Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.5 No.2 June, 2022; p.g. 207– 220; ISSN: 2695-2319 (Print); ISSN: 2695-2327 (Online)

ETHNIC CONTESTATIONS AND POST-GENOCIDE TRANSFORMATION IN RWANDA

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Abstract

Myriads of strife between different ethnic groups ushered in stereotypes and prejudices leading to the emergence of polemics and glaring destabilization. The viscerally revolting spectra of political destabilization occasioned by the usage of ethnicity as a tool of discord in Africa, especially Rwanda prompted the desire for this research with the aim of laying bare some contending issues or problems and solutions. Unfortunately, the road less travelled in Africa is the road leading to genuine development and stability. This study examined ethnicity and ethnic contestations taking into consideration the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial tendencies that midwife the 1994 genocide. Furthermore, the negative usage of some media houses to spread hate speeches unabated has been looked into. This paper looked into the post-genocide transformation in Rwanda and pointed out the warning signs of impending violence in Rwanda in order to avoid the recurrence of another round of genocide in the future. The paper concludes that the problem of ethnic strife and political instability boils down to the quest to gain economic advantage by controlling resources. To have unfettered access to such resources, politics comes into play. To climb the political ladder, ethnicity is used to mobilise support which often takes violent dimension. Secondary sources such as journals, books and online sources were used in the course of writing this paper.

Keywords: ethnicity, Rwanda, Hutu/Tutsi, genocide, transformation.

Introduction

It is a factual error to say that we all belong to one ethnic group with the same cultural inclination, religious beliefs and social status. Since we belong to different ethnic groups with varying cultural cleavages, it is natural to have misunderstanding but not obligated to fight one another. Ethnic contestations in Rwanda has ravaged the fabric of peace and slowed down development. Ethnic cleavages are used as tools for political manipulations leading to the emergence of purveyors of violence for political gains. "Ethnicity is functional for the politician who wants to survive or to conceal exploitative practices by building solidarities across class lines" (Ake, 1992:4)

The near collapse of the family value system in Africa has opened the floodgate for strife and sorrow. Some politicians often recruit youths from their ethnic group as their guards or militia to aid their journey to the corridor of power at the detriment of their education and wellbeing. This makes the supremacy of states to use the instrumentality of state coercion on rebellious groups grossly ineffective due to proliferation of small arms and light weapons and its availability in the hands of militia groups mostly sponsored by politicians who use them to remain relevant in politics. "This is what others have done to us is, frankly, less painful than this is what we have done to ourselves, worst still, this is what we are still doing to ourselves" (Soyinka, 2005:15)

> The bloody history of the Hutu and Tutsi conflict stained the 20th century, from the 1972 slaughter of about 120,000 Hutus by the Tutsi army in Burundi to the 1994 Rwanda genocide where, in just 100 days in which Hutu militias targeted Tutsis, about 800,000 people were killed (Bridget, 2020).

"Ethnicity is typically not the driving force of African conflicts but a lever used by politicians to mobilize supporters in pursuit of power, wealth and resources" (Clement, 2010) there is a nexus between ethnic contestations and political instability, the latter triggers the former as a blanket reason or a tool of mobilization. When ethnic groups or communities feel threatened as a result of marginalization or domination by others in terms of access to resources and power, the option of resistance comes to light which often take violent dimensions.

The rationale behind this paper is to look into the glaring problem of ethnic contestations and political instability in Rwanda and making attempt to proffer solutions to the hydra-headed problem.

Conceptual clarifications

In order to have a proper grasp of this paper, attempt has been made to define the major keywords or some concepts used in this research work, thus:

Ethnicity

Ethnicity can be seen as a group of people whose members are connected through common ancestry, culture or heritage, religion or language. "Ethnicity is rooted in an ancestral blood group of kinship and communal values. The common denominator for all members of the clan or the ethnic group/tribe is the ancestor, the progenitor" (Turaki, 2019:15).

> Ethnicity is more than skin colour or physical characteristics, more than language, song, and dance. It is the embodiment of values, institutions and patterns of behavior, a composite whole representing a people's historical experience, aspirations and world view…traditionally, African societies and even states function through an elaborate system based on the family, lineage, clan, tribe and ultimately a confederation of groups with common cultural and linguistic characteristics (Francis, 1997).

One may not be wrong to say that ethnicity is a form of identity. On a traditional trajectory, African societies operated or functioned based on organized group setting with common lineage as a unifying factor, but where differences exist between one ethnic group and another, the fabric of inter-communal relationship or bond becomes weak and can spark conflict.

Ethnic contestation can be seen as misunderstanding between two or more ethnic groups which can take the form of non-violent or violent confrontation. Such contestations can come as a result of economic, social, political or religious reasons. A good number of Africans were anxious to disavow the monstrous ethnic jingoism and divisiveness, especially after independence. The dominance of one ethnic group is a potential trigger for ethnic contestations which threatens quest for unity.

Genocide

A Polish lawyer, Raphael Lemkin first coined the word "genocide" in 1944 in his book titled: 'Axis rule in Occupied Europe' using the Greek word *genos* (race or tribe) and Latin word *cide* (killing). Article II of the United Nations Convention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide approved in 1948 stated thus:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

a. Killing members of the group;
b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (www.un.org)

There is no single universally accepted definition of genocide. Simply put, genocide can be seen as an act of unleashing mayhem on a people leading to massacre on the basis of their racial, ethnic, religious or political cleavage.

Transformation

Within the context of this paper, transformation is a process of reorganization, rejigging, modification or revamping an existing administrative and political structure for the betterment of the society. (Feola, 2014) sees transformation as a process of structural change which has to do with change of fundamental patterns, elements, and interrelations in the system and that pursuing sustainability need the involvement of social, symbolic, physical and material changes or reforms in the society.

Pre-colonial era

Rwandans established a kingdom in the 15th Century headed by Mwami, a Tutsi monarch with a hierarchical system of nobles and gentry of Tutsi descent. Prior to colonial rule, Rwanda had a monarchical system of government which became increasingly centralized from the latter part of the 18th Century in particular. "In a structure like a pyramid, regional authorities were dependents of the Mwami (King). Below them were the hill chiefs who tightly controlled the population" (Reyntjens, 2018)

> The Tutsi are believed to have first penetrated the area in the 14th or 15th Century entering from the northeast. Nomadic pastoralists, they came not in a sudden invasion but, rather, through the process of a slow and largely peaceful infiltration. Although far fewer in number, the Tutsi used their possession of cattle and their more advanced knowledge of warfare as sources of power and prestige, and in time, achieved economic, social and political dominance over the Hutu. Their striking physical size and aristocratic bearing lent credibility to their claims of being divinely ordained to rule. (globalsecurity.org)

Over a period of time, land ownership was taken from the Hutu by Mwami as his property. Hutu and Tutsi had a relationship called *ubuhake* (a mutual understanding which the Hutu used Tutsi cattle based on agreement and in return, the Hutu provided personal and even military service to the Tutsi cattle owners) the relationship metamorphosed with time to a feudal-class system in which cattle, land and power in minority Tutsi hands where the Hutu majority became subjects. The Hutu practiced small-scale agriculture with a clan-based social organization having petty kings (Bahinza) ruling over small domains. In terms of population, Hutu are the majority, followed by Tutsi and Twa the least. The Twa, a pygmoid people were the first inhabitants living in the forests hunting and gathering food. Prior to the pre-colonial era, the clear distinction between the Hutus and Tutsis was wealth based not on race. The control of the monarchy by the Tutsis placed them in higher social pedestal or strata than the Hutus which became appealing to the German and Belgian colonialists when they arrived Rwanda. (Berry, 2014)

Colonial era

The Berlin Conference of 15th November, 1884 to 26th February, 1885 where the European delegates "armed with rulers and pencils, sketching out national borders on the continent with no idea what existed on the ground they were penciling out" (Gathara, 2019) which aimed at ensuring hitch-free scramble and partition of Africa. However, Rwanda and the Great Lakes was not partitioned or divided during the Berlin Conference not until the 1890 Conference in Brussels.

Rwanda was part of the German East Africa, where Germany colonized the African Great Lakes region (which comprises present day Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania) from 1891 and the colony was dissolved in 1919 "beginning from 1885, the country was awarded to Germany as part of their empire, and in 1919 authority was officially transferred to Belgium in a League of Nation's decision" (Bekken, 2011:3) after the defeat of Germany during the First World War. Two German colony of Rwanda-Urundi later became Rwanda and Burundi, were separately administered under two different Tutsi monarchs in the two countries.

> Both Germany and Belgium turned the traditional Hutu-Tutsi relationship into a class system. The minority Tutsi (14%) are favoured over the Hutus (85%) and given privileges and western-style education. The Belgians used the Tutsi minority to enforce their rule (Keane, 1996).

The African society is not immune from both intra-ethnic, inter-ethnic squabbles and prejudices. The advent of colonialism widened and deepened the scope of ethnic prejudices in Rwanda. The Belgians in 1926 introduced a divisive system of identity card possession differentiating Hutus from Tutsis. "The Belgians knew nothing about these two small countries and decided to administer them indirectly" (Colette, 2021). Belgium recognized and empowered the Tutsi more than the Hutu. This dangerous seed of ethnic division was watered during this period. The favoritism and elevation of the Tutsis further planted anger in the Hutus which became severe and snowballed into a full-blown genocide much later.

> During the colonial periods a further distinction between the two groups (Hutus and Tutsis) was made based on physical features: colonialists perceived Hutus as generally shorter and wider in stature and Tutsis as generally taller and more slender. This racial distinction was hardened as colonial administrators drew on the Hamitic myth of racial superiority (which holds that some people in Africa, including the Tutsi, descend from Caucasians) to give special privileges to the Tutsi. (Berry, 2014)

Worth noting is that in 1957 a Hutu political party; PARAMEHUTU (Party for the Emancipation of the Hutus) was formed during the Belgian rule. There was revolution by the Hutus in 1957-1960 against the Belgian colonialists and the Tutsi elites which resulted to the fleeing of about 150,000 Tutsis to Burundi for safety. Hutus won municipal elections in 1960 conducted by Belgian colonial rulers. The Hutu uprising forced the Belgians to leave.

Post colonial era

Rwanda got her independence from Belgium in 1962 largely pushed by the Hutu uprising in a quest to clinch power.

> The new republic born after Belgium granted Rwanda independence, institutionalized and promoted ethnic differentiation. The old identity card was abolished and a new card where *ubwoko* referred to ethnic group was adopted. One could only be a Hutu, Tutsi or Twa…Rwanda could no longer identify themselves along clan lines, which cut across the Hutu, Tutsi, Twa divide and people who were once part of the same "family" became enemies overnight. (Mugesera, 2014)

The colonial structure in Rwanda gave Tutsis more advantage than the Hutus in terms of education, leadership and economic wellbeing possibly due to their organized monarchical system despite having less population compared to the Hutus. The categorization of Rwandans on the basis of ethnicity amplified "we" versus "them" unhealthy rivalry. For Tutsi the motto is 'we have our backs to the wall, unless we maintain absolute control they will finish us the next time'. While Hutu say 'we only have to wait, number will play in our favour'. (Mann and Berry, 2015)

The Hutu uprising weakened the colonial phase under Belgium and revolutionary Gregoire Kayibanda of the Paramehutu Democratic Republican Movement was chosen as the President of Rwanda in 1962. The Hutu revolution forced thousands of Tutsis to go on exile while in neighbouring Burundi, Tutsis retained power. Renewed massacre of Tutsis continued in response to the Tutsis in exile who launched attacks from neighbouring Burundi. The coup of 1973 dethroned Gregoire Kayibanda and Juvenal Habyarimana took over and established a one-party system of government with *Movement Revolutionnaire National Pour le Developpment* (National Revolutionary Movement for Development) MRND, in 1975 which further marginalized Tutsis.

The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) a Tutsi-dominated organization largely in exile "led by two charismatic leaders, Fred Rwigema and Paul Kagame" (Bekken, 2011:20) became allies of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army in Uganda. Museveni and Kagame were comrades-in-arms.

> When Museveni was a rebel in the Ugandan forest fighting for the overthrow of tyrannical rulership in Uganda, he employed Kagame, a Rwandan Tutsi exile living in Uganda as his Chief of Staff. General Paul Kagame was an integral part of the rebel forces who helped General Yoweri Museveni to attain power in Kampala by defeating the Ugandan Army and causing the flight from power of the notorious despot- Milton Obote. (Igwe, 2010:21)

Habyarimana's regime came onboard when Rwanda had a strong presence in the global coffee markets and aids by the international donors. "after more than two decades of rule, many Tutsi and moderate Hutu were dissatisfied with the authoritarian MRND regime and the impending economic collapse only made things worse" (Bekken, 2011:20) in order to attract support and cover up for his policy summersault, Habyarimana used ethnicity to drum for support since his Hutu ethnic group is the majority further pushed more Tutsis into exile and became refugees. The *Interahamwe* (those who attack together) and *Impuzamugambi* (those who have the same goal) were recruited militias trained by the Rwandan Army during Habyarimana's reign and were supplied weapons by the *Amasusu* (a secret society within the army). His regime encountered serious challenges which compounded his problems.

> A sharp drop in world coffee prices cut farmer's income by half. Drought blighted food production. The government's budget in 1989 had to be slashed by 40 percent. Gross domestic product in 1989 fell by 5.7 percent. The shortage of land was becoming ever more acute. From 2 million inhabitants in 1940, the population by 1990 had reached 7 million. Whereas in the 1950s a typical peasant hill community consisted of about 110 people per square kilometer, by the 1970s the number occupying the same area had risen to about 280 and by the early 1990s it had reached an average of 420 (Meredith, 2005:490).

In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) mostly comprised of Tutsis who grew up in exile (Uganda) attacked Rwanda in order to drive home a demand for change of government and power sharing arrangement so as to make the Tutsis in exile comfortable to return to their homeland. The Habyarimana's regime was threatened by the growing strength of the RPF and growing resentment and opposition from some Hutus who were tired and dissatisfied

with Habyarima's poor handling of Rwanda's economy and security. The Arusha Accord of 1993 was not taken seriously by the government of the day. "The outcome was a power-sharing government between the MRND, RPF and a block of secondary parties" (Bekken, 2011:20)

The last straw that broke the camel's back which sparked the horrible ethnic cleansing in Rwanda was the assassination of Rwandan President, Juvenal Habyarimana and the president of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira (both Hutus) in an aircraft shot down by a missile on the 6th of April, 1994. Since the obvious warning sign for catastrophe was not given serious attention by the government of Rwanda, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) now called African Union (AU) and the United Nations. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) did little to end the senseless killings in Rwanda. They became witnesses to the genocide to a large extent with little capacity and funding to stop the massacre in Rwanda.

"The FAR was able to purchase arms from China (over $5 million worth), South Africa, Bulgaria, Albania, Nigeria, Ghana, Russia and the Ukraine" (Bekken, 2011: 20) the availability of arms entice or prompt people to use it to kill. Worth noting but sadly, Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, a Hutu and a leading commander of the *Akazu* ensured the supply and distribution of huge number of machetes. "Between January 1993 and March 1994 Rwanda imported more than 500,000 machetes. Double the number imported in previous years and enough for one for every third adult Hutu in Rwanda" (Meredith, 2006:501). A wealthy businessman, Felicien Kabuga whose daughter was married to one of Juvenal Habyarimana's sons was among the major importers of arms. He was a principal financier of both the *Kangura* newspaper and the *Interahamwe* militia.

The availability of weapons, hatred and quest for political control amplified the severity of the genocide. Habyarimana's death set the stage for widespread coordinated massacre across the country. Tutsi Victims who were taken to hospitals for treatment were murdered by the killer-squads and some doctors. Even some churches were raided and members killed, some priests were also deeply involved in the genocide while the French government aided the Hutu extremists. Belgian troops were willing to stop the killings but ran short of fuel for patrol, inadequate food and water supply and had shortage of ammunitions leading to the death of ten Belgian soldiers. The Belgian government withdrew their peacekeeping troops and left those they were protecting vulnerable and were attacked by the army and militiamen. It reached a point where people prefer to be drowned in the river to avoid the horror meted on victims by the militiamen. "River banks became a common location for execution, convenient for getting rid of bodies. Some 40,000 bodies washed down the Akagera River into Lake Victoria." (Meredith, 2006: 515.) Unfortunately, UNAMIR kept dilly-dallying while the grotesque cruelty intensified. The RPF under the leadership of Paul Kagame gained control of sizable parts of Kigali in May 1994 including the airport. "On July 4, the RPA, the military branch of the RPA, made its way into Kigali and essentially ended the genocide" (Bekken, 2011:20) after spending thirty years as a refugee in Rwanda since his family went to exile in Uganda as a result of the pre-independence violence in 1960, Paul Kagame finally returned home.

Hate speech as trigger of violence

Hate speech is a communication expressing hatred for a person or group of people on the basis of race, religion, gender, ethnicity and other considerations. Cycles of ethnic hatred often degenerate into spasms of violence. (Shul-Nom, 2018:11) hate speech played an integral part in igniting the Rwanda genocide. The media was used to spread hate speeches which served as a mobilization tool for hatred. The media was used to mastermind and orchestrate the Rwanda genocide of 1994. The same media reported the genocide to the world.

The mass media was used as a tool for propaganda and spreading hate messages and programmes. Out of the forty two new journals that surfaced in 1991, at least eleven had affiliation with the *Akazu.* A leading figure of the hate campaign was the editor of *Kangura* newspaper, Hassan Ngeze, a personality with a crude talent for propaganda. A memorable article published in December, 1990, shortly after the RPF invasion. Ngeze laid out a doctrine of Hutu purity which he called 'the Hutu Ten Commandments' (Meredith, 2006: 497).

The *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) was incorporated in April 1993 with the purpose of preparing the people of Rwanda for genocide and transmitted in a deceitful manner using the same frequency used by Radio Rwanda when the station is off transmission between 8 and 11 AM. This made listeners to be confused and considered the content as that of Radio Rwanda. The RTLM played Simon Bikindi's anti-Tutsi songs and radio presenters anchored programmes with hate messages with the backing of government. *Kangura* newspaper which published in French and Kinyarwanda was used to fuel anti-Tutsi propaganda through hate publications. The ten commandments of the Hutu were championed by the *Kangura* in 1990, four years before the commencement of the genocide, thus:

1. Every Hutu should know that a Tutsi woman whoever she is works for the interest of her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider a traitor any Hutu who marries a Tutsi woman, befriends a Tutsi woman, and employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or a concubine.
2. Every Hutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as woman, wife and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?
3. Hutu women, be vigilant and try to bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to reason.
4. Every Hutu should know that every Tutsi is dishonest in business. His only aim is the supremacy of his ethnic group. As a result, any Hutu who does the following is a traitor:
    i. Makes business partnership with Tutsi
    ii. Invests his or the government's money in an enterprise belonging to Tutsi
    iii. Lends or borrows money from a Tutsi, gives favours to Tutsi in business (obtaining import licenses or bank loans)
5. All strategic positions-political, administrative, economic military and security-should be entrusted only to Hutu.
6. The education sector comprising pupils, students and teachers must be majority Hutu.
7. The armed forces of Rwanda should be exclusively Hutu. The experience of the October 1990 war has taught us a lesson. No member of the military shall marry a Tutsi.

8. The Hutu should stop having mercy on the Tutsi
9. No Hutu, wherever they are, must unite and be concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers. The Hutu in and out of Rwanda must constantly look for friends and allies for the Hutu cause and must counteract Tutsi propaganda consistently. The Hutu must be firm and vigilant against their common Tutsi enemy.
10. The social revolution of 1959, the referendum of 1961, and the Hutu ideology, must be taught to every Hutu at every level. Any Hutu who persecutes his Hutu brother for having read, spread, and taught this ideology is a traitor. (Adeyinka, 2017)

The detail of the Hutu Ten Commandments clearly gives a picture to some extent, the terrible ethnic contestations and backed by hate speech. In 1992, Leon Mugeseru, an MRND official and university teacher delivered a terribly inciting speech against Tutsis in Habyarimana's Gisenyi District, thus:

> The fatal mistake we made in 1959 was to let them (the Tutsi) get out…they belong in Ethiopia and we are going to find them a shortcut to get there by throwing them into the Nyabarongo river (which flows northwards) I must insist that the enemy's objective was extermination, he urged his audience to 'rise up…really rise up' in self-defense. And he ended with this final warning: 'know that the person whose throat you do not cut now will be the one who will cut yours'. (Meredith, 2006: 498-499)

The various hate messages spread by both electronic and print media was ignored by the government which is a clear indication of government's open and clandestine plan for genocide for a long period of time. This terrible situation can be described as normalization of the unacceptable which kept eating deep into the fabric of corporate existence of Rwandans as a people.

Post-genocide transformation in Rwanda

After the 1994 genocide in Rwanda came to an end, Pasteur Bizimungu became the President under Government of National Unity while Paul Kagame was appointed and served as the Vice President and Defence Minister from1994-2000. Paul Kagame was elected President of Rwanda in the year 2000 and was re-elected for seven year terms in 2010 and 2017 amid allegations of violence, intimidation and fraud. A constitutional change through referendum in 2015 would enable Kagame to govern until 2034 provided he gets the mandate of the people.

Rwanda has maintained a relatively good position in key Global Ranking. According to World Bank 2020 Doing Business Report, Rwanda is 2nd in Africa and 39th easiest place to do business globally. It is also among the top 10 global reformers according to World Bank 2019 Doing Business Report. The Rwanda tourism sector has been revitalized and attracted 1.5 billion USD in investment since the year 2000. Tourism revenues increased from 131 million USD in 2006 to 500 million USD in 2019. "Rwanda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has risen from $752 million in 1994 to $9.5 billion in 2018, and the GDP per capita has grown from $125.5 to $787 during the same period" (www.gov.rw)

> The agriculture sector contributes about 35% to the national GDP, employing about 70% of the population in Rwanda. It has been the main driver of growth and poverty reduction, pulling 1.7 million people above the poverty line in only five years. With increased commercialization, the agriculture sector has been the driving force for about 45% of poverty reduction in the last decade. 81.3 percent of all households (about 2,034,942 households) are food secure, have an acceptable diet, and use a low share of their budget to cover food needs (WFP, 2018).

Rwanda is arguably an economic miracle hub in Africa despite her bitter experience of genocide. It has revivified itself "from a horrific genocide in 1994 and has become one of the fastest growing economies in the African continent" (Cheeseman, 2018). From a negative to a zero growth rate at the end of the genocide, the economy of Rwanda improved by expanding to an average of 8.1% annually since 2001 due to the economic reforms introduced by the government where both the public and private sectors playing key roles. The liberalization in the agricultural sector led to the boost in tea and coffee which is Rwanda's major export commodity. This brings more revenue to the government and the farmers getting personal income from the agriculture sector.

Worth noting is that President Paul Kagame groomed thousands of smart young women and men to have leadership experience for Rwanda to have future leaders that are responsible. "The average age of his cabinet is 40. Women make up 50 percent of the cabinet, 61.5 percent of the parliament and 50 percent of supreme court judges" (Ruhumuliza, 2019) this has given the youths especially women a sense of belonging with the idea that women are very cardinal in terms of child upbringing. The ugly genocide is partly due to the collapse of the family value system. It is with the understanding that bringing the youths into the mainstream of leadership will help in addressing youth restiveness.

Warning signs of impending violence in Rwanda.

Despite the huge transformation in Rwanda after the genocide, there are glaring warning signs of impending violence. "From 1995 to 2007 more than 40 prominent political figures, both of Hutu and Tutsi descent, fled into exile" (Bekken, 2011:20) because of the highhandedness by Paul Kagame's regime. Laws that are predatory in nature emerged where critics of the government of the day are labeled as promoters of divisionism ideology with unclear interpretation by judges. The RPF as a party sees itself as the 'saviour' of Rwanda from genocide while those opposing RPF are seen as supporting the mass killings that occurred in 1994. Combating genocidal mindset is good but not when people are victimized for criticizing the government.

The Republican Democratic Movement (MDR) was banned for fictitious allegations of spreading divisionism. Pasteur Bizimungu (Former President of the National Unity Government and a leading MDR figure) was arrested in 2003 and charged for ethnic divisionism, threatening national security and corruption. He was later pardoned and released from detention in 2007 after President Paul Kagame secured another term in office. The RPF is using fictitious allegations against opposition political parties. The media is faced with censorship and attacks which is a clear sign of intolerance on the part of the government.

> In the week leading up to the 2003 election, Rwanda's Media High Council banned more than 30 newspaper outlets. Two of the country's biggest newspapers, *Umuseso* and *Umuvigizi*, received temporary 6-months bans and some of their staff jailed…media censorship may have hit rock bottom when Jean-Leonard Rugambage, editor of *Umuvigizi*, was gunned down in front of his home on June 26, 2010 in what is likely a planned assassination. Rugambage had been marked by the government for criticizing state policy. (Mgbako, 2010)

The sit-tight syndrome of Paul Kagame and the near one party status orchestrated by the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which undermines the existence of opposition parties and civil society groups is a seed of discord that has been planted and watered consistently. "Although the RPF's political strategy has been ostensibly undertaken to foster stability and reconciliation, it may ultimately radicalize opponents, who will find other means to challenge the regime if open political discourse is not an option" (Jennifer, 2011:9) since the political space is not open enough for wider political participation, the opposition voices will likely stage a revolution if care is not taken.

> Today, there is a strong perception that the current government is essentially a "Tutsi" government that the key positions of power in military and civilian institutions are held by Tutsi. And that public benefits tend to favor Tutsi over Hutu…the government's absolute suppression of dissent ultimately adds to its own fragility and thus makes even a gradual opening of political space increasingly difficult (Jennifer, 2011:26).

The question of who succeeds Paul Kagame is a potential problem hanging in the future. If a Tutsi succeeds him, it may spark violent uprising since the Hutu are the majority. The early warning signs that were ignored prior to the 1994 genocide are gradually emerging. The mutual suspicion and suppression of democratic ideals has ushered in dictatorship with pseudo democracy under Kagame. Despite the fact that he contributed in bringing relative stability in the country, he should give way for others to steer the country. There is no gain saying that there is no capable hand in Rwanda except Paul Kagame. Power sharing among the ethnic groups in Rwanda should be considered and Presidents should not exceed two terms in office to avoid political instability which is capable of sparking violence.

Conclusion

Ethnicity in Rwanda is not an invention of the German and Belgian colonial powers. However, they formalized structures for ethnic differences and preference which became a big problem with catastrophic consequences. In an attempt to eradicate the monster of ethnic stereotype, the post genocide government banned identity labels of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa as an integral way of reconciling the groups. But the mere banning of identity labels on ethnic lines is not enough because the Hutus know their ethnic background just like the Tutsi and Twa. The 2019 Miss Rwanda reactivated the deep ethnic inclination in Rwanda despite 'de-ethnicization' efforts.

> Conversations on Miss 2019 and Mwiseneza's candidature escalated and became outright offensive. Online spaces became avenues to channel hatred against the Hutu, mock government reconciliation efforts such as Ndi

> Umunyarwanda, Itorero and other reconciliation projects that target youths. Some of the tweets that circulated and caused debates included: '*time is now that that the Hutus can be selected to be miss, Josiane 100%, we are together, the crown must be yours, we are tired of Tutsis always being voted'*. Another tweet reads *'there is no Hutu who has ever become Miss when her father died in Tingitingi* (reference to Refugee camp in Zaire) *after he drank the blood of innocent children, I have said it whatever the consequence* (Andrea & David, 2021:19).

This is clear indication that all is not well in Rwanda. The social media is used by young Rwandans to express their feelings or sentiments since the traditional media is not giving them the opportunity to do so due to high handedness by the government. Suppressing criticisms will lead to obvious outburst in the future.

The post genocide Rwanda witnessed the emergence of exile-based identities upon return to Rwanda from countries where they lived as refugees. New labels emerged such as *abasajya* (Rwandan refugees that returned from Uganda), *abajepe* (Rwandans who returned from Burundi), *abadubayi* (those who returned from Democratic Republic of Congo with the tendency of display of their wealth, hence the reference to Dubai) and *abasopecya* (those who were born in Rwanda and never left. The SOPECYA in the name refers to the only fuel station that never closes prior, during and after the genocide). "These returnee groups included people whose families fled in 1959 but also others whose relatives had left Rwanda through many waves of pre-colonial migration" (Andrea & David, 2021: 24)

Rwanda experienced troublesome moments in her history. This paper has demonstrated that ethnic chauvinism and jingoism is a potent danger not only to Rwanda but to any society. The warning signs that were ignored which led to the 1994 unfortunate genocide still exist and are teetering on the precipice of future catastrophe if such warning signs are not accompanied with early response. The warning signs include but not restricted to: elimination of political opposition, suppression of the Civil Society and the media, the existence of a pseudo-democratic system and sit-tight syndrome. Peace is not the mere absence of war and peace can be achieved through mutual understanding and not the use of force.

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