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THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF VICTIMHOOD AND PERPETRATORHOOD IDENTITIES IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA: THE VICTORS LEGITIMIZATION OF OPPRESSION AND DICTATORSHIP?

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Abstract

When a mistake is used to correct another mistake, is like repeating the same modus operandi expecting different results. Rwanda suffered from the politics of ethnicity and while the wounds are still fresh, the same political maneuver is underway. While the theoretical frameworks towards a Rwanda divested of ethnicity and other forms of divisive forms of identities were formulated with intent to create a single Rwandanness identity; their implementation yielded controversial results for those ended and for those still ongoing give no hope. Not only the government interventions failed mistakenly or intentionally in eradicating the old ethnic divides but also strengthened them and above all new group identifications were born and are maturing to become new ethnic identities that overlap with old ones. The conflicting narratives and interpretation of Rwandan history grounded in genocide resulted in the formation of two distinct identities: those fighting to maintain their perceived meritocratic privileges called ABAROKOTSE that I call Victimhood identity and those who are collectively called ABAJENOSIDERI that I call Perpetratorhood identity. The aim of this paper is to analyze the birth and current status of these identities and through the lenses of appropriate theories and models predict their fate. I argue that current Rwandan ethnoscape is not only harboring former ethnic identities Hutu Tutsi and Twa but also new ones: Victimhood and Perpetratorhood identities are dangerously evolving to become other ethnic identities that overlap with the former salient ones and their continued instrumentalization and politicization may lead Rwanda into other future forms of inter-group conflicts and violence.

Keywords

Social Identity, Ethnic Group, Victimhood Identity, Perpetratorhood Identity, Inter-Group Conflict, Inter-Ethnic Conflict



1. Introduction

The monarchy in Rwanda was abolished when it was about four hundred years old. This period was characterized by what can be considered serious human rights violation in contemporary societies, a period that civilized societies may consider to have been characterized by practices considered crimes against humanity especially in the form of enslavement and torture. The Rwandan history and its socio-political arena has known two ethnicity as main players: Hutu and Tutsi. The Hutu and Tutsi ethnicities in Rwanda have a complex history. The Tutsi gained power through bloody conquest wars against auto-governed Hutu kinglets and established their Nyiginya dynasty and formed and strengthened an ethnicity-based ruling structure that marginalized and discriminated against the Hutu population. This led to deep-seated tensions between the two groups. Eventually, these tensions erupted in the 1959 bloody social revolution, which marked a significant turning point in Rwandan history and led to the 1962 Rwandan independence and establishment of the first Hutu led republic. Tutsi aristocrats surrendered to Hutu peasants during this social revolution that took them to power where their status prevented to attain during hundreds of years and this may have led the former bosses to subordination, a status they could not accept. Subsequent ethnicity based struggles for power culminated in the 1994 genocide against Tutsi, targeted systematic killings of Hutu civilians both in Rwanda and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Mayersen (2015) argues that the Rwandan pre-independence period was marked by ethnic divides and hate and that discrimination prevailed in both Hutu and Tutsi. According to her,

one of the Hutu political party APROSOMA in a 1959 press release recalling the feudal and colonial Hutu living conditions characterized Tutsi as “exploiters by nature, xenophobes by instinct and communists by necessity” while a Tutsi party UNAR declared when opposing the share of power with fellow Hutu “the Rwandan society is composed of individuals of highly unequal value, and it is not equitable to accord the same value to the vulgar thoughts of the ordinary man as to the perspicacious judgment of the capable”. She notes also that after independence while both presidents Kayibanda and Habyarimana in their speeches called for unity in ethnic diversity; “tolerance and understanding between the ethnicities” and “love your countrymen without distinction of ethnic or regional origin” respectively, due to the allusive and indirect communication style typical of Rwandan discourse, underneath the presidential promotion of unity according to the author, was a more complex message leading her to conclusion that the way each president addressed the issue served to maintain a high level of consciousness regarding ethnicity, and contributed to ongoing ethnic disharmony. According to the author while the Habyarimana’s reconciliation approach was a policy of ethnic and regional balance aimed at redressing past injustices, providing fairness in opportunity and fostering unity, this policy was a clear legitimization and institutionalization of ethnicity and regionalism at the expense of merit. Besides a moderate approach towards ethnicity after seizing power, the author argue that Kayibanda was intercepted comparing Hutu and Tutsi groups in Rwanda as “two nations in a single state . . . two nations between whom there

is no intercourse and no sympathy, who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers of different zones, or inhabitants of different planets". However this language is similar and may be considered the little brother of the 1958 statement by the 12 great servants of the royal court (abagaragu 12 bakuru b'ibwami) that "the relations between us (Batutsi) and them (Bahutu) have always been until now based on serfdom; therefore between them and us there is no basis of fraternity Kigwa found the Bahutu in Rwanda . . . History says that [our] kings killed the Bahinza [Bahutu kinglets] and have conquered the Bahutu lands of which the Bahinza were kings. . . . Since our kings conquered the countries of the Bahutu and killed their kinglets, how can they now claim to be our brothers" (Eltringham, 2006). In my observation, I argue that while throughout Rwandan history both Hutu and Tutsi elites were involved in discriminatory, derogatory and hate endeavors, only Hutu were put on the defendant bench and this also continue to be problematic in terms of long lasting inter-ethnic peaceful cohabitation. Mayersen (2015) having analyzed the speeches of presidents Habyarimana and Kayibanda argues that the problem of ethnicity has always been salient waiting fragile moments such as the Inyenzi invasion to resurface. Regarding to the question of how the mass participated in genocide regarding a moderate approach to ethnicity in the seemed peaceful period; the author argues that the invasion of the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) among others played critical roles in fuelling the growth of extremism. She notes that without doubt the politicization of ethnicity has

been clearly identified as a risk factor that can increase the risk of genocide. The politicization of ethnic or other identities creates the perceptions of outgroups hence the author argues that, prior to escalation of inter-ethnic conflict, there may be opportunities to work with leaders in nations at risk of genocide in order to identify the dangers associated with the politicization of ethnicity. Rwanda of today is dealing with the politics of victimizations, dealing with who is the real victim and who is the real culprit in the 1994 genocide even though for clear picture the period of interest has to cover pre-colonial era to present. In an interview with Johnston Busingye the then Secretary-General of the Ministry of Justice by Mgbako (2005) he argued that "...this generation, both those who survived the genocide and those who participated in it, were victims of a system that went viciously off course...". I argue that while recognizing the defects of recourse to ethnic identities by political elites, the current approach to them are also taking a wrong turn. One of these approaches has been ingando that after yielding no significant fruits, or putting it in the real sense of the terms "has failed" its purpose which is unity and reconciliation of Rwandans through the emphasis of de-ethnicization policy, it was replaced by the so called Itorero ry'igihugu destined to meet the same ending fate. Mgbako (2005) argue that much of the ingando project is about disseminating a pro-RPF ideology an approach that he qualifies of "a dangerous undertaking in a country in which political indoctrination and government-controlled information were essential in sparking and sustaining the genocide". In his visionary statement

he notes that “ingando [and the current Itorero ry’igihugu] will fail as a reconciliation mechanism” and here I argue that this became a self-fulfilled prophecy for ingando and nothing special to expect from itorero that operate on the same principles. The author argues that the government failed in the first place when it decided to approach the reconciliation from a wrong angle, denying the existence of ethnicity. According to him, “the government’s denial of ethnicity without enlightened and open discussions about history and historiography ignores an issue that bears critically on the prospects for reconciliation within Rwandan society”. He qualified the practice as “[the political system] trying to survive by dissolving the idea of ethnicity... [with] emphasis on erasing the myths of ethnic difference without confronting the role that political constructions and utilizations of ethnicity [played in pre-genocide Rwanda and] continue to play in post-genocide Rwanda”. The author qualifies ingando as “dangerous” because “instead of teaching tolerance for difference, it leads to an obliteration of difference that lies about history and the truth of origins for the sake of peace and reconciliation”. The facts are obvious since the ethnicity and ethnic divides are still prevalent in Rwandans both peasants and political elites; I argue also that these divides will continue to be prevalent as long as political elites refuse to approach the issues with an evidence based approach since what have been called “brainwashing” attempt of the former approaches including this Ingando failed to solve the problem. In an interview with Rusagara on behalf of the former National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) by Mgbako

(2005), he stated what the author qualified as “a sophisticated argument” stating that ethnic identification is permissible but that it should not be of importance and basis for invidious differences and distinctions. He stated “Our aim is not to destroy these identities because they have been used as political ammunition... We are not telling ingando participants not to identify as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa, but we are aiming to create a society in which these identities have no real meaning because they impart no privileges”. In the author’s observations, the statement runs counter most of the government’s discourse on ethnicity. In my paper entitled “Rwandan Ethnoscape More Than 400 Years Later: The Failure of De-Ethnicization Policy?” I discussed the current status of Rwandan ethnicity in terms of Hutu Twa and Tutsi ethnic identities where in the light of available evidences, these ethnic identities were found to be still prevalent and active in social interactions. The approaches used to mitigate ethnicity problems among Rwandans, did not only fail to achieve their intended objectives as it was considered to be an obvious end by the big-eyed, the policies undertaken created loopholes for the emergence of new divisive identities that in my observation are masked former ethnic identities that re-emerged in order to counter the current ethnicity related Rwandan legal jeopardy. These identities include ABAPOWA and ABAPARIMEHUTU for Hutu, mainly those Hutu counter-elites with ideas considered threatening the politics of RPF, a mainly Tutsi political party and IBIGARASHA for Tutsi, those Tutsi mainly in exile former loyal and members of RPF inner circle currently criticizing it. Another categorization is a dual ABAJENOSIDERI

(genocidaires) and ABAROKOTSE (genocide survivors) and other categorization include stayees (Tutsi who were in Rwanda during genocide) versus returnees (oldcase refugees) all Tutsi, and Ugandans versus other oldcase returned refugees also all Tutsi. While equally dangerous, in this paper I explore the evolution and the fate of ABAJENOSIDERI or INTERAHAMWE that I call Perpetratorhood identity and ABAROKOTSE or ABACIKACUMU that I call Victimhood identity. The aim of this paper is to examine the rise and fate of perpetratorhood and victimhood identities in post-genocide Rwanda, where interethnic conflicts have occurred in the past, and these new identities coexist with the salient Hutu and Tutsi ethnic labels. By exploring the dynamics and implications of these identities, this research seeks to shed light on their impact on social relationships, reconciliation processes, and the reconfiguration of collective Rwandan identity. Through a comprehensive analysis of historical, sociological, and psychological factors, this study intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of post-genocide Rwanda and the ongoing efforts to rebuild a harmonious and inclusive society.

These divisive identities are maturing in the face of political elites who engineered them and are even participating in their shaping regardless of the still fresh wounds among Rwandans, wounds from the genocide and war that resulted from identification with and politicization of ethnic groups. I warn that these identities are evolving to be new ethnicities superimposed with and boosting the already salient Hutu Tutsi and Twa ethnicities and once again as I argued in my paper stated above regarding Hutu Tutsi and Twa, this is also the work of Rwandans

and when things out of them turn bad, they have to bear the burden alone and never blame anyone else.

2. Methodology

In this paper, first a review of the literature about available models and theories of social identities formation and affiliation will be done; the theories that explain intergroup relations including conflicts especially the causes of inter-group conflict, participation and motivation will also be explored. Second, the paper will, through available literature and author's own experience and analysis explore the birth and evolution of Victimhood and Perpetratorhood identities in Rwanda. Finally, forcing the two findings together and drawing on past experience, the paper will present the fate of such identities especially in a country still succumbing from injuries of misuse of the same type of identities. The paper will answer the question: Is Rwandans' sarcasm and ignorance leading them to repeating the same mistake?

3. Theoretical framework

According to Thompson (2000) cited in Uwaifo (2016) and El Koubi (2016), ethnic group may be defined as a group of people convinced that they have common identity, a common fate and a shared history; an imagined community in a nation hence ethnicity focuses on sentiments of origin and descent. Besides defining a group in ethnic term, Tajfel and Turner (1986) conceptualize a group as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of membership in it. Reimer *et al.* (2020) present

among others, three theories besides the Social Identity Theory (SIT), which explain what motivates social identification and shapes intergroup relations. The optimal distinctiveness theory postulates that individuals are motivated by two opposing needs, a need for assimilation and a need for differentiation. Here, individuals seek to belong to social groups in order to avoid the risks of isolation and stigmatization and this theory recognizes that individuals identify with social groups that are inclusive enough to satisfy their need for assimilation, but not too inclusive to conflict with their need for distinctiveness. The subjective uncertainty reduction theory on the other side posits that individuals need to feel certain about their social world and to maintain control over their lives and hence seek to reduce uncertainty in their social perceptions. Self-categorization and social identification with groups give individuals certainty about their place in the social world, they feel secured. Terror management theory postulates that individuals have an inherent need for self-preservation and that this need is threatened when we are made aware of the inevitability of our death, this is the so-called mortality salience hence affiliating with social groups may overcome this mortality threat since such affiliation provides meaning and stability. According to this theory also individuals hold negative attitudes toward outgroups because they see them as a threat to their ingroup's worldview. According to Abrams and Hogg (2010), the Social Identity Theory (SIT) and its sub-theory, the Self Categorization Theory (SCT) are useful in understanding the nature and function of social identity and the process and

effects of categorizing oneself and other people. They are useful in explaining group behavior and intergroup relations, and thus of prejudice and discrimination. While the SIT focuses on the role of identity in intergroup conflict and harmony, the SCT focuses on the social-cognitive architecture of social identity processes and among concepts explained by them we include stereotyping, collective action, group cohesion, leadership, group decision-making, social influence, deviance, motivation, and the self. The SIT was pioneered by Tajfel who demonstrated that if people categorize objects and other people, they perceptually accentuate similarities within and differences between categories on dimensions believed to be correlated with the categorization especially if the categorization or correlated dimension is important or valued. According to him when people categorize others they see them as stereotypically similar to fellow group members and different from members of other groups. The Tajfel research hypothesized and proved that as categorization automatically produces perceptual accentuation, perhaps it also produces behavioral discrimination. From his minimal group studies, he defined social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership" (Abrams & Hogg, 2010). The Sabine Trepte and Laura Loy (2017)'s hermeneutic study of the Social Identity Theory and Self-categorization theory (SCT) found the SIT based on seven principles: people categorize themselves (self-categorization) as belonging to certain social groups such as an age group; this social group is

more or less salient in certain context; through social comparison, people evaluate their salient in-group relative to relevant out-groups; positive distinctiveness describes the result of social comparison, perceptions and favoring the in-group over the out-group; social identity is defined as the combination of self-categorization and its evaluation, here the self-image is determined by social categories which may be negative or positive; and influence individual's self-esteem which is threatened when the outgroup wins the social comparison and; trigger various strategies designed to increase self-esteem, such as individual mobility, social creativity, or ongoing social competition; and how individual mobility, social creativity, social competition, and stereotyping are affected by self-esteem. According to them, Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) is also built upon four processes: self-categorization, an active, interpretative, judgmental process, reflecting a complex and creative interaction between motives, expectations, knowledge and reality; salience, when a certain context or situation is interpreted and given a meaning in terms of specific social and personal identities; depersonalization, when self-perception is dominated by social identity; and individuality also called personalization indicating that a behavior or self-perception is determined by personal identity. According to Abrams and Hogg (2010), Tajfel showed that social identity is the basis to making one's ingroup distinct in evaluatively positive ways from relevant outgroups underpin ethnocentric perception, behavioral ingroup favoritism, and the existence of status hierarchies in society; this is the theory of intergroup relations.

According to this theory, prejudice and bias often reflect the way people protect and promote their positive distinctiveness, and their views of outgroups are framed by their beliefs about the nature of relations among groups in society and these beliefs about relative group statuses whether stable or permeable (social mobility) determine how groups and their members protect and promote their social identity. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), social mobility is based on the flexibility and permeability of the social system so that when ones are not satisfied by living conditions imposed on their lives due to membership of a given social group, it is possible to move either by talent hard work, good luck, or other means to another group that suit them better. On the other hand social change beliefs are based on the fact that the nature and structure of the relations between social groups in a society is characterized by social stratification systems that make it impossible or very difficult for individuals as individuals to divest themselves of an unsatisfactory, underprivileged, or stigmatized group membership. The economic and social realities of a society may be such that the impossibility of getting out on one's own, as an individual, becomes an everyday reality that determines many forms of intergroup social behaviors. According to the authors, social intergroup situation characterized by a strong felt stratification, interpersonal social behaviors may tend to be intergroup social behaviors; this is the case of groups that are superior and inferior in a social system. This is consequential, since in some intergroup situations, individuals will not interact as individuals, on the basis of their individual

characteristics or interpersonal relationships but as members of their groups standing in certain defined relationships to members of other groups hence we may expect a high correlation between the degree of objective stratification in a social system and the social diffusion and intensity of the belief system of social change. They argue that there is a tendency of moving from transition of acceptance of stratification to the creation of social movements aiming to changing the status quo. During this period ethnic groups for example will accentuate their distinctive languages, dialects or accent. There is a strong relationship between explicit intergroup conflicts of interests and the social change system of beliefs characterized by perception that concerned individuals can't move on their own from one group to another hence recourse to collective action leading to intergroup conflicts. When members of social change group are close to their objective they treat members of the out group as undifferentiated items in a unified social category rather than in terms of their individual characteristics. Actually social change beliefs will lead to the simultaneous creation of social movements for both change and conservation of the status quo. Authors argue that whenever social stratification is based upon an unequal division of scarce resources such as power, prestige, or wealth; there is a real conflict of interests, the social situation should be characterized by pervasive ethnocentrism and outgroup antagonism between the overprivileged and the underprivileged groups. They retain works by authors like Gregor and McPherson 1966, Milner 1975, 1981 and Morland 1969 who have argued that the status relations between dominant and

subordinate groups determine the latter's identity problems and that sometimes subordinate groups may internalize their social evaluation as inferior or second class and this consensual inferiority is reproduced as relative self-derogation in a number of indices upon which studies were conducted. However, they confirm that this consensual status itself is also problematic in terms of realistic group conflict theory (RTC) which conceptualizes prestige as scarce as resource like wealth or power since status differences between groups like other inequalities tend to accentuate the intergroup conflict of interests. Hence the impact of low status upon a subordinate group will be the intensified antagonism towards the high-status group. The authors argue that many forms of differences reduce perceived similarities. The authors argue also that where social-structural differences in the distribution of resources have been institutionalized, legitimized, and justified through a consensually accepted status system or at least a status system that is sufficiently firm and pervasive to prevent the creation of cognitive alternatives to it, the result has been less and not more ethnocentrism in the different status groups. Whenever a subordinate group begins for whatever reasons to question its presumed characteristics associated with its low status, this will re-awaken the previous dormant conflict over objective resources and at the same time the counteractions of the dominant groups in such circumstances will be the measures targeting the preservation of the previously existing subjective and objective differentiations. The mechanisms by which the minority group mobilizes to contest inequality, prejudice and discrimination

and situations of relative deprivation through collective action and protest have been a subject of study and the concept of social identity-deindividuation interpretation of collective aggression and violence was formulated. According to Abrams and Hogg (2010), the concept of social identity-deindividuation interpretation of collective aggression and violence recognizes that these arise because depersonalization transforms the self from being a unique individual to being a representative of a social category or group for which such conduct is prototypical. They argue that neither deprivation nor identification alone will necessarily provoke reaction to unfair inequality but social identity and rational-choice can have additive and independent effects and that politicized collective identity holds that political mobilization involves a sequence from construing shared grievances, to blaming political opponents and then seeking to make connections between one's own group's cause and the values of society as a whole. They retain the van Zomeren, Postmes and Spears (2008) conclusion from their meta-analysis that social identity provides the binding medium through which the sense of efficacy and injustice may influence collective action and the Wright, Taylor and Moghadham (1990) observation that the mere possibility of social mobility may be enough to quell potential protest. The authors also undertook the endeavors to analyse works related to group and group behavior motivations for actions like ethnocentrism. Among motivations self-enhancement and self-esteem recognize that people are motivated to attain positive distinctiveness of their ingroup vis-à-vis outgroups. The self-esteem hypothesis regarding propositions that ingroup

favoritism should enhance self-esteem and that low self-esteem should enhance a striving for positive ingroup distinctiveness was evaluated and authors like Houston and Andreopoulou (2003) found that high self-esteem and ingroup bias are positively related than with the idea that ingroup bias is a compensation strategy for low self-esteem. Tajfel and Turner (1986)'s hypothesis about intergroup conflict in a stratified society may be formulated as follows: "An unequal distribution of objective resources promotes antagonism between dominant and subordinate groups, provided that the latter group rejects its previously accepted and consensually negative self-image, and starts working towards the development of a positive group identity. The dominant group may react to these developments either by doing everything possible to maintain and justify the status quo or by attempting and creating new differentiations in its own favor, or both". A lot of studies conducted concluded that the mere perception of belonging to two distinct groups, the social categorization per se is sufficient to trigger intergroup discrimination favoring the ingroup; simply, the mere awareness of the presence of an out-group is sufficient to provoke intergroup competitive or discriminatory responses on the part of ingroup. Fearon and Laitin (2000) from their study on the relationship between the construction of ethnic identity and violence argue that substantial evidence link strategic aspects of the construction of ethnic identities to violence and argue that large-scale ethnic violence is provoked by elites seeking to gain, maintain, or increase their hold on political power. According to them the modern discourse of ethnicity might be seen as a

necessary condition for politicized ethnicity and thus ethnic war and ethnic identities are constructed by the actions of individuals seeking various ends. They argue that any review in the realm of on ethnic violence blame elite machinations and politicking, hence the “elite theories of ethnic violence”. Accordingly, ethnic violence is explained as both a means and a by-product of political elites’ efforts to hold or acquire power and in this context, elites foment ethnic violence to build political support and this process has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities, which favors more violence. Theories that explain intergroup relations and mainly intergroup conflict include the theory of authoritarian personality, theory of frustration-aggression, realistic group conflict theory, social dominance theory, and system justification theory. Pratto *et al.* (2006) define the social dominance theory as a general theory for societal group based inequality. Based on the fact that members of the dominant group tend to enjoy disproportionately what they call positive social values or desirable material and symbolic resources such as political power, wealth, protection by force, plentiful and desirable food, and access to good housing, health care, leisure, and education while negative social share is disproportionately left to or forced upon members of subordinate groups in the form of substandard housing, disease, underemployment, dangerous and distasteful work, disproportionate punishment, stigmatization, and vilification. According to them, the theory helps to understand the why and how of the processes that produce and maintain prejudice and discrimination. Sidanius *et al.* (2004) argue that while social identity theory and

self-categorization theory focus on social status, the amount of prestige one possesses along some evaluative dimension; social dominance theory emphasizes on social power, the ability to impose one's will on others despite resistance. According to them both social status and social power enhance ingroup favoritism however social power make discrimination more possible. Sidanius *et al.* (2004) argue that social dominance theory is explicitly devoted to trying to understand how psychological predispositions, social identities, social context, social institutions, and cultural ideologies all intersect to produce and reproduce group-based social inequality, according to them, social dominance theory is very much a model about process, specifically the processes that create and recreate group-based social hierarchy. According to Pratto *et al.* (2006), group-based social hierarchy is produced and maintained by legitimizing myths. They argue that social group dominance is not only a result of the use of force, intimidation, and discrimination on the part of dominants against subordinates, but also that behaviours of individuals, the formation of new social practices, and the operations of institutions are shaped by legitimizing myths and these myths include consensually held values, attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes, and cultural ideologies. What they call “hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths” (HE-LMs) such as different forms of racism, stereotypes, notions of fate, nationalism, the doctrine of meritorious karma, classism, the divine rights of kings, manifest destiny, and internal attributions for poverty; provide moral and intellectual justification for group-based oppression and inequality.

Accordingly, myths have been used to argue that inequality is fair, legitimate, natural, or moral. According to the authors, the oppressed may play a crucial role in their own oppression by playing an important part in the legitimization of myths. With self-debilitation, people belonging to subordinate groups engage in self-destructive and ingroup-damaging behaviours such as higher levels of criminality; in-group directed violence; harmful substance abuse like cigarette smoking, drug and alcohol abuse; truancy; and school attrition at significantly higher levels than do those from dominant groups hence contribute to their own group's subordination. In this context, stereotypes of group inferiority lead members of subordinate groups to under-perform on intellectual tasks in self-evaluative situations. The authors observe that stereotypes and other ideologies that subordinates carry in their heads induce them to behave in ways that reinforce these stereotypes thus becoming self-fulfilling prophecies hence due to their influence on the actions of both dominants and subordinates, hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths contribute to the maintenance of group-based hierarchy. What is intriguing is their observation that when the status of the groups reverses, social dominance theory would expect the social dominance orientation differences among the groups reverse as well. In addition hierarchy enhancing institutions will be put in place, such as the criminal justice system, that will help to promote and sustain inequality by allocating disproportionately more positive social value or less negative social value to dominant groups than to subordinate groups. The discrimination perpetrated by hierarchy-enhancing

institutions according to them, is a particularly potent cause of group hierarchy since they can mobilize and allocate vastly larger amounts of resources than individuals can; large institutions, such as national governments and multinational corporations, have a larger reach in systematic influence across locales; institutions perpetuate themselves hence the discrimination they engage in operates over generations and when individuals or groups try to fight those practices, institutions typically defend their discriminatory practices as part of defending the institution itself; institutions establish their own internal norms, which coordinate the people who work in them and homogenize individual differences; and individuals in many institutions, including the military and corporations, are frequently exempted from personal culpability for their institutional actions because the institution has special legal status. Systems justification theory according to Sidanius *et al.* (2004) drew the foundation in the Marxism. Marx and Engels argued that social, political, moral, and aesthetic ideologies of a society are widely shared and that these ideologies are largely manufactured to serve the political and economic interests of the dominant class. In this context, elites due to their control of intellectual production through media and educational institutions for example, will make sure they are able to convince non-elites of the moral and intellectual righteousness of social policies, especially allocative policies that primarily serve the interests of the owners of the means of production rather than the interests of the workers and lower classes. According to both social dominance theory and systems justification theory,

both dominants and subordinates participate in the legitimization of the hierarchical social system. According to Reimer *et al.* (2020) realistic group conflict theory (RCT) is based on the fact that negative intergroup relations stem from conflicting group goals and competition over resources or power. According to Breuer and Elson (2017), the theory of frustration-aggression was formulated for the first time by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears in 1939 and postulated as “the occurrence of aggressive behavior always presupposes the existence of frustration and, contrariwise, that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression”. Frustration here is not defined in terms of emotion; it is “an interference with the occurrence of an instigated goal-response”. According to the authors, the current and most influential is the 1989 Berkowitz’s reformulated theory that defines frustration as “aversive events that generate aggressive inclinations only to the extent that they produce negative affect”, this theory recognises negative effects as the proximal cause of aggressive responses. Many perspectives were used to define frustration. According to authors, Amsel used a cognitivist perspective and formulate a theory and defined frustration as occurring when anticipated reward is reduced, delayed, or removed completely while Bandura recognized frustrations as events that reduce the experience of self-efficacy. According to the self-determination theory, frustration can be thought of as the thwarting of basic psychological need satisfactions of relatedness, autonomy, or competence as in the case of self-efficacy and effectance. According to Dollard and colleagues as reproduced, the strongest

aggressive reactions are those directed toward the perceived sources of the frustration and aggression toward the source of the frustration is one type of retaliatory behavior. Monroe *et al.* (2000) state the theory of authoritarian personality as built on individual’s personality type, resulting from an individual’s family structure, which predisposes him or her to particular types of political identity and behavior. In the same context, individuals from authoritarian family repress certain desires and drive whose resulting anxieties produce the authoritarian personality type characterized by traits such as intolerance of ambiguity, deference to authority, and the scapegoating of relevant out-groups. Duckitt (2015) reproduced observations by Reich (1975) that authoritarian character structure is described as conservative, afraid of freedom, submissive to authority, obedient, with natural aggression distorted into brutal sadism. He argue that the original authoritarian personality theory was proposed by Adorno and colleagues in 1950 with explanations heavily relying on psychodynamic theory and suggested that overstrict, harsh, and punitive parental socialization sets up an enduring conflict within the individual where parental punitiveness engenders resentment and hostility toward parental authority and by extension all authority, but cannot be expressed because of fear of, and dependence on the all-powerful parents. The resulting anger and hostility are repressed and replaced by an uncritical idealization of the parents and conventional authority and submission to them. This repressed anger and hostility toward authority does not disappear but is displaced and directed toward substitute targets, notably those seen as

being sanctioned by conventional authority, such as vulnerable and culturally deviant out-groups and minorities. Due to criticism other versions of the model were formulated. According to the author, the 1954 Gordon Allport's version of the theory asserts that authoritarian personality traits are stemmed from personal insecurity and fearfulness, or ego weakness and suggested that they cause authoritarian personalities to need structure, order, and control in their social environments and to react with punitive hostility to social change, deviance from convention, and novelty. Duckitt (2015) also reproduce the 1954 Rokeach's version of the theory that asserts that these traits are due to what he called "dogmatism", a relatively closed cognitive organization of beliefs organized around a central set of beliefs about absolute authority and argue that persons high in dogmatism would be attracted to authoritarian movements and beliefs of either the political right or the left, and cause them to dislike and reject persons and out-groups with dissimilar beliefs and values to their own. Accordingly, another version is the 1973 Wilson's conservatism which is a generalized susceptibility to experience threat or anxiety when confronted by uncertainty which lead to such personalities to adopt authoritarian or conservative social attitudes.

4. Background on Victimhood and Perpetratorhood identities in post-genocide Rwanda

After the 1994 genocide and war, the journey towards categorization of Rwandans started with the beginning of commemoration of lost lives. Since 1995, the government of Rwanda established a seven days period from the first day of April as a

week destined to the memory of people decimated in the Rwandan carnage, this first session was an endeavor that Hintjens (2008) refers to as a genuine exercise in collective mourning for all Rwandans. According to Mwambari (2021), in the initial commemorations the carnage was loosely referred to as "massacres" the name that was changed to "Rwandan genocide" (*Itsembabwoko n'itsembatsemba* and then *jenoside*). These two first terminologies did not discriminate the dead based on ethnic affiliation however, since 2004 the name was changed to "genocide against the Tutsi" (*jenoside yakorewe abatutsi*). Hintjens (2008) argue that this new rhetoric is hegemonic since it defined who should be considered true victims and villains of the genocide. This is also corroborated in Mwambari (2021) who argues that the script of this selective memory was constructed with reference to other genocides such as the holocaust hence creating association with the global hegemonic narrative and from then on, the official genocide memory in Rwanda morphed into a hegemonic narrative. This enabled the RPF to impose their interpretations of reality or the interpretations that support their interests as the only thinkable way to view the world while alienating alternatives. This selective memory gave impression of only Tutsi died and Hutu killed them in the genocide while in the observations of Tshimba (n.d.) "... [Rwanda is] locked in endless cycles of victimization, a kind of pendulous movement from perpetrated victims to victimized perpetrators" and according to him this historical selectivity established rigid ethnic distinctions between "those who are the victims", and "those who are offenders". A closer look at top down

approach towards organization and preparation of lectures to be delivered during this *kwibuka* week mainly through a national organ, the *Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre le Génocide* (CNLG) in addition to the one sided participation of survivors with non-survivors as passive players but some of them also lost relatives during the genocide either in the hands of genocidaires or RPA, after genocide in systematics revenge killings and as survivors of the Hutu refugees carnage in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the conclusion is crystal clear, while the event was established in the context of Rwanda towards unity and reconciliation, the commemoration week strengthened the categorization of Rwandans as victims and perpetrators than being a reconciliatory instrument. The government went on with the creation of the fund for Tutsi survivors, the so called *Fond d'Assistance au Récupérés du Génocide* (FARG) that was and still is used to fund for survivors' housing, health insurance, living allowance, and school fees. While it was said to be created for supporting poor survivors, its wide coverage gave impression of a systematic and universal coverage on the side of Tutsi survivors. It is a common knowledge that probably more Hutu died during the same genocide in a number of circumstances including being killed after mistakenly identified as Tutsi, intentionally killed for opposing undergoing massacres of Tutsi, killed for hiding Tutsi, killed for helping Tutsi to flee, and killed by the Rwanda Patriotic Army during revenge killings. In a country said to have been rising from ashes where everything was destroyed and poverty affecting almost every one. The Hutu orphans, widows and widowmen were left

aside as they were not included in the mandate of the fund for survivors. This also strengthened ethnic divides contrary to the aim of the government, a unified nation-state. A terrifying story is found in Burnet (2008) where a survivor Marie who married a Hutu and forced to falsely testify in Gacaca courts by a Tutsi neighbor Jeanne and refused, few days later his husband was imprisoned with no judicial file. Alone with children due to the loss of salary of the husband she went to request the help from the survivor's fund (FARG), but Jeanne and her husband Patrice, who headed the local genocide survivors' organization, blocked Marie's efforts by refusing to sign the necessary paperwork and Jeanne told her "The FARG does not help killers' children." Marie's husband spent seven years in prison on charges of genocide, although there was no evidence against him in his dossier. According to the author, certain Tutsi genocide survivors have sought revenge against individual Hutu as a scapegoat for Hutu as a corporate group and this is due to the Rwandan government's genocide commemorations and national mourning practices generating a polarizing discourse that defines all Tutsi as genocide victims and all Hutu as genocide perpetrators. As one big eyed can easily understand, the judiciary was a good instrument for strengthening ethnic divide. Besides the Arusha Tanzania based International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) whose justice was and still is disputed due to flaws in fabricated cases and false testimonies, the Rwandan innovative Gacaca courts with its *inyangamugayo* arbiters with no or very little knowledge in the process of law and still in troubled fearful years and under victors tight

surveillance, the revengeful justice was rendered. A large number of genocidaires were convicted but at the same time a large number of innocent Hutu (till now there are no available figures for comparison) were also convicted. This was done while on the other sides Tutsi army and in some circumstances with Tutsi civilians help, was also involved in the revenge killings of Hutu if it is not crimes against humanity, war crimes and acts of intentional ethnic cleansing and none was brought to justice. In order to make sense on how Gacaca courts are fulfilling its reconciliatory mandate through ending impunity and establishing the truth about the Rwandan tragedy, Burnet (2008) conducted a field study in Rwanda from 1997 to 2002. Reflecting on studies conducted to assess the suitability of Gacaca courts, she points to the 1996 study commissioned by the UN Human Rights Mission to Rwanda and conducted by several Rwandan professors from the National University of Rwanda, a study that concluded that the courts were not suitable or appropriate as a judicial remedy for the genocide. She reproduces the statement by Peter Uvin and Charles Mironko that the strongest element in favor of Gacaca is the lack of an alternative. According to her, international human-rights organizations have criticized the Gacaca courts due to their procedures violating the fundamental rights of the accused by prohibiting them from seeking legal counsel and not granting them full rights to cross-examine prosecution witnesses or to call witnesses for their defense. According to the author, contrary to intended objectives, the perception of the Gacaca courts by many in communities covered by the research is that they are entirely focused on punitive

justice where they impose sentences ranging from civil reparation of damages caused to other people's property to the death penalty (now abolished) or life imprisonment. According to Burnet (2008) and Uwizeyimana (2015), Gacaca courts are perceived as one-sided and as victor's justice. Burnet (2008) argues that at multiple accounts, genocide survivors and others have organized themselves to fabricate testimony and evidence against certain people, a situation that appears to be motivated by the desire for reprisals or revenge and in other circumstances testimony is fabricated for other purposes, such as to settle long-term personal conflicts, family feuds, or disputes over land or other property. According to the author, people whose family was decimated including the members of the RPA due to anger many seek revenge through the Gacaca courts against anyone they know who is Hutu. According to Uwizeyimana (2015), genuine reconciliation cannot happen till justice is done and is seen to be done by all Rwandans both Hutus and Tutsis. He argues that the principle of judges' impartiality cannot be guaranteed seeing that the ruling group in Rwandan has both political and economic interests in the prosecution of its opponents. By looking at the ICTR's Victors Justice and the Rwandan Genocide, the author argues that the mandate of the court was clear and about prosecuting people from both sides of the conflict however, while evidences point to the RPA committing atrocities during the war, the court failed to prosecute any Tutsi or member of the RPA. He reproduced the statement from the 2014 Human Rights Watch report that "Perhaps the most significant failure of the ICTR has been its unwillingness to prosecute crimes

committed by the RPF in 1994, many of which constituted war crimes and crimes against humanity ...creating a sentiment among some Rwandans and international legal observers that it provided only victor's justice". The author reproduces the December 1995 declaration of the former RPF intelligence chief Sixbert Musangamfura as found in Umutesi (2006:157) that 312,726 people were murdered in a selective and deliberate fashion by RPF fighters between July 1994 and July 1995 and a November 1995 statement by ex-Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu that about massacres by the RPF irrefutable proofs exist that over 200,000 Hutus were killed inside Rwanda in the aftermath of RPF taking power in 1994. These and other statements especially from former military officers that broke tie with RPA argue that order for revenge killings were from high command of the army. The author reproduced statements by academics such as Reyntjens (1996: 240) that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) killed tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of Hutus before, during, and after 1994 and Davenport and Stam (2009: 8) that if a million people died, contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of those who died were not Tutsi, but Hutu where according to them, RPA is guilty of war crimes of an extraordinary scale. According to him Des Forges (1999: 692) reported that "the killings by the RPF were more selective, mainly targeting educated or politically active Hutus". However, due to pressure and politics, the ICTR focusing exclusively on genocide-related crimes may lead to conclusion that it practiced the victor's justice. Uwizeyimana (2015) also argues with a statement by Umutesi (2006:157) that "most Rwandans, Hutus

and Tutsis, as well as some academics agree that there cannot be peace and reconciliation in Rwanda until those RPF members who killed the Hutus are also brought to justice and the Hutus are allowed to remember their own relatives who perished at the hands of RPF soldiers inside and outside the country" while adding that Rwandan government was involved in revenge and dispensing victor's justice and that both the ICTR and the Rwandan courts have contributed to a perception that one ethnic group was targeted, promoted the victors' justice and have so jeopardized the process of ensuring that everyone seeking justice receives it. The author also explored the issue of Rwanda's laws relating to the punishment of the crime of genocide ideology and reproduced the 2008 Human Right Watch observations that people (children and adults) and organisations (private and political) of ethnic Hutu background are the exclusive targets of this law of genocide ideology and that it gives loophole for Tutsi bringing accusations against their Hutu neighbours perhaps through jealousy and the 2012 Human Right Watch's concerns that the prosecution may be based, not on actual statements, but on "the speaker's alleged underlying philosophy, which is determined by the state or its agents and not on an analysis of whether speech constitutes advocacy of hatred that amounts to violence, discrimination or hostility hence no clear way of determining beyond reasonable doubt that the philosophy behind someone's thoughts constitute the crime of genocide ideology. Based on the principle that justice should be done be seen to be done that requires that all persons be equal before the courts and tribunals he argue that in order for

justice to be done, and manifestly and undoubtedly be seen to be done, judges should be above suspicion and everyone shall be entitled to a fair and public hearing by a competent but most importantly independent and impartial tribunal established by law which he argue to be problematic in post-inter-ethnic conflict countries such as Rwanda. By characteristics and definition according to him, victor's justice is when "an entity partakes in carrying out prosecution on the basis of applying different rules to judge what is right or wrong for their own forces and for those of their conquered enemies" during which the victorious forces, "ex post facto justice" establish the courts and the terms and conditions under which members of the losing side are prosecuted and punished; it is a situation in which the Victors decide on the crime, establish laws and the judges to adjudicate, decide who is to be prosecuted and who is not and most importantly, shield their own members suspected of having committed similar crimes from being prosecuted. In light of evidences he argues that the Rwandan government has expressed opinion on Hutu guilt simply because they are Hutus when for example the president of the republic Paul Kagame addressed more than 800 youths in the so called Youth Connect Dialogue which took place on 30th June 2013 at the Kigali Serena Hotel and speaking of genocide stated that genocide was committed by all Hutus and that he was the paramount example of tolerance because he accepts to live in the same country with an ethnic group of genocidaires hence called for every child, adolescent, and young adult of Hutu descent or blood including those who were not born at the time of the massacre to apologize for

the crimes committed in their name, by their parents and relatives during the 1994 genocide. This was followed by cases of Hutu politicians apologizing for crimes they never committed but committed by their fellow Hutu in their name. The materialization of open mass culpabilization where all Hutu are considered perpetrators of genocide and their children considered to have inborn crime and asked to apologize for crimes of family and relatives for some and for being ashamed of being genocidaires descendants respectively became a corner stone in building Perpetratorhood identity for Hutu as opposed to victimhood identity for Tutsi, identities that from then on one will have to be borne with. The author reproduced the statement by Rudasingwa (2013: 1) that the president publicly announced that "all Hutus from all corners are genocidaires" despite the fact that Rwandan government like to pretend that there is no ethnic groups in Rwanda and this led him to ask the basis on which these young people were selected and labeled as Hutus by the President of the republic and then forced to apologize for other Hutus. This forced him to reproduce the argument by Warigi (2013: 1) that "As much as Kagame's Rwanda claims to have forcefully moved to disband its old ethnic categories, it is an open secret that the Hutus are made to feel the burden of the guilt" and that this is in line with declaration by both former President Bizumungu and current President Paul Kagame that "it is not always easy to distinguish between innocent and guilty Hutus" as found in OAU (2000: 235) and Doxtader and yVilla-Vicencio (2003: 12) hence the need for all of them to apologize for the crimes of genocide. Accordingly, Le Mon (2007:

18-19) argues that the expression of the Hutus guilt and the presumption of the Tutsis innocence could be found in the way the Rwandan government has used Gacaca courts to “affirm group personas of victim and perpetrator, innocent and guilty” and that “Gacaca court proceedings assigned collective guilt to Hutus by ignoring crimes committed by the RPA, and permitting primarily Tutsi survivors to stand in judgment of primarily Hutu perpetrators”. The author also reproduces the statement by Dr Phil Clark a Lecturer in Comparative and International Politics, specializing in conflict and post-conflict issues in Africa at Oxford University that Gacaca courts did not prosecute crimes committed by RPF members because they know very well how opposed is the Rwandan government to hearing cases in which the RPF members are accused of crimes against Humanity and in his terminology he said that “judges were concerned that if they transfer the transcripts of the trials back to central authorities and it becomes known that they have allowed open discussions of RPF crimes then they themselves could get into trouble” this led Katherine Iliopoulos (2011:1) to conclude that “Tutsis were not prosecuted during the Gacaca courts, it can be reasonably argued that all 1.3 million who have been prosecuted and condemned some to death penalties or longer jail terms are from Hutu families” this according to Uwizeyimana (2015), challenges the assumption that the penal code and the genocide ideology law punish ‘any person’. Laws of genocide and genocide ideology were instrumentalized to persecute opponents of the regime. Uwizeyimana (2015) reproduces an Amnesty International Report (2010: 92) statement

that “If you dare to criticize what is not going well, it is genocide ideology” and according to the author, the Rwandan government used the law of genocide ideology to silence political opponents rather than to provide justice. The author reproduced the Des Forge (1999: 728)’s argument that “while the Rwandan government’s effort to reshape Rwandan political culture to eliminate divisiveness has been widely lauded, other political motivations have influenced the government’s political program and undermined the government’s ability to unify the country” and that “the RPF leaders have a strong sense of their own moral rectitude and great certainty of their right to rule, and as a result, they have been willing to use brutal force to maintain their power.” Accordingly, the RPF former senior officers Nyamwasa, Karegeya, Rudasingwa and Gahima (2010: 15-16), stated that the Hutu community is marginalized from a meaningful share of power and the Hutu who serve in RPF-led government are only surrogates of the RPF who lack legitimacy in their community since are kept in office, often for very brief periods, for the sole purpose of giving the government an appearance of embracing political pluralism. According to them, the Hutu community perceives the RPF as an instrument of political domination by the minority and that the current Rwandan government is not considered legitimate by the majority of the population in general, and the Hutu community in particular. Contrary to the fact that the judges can only dispense justice fairly with the necessary integrity if there is conducive environment, Uwizeyimana (2015) reproduces the HRW statement in its 2012 Report that Rwanda’s

“judiciary still suffers from a lack of independence, and the government has interfered with the conduct and outcome of a number of trials, especially in cases of a political nature, such as the prosecution of opposition politicians and journalists”. Accordingly, the UnWatch in 1997 argued that “some jurists who have attempted to apply the law fairly have suffered from threats, arrest and worse” and prosecutors such as Munyagishali arrested due to their refusal to arrest people on genocide charges when there was little or no supporting evidence. The report says “mayors, their counsellors and others with no legal competence to make arrests were in fact making many arrests in the district, often on the merest denunciation and without any investigation”. In the same report, in a number of accounts, there were summarily killing and disappearance of witnesses willing to testify for those accused of genocide crimes and lawyers, the case of Innocent Murengezi who disappeared on 30 January 1997 and never seen again, willing to represent them in courts. The Human Right Watch Report (2012:11) stated that since then “Lawyers have been reluctant to take on cases relating to state security, political issues, media freedoms and genocide ideology, as well as cases in which Hutu suspected of genocide have been illegally detained or tortured, limiting a defendant’s right to legal representation and the Freedom House Report (2012: 2) stated that the Rwandan judiciary has yet to secure full independence from the executive, the military and politicians in spite of efforts made in its improvements. With its renown widespread state censorship that according to Reyntjens (2011) the regime seeks full control over people and space and

hence the country is an army with a state, rather than a state with an army; Uwizeyimana (2015) reproduce the statement by Le Mon (2006: 19) that there is no doubt that the Rwandan government crackdown on criticism has served to silence those best positioned to speak frankly about the Gacaca process and in situations like this, according to a reproduced Purdeková’s observation “you cannot openly oppose and often everyone are urged to align with and assist the state hence the independence and impartiality of the courts and the judges cannot be established or seen to be established when the courts or the judges are under the control or influence of non-judicial entities” and accordingly, this led Des Forges and Thomas Longman (2004: 60) to argue that “many observers, both inside and outside Rwanda, believe the trials of genocide suspects have been unduly influenced by political considerations”, that “Military and government officials have harassed and intimidated prosecutors and other judicial officials and pressured some of them into arresting and, in some cases, convicting individuals based on flimsy evidence. Arbitrary arrests have particularly targeted Hutu, especially if they were perceived to be opponents of the new regime. In the initial trials of genocide suspects, the defendants had few rights, with no legal representation and limited access to their case files, even though they faced capital charges. Military and government officials regularly sought to influence the outcome of trials.” According to the author; the army, the police, and the local defence forces (LDF) were influential in the preparation (that is, coercion) of witnesses of Gacaca courts where over a million Hutu genocide suspects were tried hence according

to the reproduced statement by Purdeková (2011: 478), “when it comes to Gacaca.... the police superintendent is more important than the *inyangamugayo* (Gacaca judge), especially when it comes to “backstage preparing of witnesses”. The same author argue that Carina Tertsakian, a Human Rights Watch’s Senior Researcher on Rwanda believes that many of the current 55 000 to 60 000 current prisoners in Rwandan jails could be innocent and read in the Freedom House Report (2012: 2) “Gacaca courts faced criticism from legal experts not only because of their failure to address genocide-era crimes allegedly committed by the RPF, but also because they routinely tried politically motivated cases”. According to him, the US Department of State (2011: 14) states that it is highly possible and unavoidable that “witnesses might have given false testimony in a sizable number of Gacaca cases, and observers expressed concern that some suspects confessed to avoid lengthy prison terms, it would not be surprising to find that some people admitted committing crimes in desperation to avoid lengthy prison terms while they have actually not committed any. Decisions of those who presided over the Gacaca courts (especially the Hutus) could have been influenced by the fear of being charged with genocide denial if they failed to convict other Hutus accused of genocide related crimes. The fact that no Rwandan court has tried Tutsis for the crimes of genocide to this date tends to create an impression of the victor’s justice. Besides Hutu survivors of the genocide, a large number of Hutu children after imprisonment of their parents are now heads of families or remain with a single parent most of the time a mother. It is

easy to understand that for being children of confirmed genocidaires they cannot get any help in the new Rwanda. The other episode in our horror movie was going to follow. Due to intentional maltreatment of inmates and inhuman punishment inside prisons in addition to overclouding a large number of inmates died before the biological adaptation mechanisms fully mature to protect the remained. This increased the self-identification even in these small children and contrary to the widely disseminated by RPF partisans that children were educated about ethnicity in their home, they were educated by observation and experience mainly from the RPF deeds. Ingelaere (2010) retain the findings of anthropologic studies that focused on identity in Rwanda that found ethnicity to remain a central factor for Rwandan social identity and that today ethnic group based identity is meaningful and perhaps arguably even more than before the genocide or more appropriately saying, that the Hutu and Tutsi distinctions are more rigid now than ever.

5. Discussion of the Findings

It is not surprising that every endeavor destined to Rwandan reconciliation taken above salient ethnicity and ethnic amnesia failed. Hillary Power as quoted in Kuradusenge (2016) argued that “such deep-seated identities and attitudes cannot be expected simply to disappear; [even] though they may be publicly silenced, they may remain intact. Failing to address them negates the possibility of dismantling and neutralizing them”. One of her interviewee argued “Today, we are the Palestinians; the only problem is that we don’t have intifada and don’t have terrorists. Who knows, maybe we are

creating the terrorists of tomorrow”. Tshimba (n.d.) observed that as long as Hutu interpret their history and justification of power from a social liberation perspective while Tutsi interpret genocide as a point to get rid of those with genocide ideologies and to frame their enemy; post-genocide Rwanda is seen by Hutu as a replica of old monarchical society while the fear of Tutsi that if Hutu get hold of power, the Hutu power will be brought in play again; in order to maintain a balance, each group exonerates its favored regime by shifting blames and guilt to the other. Hilker (2009) argues that “despite current state policies that seek to de-emphasize ethnic identities, ethnicity remains salient in contemporary Rwanda”. From the observations by different authors presented above, despite effort made and due to errors made when the government of Rwanda expected to cover all history narratives with a single official genocide based narrative, it failed to address ethnic divides among Rwandans. The selective memory or what is termed by some academics such as Buckley-Zistel (2009) as chosen amnesia, contributed to the continued social divide. The official narrative of the genocide created a kind of denied victimhood on the side of Hutu, and while I argue that there are still disputes among Rwandans of who are real victims (Tutsi, Hutu, or both?) the official hegemony gave credit of Victimhood to Tutsi and eventually Perpetratorhood to Hutu, all of them in both category. In Rwanda, according to Tshimba (n.d.) victimhood became a condition to exclude others since perpetrator is condemned and the victim is wholly good and completely innocent and more importantly the perpetrator is believed to be inherently evil, wholly guilty of the crime and

from him springs a culture of evil people. Accordingly, all Hutu are addressed as murderers, extremely ungrateful, crude and cruel and due to their inhuman behaviour they are considered to be inferior, fit to be cast out. According to the author, this created a sentiment of spiral vengeance as well as a generalised feeling of mistrust, and shaped a socially accepted behaviour for the victimized as well as an impetus for exclusive change on the other hand hence victims take up a position that raises them above the offenders. In Rwafa (2021)’s terminology, this is a worrisome tendency of categorizing people into “sinners” and “saints” under the veil of Rwandanity (*Ndi umunyarwanda*). The author reproduced the statement by King (2010) that Tutsi hold a “monopoly on suffering” in Rwanda while Tshimba (n.d.) argues that this monopoly was strengthened by expressions such as we are hated because of what we are and has; we must always be careful in our dealings with them; they threaten our existence hence by carrying this into posterity, the crime of the offender will define a people and create a rift between descendants of us and them. According to him, other’s claims are characterized as lacking legitimacy and so any concerns from the ‘out-group’ [framed enemy] are quickly rendered null and void by the in-group [perceived victim] hence, the promise of the future is often hidden by the trials of surviving in the present, which justify the extermination (annihilation) of one group by another as the only presumed way to prosper and live longer. At least four things happened in post-genocide Rwanda: covering Hutu victimhood in the genocide, revenge killings of Hutu,

instrumentalization of the victor's justice against Hutu, and engineering of a hegemonic new superordinate Rwandanness social identity. All of these in the line of fostering national unity and reconciliation, this is what Purdeková (2008) calls exclusive ethnic nationalism and inclusive civic nationalism dichotomy. Besides the failure of every attempt made towards a Rwandan Eldorado in which social harmony prevails since they were willingly formulated above unhealed broken hearts and mind, they not only strengthened the already existing problematic ethnic groups, but also opened window for the emergence of new social categorization. Among these new identities, this paper explores the Victimhood identity (ABAROKOTSE) and Perpetratorhood identity (ABAJENOSIDERI). Social struggles in Rwanda have been motivated by socio-political power which also implies economic power. In the lenses of Social Identity Theory and Self-categorization theory, the Victimhood identity was created to maintain socio-economic-political privileges by Tutsi especially oldcase refugees repatriated with the RPA and this group imposed a negative accolade of genocide perpetrators to the other segment of Rwandans hence the Perpetratorhood identity. In the lenses of the subjective uncertainty reduction theory, these groups grew and continue to grow due to ingroup solidarity and favoritism and outgroup discrimination since mainly the Victimhood identity members see their future secured through their maintaining and strengthening the status quo. I will draw on the Gordon Allport's modified version of the theory of authoritarian personality, where I argue that in countries whose politics is based on

ethnicity, the minority cannot rely on elections to attain power hence due to fear and insecurity when this group is in power, it will create and maintain structures, orders, and control instruments in its social environments and react with punitive hostility to social change and deviance. All these measures strengthen in group identification and outgroup bias, stereotyping and discrimination while political elites continue to draw supports from the perspectives of social dominance theory and systems justification theory, to explain their being righteous beholders of the power. This will be easily understood since in the case of Rwanda the founder and political ideologues of the RPF have ties with the UNAR party that was linked to the monarchy before they exiled. This is the reason why it is easy for Hutu elites as noted above take this hegemony as a return of the painful Tutsi aristocracy and this is how they will continue to interpret things as long as the RPF monopolize every socio-economic sphere in the name of Victimhood while they also feel their victimhood have been erased in their disfavor. Even though not all Tutsi are enjoying the fruits of the *Igihugu gitemba amata n'ubuki* (a country plenty of milk and honey), the realistic group conflict theory (RTC) conceptualizes the social identity-deindividuation where depersonalization transforms the self from being a unique individual to being a representative of a social category or group, explains collective behaviors such as aggression or discrimination against all members of the group. While the inequality and discrimination create poverty burden on the subordinate group, the theory of frustration-aggression recognizes that frustration considered

blockages of efforts made by subordinate groups for emancipation, will trigger aggression of the frustrated towards the perceived sources of the frustration. Like other social groups, Victimhood and Perpetratorhood identities are destined to become other forms of ethnicity as predicted by the Integrated-blame game theory and in full light of elite theories of ethnic violence, they may lead Rwanda in writing other dark pages of history. In this transitional period when Rwandans are swinging in wandering identities, a period that according to Benda (2018) is characterized by ambiguous identities, complex narratives and fluid temporalities; Rwandans are in what Hinton called “gray zones” of the transitional period. This is a period according to the author characterized with plural, contested, competing and complementary temporalities in which young generations vie to assert their political agency or affiliation. One of the methods to overcome inter-group conflicts is the creation of a superordinate group. This is what Bilali (2014) call “re-categorization of distinct subgroups into an inclusive superordinate category” and this is expected to produce positive intergroup attitudes since former out-groups are considered in-group members at the superordinate level. The author argues that the same approach yielded positive outcomes in post-conflict countries such as Bosnia, Chile and Lebanon. The process is recognized to be resisted by group members especially in the situation of asymmetric relations since it may be considered a threat to group distinctiveness where the inclusive category reflects the norms and characteristics of the dominant group. The author argues that recent studies found a more appropriate

“dual identity model” which suggests that re-categorization to a common identity should produce more positive outcomes when subgroup identities are also recognized. The creation of a new superordinate group was at least theoretically attempted, the Rwandanness identity (*Ndi Umunyarwanda*). While poverty is ever increasing among peasants, repressive measures preventing them to openly speak on their grievances, exploitative economic policies driving many capitalists into bankruptcy; Tutsi political elites are busy denying ethnic identities, and sentencing long prison terms to those convicted with genocide ideology or denial using what was termed “vague laws on ethnic divisionism and genocide denial”. This is strengthening resentments between the overprivileged group mainly Tutsi considering themselves using resources to recover from wounds inflicted on them and the underprivileged group mainly Hutu attributed the evilness quality. According to Raffoul (2017), “shifts in [ethnic or other social] identity do not result from migrations waves [for example], they are the product of shifts in the way the same people identify themselves across time”. While singing *Ndi Umunyarwanda*, Rwandans experience exclusive ethnic nationalism and hegemonic inclusive civic nationalism. Baldwin (2019) observes from *kwibuka* ceremonies what he characterized as opposing policy of ethnic non-recognition since there is what he calls blurring of Tutsi with survivor and the deliberate passing down of survivor identity to Tutsi youth that have created over time, conditions for a ‘survivor nationalism’, which exacerbates social tensions and risks sustainable peace in the long term. According to

Hintjens (2008) which is also my position, not everyone sees things as the regime would like them to, and accordingly, the regime monopolizes political correctness and the argument of Maina Peter and Kibalama that she reproduced is that the dominant emotional tone in public life tends to be one of fear and distrust [among opposing groups]. The author argue that the spectre of eternal Tutsi victimhood does not help in opening up more complex and inclusive forms of political identity for all Rwandans and considering the evolution of the numbers of genocide perpetrators from 10 percent of Rwandan Hutu who took an active part in the genocide in 1994, representing around 350,000–600,000 people calculated by academics and 571,934 suspected genocidaires by the Rwandan Prosecutor General's office to the Rwandan ambassador to Belgium giving a figure of two million, equivalent to the entire adult male Hutu population of Rwanda at the time (hence all Hutu considered genocidaires), she argues that this continuous re-readings of the genocide and the outcome seems more likely to further social and inter-group polarization than reconciliation and social peace. The author go on arguing that recognizing only Tutsi victims and survivors, the RPF regime claims the race ideology as its own, implicitly and that this created categories of goodies and baddies, sinners and saints.

6. Conclusion

The writing of Rwandan history may be seen as swaying in endeavors of planting and harvesting the fruits of inter-ethnic conflict and violence and then plant seeds for the next. Ntakirutimana *et al.* (2019) argue with much of the academic literature that sees

the twin concepts of *ubumwe n'ubwiyunge* (unity and reconciliation) as deeply politicized terms that serve to paper over divisions, and to disguise the monopolization of power by a small regime elite. This is in the same line of the observation by Edwards (2021) that the public memory in Rwanda is suffering under projects of state and nation-building which are more concerned with the consolidation of power than facilitating durable frameworks for reconciliation. He also argue that Gacaca courts has cemented Hutu-perpetrator and Tutsi-victim categorizations and according to him, the current RPF's modus operandi and policies of "*Plus jamais!*", are doomed to engrain Rwanda in, rather than uproot her from, a conflictual past prone to erupt". This is also corroborated in Hintjens (2008) who reproduced the Clark (2005)'s Gacaca courts observer's note that "[there was] tendency for 'two sides' to distance themselves physically from one another over time, as social groups placed themselves on opposite sides of the proceedings, physically as well as ideologically remote". One of the main obstacles to the future open political space free of ethnic driving force is that according to Hintjens (2008), the state continues to exercise tight control over the public expression of political identities and the government always feels attacked whenever an open political debate is proposed and accuses critics of divisionism or harboring a genocide mentality. She also argue that the top-down approach to de-ethnicization was done in an authoritarian manner, which prevented the emergence from below of a complex political identification leading to more inclusive forms of Rwandan citizenship in future. She reproduced the

Doom (2000)'s observation that poor people in marginalized situations may turn to identity politics as one of the few means they have to assert their rights. While I argue that this recourse to identity politics is highly probable in the future of Rwanda if things continue to evolve in the same direction of the status quo, I also predict that the reaction of the current political elites will be seeing the uprising as a continuation of genocidal ideology and this is contrary to Doom (2000)'s observation that when things like this happen, the identity politics of the poor cannot be equated with the genocidal mobilization of race-based identities. According to him, the identity politics of the poor should not be repressed in the name of security and post-genocide nation building. According to her, Alison des Forges has convincingly argued that impunity [of the RPA] is not just a problem for those who are victims and their relatives; it is a problem for the regime too, because it sows antagonisms and resentments in the present that can grow into possible retaliation and violence in the future. She reproduced the Mamdani (2001: 281) statement that if the immediate challenge in Rwanda is to undercut Hutu and Tutsi as political identities, this will not happen so long as the minority monopolizes power. Purdeková (2008) argues that "the staple story of the country's diversity and division (the Tutsi versus Hutu story) needs to be opened to question" if a secure future is to be built.

The evidence presented in this paper underscores the birth and maturing of perpetratorhood and victimhood identities in post-genocide Rwanda, alongside the prevailing Hutu and Tutsi ethnic labels. The instrumentalization and politicization of

these identities carry the potential to reignite interethnic conflicts in the future. It is clear that these new identities have emerged as powerful social constructs, influencing individual and collective perceptions, memories, and interactions. The coexistence of multiple identities poses serious challenges for the process of reconciliation and nation-building in Rwanda. To avoid further waves of interethnic conflicts, it is crucial for Rwandan society to navigate these complexities with a comprehensive approach that promotes inclusivity, justice, and genuine dialogue. Future efforts should focus on fostering a shared national identity that transcends the divisions of the past; fostering a culture tolerance and unity in diversity.

I argue that the windows to ethnic debates and related consequences were closed too soon when the wounds resulting from them were not already taken care of for a large number of Rwandans, I argue also by looking at how government officials and institutions crack on critics that there is an intentional instrumentalization of ethnicity, and looking at the vague approach to de-ethnicization that created space for the emergence of new forms of identities as the Victimhood and Perpetratorhood identities; I argue that Rwanda will not securely move on unless past mistakes are recognized all and fair solutions found in favor of all Rwandans without discrimination, political space relaxed and human rights respected especially the rule of law promoted. On the contrary, I will say yes, Rwandans' sarcasm and ignorance is leading them to repeating the same mistakes.

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