NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
Monterey, California

THESIS

GENOCIDE IN RWANDA: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL APPROACH

by

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March 2000

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20000605 122

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE March 2000	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL APPROACH	5. FUNDING NUMBERS
6. AUTHOR(S) Jill D. Rutaremara	

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.	12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

ABSTRACT *(maximum 200 words)*

Before colonialism, the Rwandese lived together in harmony. They spoke the same language, shared the same culture and geographical territory, intermarried, and belonged to the same clans. Yet, in a period of less than three months in 1994, about one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed by their Hutu neighbors in one of the most horrific genocides ever witnessed. This thesis reviews the definitions of ethnicity and theories of ethnic conflict in the literature. It critically examines how ethnicity was constructed in Rwanda, and how it became rigid, ranked, and polarized. The thesis also examines the roles and interests of the two major actors in the Rwandan genocide: the elite and the masses. Although the ideology of the Rwandan genocide was propounded and popularized by the Hutu extremist elites, its intensity can be explained largely by analyzing the interests and fears of the masses, and why they responded to genocide ideology and elite incitement.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Genocide, Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Groups, Rwandese, Elites, Masses, Extremists, Moderates, Ethnic Ranking, Dual Ethnicity, Cohabitation, Resources, and Rational.	15. NUMBER OF PAGES 130
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFI- CATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-9)
Prescribed by ANSI td. 239-18

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GENOCIDE IN RWANDA: TOWARDS A THEORETICAL APPROACH

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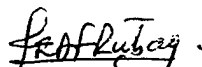
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS
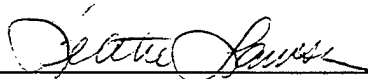
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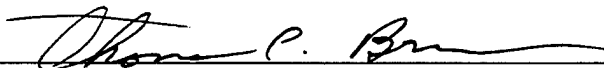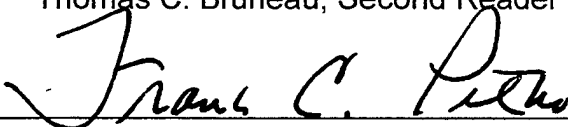**March 2000**

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ABSTRACT

Before colonialism, the Rwandese lived together in harmony. They spoke the same language, shared the same culture and geographical territory, intermarried, and belonged to the same clans. Yet, in a period of less than three months in 1994, about one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed by their Hutu neighbors in one of the most horrific genocides ever witnessed. This thesis reviews the definitions of ethnicity and theories of ethnic conflict in the literature. It critically examines how ethnicity was constructed in Rwanda, and how it became rigid, ranked, and polarized. The thesis also examines the roles and interests of the two major actors in the Rwandan genocide: the elite and the masses.

Although the ideology of the Rwandan genocide was propounded and popularized by the Hutu extremist elites, its intensity can be explained largely by analyzing the interests and fears of the masses, and why they responded to genocide ideology and elite incitement.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rwandan people (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) speak the same language, share the same culture, live in the same territory, intermarry, and belong to the same clans. These characteristics of the Rwandese society would lead one unfamiliar with its recent history to categorize Rwanda as a homogenous nation-state. In the precolonial era, three mutually interdependent groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa), coexisted and showed no predisposition to conflict. Yet, in a period of less than three months in 1994, about one million Tutsi and moderate Hutu were hacked to death in their communities by their Hutu neighbors in one of the most horrific genocides ever witnessed. Since that time, a number of conflicting explanations for the Rwandan genocide have been advanced. None of them satisfactorily provides a thorough, theoretically based explanation of why such a horrific genocide occurred in one of the few African countries that, on the surface, seems to be the least prone to ethnic conflict.

This thesis begins with a review of definitions of ethnicity and theories of ethnic conflict in the literature. It critically examines how ethnicity was constructed in Rwanda, and how it became rigid, ranked, and institutionalized. The thesis notes that the three groups (the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) were constructed into ethnic groups during colonialism largely due to colonial machinations that were reinforced with racist ideology. By the time Rwanda obtained independence in 1962, the three ethnic groups had already acquired distinct group consciousness, and were already polarized and ranked. The post

colonial leadership in Rwanda institutionalized and polarized these groups even further.

The research presented in this thesis suggests that although the colonialists and the Catholic Church created deep divisions among the Rwandese and also reinforced these divisions with a racist ideology, especially regarding the superiority of the Tutsi, it is the postcolonial elite and the masses who should bear most of the blame for the 1994 genocide. Thirty two years after independence, the Rwandese had no excuse for massacring each other.

The findings presented in this research suggest that genocide was both a means and an end in itself. It was propounded by the extremist Hutu elites with the purpose of destroying the Tutsi group, and killing the moderate Hutu so as to cling to power. It was also aimed at unleashing the hatred that the extremists elite harbored against the Tutsi. The research findings suggests that although the Rwandan elite revived the racist ideology and mobilized the Hutu to kill the Tutsi, genocide as was witnessed in Rwanda, could not have been possible without the interaction of the interests and fears of both the extremist Hutu elites and the masses.

The research further suggests that although the masses are relatively more ignorant than the elite, and although the elite to some extent coerced the masses into killing, the participation of the masses in the Rwandan genocide cannot be explained by simple ignorance and coercion. Although the masses were motivated by looting and settling personal scores, they participated in genocide so as to grab land, a scarce resource in Rwanda, just as they had done

during previous massacres. Some of them also participated in genocide out of the fear of losing the land they owned to the returning refugees. Having participated in the massacres of the Tutsi in 1959 and thereafter, the peasants harbored fear of prosecution and revenge. Both the question of resources, especially land, and the concern for personal security were reinforced by the history of impunity and elite mobilization. The presence of a highly centralized and hierarchical state, the small size of the country, a relatively developed infrastructure, and lack of language barrier in communication, also made it easy for the elite to mobilize and to some extent to coerce the masses. The sharing of the same territory by all the ethic groups (cohabitation), dual ethnicity (the division of a country into only two or into two main ethnic groups rather than multiple ethnic groups), and the history of ethnic ranking (the ordering of ethnic groups in a hierarchy of power), explain the ease with which the genocide ideology was accepted and implemented by the Hutu masses.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My appreciation also goes to Joseph Mutaboba, Rwanda's Representative to the United Nations, for making contacts for me with some people at the United Nations headquarters in New York. In particular, I am thankful to Prof. Ibrahim Agboola Gambari, who represented Nigeria at the Security Council when genocide was taking place in Rwanda. The discussion that I held with him concerning the role of the United Nations in preventing and stopping crimes such as genocide was very insightful. I also take this opportunity to sincerely thank the International office at NPS for funding my research travel to New York.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my wife, Pelagia, and my children, Lynette, Brian, and Kevin for their love, encouragement, and support in the course of writing this thesis. The books that Pelagia sent me were also very useful. My daughter, Lynette tried to make time move faster but in vain. Her regular reminders that I should wind up whatever I was doing and come back home made me redouble my effort. It also made me realize even more how difficult it was to undertake such a long but necessary course without the company of one's family.

A special thanks to my mother, who raised me during critical times; especially for the thirty years or so that we lived in exile. Without her support and tender love, I would not be what I am today.

Lastly, I am thankful to both the Rwandan government and the American government without which I could not have pursued this course.

I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   BACKGROUND

Rwanda, a former Belgian colony is one of the few countries in Africa in which people speak the same language, share the same culture, intermarry, belong to the same clans and are commingled in the same geographical territory. In the precolonial era, three mutually interdependent groups (Hutu, Twa, and Twa), most often understood as social groups or classes, coexisted and showed no predisposition to conflict.

During the colonial era, the three groups were created by the Belgians into distinct ethnic groups and the social relations between the Hutu and the Tutsi altered as the Twa became marginalized even further. The division between the Hutu and the Tutsi was achieved through the sowing of racial ideology by favoring one group over the other, and through the issuance of identity cards that ended mobility from one social group to another. This factor was previously based on wealth. Further division was also achieved through political centralization and a tight system of indirect rule, coercive and highly exploitative policies aimed at efficient and maximum exploitation of resources, and through active mobilization of the Hutu against the Tutsi whom they had initially favored. These factors along with the mobilization of the Hutu elite led to the first conflict in 1959; three years before Rwanda obtained independence. In that conflict, tens of thousands of Tutsi were killed as hundreds of thousands fled mainly to

neighboring countries. In 1962, Rwanda obtained independence with Gregoire Kayibanda as the first president of the Republic of Rwanda. He was later overthrown by Major General Juvenal Habyarimana in a military coup in 1973. Both postcolonial regimes used the Tutsi as scapegoats for the problems facing the country by periodically expelling and massacring them. The two regimes also refused to allow refugees to return from exile on the pretext that Rwanda was overpopulated. They treated the Tutsi inside the country as second class citizens and sought to unite the Hutu by using the Tutsi scare.

In 1990, the Rwandese refugees, under the umbrella of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and its military wing the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA), launched an armed struggle against the regime of Habyarimana from Uganda. The regime reacted by killing the Tutsi, and imprisoning both the Tutsi and some of the Hutu. Some Hutu elite, both in and outside the mainstream of political power, also launched anti-Tutsi propaganda and openly called for the extermination of the Tutsi. This propaganda was being conducted as 'political negotiations between the RPF and the government were going on. In August 1993, the two parties signed the Arusha Peace Agreement which was supposed to be followed by a Broad Based Transitional Government of National Unity comprising of the ruling party, the RPF, and the opposition parties. However, before the peace agreement could be implemented, on April 6, 1994, President Habyarimana was mysteriously killed when his plane was shot down as it tried to land at the Kanombe International Airport in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. On

that day the genocide started. The RPF appealed to the interim government to stop the massacres and when the government refused to comply, the RPA pushed to stop the massacres and to overthrow the regime. The new genocidal regime that came into power after the death of President Habyarimana was finally defeated in July 1994.

B. PURPOSE AND MAJOR ARGUMENT

This thesis argues that while Rwanda is not the only African country that is ethnically divided, or that has suffered from ethnic violence (e.g., massacres of some members of certain ethnic groups), it is the only country where horrific genocide has occurred. In not more than three months in 1994, about one million Tutsi and some moderate Hutu were killed. The genocide was carried out mainly by peasants. It took place in almost every village throughout the country and it was executed relatively rapidly. The main purpose of this thesis is to establish through scientific and objective analysis, the factors that led to the generally unique genocide in Rwanda.

The most common explanations of the genocide in Rwanda emphasize the role of Belgian colonizers and the Catholic Church in fomenting ethnic conflict and in sowing racial ideology, the particularly manipulative nature of the Rwandan elites in exploiting that ideology for their own ends and the vulnerability of peasants to such manipulation because of their ignorance and poverty.

This thesis argues that these explanations for genocide are inadequate. The above factors are not unique to Rwanda and cannot therefore alone explain

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the cause of such a horrific genocide. To begin with, it is difficult to establish whether the Belgian colonialists were the worst colonizers on the African continent. Moreover, Rwanda is not the only country in Africa that was colonized by the Belgians. However, it is the only country in Africa that experienced such horrific genocide. At the same time, the role of elites in reaping political capital out of the diversity that exists within a society is a factor that is not limited to Rwanda. Nor are the Rwandan peasants the most ignorant in Africa or even in the whole world. However, there are two main considerations that should be made.

Firstly, this thesis argues that there was predisposition towards genocide by some of the Hutu extremist elite and that this predisposition grew as the threat to power by those behind it increased. In short, genocide in Rwanda was motivated by two complementary factors: the extermination of the Tutsi and the need to cling to power by whatever means. By eliminating the Tutsi, the elite hoped to achieve their extermination campaign, deny the RPF support, and in the process, make it politically and militarily weak. The ideology of genocide allowed them to target moderate Hutu elites from opposition parties whom they accused of being traitors to the Hutu cause and of joining the Tutsi in opposition to Hutu rule. The main goals of the Hutu elites were to exterminate Tutsi and to stay in power. The ideology of genocide and genocidal massacres were the means they used.

Secondly, the fact that some Rwandan elites wanted to exterminate the Tutsi and to stay in power, and were willing to use violent means against another ethnic group, does not explain the level that the Rwandan genocide reached. Elite violence in other countries has been limited to massacres carried out largely by government forces and not full-scale genocide with the participation of a significant proportion of the population. This is why this thesis turns to the motivation behind the participation of the masses for further explanation. Although the extremists preached hatred against the Tutsi, and although one cannot deny the fact that this message appealed to the masses, this thesis argues that the acceptance of this message cannot simply be attributed to the ignorance of the masses. This thesis therefore advances four arguments to explain why the masses responded to elite mobilization:

Firstly, there was among the peasants, an urge to grab land and the fear of losing it to the returnees. This urge and fear was aggravated by mobilization by the extremist elite, and the fact that land is a scarce resource in Rwanda. There is no doubt also that lack of non-agricultural employment opportunities also played a big role in motivating the masses to participate in genocide.

Secondly, there was concern for physical security among the masses. There was fear of revenge by the Tutsi for various massacres committed by the Hutu against the Tutsi since 1959. This fear was also intensified by elite mobilization.

Thirdly, Rwanda's highly centralized state partially contributed to the death of many Rwandese since it enabled the elite easy and speedy access to the population; a factor that made mobilization of the masses and coordination of genocidal massacres easy.

Fourthly, the ideology of genocide was accepted by the peasants not only because it had been preached for a long time, but also because of the history of ethnic ranking (in ranked ethnic groups, one ethnic group considers itself to be relatively different in power or perceive itself to be so), dual ethnicity (i.e., the division of a country into two ethnic groups rather than multiple groups), and cohabitation (commingling of different ethnic groups in the same territory). It is the interaction of the above factors that explain the high intensity of the Rwandan genocide.

C. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this thesis is a general survey of the literature on the types of ethnic groups, ethnic conflicts and on genocide. A survey is conducted on the differentiation of the Rwandese people into ethnic groups and how intense ethnic conflict later developed and finally culminated into genocide. This thesis also applies the hypothesis of cohabitation, dual ethnicity, the history of ranking and the security of resources, particularly land, in ethnic conflict and in genocide.

D. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Different explanations have been advanced to explain the cause of the horrific Rwandan genocide of 1994. These explanations have concentrated on why the elite promoted genocide, for example to maintain power and to exterminate the members of Tutsi ethnic group, but are not persuasive as to why the masses responded to elite incitement. This thesis fills this void. In so doing, the causes of genocide are clearly discussed. This partially provides a basis from which further genocide can be prevented.

Assuming that other factors that lead to genocide are constant, some societies are more prone to violence than others. However, no society is destined to face genocide and probably no society is immune from it. The importance of this thesis is to provide a basis from which leaders can design and strengthen appropriate and relevant policies and institutions for their societies.

Genocide is not only a national crime but also an international crime. The effects of genocide are also not limited to a particular country. Indeed, Rwanda's genocide has contributed to the destabilization of Africa's Great Lakes Region. It is by understanding this fact, together with the above point, that justice can be administered and future genocide prevented. This would undoubtedly contribute to peace and stability not only in Rwanda, but also in the entire region.

E. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

Chapter II presents a definition of ethnicity and a review of the theories of ethnic conflict in the literature. It also presents the meaning of genocide.

Chapter III discusses the background of Rwanda's genocide. It critically examines how ethnicity was constructed in Rwanda, and how it was politicized and institutionalized into rigid and ranked ethnic groups, and how this finally led to violent ethnic conflict.

Chapter IV discusses how different factors combined to cause the 1994 genocide. It critically examines the roles and interests of the two major actors in the Rwandan genocide: the elite and the masses. In particular, it examines the interests and fears of both groups, and why the masses responded to mobilization by the elite with a genocide agenda and also by the self interested political actors.

Chapter V recapitulates some key ideas in the thesis and presents a conclusion on the interaction of different factors that led to genocide in Rwanda.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

A. INTRODUCTION

The study of ethnicity and ethnic conflict gained popularity among scholars after the decolonization in the Third World. More recently, the end of the Cold War saw the reemergence of ethnic conflict, especially in Eurasia, which attracted renewed attention from scholars in the field of ethnic conflict. Diversity in approaches and lack of consensus on various issues has characterized this literature. Not only are scholars sometimes not clear nor consistent about definitions of concepts, but their theories also fall short of furnishing satisfactory explanations about why ethnic conflicts take place, and why some ethnic conflicts are more intense than others. Theories on ethnic conflicts also "fit certain aspects of ethnic conflict much better than they fit other aspects."[1] Although I rely heavily in what follows on Horowitz's review of the literature preceding his own contribution, I utilize his review as well as commenting critically on his analysis. I also review the large amount of literature coming out of post-Cold War Eastern Europe.

This chapter defines ethnic group, ethnicity, and ethnic conflict. It discusses the theories of ethnic conflict and the motivation behind that conflict. The chapter also discusses the factors that are commonly used to explain ethnic

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[1] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), p. 96.

conflict: the actors (elites and masses), and the resources. Stressing that there are some differences in ethnic group relations and in other factors that account for ethnic conflict, this chapter also discusses some additional factors that make societies more prone to violent ethnic conflict: ranking, dual ethnicity, and cohabitation.

B.   ETHNIC GROUP, ETHNICITY, AND ETHNIC CONFLICT

Initially, the term ethnic group referred to the group of people who for one reason or another, managed to retain their distinct identity after the formation of nation-states. Such groups usually retained their language and culture, lived in the same territory, and claimed to have a common ancestry. Over time, the term ethnic group has been redefined by scholars and at times given political connotations. As Kellas observes, "in contemporary political usage, the ethnic group used to describe a quasi-national kind of 'minority' group within the state, which has somehow not achieved the status of a nation."[2] In his definition, Kellas fails to differentiate ethnic group from a nationality and instead uses the word quasi-national to denote ethnic group. Kellas also fails to show that when an ethnic group achieves the status of a nation although he argues that ethnic groups are usually smaller than nations.[3] Suffice to state, however, that there is no agreed upon standard size for an ethnic group and that some ethnic groups

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[2]   James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, (London, UK: MacMillan Education Ltd., 1991), p. 4.

[3]   ibid.

can be larger than nationalities. The claim that ethnic groups are minority groups is also difficult to accept especially if this is applied to multiethnic societies, for instance, in Africa. The word 'minority' as applied here therefore loses meaning in some multiethnic societies in which there are majority as well as minority ethnic groups.

Rothchild's definition is much broader and encompasses a number of ethnic groups. According to him, ethnic group refers to "organized activities by people who are linked by a consciousness of special identity, who jointly seek to maximize their corporate political, economic, and social interests."[4] Elaborating on that definition, Rothchild argues that the origin of the group may be imaginary. This resolves the problem inherent in the former definition that tends to fix rigid boundaries to ethnic groups.

In contrast, Fredrik Bath emphasizes culture. He defines ethnic group as "a distinct group in a society self-consciously united around shared histories, traditions, beliefs, cultures, and values, which mobilizes its membership for common political, economic, and social purposes – is in essence a culturally based social organization."[5] This definition has one limitation, it implies that ethnic groups are primordial in nature and that there is nothing that can be done

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[4] Donald Rothchild, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africain: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation*, (Washington, D.C. : Brookings Institution Press, 1997), in James G. Kellas, *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, (London, UK: MacMillan Education Ltd., 1991), p. 4.

[5] Fredrik Bath, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Differences*, (Boston: Little, 1967), in Naomi Chazan, and others, *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*, (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), p. 10.

to avert ethnic conflict. However, Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner take an intermediary approach to ethnicity:

> Although ascriptive in nature, ethnicity is not entirely immutable (even though it may appear so in particular conflictual situations). Group boundaries may shift as groups divide, merge, erode, aggregate and redefine themselves over time (in part by recasting or reinventing myths of common origin.[6]

Their perspective is crowned by Anderson's instrumental approach: "Ethnicity, [notes Anderson], is not a matter of objective cultural or physical distinctions but rather is a social construct, an imagined community."[7]

Although different scholars give different definitions of ethnic groups, and although some of these definitions do not differ fundamentally, suffice to mention that it is the consciousness of peoplehood that is the most important defining element of ethnic groups and that ethnic groups can therefore be constructed just like they can dissolve and disappear completely. Consciousness can therefore change over time just like ethnic labels can acquire a high or low value depending on the political, social, and economic environment.

C.   UNDERSTANDING GENOCIDE

Although most people agree that what took place in Rwanda was genocide, few share the understanding of the term genocide. To avoid being caught up in semantics, this thesis bases its definition of genocide on the one in

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[6]   Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), p. xvii-xviii.

[7]   Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (New York: Verso, 1991), in Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development of Enterprise in Rwanda*, (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1998), p. 14.

the Geneva Convention of 1948. Reference is also made to the work of the leading scholars on the subject. Some articles of the Convention are worth citing.

According to Article I of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, "[G]enocide whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law."

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

- Killing members of the group

- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group

- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part

- Imposing measures intended to prevent births in the group

- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

According to Article III of the same convention, the following acts are punishable:

- Genocide

- Conspiracy to commit genocide

- Direct and public incitement to commit genocide

- Attempt to commit genocide

- Complicity in genocide

Individuals have also tried to define genocide and to expound on its

meaning. According to Raphael Lemkin, genocide is

> a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.[8]

Expounding on this definition, Lemkin observes,

> [G]enocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.[9]

Although it is not only the number of victims that determines whether a

crime is genocide or not, "the term would be trivialized if it were extended to

cover isolated hate crimes and racially motivated violence."[10] At the same time,

"even if only a few are killed or injured, the crime is genocide if the intent is to

destroy the whole group or part of that group."[11] The large number of the people

that were killed and the intent to exterminate the Tutsi were very clear in the

Rwandan genocide. The fact that the victims of the Rwandan genocide included

some Hutu did not alter the nature of the crime. However, it confused some

people. Examples of the calls to exterminate the Tutsi, the planning and

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[8]   Raphael Lemkin, "The Genocide Convention at Fifty," *Special Report* (Washington, D.C: Unite States Institute of Peace), Available [On Line] http://www.usip.org,[January 7, 1999], p. 2

[9]   ibid.

[10]   Ibid

[11]   ibid.

preparations for genocide are widely cited by a number of scholars.[12] Therefore, although genocide, and in particular the Rwandan genocide can be said to be a form of ethnic conflict, it differs from other ethnic conflicts in that its intent was the extermination of the Tutsi ethnic group for nothing other than the fact that they belonged to that ethnic group.

D.   THEORIES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

Before reviewing the theories of ethnic conflict, it is important to define what ethnic conflict is. According to Levinson, "ethnic conflict is violent conflict among groups who differ from one another in terms of culture, religion, physical features, or language [sic]." [13] This definition is misleading because not all ethnic conflicts are violent. As this chapter later shows, ethnic conflict is also not only about culture, religion, physical features, and language. It is Horowitz however, who provides a better definition of conflict. According to him, "a conflict is a struggle in which the aim is to gain objectives and simultaneously to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals."[14] This definition is important in two ways: it shows that conflict can take different forms, and that there is usually an objective in any conflict.

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[12] Refer to Gerald Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), and, Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance* (London, UK, African Rights, 1995).

[13] David Levinson, ed. , *Ethnic Relations: A Cross-Cultural Encyclopedia*, (Denver, Colorado: ABC-CLIO, 1994), p. 62.

[14] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 95.

1.   Modernization Theory

This theory of ethnic conflict is linked to the studies of tradition and modernization. It is divided into three variant schools of thought all of which link ethnic conflict to the modernization process.[15] Those in the first category view "ethnic conflict as a mere relic of an outmoded traditionalism doomed to be overtaken by the incursions of modernity."[16] After decolonization, many scholars especially those from the West and even some politicians from the Third World countries wrongly believed that ethnic politics would have no room in the politics of the newly independent and modern states. It was also widely believed that ethnic groups would quickly give way to nations and that nationalism would quickly replace ethnocentrism. On the contrary, Lipset observes, "there has been a remarkable resurgence of ethnic demands and conflict in the most modern parts of the world."[17] Also, in the Third World, ethnic conflict did not only take place in the rural areas that are strongly associated with traditionalism but it also took place in urban areas that are associated with modernization. There was another irony also: "The very elites who were thought to be leading their peoples away from ethnic affiliations were commonly found to be in the forefront

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[15] The three categories of modernization theories are drawn from Horowitz's book, *Ethnic groups in Conflict*, pp. 106-107.

[16] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 96.

[17] Seymour Martin Lipset, ed. , "Multiethnic Democracy," *The Encyclopedia of Democracy*, Washington, D.C: Congressional Quarterly, vol.3, 1995, p. 885.

of ethnic conflict."[18] They included civilians as well as the military. In Africa for instance, both groups made strong ethnic appeals in order to expand their constituencies and to gain more legitimacy.

A second category of the modernization school attributes ethnic conflict to "extraordinary persistence of traditional antipathies so strong that they can survive even the powerful solvent of modernization."[19] Those who subscribe to this theory use ancient hatreds to justify ethnic conflicts. The fact that ethnic conflict is sometimes manifested in those ethnic groups that encountered each other just recently, for instance during colonialism, discredits this explanation. Although some ethnic conflicts are of long duration, there are others that do not date back to the distant past. Nor is the intensity of ethnic conflict necessarily linked to the duration of ethnic animosity. However, this should not be misconstrued to mean that historical memory has no role at all in contemporary ethnic relations. The revival of the old memories can have a role in intensifying but not creating ethnic conflict.

Those in the third category of the modernization school "interpret ethnic conflict as an integral part - even a product - of the process of modernization itself."[20] Ethnicity is regarded as a by-product of modernization, just as pollution is regarded as a by-product of industrialization. According to this theory,

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[18] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 97.

[19] ibid. , pp. 97-8.

[20] ibid.

modernization produces new people and new wants. The people then compete with each other for the benefits of modernity. Bates for instance attributes the persistence of ethnic groups largely to "their capacity to extract goods and services from the modern sector and thereby satisfy the demands of their members for the components of modernity. [And] insofar as they provide these benefits to their members, they are able to gain their support and achieve their loyalty."[21] In short, modernity perpetuates ethnicity and contributes to ethnic conflict. Melson and Wolpe also expound on how modernity leads to ethnic conflict. "It is by making men 'more alike', in the sense of possessing the same wants, that modernization tends to promote conflict."[22]

If this is true, we would expect intra class conflicts to be more common. However, the ethnic conflicts that are commonly experienced cut across all the strata of the society. At the same time, although there is usually an uneven distribution of the benefits of modernization, no single ethnic group as a whole ever benefits from this distribution of resources, and rarely are other ethnic groups excluded completely from access to these benefits.

Modernization theories have other limitations. "[They] place most of their emphasis on modern elites, the modern stratification system, and the modern sector of developing societies in general [but] they tend to give insufficient

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[21] Robert Bates, "Ethnic Competition and Modernization in Contemporary Africa," *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 6, January 1974, in ibid. , p. 100.

[22] Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, "Modernization and the Politics of Communalism: A Theoretical Perspective," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 64, December 1970, in Horowitz, p. 100.

attention to the conflict motives of nonelites, whose stake in the benefit being distributed is tenuous at best."[23]

Although commonly used to explain ethnic conflict, modernization theories do not account for the distribution of the occurrences of ethnic conflicts in the world. According to these theories, more ethnic conflict would be expected in the more developed and modernized parts of the developing world. However, this is not the case. Moreover, although social mobilization or being well-off is a factor that is not entirely irrelevant to ethnic conflict, the number of socially mobilized people in a particular ethnic group is too low to account for an entire ethnic conflict. In particular, it does not explain why an entire ethnic group gets victimized by another. However, the adherents of this theory argue that "the elite in those areas, small though they may be, are disproportionately important [and that] it is their ambition that ignites the conflict."[24] However, this does not offer a persuasive explanation as to why the masses sometimes refuse to follow what the elite tell them. In general, primordial theories focus on masses, but do not explain when and where conflict occurs. Instrumental theories focus on elites but do not explain why masses respond to ethnic mobilization.

What motivates various categories of people in ethnic groups will become clearer when discussing the actors: the elite and the masses, and also the

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[23] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 100.

[24] ibid. , p. 104.

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resources. It is in these elements that conflict motivation can be partially explained.

2. Materialist Theory

This theory is linked to studies by the Structuralists. It is linked to modernization and also to the elite. It attributes ethnic conflict to the inability of the people to identify the basic cause of ethnic conflict; the exploitation by the ruling class. This inability, it is argued, leads to misdirected conflict between people with non- antagonistic contradictions. In short, ethnic conflict is regarded as an artificial ploy used by the ruling class to divert attention from the real issues or material exploitation.

Popularized mainly by the Marxists, this theory fails to answer some important questions regarding ethnic conflict. The study of ethnic conflicts has for instance revealed that ethnicity is stronger than class as a source of conflict.

> Ethnic affiliations generally seem to elicit more passionate loyalty than do class allegiances; and certainly there has been no marked trend in the developing world for class interests across ethnic lines to supersede ethnic ties.[25]

However, it must be mentioned that this assertion supports rather than undermines the view that upper classes stir up ethnic conflict so that people will not owe their loyalty to class allegiances and thus making them fail to realize that they are being economically exploited.

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[25] ibid. , pp. 105-6.

Materialists identify instrumental use of ethnic mobilization, but cannot explain why "false consciousness" of ethnicity is stronger than the real consciousness of class.

3.   Theory of Cultural Pluralism

This theory attributes ethnic conflict to differences and incompatibilities in cultures between ethnic groups. It portrays ethnic conflict as a conflict over institutions, values, and symbols. According to this theory, "it is the incompatibility of institutions and values among the groups that gives rise to the need for domination."[26] Because culture applies to the whole group rather than individuals, this theory is also not persuasive. In the first place, it lumps together the society as one entity and fails to recognize the different roles that classes or specific categories of people, for instance the elite, play in ethnic conflict. At the same time

> it does not explain why so much ethnic conflict occurs among the strata of the various ethnic groups that are culturally and socially most similar: the 'modern' elites that, in education and in occupational life, have typically engaged in the greatest amount of contact and interchange.[27]

Lastly, ethnic conflict in relatively culturally homogeneous societies such as in Rwanda has led some people to reconsider the role of culture in ethnic conflict.

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[26] ibid. , p. 137.

[27] ibid.

4.   Rationalist Perspective

Before discussing the Rationalists' view on ethnic conflict, we must remind ourselves of the Rationalists' general approach as put forward by Lichbach and Zuckerman:

> Rationalists begin with ... assumption about actors who act deliberately to maximize their advantage. [Their] analysis begins at the level of the individual and culminates in questions about collective actions, choices, and institutions.[28]

Hardin, a Rationalist, for instance argues that individuals identify with such groups [ethnic groups] because it is in their interest to do so."[29] This argument is based on the fact that if "group identification is not primordial but develops sociologically, there must be a large role for rational, self interest considerations."[30] On ethnic conflict Hardin further argues that individual "self interest is fundamentally important ... for group identification and for the group action that follows from such identification."[31] In so doing, Hardin equates individual self interest to group interest and explains ethnic violence as "merely a means to the protection of [peoples'] identification."[32] According to rationalists,

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[28] Zuckerman Alan S. , Lichback Irving Mark and *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. *6*.

[29] Russell Hardin, *One for All: The Logic Behind Group Conflict*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 70.

[30] ibid. , p. 21.

[31] ibid. , p. 14.

[32] ibid. , p. 9.

identification with a group is important because it enables one to achieve greater power or resources to be more specific.

Some people do not agree with this view partially because of what they term as irrational actions especially those that bring suffering to the people. However, Rationalists caution us against judging any action as irrational. They argue that "if you act from your best understanding, you are rational"[33] irrespective of the nature of the outcome. This teaches us that we must not always equate ignorance with irrationality.

The Rationalist perspective does not explain some things. For instance it does not explain why some people are racists, or why they go out of their way to exterminate people even when there are no clear material benefits, and when they are not physically threatened by those that they want to exterminate.

Since these theories reviewed above have some limitations, this thesis turns to an integrated theory that is applied in this thesis to explain the cause of the Rwandan genocide.

5.   Toward an Integrated Theory of Ethnic Conflict

The theory adopted here is an integrated one that borrows relevant ideas from the theories already discussed above. Only the cultural perspective is excluded in its entirety, since genocide clearly demonstrates that violent ethnic conflict can occur in culturally homogenous societies such as the one in Rwanda.

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[33] ibid.

This integrated theory emphasizes the role of elite as self interested actors whose interest is mainly the control of state power and the wealth and prestige that it accrues. Since the elite do not participate in ethnic conflict by themselves, this theory also looks at the masses. Unlike those who subscribe to the view that the masses are ignorant and unable to identify their interests, this theory argues that the masses are only relatively more ignorant than the elite since the latter are relatively better educated and more exposed to the modern world. The elite also have the ability to mislead and even coerce the masses since they control the mass media and the means of violence. Needless to say, they are the ones in leadership positions. However, this should not be misconstrued to mean that the masses do not have an interest in what concerns them. This theory argues that the masses are also rational actors and that they do not respond to elite calls without questioning them. This explains why the masses are selective in responding to elite appeals. This thesis further argues that although the elite and the masses may have different interests, the question of resources; material and physical security, is at the root all the same. It is the perception of the threat to these two resources that motivates both the elite and the masses to participate in ethnic conflict, and such perception need not be correct.

Since some people are motivated by hatred to exterminate a particular group of people, and since this usually involves a dehumanizing and demonizing ideology among other things, this thesis does not intend to go into the theories that explain why some people harbor such feelings against other people. Suffice

to state however, that irrational hatred exists. However, there are factors that aggravate this hatred and which explain why such people choose to exterminate other people at particular times. One of those factors is the threat to loss of power.

E.   COMMON FACTORS IN ETHNIC CONFLICT

1.   The Elite

Every society has elites and the nature of elites vary from one society to another. In Africa, the main focus of this thesis, the elite consist of those people who are mainly in the political or government leadership positions for instance, the politicians, the bureaucrats, and the military. The term also encompasses civil servants, professionals, entrepreneurs, clergy and sometimes, university students in various countries. Needless to say, this group has no clearly defined boundaries. For some people, the elite strictly refers to those people in the uppermost echelon of the society, the cream of the society, that has been successful especially in politics, wealth, and education. The term may sometimes also be said to refer strictly to the political class. Generally speaking, the elite is not a class in itself. However, by acknowledging that there are economic, social, and political elites, we end up with a unique category of people that is sometimes called a class. In this thesis, the word elite is used to refer mainly, but not solely, to the political class. The category excludes the masses or peasants. "Elite culture during the first decades of independence revolved around the close connection among people with high education, state power,

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and personal wealth."[34] It is therefore not surprising that the ambitions and actions of the elite in the countries that were formerly colonized are rarely divorced from the colonial education and colonial economy. The explanation about the role of the elite in ethnic conflict is based on the argument "that the elite have distinctive interests that relate to the benefits of modernity: good jobs, urban amenities, access to schools, travel, prestige."[35] Access to state power enables the elite to acquire these scarce resources. This factor is important in understanding ethnic conflict in general and in Africa in particular. Lawson reminds us that "at the heart of all ethnic conflicts is competition for scarce resources [and] ... that the distribution of such resources is controlled everywhere, but especially in Africa, by the state."[36] While discussing the role of the elite in ethnic conflict it is important to remind ourselves that the elite do not usually participate in ethnic conflict without the masses. The proportions of elite and masses that participate in ethnic conflicts vary. However, all ethnic conflicts in developing countries involve the participation of both the elite and the masses. This is why attributing ethnic conflict solely to elite motivation is insufficient. An explanation of ethnic conflict must specify the conditions which motivate the

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[34] Naomi Chazan, and others, op. cit. , p. 88.

[35] ibid.

[36] Letitia Lawson, "External Democracy Promotion in Africa: Another False Start?" *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, vol. 37, no. 1, March 1999, p. 16.

masses to respond to elite mobilization efforts, and therefore must go beyond the "ignorance" of the masses.

2. The Masses/Nonelites

This category includes all those people who are not members of the elite group. In contrast to the elite, they are relatively less educated or not educated at all, they generally lack access to state power, and are generally poor. In Africa, they comprise mainly the peasantry and the few proletariats in urban areas. It is often assumed that the masses are manipulated into ethnic conflicts by selfish and power-hungry elites. The assumption that the masses are ignorant is relative. The masses have less access to information and choose a strategy based partially on information supplied by mobilizing elite, but they balance the information against other information for instance such as the previous promises made by politicians. In Zimbabwe for instance, the masses recently refused to support Mugabe in a referendum because they did not believe him based on their experience that he would use his new constitutional powers to give them land. At the same time, ignorance must also be divorced from interests. Moreover, the indictor of ignorance commonly used is formal education which is in itself an elitist creation. Be that as it may be, this does not mean once again, that the peasants cannot identify their interests. Horowitz provides a good explanation as to why the masses participate in ethnic conflicts: "If elites pursue a policy of deflecting mass antagonisms onto other ethnic groups, such a policy must strike roots in mass sentiments, apprehensions, and

aspirations in order to succeed."[37] This explanation is very important because it is often wrongly assumed that the interests of the elite, especially those regarded to be negative, cannot coincide with those of the masses. Whenever they do, it is erroneously attributed to the ignorance of the masses and not both. For instance, when the elite incite the masses to kill members of another ethnic group, they do not just respond to such a call without considering the anticipated payoff. This partially explains why the masses will respond to some calls and not others.

3.   Resources

Attributing ethnic conflict to the actors: the elite and nonelites is not enough. At the center of many if not all ethnic conflicts are the resources. The competition for resources is usually more intense in those states that are highly centralized and economically underdeveloped. This is because there are few resources that are heavily controlled by the state. Apart form the state, there are other resources for instance, material resources such as land and water, that can also be a source of ethnic conflict. In general, the more scarce the resources are, the more intense the conflict is likely to be. Security is also a highly valuable resource that may be relatively scarce. Violent conflicts are not only about material resources but also about physical security. Conditions of security uncertainties can easily lead to offensive mobilization resulting in a more intense ethnic conflict. This is true when one group has been mobilized for the worst

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[37] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 105.

outcome and when it is deliberately denied the information about the real intentions of the opponent. As Rothchild puts it, "intense ethnic conflict originates from the fears of the communal groups about their future safety."[38] This is the situation that is referred to in international relations theory as the Security Dilemma. This dilemma is increased when one group finds itself with no security guarantees by the state, especially when the state is collapsing or has already collapsed.

F. FACTORS THAT MAKE ETHNIC CONFLICT MORE INTENSE

A number of scholars have studied and written about the structure of group relations in multi-ethnic societies. However, there is little literature on ranked ethnic systems. The relevance of the number of ethnic groups in ethnic conflict in a particular country has also received little attention and so has cohabitation. It is against this background that I discuss those factors: ranking, cohabitation, and dual ethnicity.

1. Ranked Ethnic Systems

To understand ranked ethnic systems, we must contrast them with the unranked systems. "In unranked systems, ... parallel ethnic groups coexist, each group internally stratified."[39] In the majority of cases these ethnic groups have been brought together within one country but continue to occupy their respective

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[38] Donald Rothchild, "Ethnic Bargaining and the Management of Intense Conflict," *International Negotiations*, vol. 2, 1997, p. 11.

[39] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 23.

territories. Since "they constitute incipient whole societies"[40], and since they have a parallel relationship with each other, they "act as if they were states in an independent international environment [and] they are concerned more with the politics of inclusion than exclusion."[41] According to Levinson, in an unranked situation, the ethnic groups are relatively equal in power or perceive themselves to be so."[42]

On the other hand, ranked ethnic groups are "vertically stratified and ascriptively defined components of a single society."[43] This partially explains why ranked groups usually occupy the same territory. It also explains why ranked relations are characterized by superordination and subordination. This does not mean, however, that all members of the superordinate group are of upper class standing. At the same time, this does not mean that some members of the surbordinate group cannot rise to the upper class. In short, ranked ethnic systems are not always rigid. Due to the vertical stratification mentioned above, "mobility opportunities [in ranked systems] are restricted by group identity."[44] Generally speaking, "in ranked situation, the ethnic groups in a nation are

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[40] ibid. , p. 31.

[41] ibid.

[42] Levinson, op. cit. , p. 63.

[43] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 23.

[44] ibid. , p. 22.

ordered in a hierarchy of power."[45] Since competition is heavily discouraged

among the members of ranked ethnic groups, the status quo in ethnic relations is

usually maintained and reinforced by an ideology or a myth designed by the

superordinates. As Horowitz notes, there are elements of reciprocity and

clientage that underpin the system."[46]

Ranked systems also differ from unranked systems in the nature of ethnic

conflict that characterize them.

> Ranked ethnic systems may posses more social cement than
> unranked at some stages of their development. But when the
> cement cracks in ranked systems, the edifice usually collapses:
> when ethnic hierarchies are undermined, they may undergo
> fundamental transformation.[47]

Conflict in ranked ethnic groups takes the form of class conflict because of the

coincidence of class and ethnicity. Ethnic ranking is a temporal phenomenon.

Ethnic groups that were previously ranked[48] may, however, live with the legacy of

ranking for some time. This legacy may play a big role in intensifying later ethnic

conflict, especially if it is politicized.

2.   Cohabitation

Unranked ethnic groups occupy respective territories in which they are

usually regionally discrete. However, there is a strong correlation between

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[45] Levinson, op. cit. , p. 63.

[46] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 28.

[47] Horowitz, op. cit. , p. 29.

[48] The term ethnic ranking in the Rwandan case study is used mainly to refer to political ranking.

ranking and cohabitation. "It seems evident that ranked subordination cannot long be sustained without a measure of spatial proximity to enforce it."[49] Although ranking goes with cohabitation, the latter is possible without ranking. Although he combines both the dual ethnicity and cohabitation, Mazurui points to the fact that cohabitation of different ethnic groups can intensify conflict. He argues that "the riskiest form of duality is that of ethnic differentiation without territorial differentiation."[50] Cohabitation is relevant to ethnic conflict in two ways.

Firstly, it can be a motivating factor in ethnic conflict since it allows the killers access to the land of the victim. This is especially so in peasant societies where land is valued more than other resources and privileges. This situation can be aggravated by scarcity of land in places with high population density and therefore high pressure on land resources.

Secondly, cohabitation is relevant to ethnic conflict because it brings the conflicting groups in direct contact. If violence breaks out among people that are living together, it produces more disastrous results since the perceived opponent or enemy is next door. However, this should not be misconstrued to mean that cohabitation is always disadvantageous. Where resources are not scarce and politicized, living together helps people to know each other and to establish

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[49] ibid.

[50] Ali Mazurui, "The African State as a Political Refugee," in David R. Smock and Chester A. Crocker, ed., *African Conflict Resolution: The U.S. Role in Peacemaking,* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1995), p. 14.

strong ties, and therefore can make them less vulnerable to elite ethnic mobilization.

3. Dual Ethnicity

The majority of multiethnic countries have many ethnic groups albeit of varying sizes. There are others, however, that have only two ethnic groups. At the same time, some countries have two major ethnic groups and others that are either very small, politically insignificant, and marginalized. The latter two cases are said to exhibit dual ethnicity or biethnicity. The number of ethnic groups in a country is associated with the nature of the ethnic conflict. Ali Mazurui for instance argues that "[T]he state in a dual society has different vulnerability from the state in a plural society."[51] This factor (dual ethnicity) is closely interlinked with other factors in particular ranking and cohabitation. Mazurui also accounts for the disadvantage of a dual society. He argues that "[it] endangers the state by having too little sociological differentiation for politics of compromise."[52] Unlike in multiethnic societies, there is little room for bargaining and formation of shifting coalitions and alliances between ethnic groups in a society with dual ethnicity.[53] This is even more so where one ethnic group has an overwhelming

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[51] ibid. , 14.

[52] ibid. , 13.

[53] Larry Diamond, *Class, Ethnicity and Democracy in Nigeria: The Failure of the First Republic,* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1988), p. 50. Larry Diamond shows that the conflict in Nigeria become violent only when the three parties are reduced to two by constant coalition formation between two of the three.

numerical advantage. In an attempt to exploit that advantage, the boundaries between the two groups is usually reinforced by the members of the larger group. Instead of the usual bargaining between ethnic groups as they compete for power, the elite in the bigger ethnic group tend to become preoccupied with ensuring that the group remains closed, intact, and loyal. This is usually done at the expense of the other ethnic group.

The chapter that follows examines the changes in the Rwandan history that laid the foundation for the most intense of ethnic conflict – genocide. The development and/or the state of resources, cohabitation, dual ethnicity, and ethnic ranking up to the time the genocide took place is also discussed.

III. BACKGROUND TO THE 1994 RWANDAN GENOCIDE

A. INTRODUCTION

Having developed an integrated theory of ethnic conflict, I now turn to an initial assessment of that theory's validity in the case of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Rather than reciting the history of Rwanda, this thesis and this chapter in particular, places much emphasis on the analysis of key factors that explain ethnic conflict. It analyzes these factors from a historical perspective. In general, this chapter addresses mainly the construction of ethnicity in Rwanda, how this ethnicity was politicized and institutionalized into ranked, rigid, and polarized ethnic groups, and how this finally led to violent ethnic conflict.

On precolonial Rwanda, this chapter analyses the social relations among the Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa. In particular, it focuses on how the three groups related to each other and to the state. The thesis argues that although there were no ethnic groups in precolonial Rwanda, and although the three groups (the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) lived in harmony and were by no means ranked, the precolonial society contained some elements that were later to be exploited by the colonialists.

On colonial Rwanda, this chapter discusses the role of colonialism in shaping group consciousness and in ethnic ranking. It discusses how the three groups came to be divided into distinct, rigid, ranked, and institutionalized identities. In short, it discusses the mechanism through which colonialism

changed the social relations and how this later led to ethnic conflict. While discussing these factors, this thesis pays particular attention to the distinct roles and interests of elites and masses.

On postcolonial Rwanda, this chapter discusses the further politicization and institutionalization of ethnicity, the revival of the legacy of the history of ethnic ranking by the political elites. It also discusses the centralization of the state, a factor that later aided elite mobilization and the execution of genocide. Dual ethnicity and the question of resources, in particular land and impunity, are also briefly highlighted.

B.   PRECOLONIAL RWANDA

Before looking at Rwanda's social structure, it is important to explain the origin and expansion of the Rwanda kingdom. The origin of the kingdom is as controversial as the origin of the Tutsi to the extent that the two have become almost synonymous. On the origin of Tutsi, scholars range along a spectrum from those who see the Tutsi as a conquering racially distinct group, to those who see them as an integral part of an historically homogeneous Rwandese society.

1.   Precolonial Society

Driven by the assumption that heterogeneity in a society is the source of conflict, and that different ethnic groups migrated from different places, a number of scholars, especially historians and anthropologists, concentrate on establishing the ancestral roots of the three groups in spite of the fact that they

speak the same language, share the same culture, have joint clans (for instance, *abasinga, abega,* abagesera, and *abacyaba*[54]) and live side by side in the same territory.

Not only have scholars failed to establish the origin of the Tutsi but also the time at which they came to Rwanda. They have also been at pains to account for the similarities among the Rwandese. The fact that Rwanda's precolonial history is devoid of conflict among the Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa also presents some challenges to those interested in understanding Rwanda's recent ethnic conflict.

Something should also be mentioned about the differences[55] in physical features among the Rwandese. These differences actually exist and the Rwandese themselves talk about them.

> In reality, there are people who fit the stereotypical 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' physical types. But for many Rwandese it is not possible to determine ethnicity on the basis of physical appearance alone.[56]

This is reinforced by Chretien: "Rwandese tell an individual's group by his or her lineage, not by his height or straightness of the nose."[57] One cannot rule out that the Tutsi model that the colonialists adopted, and which the Rwandese

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[54] Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa share not less than seventeen clans.

[55] The differences talked about include mainly height and the shape of nose.

[56] Rakiya Omaar and Alex de Waal, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance,* (London, UK: African Rights, 1995), p. 5.

[57] Jean Pierre Chretien, "Hutu et Tutsi au Burundi," in ibid. , p. 5.

themselves talk about, was most probably that of the Tutsi aristocrats: the king, the queen, the prince, the princess, and so on.

The first Europeans who came to Rwanda were struck by the elaborate political and administrative organization of the Rwandan kingdom. Influenced by racial ideologies, "they found it unbelievable, to use Lemarchand's words, how the Tutsi minority managed to extend hegemony over the mass of the Hutu peasants."[58] They then quickly concluded that only the Hutu and Twa were indigenous, and that the Tutsi must have migrated from a more "advanced" region. Writing about the precolonial Rwandan state, Mamdani observes: "Caught up by the notion that the differences and conflicts in human society are the result of racial differences, early European explorers and administrators came up with the 'Hamitic hypothesis': that the Batutsi were a superior non-Bantu race who had come from the direction of Ethiopia and conquered indigenous agriculturists (Bahutu) and forest dwellers (Batwa).[59] For the first time, the Tutsi were linked with Semitic origin. This was the first written version of the origin of the Tutsi. This hypothesis was later popularized by an intellectual Tutsi priest, Alexis Kagame. This hypothesis is strongly at parallel odds with the second version advanced by Walter Rodney in his book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

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[58] Rene Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, (New York, U.S.A: Praeger Publishers, Inc. , 1970), p. 15.

[59] Mahmood Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda, "*New Left Review*, vol. 216, 1996, p. 7.

Rejecting the 'Hamitic myth', that Tutsi are a distinct group that migrated from Ethiopia, Walter Rodney offers a dietary explanation of physical differences among Rwandese: Tutsi pastralists have a higher protein diet, while Hutu agriculturists depend much more on carbohydrates.[60] This dietary explanation also lacks credibility among those who are familiar with some elementary genetics. The protein-rich milk can only contribute to one's phenotype but cannot be a part of a person's genotype. In short it has nothing to do with hereditary features.

The third version of the origin of the Tutsi is spearheaded by scholars like Lemarchand. He claims that the Tutsi migrated from outside Rwanda and conquered the Hutu and Twa in Rwanda and established a kingdom there.[61] There are also those with a fourth version that is slightly different from the third one. The late Professor Samwiri Karugire of Uganda for instance claimed that "the pastralists (Tutsi) migrated from outside Rwanda, but argued that their relations with agriculturists were peaceful and symbiotic."[62] There are those with a fifth version which include scholars like Mamdani. According to him, "the migration of the Tutsi into the Great Lakes Region was peaceful and its context

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[60] Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (Washington, D.C: Howard University Press, 1982), p. 126.

[61] Rene Lemarchand, op. cit. , p. 11.

[62] Samwiri Karugire, in Mahmood Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda, p. 6.

was peaceful coexistence between pastoralists and agriculturists."[63]   Unlike Karugire, however, Mamdani rejects the fact that the relations between the Tutsi, Hutu and Twa were symbiotic.[64]   He argues that the relationship between the Hutu and Tutsi was characterized by vassalage.

Unless further research comes up with more evidence on the origin of the Tutsi, one cannot avoid concluding that the three ethnic groups resulted from the differentiation of a single group. It is also possible that some Tutsi aristocrats remained with slightly different features mainly because of selective marriages. This is a fact that is well known in the history of Rwanda and in the history of other societies that had aristocratic classes. Moreover, it is not whether a society was initially one people or more that solely accounts for the similarities or differences in their physical features. Nor is it the sole factor that accounts for the presence or the absence of ethnic conflict. This does not mean also that Rwandese should be looked at as one people, and their diversity ignored. However, when conclusions are randomly and erroneously made, they can sharpen the differences that already exist in a society especially if they are made for that purpose.

Regardless of the historical origin of the distinctions of the three groups, it seems clear that in the early 19th century, there was a functioning integrated

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[63]   Mamdani, op. cit. , p. 10.

[64]   Mahmood Mamdani, "When does a settler become a native." The Electronic Mail and Guardian Available [On Line]<http://www.mg.co.za/news/> [26 May 1998], p. 6.

society in the Rwandan kingdom. Rwanda was a developing nation-state. Prunier notes that "in precolonial Rwanda, the central court of the initial kingdom is alleged to have been in Buganza around present day Lake Muhazi."[65] For their part Omaar and Waal note that "what is not contested is the fact that the origin of the kingdom is linked to a Tutsi clan, the *Nyiginya*, that achieved political dominance in central Rwanda."[66] The kingdom expanded by conquering and assimilating other people. Ad' Arinoff for instance claims that "no less than seven expeditions were launched against the Tutsi chiefs of Gisaka ... before they were finally brought to heel by Rwogera's warriors."[67] The fact that expansion involved war at all times is a factor that is challenged by some scholars. Lemarchand for instance claims that cattle was used as a lever of economic power to subdue the Hutu and Twa.[68]

2. The Precolonial State and the Elements of Future Ethnic Groups and Ranking

It is difficult to understand Rwanda's social structure and how it later came to change with the intrusion of colonialism without understanding the political and administrative organization of the precolonial state, and its socio-economic organization. It is these two organizations that the colonialists later exploited to

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[65] Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 18.

[66] Omaar and Wall, op. cit. , p. 2.

[67] Ad'Arnoff, "Origines de Clans Hamites du Rwanda," vol. v, 1951, in Rene Lemarchand, op. cit. , p. 21.

[68] Lemarchand, op. cit. , p. 19.

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differentiate Rwandese people into ethnic groups and to create a ranked ethnic system.

a. Political and Administrative Organization

Catharine Newbury summarizes Rwanda's political authority during pre-colonial times: "A complex hierarchy of political authorities with overlapping and competing jurisdictions."[69] Topmost on the hierarchy was the king or *Mwami*. Describing the hierarchy, Louis observes: "Administratively, below the Mwami was a council of ministers, *batware b'intebe*."[70] These were the administrative chiefs in charge of the provinces. The king also ruled through three categories of chiefs that resided in the provinces: the chief responsible for the administration of agricultural lands (*umutware w'ubutaka*); the chief responsible for the supervision of grazing lands and cattle (*umutware w'umukenke*); and the chief responsible for the recruitment of the king's army (*umutware w'ingabo*).

The chief in charge of pastures ruled over grazing lands while that of land holdings was responsible for attributing land and agricultural products. The military chief was responsible for the recruitment of the king's army. Louis further observes, "the chiefs were bureaucrats in the sense that they did not claim their position by right of inheritance or by virtue of any prior connection with

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[69] Catharine Newbury, "Colonialism, Ethnicity, and Rural Political Protest: Rwanda and Zanzibar in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics*, vol.3, no. 15, 1983, p. 258.

[70] William Roger Louis, *Rwanda-Urundi:1884-1919*, (Clarendon: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 110.

the area to which they were appointed, but from the Mwami's (king's) will."[71] This was important because it enabled the king to be under the effective control of the kingdom by having a highly centralized administration. Few people would dare challenge the king's representative not only because the people believed in the reinforcing mythology of the time, but also because it meant death.

Not all the provinces however, had all three categories of chiefs. A predominantly agricultural province would for instance have a chief in charge of agricultural land while a predominantly cattle-raring province would have a chief responsible for grazing lands and cattle. In most cases, the chiefs responsible for grazing lands and cattle, and for the recruitment of soldiers were Tutsi while those responsible for agricultural lands were Hutu. There were also cases in which one type of chief held more than one post. The same chief could be in charge of both the grazing land and the military for instance. However, as Louis notes, "obligations were not usually to the same person."[72] Beneath the three categories of chiefs who resided in provinces were the subchiefs who were in charge of districts.

The above system of political organization and political authority had some advantages. The specialization of duties of the chiefs ensured some

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[71] ibid.

[72] ibid. , p. 111.

level of efficiency especially in the collection of taxes.[73] The existence of the above royal appointees also checked the powers of the administrative chiefs. At the same time, the three chiefs also checked each other as they competed for loyalty from the king. However, as this chapter later shows, this arrangement that ensured centralized loyalty to the king could not survive under colonial rule.

In order to ensure that the authority of the monarchy was not challenged, the state employed various institutions; including the military and ideological institutions. There was a powerful and loyal standing army with centralized military organization. For security purposes and for purposes of maintaining loyalty within the army, every king raised his army from among the members of his peers as the old army was disbanded with the departing king. There was a military training school known as *Itorero*. It offered a number of disciplines on top of military training: administration, history, poetry, and etiquette, to mention a few examples. This school produced the elite. The main school, *Itorero rikuru*, was in the central court while subsidiary schools such as the *Amatorero mato*, were found in different provinces. "Although predominantly Tutsi, the Hutu and Twa formed the pre-colonial Rwandan army."[74] In Rwanda, "war was waged for three purposes: defending the kingdom against external

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[73] Different forms of taxes were collected by the chiefs. The chiefs in charge of land for instance collected agricultural produce to feed the army for instance. The chief in charge of pasture lands also collected cattle for the same purpose. The chiefs also received other items such as beer from the masses.

[74] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 14.

enemies, extending the kingdom by conquest, and stealing cattle from neighboring non-Rwandese tribes."[75]

In addition to the military, there were ideological institutions that supported and strengthened the state. One of those institutions was the *Ubwiru*. "*Ubwiru* was the ritual code of the monarchy, and the guardians of the code, the *Abiru*, were its sole authoritative interpreters. "[The code] enshrined the testament of the departing king and the choice of his successor."[76] The *Abiru* were comparable to the constitutional court. Characterized by obscurities, the *Ubwiru* played a very important role in the myth that surrounded the king and his power. As Newbury notes, "the king's status was enhanced and his powers reinforced by the elaboration of a royal ideology portraying the king as a glorified being possessing strong ritual powers."[77] The heir to the king was for instance alleged to have been born with grains in his palms. Apart from the Abiru, no other person was supposed to confirm or to deny this myth.

The kingship institution was also kept live by the institution of *Ubucurabwenge*. "*Ubucurabwenge* was a collection of traditions which preserved the genealogy of the *bami* (kings)"[78] This body was later useful in furnishing

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[75] ibid.

[76] Lemarchand, op. cit. , p. 32.

[77] Newbury, op. cit. , p. 258.

[78] Lemarchand, op. cit. , p. 32.

people with information about the kings of pre-colonial Rwanda since Rwandans had no alphabet.

Another institution that enhanced the status of the king was *Ubusizi* or poetry." The *Abasizi* were the official bards who sought to reenact the story of the monarchy in a supernatural context; one in which the Rwandan kings were inevitably cast in the mold of supermen."[79] This is reinforced by Gourevich: "The *Mwami* (king) himself was revered as a divinity, absolute and infallible. He was regarded as a personal embodiment of Rwanda."[80] For a long time, the population accepted this mythology. This served to regulate and maintain the country's political order and stability.

b. Socio-economic Organization: The Clientage System and Social Mobility

Although the Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa were associated with economic or occupational activities, Newbury observes that "these distinctions were not rigid."[81] These social categories were also defined in relation to the state by the existing system of patronage. The *Ubuhake* and *Ubukonde* were the two main systems of patronage in Rwanda. In both systems, the patrons were also landlords.

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[79] ibid.

[80] Philip Gourevich, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed with our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, (New York: Farrar Straus, 1996), p. 49.

[81] Newbury, op. cit. , p. 257.

Ubukonde, the clientage system based on land, was predominant in areas such as the north and northwest of the country that were predominantly settled by cultivators (Hutu). The patrons (abakonde) who were all Hutu, gave land to the tenants (abagererwa) who in turn gave a specified percentage of their agricultural produce to their patrons.

The Ubuhake, the clientage system based on cattle was more common in areas that were predominantly pastoral, for instance, in the central, south, and eastern parts of Rwanda. It was more dominant than the Ubukonde because of its link with the kingship or the state power and because of the value that was accorded to the cow. The relationship between the patron (shebuja) and the client (umugaragu) was centered on the cow which was an important symbol of wealth in Rwanda at that time.[82] As Tuttle observes, "Ubuhake bound people with different social status in relations of mutual obligations."[83] The client received commodities such as cattle, milk, and pasture land from the patron as well as protection.

In return for the commodities and protection provided by the patron, the client provided services such as looking after the patron's cattle for instance. The client also owed loyalty to his patron. In general, the clients were proud of identifying with their patrons. Needless to say, not all patrons were popular with

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[82] The cow also had more economic value than agricultural products. Also agricultural products rot over time while cows reproduce better store of value.

[83] Tuttle in Mahmood Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda," New Left Review, vol. 216, 1996, p. 7.

their clients. Apart from the king, many Rwandese adults including the chiefs, were clients or subjects of some patron, usually the king. In short, a patron could be a client of some bigger patron.

The exchange of commodities and services between the patron and the client was one aspect of the Ubuhake clientage system. The other aspect involved mobility among the Rwandan society. "In precolonial Rwanda, a Hutu who was able to accumulate cattle would become a Tutsi by rising through a socioeconomic hierarchy called *kwihutura*"[84] which literally meant shedding 'Hutuness'. Conversely, "a Tutsi family that fell on hard times and lost all its cattle might come to be regarded as 'Hutu' over time. Thus, Hutu and Tutsi identity was not defined only by birth. Nor were all Tutsi wealthy and powerful."[85] As for the Twa one can argue, albeit without any evidence but logically, that since they were the lowest in the social hierarchy, they could only rise through the rank of Hutu and then become Tutsi through the same phenomenon of *kwihutura*. Whether this happened or not is not very clear. However, what is indisputable is the fact that the king sometimes used his unlimited powers to admit Hutu to the Tutsi social group. There are some Tutsi in Rwanda who still identify proudly with this group. The Twa who did not rise in the hierarchy were also integrated into the society. They made pottery in exchange for commodities

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[84] Mahmood Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda," vol. 216, 1996, p. 10.

[85] ibid.

such as food and milk. However, some preferred to live an independent life in and around forests as hunters and gatherers.

Although the labels Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa existed before the coming of the colonialists, they carried little weight. Before colonialism, Rwandese identified themselves by their clans, which cut across the three groups. Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa consciousness had not yet developed. The three groups were yet to become ethnic groups. Intermarriages and extramarital relationships also bridged these groups as did the exchange of commodities and services. Newbury notes that "the three groups lived in harmony. Even though there were ethnic [sic] differences, the various groups participated in extensive symbiotic economic relations before the advent of colonial rule."[86]

It is important to note that all three groups supported their country during war and peace. Prunier observes: "The Tutsi were not the only ones to fight. All men were part of Intore (fighting regiments)."[87] There were also Tutsi as well as Hutu chiefs and sub chiefs. However, Tutsi chiefs were more common in the higher ranks. Mamdani notes for instance that "in the lower ranks of the administrative hierarchy, non-Batutsi functionaries were more common."[88]

The Ubuhake system and kwihutura in particular contained some elements that the colonialists later exploited. The mobility factor was positive as

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[86] Newbury, op. cit., p. 254.

[87] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 14.

[88] Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda," p. 12.

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it allowed a Hutu to become a Tutsi. Being a Tutsi was a privilege given to a wealthy Hutu and some Twa who became 'Tutsified'. However, the Tutsi label did not only stand for the wealthy people since there were poor as well as rich Tutsi just like there were poor and rich Hutu. It was not automatic for a rich Hutu to become a Tutsi. After all, there was no defined number of cows that one had to acquire in order for him to become a Tutsi. Likewise, a Tutsi who became poor could not suddenly drop down to a Hutu category. Also, associating the loss of Tutsi status to being a Hutu defies the logic of talking about rich Hutu.

As far as political status was concerned, both Tutsi and Hutu could become members of the political class except that no Hutu could become a King. At the same time, not every Tutsi could become a king or even a queen. Both the king and the queen had to come from particular clans and they had to be Tutsi.[89] This distinction between monarchical class and Tutsi has been under recognized by a number of scholars. As for the economic status of the two groups, both the Hutu and Tutsi could acquire high economic status. However, this would change some Hutu into Tutsi who would henceforth cease to be referred to as Hutu. In terms of social status, the Tutsi were generally considered to be of higher status than the Hutu. In general however, although the identifies of the precolonial elites generally overlapped, the majority of the elite were graduates of Itorero, the school that was reserved for the select few especially the chiefs, subchiefs and other notables.

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[89] Although the King was always Tutsi, he claimed to be above those categories.

It is in the precolonial period that being a Tutsi started to be associated with high status and political power. However, this should not be misconstrued to mean that all Tutsi were powerful and wealthy. Being a Tutsi did not for instance guarantee a person a place in the political class. Nor was it a guarantee of becoming wealthy. "But it is significant that those who were powerful and very wealthy were [generally] Tutsi."[90]

The masses were clients either under the Ubuhake or Ubukonde clientage systems. Most *bagaragu* (clients under cattle clientship) were Tutsi while most *bagererwa* (clients under land clientship) were Hutu. However, as already indicated, they had a lot in common. "Various institutions reinforced social cohesion and cut across the group divide (*kubandwa, kunywana*, and so on)."[91] Kubandwa was a spirit possession cult while "Kunywana was a blood pact ritual which could bind together people of very different social origins. The *Mwami* (king) himself could have Abatwa abanywa*ni (blood brothers).*[92] In terms of relationship between the elite and the masses at that time, "it was a center versus periphery affair and not one of Tutsi versus Hutu."[93]

There were two major resources in precolonial Rwanda: cattle and land. These two resources were closely interlinked since those who had the

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[90] Newbury, op. cit. , p. 264.

[91] Gerard Prunier, "The Rwandan Patriotic Army", in Christopher Clapham, ed., *African Guerrillas*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), p. 120.

[92] Gerard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide*, p. 34.

[93] ibid. p. 21.

largest number of cattle also had to control the most land. This is reinforced by Newbury's argument: "Although cattle and Ubuhake (cattle clientship) were important, ... land was even more crucial in structuring rural class relations."[94] In precolonial Rwanda, a big chief could give and dispossess land and cattle. However, he was not immune from being subjected to such injustices by the king, to whom all the land and cattle ultimately belonged. In areas that were predominantly agricultural, for instance in the north and northwest, anyone who cleared new areas would have autonomous rights over that land without being sanctioned by any political authority. However, this was later altered by the consolidation of the kingdom especially during colonialism.

C.   COLONIAL RWANDA

1.   The Impact of Colonialism on Ethnicity and Ranking

While discussing the impact of colonialism on ethnic construction, ranking, and dual ethnicity, we should remind ourselves about the discussion in Chapter II: "Ethnic groups are not primordial categories but groups that become self-conscious communities as a result of social and political changes."[95] It is against this observation that the impact of colonialism must be understood. Newbury further reminds us that "stratification [not into ethnic groups] was not a European

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[94] Newbury, op. cit. , p. 263.

[95] ibid. , p. 254.

import."[96]   However, it only became a basis of conflict under colonial manipulation. German rule (1895-1916), the first colonial rule in Rwanda, had little impact since it was short lived and indirect. However, it helped to bring some parts of present day Rwanda under the effective control of the royal power. It also introduced kiswahili[97] and coffee production in Rwanda. After the Germans were defeated during the First World War, Rwanda was given to Belgium by the League of Nations. The Belgians ruled Rwanda from 1916 to 1962. They found a functioning centralized political system in Rwanda, and established a system of "indirect rule" through the existing kingdom. According to Mamdani, "they relied heavily on the monarchy to collect taxes, recruit labor, and maintain social order."[98] In short, they worked through the chiefs and subchiefs, the majority of whom were Tutsi.

Not satisfied with the existing system, however, the Belgian colonialists, guided by racial theories, promoted Tutsi superiority. Jean Paul Harroy, the Minister in charge of colonies, wrote back to his government:

> Gifted with a vivacious intelligence, the Tutsi displays a refinement of feelings which is rare among primitive people. He is a natural borne leader, capable of extreme self-control and of calculated good will.[99]

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[96] ibid. , p. 270.

[97] Kiswahili is a hybrid of the Bantu language and Arabic. It was being used in former Tanganyika and the coastal areas. Tanganyika was initially a Germany colony.

[98] Mahmood Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda," p. 10.

[99] Jean P. Harroy, Le Rwanda, de la Feodalite a Democratie (1955-1962), (Brussels: Hayez), 1984, in Gerard Prunier, The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide, p. 16.

This racist ideology was quickly put into practice. "[M]any already existing Hutu chiefs were fired and replaced by Tutsi ones."[100] Moreover, as Mamdani observes,

> "Rwanda was distinctive. While most colonies were organized as polyglot formations – with central civil authorities and a constellation of district based customary authorities each with a distinct ethnic identity – in Rwanda, district authorities did not correspond to ethnic powers."[101]

Although this would have been difficult in areas where 'ethnic' groups were intermixed, this factor was not observed even in the areas such as the Northwest where there were few Tutsi. It was not unusual for a chief to be appointed as a leader of a district about which he knew little and in which he was regarded as an outsider but nonetheless a representative of the royal court and the colonial government. Although this started during the precolonial period, it intensified during colonialism. According to Newbury, "Tutsi chiefs sent by the royal court to administer in the north and northwest encountered recurrent resistance."[102]

Some of the problems attributed to colonialism were also based on favoring one group over another in other fields such as education. During colonialism, the Hutu were systematically excluded from education. According to Gourevich, "the catholic schools, which dominated the colonial education

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[100] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 26.

[101] Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda," p. 14.

[102] Newbury, op. cit. , p. 267.

system, practiced open discrimination in favor of the Tutsi."[103] It is interesting to note however, that some Tutsi chiefs and subchiefs were at first skeptical about colonial education. In order for them to appease the colonialists, they sent the children of their Hutu clients to school rather than their own children. However, this was more of an exception than a rule. This discrimination together with other factors such as the racial theory, served to sharpen group consciousness especially among the Hutu. These factors also promoted a feeling of superiority among the Tutsi especially the Tutsi elite, and feelings of inferiority among the Hutu. As Prunier puts it, "it ended by inflating the Tutsi cultural ego inordinately and crushing Hutu feelings until they coalesced into an aggressively resentful inferiority complex."[104]

The whole process of ethnic construction was institutionalized by the issuance of identity cards. In spite of the racial theories based on the differences in the anthropological features, and in spite of the Belgians having gone to the great length of measuring hair samples, body heights, sizes, cranial masses, shapes of lips and noses, and linguistic differentiation, "during the 1933-4 census, [they] were obliged to use the ownership of cows as the key criteria for determining to which group an individual belonged.

> Those with ten or more cows were Tutsi — along with all their
> descendants in the male line — and those with less were Hutu.

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[103] Gourevich, op. cit. , p. 57.

[104] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 9.

Those 'recognized as Twa' at the time of census were given the status Twa.[105]

In so doing, social mobility was effectively halted and closed, and ethnic groups rigidly and artificially constructed. The ranking of the three groups and in particular of the Hutu and Tutsi was accomplished. It was reinforced by the superiority and inferiority among the two groups: the Tutsi and Hutu respectively. As Gourevich puts it, the identity cards made it virtually impossible for the Hutus to become Tutsis and permitted the Belgians to perfect the administration of an apartheid system rooted in the myth of Tutsi superiority.[106] In short, the identification cards served to divide and to conquer the Rwandese society that might have appeared too united for the colonialists.

Centralization of political power was also an important factor in ethnic construction and in ethnic ranking. Not only were some parts of the country brought under the control of the monarchy, but the political and administrative organization was altered during colonialism. "In 1929 the three positions [of chief] were fused into one which was almost always given to a Tutsi"[107] who was strongly backed by the colonial administration. This made the new political and administrative arrangement more effective in satisfying the demands of the colonial economy through heavy taxation and efficient tax collection, and also

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[105] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , pp. 8-9.

[106] Gourevich, op. cit. , p. 57.

[107] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 27.

through forced labor which was offered for many hours. In so doing, centralization made the system more exploitative and oppressive. Combined with the indirect rule, this system portrayed the Tutsi colonial agents as the exploiters and oppressors. This went hand in hand with the restructuring of the old provinces, a factor that further undermined the traditional authority in favor of the colonial authority.

It was the introduction of the colonial economy and its attendant policies that played an even bigger role in the development of ethnic consciousness. The Belgians needed raw materials such as coffee and minerals. People had to grow coffee, work in the mines, construct roads, plant trees, and so on. Most of these activities were not popular among the Rwandese. To ensure that they were done, the colonialists introduced monetary tax. The most common ways of getting cash was through selling 'cash crops' such as coffee, working in mines, and working for the colonial administration. However, the incentives that were tied to the monetary economy were not enough.

To exploit the Rwandan resources fully, different means, including coercion were used. The Belgian colonialists introduced *shiku* (forced cultivation of coffee and other crops), *uburetwa* (forced labor), and *kiboko*[108] (eight-stroke caning). The strokes were administered by the Tutsi chiefs who in most cases would have had the same punishment from the colonial master. These brutal

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[108] Kiboko is a kiswahili word meaning hippopotamus. The canes were made from the tail of the hippopotamus.

policies drove a wedge between the Hutu and Tutsi. In reality however, they affected the Hutu more than the Tutsi.

> Nothing so vividly defined the divide as the Belgian regime of forced labor, which required armies of Hutu to toil *en masse* as plantation chattel, on road construction, and in forestry crews, and placed Tutsi over them as taskmasters.[109]

Apart from *kiboko*, the peasants were also left with very little time to work for themselves as they were very heavily engaged in activities that benefited the colonialists. According to Prunier, "these various activities could swallow up to 50-60% of a man's time."[110] It is these inhuman and exploitative policies, that resulted in the first wave of refugees from Rwanda. "Hundreds of thousands of Hutu and impoverished rural Tutsi fled north to Uganda and west to the Congo to seek their fortunes as itinerant agricultural laborers."[111] In spite of these factors, however, the relationship between the Hutu and Tutsi remained fairly good at the mass level. "Most Hutu and Tutsi maintained fairly cordial relations; intermarriages went ahead, and the fortunes of the 'petit Tutsis' in the hills remained quite indistinguishable from those of their Hutu neighbors."[112]

However, at the level of the elite, colonial policies were already making fundamental transformations. There were generally four categories of elite in Rwanda by this time. Firstly, there was a category of Tutsi elites who were in

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[109] Gourevich, op. cit. , p. 57.

[110] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 35.

[111] Gourevich, op. cit. , p. 57.

[112] ibid.

political positions and who were relatively wealthy. They included the king, the chiefs, and the subchiefs. They also included the court notables (*abagaragu b'ibwami bakuru*) who were kept by the monarchy. Unlike the precolonial political elite, these neo-traditional elites had "lost much of their autonomy; but through their dependency on the European colonial authority, they obtained new and more effective forms of superiority vis-à-vis the population they ruled."[113] Needless to say, they were very few. "They constituted highly privileged minorities distinct from the rest of the population and favored by European colonial policy."[114] This was especially so after the colonial administrative reform in which the Hutu chiefs were replaced with Tutsi chiefs.

Colonialism produced a second type of elite; the beneficiaries of the colonial education which was almost exclusively controlled by the catholic church. An educated class, the *evolue*, consisting of clerks, medical assistants, agriculture extension workers, and chiefs, eager to serve the colonial state, emerged. As Omaar and Waal note, "A new generation of Tutsi sought wealth and power less in the traditional privileges of *ubuhake* than in authority of holding a position in a state bureaucracy."[115] This was because the locus of power had shifted.

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[113] Newbury, op. cit. , p. 254.

[114] ibid. , p. 253.

[115] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , p. 10.

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It was partially because of the political awakening of this newly created Tutsi elite in the 1950s, that the colonialists decided to create a third type of elite, the Hutu counter elite. "Better educated than the Hutu and exercising a quasi-monopoly over the native clerical positions in the colonial administration, the Tutsi of the exalted lineage had been the first to pick up on the new ideas of racial equality, colonial political devolution and possible self government."[116] As the anti-colonial movements in Africa demanded independence, both the church and colonial administration became wary of the Tutsi elite whom they had been nurturing since the inception of colonialism.

It is because of the above reasons that colonialists made a drastic turn and started supporting the Hutu in raising a Hutu elite that would counter the Tutsi elite. According to Prunier, this was brought about by "the combination of changes in white clerical sympathies, struggle for the control of the Rwandese church and increasing challenges of the colonial order by the Tutsi elite."[117] There was also pressure from the United Nations Trusteeship Council to prepare grounds for Rwandan independence.

Rwanda's politics was also influenced by ethnic politics in Belgium. Gourevich reminds us that "Belgium itself was a nation divided along 'ethnic' lines, in which the Francophone Walloon minority had for centuries dominated

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[116] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 43.

[117] ibid. , p. 44.

the Flemish majority."[118] After the Second World War when the Flemish had gained power, the Flemish priests replaced the Walloon priests in Rwanda. These [Flemish] priests "identified with the Hutus and encouraged their aspirations for political change."[119] This is how Rwanda's first president, Gregoire Kayibanda, for instance, became closely associated with both the Catholic Church and the colonial administration. The political changes that were going on in Belgium accounted for the drastic changes in the Belgian colonial policies in Rwanda.

Needless to say, there was a fourth category of elite. These were the colonial administrators who included some military officers. This category also included the foreign catholic priests some of whom were not necessarily Belgians. These powerful elite stayed in the background, leaving the Tutsi chiefs and their close agents to appear as if they were the ones in control. This is how the exploitative and oppressive policies introduced by the Belgian colonialists came to be attributed not to the Tutsi elite alone, but to all the Tutsi. According to Newbury, "Tutsi came to be associated with arbitrary power, and Hutu with powerlessness. This collective subordination undermined existing clan ties, and created a new sense of pan – Hutu identity."[120]

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[118] Gourevich, op. cit. , p. 58.

[119] ibid.

[120] Newbury, op. cit. , p. 161.

During colonialism, the Hutu and Tutsi became politically ranked. The Hutu considered themselves relatively powerless or at least or at least perceived themselves to be so.

2. The 1959 'Hutu Revolution'

The first ethnic conflict took place in Rwanda in 1959, as decolonization approached. The Belgians in collaboration with the Catholic Church identified a reliable agent, Gregoire Kayibanda, a Hutu and graduate from the Nyakibanda Seminary who also served as the chief editor of L'Ami, a catholic journal, and Kinyamateka, a catholic newspaper. He was also the private secretary to Mgr. Perraaudin, a Swiss vicar apostolic of Rwanda who was well known for being anti-Tutsi. The catalyst for the conflict of 1959 was the upcoming elections. It was The 'Bahutu manifesto' was written by the Hutu elite together with the Belgian colonialists. "It was a curious mix of racial enfranchisement, social justice, the extension of economic privileges, and anti-communism."[121] Reflecting the colonial ideology of the time, it highlighted the social contradictions between the Hutu and Tutsi, and labeled the Tutsi communists and feudalists. The Hutu manifesto was later to be the guiding ideology of PARMEHUTU (Party for the Emancipation of Hutu), a radical Hutu dominated party that stood for the emancipation of the Hutu from the 'Tutsi rule'. Thus the interests of this party could be served by delaying independence until it could, with the aid of the colonial administration, gain control of the state.

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[121] Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda," p. 14.

The king's council (*Inama Nkuru y'Umwami*) also wrote a document, *Mise au point*. Unlike the Hutu manifesto which regarded the problem as being among the colonized people, *Mise au point* highlighted the problem between whites and blacks, and went ahead to demand independence. These elites were mainly represented by UNAR (Rwandese National Union), a party that was Tutsi dominated. The interests of this elite could be served by gaining independence immediately while they still had some control of the state.

The violence begun with the coup d'etat in which the monarchy was abolished by both the Belgians and the Hutu elite following the mysterious death of King Rudahigwa in Bujumbura in August 1959. This was followed by the removal of Tutsi chiefs and their replacement by the Hutu. The colonialists and the Catholic Church strongly backed the violence that began in 1959 and continued into the early 1960s. In that violence, tens of thousands of Tutsi were killed as hundreds of thousands became refugees in neighboring countries, especially Uganda, Burundi, Zaire, and Tanzania. This is the climate in which the elections were held. PAMEHUTU emerged as the winner and on July 1, 1962 Rwanda was formally declared independent with Gregoire Kayibanda as the first president of the Republic of Rwanda.

Although the Hutu peasants participated in the 1959 massacres of Tutsi, King Rudahigwa was generally still popular among the Hutu at that time. "The mobs were unsophisticated and had little political direction – for example they

believed that they were acting on the authority of the king."[122] This was partially

what they had been told by the Hutu elite. The claim is supported by Prunier:

"Many people thought that the king supported the anti-Tutsi attacks because he

embodied justice and the chiefs had been unjust and oppressive."[123] The king

remained relatively popular among the masses because he was not directly

involved in the colonial administration, and had institutional popular reforms,

especially the abolition of Ubuhake and the introduction of an education fund for

the poor called *Fond de Mutara*. Thus, the conflict of 1959 was in part

simultaneously a grass roots anticolonial movement and a successful attempt by

the emergent Hutu political elite to grab state power from the Tutsi before that

power was cemented by independence.

D.   POST-COLONIAL RWANDA (1962-1994)

In this part of the chapter, post colonial Rwanda refers only to the two

regimes after independence: the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes.

However, since the factors that led to genocide are discussed in detail in the

chapter that follows, they will be mentioned here only in as much as they relate

to the background of the 1994 genocide. This section shows mainly how the

postcolonial governments reinforced the divisive policies of the colonialists and

how they played on the interests and fears of the masses.

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[122] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , p. 11.

[123] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 49.

1. Kayibanda's Regime (1962-1973)

Kayibanda's regime was dominated by Hutu and in particular those from the south, his home area. However, the military was still dominated by Belgian-recruited Hutu officers from the north.[124] The Hutu from the north had for a long time remained independent of the monarchy until their resistance was finally broken by the king with the assistance of the Germans.

> Outright revolt by northern Hutus in 1912 was followed by harsh repression, leaving them with a strong sense of grievance and a distinct identity from Hutus of central and southern Rwanda.[125]

Not only were the Tutsi highly excluded from the army but were also from civil service and education. To ensure effective Tutsi exclusion, identity cards were retained. In order to survive and earn a living, the Tutsi tried to disguise themselves as Hutu and those that were lucky managed to acquire Hutu identity cards. Others managed to find Hutu friends who gave them some protection. The chances for national unity waned as the regime "continued to propagate the old racial theories using them against the Tutsi in exactly the manner that the Tutsi had feared."[126] The attacks of *Inyenzi* (cockroaches) in 1960s, the exiled Tutsi guerrillas from the neighboring countries, was used as a pretext by the regime to launch indiscriminate reprisals against Tutsi inside Rwanda. Owing to the lack of organizational capacity, lack of a clear ideology on who they were

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[124] In Africa, the colonialists recruited into the army people whom they claimed were more martial and warlike. In Rwanda, the people from the north were preferred for the same reason.

[125] *Rwanda: The Insurgency in the Northwest*, (London, UK: African Rights, 1998), p. 13.

[126] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , p. 12.

fighting and why they were fighting, coupled with the fact that the government forces were assisted by the Belgian military force, *Inyenzi* were finally defeated in the late 1960s.

As far as the masses were concerned, the fruits of the 'revolution' had been exaggerated. "For the Hutu peasants who rebelled, independence and a Hutu president were, initially, rewards enough. But the ideology of Hutu-ism was not enough to deliver any change to the people of Rwanda, who remained overwhelmingly rural and desperately poor."[127] There was little or no effort to transform the social structure and the entire economy. It was as if the only objective of the 'revolution' had been to replace the Tutsi rule.

> Although Ubuhake cattle clientship had been abolished [in 1954], Ubukonde land clientship — which benefited Hutu chiefs — remained. ... [and] in many respects the ethnic hierarchy was simply reversed.[128]

Some PARMEHUTU militants who had shown great enthusiasm in the 1959 'revolution' were rewarded with the land and cattle of the Tutsi who had either fled the country or been killed. Those who had shown a lot of resentment against the Tutsi were also regarded by the regime as true nationalists. Nobody was ever tried for killing a Tutsi. The culture of impunity had emerged in Rwanda.

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[127] ibid. , p. 11.

[128] ibid. , p. 12.

2.   Habyarimana's Regime

By 1973 the Tutsi had been completely marginalized and the struggle for resources between the north and south, that is, between the political elite and the army, moved to center stage. On July 5, 1973 Major General Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu from the north who was then the army chief of staff led a successful coup d'etat against Kayibanda's regime.   Initially a populist, Habyarimana promised an end to ethnic and party politics and all forms of discrimination. His coup d'etat was welcomed by the Tutsi, inside and outside the country. However, in order to survive in power, the regime sought to keep the Hutu united, at least superficially. To do this the regime "insisted on the ritualistic reiteration of the ideological slogans of '*rubanda nyamwinshi*'(majority), equating a demographic majority with democratic rule."[129] Although the word 'majority' was meant to mean Hutu, it was initially confused with masses since that was the original meaning of the term 'rubanda'. This ideology served to legitimize the Hutu rule in the eyes of both the Hutu and Tutsi. Most importantly, it was also meant to unite the northern and southern Hutu against the feigned common-enemy, the Tutsi, while at the same time portraying the regime as democratic. Indeed, this augured well among the Western donors on whom the regime relied for aid. The Western community equated the term 'majority' to majority rule and therefore to democracy. Also, being in the Cold War period, democracy and the form of governance were secondary to both the Western and

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[129] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 75.

Eastern block. The regime also popularized the ideology of 'native peasants' (Hutu). This particular ideology was meant to reduce the Tutsi to second class citizens and to make them submissive.

As a way of tackling the problem of shrinking resources and other privileges, the regime institutionalized what it termed as 'ethnic and regional balance'. This quota system sounded like a blend between consociationalism and federalism. It was supposed to ensure equitable distribution of resources between ethnic groups and regions. However, it was nothing more than the usual rhetoric. "The policy of 'balance' was a ploy to reward the north-west, 'the blessed region', at the expense of the rest of the country."[130]

In both the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes, the Tutsi were used as scapegoats for government failures. Both regimes organized periodic expulsions and massacres of the Tutsi, a factor that was partially meant to avail resources especially land and cattle to the Hutu peasants. They also used the return of Tutsi refugees as a scare tactic by playing on the interests of the masses, especially land and physical security.

In spite of all these problems, the Rwandese continued to live together, to work together, to intermarry, and to socialize. The Tutsi in Rwanda learned to live with injustice while the Hutu who showed any disgruntlement were hunted

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[130] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , p. 14.

down by the members of the MRND (Revolutionary Movement for National Development) party[131] which had penetrated all spheres of life.

Centralization of the state was reinforced in the postcolonial period especially under Habyarimana's regime. More than before, the elite defined themselves in relation to the state. "Even the jobs in the private sector required permission and control of the Ministry of Labor."[132] The structure of the party, MRND, mirrored that of the state and made the two almost indistinguishable. The state was felt in all spheres of life and in all parts of the country. Coupled with a relatively developed infrastructure, thanks to foreign aid, it made the mobilization of the peasants by elite easy and faster. This was reinforced by the totalitarian[133] nature of the regime.

> Travelling was tolerated, but not changing address without due cause; one had to apply for permission to move. Unless there was good reason, the authorization to change residence would not be granted – unless, of course, one had friends in higher places.[134]

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[131] MRND was the only party allowed in the country.

[132] Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda*, (West Hartford, Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1998), p. 14.

[133] Both Prunier and Gourevich describe Habyarimana's regime as totalitarian. See Punier, *The Rwandan Crisis: History of A Genocide*, p. 76, and Gouverich, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed with our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, p. 88.

[134] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 77.

During Habyarimana's regime, the Twa were less of an issue than they were even before. The Rwandese society was a dual society of Hutu and Tutsi. The Tutsi mattered to the regime not only because of their historical legacy, but also because the regime regarded them (especially the refugees) as its future challenge, and unlike the Twa, their numbers were significant. Meanwhile, the Rwandese refuges in the Diaspora, both elite and the masses, were being used as scapegoats for the problems affecting their countries of asylum. The refugees saw only one solution to their problems; going back home.

The political and social changes that Rwanda had gone through had shaped distinct group consciousness. Not only had ethnicity been created and institutionalized, but the legacy of ethnic ranking was also kept alive through the revival of the old memories of Tutsi rule by the Habyarimana regime. Due to cohabitation, however, it was not easy for the regime to systematically exploit the Tutsi as a separate group. However, the regime deliberately kept the areas under which the Tutsi were concentrated, for instance Bugesera, more underdeveloped. However, because of the shrinking resources and monopolization of those resources by the ruling clique, the gap between the Hutu and Tutsi remained relatively small. The regime used the identity cards to deny Tutsi access to employment and education while at the same time mobilizing Hutu peasants around their key interests, land and physical security. The regime also preached hatred against the Tutsi and encouraged impunity among both the elite and peasants. When Habyarimana's regime was for the first time effectively

challenged in 1990 by the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF)[135], the Rwandese were no longer one people. Although they retained the characteristics of a nation state, they were no longer a nation. In short, they were living in a state without a nation.

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[135] Some Rwandese refugees who had managed to acquire military training in Uganda, attacked Rwanda in October 1990. They were under the umbrella of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), and its armed wing, the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA).

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IV. THE FACTORS THAT LINKED TO CAUSE GENOCIDE

A. BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the factors that combined to produce the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In particular, it discusses the interests of the elite and the masses, and the role that they played before and leading up to genocide. In so doing, this chapter explains why very many Rwandese peasants (masses) participated in genocide. While recognizing the existence of extremist elements in society in general, and in Rwanda in particular, this chapter focuses on the major interests of both the Rwandan elite and masses. It discusses the factors that motivated the masses to participate in genocide, that made it easy for them to accept the genocide ideology propounded by the elite, and the ease with which the state was able to direct and coordinate the genocide. In particular, it discusses the urge for resources particularly land and the fear of losing it, the concern for physical security, cohabitation, and ethnic ranking and dual ethnicity, factors that partially accounted for the high intensity of the conflict. This chapter also discusses the interaction of the above factors in producing genocide and a horrific one at that. In order for this chapter to become clear, the 1990 war and the Arusha Peace Agreement are first highlighted.

2.   The 1990 War in Rwanda

The Rwandese refugees who fled Rwanda in 1959 were harassed and discriminated against in their countries of asylum, and the two post independence regimes in Rwanda used the pretext of high population density to justify their refusal to allow them to return. For his part, President Habyarimana used to argue: "The glass is full and I have nowhere to put the rest of the water."[136] As Kakwenzire and Kamukama observe, "this feeling of not being wanted in your host country nor in your own country made these young men and women a determined lot. [It] created fearlessness and determination that did not tolerate any thing short of invading and 'going back home' by force."[137]

In 1979 a small group of Rwandese refugees met in Nairobi (Kenya) and formed the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU). In 1987, RANU convened its fourth congressional meeting. The congress changed the name of the organization to the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), and proposed that its armed wing would in the future bear the name the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA).[138] The RPF mobilized the Rwandese community both in the Diaspora

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[136] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , pp. 16-7.

[137] Joan Kakwenzire and Dixon Kamukama, "The Development and Consolidation of Extremist Forces," in Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, ed. , The Path of Genocide: The Rwandan Crisis from Uganda to Zaire, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), pp. 88-9.

[138] The RPF could not publicly acknowledge that it had an army since that army was a part of the Ugandan army.

and inside the country. Mobilization was based on two major issues: the right of refugees[139] to return home and the need for democratization in Rwanda.

In particular, the Rwandese refugees in Uganda were used as scapegoats by the leaders of that country. This forced them to fight wars against various dictatorial regimes in Uganda. In late 1978 different armed Ugandan groups based in Tanzania formed a united front against the Ugandan dictatorial regime of President Amin. They were strongly backed by the Tanzanian government. Among those groups was the Front for National Salvation Army (FRONASA) led by Yoweri Museveni, the current president of Uganda. FRONASA managed to attract few Rwandese refugees into its ranks. In 1979 Amin was overthrown and in 1981 the ruling Military Commission organized elections in which the former president of Uganda, Milton Obote, who had been overthrown by Amin in a military coup in 1971, emerged as the winner.[140] In the same year, Museveni who had publicly warned that if the elections were rigged he would go back to the bush, started a guerrilla war against the Obote regime. A number of Rwandese refugees, including those who were previously in FRONASA, joined him especially after Obote chased away Rwandese refugees from Uganda in 1982. In 1986 Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) overthrew the government in Uganda. By that time, the Rwandese had risen in ranks and occupied

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[139] At that time, the RPF put the estimate of the Rwandese refugees at about 1 million.

[140] The elections were widely regarded as having been rigged. Museveni's political party, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), was one of the parties that lost in the elections.

influential positions in the military. On October 1, 1990 the Rwandese soldiers in Uganda led by Major General Fred Gisa Rwigyema deserted Uganda's NRA and attacked Rwanda. This marked the birth of the RPA and the start of a four year guerrilla war against the Rwandan regime of President Habyarimana.

3.   The Arusha Peace Accords

The 1994 genocide took place after the Arusha Peace Accords had been signed between the RPF and the Government of Rwanda in August 1993 in Arusha, Tanzania. As this chapter later shows, this agreement was preceded by military, political, economic, and diplomatic pressure on the regime. Since the details of these factors are covered under the interests and goals of the elite, this thesis now turns to the salient issues in the Arusha Peace Accords that were relevant to the interests of the elite.

The Arusha peace negotiations that started in July 1992 between the Government of Rwanda and the RPF were concluded on August 4, 1993 with the signing of five protocols: the protocol on the repatriation of refugees and resettlement of internally displaced persons; the protocol on power-sharing; the protocol on the integration of armed forces; the protocol on the rule of law; and the protocol on miscellaneous issues and final provisions.[141] Two of these protocols require some further elaboration. According to the protocol on power sharing, all the political forces in the country were to share power until a

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[141] As cited in the table of contents of "The Peace Agreement between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front," signed at Arusha, August 3, 1993, p. 3.

democratically elected government would be in place. In the legislature, the big parties: the Republican Movement for National Development and Democracy (MRNDD), the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR), the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Liberal Party (PL), and the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF)[142] would get eleven seats each. The Christian Democratic Party (PDC) would get four seats while small parties like the Coalition for the Defense of the Republic (CDR) would get one seat each. In the Executive branch, the RPF, MRNDD and MDR would get five ministerial portfolios each. PSD and PL would get three portfolios each while PDC would get only one. The key ministries of Defense and Interior would go to the MRNDD and RPF respectively. The incumbent President would retain the Presidency while the portfolio of the Prime minister would go to the MDR.

The protocol on the integration of the armed forces provided for equal distribution of all top posts among the officers of the Rwanda government and those of the RPF. This would apply to all the top posts in both the army and the *gendarmerie*. At the same time, the RPF would contribute 40% of the total force and the remaining 60% would come from the government. According to the

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[142] MRNND was exclusively Hutu and its stronghold was in the northwest; MDR was also exclusively Hutu and its stronghold was in the south especially in Gitarama; PSD attracted both Hutu and Tutsi who were wary of MRNDD and MDR . Its supporters were mainly in Butare; PL attracted mainly Tutsi although it had some Hutu within its leadership before the extremist faction broke away. The RPF had the strongest support among the Tutsi both inside and outside Rwanda. It had some Hutu both in its political and military leadership.

peace agreement, the President of the Transitional National Assembly would come from either the PSD or the PL[143]

The signing of the Accords was followed by delays in setting up a Transitional National Assembly and a Broad Based Transitional Government of National Unity. The incumbent government continued to give lame excuses of the splitting of some parties into extremist ("power") and moderate factions. The training of militias intensified and the *Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM) and to some extent Radio Rwanda continued to broadcast virulent messages against Tutsi and Hutu moderates. Violence also continued until April 6, 1994 when genocide started.

B.   EXTREMISM AND ELITE RESPONSE TO ESCALATING THREAT

The role of the elite (politicians, the ideologues of political parties, military officers, directors of parastatals, academics and professionals, journalists, priests, pastors, and nuns) in genocide has received wide coverage among scholars, journalists, and human rights activists. Suffice it to say however, that they included: making preparations for genocide (training the militias, and importing and distributing machetes and light weapons to the militias and the general populace); propagating hate propaganda and inciting the Hutu to rise against the Tutsi through broadcasts, print media, addressing public gatherings, and participating in direct killing.

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[143] For details on power-sharing and the integration of the armed forces, refer to the "Peace Agreement between the RPF and the Government of Rwanda," signed at Arusha on August 3, 1993.

As self interested actors, the interests of the Rwandan elites like many other elite elsewhere, were clear. They were interested in maintaining state power. By maintaining power, they would not only continue to have access to state resources, but would also protect the resources that they had acquired while in power. This was especially so with the political and military elite, our main concern here. However, this also applied to the business elite who had acquired wealth mainly through the connection they had with the political class.

The above reasons explain the interests of the elite in general. However, they do not explain fully why the Hutu elite participated in genocide. There were other strategies that the Hutu elite could have used. It is therefore important to explain why they opted for this option and not other options. It is also important to explain why genocide took place at the time that it did. While furnishing answers to these questions, it is important to keep in mind that although the actions of the rational actors are carried out with the goal of furthering their interests, they may fail because of imperfect information or mistaken calculations about the actions of others. This partially explains why rational actions do not necessarily produce favorable outcomes for the actors. At the same time it is important to highlight also the fact that rational actors are constrained by the social, political, and economic environment in which they work. This partially determines the strategy that they choose. Therefore to understand why the elite opted for the strategy of genocide, we must trace their interests, how those interests changed over time, how they were constrained by the prevailing

circumstances, and the outcomes that were produced. While discussing these factors, state power is assumed to be the central issue. We should also bear in mind that although the elite usually have the same interests, different institutional constraints will lead them to adopt different strategies to accomplish those interests.

However, having said this, it does not mean that the elite cannot pursue goals that are irrational. For instance, extremist elites exist and they talk openly about their hatred of other groups. However, they become *genocidaires* only when they put their ideology into practice. In Rwanda, both these two groups were present: those that were interested in pursuing their rational goals, and those that showed a lot of hatred for the Tutsi, and both these groups are not exclusive of each other.

To explain the cause of genocide, it is therefore important to assess the threats that the regime faced, the responses to those threats, and the strategies that the elite chose and the reasons for those choices. It is also important to assess the opportunities which were available to the extremist elites and that enabled them to pursue their rational interests, and to unleash their hatred.

1.   The RPA Invasion

The first threat of loss of state power became pronounced when the RPF launched an attack on the regime of Habyarimana on October 1, 1990. The

regime used this excuse[144] to crack down on the people that it regarded as its enemies and their accomplices. "Between eight and ten thousand people, mainly Tutsi, were detained shortly after the invasion, following the pretext of the faked RPF attack on Kigali on the night of 4 October 1990."[145] However, the arrests were targeted towards particular people. As Prunier observes, the government "indiscriminately swept up educated Tutsi, opposition-minded Hutu, anyone who was in the bad books of power elite (and even their friends or business connections)."[146] At that time, the elite were still selective as to who their enemies were. "After the international protests, they [the 'suspects'] were slowly released, [but] only to find out that they had been dismissed from their jobs in public services."[147] This response is not uncommon among rational actors especially dictators. However, some extremist elite used this chance to indiscriminately kill Tutsi in some parts of the country, for instance in Murambi in the Umutara region.

2. The RPA Advances

The advances by the RPA was a second major threat to the regime. Following the October 1990 attack by the RPA, the regime refused to meet directly and to negotiate with the RPF, a factor that was understandable. The

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[144] Before October 1990, the regime was aware of the possibility of the attack from Uganda. It tried to identify the people that it suspected of collaborating with the RPF.

[145] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , p. 29.

[146] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 113.

[147] Omaar and Waal, op. cit. , p. 29.

rapid advance of the RPA had been checked by the intervention of France, Belgium, and Zaire whose forces started appearing at the battle front as early as October 4, 1990. The loss of the RPA top commanders[148] coupled with the strong offensive launched by government forces and their allies forced the RPA to make a tactical retreat and to reorganize itself under a new commander, Paul Kagame.[149] At that time, the incumbent elite preferred a military solution to political negotiations as this would deny the RPF a stake in state power. It was when the RPA made a surprise attack on January 21, 1991 and overran the strong garrison town of Ruhengeri in the Northwest, that the government agreed to talk with the RPF. This culminated in the signing of the N'Sele cease-fire agreement in the former Zaire between the RPF and the Government of Rwanda. However, because the balance of forces was still in their favor, the government forces refused to respect the agreement.

It is when the RPA once again extended its areas of operation in the northeast in the Umutara region, where it overran the two strongest strategic defense positions of Kabuga and Mabale in April 1992, that the incumbent elite and their allies, especially France, probably began to doubt the viability of defeating the RPF on the battle front. It is then, that France for the first time, showed willingness to mediate between the two belligerents. France organized a

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[148] The RPA lost its top commander, Major General Fred Rwigyema, and three senior officers, among others in the first month of fighting.

[149] Paul Kagame, then a major, is now a Major General, and a Vice President and Minister of Defense.

meeting between the RPF and the government of Rwanda in Paris in May 1992. The negotiations later shifted to Arusha, Tanzania. These negotiations were followed by the signing of a cease-fire between the government and the RPF in June 1992. However, the government refused to respect the cease-fire by carrying out gross human rights violations in which thousands of Tutsi were killed for instance in Kibirira. The RPF reacted by launching a grand offensive on February 8, 1993. "[It] made quick military advances - doubling the territory under its control, reaching within 25 kilometers of Kigali."[150] It is after that attack that the government settled for political negotiations. Although some massacres and assassinations continued, there was no serious cease-fire violation by the government forces, and no military confrontation between the RPA and the government forces until genocide started on April 6, 1994. The threat by the RPA forced the elite into serious negotiations.

3. The Threat of Democratization

Like many other African regimes, Habyarimana's regime faced a third type of threat: democratization. Habyarimana had grudgingly accepted multipartism after the 1990 Franco-African Summit in La Baule in France. However, it was not until 1991 that the opposition political parties were formed and allowed to operate. "The opposition parties united under the inter party *comite concertation de l'Opposition* which agitated for a number of demands: A de-institutionalization

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[150] Alan J. Kuperman, "The Other Lesson of Rwanda: Mediators Sometimes Do More Damage than Good," *Journal of International Relations*, Winter-Spring 1996, p. 261.

of the MRNDD not only in words but also in practice ...; the disbanding of parliament and the convening of the national conference; [and] the opening up of the audiovisual media.[151] Democratization was a threat to the regime because the newly formed opposition parties wanted to share power with the MRNDD until democratic elections were held. Pressure from these parties mounted when on December 3, 1991 the regime ignored the demands of the joint committee of the opposition parties and went ahead to swear in a new cabinet which "included no opposition ministers apart from a single PDC member in a secondary post."[152] Rather than facing the two opposition forces, the RPA and the opposition parties, the incumbent elite decided to form a slightly different cabinet. "On April 1992, under the aegis of Premier Dismas Nsengiyaremye (MDR), a new cabinet was sworn in where for the first time the MRNDD had to share power."[153] This threat led to the adjustment in the strategy. The internal opposition was admitted as junior partners to offset the military threat.

Although the opposition parties shared power with the MRND, the leaders of the opposition parties realized that the MRNDD would continue to bully them as long as it monopolized the means of violence and state resources. In short it was hard to ensure fair and democratic elections under that arrangement. With the RPF also controlling a part of the country and many people displaced from

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[151] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 133.

[152] ibid. , p. 135.

[153] ibid. , p. 145.

their areas, carrying out elections was considered a mockery to the people and was strongly opposed by the leaders of both the RPF and the moderate opposition parties. It is partially because of these reasons that the leaders of the opposition parties showed a willingness to work more closely with the RPF in solving their basic problems: ensuring that the incumbents did not dictate terms during transition, and ending the problem of war. Once in government, these opposition parties became active in seeking peaceful means to end the war. Moreover, on its part, the RPF insisted that there were political problems that led to the war and that if those problems could be solved politically, then it would have no more reasons for continuing the war.

4. The External Pressure

The fourth threat to the MRND was external pressure. The threat of RPA advances and the pressure from internal opposition parties came at a time when Rwanda's economy was shrinking. Rwanda had been heavily hit by the 1989 drought and the fall in coffee prices. There was also massive corruption and embezzlement mainly by the politicians. The economy was further worsened by a war that destroyed infrastructure and affected both tourism and trade. The war also led to an increase in defense spending by the government. Between 1990 and 1992, Rwanda registered an increase in the defense budget of 181%.[154] This led to a poor and shrinking economy which in turn made the regime vulnerable to pressure from external actors some of whom provided military and

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[154] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 159.

financial support to the regime. What those allies[155] did not want was a situation in which the RPF could overthrow the regime and possibly monopolize or even dominate the state power. However, they did not mind the RPF sharing power with the incumbent regime especially after they had ruled out the possibility of a military victory against the RPA.

Although the incumbent elite would have preferred the monopolization of power, the pressure from the RPF, the moderate opposition parties, and the pressure from the external actors combined to force the elite into political negotiations with the RPF and finally to agree to sign the Peace Accords.

5.   Implementation of the Arusha Accords

The signing of the Arusha Peace Agreement was supposed to be followed by its implementation. However, after it was signed, violent demonstrations organized by some extremist Hutu elite who disapproved of the Accords erupted in different parts of the country. The killing of Tutsi and the leaders of opposition parties continued. Some extremists especially in the CDR blamed the president for signing the Peace Accords. Whether this indicated a split between the hard-liners and softliners was not clear. However, no leaders from the CDR, MRNDD, and the extremist ("power") factions of MDR, PL, and PDC came out in support of the peace agreement. On the contrary, the main ruling party denounced the agreement. "Making it clear that he did not intend to implement the agreement he had signed three months before, he [President Habyarimana] called the

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[155] The major allies of Rwanda government were mainly France, Belgium, and the former Zaire.

Accords 'a scrap of paper'."[156] Why then did Habyarimana sign the agreement

that he did not believe in? The answer has been partially provided: to ease

pressure from the RPF, the moderate opposition parties, and the external forces.

This raises another question. Why did he have to disavow the Accords publicly?

Forges provides an answer: "Responding to the pressure from the military and

from the civilian hard-liners, Habyarimana disavowed the Arusha Accords."[157]

Whatever the pressures that were behind the signing and disavowing of the

Accords, the incumbent ruling party, MRNDD demonstrated that signing and

implementation were two different things.

It seems probable that the implementation of the Arusha Accords,

especially the protocols on Power Sharing, the Integration of the Armed Forces,

and the Rule of Law posed a threat to some elites in the MRNDD and CDR since

only few elites would have access to state resources. With growing internal

opposition, their chances of winning elections may have also looked slim.

Moreover, the checks and balances in the Arusha Accords ensured that no

single political force would dictate terms during the transition, and having

committed atrocities, some elites in the MRNDD and CDR feared that they would

be prosecuted for the crimes they had committed if peace returned and new

institutions were in place.

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[156] Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*, (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), p. 61.

[157] ibid.

However, based on the knowledge on self interested elite, it is probable that some elites in the MNRDD hoped to evade the full implementation of the Arusha Accords. It is also probable that there were some elite who hoped to monopolize power by carrying out genocide. Moreover, the preparations for genocide had been made. The masses had been radicalized through the hate propaganda by the extremist Hutu both in and outside the main stream of political power, they had been trained and armed, in some places the lists of victims had been drawn, and secretive meetings to kill Tutsi had been organized by various leaders.[158]

6.   The Genocide Strategy

Only states and institutions in power can commit genocide. Contrary to the preponderancies by the extremist Hutu elite, "the genocide was planned and implemented."[159]   It could not have been carried out effectively without the support of the political and the military elite, and without the control of the state. Although ultimately the genocide did not enable the extremists to maintain and monopolize power, its planners looked at it as a strategy not only to destroy the Tutsi group, but also to keep themselves in power. This was reflected in its multi prong strategy involving a coup d'etat, systematic and indiscriminate killing of Tutsi, and attempts to defeat the RPA.

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[158] In her book, Alison des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* cites minutes of such meetings.

[159] Joan Kakwenzire and Dixson Kamukama, "The Development and Consolidation of Extremist Forces," in Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, ed., *The Path of Genocide: The Rwandan Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), p. 61.

Accounting for the coup d'etat, Prunier observes, "they [extremists] wanted a cabinet which would leave them and other coup makers in the shadows where they could go on pulling the strings, but which could be their creature and closely reflect their radical political option."[160] Irrespective of whoever killed Habyarimana and the reasons behind his killing, the coup d'etat that followed enabled the extremist elements such as Colonel Bagosora and Colonel Rwagafirita, and their puppets especially President Sindikubwabo and Prime minister Kambanda[161] to execute their plan. The coup d'etat partially served also to increase the legitimacy of the regime by placing the extremists from outside the northwest in topmost political positions.[162] Although all the opposition parties were represented in the new Interim Government, "[they] were represented by their 'power' components which had rallied to the 'final solution'."[163] Since the leaders of the moderate opposition parties were already members of the executive, the coup served to cleanse the system of all moderate politicians especially the top government officials who were opposed to Hutu extremism, and who would therefore oppose genocide. It also enabled them to gain access to state power. By killing the leaders of the moderate opposition political parties, the coup makers also hoped to effectively

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[160] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 232.

[161] To the surprise of many people, Kambanda pleaded guilty to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania.

[162] Both the President of the Interim Government and the Prime minister were from Butare in the south.

[163] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 233.

disorganize, intimidate, and silence the members of the moderate opposition parties. They therefore hoped also to use this strategy to consolidate their power after the genocide.

Genocide was also supposed to weaken and where possible to defeat the RPA. The *Interahamwe* militia did not only kill people but they also engaged the RPA. Immediately after Habyarimana was killed, the government forces, and especially the Presidential Guard, attacked the RPA position at Kimihurura in Kigali. Having armed the populace and also mobilized them, the extremist Hutu elite might have expected them to reinforce Interahamwe militias and government forces, and check the RPA advances. By killing the leaders of the moderate opposition parties the extremists might have also hoped to weaken the RPA since they attributed the joining of the RPA by the Hutu youth to mobilization by the leaders of the moderate opposition parties.

The extremists also hoped that the extermination of the Tutsi would also enable them to cling to power. By exterminating the Tutsi, they may have hoped to get rid of what they regarded as permanent opposition. It is also possible that they hoped to negotiate with the RPF after the genocide from a position of strength. With a weak RPF and an opposition without leadership and whose supporters had been intimidated, and with the genocide over, they might have hoped for a transitional government in which they could dominate and dictate terms. As Forges put it, "they believed that the extermination campaign would restore the solidarity of the Hutu under their leadership and help them win the

war or at least improve their chances of negotiating a favorable peace."[164] The fact the extremists also regarded genocide as a solution to the political and military opposition is also cited by Prunier: "a final solution which would solve both the ethnic problem (killing all the Tutsi) and the threat of democratization (killing all the moderate Hutu)."[165]

The evidence that is available about the preparations[166] and plans for genocide and the targeted victims leaves people with no doubt that the extremist elite did not respond only to the threat of loss of power. They targeted Tutsi simply because they were members of Tutsi ethnic group. This is why they hunted for everybody who had Tutsi blood. This is also why they did not spare even the babies or the old men and women, cripples, and those that were mentally sick. It is these factors that make the genocide in Rwanda something more than the mere threat to loss of power by the elite. It is also this factor that differentiates genocide from ordinary ethnic conflicts. This is why genocide is defined not only by the number of victims but also by intent of those who participate in it.

There is no doubt that the strategy that the extremists hoped would maintain them in power failed to succeed. However, they succeed in committing

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[164] Forges, op. cit. , p. 2.

[165] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 242.

[166] Colonel Bagosora, one of the architects of the Rwandan genocide who participated in the Arusha negotiations, left the talks and went home. When he was asked why he had quit, he said that he had come to prepare the apocalypse [of Tutsi], for more details refer to Omaar and Waal, *Death, Despair and Defiance*, p. 86.

genocide against the Tutsi and some Hutu moderates. The coup and massacres undoubtedly demoralized some people in the military, especially those that might have supported opposition parties or who had some relationship with the victims of genocide. The coup also weakened the state. It is also possible that the extremists underrated the military capability of the RPA in taking on both the government forces and the Interahamwe militias. Had they known that they would get defeated and become wanted criminals as they are presently, it is unlikely that they would have opted for this strategy.

C. THE MASSES RESPONSE TO ELITE MOBILIZATION

Like the elite, it is the interests of the masses, rather than their role in genocide that is important. Suffice to mention however, that "the main agents of the genocide were the ordinary peasants themselves."[167] However, as Uvin notes, "there is little discussion of the people [the Hutu masses] who perpetrated the violence, the world they inhabited and the reasons they might have had for obeying the messages."[168] The elite distributed the machetes, broadcast calls for genocide, and eliminated counterelites. But the masses still had to make a conscious decision to kill. When the masses responded to the elite calls to carry out genocide, they were weighing the calls to their interests and also drawing on past experiences and history that the country had gone through before the 1994 genocide. At the same time, they anticipated a payoff. "However, because the

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[167] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 247.

[168] Uvin, op. cit. , p. 67.

attacks were incited or ordered by supposedly legitimate authorities, those with misgivings found it easier to commit crimes and to believe or pretend to believe they had done no wrong."[169]

There are factors that can help to account for the massacres of such a large number and in a very short time. While keeping in mind the interests and the role the elite in the Rwandan genocide, this thesis turns to those factors for an additional explanation, especially those that concern the specific interests of the masses (land and physical security), and the ease with which the genocide ideology was evaluated and accepted in Rwanda (centralization, cohabitation, dual ethnicity and the history of ethnic ranking).

1. The Urge to Grab Land and the Fear to Lose the Scarce Resource

The masses that participated in genocide were motivated by a number of factors including looting and settling personal scores. The participation of the youths can partially be attributed to general poverty due to mainly lack of non-agricultural employment opportunities. More than these factors however, the peasants were motivated by land. The fact that Rwanda is a small country is well known. The fact that it has one of the highest population density in Africa is also a fact that is documented. Nobody can also doubt the importance of people both as a human resource and as a market. However, these two factors do not augur well for a society whose economy is predominantly subsistence and

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[169] Forges, op. cit. , p. 2.

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characterized by traditional subsistence agriculture. It is these factors that make Rwanda's population appear as if it is a burden. It is against this background that one talks of scarcity of land and the importance of this resource to the peasants who constitute about 90 percent of Rwanda's total population. Like other factors in Rwanda, the question of land had been politicized. Having mismanaged the economy, Habyarimana's regime used the overpopulation mythology to explain away all the problems that the masses faced. The scarcity of land was turned into a Tutsi scare, and to give a false impression of Rwanda, the regime prevented rural populations from moving to towns. This factor that would have eased the population pressure on land. Ironically, "these policies pleased many experts who appreciated the lack of shanty towns in Rwanda."[170] However, they led to a higher population density and therefore more scarcity of land.

Rather than concentrating on why Rwanda experienced the problem of scarcity of land, this thesis notes that the scarcity of land alone cannot be a cause of genocide. Moreover, India, which has higher population density than Rwanda, has never experienced any genocide. However, the urge to grab land from neighbors was a motivating factor in genocide. This urge was reinforced by the history of impunity and by the scarcity of land resources. There is no doubt that some Hutu peasants participated in genocide so as to acquire extra land as they had done in the 1959 upheavals and thereafter. The elite also reinforced

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[170] Uvin, op. cit. , p. 118.

this urge. "The authorities encouraged cultivators to pillage farm animals, crops, and such building materials such as doors, windows, and roofs. They promised cultivators the fields left by vacant victims."[171]

There was also fear by the peasants of losing the land that they owned to the returning refugees, some of whom they regarded as the rightful owners of that land. In spite of the fact that the question of property had been fully discussed within the RPF and clearly defined in its political program, and in spite of the fact that the question of resettlement of the returnees had been discussed in Arusha, and the Commission for Resettlement established, this fear remained. It was reinforced by the propaganda of the elite. For instance, the authorities claimed that "the RPF had prepared maps showing fields to be taken from Hutu in Butare."[172]

2. Physical Security

In 1959 the Hutu masses participated in the massacre of the Tutsi, accompanied by arson, and looting. A series of massacres continued during President Kayibanda and President Habyarimana's regimes up to the 1994 genocide. The people who died were killed by their neighbors. The people who were killed included the parents, relatives, and friends of the refugees who had fled the country in 1959 and thereafter, and those who had joined the RPA from Rwanda. With such a history of periodic massacres, it would be wrong to ignore

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[171] Forges, op. cit. , p. 10.

[172] ibid.

the fact that those who had participated in the massacres did not harbor the fears of prosecution or even of revenge. Moreover, in a society where impunity was the order of the day, where kinship was strong, and where ethnicity had been politicized and ethnic boundaries strengthened, it is likely that people considered revenge as a collective action against the Hutu as a group, rather than a crime that usually targets specific individual suspects.

As for the peasants who were said to have been coerced into killing, they must have balanced the risks involved, and most probably with such a regime, the argument must have been, 'If I kill now, I must be punished later or not. But if I do not kill, I might be killed now'. This action was linked to impunity which had characterized the country for a long time. The majority of the killers expected to kill and get away with it. Although the masses might have initially believed that the regime was too strong to be defeated, the fear for their personal security must have increased as the state showed signs of collapsing under the defeat of the RPA, and as the Interim Government intensified false propaganda against both the RPF and Tutsi. For instance, "throughout the country, they disseminated detailed false information, such as reports that the Tutsi had hidden fire arms in the bushes behind the Kibungo Cathedral."[173]

3. Centralization

In their mobilization and coordination of the masses, the elite were aided by the nature of the Rwandan state. "The extremists were aided by Rwanda's

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[173] ibid.

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highly centralized and hierarchical administration system."[174] This centralization was reinforced with the civil authority that permeated the society at all levels especially the communal level. As Uvin puts it," the representatives of the state and of the party [MRNDD] were present up to the lowest level of social organization."[175] At the same time, all the local administration officials were presidential appointees. According to Prunier, "it was only the president who had the power to discipline and sack them."[176] Discussing the role of centralization in genocide, Forges observes: "Although this system did not guarantee mass participation, it gave genocidal leaders rapid and easy access to the population."[177] This centralization was reinforced by the small size of the country and the relatively well developed infrastructure especially the dense network of roads that Rwanda enjoys.

4. Cohabitation

In a population in which anti-Tutsi genocide ideology was rife, cohabitation made the Tutsi more vulnerable which led to a large number of victims. Unlike cases where ethnic groups live in separate geographical locations, it did not require the peasants to travel to far distant places to attack Tutsi. Cohabitation

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[174] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 80.

[175] Uvin, op. cit. , p. 22.

[176] Prunier, op. cit. , p. 80.

[177] Forges, op. cit. , p. 10.

made it easy for the killers to identify and to track down the victims because both the killers and victims lived together. The demographic superiority[178] of the Hutu also reinforced cohabitation, contributing to the death of a large number of Tutsi. Although the *genocidaires* were enthusiastic killers, they always tended to prefer concealing the killing especially from the international community. Cohabitation provided that cover since it enabled the killings to be largely decentralized. Above all, cohabitation provided the incentive of killing the Tutsi since the killers were guaranteed their property especially land that was nearby. Also, contrary to what some people imagine, peasants do not need each other in the same way for instance that capitalists and workers do. Despite its advantages, cohabitation played a big role in the death of a large number of Tutsi in Rwanda.

5.   Dual Ethnicity and the History of Ethnic Ranking

Prior to genocide, Rwanda was regarded as a dual ethnic society. Almost everything in Rwanda was viewed through an ethnic prism. It was either pro Hutu or pro Tutsi and nothing in between. The emergence and perpetuation of dual ethnic politics was not a result of the usual ethnic politics. In other dual ethnic societies, for instance in Botswana and Zimbabwe, the minority ethnic groups are usually ignored, and rarely do they pose a threat to a 'democratic majority government'. The question which should be answered here is why this has not be so in Rwanda. The answer lies partially in the transformation of the

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[178] Since colonialism, conservative figures have put the percentages of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa at 85%, 14% and 1% respectively.

ranked ethnic system. After colonialism, the elite replaced one monoethnic power with another. The regime then went ahead to systematically oppress the Tutsi. Using the rhetoric of Western democratic ideals, the regime used the pretext of 'majority rule' and therefore 'democratic rule', and the revival of the legacy of ethnic ranking to unite the Hutu against their 'enemy', the Tutsi. "The quota system and the IDs served to keep the distinction alive."[179] Since the Tutsi scare acted as an incentive for the elite to maintain an artificial solidarity among the Hutu, and since the regime hoped to maintain its legitimacy partially by denying the minority Tutsi their rights including citizenship rights, it invited the Tutsi, and especially the refugees, to challenge it. By launching the attack in 1990, the RPF must have been aware of the artificial Hutu solidarity that the regime had maintained under the pretext of 'majority rule'. It is probably this artificial bond that gave the RPF confidence and determination when it attacked Rwanda in 1990. This attack however, could not have been taken lightly by the regime since it perceived it as a kind of Hutu awakening. In short, although the Tutsi may not have necessarily posed a big threat to the majority Hutu leadership, they implicitly did so by threatening to break the artificial Hutu solidarity. Forcing the Tutsi into a tight corner, and in turn their strategy to come out of that corner, served to reinforce the fears that the postcolonial regimes had propagated since independence. This in a way strengthened Hutu solidarity. In such a case where there were only two groups, and where the alliance between

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[179] Uvin, op. cit. , p. 35.

those groups was difficult, politics was not only reduced to almost ethnic census, but also to a zero sum game. This is how the regime managed to turn the Tutsi into a kind of permanent opposition and thus cemented the ethnic politics.

Among the things that colonialism succeeded in creating was ranked ethnic groups in Rwanda. By the time colonialism came to an end, the Tutsi were widely regarded as the rulers and the Hutu as the subjects. The two groups had also acquired some level of superiority and inferiority complexes respectively. However, both groups were no longer ranked at the time the genocide took place. The legacy of ranking, which in most part was revived by the Hutu elite, still existed. It is this legacy that partially explains the ease with which the Hutu were mobilized and the high intensity of the conflict that ensued. By constantly reminding the Hutu about the Tutsi rule, their brutal punishments, and so on, the regime was trying to revive the bitter memories of ethnic ranking. "In the campaign to create hatred and fear of the Tutsi, the Habyarimana circle played upon memories of past domination by the minority and on the legacy of the revolution [sic] that overthrew their rule and drove them into exile in 1959."[180] It is this factor that gave some Hutu the notion of the RPF as a new Tutsi force that was coming to collaborate with Tutsi inside the country to rule over the Hutu. Also, the Hutu elite, assisted by some of their foreign allies, worked hard to ensure that this point sunk in among the Hutu masses. This was reinforced by almost inevitable historical circumstances. The majority of the RPF leaders and

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[180] Forges, op. cit. , p. 3.

members were refugees and therefore Tutsi, and having been trodden upon by the both the Kayibanda and Habyarimana regimes, there is no way that the Tutsi would not have supported any force that opposed the two regimes. Moreover, there was also the ethnic element and the need to belong to one's country that rallied the Tutsi behind the RPF. It is against the above background of dual ethnicity and ethnic ranking that the 1959 events were wrongly regarded by Hutu as a revolution. It is not surprising also that the effective challenge of the Habyarimana's dictatorial regime by the RPF was seen by some Hutu as an attempt by the RPF to carry out a counterrevolution.

It is in this legacy of ethnic ranking that the Belgian colonialists should shoulder the blame for creating ethnic groups, for institutionalizing them into rigid and ranked identities, and for hatching the 'Hamitic myth' as an ideology to reinforce this ranking. Although the ideology of genocide was preached for a long time in Rwanda, and although this had a big impact on the population, it is in this legacy of ethnic ranking, and in dual ethnicity that the ease with which the genocide ideology was accepted by the Hutu masses must be understood.

6. The Interaction of Factors that Led to Genocide

The ideology of genocide was hatched and popularized by the Hutu extremist elite who saw in genocide a strategy to cling to power. This factor would enable them to acquire more resources and to protect the resources that they had acquired. Given the calls that had been made for the extermination of the Tutsi, the preparations and plans for genocide that had been made by Hutu

extremist elites, and the fact that they later put them into practice, there is no doubt that some Hutu extremist elites were driven by the hatred that they had for the Tutsi. Although these extremist elite were not necessarily many, they were very effective in ideological mobilization and in extermination campaigns.

The elite interests and the type of mobilization that they used coincided with the interests and the fears of the masses: to acquire more resources especially land, to protect the land that they had, and fear of prosecution or revenge. Having committed crimes, some members of both the elite and masses, including the militias, feared for their physical security. This factor was intensified by the deliberate and negative propaganda by the elite regarding the intentions of the RPF and the Tutsi. This was reinforced by past experiences especially the 1959 events and thereafter. Dual ethnicity and the legacy of ethnic ranking also made it easy for the ideology of genocide to be easily accepted by the masses. The long history of impunity and the ideology of genocide also explain why coercion was easily used by the extremist Hutu elite. The fact that the Rwandan state was highly centralized also enabled the elite to effectively mobilize, coordinate, and direct the genocidal massacres. All these factors combined to produce the horrific 1994 genocide.

V.   CONCLUSION

Prior to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, there was a general notion that Rwanda was a homogeneous nation-state. The debate as to whether the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are ethnic groups or not continues not only in academic circles, but also among the Rwandese themselves. Those who argue that there are no ethnic groups in Rwanda base their argument on the fact that Rwandese have lived together for a long time and that they share a lot in common. Indeed, this is a fact that cannot be denied. As Uvin puts it, "they spoke the same language, they believed in the same god, shared the same culture, belonged to the same clans, and lived side by side throughout the country."[181] It should be added that they intermarried.   However, these factors do not confirm that the three categories belong to the same ethnic group, or that they are not ethnic groups at all. What matters is whether or not they have separate consciousness especially regarding their decent.   The Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa generally distinct group consciousness and believe that there are distinct categories of Rwandese, and therefore they belong to different ethnic groups. Not until this belief changes, will they cease to be ethnic groups. Had the Rwandese been one people, Rwanda would not have witnessed such a horrific genocide. Ethnicity cannot be wished away by pointing to the similarities that Rwandese have in common. Nor can it be wished away by reminding the Rwandese about the peaceful coexistence that

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[181] Uvin, op. cit. , p.14.

they enjoyed for a long time. Moreover, the debate as to whether the Rwandese are ethnic groups or not tends to lead to erroneous notions regarding the causes of ethnic conflict. As Wicker puts it, "far from being causes of conflict, these categories [ethnic groups] merely provide the forms under which such conflicts are enacted."[182] In short, the conflict in Rwanda was more than the mere construction of ethnic groups. Other categories can also provide a form in which a conflict can be enacted. For sure, the Rwandese who participated in genocide did not necessarily know the difference for instance between ethnic group, clan, tribe, nationality, and nation. Although they used the ideology of racism, the people who participated in genocide were not necessarily racists.

The interests and roles of colonialists and the Catholic Church, the Rwandese elite, and the masses are all necessary to analyze the causes of the genocide. There is no completely homogenous and egalitarian society and the Rwandan society was not an exception even before colonialism. Its political and socio-economic organization was a fact that the colonialists exploited to divide the Rwandese into rigid, ranked, institutionalized, and polarized ethnic groups. They did this through sowing racial ideology, favoring one group over another, issuance of identity cards specifying one's ethnic group, political centralization

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[182] Rudolf-Hans Wicker, ed., *Rethinking Nationalism and Ethnicity: The Struggle for Meaning and Order in Europe*, (New York: BERG Publishers, 1997), p.145.

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and tight system of indirect rule, policies aimed at maximum and efficient economic exploitation, and finally through active mobilization of the Hutu against the Tutsi they had initially favored.

Like colonialism elsewhere, the interests of the colonialists in Rwanda were very clear; maximum exploitation of resources and leaving a system in place that would enable them to continue with that exploitation even after they had left. It is in this context that their actions and policies should be understood.

More than the colonialists, however, it is the Rwandese who should bear most of the blame for the crime of genocide. Thirty-two years after independence, the Rwandese had no excuse for massacring each other in the name of colonial machinations. Although the history of any society is important in understanding the causes of conflict, it is the contemporary issues that are even more important. As Ignattief correctly observes, "it is not how the past dictates to the present, but how the present manipulates the past that is decisive."[183] In Rwanda, the postcolonial leadership worked hard to keep the bad past alive through divisive policies and propaganda. Without different but complementary roles played by both the elite and the masses, the genocide as witnessed in Rwanda would not have taken place.

The Hutu extremist elite used different channels to disseminate hate propaganda and to incite people to commit acts of violence against the Tutsi and

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[183] Michael Ignattief, "The Balkan Tragedy," New York Review of Books, 13 May 1993, in Hardin, op. cit. , p. 161.

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moderate Hutu. They created, trained and armed the militias and death squads. They encouraged impunity by refusing to prosecute the killers and by rewarding them with political posts and other incentives. Once genocide started, the elite reinforced and assisted the killers in all possible ways. Not only did they transmit orders and supervise the killings, but they also lured the Tutsi into collection centers in which they assured them protection as they alerted the killers. In their mobilization and killing campaigns, elites' rapid and easy access to the population was made possible by the presence of a highly centralized state, relatively developed infrastructure, large number of radios in the country and lack of language barriers.

The elite opted for genocide partially as a rational action aimed at maximizing their interests and especially maintaining the state power and also guaranteeing their physical security. Having tried a number of strategies to respond to the threats emanating from the RPF, the internal opposition, and the external forces, the Hutu extremists settled on genocide. They saw in genocide a strategy to defeat or strongly weaken the RPF and the moderate opposition parties, while strengthening the Hutu solidarity. "The genocide resulted from the deliberate choice of the modern elite to foster hatred and fear to keep itself in power."[184]

However, the above argument does not fully explain the reasons for the genocide. The planning, organization, and targeting of the Tutsi for no reason

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[184] Forges, op. cit. , p. 1.

other than their ethnic group, cannot simply be regarded as a strategy in response to threat of loss of power by the elite. The extremists used the opportunity of gaining access to state power to systematically and indiscriminately kill the Tutsi.

The Hutu masses who included Interahamwe militias played a big role in genocide. They hunted for Tutsi everywhere they were hiding and they did much of the killing. "Others did not kill but chose not to see."[185] The fact that the peasants are less knowledgeable than the elite, and the fact that they were to some extent coerced into killing is a fact that cannot be denied. However, the fact that they were manipulated into killing simply because they were ignorant and unable to identify their interests is not persuasive at all. Moreover, such an explanation suggests that those who did not kill were less ignorant, a fact that is hard to ascertain. The masses like the elite are rational actors. They participated in genocide because of their interests: acquiring resources especially land and the concern for personal security. Moreover, the acquisition of land after killing the owners was not new in Rwanda. In short, the interests of the masses were juxtaposed upon past experiences and the history that the country has gone through. The history of cyclic massacres and impunity made the Hutu masses fear for their lives. These factors were reinforced by elite mobilization that was aimed at reinforcing the interests and fears of the masses,

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[185] ibid. , p. 4.

and instilling in them hatred for the Tutsi. "As the authorities played on popular fears and greed, some people picked up their machetes and came readily."[186]

At the same time, the acceptance of the ideology of genocide by the masses was made easier by dual ethnicity, the history of ethnic ranking, and cohabitation. In short, although it was the extremist elite who promoted the ideology of genocide and mobilized the people to put it into practice, it was mainly the interests and the fears of the elite and the masses, coupled with the intent by some extremists to exterminate a whole ethnic group, that interacted to produce the 1994 genocide. This largely explains why Rwanda's genocide was so intense. There cannot be a genocide without a genocide ideology. However, the explanation for genocide must go beyond the ideology. It is imperative that the reasons behind that ideology be analyzed and clearly understood. The Hutu peasants may harbor some negative feelings about Tutsi, but as Hardin notes, "they also have living memories of cooperation."[187] The fact that the Tutsi were killed because they originated from Ethiopia was only a pretext by both the extremist elite and those who are guilty of the massacres, just like the excuse of ignorance has obscured the real issues behind the participation in the Rwandan genocide by the masses. While recognizing the relatively high level of ignorance among the masses, a factor that is by no means exclusively unique to this particular group, this thesis notes that an explanation that attributes the

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[186] ibid.

[187] Hardin, op. cit. , p. 170.

participation of the masses in genocide solely to ignorance serves to preempt a debate about the real issues that were behind the genocide. It also tends to give the impression that education is the only answer to such problems. This thesis does not intend to go into policy recommendations, something that the author thinks can be his follow-on research. As a final remark, suffice to state that to partially explain an act of violence such as genocide, is not necessarily to justify it. Rather, it is to understand it. There can never be any justification whatsoever for genocide and other crimes against humanity.

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