Citizenship, Rights and the Problem of Internal Conflicts and Civil Wars in Africa

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Abstract

The paper undertakes a re-interpretation of the problem of internal conflicts and civil wars in Africa, from the perspective of citizenship and rights. The central argument is that although the genealogy and dimensions of conflicts and civil wars in Africa are quite complex and varied, however, underlying most of those conflicts, especially those that erupted within the last decade, is the issue of citizenship and rights. The construction and nature of the state in Africa, which is rooted in the colonial pedigree, tend towards the institutionalization of ethnic entitlements, rights and privileges, which creates differentiated and unequal status of citizenship. This tendency de-individualizes citizenship and makes it more of a group phenomenon. As such, rather the state providing a common bond for the people through the tie of citizenship, with equal rights, privileges and obligations, both in precepts and practice, people's loyalties are bifurcated. The result is usually tensions and contradictions in the public sphere as claims of marginalization, exclusion and domination among individuals and groups are rife. The consequence is mostly conflicts and civil wars in Africa.

Introduction

Samuel Huntington in his seminal work, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (1996) argues that the post-cold war era may not signal the end of history as Francis Fukuyama may want us to believe, rather the international system will witness the emergence of new social forces that are basically identity driven. These identity-based forces will be at the heart of conflicts in the world, and will resonate more within national boundaries. In his words, "In this new world the most pervasive, important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural identities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilizations" (Huntington, 1996: 28). As such, the new

world would be one in which local politics is the politics of ethnicity and global politics is the politics of civilizations. The politics of hegemony and control in the political process within national and international context will be based on the primordial values of identity, culture and civilizations.

The nature and dimensions of conflicts in the post-cold war era tend to validate Huntington's position. Essentially, there has been the relocation of the site of political conflicts from the international to national arena, which is mostly group and identity based, of ethnic, religious and communal nature. For instance, the number of ethno-political groups involved in serious conflicts rose from 55 between 1970 and 1979, to 70 between 1993 and 1994 (Gurr, 1994). Also, between 1989 to 1998, there were 108 armed conflicts in the world (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1999: 593), of these only seven were inter-state, with the rest located in national contexts and basically group-identity related, of ethnic, communal or religious bent. In all these, Africa is the "melting pot" of conflicts in the world. From 1970, no less than 30 wars have been fought in Africa, most of them intra-state in nature (Annan, 1998: 2). In 1994, out of a total of 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, no less than 12 countries were at war, while 2 were in the post-war phase, and 14 had a recent or current experience of significantly high levels of political violence. In all, at the period (1994), a total of 28 countries, more than half of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, were or then recently afflicted by serious violent conflicts (Sandberg and Smith, 1994: 5). In 1996, 14 countries were engaged in armed conflicts, while by 1999 the number increased to 18, with no less than 11 countries under severe political crises (Adedeji, 1999: 5). Evidently, most countries in Africa are vulnerable to conflicts and civil wars.[1]

In this paper, I shall argue quite differently from Huntington. While in the present conjuncture most of the conflicts threatening to tear many states apart are identity-based, underlying them is the issue of citizenship and rights. Group identities have assumed not only a primary means of social expression, but also of rights and privileges in the polity. The concept of national citizenship of equal rights, benefits and duties for all citizens has been attenuated or bifurcated, with the state sunk in a cesspool of inter-group struggles and conflicts over the distribution of public goods. The claims of marginalization, domination, and social injustice by groups and individuals often derive from this reality. Put differently inter-group or identity-based conflicts and civil wars are manifestations of a deep-seated problem of citizenship in different national contexts.

The paper is organized into five parts. Part one, which is the introduction, provides a background discourse on the issue of conflicts both from the global and African context. The second section is a theoretical analysis of the interface between citizenship and the nation-state. What is the nexus between the state and citizenship, and does the latter seeks to create a common national identity for the members of a political community (i.e., state)? Part three focuses on the historical trajectory in the development of citizenship and the state in Africa from the colonial era. Part four dwells on the construction of identity and citizenship in the post-

colonial period in Africa. Part five is an empirical illustration of how such a construction manifests itself and translates into political conflicts in Africa with a focus on the Rwandan experience. The paper ends with the conclusion.

Citizenship and the Nation-State: The Theoretical Interface

The relationship between the state and citizenship has been an age-long theoretical discourse dating back to the classical political theorists. In the view of Aristotle for example, a state is nothing but "a compound made up of citizens; and this compels us to consider who should be properly called a citizen and what a citizen really is" (Aristotle, 1958). For social contract theorists like Rousseau, Hobbes and Locke, the very basis of the "social contract" through which the state evolved as a form of human organization, is the conferment and recognition of citizenship on those in the political community. In other words, the notion of citizenship is tied up with the evolution of the state.

Although the concepts of state and citizenship have changed in time and space, however, the idea of modern citizenship is still closely connected with the notion of the state. Conceptually, a state is an entity endowed with political sovereignty over a clearly defined territory; that has a monopoly of the use of legitimate force; and that consists of citizens whose terminal loyalty is to the state (Oomen, 1997: 23). In other words, a modern state is conceived as a collectivity of citizens. While the notion of a modern nation-state suggests a collectivity of nationalities all bounded together in a state through the tie of common citizenship.

The idea of a state or nation-state cannot be meaningful without citizenship. Although empires and colonies have predominantly subjects and not citizens, however, those forms of political entities have become anathema in contemporary times. Every nation-state identifies a particular set of persons as its citizens and defines others as non-citizens, as aliens (Brubakar, 1992: ix). Citizenship therefore is an instrument of social closure through which the state lays claim to and define its sovereignty, authority, legitimacy and identity. The identity of the citizen in a global context is in turn defined by the state. The institution of citizenship is that political artefact through which the state constitutes and perpetually reproduces itself as a form of social organization. It is the means through which the modern nation-state made of various nationalities seeks to forge a common identity and collective experience for its people. Indeed, without the concept of citizenship, the idea of a modern nation-state cannot be translated into practice.

But how is citizenship to be conceptualized, how did it evolve and what are its elements? The word "citizenship" as Anh Nga Longva noted (as French *citoyenneté*) derives from the root word, city. As a historical concept, it arose in the context of the town and reflects the relationship between the individual and the city. Indeed, the word originally referred to the freeman of the city (Longva, 1995: 201). Thus, citizenship may be conceived as an urban phenomenon (Longva, 1995: 201). Perhaps the notion of citizenship being viewed in a city or urban context may be partly related to the fact that most of the states in the medieval and ancient periods

were conceived as city-states, small in territory and largely urban in nature. And also probably because the struggle for citizenship was at inception basically urban-centred, the struggles of the working class. However, what is important is that citizenship in this context is viewed as a form of relationship between the political sovereign-state or city and the individual.

Although consensus exists that citizenship is a form of state-individual relations, there are relative variations among scholars, both modern and early political theorists on what citizenship means and its content. Aristotle and Rousseau view citizenship as a form of political activity, citizenship is the right to rule and be ruled (Aristotle, 1958). The citizen must be an active figure if the state is to be virile, and able to provide for the common good of everybody. Civil society is seen as being destructive of citizenship as it obstructs the relationship between the state and the citizen. But both Aristotle and Rousseau admitted that their notion of citizenship is limited to the small city-states. In a more broader conception, citizenship is viewed as the right of the individual to the protection of life, liberty, property and welfare (Bodin, 1945). In this way, a citizen may choose to be passive, so long as his activities are not subversive of the state.

In modern times, citizenship is conceived in a symbiotic manner between the state and the individual. It is defined as a regime of rights, privileges and duties. T. H. Marshall breaks those rights into three categories: civil, political and social rights (Marshall, 1964). These include: the right to free speech, association, due process, and equality before the law, franchise, and social welfare. The duties or obligations of the citizens include, tax payment, military conscription if necessary to defend the state, loyalty and allegiance to the state. From a different perspective, Charles Tilly argues that citizenship can be interpreted from four main angles. As a category, role, tie, and identity. As a category, citizenship designates a set of actors—citizens — distinguished by their shared privileged position *vis-à-vis* a particular state. As a tie, citizenship identifies an enforceable mutual relation between an actor and state agents. As a role, citizenship includes all of an actor's relations to others that depend on the actor's relations to a particular state. And as an identity, citizenship can refer to the experience and public representation of category, tie or role (Tilly, 1996: 7–11).

This multi-dimensional conception of citizenship by Tilly does not vitiate but only complements that of Marshall. Indeed, Tilly eventually opted for citizenship as a tie, and defines it as "a continuing series of transactions between persons and agents of a given state in which each has enforceable rights and obligations uniquely by virtue of (1) the person's membership in an exclusive category, the native born plus the naturalized and (2) the agent's relation to the state rather than any other natural authority the agent may enjoy" (Tilly, 1996: 8).

From the foregoing, therefore, citizenship in my view is a form of social pact, constituted by the dual elements of reciprocity and exchange between the individual (citizen) and the state. The individual enjoys those rights and privileges which no other social or political organization offers, while in turn, he gives his obligations,

loyalty and commitment to the state. While citizenship sounds like an egalitarian and equalizing concept, it does not presuppose class, but civic equality: equality before the law, equality of access and opportunities in state institutions and structures, and fairness and justice in the interactions between the state and individuals and amongst individuals in a political community.

The criteria for citizenship differ from country to country. Three differing criteria can be identified. The first is citizenship by birth (*jus soli*). The second is citizenship by descent or ancestral claims (*jus sanguinis*). The third is citizenship acquired through naturalization. In most cases, countries adopt a combination of two or all of these criteria. The first criterion is more inclusive and liberal in nature. This is adopted more capriciously in a country like the United States. Countries like Germany deny citizenship on the basis of birth, permanent or prolonged residency. In a country like France, children born in the country cannot lay claim to citizenship except under certain conditions. That is when they reach the age of eighteen, have lived in France for five years and have committed no crime (Kerber, 1997: 834). What is important is that every state stipulates rules through which it defines its citizens and those who are not.

There have been attempts to classify or create typologies of citizenship based on the level of the social engagement of the individual with the state. These range from the passive to the active citizens, the thick or the thin, and the oppressed, alienated and pluralist citizen. These categories are good heuristic devices that have a subtle undertone for citizens' mobilization and participation in the state. Except for the oppressed citizen, who in the practical sense of it cannot be called a citizen, but a subject. Subjects are objects of domination and cannot really lay claim to the benefits of citizenship. Citizenship, when properly constituted should provide "common" or "equal" rights and benefits to those considered as such (i.e., citizens) in the state.

However, two factors in the global arena are rapidly redefining the notion of citizenship within national contexts. First is the trend of regional integration with the creative, but emerging experience of the European Union (EU). By this initiative, citizenship is being gradually recontextualized away from national frontiers to supra-national level. The EU is gradually creating "regional citizens" who enjoy a wide range of rights and benefits not as citizens of their respective countries, but as citizens of the union. This experiment continues to generate intense debate among academics, politicians and civil society groups in most countries of the EU. Even in non-member states like Norway, it remains a central issue of public discourse.

The second factor is the increasing political globalization of the world, particularly with the hegemony of the liberal capitalist ideology. International codes of rights and privileges of individuals are being designed, institutionalized, and gradually enforced by supra-national organizations. Legal norms and conventions for minimum standards, especially on the issue of civil rights, are evolving which nations are being encouraged and sometimes coerced to acquiesce to. In other words, the rights

of citizens are no longer the sole prerogative of states. Extra-state actors mediate these. To be sure, the state remains a major actor in global interactions and the institution of citizenship.

It is essential to touch on the relationship between social pluralism or multiculturalism and citizenship. Some argue that the former has negative effects on the latter. That is, multiculturalism creates multiple and competing identities for the individual which attenuates his loyalty and allegiance as a citizen, to the state. Sectarian identities like nationality, ethnicity and religion are believed to be exclusive identities, which generate inequalities, while citizenship is basically inclusive and equality oriented (Oomen, 1996: 20).

The goal of equality embodied in citizenship and multiple identities can co-exist and complement each other, provided the constitutive rules in the socio-political space are well defined. In other words, multiculturalism or pluralism should not necessarily be conflictual or subversive of national citizenship or the state. Indeed, the idea of a nation-state is a plurality of nationalities bound together by a common state identity. Pluralism offers multiple layers of organizational participation or interaction for the individual in the state, which should enhance his citizenship qualities. As Michael Walzer rightly noted, "the citizen stands to the state not only as an individual, but also as a member of a variety of other organizations (class, professional, racial, ethnic, etc.) with which the state must relate, in relating to him (i.e., citizen)" (Walzer, 1970: 218). Multiple identities of the individual should not detract from his/her allegiance or commitment as citizen, to the state, but should complement and enrich it. Indeed, human beings are gregarious and thereby essentially identity seeking.

However, it is when citizenship is more nominal than substantive, that is, when citizenship rights and benefits are largely denied and the state seems out of reach, that pluralism may be subversive to or endangers the state. Those sub-national identities then form the basic source of support to the individual and may constitute a platform of resistance against the state. As Morton Grodzin (1966: 213) puts it "all patriots are potential traitors". In this context, those groups may take precedence over the state as primary object of identity and allegiance and may seek to contest political space with the state. It is the consciousness of the denial of citizenship rights by a people, which usually facilitates the transformation of sectarian groups, like racial and ethnic groups, from being "groups in themselves" into "groups for themselves". The idea of elite mobilization of ethnic or racial ideology, which most analysts emphasize in explaining politics and conflicts in Africa, is only possible in the context of a fertile ground of citizenship exclusion of a group or people, concerned. We shall demonstrate this shortly in the narrative of the African experience.

Between the Two Publics: Colonialism, Identity and the Citizenship Question

The concept of the two publics was first used by Peter Ekeh to describe how

colonialism created a split in the personality of the average African elite under colonial rule (Ekeh, 1975). This personality split is typified by a set of dual identities, which Ekeh referred to as the amoral or civic public and the moral or primordial public. I have used the concept of the two publics here slightly differently. In my usage, it refers to how colonialism created two categories of people in the public sphere in the colonies; citizens and subjects or as Mahmood Mamdani (1996) puts it; the native and the citizen. The former speaks the language of tradition, and customs, the latter, the language of rights, duties and privileges. How did this evolve and what are its implications for the post-colonial state, identities and politics in Africa?

Colonialism, though primarily an economic project meant to facilitate the brutal exploitation of labour and natural resources in the colonies evolved a political infrastructure that foisted and institutionalized relations of domination and control, which was a prerequisite for the colonial enterprise. Although methods of colonial governance differed slightly among the colonial powers, for example, between the British "indirect rule" policy and the French "assimilation" policy, the logic and dynamics of such rules, and the institutional structure and process of state formation, which they set in motion were basically the same.

Colonial political structure was predicated on the logic of dualism, of spatial institutional and territorial segregation and laws, which Mahmood Mamdani (1996) aptly characterized as a bifurcated state or the logic of decentralized despotism. On the one hand, there was the central state governed by civil laws which was the domain of the colonizers, basically urban based, and on the other hand, there was the local state or the native authorities, which enforced customary laws. The former was the domain of rights and privileges associated with citizenship; the latter was a terrain of "culture" and "custom". The natives or the colonized were subjects and therefore unentitled to citizenship rights or benefits. The seat of customary power in the rural areas was the local state: the *district* in the British, the *cercle* in French, and the *Indigenato* in the Portuguese colonies (Mamdani, 1996: O'Laughlin, 2000). The agency for the local state and native authority rule was the chiefs. In the chiefs were vested administrative, executive, legislative, extractive and judicial powers. He was the law. In essence, while civil law was racialized, customary law was ethnicized.

However, the import of native authority rule was not only with the denial of citizenship and its bundle of rights to the natives. It had two other important aspects. First colonialism through the native authority system radically transformed the social structures in Africa, including the chieftaincy institution (Ekeh, 1980). The sphere of control, sources and the nature of power, and those who exercised it at the local level changed dramatically under colonial rule. Native authority rule and customary law under the colonial regime meant the reinvention and bastardization of what were traditional political institutions and what may be called customary laws in most pre-colonial societies in Africa.

Although modes of political governance differed in many pre-colonial African

societies from the acephalous and highly democratic age-grade system in *Iboland*, the dispersed and regulated monarchical system of the *Yoruba* kingdoms, to the fairly centralized *Fulani* empire and the *Zulu* kingdom, hardly was there a society in which all powers was absolutely fused in a single authority (Ikime, 1980; Asiwaju, 1976). Contrarily, the colonial state ensured that there was no local regulatory check on the chief, who invented and reinvented what constitutes "customary laws" in line with the wishes of the colonial authorities. Also, the selection of chiefs under colonial rule was not based on any tradition or customs of the local people, but on the whims and caprices of the colonial regime. As Michael Crowder and Obaro Ikime (1970: ix) observed, " in a very real sense, none of the chiefs who 'ruled' under the French and British were legitimate". In short, there was nothing traditional or customary about "customary laws" and the native authority system in the colonial era.

Second and perhaps more important, is that the colonial regime, by fragmenting the local people into "native authorities", with different sets of "customary or tribal laws" constructed and fermented ethnic identities which was to later plague the state and polity in most African states during the nationalist struggle and in the post-colonial era.

Anti-colonial political struggle in Africa was couched in the language of citizenship. That is, the right of the natives to become citizens. As Pixley Kazaka Seme, a founder of the African National Congress (ANC) noted at one of the functions of the organization; "the white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa—a union in which we have no voice ... We have called you therefore to this conference for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges" (Walshe, 1971: 34).

Everywhere in the colonial territories the political slogans of the nationalist movements were, "power to the people"; "equal rights for all". Colonial rule exhibited severe contradictions that were to later stand the regime on its head. The provision of limited educational opportunities to the natives, which was designed to better facilitate the process of colonial exploitation and domination, served some other contradictory purposes. It created a new class of natives, who were to use acquired western political pedagogy on citizenship and rights to make claims and contest political space with the colonial state. The social base of nationalism in Africa, as Mamdani points out was the educated native or the small, but emergent native middle class who had crossed the boundary between the rural, which incorporated the subject ethnically, and the urban that excluded the subject racially. Though beyond the lash of customary law, this native was denied access to civil and political rights on racial grounds (Mamdani, 2000: 45). He was the agency of political nationalism and the decolonization project in Africa.

However, the entrenched institutional structures of colonialism engendered contradictions and tension-ridden tendencies in the anti-colonial struggles, and influenced the nature and pattern of the political movements. The sharp division between the rural and the urban; the native and the settler, and the horizontal fragmentation of the natives into ethnic entities and identities through the native

authority system placed severe limitations on the ability of the emergent indigenous political elite to have a broad national base. In most countries in Africa, most of the nationalist movements and resultant political parties were ethnically defined, drawing their support base from the fragmented ethnic social structures of the colonial era. For example, in Nigeria, the three major political parties in the decolonization era (the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), the Action Group (AG), and the National Council for Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) reflected ethnic configurations in their origin and character. In the case of South Africa, although the semi-industrialization of the country facilitated a high level of urbanization and labour force which made possible the formation of largely urban-based political movements against apartheid. However, as those movements sought to mobilize the rural population in the liberation struggle ethnic expressions gained meaning. The liberation movements were confronted with the power of the chiefs, who they had to incorporate into the nationalist struggle. The fragmentation that ethnic expressions unleashed defines the status of a party like the Inkatha Freedom party (IFP) in South Africa.

The points being emphasized are basically three. First, that the bifurcated nature of the colonial state produced and encouraged ethnic-based political identities in the decolonization period and beyond. As Mamdani (1996: 24) aptly puts it "every movement of resistance was shaped by the very structure of power against which it rebelled". Second, the logic of dualism germane to the institutional structure of colonialism created divisions between the rural and the urban, the native and settler; the subject and the citizen. This was to produce profound problems in the post-colonial era in the discourse and politics on citizenship in most southern and eastern African countries where "settler colonialism" was the norm. Up until now, a raging debate exists in most of those countries as to who is a citizen and who is not, between the "settler" and the "native". Third, colonial structures affected the nature of anti-colonial politics and the character of the post-colonial state.

Post-Colonial State, Identity and Citizenship

The interaction of two factors coalesced to shape the nature of the post-colonial state in Africa. These are the colonial antecedent and the direction of state policy in the post-colonial era. Although redesigned in form, in content, the colonial political structure and state formation witnessed no radical or qualitative transformation in the post-colonial era in most African states, beyond the change of personnel. The reasons for this are quite numerous and have been the subject of discourse elsewhere (Ake, 1980; Onimode, 1988). But suffice to note that factors like the politics of power transfer, the configuration among local social forces, the perceptions and interests of the emergent ruling elite and external political influences were some of the variables which stultified a radical transformation process. In some countries where transformative policies were initiated, those policies sometimes reproduced the logic and contradictions of the colonial state with little meaningful results achieved.[2]

There are several areas in which the colonial heritage was palpable. Although the nature of the political arrangements adopted by African countries in the post-colonial era differs, ranging from the unitary to the federal system, there are similar discernible features in their state structure. The post-colonial state was not reorganized to attenuate difference, either institutionally, ethnically, identity-wise, or symbolically. With regard to the institutional dimension, the logic of dualism in the state structure was not obliterated, but reproduced and assumed a new dimension. The nature of the dichotomy between the central and local states, though reformed, still had implications for the issues of identity and citizenship in the post-colonial era. While national citizenship was liberalized with civil laws applicable to all, the local state remains largely ethnicized.

Indeed, in most parts of Africa, the concept of citizenship had a dual derivative. There was the primordial citizenship, defined by ethnic, communal and ancestral affinities, and the civic citizenship (Ekeh, 1972). The latter tends towards egalitarianism, the former exclusivity. However, it is the former that often serves as the functional basis of defining citizenship even in a constitutional sense and in the distribution of public goods. As Eghosa Osaghae ably demonstrates with a Nigerian example, who is a citizen of Nigeria as stipulated in the 1979 constitution is rooted largely in primordial origins. An individual's membership or origin in an ethnic group or community is a major criterion for the qualification of citizenship. Thus citizenship gains expression more from the primordial, than the civic perspective in Nigeria (Osaghae, 1990).

This situation reinforces the bifurcation of citizenship as local and state governments remain exclusionary in their norms and practices, and the rights and privileges they confer on the people. In the localities, there is usually a clear distinction between the "natives" or "indigenes" of those areas, who are considered as the "local citizens" and the "immigrants" or "settlers" who are considered as "non-citizens" (in spite of the fact that they are all nationals of the same country). In countries like Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo where the ownership and control of land (the main means of livelihood) is still vested in native authorities, "non-natives" are largely denied access to land and also denied the right to have their own native authorities, as doing so will imply recognizing them as "indigenes" and subsequently granting them access to land. In other words, residency is not the criterion for inclusion as "local citizens", but "indigenity". In most cases, the local or state laws sanction this arrangement. In Nigeria, for example, not until recently, "indigenity" was a criterion for qualification to contest in local elections and not residency. Consequently, it is possible for someone to live all his life in a locality without having a right to be voted for in that locality. The point is that while political reforms and decentralization occurred in most African states in the post-colonial era, there was little real democratization of decentralized institutions. Thus, the state system that subsists reinforces local ethnic and political identities, fragments the political process and undermines the concept of common citizenship for the people in the country.

Also, at the national level the logic of difference of an ethnic nature is factored into the rules, and norms of political interactions and the state system especially with regard to social rights. Ethnic identity as opposed to citizenship identity determines who gets what, when, how, and how much in the state. Issues of employment, public appointments, education grants, scholarships, etc., are subjected to ethnic arithmetic by the central state. In some countries, this practise has constitutional basis, while in others it is one of state norms and conventions. In Nigeria, there is a key constitutional provision known as the "federal character principle".[3] It is an ethnic formula for the allocation of public goods. Although this constitutional provision was designed as a political technique for managing Nigeria's federal system; of giving equal opportunities to all ethnic groups, however, it is a policy that has proved to be largely counter-productive. It places ethnic identity as the primary identity for state entitlements and social rights. It de-individualizes citizenship and makes it more of a group phenomenon. As such, in gaining access to state institutions, the individual does not relate with the state directly as citizen, but relates with it (i.e., the state) as a member/representative of an ethnic group. The result is that the central state becomes an arena of ethnic contest with the more powerful ethnic groups excluding and submerging the lesser ones and denying their people the benefits of citizenship. This tendency undermines the integrity and cohesion of the fragile African state and supplements the principle of territorial loyalty and citizenship with that of ethnic and community loyalty.

Furthermore, the logic of dualism remains palpable in public images, meanings and social expressions. This assumes racial, ethnic or spatial dimensions. This tendency is reinforced by deep social and economic inequalities in the society. In countries with the experience of "settler colonialism" like South Africa and Zimbabwe, the public image of difference is racial; between the "white settlers", who are considered by the "local population" as "oppressive aliens" undesirous of "citizenship", even in a juridical sense; and the "natives" who regard themselves as the real citizens. Unfortunately, economic leverage tilts in favour of the former. This phenomenon often provokes tension in the discourse on citizenship and sometimes facilitates inter-group conflicts in those countries. This is the crux of the current land question in Zimbabwe and was at the heart of the constitutional crisis in Mozambique in 1990. With regard to the latter, the most controversial issue in the constitutional review of that year was the question of citizenship. The issue centred on whether Mozambican citizenship should be limited to Mozambican natives (*originarios*), or extended to the Asian and Portuguese settler population (O'Laughlin, 2000: 5). The inability of the post-colonial state to engineer economic redistribution and bridge social inequalities based on race, institutionalized in the colonial era, continues to thwart the process of social integration with negative political effects on the issue of citizenship. The question as Mahmood Mamdani (1998) posed it in his inaugural presentation is, "when does a settler become a native?"

Finally, with regard to the entrenched state structures, the post-colonial rulers tapped the authoritarian culture and possibilities inherent in the coercive machinery

of the state, which include the police force, military, intelligence corps, etc. Those state institutions under colonial rule were basically instruments of oppression and domination of the society. Adapted to the exigency of post-colonial politics, those structures served as the bedrock of dictatorial and authoritarian political regimes in Africa. Authoritarian rule further weakened the capacity of the state and exacerbated the gulf between the state and the citizens. Civil and political rights were gradually withdrawn or foreclosed under authoritarian states. With the already shrinking space for social rights, citizenship became nominal or formalistic, rather than substantive. This development generated hidden spaces of solidarity and resistance by groups—ethnic, religious, civic, etc., whose identity formation, mobilization and activities become contradictory and conflictual to the state in the political process.

In summation, the post-colonial state could neither provide a strong trans-ethnic or secular national identity for its citizens nor safeguard the values of citizenship. In most cases, the state is submerged in a cesspool of sectarian struggles—ethnic, racial, religious, as its internal processes and constitutive rules are largely influenced or defined by those social elements. Scholars like Achie Mafeje have noted that it is arguable to contend that states exist in Africa. According to Achie Mafeje, a state in order to have firm roots must develop organically out of society and must construct hegemony and legitimacy for itself in society (Mafeje, 1999: 67–82). The post-colonial state in Africa has not been able to do this. As such, lacking in the basic prerequisites of a state, it is not able to entrench itself as the terminal and major reference point of citizens' identity.

Exclusion, Rights and Political Explosion: An Empirical Illustration

The struggles for social inclusion and citizenship rights have been waged in different ways in different African countries. In some countries, they have taken the form of armed expression in which ethnic groups take up arms against each other or the state in the quest to claim their "rights" as citizens as it occurred in Rwanda and Burundi. In other cases, the struggle has taken a more inclusive dimension with the clamour and popular agitation for democratization. Democratization in Africa is a struggle by the people for civil, political and social rights, which are the substantive social values embodied in citizenship.

The Rwandan experience serves as an empirical illustration of this problem. There are two reasons why the case of Rwanda is quite intriguing and lends itself to a curious enquiry on the problem of citizenship. First, Rwanda is a relatively compact country in terms of social composition, which ordinarily should make the evolution of a nation-state less arduous, and inter-group relations, less conflictual. Second, the level of human tragedy that occurred in Rwanda from the inception of that country as an independent state in 1962, peaking with the genocide of 1994, has been alarming. The Rwanda narrative depicts how colonial construction of group identity was factored into the structures and processes of the state system, a

phenomenon that thwarted the logic of a common national identity and equal citizenship for the people of Rwanda. This virus continues to plague Rwanda into the present.

In social composition and identity, Rwanda is a fairly homogenous country. Its three ethnic categories of the Tutsi, the Hutu and the Twa—share the same language, type of social organization, often the same lifestyles, and have lived together with each other peacefully for centuries while sharing the same collective commitment to monarchical symbols (Adekanye, 1996: 38). Colonialism radically transformed the social structures and identity formation of this society. It created rigid identity differentiation and sharp social distinction among those groups. The background to this was the colonial cultural mythology and historiography of the Rwandese people, which sought to reconstruct social reality and identity in Rwanda. Colonial historians and anthropologists were the precursor of this historical reconstruction. Using differences in physical traits they claimed that the groups in Rwanda were of different historical origins. The Tutsi were classified to be of "hamitic" origin, the Hutu as Bantu, and the Twa as pygmies. A logic of racial superiority was injected into these scholars' analyses with the claim that the Tutsi were superior *homo sapiens* than others. This dubious historical reconstruction as Gerald Prunier (1995: 9) noted became a kind of "unquestioned 'scientific canon', which actually governed the decisions made by the Germans and even more so later by the Belgian colonial authorities".

For the colonial regimes (both the Germans and the Belgians)[4] the Tutsi were considered to be the *white man in black skin* in Rwanda. As such, they were formally designated as the *first-class natives* to whom decentralized local power and resources were to be devolved. The Hutu, though more in population, were conferred with the identity of *second-class natives*, with the Twa completely relegated to the background.[5] This identity reconstruction by the colonial state underwent the three processes of social influence, which Herbert Kelman (1998) identifies as being central to identity formation and consolidation. These are compliance, identification, and internalization. All the social groups complied with the new identities, acquiesced to them (with an initial threat of force) and internalized them through a socialization and generational cycle. In addition, those identities were codified with the colonial policy of separate identity cards for the groups.

The colonial ideology of racial or group superiority among the native population had both normative and social consequences. In the former regard, the Tutsi identity became the standard or optimal identity by which other forms of social identities were to be measured. Its signs, symbols and meanings assumed the cultural base for the society. In the latter regard, Tutsi identity came to be synonymous with power, wealth and influence. The Tutsi controlled the native authorities, were in charge of land in the localities and were the major recipient of colonial education policy. For example, by 1959, 43 out of the 45 local chiefs and 549 out of 559 sub-chiefs were Tutsi (Prunier, 1995: 27).

The colonial state transformed what were flexible and complementary social

categories into rigid ethnicities, engineered group identity competition through an inverse process of the domination of one group by another, and gradually undermined the basis of a common national identity and equal citizenship among the Rwandese.

However, as the politics of decolonization unfolds contradictions began to set in, in the colonial state policy on ethnicities. The Tutsi elites armed with the weapon of western education were at vanguard of the clamour for self-rule. The Belgian colonial authorities were apparently dissatisfied with the position of their ethnic clientele—the Tutsi—and therefore decided to shift support to the Hutu in state policy. This is not a new politics of power control by the colonial authorities. The tendency by colonial powers is to give political support to groups that are least susceptible to nationalist agitation. (The same thing happened in Nigeria.)[6] This saw the gradual displacement of the Tutsi from the control of the state machinery. Hutus swiftly replaced most of the Tutsi chiefs. Also overt support was given to the Hutu political party.

The decolonization erà saw the emergence of ethnic-based political parties in Rwanda. The major parties were the PARMEHUTU (Rwandan Democratic Party/ party for the movement and of Hutu emancipation) and the UNAR (Rwandese National Union), which represented the Tutsi. By 1960, when local elections were organized, the Hutu emerged as the new local power elite in Rwanda. They won about 80% of the seats and took control of the local state; 210 communes came under Hutu control, while the Tutsi had only 19 (Prunier, 1995: 52). As the transfer of power gradually proceeded, the sphere of political control by the Hutu also expanded progressively. In September 1961, the legislative elections were held, with the Hutu party winning about 78% and having 35 seats out of a total of 44. The process of constructing Hutu hegemony in the political process was capped with the ascendance to power of Gregoire Kayibanda, a Hutu as president in 1962. Rwanda became independent in July 1962.

While the Belgian colonial authorities considered their apostasy on ethnic clientele in Rwanda as a "grand revolution", the process generated intense inter-group conflicts in Rwanda. The declining identity group in the political process fought back with a weak capacity, while the ascending power, the Hutu, unleashed their pent-up aggression and psychological demeaning of the colonial period, on the Tutsis. Between 1959 and 1962, no less than 130,000 Tutsis were driven into exile in neighbouring countries of Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire and Burundi. Right from independence, the stage appeared set for inter-group conflagration in Rwanda.

From 1962 to 1994, when the pogrom occurred, an ethnic republic in all ramifications, except in name was instituted in Rwanda. Hutu nationalism took the centre stage in which the Hutu elite sought to make-up for the historical gap of inadequate social identity and recognition of the Hutu ethnic group. The process involved the ethnic appropriation of the state and the establishment of a regime of social exclusion on citizenship rights. During this period, to be Hutu is to be a recognized Rwandan citizen, *de facto and de jure*, by the state. This qualifies one to have access to state employment, military service, right of association, participation

in state affairs, and security. A uni-ethnic military formation was established in Rwanda, which was a Hutu preserve. Uni-ethnic military formation is a system of institutionalized inequality based on group domination and control of the military (Adekanye, 1996: 37–71). It has a potential destabilizing effect on the state, as the excluded groups often have real and psychological fear of insecurity that usually prompts them to recruit, train and organize their own "unoffical armies". However, the idea of a uni-ethnic army in Rwanda was not because of what Cynthia Enloe (1980) regarded as the penchant of authoritarian regimes to construct an "ethnic security map", but fundamentally because a logic of state enthnicization had been set in motion and institutionalized in Rwanda from the colonial era. The structure of power in post-colonial Rwanda is a janus-face of its colonial background.

Also, in the post-colonial era, the Hutu elite turned colonial cultural mythology of the Rwandan society on its head, with the argument that if the Tutsi were of a superior race, then they could not have been part of the original local population or the natives, thus they are at best "foreigners" and should not be regarded as bona fide citizens of Rwanda. This is the intellectual platform on which the institutional discrimination against the Tutsi was justified. Gerald Prunier puts it quite poignantly:

Tutsi were still "foreign invaders" who had come from afar, but now this meant that they could not really be considered as citizens. Their government had been grandiose and powerful: In the new version of the Rwandese ideology, it had been a cruel and homogeneously oppressive tyranny. The Hutu had been the "native peasants', enslaved by the aristocratic invaders: they were now the only legitimate inhabitants of the country. Hutu were the silent demographic majority, which meant that a Hutu-controlled government was now not only automatically legitimate but also ontologically democratic. (Prunier, 1995: 80).

The Rwandan state under both the Kayibanda (1962–1973) and Habyarimana regimes (1973–1994) mirrored its colonial ancestry. The state was the enforcer of exclusive group rights and privileges and provided the institutional context and legitimacy for the discrimination and domination of one group by another. Citizenship was not defined on an individual or common national basis, but from a group dimension. The ethnic identity card policy, which the colonial state instituted, was retained. (It was later to serve as the basis of easy identification of the target group during the human pogrom of 1994.) A perverse policy of "quota democracy" or "majoritarian rule" was enforced by the state, which reserved 80% of all public goods to the Hutus. This policy was the flip side of the colonial one which emphasized the rule or governance by the "superior specie" or "qualitative rule". Group identity and social stratification were fused into the state system.

The phenomenon of group exceptionalism or exclusivity became bizarre when Hutu extremists took control of the state or began to exercise overwhelming influence on it. The Hutu irredentists insisted that the Tutsi were not Rwandese and must be forced out of the country. In 1992, a journalist, Hassan Ngeze, published a political catechism known as the *Ten Commandments*, which was to serve as the

Manifesto of the Hutu nationality. Those commandments include:

i.   Every Hutu should know that a Tutsi woman, wherever she is, works for the interest of her ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider a traitor any Hutu who: marries a Tutsi woman, befriends a Tutsi woman or employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or concubine.

ii. Every Hutu should know that our Hutu daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as women, wife and mother of the family.

iii. Hutu women be vigilant and try to bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to reason.

iv. Every Hutu should know that every Tutsi is dishonest in business. His only aim is the supremacy of his ethnic group. As such, any Hutu who does the following is a traitor: makes partnership with a Tutsi in business, invests his money or Government's money in Tutsi enterprise, lends or borrows money from a Tutsi or give favours to a Tutsi in business.

v.   All strategic positions, political, administrative, economic, military, and security should be entrusted to Hutu.

vi. The education sector (school, pupils, students, teachers) must be majority Hutu.

vii. The Rwanda armed forces should be exclusively Hutu. No member of the military should marry a Tutsi.

viii. The Hutu should stop having mercy on the Tutsi.

ix. The Hutu, wherever they are must have unity and solidarity and be concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers.

x.   The social revolution of 1959, the referendum of 1961, and the Hutu ideology must be taught to every Hutu. Every Hutu must spread this ideology widely. Any Hutu who persecutes his brother Hutu for having read, spread, or taught this ideology is a traitor. (Omar and Waal cited in Kukah, 1998: 17–18.)

Group exclusion from citizenship rights as Anthony Marx (1996: 162) rightly observed tends to define subordinate identity and usually provokes a struggle for inclusion by the dominated groups. In other words, citizenship thus creates the "social construct" of relevant identities, with "oppositional consciousness" forged in reaction to the frame of domination. The Tutsi who have largely become immigrants in neighbouring countries, persecuted at home and vilified abroad by their hosts, were compelled to counter-mobilize for political action. They realized that a "stateless" individual or group has few rights or claims in a state-driven international system. Between 1980 and 1990, the Tutsi immigrants formed various movements and links abroad, with a view to sharpening their focus and organization for effecting political change in Rwanda. The result of this was the birth of the Rwandan Peoples Front (RPF) in 1990, which waged a ceaseless war against the Habyarimana regime and seized political power in 1994. In the context of the war, no less than 800,000 hapless civilian Tutsis were murdered, in what is today referred to as the Rwandan genocide.

How is the Rwandan tragedy to be problematized? In my conception, what happened in Rwanda transcends the issue of elite manipulation of ethnicity. It is also

not simply a case of share material deprivation. It is a destructive phenomenon of social identity competition grounded in historical trappings of the construction of citizenship and rights in Rwanda. Rights and citizenship have been largely defined and institutionalized as a group affair, which are synthesized into the cultural and historical processes of the Rwandan society as reconstructed and legitimized by the colonial state. Citizenship in its normative and instrumentalist dimensions, both in the colonial and post-colonial era, as I have shown in the above narrative, was not a "universal" and common public good in Rwanda. It was exclusionary and bifurcated. This is the basis of the intractable political conflicts and civil war, which enveloped Rwanda.

Conclusion: Putting Things Back Together

Engendering peace, security and stability in Africa are tasks, which must be accomplished by Africans if the quest for development is ever to gain meaning and take firm root on the continent. Clearly, war and debilitating conflicts are antithetical to development. Negotiating peace and stability will require reconceptualizing citizenship from a group to a national or "universal" perspective and re-individualizing it. Citizenship is destructive of the social and political processes of a political community when conceived in group terms. It undermines national identity and attenuates the loyalty and commitment of the citizen to the state.

Putting things back together in Africa will require policy changes in two major areas. First is to begin to take liberal democracy very seriously. It is a means through which some of the values embodied in citizenship can be realized. Liberal democratic norms like elections, political participation, the rule of law, right of association and expression, could provide the base for the expression of citizenship in its substantive form. However, such should be an all-inclusive process in which all state structures and institutions are to be democratized. This process should transcend and obliterate the rural–urban, and the central–local state dichotomies. In other words, there should be the evolution of what Elizabeth Jelin (1996: 101) described as a new culture of citizenship "from below", intertwined with formal institutional changes and the expansion of democratic practices and norms.

Second is to tackle the normative dimension of citizenship, which the liberal democratic project cannot guarantee. Who qualifies to be a citizen, and who does not, even in the juridical sense? How is national identity to be forged over and above sub-national or group identities and how is the state to be the primary and terminal point of citizens' loyalty and commitment are issues, but which though related to, transcend the liberal democratic project. These questions have a bearing on how the state is constituted and how the direction of state policy ensures that the state affects the life-chances of the citizens in a just and equitable manner, such that subordinate identities do not contest the legitimacy or relevance of the state in the society.

Notes

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[1]The nature of Africa's political history, its diverse social and ethnic composition, the character of the state, the problem of poverty and acute material shortages and other endemic socio-political problems make many African countries susceptible to conflicts.

[2]In countries like Tanzania and Mozambique where centralist socialist policies were adopted in the immediate post-independence era, traditional authorities were abolished and replaced with state agents. However, this did not promote the democratization of the local structures, but only substituted a decentralized, with a centralized form of despotism.

[3]The federal character principle is a provision in the Nigerian constitution that seeks to provide for state, ethnic and regional balancing in public appointment opportunities at the federal level. It is meant to give equal access to all groups in the country through equal representation of states in federal public appointments. The objective is to prevent the marginalization and domination of one group over another.

[5]The Twa constitutes about 3% of the population in Rwanda. They do not feature prominently in identity group politics in the country.

[6]In Nigeria the preference of the British colonial regime with regard to the transfer of power in the decolonization era was the Hausa-Fulani aristocracy, who have a conservative political outlook, with little or no agitation for the political independence of Nigeria. Indeed, when Anthony Enahoro raised the motion of self-government at the Federal House of Representatives in 1953, the Hausa-Fulani political elite opposed this. They argued that they were unprepared for independence. Also, the same thing occurred in the Sudan, where the preference of the British colonial authorities was for the Northern political elite, with a conservative bent.

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