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Burundi et son passé colonial

Mémoire, enjeu et solde en débat

Burundi und seine koloniale Vergangenheit

Erinnerung, Problematik und Bilanz in der Debatte

Table des matières

DEUXIEME PARTIE
CULTURE ET CRISES IDENTITAIRES

Post mortem

Nach Fertigstellung dieses Bandes verstarb am 12. August 2023 im Alter von 48 Jahren Prof. Dr. Gérard Birantamije von der UL Bruxelles, Gründungsmitglied des wissenschaftlichen Beirates dieser Reihe und engagierter Mitherausgeber dieses Bandes, dessen Thema ihm sehr am Herzen lag. Wir werden ihm ein dankbares Gedenken bewahren, verbunden mit seiner Familie und im gemeinsamen christlichen Glauben an die Auferstehung.

Ebenso gedenken wir dankbar Herrn Gaspard Nduwayo, Professor der Universität Burundi, der starb, nachdem er für diesen Band noch seine Beiträge fertigstellen konnte.

Ruhe in Frieden

Après l'achèvement de ce volume, notre cher collègue Gérard Birantamije vient de nous quitter. Il travaillait à l'Université libre de Bruxelles et était membre fondateur du Conseil scientifique de cette série de publication et co-éditeur engagé de ce volume, dont le thème lui tenait à cœur. Nous garderons de lui un souvenir reconnaissant et restons unis avec sa famille dans la foi chrétienne en la résurrection.
Nous pensons également au Professeur Gaspard Nduwayo de l'Université du Burundi qui est mort après avoir envoyé sa contribution pour ce volume.

Repose en paix.

Grußwort

Seit über vier Jahrzehnten bestehen partnerschaftliche Verbindungen zwischen Baden-Württemberg und Burundi, die Menschen über Grenzen hinweg zusammenbringen. Was einst mit zivilgesellschaftlichen Beziehungen begann, führte in den 1980er Jahren zu ersten politischen Kontakten. Auch in Zeiten, in denen die offiziellen Beziehungen unterbrochen waren, blieben die vielfältigen privaten, religiösen und zivilgesellschaftlichen Partnerschaften bestehen. Im Jahr 2009 wurde im Auftrag des Landes Baden-Württemberg eine Koordinationsstelle für die Partnerschaft bei der SEZ eingerichtet, um die Zusammenarbeit zu stärken. Schließlich wurde im Mai 2014 eine offizielle Partnerschaftsvereinbarung zwischen den Regierungen unterzeichnet.

Die geschichtlichen Verbindungen zwischen den beiden Regionen bestehen jedoch schon länger. Von 1896 bis zur Niederlage im Ersten Weltkrieg 1916 kolonisierte Deutschland das Königreich Burundi.

In Anbetracht dieser geschichtlichen Verflechtungen und der bestehenden Partnerschaft zwischen Baden-Württemberg und Burundi stellt sich die Frage: Was bedeutet die Kolonialgeschichte für die Partnerschaft zwischen Baden-Württemberg und Burundi? Wie kann eine Partnerschaft aussehen, die den Anspruch hat, die Fortführung postkolonialer Strukturen zu unterbrechen? „Dekolonisierung" ist in aller Munde, aber wie sieht diese aus?

Das vorliegende Werk „Burundi und seine koloniale Vergangenheit, Erinnerung, Problematik und Bilanz in der Debatte" ist ein wichtiger Schritt auf dem Weg, die gemeinsame Kolonialgeschichte aufzuarbeiten. Es lädt uns ein, zu verstehen, wie Machtungleichgewichte und struktureller Rassismus bis heute nachwirken. Die Dekolonisierung der Partnerschaftsarbeit erfordert, die komplexen Zusammenhänge zu verstehen, die zu Ungleichheit und Ungerechtigkeit geführt haben. Sie erfordert ebenso, strukturelle Ungleichheiten zu erkennen und ihnen aktiv entgegenzuwirken. Sie ist ein umfassender Prozess, der nicht nur in Burundi stattfinden sollte, sondern insbesondere auch bei denjenigen, die vom Kolonialismus profitiert haben. Der Wandel erfordert ein Umdenken, das sich von pater-

nalistischen Beziehungen hin zu echter Gleichberechtigung und gegenseitigem Respekt bewegt. Dazu ist es notwendig den Stimmen derjenigen Menschen zuzuhören, die durch den Kolonialismus und seinen Nachwirkungen nicht gehört wurden und werden. Ebenso gilt es die eigenen Privilegien und Strukturen zugänglich zu machen, denn Ausschlüsse war die Währung der Eliten, damals wie heute. Und weiter gedacht sollten wir uns auch öffnen für das, was Baden-Württemberg von Burundi lernen kann und sollte.

Die Dekolonisierung der Partnerschaft bedeutet, alte Muster zu durchbrechen und neue Brücken des Verständnisses und der Zusammenarbeit zu bauen. Es bedeutet neben der Reflektion und dem sich öffnen für andere Perspektiven, auch, dass strukturelle Veränderungen endlich sichtbar werden. Es erfordert von uns allen, Verantwortung zu übernehmen, sich der eigenen Privilegien bewusst zu sein und gemeinsam eine gerechtere Zukunft zu gestalten. Dieses Buch ist ein wichtiger Schritt auf diesem Weg, indem es uns dazu ermutigt, gemeinsam zu lernen und zu handeln.

Ich bedanke mich herzlich bei den Autor*innen und allen Akteur*innen, die sich unermüdlich für die Dekolonisierung der Gesellschaft einsetzen und damit zur Verringerung von Machtungleichheiten in der Welt beitragen. Ihr Engagement bereichert maßgeblich die Partnerschaftsarbeit zwischen Burundi und Baden-Württemberg, und dafür möchte ich nochmals meinen herzlichen Dank aussprechen.

Philipp Keil,

Geschäftsführender Vorstand

der Stiftung Entwicklungs-Zusammenarbeit Baden-Württemberg

Preface by the Editors

Burundi and its past of colonialism is not only a historical topic, but, as it seems, is also of vital relevance of and for the present and future of this county in the heart of Africa, its civil society including faith communities and the state organisation. This conviction inspired two public events, namely, a panel discussion during the Stuttgart SEZ Baden-Württemberg Conference on Burundi, held on the 28th of October 2022 on the topic „Changing the narrative: preconditions and visions of creating new partnerships ", and an International Conference held the next day on Burundi and its colonial past. During this Conference hosted in the building of the Library of the University of Freiburg, debates focused on memory, stakes and perspectives in relation with the said past. Presenters and attendees included politicians and scholars from different disciplines and based in Europe and Africa.

This ninth volume of Girubuntu Peace academy Studies series "Peace – Reconciliation – Future: Africa and Europe" compiles selected papers on the colonial past of Burundi under the German and the Belgian domination, most of which are written by Burundian scholars. Contributions provide insightful analysis of various issues grouped in two parts two grouped in two parts. Part I gathers papers dealing the management of the colonial past, with a focus on its realities and perspectives. Part II encompasses papers revolving around the theme "Culture and identity crises". Regarding approach, beyond an authentic perspective on contemporary perspective on Burundi and its colonial past, this Volume extends perspectives on the post-independent Burundi in the aftermaths of decades during which peace and reconciliation policies are prioritized in the Burundian and neighboring societies. The findings have an intermediate character and call for further endeavors and research which confront the memories and the challenges connected to the colonial past of Burundi in its present and its future towards peace and the common good of the whole country and of the neighboring countries in the Africa's Great Lakes Region. Hopefully, this volume will stimulate this much needed kind of further research and cooperations for peace and reconciliation, including and partnering with the scholarly activities of our Freiburg Caritaswissenschaft and its Girubuntu Peace Academy.

On behalf of the editors of the series and of the volume:

<div style="text-align: right">Klaus Baumann</div>

Préface par le Recteur de l'Université du Burundi

En marge d'une mission de travail en Europe, nous avons été invité par la Girubuntu Peace Academy, une initiative du Réseau Africain pour la Paix, la Réconciliation et le Développement Durable (RAPRED Girubuntu) en coopération avec l'Université de Freiburg (AB Caritaswissenschaft und Christliche Sozialarbeit) à prendre part à un Symposium qu'elle avait organisé sur le thème : *Le Burundi et son passé colonial : Mémoire, enjeux et solde en débat*. Volontiers, nous avons répondu présent à cette manifestation scientifique s'est tenue le 29 octobre 2022, à l'Université de Freiburg im Breisgau, en Allemagne et nous n'avons pas été déçu. Au-delà de l'intérêt du thème du symposium au regard de l'actualité du débat sur le fait colonial, ses conséquences et son solde, la présence parmi l'équipe des animateurs de ce symposium d'une importante équipe d'enseignants-chercheurs de mon Université, ou en connexion avec mon Université a été déterminante pour notre présence.

Au point de vue du format, les organisateurs ont préféré un format hybride, c'est-à-dire que le Symposium s'est tenu en présentiel et à distance, simultanément. Le format hybride a permis aux chercheurs basés dans les deux hémisphères de partager et de discuter les résultats de leurs recherches et de surmonter les contraintes financières et logistiques du déplacement pour une activité en présentiel.

A l'instar du thème lui-même à caractère multidisciplinaire en ce qu'il se situe au carrefour de plusieurs disciplines, les débats ont fait intervenir une équipe multidisciplinaire comprenant historiens, journalistes, juristes, linguistes, pédagogues, théologiens, etc. La multidisciplinarité et la complémentarité d'approche et de méthodologie, les regards croisés des chercheurs européens et africains sur une question qui divise encore les héritiers des colonisateurs et des peuples coloniaux, étaient remarquables. Cette intéressante conception de la recherche est indispensable pour aborder une question complexe et sensible, comme celle du colonialisme.

Nous félicitons et encourageons la Girubuntu Peace Academy pour ses initiatives en matière de promotion de la recherche et pour l'association des chercheurs basés en Afrique, dans la région des Grands-Lacs africains et au Burundi en particulier. Nous félicitons et encourageons également les

enseignants-chercheurs de l'Université du Burundi qui ont participé à la recherche et dont les articles ont été publiés dans ce Volume. Qu'ils aillent de l'avant et fassent des émules parmi leurs collègues. Nous encourageons également tous les chercheurs à fouiller et encore fouiller pour fournir au monde de lecteurs et scientifique des données équilibrées et à jour pour des publications de qualité. La visibilité des chercheurs et de leurs institutions d'affiliation dépend essentiellement de la qualité et de la diffusion des productions scientifiques.

<div align="right">Prof. Dr. Audace Manirabona</div>

Introduction générale

La mort de l'Afro-Américain George Floyd le 25 mai 2020 à Minneapolis suite à des violences policières a provoqué une forte indignation aussi bien aux Etats-Unis que dans le reste du monde. En dépit de la condamnation des meurtriers, de nombreuses manifestations contre le racisme à l'endroit des Noirs furent organisés un peu partout. A Bruxelles, bravant les restrictions dues à la pandémie du coronavirus, plus de dix mille personnes descendirent dans la rue le 7 juin 2020. Des statues des autorités coloniales, à commencer par celles du roi Léopold II furent vandalisées ici et là. C'est dans ce contexte et sur initiative du Parlement belge qu'une Commission spéciale de dix-neuf députés chargés d'analyser le passé colonial de la Belgique au Congo, au Rwanda et au Burundi fut mise sur pied le 16 juillet 2020. Pour l'assister, on fit aussitôt appel à dix experts[1], choisis selon les sensibilités politiques représentés au sein de la Chambre. Après quinze mois de travaux, ces derniers présentèrent leurs résultats qui, comme on s'y attendait, comportait des lacunes évidentes que Wouter De Vriendt, le président de la Commission reconnut lui-même, faisant valoir « les circonstances difficiles et le délai limité imparti » aux chercheurs. Sur les 689 pages du rapport en effet, rien n'était dit sur le Burundi[2] et très peu sur le Rwanda.

Dans la foulée, il s'était constitué presqu'au même moment un Collectif burundais sur la colonisation (CBC) qui se voulait ouvert, diversifié et inclusif, apolitique et multidisciplinaire. Il comptait à ses débuts une trentaine de membres[3] (historiens, sociologues, politologues, journalistes, mathématiciens, etc.) résidents au Burundi, au Rwanda, en Belgique, en

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[1] Les dix experts étaient composés d'un Burundais, d'une Rwandaise, tous les deux non historiens, de cinq Belges et de trois personnes d'origine congolaise. La parité du genre était scrupuleusement respectée.

[2] Au moment de la présentation du rapport, l'expert burundais, Mgr Louis Marie Nahimana était entre temps décédé.

[3] Ces membres étaient répartis en cinq commissions : pouvoirs politique ; culture et société ; économie et environnement ; mémoire, temps présent, justice et réparation ainsi que plaidoyer, communication, documentation et archives.

Allemagne, en Suisse, en France et au Canada. La mission principale du CBC consistait à veiller à ce que les travaux de la Commission mentionnée plus haut établissent la vérité historique sur le passé colonial et en reconnaissent la responsabilité quant aux crimes et dégâts causés par la colonisation et ses conséquences sur la vie quotidienne non seulement des populations actuelles du Congo, du Burundi et du Rwanda, mais aussi sur le racisme systémique à l'égard des Afro-descendants belges.

Entre septembre 2020 et juin 2022, le CBC organisa une dizaine de conférences dont le débats portaient sur les transformations politiques, économiques, sociales et culturelles du Burundi pendant le protectorat allemand (1896–1916) ainsi que durant la période du Mandat et de la Tutelle confiés à la Belgique entre 1923 et 1962. Un rapport fut présenté au public à Bruxelles le 2 juillet 2022. Sur le plan politique, il évoquait l'idéologie coloniale, le statut juridique du Ruanda-Urundi, la réforme administrative des années 1930, l'affaiblissement et l'anéantissement des pouvoirs politiques et religieux traditionnels et les résistances populaires. Du point de vue social et culturel, il épinglait les mesures coloniales qui contribuèrent à la destruction du tissu social, la dévalorisation de l'individu et l'aliénation culturelle comme la classification des populations en « races » supérieures les unes aux autres, le combat contre les « coutumes barbares », un système éducatif au rabais ainsi que les traitements inhumains et dégradants. En ce qui concerne le volet économique, le rapport n'a pas manqué de souligner les méfaits des impositions coloniales et des réquisitions de tous genres, des cultures industrielles au profit de la métropole et par conséquent au détriment des populations locales.

Bien que la Commission spéciale chargée d'étudier le passé colonial belge ait refusé pour des raisons qu'elle n'a jamais expliqué de procéder au remplacement de l'expert burundais, elle fit preuve de sa collaboration, puisqu'à deux reprises, le 4 avril 2021 et le 4 juillet 2022, quelques membres du CBC furent auditionnés par le Parlement belge au sujet des attentes des Burundais sur leur travail en cours et les éventuelles réparations du Gouvernement belge.

Cet ouvrage collectif prolonge donc une réflexion menée depuis cinq ans et dont nous venons d'exposer les grandes lignes. Il répond au besoin maintes fois exprimé par les experts de la Commission spéciale qui montrent que « la compréhension et la gestion du passé colonial forcent à développer une forme d'écoute, de bienveillance et de mise à distance qui requiert du temps » (Chambre des représentants de Belgique, 2021 :10) ,

mais aussi et surtout par les conclusions et les recommandations des conférences organisées par le CBC invitant les Burundais à continuer les débats pour que toute la vérité historique soit établie avant d'envisager que la Belgique reconnaisse les fautes lourdes commises pendant la colonisation et procède par conséquent à la compensation dont la forme sera à déterminer.

L'ouvrage se compose de deux parties de longueur et d'importance presque égales. Il revient sur dix sept contributions des chercheurs universitaires de divers profils[4] largement discutées lors d'un Symposium international [5]organisé le 29 octobre 2022 par l'Université de Freiburg en collaboration avec RAPRED-Girubuntu[6].

L'objectif majeur de la première partie de cet ouvrage est d'une part analyser les méfaits du passé colonial belge et d'autre part relever la nécessité de les revisiter pour mieux les comprendre en consultant notamment les archives jusqu'ici restées inaccessibles.

On sait que les vingt années qu'a duré le protectorat allemand n'ont pas suffi pour transformer le pays de manière significative et qu'actuellement son héritage apparaît assez maigre[7]. Le premier chapitre rend compte d'une exposition organisée à Freiburg en 2022–2023 sur les objets ethnographiques en provenance de l'ancienne Afrique orientale allemande et des efforts déjà entrepris par RAPRED-Girubuntu en matière de la recherche de la paix et de la réconciliation en adoptant « une approche positive de décolonisation ». Intéressante est aussi ici une contribution qui établit le bilan démographique et économique de cette période. A l'aide des sources composées des diaires des missions catholiques synthétisés par les rapports

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[4] Il s'agissait principalement des historiens, politologues, théologiens, anthropologues, juristes, journalistes, spécialistes des sciences de l'éducation affiliés à l'Université du Burundi, à l'Université du Lac Tanganyika, à l'East African University Rwanda, à l'Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, au Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen, à l'Université libre de Bruxelles, à l'Université Saint Louis Bruxelles et l'Université de Paris Nanterre.

[5] Ce symposium a été rehaussé de la présence de l'Ambassadrice du Burundi en Allemagne, du Recteur de l'Université du Burundi qui a bien voulu préfacer ce livre et du Recteur de la Catholic University of Rwanda.

[6] Le Réseau africain pour la paix, la réconciliation et le développement durable (RAPRED) a, entre autres projets, l'intention d'accompagner les jeunes déshérités dans leur scolarité et leurs études universitaires.

[7] Cet héritage se réduit à la présence de quelques bâtiments, dont le *boma*, à Gitega, au cimetière de Nyakagunda où reposent les soldats allemands tués par les Belges pendant la Première guerre mondiale, quelques mots en kirundi comme *ishule* (schule) ou *intofanyi* (kartoffeln) ainsi que des mythes et fantasmes.

annuels des Pères blancs, on découvre finalement, dans ce deuxième chapitre, que nos connaissances de l'histoire coloniale reposent essentiellement sur les écrits des premiers missionnaires, le personnel mis en place par l'administration allemande étant très limité. On apprend, chiffres et maints détails à l'appui, que la « pacification allemande » se fit avec une brutalité sans pareille : la résistance de Mwezi Gisabo fut sauvagement écrasée. Le Résident Von Grawert n'hésita pas à utiliser la mitrailleuse et força ainsi le roi à signer en 1903 le traité de Kiganda après avoir perdu de nombreux guerriers. Les expéditions militaires contre les chefs du Nord-Est qui contestaient alors le pouvoir central provoquèrent non seulement de nombreuses pertes en vies humaines, mais surtout le désordre et l'appauvrissement généralisé des autorités locales et de la population.

Ce triste bilan est aussi soigneusement examiné à travers le recrutement des jeunes gens qui sont allés combattre aux côtés des troupes belges et de leurs auxiliaires congolais durant la Première guerre mondiale, les réquisitions des vivres[8], les corvées dont le portage[9] qui affecta l'ensemble du pays au moment de la construction de Gitega en 1912.

Sous la plume du petit-fils d'une grande personnalité de l'administration coloniale belge, le troisième chapitre de ce livre évoque le rôle joué par Pierre Ryckmans[10]. Il s'agit d'un regard d'un descendant d'un acteur incontournable sur ce que fut l'œuvre de la Belgique au Ruanda-Urundi. Pour nous éclairer, sa biographie nous apprend qu'alors âgé seulement de 25 ans, ce jeune officier qui s'était engagé dans l'armée coloniale belge arriva en 1916 à Gitega comme chef de poste avant de gravir les échelons qui firent de lui successivement Résident de l'Urundi (1919–1928), Gouverneur général du Congo belge et du Ruanda-Urundi (1934–1946) et représentant de la Belgique à l'ONU (1949–1959).

François Ryckmans nous rappelle à juste titre que son grand père est le véritable théoricien [11]de la politique coloniale au Burundi. Il organisa avec le Père Henri Bonneau, supérieur de la mission de Mugera, le plébiscite qui reconnut la souveraineté de la Belgique sur le Burundi le 25 août 1918,

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[8] Les soldats congolais de la Force publique se sont signalés par leur pillage au moment de se ravitailler.

[9] La campagne de Mahenge en 1917 qui devait consacrer la victoire des Belges aurait nécessité plus de 20.000 porteurs dont les 2/3 moururent de maladies et d'épuisement. A leur retour, ceux qui ont survécu contribuèrent à la propagation des épidémies très meurtrières de la méningite célébro-spinale et de la grippe espagnole.

[10] Il a utilisé, outre les notes personnelles, le livre bien connu de Jacques Vanderlinden, Pierre Ryckmans (1891–1959). Coloniser dans l'honneur, Bruxelles : De Boeck, 1994.

[11] Pour plus de détails, voir Ryckmans, P., Dominer pour servir, Bruxelles 1930.

il obtint la soumission du chef rebelle Kilima en 1919, il réorganisa le Conseil de la Régence avant de faire adopter la loi du 21 août 1925 qui unit sur le plan administratif le Ruanda-Urundi au Congo belge[12].

A l'opposé, on voit au quatrième chapitre, Jean Paul Harroy, Gouverneur général du Ruanda-Urundi, clôturer la période coloniale de manière peu élogieuse. Dans un discours prononcé en décembre 1958 devant les plus hautes instances du pays, il souleva le « problème hutu-tutsi » dont il semblait ignorer qu'il avait été créé une trentaine d'années auparavant par une réforme politique et administrative qui consacra la suprématie des Ganwa, diminua considérablement le pouvoir des Tutsi et exclut totalement les Hutu.

Deux juristes discutent aux cinquième et sixième chapitres un sujet qui a fait longtemps l'objet d'une « omerta institutionnelle » : le rattachement du Bugufi au Tanganyika Territory à l'issue des conventions signés le 30 mai 1919 et le 15 mars 1921 entre la Belgique et la Grande Bretagne. La question centrale consiste à analyser les conditions de son éventuelle rétrocession, tout en considérant que les deux signataires ne sont plus parties prenantes et surtout qu'on ne heurte pas le principe d'intangibilité des frontières héritées de la colonisation.

Bien qu'il y ait une certaine littérature sur le passé colonial belge, il subsiste encore de nombreuses zones d'ombre dont il convient de faire rapidement la lumière, grâce notamment à l'accès aux archives jusqu'ici non encore ouvertes au public. Le rédacteur du chapitre 7 fait l'état des lieux des démarches entreprises par le Gouvernement du Burundi en vue de leur restitution, mais on apprend avec indignation que certains dossiers, notamment ceux en rapport avec l'indépendance ne seront pas ouverts à la consultation avant un délai de cent ans.

Avec une orientation plutôt tournée vers les conséquences de la colonisation sur les plans social et culturel, la seconde partie de cet ouvrage insiste avec raison sur la perte des valeurs traditionnelles qui ont conduit aux crises identitaires périodiques qu'a connues le Burundi dès les lendemains de l'indépendance. Rédigés par un groupe de chercheurs spécialistes de l'éducation, les chapitres 8 et 9 analysent les forces et les faiblesses du

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[12] Sur le plan économique, Ryckmans généralisa l'usage de la monnaie après avoir remplacé les roupies et les hellers allemands, prit des mesures pour combattre les famines en obligeant les gens à cultiver le manioc et les patates douces, mobilisa les populations pour reboiser l'ensemble du pays et ouvrir le marais aux cultures pendant la saison sèche, construisit la première route qui relia Gitega et Bujumbura. Sa politique n'a pas toujours rencontré les vœux des missionnaires catholiques dont certains lui contestaient le leadership.

système éducatif durant la période coloniale en ciblant demanière claire les auteurs, leur méthodologie ainsi que les résultats obtenus d'une part et les difficultés toujours d'actualité que rencontre quiconque tente de le « décoloniser » : on ne mesure pas assez en effet l'importance qu'exerce actuellement l'acculturation sur notre société.

Les chapitres 10 et 11 rappellent que les valeurs traditionnelles d'*ubuntu* (humanisme) revisitées et remises à l'honneur ces derniers temps ici comme ailleurs notamment en Afrique du Sud ou celles d'*ubugabo* (bravoure) ont été mises à l'épreuve durant la domination coloniale : elles ont cependant vaillamment résisté, puisqu'elles ont permis de limiter les violences qui ont jalonné notre passé récent. Celles-ci ne pouvaient, on s'y attendait, n'être pas évoqué , tant elles ont été déterminantes dans l'évolution sociopolitique du pays et de ses voisins ces soixante dernières années : le chapitre 12 s'attarde sur l'*ikiza* (crise) de 1972 en s'appuyant sur des enquêtes orales effectuées entre 2000 et 2016 à travers tout le pays, tandis que les deux suivants analysés sous l'angle sociopolitique montrent que les Burundais n'arrivent pas à se défaire des préjugés et mythes hérités de la colonisation lorsqu'il s'agit d'analyser froidement la nature de leurs conflits.

Dans le quinzième chapitre, l'auteur rappelle que le Burundi précolonial est une société où règne l'ordre avec une organisation étatique solide, structurée et hiérarchisée en plusieurs niveaux autour du Mwami. Il relève que le colonisateur va s'attachera à déconstruire cette légitimité du monarque et les représentations traditionnelles du peuple vis-à-vis de celui-ci. A la lumière de la méthode de sociologie compréhensive de Max WEBER, l'auteur cherche à comprendre les motivations derrière cette déconstruction.

Face au passé colonial dont les conséquences continuent à avoir un grand impact sur le temps présent, les deux derniers chapitres de cet ouvrage réfléchissent sur l'action à mener à court et à moyen terme, à savoir la « réconciliation des mémoires coloniales » et de manière spécifique la restitution au Congo belge des biens culturels conservés actuellement en Belgique.

Au total, cet ouvrage est le fruit d'une réflexion plurielle des universitaires et chercheurs allemands, belges, burundais et congolais sur la domination coloniale, l'exploitation économique et surtout sur leurs conséquences sur les plans social et culturel. Plusieurs contributions mettent en relief et discutent des germes de divisions de la société burundaise qui ont conduit aux conflits et violences de la période contemporaine.

<div align="right">Joseph Gahama</div>

Ildephonse Horicubonye

The Impact of Colonialism on the Concept of Ubuntu in Burundi

Résumé

L'existence de toute communauté dépend de tout un ensemble de valeurs qui forment la pierre angulaire sur laquelle sa culture repose. Ubuntu, un concept par lequel chaque membre de la communauté apprend à se comporter envers les autres comme il le faisait pour lui-même, incarne l'idée de solidarité de groupe, de compassion et de dignité humaine. L'expression "ta peine est aussi ma peine, ta richesse est ma richesse, ton salut est mon salut" l'illustre à suffisance. A travers ces expressions on observe que les gens dans des communautés étaient interconnectés et interdépendants. L'objet de ce papier est de savoir comment le système de valeurs culturelles a été affaibli par les colonisateurs. Une analyse qualitative des interviews avec les Bashingantahe dans 87 communes du Burundi sur le rôle qu'ils ont joué pendant la crise de 1993 a été faite. Les résultats montrent que Ubuntu a permis à la population de rester unis malgré les différences politiques et ethniques. Cette unité a été exprimée à travers des actes de solidarité de groupe, de compassion et de dignité humaine. Il a été constaté qu'à cause de l'introduction des partis politiques, Ubuntu a été érodé à cause des intérêts égoïstes des politiciens.

Introduction

For any community to exist and survive, it has to be guided by a set of values that form the cornerstone on which its culture rests. Before colonization, Burundian people lived together peacefully and interdependently in communities. They assisted each other in any situation as it is clearly expressed in the Kirundi expression « *umuntu ni uwundi* » that can be rendered in English as a person is a person because of others. There is also a similar expression that says that *umuntu agirwa ni uwundi* that can be rendered by a person is dependent on the other. This means that people are interdependent. The same expression is found in the Zulu maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu[1]* translated in English as "people are people through other people". It demonstrates the perception of self within the concept

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[1] Nussbaum, B,. African Culture and Ubuntu. Reflections of a South African in America, in: Perspectives Vol 17, 1. February 2003.

whereby individual members of the society learn to act toward each other with as much concern they would have for themselves[2]. All these expressions mean that the individual's whole existence is relative to that of the group and that if the individual is to survive, he/ she should work toward the survival of the group[3]. All these expressions illustrate the concept of Ubuntu that embodies the idea of group solidarity, compassion, respect and human dignity. This is found in the African expression of Ubuntu that says: "your pain is my pain, my wealth is your wealth, your salvation is my salvation"[4]. This expression means that people are more interested in the community interests than individual ones. Thus, it is observed that in pre-colonial African society, Ubuntu sustained social unity, managed peace and order for the beautiful life of everyone[5]. In Burundi, there was no conflict among community members in the pre-colonial period. Hutu and Tutsi lived peacefully together and assisted each other in their every-day life. This assertion is supported by the observation that when Burundi entered recorded history in the mid-19th century the kingdom was a complex integrated social structure bound together by a common loyalty to the monarchy[6]. It is also argued that neither internal nor external identity boundaries were rigidly determined at birth and one could move upwards and downwards in class within these structures and even between them [7]. However, with the coming of colonization, this spirit of unity and interdependence has been diluted to leave place to individualism, and selfishness that resulted in the disintegration of the communal life that prevailed before. This started with the Belgians who gave preferences to Tutsi especially in the colonial-run school system to later be given better positions in the colonial administration. This became the cause of competition over the scarce resources and created a climate of insecurity and eroded the Hutu-Tutsi trust and mutual respect.[8] The traditional community ties that had

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[2] Garmon, C.W. / Mgijima, M., Using Ubuntu: A New Research Trend for Developing Effective Communication across Cultural Barriers. Communication Faculty Publications, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green KY 2012.

[3] Ibidem.

[4] Nussbaum, B., African culture and ubuntu: Reflections of a South African in America, World Business Academy, Vol. 17, Issue 1, February 2003, 6.

[5] Ibidem.

[6] Mthembu, S., EISA Burundi: Pre-colonial Burundi (1300–1890) in Africa Democracy Encyclopaedia Project, Annual Report, Johannesburg 2008.

[7] Oketch, J.S. and Polzer, T., Pre-colonial Burundi: C. 1300–1890, Stellenbosch 1999.

[8] Ndayiziga, J.B., Humiliation and violent conflict. Paper presented at the Round Table 1 of the 2005 Workshop on Humiliation and Violent Conflict, Columbia University, New York, December 15-16, 2005.

characterized the Burundian society for years were severed hence, the beginning of all kinds of divisions. This was a violation of the principles of Ubuntu that hold that society must be run for the sake of all, requiring cooperation as well as sharing and charity[9]". Many scholars have carried out studies on similar topics namely Stephen, Ocheni, Basil C. Nwankwo [10], Mishack, T.G.[11] but this study talks particularly about the effect of the colonialism on Ubuntu in Burundi and sought to determine what made the disintegration of the multisecular community life possible.

1. Ubuntu and impact of Colonialism on Ubuntu

1.1 Ubuntu

A number of different definitions and or descriptions have been given in the literature for the concept of Ubuntu, namely the potential for being human, and to value the good of the community above self-interest. Practically, Ubuntu serves as the concept of interrelationship and interconnectedness which embodies human interaction in various contexts. This language use is illustrated in the Zulu maxim already mentioned above *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* translated in English as "people are people through other people". It demonstrates the perception of self within the concept whereby individual members of the society learn to act toward each other with as much concern they would have for themselves[12]. Likewise, Kirundi has a similar phrase that expresses the same concern that is rendered by this expression *umuntu ni uwundi* translated as a person is a person because of others. All these expressions mean that the individual's whole existence is relative to that of the group and that if the individual is to survive, he/ she should work toward the survival of the group[13]. There are many similar expressions in many bantu languages that illustrate the use of this concept to talk about interrelationships and interconnectedness

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[9] Mokhutso, J., Ubuntu is under siege: a reflection on the challenges of South Africa then and now, https://www.pharosjot.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_22_vol_103_2022__ufs.pdf. Accessed on May 25, 2022.

[10] Ocheni, S. and Nwankwo, B.S., Analysis of the Impact of Colonialism in Africa, in: Cross-cultural Communication Vol. 8, No 3, 2012.

[11] Mishack, T.G., Elders Decry the Loss of Ubuntu, in: Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, Vol 5 No 10 June 2014, Doi: https://10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n10, accessed on May 22, 2022. 67.

[12] Garmon, Mgijima, Using Ubuntu…

[13] Nussbaum, African culture and ubuntu…

among the members of the community. Ubuntu embodies the idea of group solidarity, compassion, respect and human dignity. This is illustrated through the African expression of Ubuntu that says: "your pain is my pain, my wealth is your wealth, your salvation is my salvation"[14]. In the light of the above expression, Ubuntu is defined as the capacity in African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, harmony, and humanity, to build and maintain the community with justice and mutual caring[15]. People should consider other people as they would consider themselves. As it was observed above that the concept of Ubuntu embodies the idea of group solidarity, compassion, and human dignity, it is worth explaining each of these values that make up Ubuntu in order to see how they relate to how they are expressed in Burundian values.

Solidarity among members of a social group has four main components: 1) distinguishing features that bind members together; 2) mutual concern and mutual aid within the group; 3) acknowledgement of collective responsibility; 4) limits on inequality among members.[16] These features reflect what community members did in their everyday life. The Kirundi expression *dusangiye ugupfa ni ugukira* that is equivalent with the expression « your pain is my pain, my wealth is your wealth, your salvation is my salvation that is at the heart of Ubuntu[17] proves that group solidarity is a reality in the Burundian community. This is observed in the responses that the participants gave when a respondent argued that he refused to show where he had hidden a person they wanted to kill even though they threatened to kill him. He said » *mupfuma munyica hako munyicana aba bantu bampungiyeko »*: "you would better kill me instead of killing these people who fled to my home" (my translation). They also said that they helped to build houses that were destroyed and brought food to displaced people. They were doing this on the risk of being excluded from the others. Now the values changed because before this crisis, people who were excluded from the community were those who committed crimes but at that time people who were stopping from committing were threatened of being excluded from the community. Unfortunately, we should also admit that there is also negative solidarity that is observed

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[14] Mokhutso, Ubuntu is under siege…

[15] Nussbaum, African culture and ubuntu…

[16] Miller, D., Solidarity and Its Sources, In: Banting, K. & Kymlicka, W. (Eds.), The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies, Oxford University Press, 2017, 61-79. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198795452. 003.0002. Accessed on February 25, 2022.

[17] Ibidem.

among members of the community. This should not be considered as the value of Ubuntu because it is not in the interest of the whole community but to a small fraction of it. Negative solidarity occurs when people are afraid to confront people they consider are on their side and tell them the truth about the issue of contention.

Compassion, on its turn, is defined as the feelings for the sufferings of others. It implies pity coupled with an urgent desire to assist or to spare. Compassion is the broader word: it refers to both an understanding of another's pain and the desire to somehow mitigate that pain. The meaning of compassion is also to recognize the suffering of others and then take action to help. Compassion is sometimes the capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else's skin. It is the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too.[18] As it has been observed above this implies that your pain is my pain.

Human dignity, another important value of Ubuntu, is a contested concept because it is classified among concepts over which there is no agreement concerning its core defining features. There are three distinct senses of the concept of human dignity: the intrinsic, attributed and inflorescent senses. The intrinsic dignity means that human beings are born with dignity. It also means that we do not earn, it does not emerge in relation to any effort on our part, we have it by virtue of being human[19]. This is the kind of dignity that does not change depending on any circumstances or contexts in which the agent is. It is the human dignity that is reflected in Ubuntu. Throughout the responses given by the participants, it was observed that there are people who saved the lives of other people without considering their ethnic or party belongings or whether the situation was risky or not. This is indeed the human dignity that is the value of Ubuntu. The inflorescent sense of dignity involves how the agent uses the distinctive feature definitive of their intrinsic dignity to lead a truly human life. As for the third sense, the attributed sense of dignity refers to the kind of value that emerges as a consequence of human choice in relation to attaching a certain status to a set of events or activities. It is also referred to as a conventional form of value [20].

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[18] Fredrick Buechner was an American writer, novelist and was an author of many quotes, Retrieved on July 30, 2022.
[19] Motsamai, M., Human Dignity in African Philosophy. A Very Short Introduction, New York 2021,, 6.
[20] Ibidem.

1.2 The Impact of Colonialism on Ubuntu

The way Ubuntu was considered in the precolonial Africa has undergone some transformations throughout the years. As the concept of Ubuntu enabled the African communities to be united, the colonial administration could not realize their objectives effectively without destroying this unity. Thus, many strategies were used in order to dilute and erode the many cultural practices Africans upheld and that made them become closer, interconnected and interdependent. The most important strategy was to introduce and impose on Africans their political, economic, social, and administrative systems, thereby upstaging the existing familiar, noble and enviable African institutions[21].

For this purpose, they imposed on Africans a system of governance that was modelled on the western system of government that was characterized by individualism which is contrary to the ideals of Ubuntu that put forward communalism. The first thing they did was to establish classes in the communities so that the communal life could be put at stake. Consequently, people who were interconnected and interdependent were brought to compete for positions in the new established competitive society. The monetization of the market had led to the dependence of people on the market for their survival. The goods were very expensive for people at the point that they could not sustain easily their family and relatives. As a matter of fact, the African value characterized by sharing, communalism and other related predispositions were not possible because people could no more produce enough for themselves and community members.

On the political plan, colonialists introduced the party system whereby people were grouped into parties in order to be able to get positions in the administration. As the creation of political parties was made in common agreement with the colonial administration, it was evident that their aim was not to unite people around their interests but rather to disintegrate their unity so that they could rule them easily. As a result, this new order had weakened the tribal system that preconized the communalism and unity among the members of the community and therefore mutual help, interconnectedness and interdependence were perceptibly reduced. This resulted in the total disruption of the moral and social fabric of African life. This was observed through endless ethnic wars that were fueled by politicians who were looking for their own selfish interests. The leaders of the

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[21] Celliers, J ., In Search of Meaning between Ubuntu and Into : Perspectives on Preaching in Post Apartheid South Africa, in: Societas Homiletica P., 2008 1-20.

newly established African states do not consider others as fellow human beings but as animals to kill in order to take their belongings[22]. To popularize this system of governance, a series of new expressions and proverbs were created to name the new community values that are however, contrary to the ideals of Ubuntu. It is shameful to hear people say that *umuntu ni uworya utw'iwe ni utw'abandi* that can be translated as: "A true person is someone who can not only make use of his own belongings but also someone else's belongings" (my translation).

In normal circumstances, this proverb cannot be used because it is against the social norms of social equity and the rights to one's property.

Uwukurusha ibijumbu agutwara imbwa that can be rendered by this translation: "*He who has more sweet potatoes to feed your dog will take it from you*" (my translation).This proverb came into use at the time of the multiparty system when some people were changing from one party to another without considering its objectives, but because he has been promised some few advantages whose promises may not be realized.

Uwutarahiye nabi ntasumira umwana that can be translated as: "*He who does not tell lies will never get what to feed his children*".bAs the spirit of Ubuntu that made that people were sharing everything they had has been lost, people who have nothing to give as mortgage would prefer to tell lies and get things for their survival.

Mpemuke ndamuke that is translated as: "Let me betray and survive the night" (my translation).The use of these kinds of proverbs has been a reality today though they are immoral. Many people would not hesitate to betray their friends to get some little advantages. A good illustration is given by the respondent who said that young people both Hutu and Tutsi agreed to loot together their community members' properties and share. *Muri zone Kinama imisore y'abahutu niy'abatutsi bemeye kwibira hamwe barumvikana nayo ahandi barashamirana*: "*In Kinama Commune Hutu and Tutsi young people agreed to loot together their community members' properties and share, but in case of disagreement they would end in confrontation*" (my translation).

There are many such proverbs and expressions that show that people are losing interests in the community values for their own selfish interests. This was due to life conditions that colonialism had created to impoverish

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[22] Mishack, T.G., Elders Decry the Loss of Ubuntu, in: Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, Vol 5, No. 10, June 2014, 70. Doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n10 67. Accessed on May 30, 2022.

people in order to bring them not to believe in the tribunal system of communal life of sharing, caring, human dignity, compassion, group solidarity and other good values. The examples above show that the spirit of Ubuntu is slowly dying because those who were supposed to perpetuate it have become corrupt.

Despite all these challenges that the African community's values had faced, Ubuntu has resisted and still resists to these forces that aimed at uprooting Ubuntu with all its values. It was observed that there were people who saved lives of other people from different ethnic groups at the risk of being killed. This requires that they be endowed with special virtues that are not given to any person.

2. The Analysis of the impact of colonialism on Ubuntu in Burundi

The impact of the colonialism on Ubuntu in Burundi has been a slow process at the point that it has only been perceptible in the 1993 crisis. It was at period that there has been a serious split between the two main ethnic components of the population namely Hutus and Tutsis. In the analysis, the researcher intends to show how the colonialism had impacted on Ubuntu and determine whether Ubuntu has survived this impact. The researcher used the interviews that were conducted in the 87 communes of Burundi on the role of Bashingantahe and other identified people in assisting people during the 1993 crisis. This crisis is very significant for the study as it was the crisis that split the components of the population in a remarkable way since their existence.

The qualitative method was used for the analysis of responses that were given by the participants. The analysis was made following three main Ubuntu values namely, group solidarity, compassion and human dignity. These values were chosen because they seem to be very important as they incorporate all the other remaining values. The responses were categorized following the three values compassion, group solidarity, and human dignity. Concerning group solidarity, almost all the responses that were given by the participants were related to the value of group solidarity. In order to resist the killers, all the components of the community decided to remain together. They left their homes and decided to stay together in order to resist any attempt to be manipulated and divided on the party or ethnic belonging. One of the participants said *Twahungiye hamwe kugira turarirane* that can be translated as :

My translation: We fled together so that we could protect each other. Similarly, people advised their neighbors of a different ethnic group or party not to flee because their belongings could be looted. They convinced them that they would protect them if they tried to do harm to them. They expressed their solidarity in these terms: *Ntimuhunge ikizobatera tuzokirwaniriza hamwe* that could be translated as: "*Do not flee, we will fight together against those who will attack you*". This illustrates what Nussbaum expressed in these terms : your pain is my pain, your wealth is my wealth, your salvation is my salvation[23]. This group solidarity has been also expressed by other respondents in the following words *twararaririye abatutsi kugira ntibabice* that is rendered by the following: "we watched over the Tutsi so that they would not kill them" (my translation).

This is the spirit of Ubuntu that says that if something happens to a member of the community, it affects all the members of that community. This proves that people in the community are interconnected and that something that harms a member harms all the community as a whole. As people were in difficult situations, they needed assistance of all kinds. The respondents said that people assisted each other without considering their differences based on parties and ethnic groups. *Umuhutu yarahungishije abana banje* that is translated as: "A Hutu helped my children to flee" (my translation). Group solidarity as a value of Ubuntu puts forward the interests of the community before individual or ethnic group interests. This Hutu considered that all human beings be Hutu or Tutsi deserve to have their life safe. When the respondent said a Hutu helped my children to flee, his/her intention was to convey a message that although some Hutu were killing people, there were others who did not lose the humanness. This shows therefore that Ubuntu survived despite all the challenges it faced.

Twarubakiye inzu uwutagira uwumufasha that is rendered as: "we built a house for a person who did not have relatives to help him/her" (My translation). These people express the idea of caring for this helpless person. Unfortunately, the expression helpless person implies that Ubuntu is dying away. Before the erosion of Ubuntu, there could not be any helpless person in the community since Ubuntu says I am because you are.

Abahutu baramfashijije kwubaka inzu yanje rendered in English as: "Hutu people helped me to build my house" (my translation).

As it was noted above, by saying Hutu people helped me to build my house the participant intended to mean that not all the Hutu had lost the values of Ubuntu. People were caring for others. This is expressed in the following

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[23] Nussbaum, African Culture and Ubuntu…

utterance: *Umututsi yabitse ibintu vy'umuhutu* translated as: "A Tutsi kept the belongings for a Hutu" (my translation).

In the previous utterances, they were talking about Hutu who helped Tusti, in this utterance they are giving a case of a Tutsi who kept properties for Hutu. It is a clear illustration of mutual help, interdependence and caring for each other. Another response that shows this kind of group solidarity is the following: *Abashingantahe barabujije abantu bagomba kwiba ibintu vy'abahunze nk'amabati:* "Notables prevented people from stealing the properties of people who fled during the crisis like sheet metals" (my translation). This translates the role of Bashingantahe because at the moment of taking an oath, Bashingantahe have to say these words among many others: You shall always keep the interests of the country at heart. You will fight for the country by fighting those who want to bring disgrace upon it. The utterances that have just been given previously indicate that Bashingantahe kept their word. Stealing the properties of people who fled for their lives is bringing disgrace upon the country. The Bashingantahe prevented people from stealing the properties of people who left their homes. They acted in lieu and place of the government which have to protect their people. They are in fact the voice of the voiceless. Again, we have the following laudable acts done by Bashingantahe: *Barahungishije abantu* whose translation is :

My translation: People helped other people to flee or to hide themselves.

Baraburiye abandi translated as: "People warned their neighbors of the killings" (my translation).

People warned other people from a different ethnic group or different party. The community interests took precedence over any other considerations. This indicates that Ubuntu has resisted to the division among members of the community.

Another example that shows that people still have the value of Ubuntu is found in the following utterance given by a respondent: *Abantu baranse gukwirikira abicanyi* that is rendered as: "People refused to follow the killers and go to kill other people" (my translation).

As they reported that the killers were coming from other areas, this implies that people refused to kill their neighbors. In fact, even the planners of the killings were aware that people would not accept to kill their neighbors. It is a strong indication that Ubuntu still exists among Burundians.

Abashingantahe barigishije guhungira hamwe batavanguye ubwoko that is translated as: "Bashingantahe(wisemen) instructed people to gather to-

gether and fight the attackers without distinction of party or ethnic belonging" (my translation). Staying together in a such period of crisis is a sign of solidarity and unity among the community members. It is a strong expression of Ubuntu as it is clearly observed that Ubuntu is the capacity in African culture to build and maintain the community with justice and mutual caring[24].

Although it is argued that Ubuntu still exists, it is being seriously undermined as the respondents reported that the majority of the killers were young people *abarwana bari imisore ivuye ahandi*. This may be translated as: "Those who were fighting were young male people who were coming from neighboring areas". They are the ones who are more active and have therefore the capacity to constitute a serious threat to the unity of the community, thus the erosion of Ubuntu. From the responses obtained from the participants, it was noted that there was a kind of negative solidarity that was expressed by the members of the community in supporting the cause of the killers. This negative solidarity was expressed by siding with people of the same ethnic group or the same party who were disturbing peace and destroying unity among community members. This solidarity was illustrated through the following responses from the participants in the study. For example, people who refused to cooperate in the killings were segregated against. They were called traitors and other bad qualifications.

Na mwebwe dutegerezwa kubica mwaraducogeje mu myiyamamazo: " We have to kill you also because you offended us in the campaigns"(my translation).

Uwanyegeje abantu ntiyaja mu macomite: "someone who helped people to escape was not allowed to be a member of any committee" (my translation). This implies that to be promoted to the position of a member of a committee, you had to participate in the killings. This shows that Ubuntu has lost its sense because people who did not participate in the killings were excluded from the community while the killers were promoted to the position of member of a committee.

This was the consequence of the introduction of social classes and the lust for wealth by the colonizers. All the defaulters were convinced that they were going to replace people in their administrative positions and take the properties of the people that were killed or those who were intimidated and were obliged to flee. This is illustrated by this response.

Abarwana baribazi ko bazoca batwara amatongo canke ayandi matunga yabo bishe canke batujij: "People who were fighting knew that they were

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[24] Mokhutso, Ubuntu under Siege…

going to take land properties or other properties of the people they would have killed or caused to flee" (my translation).

Another illustration is found in the following utterance that shows how young people from opposite side agreed to loot together and share: "*Muri zone Kinama imisore y'abahutu niy'abatutsi bemeye kwibira hamwe barumvikana nayo ahandi barashamirana": "*In Kinama Commune Hutu and Tutsi young people agreed to loot together their community members' properties and share, but in case of disagreement they would end in confrontation" (my translation).

Negative solidarity was expressed in different ways as it is observed from the following responses from different participants: *abanyegeje abandi barabishe, abandi bacika abanenwa*: "someone who helped people to escape from the killings was killed or could not be a member of any committee" (my translation). Or, *Uwo batahora ubwoko bamuhora umugambwe* "Someone who was not killed because of his/ her ethnic belonging was killed because of his political belonging" (My translation). Or again: "*Abafise abagore b'ubundi bwoko ntibababona": "*Someone who had a wife a different ethnic group was segregated against" (my translation). From these responses, one can easily conclude that their aim was to destroy unity among community members because once these members remained united, they would not achieve their disgraceful objective. It is in this objective that they opted for dividing people at all levels: "*Barahiga abo muri uprona ngo babice naho baba basangiye ubwoko": "*They were looking for people from Uprona Party in order to kill them" (my translation).

Colonizers brought us democracy to destroy our tribal system based on communal life that considers community members as they would consider themselves. In many African countries including Burundi, people in this new system of governance see others as enemies to be eliminated in order to get advantages. In this undertaking, Bashingantahe were deprived of all their authority, thus they had nothing to say about what was going on. This is illustrated by the responses from some Bashingantahe like the following: "*Abashingantahe barigijwe inyuma kubera guhanura*" that I could translated as: "Those young people segregated against Bashingantahe because they advised people not to commit crimes". "*Abahanuye babise ibihemu babatangisha amahadabu",* which may be translated as: "People who advised people not to commit crimes were compelled to pay a fine". Or, "*Abahutu batakwirikiye abandi mu bwicanyi barabatotezwa",* meaning: "The Hutu who did not join the killers were threatened to be harmed".

From these responses, it is clear that people were discouraged from doing acts that are likely to unite people in the name of Ubuntu. This was done in the light of what the colonizers did to Africans in general and to Burundians in particular. The colonizers' grand plan was to break up the tribal system which gives solidarity and some political and economic strength to native life and the implication of this was that a defaulter was treated as a criminal and the offence committed was against the state[25]. At that period the killers wanted to destroy the Burundian communal life that put forward group solidarity, mutual help and compassion. Although people struggled to keep peace in the community, there were some who connived with the killers by giving them accommodation for some days and probably giving them some information on the people's hidings as it was reported by respondents: "*Abanyagihugu baracumbikiye abahungabanya amahoro*" that I translate as: "Some people gave accommodation to those who were disturbing peace".

To summarize, it was observed that many people expressed group solidarity in the crisis. This made possible to consolidate peace and unity through some concrete acts of interconnedness and interdependence that are the foundation of communal life. People tried their best to resist to the division based on party and ethnic belongings. This was a big challenge to the fighters though some people ended up conniving with them. It was reported that killers created divisions among the community members at the ethnic, political and ideological levels in order to destroy the multisecular community unity among Burundians.

2.1 Analysis of responses about compassion

As Ubuntu says « your pain is my pain », the members of the community felt compassionate for people who were in difficult situations. They did everything they could to make sure that the sufferings of the community members were mitigated. These feelings were expressed in the responses that the participants in the interviews gave. Like the following: "*Abanyagihugu barancumbikiye*" that is rendered as: "People gave me accommodation for some time". Or, "*Abantu baragemurira abari mu buhungiro*" that I translate as*:* "People brought food to displaced people". In these responses, it is reported that people helped the displaced people to meet the

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[25] Ocheni, Stephen / Nwankwo, Basil C., Analysis of colonialism and its Impact in Africa, in: Cross cultural Communication, Vol. 8, No. 3, 46-54, DOI : 10.3968/j.ccc. 1923670020120803.118, 2012. Accessed on May 30, 2022.

basic needs like shelter and food. People were aware that without these needs, life is impossible and they took action to make sure they mitigated the sufferings of the displaced community members. These responses have been reported in many communes which indicates that Burundians share what they have with people in need. This is the spirit of Ubuntu that says that your sufferings are my sufferings. Those people did actions that enabled people in need to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life.

Umuhutu yabohoye umututsi bagira bice, which may be translated as: "A Hutu set free a Tutsi they wanted to kill". This is a sign of Ubuntu that he expressed. It is a clear illustration that people still cling to the ideal of Ubuntu that says that I am because you are, I am a person because of other people. Not assisting a person in such a situation would be inhumane.

Abashingantahe baranyegeje abantu this is rendered as: "The Bashingantahe hid people who were in danger". Or, *Twarubakiye inzu uwutagira uwumufasha* that is rendered as: "we built a house for a person who did not have any relatives to help him/her". People did a good action to the person as it is a norm that all the community members should care for each other: "*Abahutu baramfashijije kubaka inzu yanje*" rendered in English as: " Hutu people helped me to build my house". By saying Abahutu, the respondent implied that in that situation we should not expect to find a Hutu assisting a Tutsi because the killers were saying that the Tutsi killed the Hutu President, but it was not the case. The implication is also that there were Hutu who put forward community unity rather than ethnic belonging. However, there were some people who were inhumane and did not have any feeling for the sufferings of others. An example was reported about a person who answered a person who was requesting a hiding for his/her child in the following words:

Mbuze aho shira abanje ndonka aho nshira rwawe that is translated as: "Should I get a hiding for your child when I cannot get one for my children?" (my translation). This callous person is a prototype of people who lost Ubuntu. As a parent, you cannot be insensitive to a parent whose child is in danger. Such a person does not have any characteristic of a human being.

2.2 Analysis of responses about human dignity

Human dignity is the most important value of all the values of Ubuntu because a person who has human dignity has all the other values. Through the responses from the interviews, some participants reported how they

expressed human dignity in assisting people who were in difficult situations. "*Umuntu umwe ni we yemeye guhungisha abandi abandi batinye.* This can be translated as: "Only one person accepted to help people to flee while others were afraid to do it". From this utterance, it is a fact that human dignity is an essential aspect of our humanity. We do not imitate other people it comes naturally to humans. This person is the only one to accept the consequences of his action. "*Umuntu yitanze aravuga ko batamwishe adatanga abo ahungishije"*, rendered in English as: "A person who dared to say that he would not give the people who fled to his home to the killers unless they killed him" (my translation). Through this utterance, it is clear that this act was more than group solidarity and compassion but rather sublime dignity of human persons, who stand above all things including their life to save life of other people. This is the true meaning of Ubuntu that is given in these words « I am because you are ». "*Umugore yafashishe abantu naho abantu basangiye ubwoko nabo bamwiciye umugabo* that I translate as: "A woman widow helped people even though her husband was killed by people from their ethnic group". This woman has understood how others would feel when they inflict the same degrading actions on them. They would not like other people to be emotionally degraded as she has been. People should therefore treat their fellows as they would like to be treated.

Umuhutu yabohoye umututsi bagira bice translated as: "A Hutu set free a Tutsi they wanted to kill". This person saved the life of that Tutsi even though he knew they could do harm to him too. This proves that a person with Ubuntu does not measure the risk he is facing before saving someone's life. He considered that his life is worthless without other people. He put forward the community interests before individual interests. This is the kind of dignity that does not change depending on any circumstances or contexts in which the agent is. It is the human dignity that is reflected in Ubuntu. Throughout the responses given by the participants, it was observed that there are people who saved the lives of other people without considering their ethnic or party belongings or whether the situation was risky or not. This is indeed the human dignity that is the most important value of Ubuntu.

*"Kw' i Seminari y'i Buta, abanyeshule barategetswe kwivangura k'ubwoko baranka bemera kwicwa": "*At the Seminary of Buta, pupils were ordered to separate themselves following their ethnic group but they refused and accepted to be killed together" (my translation).

Through this utterance, the pupils expressed the spirit of Ubuntu that says that I am because you are. In such a situation, it requires human dignity to take such a decision without prior preparation. This shows that human dignity comes naturally to humans and that it is not something to be taught and acquired.

"Abashingantahe barabujije abantu kwicana": "The Bashingantahe (wisemen) prevented people from killing each other" (my translation).

"Abantu bakoze rushingantahe barakorerwa ikibi bakabohwa mugabo baravyemeye hako badohoka kw, ibanga ry'ubushingantahe": "People who behaved like true bashingantahe (wisemen) were badly treated but they accepted it instead of betraying the ideals of the institution of Ubushingantahe that foster the values of Ubuntu" (my translation). This is in accordance with the saying that *ahari abashingantahe ntiharwa ibara* that can be translated as: "No disgraceful act can be accepted in the presence of Bashingantahe. This means that Bashingantahe play an important role in the prevention and peaceful conflict resolution in the society".

Although it has been observed that people expressed acts of human dignity in many situations, it is regrettable to note that there were people who behaved in a way that does not give value to the human beings. A community loses its values it allows or tolerates a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated. Let us consider the following responses from the participants:

"Mbuze aho shira abanje ndonka aho nshira rwawe?": "Should I get a hiding for your child when I cannot get one for my children?" (my translation). It is inhumane not to attend a person who is in a humiliating situation and as a consequence when his/her dignity is seriously threatened. This goes against the Ubuntu value that says that your pain is my pain.

"Baratemaguye umuhutu yaburiye abatutsi": "They killed a Hutu who warned Tutsi with a machete" (my translation). This person was denied his right to life and this is the violation to one's human dignity since human dignity implies that every human being should be regarded as a very invaluable member of the community.

"Reka abatutsi kubita abahutu batazi ico barwanira": "Do not do any harm to Tutsi beat Hutu who do not know the cause they should fight for".

"Imisore yarasambuye inzu z'abatutsi ni iz'abahutu batavuga rumwe": "Young people destroyed the houses of Tutsi and Hutu who refused to follow them in the killings" (my translation).

"Abategetsi barabuza abantu guhunguka naho baba bamerewe nabi":
"Administrative authorities prevented refugees to return home even if they were in bad conditions" (my translation).

Through all these three utterances above, these people who were violating other people's dignity were in fact violating their own dignity because you have dignity when others have dignity. As it is said that your wealth is my wealth we can also extrapolate and say that your dignity is my dignity and as a consequence when your dignity is violated my dignity is also violated.

Conclusion

In the pre-colonial Burundi, Hutu and Tutsi lived in harmonious cohabitation and social and economic interdependence. They all had equal chances to access to a higher status depending on the role they were playing in the community without distinction of whether they were Hutu or Tutsi. This tribal system that was based on communal life has been a stumbling block for the colonizers who wanted to impose their system of governance that would facilitate the destruction of this communal life. In this endeavor, the colonizers put much emphasis on two main elements that changed the communal life into a competitive society; the creation of social classes and resource scarcity that resulted in a competition for positions and control over resources among community members. These two elements have contributed to the destruction of Ubuntu and its guiding principle of umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu (I am a person through other persons). The values of caring, sharing and group solidarity among community members started to be undermined.

To achieve this aim, the party system was introduced to facilitate the erosion of the millennium communal life based on mutual assistance, interconnectedness and interdependence. The party members were promised positions and other many advantages once their party had won and managed the country. These big promises incited people to do all kinds of acts that were contrary to the ideals of Ubuntu; thus resulting in the destruction of all the values that had made the communal life possible. Consequently, the weakening of these values became a serious threat to the Burundian social fabric.

Results indicate that Ubuntu had a strong foundation in Burundi given that people remained united despite many years of ethnic wars. They have gone beyond their differences be it ethnic or political and fought for unity and peace in their communities. This unity was expressed through many acts of mutual assistance, interconnectedness and interdependence which are

characteristic of the concept of Ubuntu. Results also indicate that Ubuntu resisted and still resists to the colonizers objective of destroying it completely in order to impose their own values. It was observed that Burundians remained attached to the group solidarity, the compassion among community members and human dignity that enabled them to go beyond all kinds of temptations by the colonizers. Burundians have gone through many serious challenges that aimed at destroying this unity but fortunately they have been able to respond to them. This was possible because of the values of Ubuntu that put forward human dignity, compassion and group solidarity. It has been noted; however, that because of the spirit of competition that the colonizers had introduced among community members, some people have lost Ubuntu for their selfish interests. This loss of Ubuntu had caused people to be insensitive to the pain of others and in some cases people have been the cause of the sufferings of the community members.

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