and regional dynamics.

The review so far indicates that the actions of states could cause or aggravate conflicts either through the policies they pursued or the opportunistic acts of its personnel. States are also implicated in these conflicts in their failure to manage them before they escalate into large-scale violence.

6. State capacity and absence of non-state conflicts

The absence of serious inter-communal violence (25 or more deaths per year) in Tanzania, Senegal and Niger is examined to evaluate the contributions of state capacity to this state of affairs. These countries were chosen for their varied socio-economic and governance performance, and a high level of ethnic fractionalisation.

6.1 Tanzania

Tanzania is one of the most relatively stable countries in East Africa both nationally and at sub-national level. After being ruled by a single party for a long period of time, Tanzania began political liberalisation in the early 1990s. Since then, the dominant party has been ruling the country by winning consecutive elections. Tanzania has better state capacity than sub-Saharan Africa countries average in the period of the study discussed in this article (1996-2010). While its overall average legitimacy score is -0.37, its overall average government effectiveness score is -0.45. The average legitimacy and effectiveness score for sub-Saharan Africa is -0.66 and -0.74 respectively. Tanzania has zero non-state conflicts as per the Uppsala Dataset. Does the state's legitimacy and effectiveness explain the absence of non-state conflict in Tanzania? Or is it the result of the absence of factors that caused conflicts elsewhere?

Green (2011) asserts that the primary explanatory factor for political stability of the Tanzanian state is the relatively equal dispersion of land and capital. As horizontal inequality among various groups is considered to be a major cause of conflicts, its absence could explain the

prevailing political stability in the country. The existence of abundant land, which is evenly distributed throughout mainland Tanzania, could reduce local level ethnic tensions. It also appears to deny local and national political entrepreneurs the local grievances to capitalise on. However, the abundance of cultivable land does not entirely explain the absence of local level grievances. The legitimacy mustered by the state and the party is also essential. As Whitehead (2012) indicates the peasantry granted wider legitimacy to the Tanzanian state and the dominant Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party.

A survey of peasant choice in rural Tanzania shows that part of the reason for this wider legitimacy is the party's role in bringing independence, in ensuring peace, and in its rural bias during the time of the single party rule (O'Gorman, 2012). The Ujamma nation building project also contributed to national unity and stability through its preoccupation with regional equality and unity (Whitehead 2012). Unity was promoted by encouraging Kswahili language, discouraging tribalism and civic education programmes, whereas equality was promoted through equitable access to education and health services. Poorer regions were given priority in the processes of equalisation (Whitehead 2012). Hence, land abundance precludes the prevalence of resource related conflict, and the policy of equalisation attenuated the politicisation of ethnicity by the elites. In as far as most resource conflicts are shaped by "social identities, political interests, historical precedent, and the defense of broader principle" (Turner *et al* 2011, 185), the interface of government policies and land abundance across all groups appears to explain the absence of non-state conflicts. Hence, the ease of accessing resources, mainly land, the effectiveness and legitimacy of the state in controlling the resource allocation process explains the absence of non-state conflict in Tanzania.

However, there are micro-conflicts in the country that are not captured by the data set as the yearly death rate is below the level required to be a non-state conflict as per the data set. Pastoralists-farmers conflicts are reportedly common in Usangu plain and Kagera region, which are caused by crop damage, competition over water, obstruction of livestock routes, and inter-village competition for cultivation (Kajembe *et al* 2003; Alao 2007).

6.2 Senegal

Senegal is one of the best-performing African countries with stable democracy. It has been politically stable throughout its post-independence history in a region characterised by a general state of violence, and has not experienced non-state conflict notwithstanding the low level insurgency in the Casamance region. It also has a good record in the measures of state effectiveness and legitimacy. While its average legitimacy score is -11, its government effectiveness score is -0.23 in the 1996-2010 period. This is superior to sub-Saharan Africa average score as well as its neighbours' score. Does the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state explain the absence of non-state conflicts in the country? State policy that marginalises some regions is one of the causes of conflict in marginalised areas as it is observed in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan. Similar trends of regional marginalisation are prevalent in Senegal notwithstanding the absence of violent conflict in the neglected areas. The Senegalese state pursued a generally urban biased policy as with many other African countries, and this led to the neglect of rural areas. However, little inter-communal conflict is observed in the rural areas. As various cases of conflict management efforts in the country appear to indicate, this cannot be explained by the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state in implementing policies and ensuring law and order. The state's effectiveness in rural areas is limited due to lack of adequate human capital, centralisation, poor and deteriorating infrastructure (BTI 2012). Local disputes are resolved through traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution because of the cost and complicated procedures involved in the court system (BTI 2012).

The following cases presented by O'Bannon (2006) also signify the extent to which local administrations fail to handle conflicts between local communities. In 1998, herders planned to have a pond in an area far from the cropping field to avoid crop destruction and potential conflict. To this end, the herders requested financial assistance from the rural council. The council failed to cover their cost as a result of which they went to a higher level of authority, the sub-prefect, to no avail. Similarly, in the village of Niandoul, conflicts over a water well used to occur frequently. There was only one well in the area which was used by both the villagers and the pastoralists. The latter's cattle disruption of the well-used to generate disputes between the two groups. Having

failed to secure the assistance of the local authority in accommodating the needs of the two groups, the villagers approached an internationally financed local microcredit agency to cover part of the cost of the new well proposed to serve the villagers only. The African development foundation, an international organisation, paid part of the cost for this new well. These two cases indicate the inability of local governance structures to effectively mediate conflicts. Hence, the legitimacy and effectiveness of the state appears to have little contribution to the prevalence of non-state peace.

Different factors appear to contribute to the non-state peace in Senegal. First, the rural population is sparsely populated. The sparse nature of the population distribution could contribute to lessening resource related stresses, and hence dampen violent confrontations among communities. Second, urban migration and migration abroad (mainly France) helped the local community to get remittances, which reduces extreme forms of deprivation and the consequent societal stress. Finally, the various ethnic groups in the country are closely related to one another, and have a long history of peaceful coexistence dating back to the 12th century Malian empires (BTI 2008). Thus, there has been an entrenched traditional mechanism of conflict resolution among local communities (Gueye, 1994).

6.3 Niger

Niger is an underperformer in the two aspects of state capacity. Its legitimacy score is -0.64, while its effectiveness score is -0.86, and that it is an ethnically fractionalised country with an ethnic fractionalisation score of 0.651. Qualitative study also indicates that the state has limited monopoly of the use of force. Its administrative reach is limited to urban areas that literally outsourced the administration of the rural population to local chiefs (BTI 2003). Even in urban areas, the police lacked many of the rudiments for providing effective security. The administrative system is incompetent and corruption-ridden. Niger has also been characterised by dictatorial rule, and political instability has marked its post-independence history. The Toubau and Tuareg ethnic groups wage separatist insurgencies because of perceived marginalisation and lack of proper representation in the institutions of the central government (BTI Niger 2003).

This notwithstanding, Niger is a peaceful country by and large in

terms of non-state conflict. Hence, it is an important case as it demonstrates the idea that the weakness of the state does not necessarily lead to non-state conflicts. This is so even in the face of increasing scarcity of water resources and the resultant competition. The Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) (September 2006), citing the French National Centre for Scientific Research indicated that rainfall in Niger has declined by as much as 30 to 50 per cent. This has changed the previously arable land into a barren one, thereby resulting in over-utilisation of the areas conducive for farming. Consequently, 45 per cent of Niger's land is in the range of either severely degraded or very severely degraded (Vanderlin 2000). Hence, abundance of land and water does not explain the absence of non-state conflicts in the country, which partly is the case for Tanzania.

However, there are a number of micro-conflicts almost all of which are settled by customary conflict resolution mechanisms (Snorek 2011; Vanderlin 2000). Apparently, the strength of local institutions seems to prevent these conflicts from escalating to the level of destruction experienced in other African states. On closer scrutiny, there is more to it than just institutional strength. Turner *et al*'s (2011) comparative study of four villages in Niger indicates that in areas where there is a convergence of livelihood, there develops a mechanism of contract herding. According to this arrangement, farmers and herders enter into a contract as part of which herders look after the livestock of farmers. Since the herders are from another group, the process generated frequent contact, trust, interdependence, and common interest among the farmers and pastoralists. In communities where there is no such arrangement more incidents of conflicts are reported. Thus, we witness an increasing numbers of localised disputes that are kept from escalating by cross cutting networks and mutual interests. The point is that competition over scarce resources in weak states does not necessarily lead to the prevalence of non-state conflicts.

7. Conclusion

This article has examined the relationship between state capacity and non-state conflicts employing mixed methodological approaches. The findings of the quantitative work revealed that the effectiveness and legitimacy of a state are negatively correlated with the prevalence of non-state conflicts, albeit a weak correlation. The qualitative analysis further

indicates that these states caused or accentuated non-state conflicts in their misguided policy and biased acts. These states are either part of the cause of the conflict or fail to be part of the solution. Two major factors are found in cases where there are no major conflicts. First, the state has not been involved in political manipulations of groups in a manner that ignites conflicts, which is the case in states affected by conflict. The fact that weak states could also refrain from political manipulation of conflicts necessitates a further study on why and under what conditions the elites of weak states refrain from this. Second, in such states national contradictions are not interwoven with local problems, as has happened in Darfur. The more a local non-state conflict is interwoven with national contradictions, the more the numbers of actors of conflict, the wider the issues and scale of the conflict, and the more difficult its resolution. Hence, we observe low intensity conflicts in Niger and Tanzania that do not escalate to the level considered as a conflict by the Uppsala data set on non-state conflicts as these local conflicts are not embedded in conflicts at other levels. State capacity contributes to dampening non-state conflicts through its effect on these two factors. A capable state refrains from interfering in societal affairs in a manner that incites conflicts. It could also ease the depth of national level contradictions thereby attenuating their effects on, and connections with, local level tensions.

However, both the qualitative and quantitative analyses indicate that the relation between state capacity and non-state conflicts should not be overstated. Non-state conflict, as all others, are complex phenomena affected by factors related to the level of resource scarcity, the strength of customary or local dispute resolution mechanisms, patterns of intercommunity interaction, nature of state policies and political actors' stake in conflict. It is the prevalence of these conflict-generating factors or the existence of resilient mechanisms of non-state conflict resolution that mediate the occurrence of non-state conflicts. The prevalence of a number of non-state conflicts driven by local agenda in Uganda, and the prevalence of non-state peace in spite of the existence of the same conflict generating factors in Niger reflect the point made here. Though a relatively strong state (Uganda) and a weak state (Niger) both failed to intervene to manage conflicts, factors other than state capacity caused significant divergence in the incidence of non-state conflict between the two countries. The modest correlation identified in the quantitative work also affirms the same point.

Endnotes

1. This article emerged from research undertaken by the author at the African Leadership Centre (ALC) in 2013 with a research report submitted to the ALC upon completion.

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