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Cultural Heritage and Nation-Building – a key issue of the cultural conflict at the state/society interface

paper for the parliamentarian workshop of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia

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1   Problem

In many developing countries, the process of nation-building is still under way. Enormous gaps in respect to economic, legal and technical development are paralleled by a multitude of religions, various styles and levels of education as well as by cultural heterogeneity. Such social constraints complicate not only the creation of a national spirit of community. In the form of institutional contradictions they may even form the background of far reaching social conflicts. This is particularly the case, if such conflicts are paralleled by institutional constraints.

The following paper refers to a core-conflict of this complex of social problems, that is the social and political impact of the cultural heritage on political development and endangered processes of nation-building. The author thinks that political opinion-leaders and state officials should be aware of the conflicting potential, the cultural heritage may have on political and legal ways of decision-making, on processes of economic and political development, on the forming of group identities, individual life-styles, religious beliefs and on the different capabilities to integrate new skills of cooperation that should lead to a better living-together. He hopes that the awareness of the social and cultural living conditions in society could improve processes of crisis prevention, conflict mediation, development cooperation and nation-building.

Starting point is the following observation: A high percentage of the total population has never been integrated in the „rational institution" (Max Weber) of a nation state. Such parts of the population were never socialized by the binding power of state institutions, political parties or associations that may nationalize the individual. Concerned is particularly the population in the countryside – with an illiteracy rate up to 90% for women – who can not deal with a western comprehension of modern democracy. Rural populations and lower classes think seldom in categories like parliamentarism with its multi-party system, like the classical separation in state and pluralistic society, like the rule of law or the rationale of bureaucratic decision-making within the public service. Their daily living conditions are marked by traditional production systems (like shifting cultivation, rain field cultivation, horticulture, cattle

breading, running irrigation systems etc.). Therefore, the rural population orientate itself largely at traditional kin-based systems of relationship as well as at traditional political structures and their corresponding normative orders.

This statement however raises a series of questions: Is there scientific evidence that can prove the correlation between economic living conditions and cultural mentalities? What is meant with terms like "traditional", "rational institution" etc. in such a context? And how does such a statement fit into the ongoing good governance discourse that starts from quite different normative and political assumptions? For reasons of a better understanding, I would like to start with the latter question, which constitutes an important element of the key-problem.

1.1 To the non-awareness of political history and political development within the good governance debate

In the ongoing GG-discourse the political history of industrial societies is sometimes replaced by a crude naivety in respect to the course of European history. With a less anachronistic perspective one could learn more from European „traditions" than one would like, because the social, political and economic conditions under which democracy grew up in Europe, differ much from what the GG-discourse expects now from developing countries: Until the beginning of the 20th century *„long labor days, child labor and abominable labor conditions"* were very common*. „Mass emigration was a safety valve (...). Superfluous, unemployed, disinherited Europeans could still move to the US or the other colonies to build an economic existence at the cost of the local population there. (...) There was no democracy as we understand it now. (...) Where some of these conditions are given in third world states, they are (now) regarded as highly undesirable, such as gender discrimination, child labor, inhuman labor conditions, the repression of workers associations, political inequality. (But) other conditions that facilitated economic growth (and political stability) are not given. (Most developing countries) do not have overseas colonies to exploit, and the exploitation of their internal colonies or indigenous population groups is not compatible with democratic organization and*

international law and conventions" (Franz von Benda-Beckmann[1], 2001:52). The Good Governance enterprise is therefore something very new and it is also at an important crossroad: Does it take the historical essentials of the recipient countries as well as the one of the former colonizers into consideration or does it just become a new instrument of the rulers ideology, declaring simply what is actually meant with "modern", "general", "universal" and "global"? Therefore, the following paper does not refer much to the ongoing GG-debate. Instead, it refers to social anthropological findings that are concerned with the social and political impact of the *cultural heritage* and with *intercultural correlations.*

1.2   Social anthropological discussions on the impact of the cultural heritage on processes of the nation-building

The ongoing scientific investigations show that the social cohesion of a modern nation state is particularly endangered, if the cultural heterogeneity of a society refers not only to diverse languages, religions or normative orders but also to *technological and economic gaps* that can be paralleled by different cultural mentalities. This for two reasons:

- In societies, where the level of market integration is low, local particularities can much easier develop. Economic autarky is an important precondition for the mobilisation of local mentalities.
- It is much easier to mobilize mental structures of specific cultural units, if their cultural identity can be paralleled with feelings of social exclusion and unfavourable economic developments.

Many researches show the various *exogenous factors* of a globalized world market that produce various processes of social exclusion and political instability. But there are *endogenous factors* as well. An important one concerns the question of the **cultural heritage**: *In how far could the cultural heritage of developing countries explain why the same processes of nation-building and economic growth produce so different results? Are there some*

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[1] Prof. Dr. Franz von Benda-Beckmann is the head of the Working Group „Legal Pluralism" at the Max-Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle, Germany

cultural pre-conditions that might help to understand, why the same development programs end up in some countries in full success, in others in a fiasco?

In the mid 80s the Department of Social Anthropology of the University of Zurich (Switzerland) started a research program that investigated the cultural heritage as an endogen key issue of the cultural conflict at the state/society interface in developing countries[2]. One outcome of this research was the publication of an „Atlas of pre-colonial societies". On the basis of the existing literature the research team operationalized the cultural units of *all Asian and African countries*. It designed maps that show several dimensions of the cultural heritage, with which the different nation-states have to deal with. They enrich the scientific debate and give political decision-makers an important instrument in the hand that improves the understanding of problems of the national cohesion. Therefore the following discussion refers on that research.

2 Cultural heritage and socio-political development: a scientific model

If one wants to explain scientifically, how the cultural heritage of developing countries influences processes of nation-building and economic growth and why the same political and economic programs end up in sometimes very different results, one has to develop *a scientific model of social development*. Such can refer to the following criteria:

- It should clarify, what is meant with "cultural heritage" and key-terms like "tradition" or "traditional power structure", "modern" or "modern state" or "modern styles of governance"
- It should establish comparative criteria for the political historical background of the different cultural units
- It should look for definitions and indicators that can easily be quantified. Such data could allow large-scale correlations between thousands of different cultural units and could allow discovering some general rules.

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[2] See the publications of Müller, Hans-Peter, Kock, Claudia and Anna v. Ditfurth (1990) as well as Müller, Hans-Peter, Kock, Claudia, Seiler-Schiedt, Eva and Arpagaus, Brigitte (1999)

Working hypothesis:

2.1   Key-terms

2.1.1 Key-term 1: Social development

<u>Social development is defined as an *improvement of social complexity.*</u>

Social, political and economic <u>complexity</u>
With the terms of (progressive) social, political and economic <u>*complexity*</u> the team referred to the process of growing social integration, starting from social autarky to nationalization and globalization. The social anthropologist Müller (1990:14) argues that:
Ever spacious, ever dense, ever differentiated and ever imperative social relations are, the stronger is the process of nationalization and the lower is social autarky.

With the different qualities (spacious and dense relations, level of differentiated relations, imperative social relations) different aspects of social complexity during the development from subsistant societies to a nation-state are on the spot: Subsistant societies are in general marked by susbsistant economies, small-scale relationships (for instance daily relations only within its own kin-group or the neighbourhood, except in cases of marriages), local knowledge and local language, low level of inner hierarchy and no social differentiation in economic classes or the like. Such social structures complicate the establishment of spacious interconnections as well as their density: The subsistant economy does not favor the need of an exchange of goods (no market integration); it limits the density of social relations with outsiders (only in case of danger or other spora-dic forms of social contacts), the local languages complicate spacious inter-connections out of its own cultural unit and the low level of inner hierarchy limits the degree of inner role differentiations. If however multiple local groupings are joined together to chiefdoms, the different cultural units are often distinguished by different levels of internal social differentiation (from a low level of economic differentiation as f. i. individual differences of wealth up to a complex stratum

in social classes with job differentiation and even towns are possible that allow the development of an endogenous urban culture). At the other end of the scale one can find cultural units with a very spacious political centralization. Then, the cultural units differ by the degree of internal social differentiation and by the level of centralization.

Social and political complexity may be related to quite different institutional structures. Spacious social interconnections may be based on kinship relations (European aristocracy), military organizations (Incas), technology and bureaucracy (China), ideology (Islam), commerce and trade relations (North- and West Africa) or on systems of productivity that refer to the labor division (capitalistic industrial societies). In each time the dominant sector of society varies, on which the most spacious social interconnection is based on and so do also the fields of conflict between these sectors and the central power of a modern nation-state.

For reasons of a general comprehension, the work operates also with terms like „modernity" and „tradition". Both terms may often signal a strong ideological link. Here however, the terms refer to distinct forms of social behaviour.

2.1.2 Key-term 2: Tradition, traditional power

<u>Tradition</u>, <u>traditional</u> power

The scientists follow Max Weber (1976:83), who defines a power structure as *traditional, if its legitimacy refers to (and is based on) the <u>holyness</u> of old orders and powers of a general master* (Herrengewalten). The master is selected by the power of older, long lasting traditional rules. To respond to a master happens by the „power of dignity" of the traditional rules. The master or ruler is not just a „superior" but a „personal master", its administrative body is not composed by „bureaucrats" but by „dignitaries", the ruled (those who are ruled) are not „members of an association or a party" but „subordinates".

The relationship between the master and its subordinates is not dominated by an „official duty", but by the servants „faithfulness".

2.1.3 Key-term 3: <u>Modernity</u>, <u>modern</u> styles of governance, <u>modern</u> state

With the term „modern", „modern styles of governance", „modern state" etc. the scientists refer to the *time of enlightment*, when the „rationalism" started to penetrate the mode and style of governance. An important outcome of that time was the growing „bureaucracy". It refers to „specialized forms of enrolment" (the schooling of the children, the distribution of diploma etc.) and on a new understanding of social „discipline" as an absolute (pre-)condition for success. The „rational" character of a bureaucratically organization is based on the ideal of the „objective impersonality", on „invented rules", on „methods" and „purposes". Within a „modern" bureaucratic organization not the „holyness" of older orders or the „power of dignity" but the kind of „diploma" plays a key-role for the „function" a person can fulfill.

Such a differentiation in various forms of social behaviour is important if one wants to understand current conflicts between state officials and local populations as well as the cultural conflict between the culture of a modern state administration and the various styles of political decision-making within other cultural units.

2.2   The deadline of social change as basic for inter-cultural correlations

For reasons of the scientific systematization, the researching team took the year 1960 as deadline. 1960 is the year when the process of decolonization started in general. With „cultural heritage" is therefore meant the cultural capital each developing country brought into the developing process *after* 1960.

The general assumptions were:

a) The traditional economies were of course subject to many changes since 1960. But *the cultural dispositions of social behaviour*, which have its strong

> roots in the past, *do not change from one day to the other.* They continue to have a strong impact on the principal structures of the living conditions *as long as there are <u>no</u> economic alternatives* (missing market integration; no or only occasional access to cash; progressive impoverishment) *that allow to develop <u>and implement</u> new perspectives of life.*
>
> b) When the process of decolonization started, the various growing nation-states had to nationalize quite different cultural groupings. And because the cultural dispositions of social behaviour vary strongly, each country had another conflict profile and to deal with distinct but different cultural barriers.

It is therefore up to the investigation to show how the specific „cultural heritage" could explain the various struggles in which the nation-states were involved during the different processes of social, political and economic development.

2.3   Indicators of social complexity in traditional societies

In the centre of the work was the attempt, to get a statistical value (index) of the level of socio-cultural development of each cultural unit on the basis of 19 indicators. They refer to the domains of <u>economic growth</u> (esp. technologies of subsistant economy), <u>society</u> (esp. the levels of socio-political differentiation) and <u>mental culture</u> (script, religion). They allowed the isolation of various culture types and cultural styles that are conflicting with the modern nation-state.

Table of the indicators

Subsistant economy

portion of agriculture on the production of subsistance
portion of pastoralism on the production of subsistance
products of cultivation: nodules, tree fruits, corn
type of pet ownership: Chicken, sheep, pigs, big animals

Technology

own script
existence of tractor animals
existence of an irrigation system
knowledge of metal working
knowledge of leather working
knowledge of pottery

**TRADITIONAL
LEVEL OF SOCIO-CULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT
Socio-cultural complexity**

Religion

Animism
World religions (one mayor single god!)

Demography

size of the ethnical groups

Social differentiation

political integration that goes above the local grouping
class distinctions
castes
slavery

Ways of settlement

size of settlement
ways of settlement: from nomadic to permanent settlement

See Müller et al. 1990:36

2.4 Hypothesis

To explain the national influence of the various cultural units, composed of multiple cultural styles of social behaviour, the scientists established three hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1:
Those cultural units have an above average influence on the process of political development in society, which represented always a strong section of the total population and which played an important role in the past too.

Hypothesis 2:
A modern, bureaucratically nation-state is a very late step in the process of cultural evolution. It can therefore only refer to those cultural units, which can integrate this new style of governance in their own cultural repertoire.

Hypothesis 3:
The *improvement of social complexity* depends largely from the <u>cultural distance</u> between traditional and modern principles of social organization: as bigger the *cultural distance* as higher is the probability of superficial assimilation and as lower is the sustainability of social change.

3 Findings

In traditional societies the *degree of complexity of traditional political systems* depends from the level of differentiation of the agricultural complex of productivity (**general finding**).

3.1 Particular finding 1

If one compares societies with **different levels of productivity** - here: *societies with intensive agriculture* (principal indicator: plough) with *societies with extensive agriculture* (principal indicator: shifting cultivation) – one can figure out the following <u>**simplified**</u> **tendencies of social behaviour**:

extensive agriculture	**intensive agriculture**
calories from tubers	calories from corn
horticulture or mixed forms	monoculture
small animals frequent	big animals frequent
low pop. density, small size settlements	high pop. density, big size settlem.
small groupings in number	big groupings in number
kinship organisation	territorial organization
low political centralisation	stronger political centralisation
low social hierarchy	differentiation in social classes
main social contradiction:	main social contradiction:
men vs. women	common people vs. aristocracy
slavery seldom and unimportant important	slavery frequent and more
agriculture mainly the job of women	agriculture: men and women alike
low collective working time	higher collective working time
permissive child training	strict child training
Deus otiosus	active and punishing principal god

3.1.1 Current conflicts between bureaucrats and cultural groupings earning their life with *extensive agriculture*

There are
- <u>questions of the political autonomy</u>: Small size settlements and a low population density are strong indicators for a high economic autarky of each grouping. If the economic autarky is high and if there is no market integration, the local population has in general no demands to a state administration and they do not to bother it. *Their goals and strategies in face of the public service have a defensive character*.

- questions how to get key information about their local living conditions: As long as the tax collectors have to gather their information about the local surplus production on the level of each and every household, it is very easy to hide the necessary key information (they can hide the cattle, tell the weather was bad, distribute their surplus within their kinship structure or eat the seeds, invent local customs that did never exist etc.). If there is however an instutionalised market, political authorities can calculate the surplus production on the basis of the exchanged goods.

- questions of the local acceptance of external political decisions: as long as the monopoly of information is only in the hands of the local population, it can verbally agree with everything and just ignore ever corresponding action. Such a strategy is strongly supported as long as there is no market integration, a low degree of local political centralisation or as long as the local political authority is not concerned with the process of political decision-making.

3.1.2 Current conflicts between bureaucrats and cultural groupings earning their life with *intensive agriculture*

There are
- Feudalistic world views: the bureaucratic rationale of political decision-making is permanently translated into the local understanding of political hierarchy, which is usually marked by feudalistic concepts of leadership (nobility, aristocracy). Unlike in horizontally layered class societies, vertical patterns of relationship are marked by quite another way of political thinking[3]. They favor a more direct and personal relation between the farmers and their rulers. Therefore, the political authority often bases its

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[3] According to Gerd Spittler (1977:59) a clientele relationship has four characteristics. *First* it is in principle dyadic (relation patron-client), *secondly* it further requires two unequal positions. The patron is wealthier and more powerful than the client. This does not exclude, of course, that the client in turn, can be patron of a third person. Therefore clientele-nets evolve; a clientele relationship is in the *third* place an act of will, i.e. it is concluded deliberately within the feudalistic structure (which is of course not deliberate), and in the *fourth* place the relationship can be described as an exchange of unequal performances: *"The patron provides to his client e.g. a job, credit or legal protection, the client offers his services as worker, collector of votes, informant or fighter for the patron"* (same publ.). From this results the paradoxical situation that in a modern African democracy there are very often not two ore more parties facing each other but different influential nets of relationships scarcely differring from each other ideologically.

power primarily on the control of persons in order to control objects. Thus the decisive instrument of power is frequently the accumulation and distribution of relationships[4].

Nevertheless, nobel or aristocratical concepts of political decision-making have a very strong political legitimacy as long as a) the „holyness" of the old orders have a virtually religious value and b) the intensive agriculture does not shift to industrialized forms of production (like a plantation system).

- <u>Questions of mistrust</u>. State officials are often understood as personal masters that do not fit well into the model of feudalistic societies. A lot of frustration comes from the fact that the state officials are not well known in the rural context (the processes of their selection do not refer to the local rites and to the local knowledge) and that the „methods" and „purposes" of bureaucratic decision-makers are translated into „older orders", the „power of dignity" and „personal obligations" state officials do not fulfil. The „objective impersonality" is often understood as a „lazy trick" to neglect the „common rules of personal exchange" (following the model of a clientele structure).

- <u>problems of political legitimacy and role conflicts</u>: State officials have often a problem of political legitimacy when addressing typical aristocrats. If they try to deal directly with such a local population in a somehow feudalistic way, they get in trouble with the modern side of their own role and function and are rumoured within the state bureaucracy as being corrupt. And if they build on an intermediate leadership as a traditional leader, they risk that the key issues of the modern nation-state are implemented in a somewhat feudalistic way. On the other hand it is important to stress, that the qualities of agrarian societies (like their complex vertical structuring of social and political relations) are often „translated" by westerners and state officials in terms of a somewhat horizontal scheme that fits well into *their* model of class societies. The consequence of such cultural misunderstandings are classical no way situations, where institutional constraints form a „fruitful"

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[4] ...That means: Who knows whom? Who knows how many influential persons? Who allows whom to participate in their relatioship network? Who reveals his contacts, who conceals and who manipulates them? Who is excluded? Why? etc.

background for political agitation and may lead to the growth of ethnicity-based differentiations.

3.2 Particular finding 2

But not only the level of productivity, also the **foundations of production** may have a general impact on the **socio-cultural form** of a society and on the **life-style of its individuals**[5]:

farm > farmers	**cattle > pastoralists**
- internal communication collectively marked (discussions, palaver)	individual forms of acting
- scepticism and mistrust internal strongly marked	scepticism and mistrust internal frowned upon
- indirect and vivid language	direct and austere language
- low level of emotional control	high level of emotional control
- positive attitude to hard and strong work	negative attitude to hard and strong work
- not belligerently	belligerently

The researching team argues, that also the knowledge of such attitudes of social behaviour could change the style of communication between state officials and the rural population: _Pre-industrial cultures are marked by extremely different styles of social behaviour_ – a reason why it would be useless to differentiate in „developed" and „underdeveloped" people or the like. Styles of social behaviour do not change from one day to the other. They continue to structure the personal perceptions and categorizations, even if the concerned persons do not live anymore in their former cultural unit. _One should at least recognize that such styles of social behaviour have not only an impact on the way of live in rural populations but also on conflicts in refugee camps, in peri-urban zones and even on conflicts within the state administration_. The internalisation of new forms of social behaviour does not immediately replace older structures. On the contrary, they lead in a first step to an eclipsing of different styles of social behaviour and to a particular patchwork character as it can be observed in many developing countries (see also Lloyd Fallers, 1956).

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[5] Details see also Edgerton (1965) who filtered out a similar complex of behaviour on investigations of over 505 farmers and pastoralists in East Africa.

3.3 **Particular finding 3**

Taking such different styles of social behaviour into consideration, it is important to deepen the understanding of the cultural pre-conditions of social and political change. If one correlates the cultural heritage *of all developing countries* (including the Latin-American countries) following criteria of the agricultural complexity of productivity, one can figure out **three principle steps of development of traditional political structures**. Such a structure may help to understand why some developing countries got more or less trouble with the cultural contact of industrialized nations.

- In countries, where the majority of the total population lives *only* from an *extensive agriculture*, the traditional order of socio-political organisation is marked by local groupings with a low level of inner differentiation and/or small chieftaincies.

- In countries, where the majority of the total population *combines extensive with intensive agriculture* and makes even use of the *plough*, the probability to develop a simple state with traditional to complex class stratification rises remarkably.

- In countries, where the majority of the total population *integrates intensive agriculture with cattle breading*, the traditional technology of the *plough and with irrigation systems*, the development of complex states with a complex class structure is possible.

<u>Inter</u>cultural correlations of traditional political complexity in developing countries (only asia and africa)

Socio-political Organization ⟋ Type of subsistant economy	1 local groups with low internal differentiation	2 (paramount) chieftaincy, internal differentiation from low to high	3 simple state with traditional to complex stratification of social classes	4 complex state with complex stratification of social classes

Category				
A culture of pastoralism from full- to semi-nomadic	Sudan, Dijbouti, Somalia			
B extensive agriculture (shifting cultivation)	Papua Neuguinea, Central African Republic, Gabun Kamerun Equatorial Guinea	Liberia, Mozamb., Malawi, Liberia, Iv.Coast, Zimbabwe Sierra Leone, Togo, Zambia, Ghana, Zaire Angola, Congo Burk.Faso, Surinam, Guyana, Fiji	Benin Haiti Brezil	
C extensive agriculture + growing complex of cattle breeders	Guinea Bissau	Chad, Kenya Tanzania, Uganda Namibia, Niger Gambia, Mali Guinea, Senegal, Botswana	Rwanda Burundi	
D extensive and intensive agriculture				
E intensive agriculture with plough				
F intensive agriculture; saisonal cattle breading			Mauretania West-Sahara Bhutan, Afghanist. Lybia, Mongolia	
G intensive agriculture + cattle breading (culture of plough)		South Africa Jordania	Ethiopia, Lesotho, Swaziland, Turkey, Cyprus Lebanon	Tunisia
H intensive agriculture cattle breading (irrigation systems/ culture of plough)		Syria	Qatar, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Un.Arab. Rep. Oman, Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt, Cape Verde	Iran, Algeria Marocco
I intensive agriculture: culture of irrigation systems incl. culture of plough			Laos, Nepal, Malaysia, Chile, Philippines, Burma Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Korea DPR. Korea Rep., Trinidad, India	Indonesia, Kombodja, Thailand, Pakistan, Mauritius, Vietnam, China, Taiwan

The **intercultural correlation of traditional political complexity** refers to the variable population size of the cultural units and to calculations that are based on hypothesis 1 that states: *Those cultural units have an above average*

influence on the process of political development in society, which represented always a strong section of the total population and which played an important role in the past too.

This approach allows specify common cultural barriers of the various countries in respect to questions of their nation-building. The problems of Ethiopia with its own cultural heritage can therefore not be compared with each other African country even if one could discover here and there some similarities. But if one would like to refer to the general results of this correlation, it would be wiser to study the specific cultural pre-conditions of Turkey, Cyprus or Lebanon[6]. However – this correlation is a very rough approach to the problem that gives only a general overview. The researching team made therefore further differentiations, which have a quite higher explicative quality.

3.4 **Particular finding 4**

Many struggles, the modern nation-state has with the cultural heritage results from cultural heterogeneity. It is therefore important to distinguish in the above average influence of the most important cultural units and the below average influence of all the rest. It might also be that the above average influence changes from one subject to the other: some cultural units might have a strong influence on the national politics but not on the national economy, others play always a particular role and so on.

The researching team decided therefore to design maps that show all the critical levels together. They took the current cartography of the modern nation-states and established a list of the most important cultural topics. That is:

- Subsistant economy
- traditional political structure
- kinship structure
- family typology
- forms of marriage

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[6] Lesotho and Swaziland make part of South Africa with its special cultural and political conditions

- transfer of traditional values from one generation to the other
- language families

Then they referred to their intercultural correlations and gave each nation a distinct colour, depending on the topic and the corresponding results of their correlations. The resp. colour represents therefore the dominant cultural influence in respect to the given topic. Then they made a cartography not of each cultural unit but of the most important cultural types representing this or that topic. And finally they marked those cultural units, which differ signifcantly from the cultural quality of the respective nations (see maps below).

Illustrations:
- identification map
- the range of subsistant economy (worldwide)
- the range of the transfer of traditional values within the generations (worldwide)
- the range of traditional political structures (worldwide)

The advantage of such an approach allows to visualize the most important basic conflicts at the state/society interface and to facilitate the reflection process on the social and political impact of the cultural heritage.

3.5 **Particular finding 5**

Comparing the social change of all relevant cultural units of all African and Asian countries since 1960, the researching team figured out the following general rule:

Social change differs from sector to sector. In general one could say

1. that the political structures change very rapidly
2. that economic structures persist a little bit longer
3. that symbolic systems and systems of belief change slowly
4. that interpersonal relationships (family relations, kinship structures, gender relations, the line of succession) are very persistent.

Interpersonal relationships have however a very strong impact

a) on the local ways of the territorial organisation (kinship structures, the line of succession) and on the ways, traditional political posts, obligations and duties move from one generation to the other.
b) on the local ways, how key-issues of the cultural heritage pass from one generation to the next.

Therefore, questions of the cultural heritage will continue to play a critical role in the state/society relationship and that independently of the question, if modern scientists refer to that point or not.

4   Epilogue

To think and write about the cultural impact on social and political development is a dangerous issue. There is a very thin demarcation line between scientific analysis and ideological indoctrination. The fact that our cultural heritage structures always our processes of social evolution has time and again been the starting point for hided or openly declared forms of political polemics.

In recent times it is the development community that seems to rediscover the value of cultural insights but the ways how such local traditions and cultural identities are often perceived nourish justified fears that old categories of progress and regress live to see a doubtful revival. In many statements one can easaly figure out a non verbalized suggestion stating, that
we are „individual" – they are „kinship- and community based"
we are „global" – they are „local"

we are „modern" – they are „cultural"

we have „history" – they have „roots"

we are „general", „universal" and „principal" – they are „particular" and so on.

To prevent such an approach, I would strongly warn from a simplification of the outlined results. More appropriate would be to start with the design of political strategies, that take such cultural conflicts into consideration and that look for appropriate political answers that a public state administration could offer. This could implicate further investigations that answer the following three leading questions:

1   What are the specific instruments and capacities of a federal state administration to deal with the outlined cultural conflict at the state/society interface?

2   Which precise face has the cultural conflict in the different regions of a nation-state?

3   What kind of political program could refer to such problems taking the existing state budget and the capacities of the state personnel into consideration?

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