

The Role of Peace in Development: A Comparative Study of Rwanda and Somalia

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Abstract: This Article seeks to find out the role of peace in development, arguing that for development to effectively take place, peace must co-exist in a state. The article will base on case studies from Rwanda and Somalia to explain if indeed peace is an essential part to development. Is it in the case of most states that fought for peace or in the case of Rwanda that sunk into genocide in 1992. Does it apply to today's developing countries?

The article also seeks to look into the turnaround measures that have been done in this two states. What are the steps and what can we pick or what lessons can we learn from those states that have done proper turn around. Wars in the recent past as seen has slowed down development not only in the state fighting but to the region as well. Take a good example of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the state is still experiencing slow at some point no growth at all. Neighboring states like Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi were and still are affected since military support will be required to stabilize peace, in the case of Rwanda most neighboring countries experienced massive in flow of refugees especially Kenya seeking refuge, increasing the population of the country and with minimal resources to feed the increase.

Two nations that were both ravaged internal conflict, with one arising to the challenge whereas the other still engulfed by decades of civil conflict. This article seeks to understand what could be the problem as to why one is still grappling in poverty, while the other is rising first overtaking nations in Africa.

Keywords: Peace, Conflict, and Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Peace and Development in Africa will have meaning only when underdevelopment is tackled effectively. One can talk of conscience, moral law, and dignity of man, truth, justice, freedom, democracy, love, and free will to a well-fed and secure person and something will sink in. However, to hungry, poverty-stricken, unemployed, low income, poorly housed, illiterate, ignorant, malnourished and diseased persons these are empty words and do not make sense in their circumstances.

This explains why there are fewer people in developing countries who own computers or even have access to a reliable internet connection when compared to individuals from developed nations. People from developing countries are either too poor, mostly illiterate, or have other more pressing concerns, such as food, health care, and security. And hence, even if every individual from these nations was to be offered a free computer, it would not do them much good since most of these people's concerns are circled around putting a meal on the table, accessing health care facilities and also the sense of feeling safe in and around their daily lives and activities.

The world has become a global village, largely because of the advancement in technology. Information spread and therefore been made possible. Likewise, people have become more aware of major events and happenings as and when they occur. Conversely, as much as we are rejoicing in this wave of technology, little benefit can be traced to that poor farmer who constantly relies on the rains to make a living. And therefore, telling him/her that he/she would benefit from rural computing centers would be like telling a blind person that the sky is green.

The late Pope Paul VI asserted several decades ago that, "nowadays the name of peace is development." Besides the breathtaking beauty and diversity of Africa, with an extraordinary, energetic, and resilient people, it is also a place plagued with problems so endemic and widespread that no continent, no matter how prosperous, could tackle them on its own.

Among the threat from international terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and climate change, which are problems common to the entire world, Africa is particularly vulnerable to the latter. It has been estimated that the African GDP could decline by up to 10 percent because of climate change. If we agree that the problems of Africa need to be addressed, maybe we should focus on some specific problems, also shared by many other countries, such as poverty, debt, disease, conflict, corruption, and weak governance. Let us consider some possible ways of addressing or solving them.

1.1 Peace and Development in Africa

In hindsight, it is easier to call a bluff on African states that claim to be democratized, free of corruption and oppression and also those that claim to enjoy a vast majority of the continent's economic stake. That said, there are some truths in the fact that some African countries are by far more developed than others and vis-à-vis enjoy the majority of the continent's economic stake. According to Likoti 2006, Kenya is the power house in the East African region, Nigeria's economy outperforms its West African counterpart by a mile and South Africa's economy remains dominant not only in the south, but also across the entire continent. Egypt is the big player in the north east whereas Morocco's economy is far superior in the north west of the continent.

Contrariwise, countries such as Rwanda and Somalia have enjoyed dissimilar fortunes. Despite the fact that both countries were plagued by deadly civil wars that left many people dead, there was also a knock on effect on the countries' economic, political and sociological conditions. Their economies were severely damaged, their democracy left in tatters and thereby leaving people of the same nation alienated among one another. It is almost ludicrous to imagine that after fighting for independence against the colonialist, most African nations became self-absorbed by communal conflicts which were largely driven by ethnical greed and the need to seize power for "us" and not "them." As suggested by (Marshall 2005), nearly half of African states have experienced communal conflicts since 1990, thereby suggesting urgency to understand the root of that violence and also ample variations in outcome.

2. SOMALI CIVIL CONFLICT

On the one hand, most African states are characterized by having multiple ethnical and tribal groups, which has been the main cause of ethnical clashes and violence. On the other hand, in Somalia, the overwhelming majority of the Somalis are part of a single, homogeneous ethnic group. All Somalis are Muslim and share the same language and culture. Nevertheless, one of the most terrible civil wars in Africa has been waged in this country for more than two decades. Somalia has been without a functioning central government since the late dictator General Mohamed Said Barre was ousted in 1991. 27 years on and civil conflicts are still rampant on what was once a promising nation with beautiful coastlines and rich in resources.

It is inconspicuous to point one distinctive cause of the civil war that has ranged for almost three decades now but looking deep into the root of the problem, a few things come up. The Somali civil war has multiple causes including political, economic, cultural and psychological. Additionally, various internal factors have played different roles during the various stages of the conflict. However, based on observations and reading of peace-building literature, we can argue that the root causes of Somali conflicts were competition for resources and/or power, an oppressive state and a colonial legacy.

In hindsight, the most important factor that created and sustained the clan-based militias' conflicts is competition for power and resources, a scenario that most war torn African nations can relate to. Somalia gained its independence in the 1960s, a time when many other African Nations also freed themselves from colonial rule. At time, Somalis became independent and as such, they had the right to democratically elect their ruler. This was followed by a realization that whoever rose into power ostensibly controlled the State's resources. This included access to government resources, recruitment of civil servants and control of foreign aid. A research by a Somali journalist, Mohamed Jama Urdoh found that 70% of appointed police chief members were members of the same clan who shared the same tribal roots with the country's prime minister.

The other important factor that led to the continued civil divide and conflict in Somalia was the repressive military rule experienced between 1969 and 1991. The military regime used excessive force and collective punishment to suppress opposition. The system did not allow opposition voices to exist let alone have a voice in important issues.

3. THE RWANDAN CIVIL WAR

The immediate roots of the 1994 genocide dated back to the early 1990s, when President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, began using anti-Tutsi rhetoric to consolidate his power among the Hutus. This also meant that government resources, including civil servant jobs were isolated and spread among the Hutu community leaving the minority Tutsi community with lower ranked positions. At the time, the laws set by the government required that both the Hutus and the Tutsis to register for their national identities based on their ethnical background. This created further division and alienation between the two communities.

Despite the Hutus and the Tutsis speaking the same language and also sharing majority of their cultural practices, there still existed a glaring division between the two communities. The Tutsis felt they were being marginalized which led to the formation of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi military organization stationed outside the country at the time – which was led by the now President Paul Kagame. In April 6th, 1994, the then President Juvenal Habyarimana's plane was shot down leading to the death of the president and thereby escalating tensions between the two communities. The Tutsi military organization was responsible for the shooting down of the plane whereas the Tutsis claimed it was the Hutu extremist who shot down the plane sparking tension leading to war.

Given the two compelling circumstances, both Rwanda and Somalia have been victims of civil conflict which left the countries' economies derailed and democratic progress in jeopardy. However, comparing the two countries today, there is an obvious difference in economic, political and social progress. Whereas Somalia still ranges on with civil conflict, Rwanda has become one of Africa's havens with a fast a strengthening economy, and stable political and sociological aspects of the country.

4. ROLE OF PEACE IN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA WITH A VIEW OF RWANDA AND SOMALIA

Most contemporary conflict occurs within nations, fought between communities divided along either regional or ascriptive identity lines, such as ethnicity, religion, or language (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, 2008). In the case of Rwanda civil war, the conflict was fought between the two communities (Hutus & Tutsis) who were divided along their identity lines. The Somalis civil war is more ascribed towards different clans clashing with one another. Having said that, the dominant factor which appears to be the root cause to all atrocities of civil conflict seems to hedge towards the control and allocation of resources, such as oil, territory, or state jobs and revenues. This was the main cause of conflict in both Rwanda and Somalia. In essence, when it comes to acquiring state power, controlling state resources and jobs, state officials tend to show lenience towards their tribal counterparts. Thus, insofar as resource allocation decisions are a component of economic development plans, a probable link exists between development strategies and future conflict, irrespective of the nearby pivotal explanation.

In this context, National economic development strategies shape access to resources, land, jobs, and opportunities, which are valued not just by elites who distribute them for political advantage, but most fundamentally by their constituents who desire improved standards of living. When those resources are distributed along ascriptive identity lines, however, one's economic opportunities are perceived as a function of the social community to which one belongs. In Rwanda, the Hutus, then led by President Juvenal Habyarimana marginalized their Tutsi counterparts by limiting them access to high paying government jobs as well as senior positions in the state government. The then president went on to use anti-Tutsi rhetoric in his public discourse which further heightened tensions among the two communities.

In Somalia, Dictator General Mohamed Siad Barre distributed state resources and jobs by ascription where the high ranking military positions and other state owned resources were allocated among the people belonging to his clan. Marginalized or threatened groups thus perceive ascriptive differences or "ethnic hatred" as a reason for their unequal treatment.

5. POST WAR RWANDA

Rwanda has achieved impressive progress since the 1994 genocide that left about one million people dead. The country moved to rehabilitate devastated infrastructure and restore social norms, and has embarked on an ambitious development strategy seeking to transform the country from a low-income, agriculture-based economy to a knowledge-based service economy by 2020.

To most countries, the 1994 genocide would have spelled doom to the country's economy given that the genocide destroyed the country's fragile economic base, along with a large share of its human capital. The aftermath of the genocide not only left behind piles of dead bodies but also saw a wave of Rwandans flee the country. Poverty levels skyrocketed to record highs of 78% of the country's population. However, the government of Rwanda led by President Paul Kagame oversaw major changes that were geared towards fostering the country's economic growth. The country underwent a reconstruction which focused on rebuilding demolished institutions. This gave a much needed boost to the country's economic outcomes and social indicators.

Presently, the Rwandan economy is among the fastest growing economies in the continent mainly due to the extensive economic and governance reform measures that were put in place between 1995 to date. Such measure saw poverty levels decline from a whopping 78% to 57% by the year 2005 and child mortality rates decline drastically during the same period.

Major progresses and achievements which Rwanda has attained to date ascribe the importance of democracy and political stability in a nation. President Paul Kagame played a key role in unifying both the Hutus and the Tutsis, bringing both communities together as one and rebuilding the country as one people. Currently, Rwanda is not only regarded as one of the most peaceful countries in the African continent but also one that no longer associates its self along ethnic/tribal lines. Clearly, the lessons were learned from the genocide and it is less likely that something of such magnitude will ever happen again in the country.

As a nation, Rwanda is unified as one people belonging to one nation. For instance, in Rwanda, democracy is not prescribed under ethnic or tribal groups but by the true will of the people. The just finished 2017 presidential elections saw President Kagame, who is a Tutsi and hence from the minority group, win the elections by a landslide. Therefore, it is evidently true that a country that chooses to embrace democracy instead of war is bound to succeed in its endeavors.

The Rwandan economy is now competing with the other regional's might, a true testament to the amount of progress and development that can be achieved by saying no to ethnic clashes, hatred, nepotism, greed and corruption. And hence, the route to true democracy in Africa is enshrined in the confines of one's personal will to do what is right, treating others person as they would themselves and detaching from ethnic and tribal allegiances.

6. MODERN DAY SOMALIA

Somalia is a country still struggling with democracy. Created in 1960 from a former British protectorate and an Italian colony, Somalia collapsed into anarchy following the overthrow of the military regime of President Siad Barre in 1991. The ousting of Mohamed Siad Barre sparked a decades-long civil war between rival clan warlords which led to the disintegration of central authority. Different regional and international bodies have tried to instill peace in the war torn nation but few have succeeded.

In the 1990s, the US-spearheaded UN peacekeeping mission failed to restore peace in the country, a move that saw two northern states of the country declare autonomy – Somaliland and Northern Portland region. This was mainly spearheaded by the lack of government structures which would then continue to fuel clan clashes.

As a country whose democracy is nonexistent, Somalia's economy has continued to struggle in the face of its African counterparts and indeed of the world. With the GDP per capita of \$128.1, Somalia is deemed to be the poorest country in Africa and the world. The country's crippled economy is a direct result of the civil war that has been ravaging the country since 1986. And therefore, Somalia's underdeveloped economy is a direct consequence of mismanagement of resources by oppressive regime which then hindered harnessing of the country's economic potential. As a country, Somalia boast some of Africa's most beautiful beaches, an economic potential that cannot be fully realized unless there is peace in the country. Economically, Somalia depends on telecommunications, foreign remittances, donors and livestock. However, all of this is still not enough to improve the country's economic condition.

International and regional forces have tried to bring peace in this war torn nation by deploying peace keeping troops. For example, between 2007 and 2011 an African Union peacekeeping force, Amisom, was deployed to ensure peace in the country. Kenya also joined in the fight in efforts to combat terrorism in the region.

Continued rival clan clashes coupled with threats from extremist group, Al-Shabab, have continued to diminish the possibility of having a peaceful Somalia. According to Necrometrics, around 500,000 people are estimated to have been

killed in Somalia since the start of the civil war in 1991. This is a true testament that without a peaceful nation, it is almost impossible to achieve true democracy. And as a result, Somalia has continued to lag behind in terms of infrastructure and other forms of development.

Following the outcry of the people of Somalia, international bodies have come together and set up an internationally controlled government in Somalia. This was in effort to try and bring some form of tranquility in the country that has been ravaged by prolonged internal conflict, corruption, poor governance and resurgence of extremist groups. Since 2012, when a new internationally-backed government was installed, Somalia has been inching towards stability; however, the new authorities still face a challenge from Al-Qaeda-aligned Al-Shaabab insurgents.

7. WHAT SHOULD SOMALIA LEARN FROM THEIR AFRICAN COUNTERPART, RWANDA?

Rwanda has achieved tremendous progress in the face of true adversity. For a country that was heavily affected by ethnic clashes, it is good to see where the country currently is. From a country that was almost destroyed by civil clashes to an East African Economic power house, Rwanda is a true revelation that democracy and peaceful coexistence are the key building blocks towards development.

Since taking office, President Kagame's government sought to unify the people and lay down a marker towards political, economic and social governance. This was achieved by restoring the country's infrastructure, revitalizing its agricultural sector and institutionalizing other sectors that would spearhead the country's economy.

In his efforts to unify the people, President Kagame denounced all ethnic identifications thereby bringing both the Hutus and the Tutsis together as Rwandans, speaking the same language – *Kinyarwanda* – and embracing the same democratic spirit.

In view of the above, in its long attempts to instill peace in the country, the Somali government ought to have focused its efforts in mending the divides between different clans by allocating equitable rights to state resources, and job opportunities to its entire people. They should have also focused more on building a government that does not discriminate on the basis of ethnic backgrounds. In essence, the Somali government and its people should play a part in ensuring democracy is achieved in the country. This stems down from the top government leaders down to the poor herders. With true democracy, a country is bound to succeed in terms of attracting foreign investment, with tourism being a key figure for a country like Somalia. This shows just how much can be achieved when a country does not prejudice its citizens on the basis of which clan they come from but by their true national identity.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paradigms of true democracy are enshrined in the people's hearts and their willingness to function as one people irrespective of ascriptive identity lines. Rwanda gives us a reminiscing example that democracy can be achieved in Africa in spite of previous adversities. The genocide that happened in 1994 was a harsh, but perhaps a much needed, reality that illuminated on the dangers of ethnic divides. Today, Rwanda is by far a much better nation with loving people and burgeoning economy which is indicative of what democracy in a nation can achieve.

In contrast, Somalia is still struggling with its shackles of poor governance. Development in the country is forgotten, economy is in tatters and the wellbeing of its people is in question. It is outlandish that the two countries pose such contrasting economic, political and sociological backgrounds and yet their history is so similar.

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