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Mass Murder and Motivation:
The Rwandan Genocide



Mass Murder and Motivation: The Rwandan Genocide

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award
of the degree of Master of Arts in Jewish Studies

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University of Cape Town

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Declaration:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:

Signed by candidate

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The motivation for writing this thesis has its roots in a highly interesting course on Holocaust and mass murder convened and led by Professor Milton Shain at the University of Cape Town in 2003. The seminar was the main reason why I choose to write this thesis. I am truly grateful to my supervisor Professor Shain for letting me do this project and for valuable comments along the process of writing it. Thank you also to my co supervisor Professor Mohamed Adhikari for helpful comments on the thesis. I also would like to thank Janine Blumberg, at the Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies and Veronica Belling, at the Jewish Studies Library for their assistance.

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Abstract

This project is about mass murderers and the motivation for becoming perpetrators of mass murder. The Rwandan genocide is chosen as a case study. The project strives to explain what seems inexplicable; why tens of thousands of Rwandan men and women turned into killers during the hundred days of genocide in 1994, most of them with no history of murderous behaviour. This project is a testimony to the human capacity for evil.

The motivations behind the Rwandan perpetrators were probably not unique. Similar motivations were important to different mass murders. Other mass murders, most importantly the Holocaust, serve as a theoretical and empirical backdrop throughout this thesis. This adds a comparative dimension to the study.

This thesis is divided into six chapters with the main focus upon three motivational factors behind the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide: history, ideology and ordinary human traits. The first chapter introduces us to the topic of mass murder and discusses methodological issues in connection with the thesis. A qualitative analysis will be dominant in investigating the data; the data was gathered through interviews undertaken in Rwanda, South Africa and Norway, reports, documentaries, court verdicts and other secondary sources. In the second chapter, perpetrators behind one massacre, the killing of several thousand Tutsis at the Catholic Church in Nyarubuye, speak about their motivations for becoming perpetrators. The third chapter gives an introduction to the history of Rwanda and shows how distinction between Hutus and Tutsis became an ever more important part of Rwandan society from pre colonial times until the 1994 genocide. The fourth chapter builds an understanding of the importance of ideology for the perpetrators involved in the mass murder. The fifth chapter shows that general psychological traits were important for turning tens of thousands of Hutus into mass murderers. As we shall see in the conclusion, a history of distinction, Hutu Power ideology and ordinary psychological traits were all factors motivating the perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

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I

Introduction

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It was just an ordinary day in April; it was hot, humid and there was not much to do. 17-year-old Chris was a little bored when Valentine and two of her friends came to visit unexpectedly in Nyamirambo, the Muslim quarter of Kigali, where Chris lived. Marcel, a taxi driver, gave the three girls a lift from Gitega to Nyamirambo for free. Business was slow, Marcel joined them for most of the evening. In Nyamirambo they all went to the Café Lyon for a soda. Café Lyon was the most popular place to hang out for young people in Nyamirambo, the only real club in the area. However, Café Lyon was almost empty when they arrived around eight. It was simply too expensive for most Rwandans to go out often. An hour or so and a couple of sodas later they decided to leave for the best club in Kigali, Kigali Night. Chris never saw him there, but President Habyarimana's son, Jean Pierre, was said to be the owner of Kigali Night and a Hutu extremist. Chris and his friends were all Tutsis, or at least their ID cards said so. Still they all went to Kigali Night with no fear. They had come to enjoy life. No matter Tutsi, Hutu or Twa, people were enjoying themselves in the best club in the country. The club was also known to be a hot spot among the UN soldiers stationed in Kigali.

Chris and his friends tried to avoid talking about politics. This evening was no different. The situation in Rwanda was tense. It was common to hear shooting in the streets of Kigali, especially at night. Security forces were driving around town on their fast motorbikes shooting at opponents to the government. They'd better not get involved.

Chris was not "really" Tutsi, he was rather of "mixed" origin. His father was Tutsi, his mother Hutu. Thus, Chris was given the same classification as his father. So said the rule. Chris' mother was married for the second time. His mother's first husband was a Hutu, therefore, their children were given Hutu ID. On this first Wednesday in April 1994, this classification meant that Chris should die because of being born Tutsi; his half brothers and sisters were allowed to live.¹

In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, one question troubles Rwandans and foreigners more than any other, what motivated perpetrators of the genocide to want Chris and hundreds of thousands of fellow Rwandans dead during 100 days of frenzied killing from April to July 1994? This is also the question I ask in this project: - what motivates leaders and ordinary people to become perpetrators of mass murder?

¹ Interviews and private conversations with Chris, Kigali, September 2004.

1.1 Mass Murder and the Rwandan Genocide

Mass murder is a massive catastrophe; a high number of people are involved and the suffering is enormous. People from all over the world are condemning mass murders like ethnic-cleansings, genocides and massacres as utterly wrong. Still, mass murder is not a rare phenomenon, was certainly not so in the past, and will most probably not vanish from this planet in the near future. In different places at different times, leaders and ordinary people seem to lose their moral compass and turn into mass murderers, people that under other circumstances most probably would have condemned mass murder become perpetrators. What motivates people to become mass murderers? Drawing mainly on data from the Rwandan genocide, with the Holocaust² for comparison, this thesis will address this complex and highly disturbing question.

The Holocaust, the mass murder of six million Jews during the Second World War, made the world say “never again”.³ Never again would such an atrocious crime be allowed to take place anywhere in the world. The mass murder was defined as a crime against humanity by the Nuremberg courts⁴ and later by the United Nations (UN). The UN gave the crime a name, genocide⁵, and developed a convention on prevention and punishment of the crime.⁶ Also

² The term Holocaust comes from the Greek word “burnt whole”. Holocaust is not a well chosen word for the state sponsored Nazi mass murder where Jews, Gypsies and the handicapped were targeted as such. However, the common understanding of the word justifies its use. If not otherwise indicated, the Holocaust does in this thesis equal the mass murder of approximately six million Jews during the Second World War. For details see i.e. Donald Niewyk and Francis Nicosia, “Defining the Holocaust”, in *The Colombia Guide to the Holocaust* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2000), 45-52.

³ “Never again” is a phrase that was originally meant to say “never again a Jewish tragedy like the Holocaust”. Today “never again” has become a slogan in connection to the prevention of genocide and mass murder in general.

⁴ During the Nuremberg trials, Nazi perpetrators were tried for crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, war crimes and conspiracy to commit those crimes. See Yale Law School, *Charter of the International Military Tribunal* [Available online] www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/imt/proc/imtconst.htm, [12.09.2005].

⁵ Raphael Lemkin first coined the term genocide in 1943 to describe the Holocaust. He saw then no exciting term adequate to describe Nazi extermination policies in Europe. The neologism genocide is put together by the Greek word *genos*, meaning race or tribe, and the Latin word *cide*, meaning killing. For details, Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1944).

⁶ Based on Lemkin’s definition and the Nuremberg Trials, UN adopted *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* in 1948. According to the convention, genocides are distinguishable from all other mass murders and crimes by the intention behind them and are acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such. See United Nations, “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”, *General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948* [Available online] www.ohchr.org/english/law/genocide.htm, [27.10.2004].

other types of mass murder of civilians were made crimes by the UN in the years immediately following the Second World War. According to international human rights law, building upon the principles of the Nuremberg courts, killing of civilians is under no circumstances acceptable. Nevertheless, humankind failed its promise. Mass murders continued to terrorise people across the world, also after the establishment of the UN. During the last sixty years there have been mass murders in Rwanda, Burundi, East Timor, Darfur, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Vietnam, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Iraq and Kosovo, just to name a few.

One of the last large scale mass murder in the 20th century left approximately one million people dead⁷ in the small landlocked African country of Rwanda.⁸ In 1994, during hundred-days of killing, Tutsis were killed for being “born” Tutsi. Hutus favouring equality and democracy for all Rwandans were also targeted. The UN regarded the intention to kill all Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide similar to the intention to kill all Jews during the Holocaust; both mass murders are therefore named genocide. The two cases of mass murder show that people in different settings have a similar and frightening potential for committing great evil.

It would be wrong to say that the only motivation to kill all members of the targeted groups as such, babies and young men alike, was similar during the Rwandan and German genocides. There were also important similarities in more general motivation behind the perpetrators. These motivation factors are also relevant when looking into other cases of mass murders. This does not mean that the motivations behind all perpetrators during all mass murders are identical all over the world. However, there seem to be similar traits in motivation behind every person committing mass murder. Motivation factors seem to repeat themselves. We can not allow ourselves to overlook this knowledge in the fight against mass murders. In this thesis I shall argue that history, ideology and ordinary human psyche seem to be important motivations behind perpetrators during mass murders. This I shall show by drawing on

⁷ For further discussion on numbers of killed see i.e. Linda Melvern, *A People Betrayed. The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004 [2000]), 222-3; Christopher Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 32.

⁸ The Rwandan genocide was not the last mass murder or massacre but the last large scale mass murder and genocide of the 20th century. The last mass murder of the century happened in East Timor when hundreds of people were murdered in 1999 just before the UN organised referendum on independence. Militias together with the Indonesian army tried to fight independence violently. This did not stop the majority of the population (79 percent) to vote for independence in September the same year. See Ben Kiernan *Cover-Up and Denial of Genocide* [available online] www.yale.edu/gsp/publications/aborigines.pdf [01.09.2005].

examples mainly from the Rwandan genocide but also other cases of mass murder.

Much of the theoretical framework for this thesis is based on theories by Holocaust scholars. There were obvious differences between the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust. In much popular knowledge on the Holocaust it is often assumed that all Jews perished in far off concentration camps where relatively few perpetrators, only acting upon strict orders, were needed for an industrial-like killing. Tutsis on the other hand, as often believed, were all killed in their own houses or in their own neighbourhood by a large number of enthusiastically self-appointed perpetrators that usually came from the same area as their victims where everybody could see what was happening. Even though both mass murders fulfil the UN criteria of being genocides, is it really fruitful to use the same theories on motivations behind people that killed their own neighbours in the local school or church with a machete and people that operated the extermination camps of Nazi Germany?

If these stereotypical understandings of the two genocides are true, they would potentially be major obstacles in employing Holocaust theories to investigate the motivation behind the Rwandan genocide. However, these understandings are only partly true. Not all Holocaust victims were killed in closed and far off death and concentration camps. There were many instances of round-up mass shootings carried out by German soldiers and policemen of defenceless Jews especially in Eastern Europe. These perpetrators were face to face with their victims, there is no way that other inhabitants could not have noticed the killings. Shootings made out a much larger part of the killing strategy during the Holocaust than is popularly known. Probably more than 25 % of the victims during the Holocaust were shot. In comparison about 50 % perished in the gas chambers of the well organised extermination camps.⁹

The killings in Rwanda were not spontaneous acts committed by primitive tribesmen; it was rather a well organised state orchestrated mass murder. During the Rwandan genocide, soldiers, policemen, militias and civilians were organised into killing squads. In investigating motivations behind perpetrators during mass murders, we must not let ourselves be blinded by immediate differences. After all, it is not the killing itself I shall focus upon in this thesis; it is the intention behind the killing; it is the motivation triggering the genocides that shall be looked into.

⁹ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985 [1961]), 1219.

There are usually a high number of perpetrators involved during mass murders. In this thesis, I shall investigate motivations behind the perpetrators directly involved in the killing.¹⁰ During the Rwandan genocide state leaders turned the state apparatus into a destructive tool of annihilation. Ordinary people living there seem to have lost their usual sense of right and wrong and turned into mass murderers. This interplay between high rank leaders, ordinary people and others not intervening ultimately made genocide possible. But why did they do it? To answer the question about motivations behind the Rwandan perpetrators, I have developed three hypothesises:

3 } **Historical approach:** *The perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide were motivated by a long history of distinction;*

4 } **Ideological approach:** *As a result of the Hutu Power ideology, the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide looked upon themselves as qualitatively different from their victims. Thus, Tutsis were seen as legal targets of mass annihilation;*

5 } **Psychological approach:** *Ordinary people have the capacity of committing mass murder; the Rwandan perpetrators were motivated by common human weaknesses.*

The three hypothesises are discussed in different chapters. This does not mean that historical, ideological and psychological motivations should or can be seen totally independent from each other. In this thesis, I shall strive to show that the motivations behind the Rwandan perpetrators were many, complex and interconnected.

¹⁰ There were many more making genocide possibly, this group is often labeled bystanders. Space does unfortunately not allow me to investigate their motivations for inaction. During the Rwandan genocide, the group of bystanders included powerful Western leaders that looked another way, not wanting to or lacking the courage to intervene. According to the UN convention on genocide, the world is committed to intervene in cases of genocide. This complicates the use of the term, it is not always, rather seldom it would seem, convenient for UN member states to take action in the name of humanity. Further reading on the international community and genocide: Samantha Power, *"A problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*. (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Sondre Bjotveit. 2005. *The Success and Failure of the United Nations Multifunctional Peace Operations: A Comparative Case Study of Conflict Transformation in Mozambique and Rwanda*. Mphil thesis submitted at Department of Political Studies, University of Cape Town, 2005.

1.2 Methodology

Before we investigate different motivation factors for mass murder more closely, the methodological implications for this thesis will be examined. The aim of this thesis is to find out more about motivations behind mass murderers. The empirical data is mainly from the Rwandan genocide. But data and theories from other mass murders are also employed, especially the Holocaust. Some Holocaust scholars, like Steven Katz¹¹, argue for the uniqueness of the Jewish catastrophe. Other scholars, like Elie Wiesel¹², even deny the fruitfulness of comparing the Holocaust with other mass murders at all. I agree with Yehuda Bauer who argues that the latter approach towards explaining the Holocaust would make the genocide unhistorical, not human. It would make the event theological and mystical.¹³ We need to understand more about motivation behind perpetrators that orchestrate and carry out mass murder in order to be better equipped in the fight against such great evil in the future. In order to do so, we need to compare different cases of mass murder. Thus, perspectives on motivations and mass murder must be of a comparative character and under no circumstances made unhistorical.

It is not possible to look into every aspect of mass murder in one single thesis. Choices have to be made, choices which have important methodological implications. In this thesis, the main focus is on the Rwandan genocide and on perpetrators and their motivations for organising and taking part in that mass murder. We shall look closely at methodological implications in connection to the various sources on which I have decided to base this thesis.

The main sources for this thesis are obviously found in connection with motivation factors behind perpetrators during the Rwandan genocide. Acts often reflect motivation. However, similar acts might have different motivation factors behind them. Sources on motivation are gathered from interviews, radio and TV documentaries and transcripts, web pages, newspaper articles and secondary sources as well as reports.

¹¹ Steven Katz, *The Holocaust in Historical Context*. Vol. 1. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

¹² Elie Wiesel, "Now We Know" in Richard Arens, ed., *Genocide in Paraguay* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976), 165.

¹³ Yehuda Bauer, *rethinking the holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001)39.

In 2004, I carried out 30 interviews in South Africa, Rwanda and Norway for this thesis. The interviews lasted between thirty minutes and three hours, depending on the situation and emotional status of the informant. It was relatively easy to find people willing to talk in all of the three countries. Most of my Rwandan informants in South Africa and Norway were refugees; a few were exchange students or connected to NGOs. I met more reluctance to be interviewed in Norway than in South Africa. The refugees in Norway were apparently more scared of reprisals by Norwegian authorities than refugees in South Africa were of reprisals by those authorities. In Rwanda, I interviewed two different groups of people; people I randomly met and got to know in the streets of Kigali and people I actively contacted who were employed by relevant NGOs and state institutions.

After the Rwandan genocide, perpetrators were tried for their crimes at different levels. Leading perpetrators during the Rwandan genocide have or are about to be held responsible for their acts at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha, Tanzania. Valuable information about the motivations behind the leading perpetrators is available in testimonies from these courts. There were lesser trials carried out in the aftermath of the 1994 mass slaughter in Rwanda. There is still relatively little information available from these lesser Gacaca¹⁴ trials. In fact, many cases have yet to be brought to court, and it will take years to finish all the cases. I interviewed a few people directly involved in working with these lesser trials in Rwanda. Unfortunately, I was not able to arrange interviews in Rwandan jails. However, there are some valuable interviews and transcripts available with Rwandan verdicts telling their story; these are mainly carried out by various human rights organisations and journalists.

One massacre which has been thoroughly documented¹⁵ is the one of several thousand Tutsis at the Catholic Church in the eastern town of Nyarubuye, in the province of Kibungo. In the

¹⁴ Gacaca, literally “the flattened grass under the elders’ tree” is a traditional Rwandan court reintroduced in the country after the genocide in order to try all verdicts in Rwandan jails. According to Fatuma Ndingiza, Executive Secretary of National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of Rwanda, Gacaca was used in the past and designed to be reconciliatory, restorative as well as community participatory. See paper presented by Fatuma Ndingiza to the *Conference on Policy Research* in Ottawa, Canada on Thursday, November 21, 2002; Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season. The Killers in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Picador, 2005) 248.

¹⁵ One important source from the massacre is the documentary *The Triumph of Evil* by Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, a *FRONTLINE* documentary, Air Date: January 26, 1999 [Available online] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/spl/hi/programmes/panorama/transcripts/killers.txt>.

second chapter of this thesis we shall look in closer detail at that particular massacre. Motivations behind the perpetrators involved there are analysed as a preliminary investigation of the hypotheses and the relevance of these. In the following chapters we shall undertake a thorough analysis and discussion of the three hypotheses with the Holocaust as backdrop. Perpetrators of the massacre at Nyarubuye will be quoted throughout this thesis. Even though the massacre is well documented and provides much valuable information, it is theoretically possible that the motivations behind the perpetrators committing that specific massacre were different from other places in Rwanda. Thus, I am also referring to empirical data from other massacres around the country.

Interviews and testimonies are important sources of information for this thesis. I find it helpful to look into these sources in three stages. The stages, or levels of interpretation and reflection, could be named: self-understanding, common sense and theoretical interpretation. At the self-understanding level, I strive to recapitulate what the informants themselves understand by what they say. The framework for interpretation is, therefore, totally within the informant's self-understanding. The second layer, common sense, is a public layer. Here I try to use a common framework that other informants or people in similar categories also understand as relevant while investigating the data. On this level, the findings are compared with findings from other research projects on the same topic. During the third phase, theoretical interpretation, I try to establish an extensive frame for interpretation in continuance of what the informant says. This implies a comprehensive reflection upon the use of theory and possibly the construction of new theory.¹⁶

There are two main methodological approaches when analysing data, namely qualitative and quantitative. Simply put, quantitative studies are concerned with analysing numbers, while qualitative studies focus on reflection and context. A combination of the two approaches is preferable. Numbers and figures are relevant for this thesis; however, a qualitative analysis will be dominant in investigating the motivation factors behind the perpetrators during the Rwandan genocide.

Qualitative methodology is a collective description of different techniques or methodological approaches to a research field. Observation, participation, interview and document analysis

¹⁶ See Paul Otto Brunstad, *Ungdom og livstolkning* (Trondheim, Tapir forlag, 1998), 41.

are the most common qualitative methods. As already mentioned, I have chosen interviews and document analysis as key research tools in collecting data about the Rwandan genocide. Thus, I will take a closer look at implications following the use of qualitative methodology and analysis.

Qualitative methodology seems to gain importance where hard data, or quantitative methodology, used to dominate the field. There are probably many reasons for this. Qualitative data more so than quantitative, has provided us with the possibility to disclosing local variations and contexts. This might be on village or national level. In this way, qualitative data has offered the possibility to rethink stereotypes and predisposed assumptions among researchers and others. In using qualitative methodology it is possible to find new and decisive structures and traits in people's understanding of themselves and the world surrounding them that numbers cannot do. Sensitivity towards informant's meanings and constructions of the world is important in studies like this. It is likely that a qualitative approach will enable us to detect motivations that a quantitative approach would not. Nevertheless, critical questions need to be asked in connection to the use of qualitative methodology. There exists a problem of generalisation. Is it possible to say that the information gained from interviewing a relatively small group of informants says something about people in the society in general? I do believe it is possible to generalise from limited material; however, it is important always to be careful in the analysis of qualitative data.

II

Genocide in Rwanda

On the sixth day of April 1994, President Major General Juvénal Habyarimana of Rwanda was murdered. At about 20:20 hours, two French-made ground to air missiles downed the presidential plane. President Habyarimana was returning home from a subregional summit in Dar es Salaam, where he had committed himself to implement the Arusha Peace Agreement,¹⁷ when he was killed. The killers are not known.¹⁸ Surreal but true, the plane crashed like a ball of fire into the president's own garden. Not only the Rwandan President was killed in the crash, but practically everybody else responsible for the country's security were killed together with him.¹⁹ This caused a power vacuum in Rwanda.

The United Nations had a peace keeping force (UNAMIR) stationed in Rwanda to monitor the Arusha Peace Agreement. Lt. General Roméo Dallaire was force commander of the UN mission. The Canadian General was committed to the task, but became increasingly concerned about the lack of resources and the weak UN mandate.²⁰ However, the UN troops were officially welcomed by both parties of the peace agreement; the National Revolutionary

¹⁷ From October 1990, the government (led by the National Revolutionary Movement for Democracy and Development, MRND) had been at war with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The Arusha Peace Agreement, an agreement between the RPF and the Rwandan government, was structured around five pillars; the establishment of the rule of law, power-sharing, repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced people, the integration of armed forces and other miscellaneous provisions. The agreement is discussed in further detail in chapter 3.5 *Hutu Power, Tutsi Guerrilla and Peace Negotiations*.

¹⁸ The question "who killed the president?" is highly disputed. The answer you get often depends on who you ask. It might have been extremists in the president's own party, MRND that opposed the peace negotiations. That the missiles that killed the president were French produced, MRND was closely associated to the French, could indicate that Hutus killed the president. On the other hand, why should (former) friends kill a relatively beloved president? And after all there was a war in Rwanda; RFP fighters could very well have fired the missiles. Hutus tend to believe that Tutsis killed the president Tutsis tend to believe that Hutus killed the president.

¹⁹ Political counsellor Juvénal Renzaho, the head of presidential security Colonel Elie Sagatwa and the army Chief General Déogratias Nsabimana died along with President Habyarimana. On the top of this, the minister of defence, Augustin Bizimana and the head of army intelligence Colonel Aloys Ntiwiragabo were attending an Olympic committee meeting in the Cameroon. The President of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira was also killed in the plane crash.

²⁰ UNAMIR consisted of 2 548 military personnel (task: monitor and verify the cease fire, supervise the integration of the Rwandan army and the Tutsi rebel army, and monitor the overall security situation), 60 civilian police monitors (task: monitor and verify the performances of the Rwandan police), and some civilian election observers (task: supervise the elections for presidency and parliament). Lt. General Dallaire originally requested 5 500 personnel but after receiving news that this was unrealistic; the French force commander called for a significant smaller force of about 2 500 personnel. The UN soldiers were allowed to use military force only in cases of self defence. When genocide broke out, the UN personnel had no mandate to protect civilian Tutsis by arms. See; United Nations, "United Nations Observer Mission Uganda Rwanda (UNOMOR); United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR)", in *The Blue Helmets: a Review of United Nations Peace-keeping* (New York: United Nations Publications, 1996) 343-5; See Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Arrow books, 2005), 75.

Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). At the same time, segments of Hutu extremists never seriously supported the negotiations; Mathieu Ngirumpatse, President of the MRND at the time, even publicly compared African peace agreements to toilet papers.²¹ Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR), a violent anti-Tutsi party refused any compromise with the RPF, they challenged the peace agreement, and acted as a spoiler to destroy the peace process.²²

The same night as the President was killed, General Dallaire was asked to attend a crisis meeting with Colonel Théoneste Bagosora and other Rwandan high ranking army officials and officers.²³ Most officers did not know what to do in the power vacuum that opened up in Rwanda following the death of Habyarimana. According to the Arusha Agreement, the next in line to take over power in the country would be the prime minister. At the meeting, General Dallaire insisted this should happen.²⁴ But even the pro-peace deal officers opposed this. Everybody seemed to agree that Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a moderate Hutu from the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR) committed to the peace process, was too weak to lead the country in such a difficult situation. Therefore the question of who was going to lead the crisis meeting became of large importance. Colonel Bagosora was more than willing to take this job. The majority of the officers opposed him. However, in lack of other strong candidates Bagosora forced his will through. In this way Bagosora took control over Rwanda. Bagosora was director of the ministry of defence, had strong links to the MRND, and was a Hutu Power extremist. Despite neglecting the Arusha Agreement, Bagosora denied that a coup d'état was underway and insisted that the army only sought to make things less chaotic until a new government could be installed.²⁵

Things went well for the Hutu Power leaders. The moderate officers at the crisis meeting did

²¹ See Interview with Philippe Gaillard [Available online] www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/gaillard.html. [10.10.2005].

²² Stephen John Stedman, "Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes", *International Security* Vol. 22 No 2 (1997): 20-6.

²³ During the meeting the news of president Habyarimana's death was confirmed. This was done by a staff officer who could not avoid smiling. See Dallaire *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, 223-4.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 224.

²⁵ *Ibid* 223; Greg Barker, *Ghosts of Rwanda* (PBS Paramount Home Video, 2004).

not show courage or cleverness enough to stop the extremists taking power and General Dallaire did not have the mandate to intervene by force. Hutu Power leaders could start their murderous task: a well planned attack on the Tutsi population. The murder of the President and his closest associates was a good opportunity for Hutu Power extremists to stop negotiations with the RPF and begin the real work: genocide. Prime Minister Uwilingiyimana was one of the first victims; she was killed on the 7th of April.²⁶ The Hutu extremists had to get rid of Hutu moderates before they could launch a full scale attack on all Tutsis.

Two days after the disastrous killing of President Habyarimana an interim government was announced. However, it was not a government of hope; it was a government of extremists. Jean Kambanda, a Hutu Power extremist from the MDR became new prime minister. In other words, both the late and the newly installed prime ministers were members of the same political party. MDR was formerly known as the main opposition party to the MRND, but in the new order extremists unified. Kambanda later said that the idea of an interim government came from Bagosora and the MRND.²⁷ Even if an interim government was not his idea, Kambanda was radically anti-Tutsi and believed that Tutsis were racially alien. He ended up administrating the genocide. The interim government used the old organizational divisions of the country into prefectures, sub-prefectures, communes, sectors and cells for spreading genocidal instructions throughout the country.

After months of warnings, rumours and prior attacks, the violence that erupted after President Habyarimana was killed, struck panic among Rwandans and foreigners alike. The speed of the first killings gave the impression of large numbers of attackers; however, during the first days of the genocide, their impact resulted more from brutality and organization than from great numbers.²⁸ Soldiers, National Police, former soldiers, communal police and the Interahamwe²⁹ played a large part in the slaughter. Soldiers and the national police led the first killings in the capital and in other urban centres, and later directed the major massacres throughout the country. These later massacres were marked by a high number of perpetrators.

²⁶ Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder. The Rwandan Genocide* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004 [2000]) 136-141.

²⁷ Ibid 170-1.

²⁸ Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story* (New York, Washington, London, and Brussels: Human Rights Watch, 1999) 6.

²⁹ Literally, "Those who attack together". A Hutu Power militia.

Many of the victims were gathered together in churches or public buildings, sometimes in sport arenas. This was done to make sure that as many as possible were killed - efficiently. The victims went to these sites under false assumptions, seeking refuge in factories of death. Civilian Hutus sometimes attended the massacres, sometimes they were forced. Interahamwe, originally the youth wing of the MRND but during the genocide some of the most notorious killers, forced or encouraged other Hutu civilians into killing. It was actually a goal of the Hutu leaders to make as many people as possible perpetrators. That way, there would be no going back for the Hutu population; Rwanda would become a country of killers.³⁰ When the genocide ended, 120 000 Rwandans were jailed under suspicion of being perpetrators.³¹

The Massacre at Nyarubuye

There were hundreds of massacres all across Rwanda during the genocide. We shall now look closer at testimonies made by perpetrators behind one such massacre, the killing of several thousand Tutsis at the Catholic Church in the eastern town of Nyarubuye between the 15 and 17 of April 1994. Based on testimonies from that massacre, this chapter shall serve as a first analysis of motivations behind the perpetrators directly involved in the Rwandan genocide. The focus will be upon how the perpetrators at Nyarubuye themselves explain why they became perpetrators of genocide.

The hilly landscape of Rwanda is the reason why Rwandans often refer to their home country as “pays des Mille Collines” or “Land of a Thousand Hills”. Nyarubuye is situated on one such hill. Rwandans are proud of their country. But as a young Rwandan woman born close to Nyarubuye told me “how can people talk about beauty in this country anymore? Far too many people were killed in 1994. It is a country of sadness.”³² The description “Mille Collines” did indeed lose much of its beauty in the early 1990s when the Hutu Power radio, Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTL), owned by extremists aired their Hutu Power ideology to the people.

³⁰ African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, Second Edition (London: African Rights, 1995) xx.

³¹ Gunnar Karlsen & Harald Stabell, *Rettsoppgjøret i Rwanda*. [Available Online] www.dagbladet.no/kultur/2004/11/08/413813.html. [23.10.2005].

³² Interview with Hamissa, Kigali 20.09.2004.

The killers at Nyarubuye partly blame their killing on national Hutu Power leaders and the Hutu Power ideology. However, Nyarubuye is a relatively isolated place. But the perpetrators at Nyarubuye got to know the ideology through the media and especially RTLM.³³ The popular radio station mixing trendy music with political propaganda became a powerful weapon for those who sought to spread hatred.³⁴ RTLM was owned and run by architects of the genocide and preached hatred.³⁵ Radio-waves were effective weapons for the extremists. RTLM did air descriptions of Tutsis and members of the opposition as Inyenzi³⁶ and named them enemies or traitors who deserved to die.³⁷ Silas Ngendahimana a member of the Interahamwe in Nyarubuye, blames Hutu Power ideology and the media for his hatred against Tutsis; “They kept on saying that the rebels, the cockroaches, are now the RPF, and that they are all Tutsis. That is when the hatred started, and, when you met a Tutsi, you would say it's your relatives who are trying to kill us.”³⁸

The Hutu Power ideology spread by leaders and ideologues seems to have found resonance among ordinary people at the ground level in Rwandan society. Lauren Renzaho which belonged to the local Interahamwe in Nyarubuye argues; “After our President died, Tutsis were hated. We didn't want to go back to the old days, so we had to kill every Tutsi wherever they were. That's the truth”.³⁹ According to Renzaho, ordinary Hutus did not want to go back to the time when Tutsis were having all the privileges and Hutus were their servants. “In the past they subjected Hutus to constant beating; they made them farm for them. That is what the Hutus didn't like.”⁴⁰

Hutus were warned that failure to support the Hutu state was betrayal. Many Rwandans felt

³³ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

³⁴ Pascal remembers that many listened to the RTLM even though they did not support the political agenda of the radio simply because they played the best music. Interview with Pascal, Kigali, 22.09.2004.

³⁵ RTLM was owned and run by people close to President Habyarimana.

³⁶ James M Smith, *A Time to Remember. Rwanda: Ten years after Genocide*. (Great Britain: The Aegis Institute, 2004) 13.

³⁷ ICTR documents case Ferdinand Nahimana, (ICTR-96-11). [Available online] <http://65.18.216.88/ENGLISH/cases/Nahimana/indictment/index.pdf>.

³⁸ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

they had no choice but to join the militia. The most important such militia was Interahamwe. Many Hutus felt they had to avoid turning into moderate Hutus,⁴¹ who were also regarded as enemies. The Hutu Ten Commandments said that any contact with a Tutsi is a death sin. The commandments were first published in Kangura, an extremist newspaper. The commandments drew a line between righteous Hutus on the one side, and Hutu enemies on the other.⁴² Hutus not accepting the absolute segregation were also enemies to the Hutu Power ideology. Many Rwandans of mixed origin with Hutu ID cards felt they had to show they were on the right side by being especially enthusiastic during the killing.⁴³ How to deal with the enemy was made clear in the media and during several political speeches and meetings: the Tutsis were to be executed.

In the months before the genocide, the Interahamwe carried out “work” that was well known to them. Umuganda or communal work obligation was an important institution in Rwandan society. Patrolling streets and cutting bushes and trees were all well known Umuganda tasks in Nyarubuye. Forced work for the common good was an integrated part of everyday life. Gitera Rwamuhizi⁴⁴, an Interahamwe leader in Nyarubuye, explains “We were told to carry out night patrols and to set up road blocks. We waited there to see if we could find supporters of the RPF in our area.”⁴⁵ This was before the genocide started. To keep the village safe was a well known Umuganda occupation. The members of the Interahamwe got attuned to the task of patrolling the streets together. They were armed and had a clear target; RPF fighters. Even though Interahamwe in itself was a new institution in the Rwandan society, patrolling and other communal work was not.

The members of the Interahamwe were also promised rewards for becoming militias. For many, especially young men, in a country with very few chances of ever getting a well paid

⁴¹ Interview with Joseph, leader of the African Evangelical Enterprise in Kigali, 22.09.2004.

⁴² For further reading P. Twagiramutara, “Ethnicity and Genocide in Rwanda”. In Okwudiba Nnoli, ed. *Ethnic Conflicts in Africa*, (Dakar, Senegal, 1998) 119-120.

⁴³ Interview with Joseph, leader of the African Evangelical Enterprise in Kigali, 22.09.2004.

⁴⁴ In 2003, a Gacaca court found Gitera Rwamuhizi guilty of genocide crimes. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison. 17 more people were found guilty for genocide crimes at Nyarubuye; they were sentenced to terms ranging from seven to 16 years in jail. United Nations, *Weekly Round-Up - IRINCEA-203: 05-Dec-03* [Available online] <http://iys.cidi.org/humanitarian/irin/ceafrica/03b/ix122.html> [08.09.2005].

⁴⁵ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

job or accumulating any wealth, the promise of even small rewards could be very tempting. Another local Interahamwe leader in Nyarubuye, Cyasa Habimana explains, "They [the Interahamwe] were taken by soldiers for training; they were given uniforms and some were given military boots". After receiving these rewards "they also started acting as soldiers."⁴⁶ Later, during the genocide, perpetrators were even promised the land and belongings of their victims.⁴⁷ On the 14 April 1994, the mayor of the Rusumo commune, where Nyarubuye was situated, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi promised that whoever killed a Tutsi could keep his belongings.⁴⁸

Most perpetrators during the Rwandan genocide were poor. Ngendahimana went to loot. Finding a woman alone in her house, he killed her, an act he regarded as less criminal than stealing a sack of milk powder.

When I entered the building I saw a sack of milk powder, and then I looked under the bed and I saw someone. I asked her to get out and she said: "Please have mercy on me." "Why should I?" I replied, and took her to the door. I continued hitting her, and she begged me for mercy. Mercy wasn't part of the deal. So I hit her and she died. Personally I would have had mercy on her but these people were handed over by the government. The government was responsible for their death. But I thought that if I let her live, I was very scared that she would testify against me for breaking into the building. That is why I took her outside and killed her.⁴⁹

Despite limited economic resources, Rwanda is a well structured society. Habimana took part in many meetings with higher ranked Interahamwe and political leaders before the genocide started. According to him "The most important thing discussed in all those meetings was how to create hatred between ordinary people, to get ordinary people to hate the RPF and what they called their accomplices, the Tutsis, inside the country."⁵⁰ At meetings near Nyarubuye orders were given to local commanders from the very top of government.

It was not only ideological and practical information that was spread through the Rwandan

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Interview with Joseph, leader of the African Evangelical Enterprise in Kigali, 22.09.2004.

⁴⁸ ICTR documents case Sylvestre Gacumbitsi ICTR-2001-64, [Available Online] <http://www.ictr.org/ENGLISH/cases/Gacumbitsi/index.htm> [07.09.2005].

⁴⁹ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

⁵⁰ Ibid.

hierarchy; weapons were also distributed through the same channels. Mayor Gacumbitsi convened a meeting between leaders at different administrative levels and party leaders of MRND and CDR in the commune, three days after the genocide started. In his position, Gacumbitsi exercised authority over both political and armed forces in the commune. During the meeting, Gacumbitsi proclaimed that weapons would be distributed in the region for the purpose of killing the Tutsi population. The next day, the mayor went to the local Rwandan armed forces (FAR) military camp where he received over 100 boxes of weapons. Communal officials who first received the weapons from the mayor himself distributed them further to certain members of the populace.⁵¹

On the 8th of April, only two days after President Habyarimana was killed, the newly installed interim government launched a nationwide campaign to mobilise the population against the Tutsi of Rwanda.⁵² Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus were killed at a high speed. Road blocks were set up by soldiers, police, Interahamwe and civilians. At roadblocks Tutsi ID cards equalled death. The local Interahamwe took control over the streets of Nyarubuye. Ngendahimana was working at one such roadblock. "If someone came, they would be asked for ID. If they didn't have it, they would be asked who their parents were. If the parents were known to be Hutu, they would pass. If they told us who their parents were and they were known to be Tutsi, we would kill them and bury them."⁵³

When news of the killings reached Nyarubuye, Tutsis began fleeing to the Catholic Church. Mayor Gacumbitsi had made a promise to the Tutsis of the area. "The mayor came and addressed a meeting at the church on about Wednesday, the 13th April. He asked the people still in the villages not to flee, and he told those of us who were already at the church that he would send soldiers to protect us."⁵⁴ The mayor was also driving around the commune announcing over the loudspeaker that Tutsi women and children in hiding could safely return to their homes.⁵⁵ Gacumbitsi was a respected mayor; people usually did what he asked. He

⁵¹ ICTR documents case Gacumbitsi ICTR-2001-64.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ ICTR documents case Gacumbitsi ICTR-2001-64.

was also respected among the Tutsi population. Pendo Uwimana was one of the Tutsis seeking refuge in the Church of Nyarubuye: “He [Gacumbitsi] was so powerful. Everything he ordered would be done immediately. You could see he was very powerful.”⁵⁶ However, Gacumbitsi was handpicked by the President; thus, he was a Hutu hardliner and a dedicated extremist who, otherwise, would not have gotten his job. Through mayors like him the state controlled its people. The mayors were in fact some of the most important men in Rwandan politics.⁵⁷

On the morning of April 15th Gacumbitsi set out for the Church at Nyarubuye, with him came soldiers and police. Along the way his bodyguards captured some Tutsis. One of bodyguards, Jonathan Berakumeyo, explains that “We took them [Tutsis] in front of the mayor. He said: “Why did you bring them? Did I send for them? Take them away and kill them straightaway.” He shot them. Gacumbitsi personally said to Hutus watching: “Look at this, I'm giving you an example.””⁵⁸ Several thousand Tutsis were gathered in and around the church at Nyarubuye. In addition to police and army personnel, Gacumbitsi had also given orders for local civilian Hutus to advance on the church. Among them were the peasant farmers and members of the Interahamwe, Renzaho, Ngendahimana and Rwamuhizi. They were all poor farmers living from small patches of land. Renzaho was father of ten children, Ngendahimana of two young children and Rwamuhizi of four.⁵⁹ Gacumbitsi led the attack. He addressed the crowd, both victims and attackers, with a megaphone, first telling the Hutus to leave the church.⁶⁰

Then Gacumbitsi ordered the attack, this was led by communal police and the Interahamwe.⁶¹ Rwamuhizi explains; “After selecting the people who could use guns and grenades they armed them. They said we should surround the church. They said one group should go north and another group should go south. There were so many of us we were treading on each

⁵⁶ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

⁵⁷ Des Forges, *Leave No One to Tell the Story*, 42.

⁵⁸ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

others heels.”⁶² According to Uwimana, Gacumbitsi had changed: “When I saw him [Gacumbitsi], he had changed. He used to hold meetings in Nyarubuye and you would see him as someone nice. But when I saw him at the church, he looked like an animal, like a real animal. He arrived and started handing out weapons to the soldiers and policemen.”

Rwamuhizi continues: “People who had grenades detonated them. Tutsis started screaming for help. As they were screaming, those with guns started to shoot.” Rwamuhizi’s neighbour, Flora Mukampore, miraculously survived the massacre.⁶³ According to Mukampore, the Tutsi men at Nyarubuye “were ready to fight, even though they didn’t have any weapons, so they died standing. You would not think they were all going to get killed because they were very many. We did not think they would get killed.”⁶⁴ However, there were also many perpetrators at Nyarubuye, probably as many as 7 000.⁶⁵ After the genocide, one of the killers, Renzaho, “felt like we’d done something terrible. I wonder how it got into my mind...”⁶⁶

Were the killers at Nyarubuye influenced by history, ideology and ordinary psychological traits as suggested in the introduction to this thesis? As we have seen, the perpetrators at Nyarubuye are drawing a clear distinction between Hutus and Tutsis. The perpetrators refer to history and ideology in explaining their action. However, such “reasons” can only partly explain their action. Some of the perpetrators at Nyarubuye have problems understanding why they did it themselves; here psychological mechanisms probably played a role.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Mukampore: “All the people they were cutting fell on me because I was near the door. My hair was all washed with blood. My body was drenched in blood and it was starting to dry on me, so the killers thought I’d been cut all over, they thought I was dead. I lay down on one side with only one eye open. I could hear a man come towards me and I guess he saw me breathe. He hit me on my head saying: “Is this thing still alive?” Immediately I heard my entire body say whaaagh. Something in my head changed forever. Everything stopped.” Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, “The Triumph of Evil”.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Fergal Keane, *Massacre at Nyarubuye church* [Available online] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/3582267.htm> [23.10.2005].

⁶⁶ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, “The Triumph of Evil”.

III

The History of Rwanda

To Rwandans – history seems to be very important. Thus, the historical context of the 1994 genocide is crucial to take into account when exploring motivations behind the perpetrators who committed it. In this chapter, we shall investigate my first hypothesis: *the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide were motivated by a long history of distinction.*

Discourses about difference played an important role in Rwanda before the 1994 genocide. Many Rwandans I talked with told me that there was a great deal of fear in the Hutu population before the genocide started. These fears were apparently based on more or less mistaken ideas about the Rwandan past. Fear of recurring Tutsi occupation of Hutu land and rights made genocide thinkable. Thus, in order to understand the motivations behind the Hutu perpetrators, it is important to look at how history was understood by them, the killers. Peoples personal narratives are after all reconstructed interpretations, sometimes inventions.⁶⁷ Narratives about history are not based on neutral facts alone. Nevertheless, and even though sources about Rwandan history are scarce, it is important to look critically at the different narratives presented. It is important to present an alternative to the manipulated history which fuelled the Rwandan population with genocidal hatred in 1994.

Even though it is crucial to understand the different Rwandan narratives, a discussion on Rwandan history must, as far as it is possible, be based on objectivity and facts.⁶⁸ Not only the emic⁶⁹ concern, to determine what people take to be truth and why, has to be examined. Every invention and cultural construction is dependent upon every previous construction, and constructions that defy all empirical evidence to the contrary tend not to survive in the long

⁶⁷ See Peter Munz, *The Shape of Time: A New Look at the Philosophy of History* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1977), 217.

⁶⁸ Liisa Malkki, in a study of mythico-historical constructions of Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania, argues that the Hamitic hypothesis should be understood solely as narrative, she is not challenging the fact. Taylor argues that we have to understand the Hamitic hypothesis as narrative, but that we also need to confront it as fact. See Liisa Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995); Christopher Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 30.

⁶⁹ According to Spike, who coined the words emic and epic, emic is what the native members of the culture takes to be meaningful cultural distinctions whereas epic is the academic conceptualisation and organisation of this knowledge. Anthropologist Marvin Harris uses the same terms. However, their understanding of objective knowledge differs. Whereas Spike argues that no objective knowledge is possible, he is thus not necessarily giving epic knowledge more weight than emic, Harris believes that it is possible to obtain objective knowledge also in social sciences, otherwise it would not be science. Kenneth L. Pike, *Language in relation to a unified theory of the structure of human behavior* (The Hague: Mouton, [1954, 1955, 1960] 1967) 762ff.

run.⁷⁰ They are easily manipulated. Only by presenting an alternative to the historical understanding and the many Rwandan myths we can argue credibly against it. We have to strive to contest politicised understandings of history. This is important for avoiding genocide from happening again in Rwanda.

Rwandan narratives about history, as well as academic studies, usually agree about important turning points and historical periods in the history of the country.⁷¹ Except some aspects of pre-colonial history, all sides of the Rwandan genocide generally recognise the same chronicle of events. However, the interpretations of these events differ and some are disputed. Even though the competing narratives do not always share substance, they usually do agree on what is worthy contesting.⁷²

3.1 Who are Hutus and Tutsis – Pre Colonial Rwandan History

Even though Rwandans take history seriously, what we actually do know about pre-colonial Rwandan history is limited. There exist no written sources from that era. Our knowledge about the period is based on oral traditions and myths which are easily manipulated and hard to verify. There have also been carried out some archaeological work and a few genealogical studies in the region giving insufficient but interesting clues about the past. What we do know for fact is that there existed three groups or identities in the country when Germany colonised Rwanda from 1894; Hutus, Tutsi and Twa.⁷³ But the nature of these groups, whether ethnical, socioeconomic, cultural or political, is contested. And still, being categorised Hutu or Tutsi meant everything in 1994; it decided life or death.

The origin of Hutus and Tutsis is an important question to Rwandans as well as academics studying the country. Are Hutus and Tutsis of different origin and thus two races or ethnic

⁷⁰ Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994*, 30.

⁷¹ See; Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting For Horror. Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 160ff; Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, 54; Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985) 17ff.

⁷² See; Reni Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 19; Eltringham, *Accounting For Horror. Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda*, 161.

⁷³ Twa constitutes no more than one percent of the total Rwandan population. The Twa population does not play any significant role in this setting as they were neither main targets nor main perpetrators during the genocide. However, some Twa were killed; some Twa were killers.

groups? During the genocide, the point of view presented by Hutu Power leaders differed fundamentally from the one presented by Tutsi leaders. In Hutu narratives, Tutsis were foreigners who deserved no future in the country. Hutu Power ideologue Léon Mugesera argued that “they [Tutsis] belong to Ethiopia”.⁷⁴ The RPF on the other hand, the rebel movement constituted of mainly Tutsis in exile, were fighting for the right to return home. A former RPF soldier told me that “Hutus and Tutsis are all Rwandans; the last five hundred years we shared the same culture”.⁷⁵ The Hutu and the Tutsi narratives correlate with two main directions among Rwanda specialists about pre-colonial origin. Much research in Rwanda is obviously conducted without political agenda, but still, academic theories are often understood to be either pro-Hutu or pro-Tutsi, especially by Rwandans. The migration hypothesis, understood to be pro-Hutu, is highlighting a different origin; Hutus settled in Rwanda before Tutsis. In Hutu Power narrative, this means that Tutsis are foreigners to the country. To the contrary, the same culture hypothesis is highlighting that Hutus and Tutsis share one single cultural community. This view does not automatically deny the possibility that Hutus might have settled in Rwanda before Tutsis, but it is more important to them to investigate the culture they shaped together.⁷⁶

Hutu Narrative – The Migration Hypothesis

Arriving in the 1890s, the first German colonisers found a country inhabited by people with different physical traits. The Europeans saw that Twa were very short, Hutus were of medium height while Tutsis were very tall. Administrators and military personnel did not arrive alone; with them came cultural anthropologists. The anthropologist found a 12 centimetre difference in average height between Hutus and Tutsis.⁷⁷ The Europeans were fascinated by the fact that people looked so different within the same small territory. Even today, scientific magazines print stories about the height of Tutsis, one of the tallest people on earth.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ See Gérard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 171-2; parts of the original tone from the speech are available on CBC Documentary, *The Spokesman of Hatred*, Air Date 22.01.2001 http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-71-1435-9271/conflict_war/war_criminals/clip10.

⁷⁵ Interview with Rene, Kigali, 22.09.2004.

⁷⁶ See Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers, Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Cape Town: David Philip 2001) 50.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 44.

⁷⁸ Illustrert Vitenskap, *Hvorfor er noen folkeslag små?* (nr.11/2004), 11. [Available online] http://www.illustrertvitenskap.com/.Crosslink.jsp?d=169&a=1217&id=8584_4 [10.09.2006].

The early observation of difference in phenotype was the beginning of the migration hypothesis. But why did they look so different? The conclusion presented by the first anthropologists was just as simplistic as their commonsense observation of phenotype variations; since Rwandans looked different, their forefathers must be of different origin. European academics, explorers, missionaries and administrators soon came to the same conclusion. Hutu Power extremists emphasised the migration hypothesis in their genocidal ideology leading up to the 1994 genocide.

Later anthropological and biological studies seeking to prove the migration hypothesis shifted their focus from phenotype to genotype.⁷⁹ Over the last decades, there have been carried out a handful of genotype studies in the region; studies about blood factors, sickle cells and lactose tolerance.⁸⁰ In this setting are studies about lactose tolerance, the ability to effectively absorb milk products, especially fascinating. The migration hypothesis argues that Tutsis were cattle owners who moved into the country only from about the fifteenth century.⁸¹ The ability to digest lactose is generally much higher among milk dependent peoples compared to other populations. Just as expected by different origin scholars, Tutsis shows a high ability to absorb lactose. Studies of lactose tolerance in the region show, that three out of four Tutsis have a high tolerance towards milk products. However, the difference compared to Hutus is less convincing; one out of three Hutus show the same ability of high milk tolerance. In comparison, only five percent of the neighbouring Shi people in eastern Congo show the same high lactose tolerance.⁸² This could indicate that the Hutu – Tutsi divide is less than absolute, that they are of same origin, or that intermarriage has erased earlier larger differences. The latter is more likely to be the case.

Studies of phenotype and genotype show that there are statistical biological differences between people categorised as Hutus and Tutsis. However, many Hutus have Tutsi traits;

⁷⁹ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 43.

⁸⁰ Further reading; Laurent Excoffier et al, "Genetics and History of Sub-Saharan Africa", *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 30, 1987, 151-194; Gebhard Flatz, "Genetics of Lactose Digestion in Humans." *Advances in Human Genetics* 1, 1987, 1-77. Melbourne Tapper, *In the Blood: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

⁸¹ Bethwell Alan Ogot, "The Great Lakes Region", In D.T. Niane, ed., *UNESCO General History of Africa*, vol. 4. (London: Heinemann, 1984).

⁸² Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 46.

many Tutsis have Hutu traits. Rwandans, especially Hutus, often argue that there is no problem in telling Hutus and Tutsis apart, only by looking at them. This is not true. Hutus were killed during the genocide because their killers were convinced that the victims looked too Tutsi to be Hutu. However, this does not rule out the possibility of different origin. According to Rwanda specialists, pastoralists became numerous only from the fifteenth century. The early pastoralists are believed to be the ancestors of contemporary Tutsis. But to say exactly where the different groups originally come from is next to impossible.

There are theories other than biological also favouring the “distinct difference” hypothesis. The Hamitic hypothesis is outdated but still played an important role during the genocide. Another is closer to nationalistic theories and is throwing some light on early Rwandan history.

The racist Hamitic hypothesis claims that Tutsis are close to Europeans in origin and thus more intelligent than their Bantu neighbours, the Hutus. This theory was important in both Tutsi power and later Hutu Power narratives.⁸³ The theory emerged in Europe during the 19th century. Academics, administrators, missionaries and explorers did not believe that real Africans were capable of creating such a well-organised society like the one they discovered in Rwanda. Could Rwanda’s ruling elite be of different origin than other Africans? The racial Hamitic hypothesis became the answer. The European colonisers were convinced that “wherever in Africa there was evidence of organized state life, there the ruling groups must have come from elsewhere. These groups were known as the Hamites, and the notion that they were the hidden hand behind every bit of civilization on the continent was known as the “Hamitic hypothesis.”⁸⁴

As we shall see, the Hamitic hypothesis has its roots in Judaic and Christian tradition.⁸⁵ The name Ham is first mentioned in Genesis, chapter 5 verse 32, of the Bible. According to the Bible, Ham was cursed by his father, Noah.

⁸³ I choose to write Tutsi power with small p since this was not an ideology but rather a political agenda, whereas Hutu Power was a genocidal ideology.

⁸⁴ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 80.

⁸⁵ Further reading; David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."⁸⁶

Shem and Japheth did look away. Noah blessed their descendants. Ham did not. Noah cursed his descendants. According to the Babylonian Talmud, as a result of the curse, the ancestors of Ham "shall be born ugly and black"⁸⁷ and "it must be Canaan, your [Ham] firstborn, whom they [Shem and Japheth] enslave."⁸⁸ This degradation of the "ancestors" of Ham (or the Hamites) was probably rather politically motivated. However, as Europeans discovered complex cultures in Africa and the Middle East, especially after Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1789, the previous understanding of the early Hamitic hypothesis needed to be revised.⁸⁹ The once despised "Negroes" became admirable producers of civilisation, but this admiration was not for all Africans. The Hamitic hypothesis needed to be rethought.

According to Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau, the mind behind race theories and racism in nineteenth-century Europe, Hamites are like Aryans, the direct successors of Noah. Thus, the cursed sons and daughters of Ham could no longer be seen as subhuman. They were Caucasians, just like Europeans. This does not mean they were equal to their Caucasian brothers in the north. But they did not belong to a different species anymore.⁹⁰ The reason for these different positions in the race hierarchy was simple. As the Hamites moved southward, they did not manage to avoid mixing with their African neighbours, the real Negroes. The

⁸⁶ The Bible, Genesis 9, 20-27 [Available Online] <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%209,%2020-27;&version=47>. [10.09.2006].

⁸⁷ Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg wrote in 1930 that race is the soul's outer surface. See Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München, 1930).

⁸⁸ Further reading; Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (New York: Doubleday, 1964): 121.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ According to the theory, Hamites are sons of Ham, Aryans sons of Japheth. The Hamites were no longer as cursed as the Europeans first thought they were. After the previous understanding was revised, it was argued that only one son of Ham was cursed; Canaan. Ham, "Cush the Ethiopian, Mizrahmin the Egyptian, and Put" were not. See Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 83.

Hamites were corrupted and blackened. According to the Hamitic hypothesis, Tutsis in Rwanda were Hamites who first went to Ethiopia, from where they migrated southwards and some of them ended up in Rwanda.⁹¹ This was the historical background for Mugesera's wish to send Tutsis back to Ethiopia. According to the Europeans, the difference in origin made Tutsis qualitatively different from their Rwandan neighbours; the Tutsis were more intelligent and cultivated than Hutus.⁹² This was part of the reason why Tutsis and not Hutus were allowed to rule alongside the Belgian colonisers (who took over the colony after the First World War) during most of colonisation.

The second group of theories seeking to explain the different origin hypothesis is closer to nationalistic theories. They claim that Tutsis are indeed of different origin from Hutus but not Caucasians or mentally "better" than Hutus. The theory is based on both biological and archaeological research. Jean Hiernaux, a prominent scholar of this theory, argues that Tutsis are more different from Europeans than Hutus, and that Tutsis are more similar to Masai of Kenya and the Fulani of West Africa than both Europeans and Hutus. The Tutsi gene pool does not indicate any close link to the Caucasus.⁹³ Hiernaux refers to fossil records that tell of tall people with typical Tutsi traits who lived for thousands of years in East Africa. The physical anthropologist argues that people developed differently in Africa because of natural adaptation to different environments different places. This theory, which could very well be close to the truth, fits into Hutu Power ideology as it makes Tutsis foreigners.

Walter Rodney, like Hiernaux, states that people look different in Rwanda as a result of their environments. But whereas Hiernaux argues that this difference is a result of adaptation to geographical environments, Rodney argues this is a result of social environments or developments. Rodney argues that Twa "wandered around in small bands, hunting and digging roots, thereby failing to assure themselves of plentiful or rich food"; thus, they are

⁹¹ Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, 58-67.

⁹² There are still published historical accounts about Rwanda that are highly influenced by the Hamitic hypothesis. They often base their work on studies by Rwandan historian Alexis Kagame and the French academic Jean-Jacques Maquet. See Alexis Kagame *Le Code des institutions politiques du Rwanda pre-colonial* (Institut Royal Colonial Belge, Bruxelles, 1952); *La notion de generation appliquee a la genealogie dynastique et a l'histoire du Rwanda des X-XI siecles a nos jours*, (Academie Royale des Sciences Coloniales, Bruxelles, 1959); Jean-Jacques Maquet, *The Premise of Inequality in Ruanda: A Study of Political Relations in a Central African Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

⁹³ See Jean Hiernaux, *The People of Africa* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), 81ff.

pygmies. And that Hutus quality of food “fell short of the protein-rich Tutsi diet, thus Hutus are relatively short compared to Tutsis”. Tutsis on the other hand, are very tall as they had constant access to a “rich diet on milk and meat”.⁹⁴ Others argue that this social selection probably has been reinforced by sexual selection. According to *Abram de Swaan* “there may be significant, inherited differences in physical appearance between social groups, that do not originate in different genetic stock, but in socially inherited differences in wealth, prestige and power. Through the social process of sexual selection, or selective mating, these social differences may in the end cause genetic divergence between the various endogamic groups.”⁹⁵

Rodney’s book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, was standard reading for RPF rebels in the years leading up to the genocide.⁹⁶ The RPF was fighting to come home. The Tutsi narrative is contesting what separate origin scholars and the Hutu narrative holds for fact, that Hutus and Tutsis are two different people. RPF Captain Haguma argued at a conference in Kigali 1995 that “science can account for the difference in physical traits which are explained in terms of diet and natural selection”.⁹⁷

Also some regional pre colonial myths reinforce the migration hypothesis. One of the myths concerns the kingdom of Bunyoro. Located in contemporary western Uganda, the kingdom was led by the Bachwezi dynasty. According to the myth, the Bachwezi moved to the region from Ethiopia and Southern Somalia. They were pastoralists and brought their cattle with them. After some generations in western Uganda, the Bachwezi were chased out from their kingdom. According to Archie Mafeje, some of them moved to Rwanda where conditions for cattle were good. They are believed by some to be the forefathers of Rwandan Tutsis.⁹⁸

In Hutu narratives, the rapid rise in number of cattle holders and the creation of the Rwandan kingdom in the fifteenth century was a result of a violent invasion. Leading Hutu Power

⁹⁴ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Dar-es-Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1971), 138.

⁹⁵ Abram de Swaan, *The social construction of hate. Modern instruments at the service of genocide* [Available Online] http://www.africansocieties.org/eng_giugno2002/eng_rwanda.htm.

⁹⁶ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 44.

⁹⁷ Captain Haguma in Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 45.

⁹⁸ Archie Mafeje, *The theory and ethnography of African social formations: the case of the interlacustrine kingdoms* (London: Codesria, 1991), 19 ff.

perpetrators argued that Tutsi kings did lead the country for some hundred years before colonisation. But that centralised kingdoms led by Hutu kings existed even before the Tutsis arrived, and that these kingdoms were violently taken over by Tutsi invaders.⁹⁹ Hutu power extremists, like Bagosora, among the most prominent perpetrators during the genocide argues that the first Tutsis populating Rwanda killed the Hutu king, King Mashira, together with his whole family. King Mashira had his genitals cut off and they were hung on a drum by his Tutsi killers. I was told by several Rwandans that this is a proof of Tutsi evilness. How could normal people kill the whole royal family and cut off the King's genitals as a sign of victory? It is not possible to trust such people, was the ultimate answer presented to me.¹⁰⁰ However, it is more likely that "the state of Rwanda emerged as did many a state in the region, through the amalgamation of several autonomous chiefdoms into a single nuclear kingdom, under the leadership of a royal clan."¹⁰¹

Tutsis Narrative – Same Culture, One People

In Tutsi narrative, history before the merger of the different chiefdoms in the 15th century is of little relevance. Mr. Rutimburana, working at the unity and reconciliation office in Kigali, regards it impossible to establish the ultimate truth about genealogies in Rwanda. "People were moving around a lot in this part of Africa. The people who settled in Rwanda were also mixing".¹⁰² This Tutsi narrative is arguing that where Hutus and Tutsis originally came from is less relevant than the cultural community they shaped together.

Allow me to state that the social classes that existed in Rwanda did not even qualify to be called ethnic groups in the first instance. All Rwandans had and still have the same culture, same language and same history. They shared the same religion and had one administrative structure under one head of state. Moreover, at the time when the

⁹⁹ See Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, 62.

¹⁰⁰ See Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, 62; Interview with Theo, Oslo, 30.08.2005.

¹⁰¹ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 62; Jan Vansina, *L'evolution du royaume Rwanda des origins à 1900*. (Brussels: Arsom, 1961); Catharine Newbury. *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960* (New York, Colombia University Press, 1989).

¹⁰² Mr Rutimburana is a senior public affairs officer at the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission for Rwanda. The Rwandan *National Unity and Reconciliation Commission* is a result of the 1993 Arusha Peace Accords and the 1994 genocide. The accords considered a reconciliation process necessary for stabilising the country, the genocide made this even more decisive. The commission was instituted in March 1999. See i.e. information pamphlet from the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, P.O. Box 174 – Kigali, Rwanda. Interview with Mr Rutimburana, Rwanda, 19 September 2004.

colonialists came to Africa, these people had changed classes so much due to ...mobility in socioeconomic status and had intermarried to the extent that neither of them could have remained a distinct ethnic group even if they were before.¹⁰³

These words were given by the executive Secretary of the Rwandan National Unity and Reconciliation Commission at an international conference in Berlin, 2003, this statement picks up central elements of the same culture hypothesis and fits into the Tutsi narrative. Fatuma Ndingiza states that Hutus and Tutsis can not be categorised as distinct ethnic groups and points at central elements of pre-colonial Rwandan society; a shared cultural, economical and political community.

Rwandan royal myths go much further. They claim that all Rwandans are of same divine origin. According to one central Rwandan royal myth, Kazi ka Muntu was the last heaven descended king to rule the country.¹⁰⁴ The king married Nyirarukangaga, who was earth born.¹⁰⁵ Together they gave birth to Gihanga, who was born in the north-eastern Rwandan town of Rweeya. Gihanga and Nyangobero got married and gave birth to three sons; Gatwa, Gahutu and Gatutsi. They are believed to be the ancestors of all Rwandans. Ga means small in Kinyarwanda.¹⁰⁶ Gihanga did not know who to leave his inheritance. He therefore gave his three sons a challenge. Each one was given a jug of milk to look after overnight. Gatwa, the father of all Twa, got thirsty during the night and drank all the milk before sunrise. He was

¹⁰³ Fatuma Ndingiza, *Dealing with Genocide and its Effects. The Rwandan Case*. Script presented at “The International Conference on ‘Learning and Remembering: The Holocaust and Genocide in the Twentieth Century’ ” March 12th – 15th. 2003 at the Federal Foreign Office, Berlin. [Available online] <http://www.gei.de/deutsch/aktuelles/pdf/ndanziga.pdf> [21.05.2006].

¹⁰⁴ According to the myth, Kazi ka Muntu (the Root of Man) was the last Ibimanuka (the Descents). Ibimanuka were heaven-descended kings who founded the Rwandan dynasty. Further reading Rose-Marie Mukarutabana, *Gakondo* [Available online] <http://webspinners.com/Gakondo/en/Myths/Gihanga.php> [12.09.2005].

¹⁰⁵ According to the myth, Nyirarukangaga was the daughter of Nyamigezi, the king of the Abasangwabutaka (Earth-Born or Found-on-the-Earth). The Ibimanuka found the Abasangwabutaka when they landed on planet Earth (Urwanda). Further reading *The Royal Myths* [Available online] <http://webspinners.com/Gakondo/en/Myths/Gihanga.php> [12.09.2005].

¹⁰⁶ Hutus and Tutsis speak the same Bantu language, Kinyarwanda. Kinyarwanda is one of the largest languages in the region. In fact, “the Banyarwanda – the speakers of the language Kinyarwanda- are spread all over Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Congo and Tanzania.” Kinyarwanda was spoken in the region also before Rwanda was centralised into one state. However, not everyone agreed before the genocide that the Rwandan language should be called Kinyarwanda. In the early 1990s, the racist Hutu Power newspaper Kangura wrote that “Public opinion must know that the only language of the Hutu is Kihutu”. Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 31 Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*: 52, Jean-Pierre Chretien. *Rwanda: Les Media du Genocide* (Karthala, Paris 1995), 110-111.

immediately banished into the Rwandan forest. Gahutu, the father of all Hutus, knocked over his jug of milk while sleeping.¹⁰⁷ Gatutsi, the father of all Tutsis looked carefully after the jug and did not spill or drink the milk. For this, Gatutsi was well rewarded by being given the role of succeeding his father. Gatutsi inherited his power, the entire herd of Rwandan cows and was exempted from manual work. Gahutu was given the role of being Gatutsi's servant while Gatwa produced pottery for both Gatutsi and Gahutu in the deep forests of Rwanda.

Similar to the Hamitic hypothesis, arguing that Hamitic Tutsis and Aryan Europeans are descendants of Noah, royal Rwandan myths claim that the forefathers of Hutus and Tutsis were brothers. Unlike the Hamitic hypothesis, claiming that Tutsis have Caucasian origin whereas Hutus are simple Negroes, Rwandan royal myths claim common ancestry of all Rwandans. However, the most important factor uniting the two myths is the notion that Hutus and Tutsis are of different value with Tutsis being regarded worthier than their Hutu neighbours.

The Rwandan Kingdom – Centralisation, Expansion and Organisation

Large parts of Rwanda were incorporated into one centralised kingdom several centuries before colonisation. Even though to a large extent they shared one common cultural community, not all Rwandans were given the same possibilities. The kingdom was increasingly ruled under the premise of politics of difference. This shows that the problem between Hutus and Tutsis did not arrive with the colonisers, like many Tutsis argue. However, it would be an exaggeration to say that Tutsis terrorised and deprived Hutus of all rights during the kingdom, like many Hutus argue. The different understanding of the past was one reason why the genocide could happen.

There were three major steps in the centralisation, expansion and organisation of the Rwandan state from the 15th century until colonisation in the 1890s: the early period from the creation of the state until the reign of Rujugira (1756-65); the second period from the reign of Rujugira until that of Rwabugiri, the final period during the reign of Rwabugiri (1860-95).

¹⁰⁷ Some variants of the myth say that Gahutu spilled the milk during his sleep, other say he drank it. Further reading; René Lemarchand, *Ethnicity as Myth: The View from the Central Africa* (Centre of African Studies University of Copenhagen May 1999) [Available online] http://www.teol.ku.dk/cas/nyhomepage/mapper/Occasional%20Papers/Occ_Lemarchand%20netversion.doc [September 2005]; African Writers Index [Available online] http://www.geocities.com/africanwriters/Myths_countries.html [September 2005].

The Rwandan state most likely came into being after a fusion of several chiefdoms under one king. In the first centuries of the kingship, and even though the king always was Tutsi, power was relatively balanced between Hutus and Tutsis. This was to a large extent a result of different and complementary powers possessed by the groups; Hutu divine and Tutsi military. According to one account about cooperation between Hutus and Tutsis in the early Rwandan state, the allegedly founder of it, Cyilima Rugwe of the Abanyigina dynasty, went to seek advice by a Hutu diviner or a *abiiru* on how to get rid of rebels from his territory. The diviner would only give advice if the Tutsi king agreed to become his blood brother. At first, Rugwe declined the proposition, but after continuing hardship, the king agreed. The divine advice showed to be important for the settlement of an independent Rwandan state. Until the reign of Rujugira (1756-65), the Tutsi kings need of supernatural Hutu power limited their own authority. It was the “*abiiru* who set the rules of governance, but without themselves governing.”¹⁰⁸

After Rujugira came to power, a dramatic shift happened to the important power-sharing institution. The *ubiiru*, the divine rituals earlier monopolised by the *abiiru*, lost political influence when the possession cult, the *mandwa*, was incorporated into the royal administration. This meant that the Tutsi king was no longer dependent on divine power from independent Hutu lineages. Thus, Hutus lost much influence and power. Under the reign of king Rwabugiri, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the *abiiru* was weakened even further, and were practically left with no power.

There existed a state wide clientship institution in pre colonial Rwanda. The pastoralist hierarchy was organised through a patron-client relationship. This was organised through family lineages. With regular intervals the clients had to give a cow to the chief of their delegate, the system was called *umuheto*. From the time of Rujugira, this changed. A new system was introduced, *ubuhake*. Whereas earlier only families with cows could partake, now every individual interested in access to cows, even without possessing any themselves, could do so.¹⁰⁹ However, the *ubuhake* patrons were mostly Tutsis. The *ubuhake* system meant that the patron owned the cow, but against goods and the obligation to work for the patron,

¹⁰⁸ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 62-3.

¹⁰⁹ *Ubughake* was made possible by an important land reform taking away the control over land from the lineage to the king. The state was no longer ruled under the principle that land belonged to the lineage that cleared it; it belonged to the king. *Ibid*, 66.

individual clients could lend one, let it graze on the patron's land, and use and consume what the cow produced. This led to a close patron-client relationship. René Lemarchand argues that the ubuhake system was in many ways similar to the lord – vassal system in Feudal Europe during the Middle Ages. Whereas the client paid his patron with goods and services, the patron got access not only to cows but also military protection.¹¹⁰

The loss of land by the Hutus as a result of land reforms led to the introduction of ubureetwa. Ubureetwa was a patron-clientship relation giving Hutus huge disadvantages. The ubureetwa system introduced by King Rwabugiri, was no less than exploitation. Whereas earlier Hutu lineages were owners of their own land and their leaders often hill-chiefs, now externally chosen hill-chiefs were administrators of the land, and Hutu families had to pay for the use of it through manual labour. Even though the patron was supposed to give his clients protection, the relationship was marked by very little reciprocity.¹¹¹

The organisation of Rwandan society became ever more centralised. In a threefold administrative system led by the king, each province was headed by an army chief. Several districts constituted one province. The districts were headed by two independent chiefs, the chief of landholding and the chief of pastures. As the name indicates, the chief of landholding was in charge of agricultural land and responsible for collecting agricultural levies in the district, just the same way as the chief of pastures was responsible for grazing land and collecting dues from stock. The districts were again divided into hills with every hill having its own hill chief.¹¹² Chiefs at all levels were appointed by a superior, usually the king, but it could also be someone else in the hierarchy. In other words, they were bureaucrats. With a few exceptions the leaders of the provinces and districts were Tutsis.¹¹³ The ubuhake system meant that the king could appoint “his closest subjects through the administrative appointment of chiefs”.¹¹⁴ This meant fewer Hutus in administrative positions. However, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa could all be hill chiefs, the local chief, making ordinary Rwandans day to day contact with the administration not as Tutsi dominated as one could be led to believe.

¹¹⁰ René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (Pall Mall, London 1970), 36.

¹¹¹ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 66.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 68.

¹¹³ Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, 8.

¹¹⁴ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 66.

As we have seen, Hutus and Tutsis had different possibilities in Rwanda. The Tutsis occupied the highest political positions and were on average wealthier than the Hutu agriculturalists. The words Hutu and Tutsi actually owe their original meaning to the organisation of society. Translated from Kinyarwanda, Tutsi means “one rich in cattle”, Hutu means “subordinate” or “follower”.¹¹⁵ Generally speaking Tutsis were pastoralists, Hutus cultivators. Cattle and wealth were synonymous. Wealth and power, power and wealth followed each other. In the ubuhake system, patrons as well as their clients were usually Tutsis; thus, Tutsis were almost exclusively in the position of the most important status symbol; cattle ownership. The Hutu agriculturalists were in this asymmetric relationship inferior. Thus, it has often been argued that the best way to look at the Hutu – Tutsi division is to see them as purely socioeconomic classes. Even though Hutus in many ways were the underprivileged, there is no doubt that there were poor Tutsis in Rwanda as well. Many Tutsis were probably just as poor as their Hutu neighbours; some of them even lost their Tutsi identity and became Hutus. On the other hand, Hutus could through the position of cows become Tutsis.¹¹⁶ A Hutu that became Tutsi went through a ritual called Kwihutura, meaning “cleansing of one’s Hutuness”.¹¹⁷ In other words, the border between Hutus and Tutsis was not definitive; Hutus and Tutsis did not belong to groups where members were either rich or poor, cultivators or pastoralists.

Pre Colonial Rwanda; Narratives and Facts

I have been pointing at four “different origin” theories striving to explain differences between Hutus and Tutsis in pre colonial Rwanda. The first three are all connected to the observation that Hutus and Tutsis look different. As we have seen, Rwandans show a wide variety in phenotype and genotype. These differences do more often than not correlate with the Twa, Hutu and Tutsi categorisation. The last theory is based on myths and narratives from the region.

Firstly, the Hamitic hypothesis claims that there is a closer kinship between “European Aryans” and “Hamitic Tutsis”, than between “Hamitic Tutsis” and “Hutu Negroes”. As we

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 32.

¹¹⁶ Further reading; Catherine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*, 11-2; Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis*, 13; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 56-8.

¹¹⁷ Laurent Mbanda: *Committed to Conflict. The destruction of the church in Rwanda* (London: SPCK, 1997), 4.

have seen, this theory is little more than racist fiction. Tutsis are much more similar to Hutus than they are to Europeans, in phenotype as well as in genotype. Nevertheless, Belgian colonisers believed in the Hamitic hypothesis and based much of their cooperation with the Rwandans under the assumption that Hutus and Tutsis belong to different and unequal races. We shall come back to this later. This notion of difference played an important role in Hutu narrative during the 1994 genocide; Tutsis were seen as foreigners to Rwanda. In other words, the Hamitic hypothesis is not relevant as fact, but the function of it still is.

Secondly, the reason for the differences between Hutus and Tutsis might very well be that they originally come from different places. Tutsis do look more similar to Masais and Fulanis than Hutus. All three groups, Tutsi, Masai and Fulani, are tall pastoralists; archaeological excavations show that they might have common ancestors in East Africa, but it is not necessarily so.

Thirdly, it is not impossible that people coming from the same area developed differently. The reason for this could be different nutrition, social organisation and inbreeding. Tutsis might be taller than Hutus because it makes more sense for cattle farmers to be tall than for agriculturalists. Thus, natural selection might have made Tutsis different from Hutus over a long time span. It also makes more sense for cattle owners to marry pastoralists than agriculturalists for economical and political reasons. Even though it is possible that Hutus and Tutsis developed differently within the same area, this theory is not very likely to be true.

Fourthly, some Rwandan myths argue that Hutus and Tutsis have common ancestry - some that they have different. Even though myths might say something true about the past, different myths in Rwandan memory must be viewed critically. Hutus and Tutsis tell different myths about the past. One myth fitting well into Hutu narrative tells the story about the kingdom of Bunyoro. It was allegedly attacked; the population fled to Rwanda and became Tutsis. On the other hand, Tutsi royal myths fit into Tutsi narratives and argue that Hutus and Tutsis are brothers. Even though myths can give us some clues about pre colonial Rwandan history, they are very much influenced by the political climate.

Even though we cannot say for sure where Hutus and Tutsis come from, it is probable that the

first groups of people started moving into the region about two millennia ago; waves of people continued to populate the fertile country until colonisation. They are the ancestors of today's Twa, Hutus and Tutsis. The consensus among Rwanda specialist today is that the first inhabitants of Rwanda probably were forest dwellers who lived from hunting and gathering. They are the forefathers of Twa. Later, Hutus and Tutsis moved into the country. Some groups of Bantu-speaking people, the forefathers of Hutus, started to cultivate the land. In the 15th century, the number of pastoralists increased sharply. They are some of the forefathers of today's Tutsis. By that time, there probably existed several small chiefdoms within the area of Rwanda.¹¹⁸ This would mean that there was no sudden change happening as a result of the increase of Tutsis.¹¹⁹ Hutus and Tutsis probably have separate origin, narratives and theories about this period are important to grasp in order to understand motivations behind the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide. However, in order to gain more knowledge about the polarisation process crucial for making neighbours enemies and genocide possible, it is important to look at political developments in the country after the Rwandan state was born.

From the fifteenth century on, Rwanda was gradually centralised and became increasingly a bureaucratic society. At the same time, Rwanda became gradually more polarised. Hutus lost power at the same time as many Tutsis became more powerful. I have pointed at two key factors leading towards this polarisation, the loss of the *abiiru* institution and the introduction of *uburetwa*.

Firstly, in pre-colonial Rwanda, Hutus and Tutsis spoke the same language and had the same set of beliefs. However, their belief system was closely connected to rituals that only some Hutu clans were able to execute, the *abiiru*. This gave Hutus much power even though the king always was Tutsi. However, power was gradually taken away from the Hutus through political reforms by Tutsi kings, first by king Rujugira and later king Rwabugiri. Rituals were no longer monopolised by the *abiiru*.

Secondly, Hutus and Tutsis had different occupations with different status. Generally speaking, Hutus were agriculturalists, Tutsis were pastoralists. Through political reforms Hutus lost their rights over land and *Uburetwa* was introduced. From then on, the king

¹¹⁸ Further reading; Bethwell Ogot, "The Great Lakes Region".

¹¹⁹ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 62.

owned the land and not family lineages that had “always” been there. The agriculturalists had to perform manual labour in return for using the land. As we shall see in the following chapters, the system of Ubureetwa was in similar forms adopted by the colonisers (Hutus were forced to build roads and churches), by President Habyarimana in the Second Republic (communal work was obligatory) and by Hutu Power leaders during the genocide (Hutus were gathered together and went out killing).

So far we have looked at how, and to a lesser extent why, Hutus and Tutsis understand pre-colonial history the way they do. We have looked into biology, archaeology and myths to gain more knowledge about the period. To look for the “true” history of Rwanda is important. However, for understanding the perpetrators behind the Rwandan genocide, the more central topic is how Hutus and Tutsis understood history themselves and how a politics of difference developed in Rwanda. The Hutu Tutsi dichotomy with roots in pre-colonial Rwanda was made absolute during colonisation.

3.2 Colonisation

At the Berlin Conference in 1885, powerful European countries decided on how to split the African continent among them. Rwanda, together with Tanzania and Burundi, was made a German colony. The area was given the name German East Africa. Gustav Adolf von Götzen was the first German official to arrive in Rwanda. King Rwabugiri of Rwanda first received von Götzen at his court on the 4th of May 1894, exactly one hundred years before the genocide. The king of Rwanda was unaware of welcoming the first foreign governor of his country.¹²⁰ Germany ruled Rwanda from Bujumbura¹²¹ until 1907, when Richard Kandt built the first colonial residence in Kigali. Germany tried to keep costs low and personnel few in the small colony. They chose to send only twenty-four military officers and six administrators to Rwanda. There were very few resources to explore in the small landlocked country.¹²² As a result of this cautious use of resources, the German colonisers decided to rule through the already existing Rwandan bureaucracy, a system reminding about British passive rule. Even though the German presence in Rwanda was less than overwhelming, at least in numbers, the

¹²⁰ See Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, 7.

¹²¹ Bujumbura is the capital of Burundi.

¹²² See Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 12.

German influence was soon felt by its inhabitants through soldiers, missionaries and academics. As a direct result of the defeat in World War One, Germany lost all its colonies, and Belgium became the new ruler of Rwanda. Belgian soldiers first occupied the small country in 1916. They became the mandate to rule Rwanda from the League of Nations a few years later, in 1923. Even though the Belgians decided to use many of the traditional Rwandan institutions as instruments to rule the country, the politics of difference was radicalised.

Europeans and Bakiga – New Influences

The Europeans arrived in Rwanda at a time of centralisation and expansion, civil war and uprising. King Rwabugiri died in 1895; he belonged to the Abanyiginya clan. An armed conflict over his succession immediately broke out between the two Tutsi clans, Abanyiginya and Abeega, the civil war culminated into a coup where the Abeega took power.¹²³

In the same period the Bakiga, living in contemporary Ruhengeri, Gisenyi and Byumba, became, if not totally integrated, at least officially part of the kingdom. Regions that were incorporated into the Rwandan kingdom shortly before or after colonisation, like the Bakiga, were organised differently from central Rwanda. North Rwanda was far less politically centralised than the Rwandan kingdom.

The colonisers and the king soon wanted to extend their control over the peripheral parts of the kingdom. The inhabitants of the northern state of Bushiru were mainly Bakiga. Bushiru was the largest self-governed state within the kingdom at the beginning of the colonial area.¹²⁴ German Schutztruppen and Tutsi-led southern troops had defeated the northern Hutu between 1910 and 1912. Even though the northerners were incorporated into the Rwandan state, they had kept alive their differences from other Rwandans, both southern Hutus and Tutsis.¹²⁵ Many ideologues during the Rwandan genocide were from the north of the country. President Habyarimana, first lady Kanziga, military and militia advisor during the genocide Bagosora and producer of genocidal propaganda Nahamana, were all from the area. It was the colonisers aiding the incorporation of the northern Bakiga into the kingdom that brought the notions of race and ethnicity there. However, the Bakiga did not even look upon themselves

¹²³ Mamdani: *When Victims Become Killers*.

¹²⁴ Des Forges: *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 32.

¹²⁵ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 12.

as Hutu before the implementation into the Rwandan state; in other words, for many Hutus of Rwanda their Hutu identity is originally political.

Tutsi Abanyiginya and Hutu Bakiga did during the first two decades of German presence fight together against the colonialists and Tutsi power. Until she was captured by British colonisers in west Uganda, one of Rwabugiri's wives led the fight against the new leaders of the country. She was based in the mountains of northern Rwanda. After the capture, her son took over. He was an important figure in the fight for a new Abanyiginya king and against forced labour, *uburetwa*. Even though Ndungutse was a Tutsi himself, his "name became a symbol of anti-Tutsi sentiment, and by implication of anti-European sentiment as well".¹²⁶ He was killed by German troops in 1912. The fight for power continued into Belgian rule.

The German and later Belgian colonisation and the incorporation of Bakiba into the Rwandan kingdom were two important factors paving the way towards genocide. The colonisers taught Rwandans new ways to think about differences between Hutus and Tutsis. They also played an important role in incorporating peripheral areas of the kingdom into the centralised state. Northerners, the Bakiga, became in this way not only Rwandans but also Hutu. The Bakiga only became categorised Hutu after becoming citizens of Rwanda.¹²⁷ This indicates that Hutu is a constructed identity. Bakiga were considerably overrepresented among leading perpetrators of the 1994 genocide.

Racialisation of Difference

A young Tanzanian with Rwandan parents studying in Kigali proudly told me that he was the great grandchild of a Rwandan chief. Privileged, James' grandfather was given education by the Belgians. Back in the 1920s, his grandfather had chosen to study linguistics in Europe. This opened many possibilities for him and his family, a fact that made James grateful to the Belgians.¹²⁸ However, the conditions for most Rwandans worsened during Belgian rule. Hutus usually had no access to higher education and were generally poor. A division of

¹²⁶ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 100-101.

¹²⁷ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 52, 70.

¹²⁸ Interview with James, Kigali, 21.09.2004.

society was enforced and made racial.¹²⁹

The colonial administration and the influential Catholic Church preferred to work with Tutsis. In their view, Tutsis were literally born to rule Hutus; the Tutsis was a physically and mentally better “equipped” race. This theory was based on the Hamitic hypothesis, advocating the Tutsis to be fundamentally superior to Hutus.

To justify his action, the colonialist preached the Hamitic theory, saying that the organized state and unique administrative system he had found in the country must have originated somewhere outside Africa. He viewed the Mututsi as an aristocrat with an inborn ability to rule. The Mututsi was used to further the indirect rule, appointed as chief and given special treatment both in administration and schools. The kind of social injustice created animosity, which has engendered the genocide we are dealing with today.¹³⁰

Around 1920 the High Representative of Belgium, Pierre Ryckmans, stated, “The Tutsis were meant to reign. Their fine presence is in itself enough to give them a prestige vis-à-vis the inferior races which surround [them]”¹³¹. This hypothesis was later rather forcefully adopted by the Rwandan population, by Hutus and Tutsis alike, and accepted as the true history of Rwanda by the population at large.¹³² At school, Rwandans learned about their different origin. Many of the schools were run by the Catholic Church. In 1939, the Roman Catholic missionary, Louis de Lacger argued;

[The Tutsi are] a ruling minority. Their supremacy is not disputed [for three reasons, political, economic and racial], their superiority of physical type, a people of tall imposing appearance [which] to the simple and half-civilised ... generates prestige and influence. [The Tutsi] who are they and where do they come from? When we go from upper Egypt to the plateaux of Abyssinia to Rwanda, we recognise them as follows ... tall men, on average reaching 1.79m ... their limbs are long and lanky, with regular features, noble bearing, grave and haughty ... They are the Caucasian type like the Semite of Asia.¹³³

¹²⁹ Interview with Grandmother, Kigali, 20.09.2004.

¹³⁰ Fatuma Ndagiza, *Dealing With Genocide and its Effects. The Rwandan Case*.

¹³¹ See Smith, *A Time to Remember*, 11.

¹³² Jame’s grandmother did for instance believe that Hutus and Tutsis came from different places, however, she did not believe that Tutsis were more or less worthy than their Hutu neighbours.

¹³³ Louis de Lacger, Ruanda (Kigali: Kabgayi, 1939) 42-9 cited in Eltringham: 17.

De Lacger was not the only churchman to preach racism in Rwanda. The church, like the colonial administration, preferred to work with Tutsis over the Hutus. As soon as 1902, the future bishop Léon Classe, argued Tutsi were “great men, with fine and regular traits, with something of the Aryan and Semitic type”.¹³⁴ In 1930, bishop Classe declared: “The greatest mistake this government could make would be to suppress the Tutsi caste. We will have no better, more active and more intelligent chiefs than the Tutsi... The government must work mainly with them.”¹³⁵ The catholic missionary, François Menard argued that the Tutsi is “closer to the White man than the Negro ... he is European under a black skin.”¹³⁶ The church not only became an important power in Rwanda but also contributed to the racialisation of the Hutu Tutsi division. The Church was a powerful educational force and taught the concept of racial superiority.¹³⁷

In 1929, the institution of land chiefs was brought to an end. These were the only administrative positions in the Rwandan political hierarchy occupied by Hutus and Tutsis.¹³⁸ In the same period, the remaining Tutsi chiefs became more powerful through reforms in the Ubureetwa system. The Belgian colonisers needed people to build roads, clear forests and stop erosion. Additional obligatory Ubureetwa work for all without an ubuhake patron, in other words, for Hutus, became the solution. About half of an ordinary farmer’s working week was spent doing Ubureetwa work. The system was organised and directed by Tutsi chiefs. The chiefs were also responsible for punishing workers who did not show up for work. After the colonisers introduced coffee and tea, the already exploitative system lost the little rest of reciprocity that used to be in it. Patrons no longer accumulated wealth through Ubureetwa work alone, for now they got paid by the Belgians. The Hutu farmers were still

¹³⁴ Léon Classe quoted in Mamdani: 301. The first missionaries to Rwanda belonged to the French White Fathers. The politics of the German empire at the time prevented them from sending own missionaries to the colonies. As a result, when the Belgians took over Rwanda, it did not influence the work of the White Fathers decisively, as it probably would have done if they were Germans. Further reading, Mbonimana Gamaliel, Emmanuel Ntezimana and Gudrun Honke: *Weißer Väter und Bethelmission. Die Niederlassung der christlichen Missionen*, In: Gudrun Honke, (Ed.): *Als die Weißen kamen. Ruanda und die Deutschen 1885-1919*, (Wuppertal 1990) 131.

¹³⁵ Smith, *A Time to Remember*, 11.

¹³⁶ J Gahama (1983) *Le Burundi sous administration belge: La Période du mandat, 1919-1939* (Paris, Khartala; quoted in Eltringham: 16.

¹³⁷ For more about the church in Rwanda i.e. Laurent Mbanda, *Committed to Conflict. The destruction of the church in Rwanda* (London: SPCK, 1997).

¹³⁸ See Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis*, 26-7; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 72.

obliged to carry out work for the chiefs, but the chiefs were no longer responsible for the security of their Hutu clients.¹³⁹

In 1932, the Belgian colonisers decided to rigidly classify all Rwandans into the Hutu, Tutsi or Twa categories.¹⁴⁰ They also decided to provide every Rwandans with mandatory ID cards stating his or her race.¹⁴¹ The official census was undertaken in 1933-34. In order to decide what category every individual Rwandan belonged to, the colonisers studied phenotype, church books and economic status.¹⁴² It was impossible to classify people into racial or ethnic groups solely based on of physical appearance.¹⁴³ In the south people were often of mixed origin, most of them were classified as Hutu, even though many of them had “typical” Tutsi traits.¹⁴⁴ In the north, there were larger physical differences between the inhabitants since intermarriage was not common. Here it was “easier” to categorise the population according to the Belgian measures. Economical status was important as well, Rwandans were sometimes given Tutsi identity because of wealth alone, and physical appearance was suddenly insignificant. Possession of cows was the measure of wealth.¹⁴⁵ It has often been argued that only pastoralists with more than ten cows were identified as Tutsis. However, the Belgians

¹³⁹ Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis*, 35 and Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*, 111-2, 142.

¹⁴⁰ Smith, *A Time to Remember*, 10.

¹⁴¹ The categorisation into races was important in Europe as well. Holocaust is a gruesome example. Hitler was convinced and Nazi ideology is based upon the notion that there exist different races. The two most central races in Nazi ideology are Aryans and Jews. The difference between the races was believed to be biological in nature where the composition of people’s blood played a decisive role. The idea of difference between Jews and Germans was no new thought in Nazi ideology, anti-Judaism drawing a line between Jews and other groups is possible to trace back to before Christianity. Anti-Judaism was made antisemitism after secularism took focus away from religion and turned its interest towards race theories during the 19th century.¹⁴¹ Nazi ideology was to a large extent built upon racial antisemitism. Antisemitism was different from anti-Judaism in the way that it was no longer religion or culture that separated Jews and Germans, now it was their very being, their race. In Vienna, Hitler became convinced that Jews constituted “a people in themselves”. Further reading on the history of antisemitism; Milton Shain, *Antisemitism* (London: Bowerdean); Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München, 1932).

¹⁴² Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 98-9.

¹⁴³ The Twa are pygmies and were easy to categorize. 60 years later, physical appearance could be lethal during the genocide, expressions like “go to the forest and chop down all the tall trees” were broadcasted by radio RTLM, addressing the human hunt of Tutsis hiding in the forest, interview Grandmother, Kigali, 20.09.2004.

¹⁴⁴ 25 % of the population Rwanda has both Hutu and Tutsi among their eight great-grandparents, still most people in Rwanda see themselves as either Hutu or Tutsi. See Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy. Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 431.

¹⁴⁵ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 6; for comparison see des Forges, *Leave None to tell the Story*, 37.

issued after the formalised categorisation about 15 percent or between 250- and 300 000 of the population with Tutsi ID. If all of them were in position of owning more than ten cows, even if we only take the male adult population into consideration, the number of cattle would widely surpass the number said to be in the country at the time, between 500 000 and 600 000. This fits well together with the knowledge that many Tutsis were relatively poor.¹⁴⁶ Most Tutsis were in possession of fewer than ten cows. After measuring, counting and looking into church books, it was concluded that 84 percent were to be provided with Hutu ID and 1 percent with Twa.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the colonisers did not only take the Hamitic hypothesis with them to Rwanda, but also rigidly categorised the people into races. The Hutu – Tutsi dichotomy was for the first time in Rwandan history absolute.¹⁴⁸

The end of Colonial rule and Tutsi power

Towards the end of colonial times, Tutsis lost power and a Hutu counter elite grew in strength. The once powerful racial Hamitic hypothesis, giving Tutsis large advantages in Rwandan society, faded in importance partly due to the church having reversed its previous strong support of the Tutsi leadership. Belgian priests were increasingly sympathetic to the Hutu masses since Belgium was divided along ethnic lines as well. Influenced by the fight for equal rights in the home country, many priests argued for freedom of speech and against ethnical discrimination in Rwanda.¹⁴⁹ Not only priests but also many Belgian administrators changed their previous position, from aiding elite rule to encourage representative democracy. This was mainly a result of political changes in Europe. The end of the Second World War and the making of the United Nation marked a change in colonial politics. Decolonisation became official policy. Belgium was obliged to change the social system and introduce

¹⁴⁶ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 98.

¹⁴⁷ Smith, *A Time to Remember*, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Ranger argues that the European colonisers in Africa “set about inventing African tradition for Africans” when they arrived in the colonies. Ranger argues that whereas in pre-colonial Africa identities were multiple and fluid, in the colonial period, African identities became rigid and was restricted by the boundaries of invented tradition. Even though Rwandan history was indeed partly invented, we do know that there existed differences between different groups of people living in Rwanda also before colonisation. Ranger did later modify his view on invented tradition and substituted invented with Benedict Anderson’s notion of *imagined communities*. See Terence Ranger. “The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa” in Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan (eds), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa* (London, 1993), pp. 62-111; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York, 1991); Eric Hobsbawm and Ranger Terence (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁴⁹ Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, 13.

democracy in Rwanda. The interpretation of the Hamitic hypothesis was once again changed as a result of a new political order. The Tutsis were no longer born to rule but rather were considered aliens to the country. If democracy and social change was to be taken seriously, the indigenous Hutu majority had to become a larger role in Rwandan society than the alien Tutsis. In 1949, uburetwa was abolished and five years later the ubuhake system had ended.

The first ever democratic local elections in Rwanda were held in 1953, the first general elections being held in 1956. The elections were indirect and elected councils who only advised chiefs and sub chiefs in their work. On the top of this, it was the same chiefs which obtained advice from the councils that chose the candidates for the elections. The result was devastating for those who wished reforms with real impact; 52 percent of the lower and 90.6 of the national level posts were filled with Tutsi candidates. Three years later, a new reform introduced a system where elections on lower levels became direct while the old system was kept as it was on the higher. The result illustrated this unequal system: Hutus won the local elections, Tutsis the regional.¹⁵⁰ Once again, a reform showed the incapability of making any large impact on the inequality between Hutus and Tutsis.

Reforms were often responses to UN trusteeships visiting the country. This did not stop the controlling UN body from being critical towards the democratic situation in the country all the way to Rwandan independence. In 1957, a trustee report said that there was “little hope for a rapprochement between the races”.¹⁵¹ The same year, an UN trusteeship delegation to Rwanda was presented two independent documents, the *Mise au Point* and the *Bahutu Manifesto*. The former was written by Tutsi elites the latter by dissatisfied Hutu, among them Grégoire Kayibanda, soon to become president of the country. Both documents were radical and pointed to two opposite directions. The *Mise au Point* program called for “a rapid transfer of power to the king and his council.” This it was argued was important to end the tension between blacks and whites in the country.¹⁵² It was hardly new that Tutsis raised their voice, but the *Bahutu* manifesto on the other hand represented a dramatic shift in the Hutu struggle for political power. Whereas the Tutsis argued that the problems in Rwanda were mainly

¹⁵⁰ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 115-6, 125.

¹⁵¹ Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, 13.

¹⁵² Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 116.

caused by black – white tension, the Hutus argued that the struggle was internal – between Hutus and Tutsis. Thus, the decolonisation was not only a result of political change in Europe; there was also growing opposition towards Tutsi power and colonisation internally in Rwanda.

Different from the opposition towards colonisation and centralisation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Hutus and Tutsis were now fighting each other and the colonisers along the racial divisions as constructed by the colonisers. The Bakiga Hutus were during the first two decades of the nineteenth century fighting together with Abanyiginya Tutsis against the colonisers, Abeege Tutsis and southern and central Hutus. The late implementation of the Bakiga into the Rwandan kingdom was making their position in it different from most other Hutus in the country. The pre colonial Bakiga elite had not been erased in the 1950s. In the north of the country, there existed two parallel administrative systems during colonisation. The old hierarchy of the owners of the land, bakonde, and their clients, bagererwa, existed together with the ubuhake and uburetwa system. In the north there already existed a small Hutu elite ready for change.¹⁵³ It was in the north of the country that Hutu Power was conceived.

The 1950s was a decade of change economically as well as educationally. The ubuhake system had lost importance through political reforms and the introduction of cash crops (coffee and tea). The new cash economy made it increasingly difficult for the Tutsi elite, which still based their wealth on cattle, to keep their exclusive position. Cash crops and not cattle was the new way to gain wealth, this was part of Belgium's strategy to modernise Rwanda. In the new economical environment also Hutus were given the possibility to accumulate wealth. At the same time became education a key institution for the development of a Hutu counter elite in addition to the Bakiga elite. An expanding school system made it possible for Hutus to gain access to higher education. From the 1940s on, both the colonial state and missionaries offered education to Hutus and Tutsis. Tutsis were in absolute majority in the various educational institutions, but the Hutus who made it became an explosive force. In public schools, Hutus and Tutsis generally received different education. The Hamitic hypothesis was an important theme, there was an ideology of difference underpinning the system. But schools gave students studying the same subjects the same possibilities. They

¹⁵³ See Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 96-112; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 107-9.

were not rewarded for who they were, but rather for how they performed. Religious schools were also making a difference between Hutus and Tutsis, but at the same time, Christianity was preaching an ideology of egalitarianism.¹⁵⁴ In this way, the various schools were both teaching exclusion and equality, they were teaching according to the principles of the Hamitic hypothesis at the same time as they gave both Hutus and Tutsis access to similar or the same education, a dangerous mix.

As we have seen, it was stated in the *Mise au Point* that Tutsis wanted the colonisers to withdraw from the country. It was not only Hutus that were fighting for more power. Many young Tutsis with higher education inspired by nationalistic movements in other African colonised countries started dreaming about independence. Tutsis studying and fighting alongside western colleagues and comrades realised that they were just as intelligent and felt “fear and anger just like themselves”.¹⁵⁵ There was no reason why Rwandans should not be capable of ruling themselves; they were not inferior to the Europeans. There was also a growing fear among the Tutsi elite that the Belgian colonisers would introduce a well working representative democracy to Rwanda. The colonisers had to leave before this was probable to happen; only by fighting democracy the Tutsi minority could keep their privileged position in the Rwandan society.¹⁵⁶

The Making of Races

Colonisation had a disastrous effect on Hutu-Tutsi relations. There were three main reasons for this: the racialisation of the Rwandan society, the rigidly categorisation of all Rwandans and the privileged role of Tutsis.

Firstly, for genocide to take place, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group must be targeted as such.¹⁵⁷ Tutsis were privileged in pre colonial Rwanda; chiefs were usually Tutsis

¹⁵⁴ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 111-4.

¹⁵⁵ Interview with Mr Rutimburana in Kigali on the 19th of September 2004. According to Mr Rutimburana, Rwandans started seriously thinking about independence after their experiences from the Second World War. Rwandans were fighting alongside Europeans during the war and to their big surprise, they could see that “white people were feeling fear and anger just like themselves”. There was no reason why “ordinary people should rule Rwandans that were just as ordinary”.

¹⁵⁶ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 38.

¹⁵⁷ United Nations, “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”.

and Tutsis were exempted from communal work. However, it was possible to change group belonging; the system was to a certain extent flexible. After the notion of race was introduced to Rwanda, differences became absolute and neighbours became foreigners. The others, the members of the foreign Tutsi race became in 1994 targets of genocide.

Secondly, the supposedly racial differences between Hutus and Tutsis became absolute or made unconditional as every single Rwandan became classified as either Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. Identity was inherited from the father, no matter how “mixed” the person was. Identity cards made it easy for the 1994 perpetrators to single out their victims. Rwandans were either Hutu or Tutsi (one percent were Twa). They were either friends or foes.

Thirdly, Tutsis were preferred as collaborators by the Belgian colonisers. Tutsis got the best education and occupied all higher political positions. Hutus became increasingly conscious about this unjust system. From the mid 1940s, Hutus, longing for more rights, were encouraged by democratic reforms, reforms that were introduced after pressure from the UN and the church. However, Rwanda was at this time so polarised that democracy never really had a chance, Hutus and Tutsis were not interested in ruling the country together. As Rwanda became a representative “democracy”, Rwanda became a republic for the majority, the Hutus.

3.3 The Hutu Revolution

In July 1959, King Rudahigwa died under what many Rwandans still regard as mysterious circumstances.¹⁵⁸ The king, a Tutsi, was only 46 years old when he allegedly died of an allergic reaction towards an antibiotic injection given by Belgian doctors. Segments of Tutsi extremists soon started reprisal killings of Hutu leaders. Many Tutsis believed that Belgians in cooperation with Hutus killed the late king. Tutsis felt that their privileged position was under attack; that Belgium was becoming increasingly anti Tutsi. It did not help the situation that Rudahigwa’s successor, Kigeri Ndahindurwa was installed without referring with the Belgian colonisers first; it was common practice in Rwanda that all political questions were discussed with the colonisers. The installation of the new king was less an ordinary succession than a coup. The new king lacked political judgement and was heavily influenced

¹⁵⁸ “I think the king was given poison by someone” was told me several times by people I meet in Rwanda. King Mutara was king from 1931. In 1959 he was succeeded by Kigeri Ndahindurwa. The younger half-brother of the late King Mutara was heavily influenced by a conservative Tutsi group and did only make the situation in Rwanda worse than it already was.

by conservative Tutsi groups.¹⁵⁹ Violence erupted in the country. But it was only from November the same year that violence became widespread. This happened as a result of the attack on the local Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement (PARMEHUTU) leader, Dominique Mbonyumutwa by young Rwandese National Union (UNAR) militants.¹⁶⁰ At least 200 Tutsis were killed.

Several political parties were established towards the end of the 1950s. UNAR was created only two months before the attack on Mbonyumutwa, in August 1959. The party was established by Tutsi monarchists and was mainly a Tutsi party. Its presidency was nevertheless held by a Hutu, François Rukeba. The party combined nationalism with an aim to re-install the pre colonial political system in Rwanda. Even though UNAR argued that Tutsis, Hutus and Twa compromised one people, the system was closely linked to Tutsi power. The PARMEHUTU party on the other hand, worked for an end to colonialism under the condition that representative democracy was to be introduced first.¹⁶¹ Both parties were essentially radical and exclusive.

Before the making of the First Republic on 28 January 1961, the direction of the Hutu struggle against the Tutsi was not obvious. It was a hot topic whether the campaign for political power and social justice should be directed against all or only some segments of the Tutsi population. The politics of PARMEHUTU, based in relatively newly incorporated parts of the kingdom, like the Bakiga north, was coloured by the polarisation of the colonial era. The Association for Social Promotion of the Masses (APROSOMA)¹⁶², based in the centre of Rwanda, was influenced by a long history of Hutu – Tutsi cooperation in pre colonial times. The latter party saw a possibility in erasing the polarised and political constructed racial identities and in building one Rwandan nation. The former argued that there was a struggle between Hutus and Tutsis as such, and that the fight had to be fought with military means if necessary. APROSOMA wanted to fight for Hutus and poor Tutsis against the Tutsi

¹⁵⁹ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 38; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 123.

¹⁶⁰ Melvern, *A People Betrayed*: 14.

¹⁶¹ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 160.

¹⁶² APROSOMA was a second mainly Hutu party, but differently from the PARMEHUTU, APROSOMA declared themselves a party for all Rwandans, especially for the poor. However, after the struggle for independence started, it became increasingly difficult to fight for the rights of both Hutus and poor Tutsis. Further reading Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 121-2.

aristocracy; this perspective lost political potency against the argument that all Tutsis were privileged as such, even the poor.¹⁶³ Hutus had to take over.

For the Hutu population, the prospects of political change brightened considerably after an incredible political manoeuvre by Belgian Colonel B.E.M. Guy Logiest in 1960. The country was under his command to prevent further escalation of the conflict in the wake of the killing of 200 Tutsis towards the end of 1959. However, Logiest did not only protect the Rwandan population against internal chaos and violence, but also radically distorted the political situation in the country. Under the justification that Tutsi chiefs were causing the political problems, Logiest simply replaced them with Hutus. After four decades of Belgian rule, it was suddenly decided to deprive power from the previous local authorities. It was a shift taking on “the dimensions of a coup d’état”.¹⁶⁴ Many Tutsis fled Rwanda and went to neighbouring countries.

Later the same year, in June and July 1960, there were held new elections in Rwanda. The elections reflected the political changes inflicted by the Belgians; the Tutsi elites could no longer control the results. PARMEHUTU got 70.4, APROSOMA 7.4, RADER 7.4¹⁶⁵ and UNAR 1.79 percent of the votes. This paved the way for the coup of Gitarama on 28 January 1961. On that day, 3 162 communal councillors and mayors from all over the country met and decided to abolish the monarchy and establish a republic. The charismatic Hutu leader Kayibanda became prime minister. Both Tutsis and moderate Hutus opposed the coup. Even though the coup was arranged by PARMEHUTU representatives, in parliamentary elections held few months later, in September 1961, PARMEHUTU got 78 percent of the votes, UNAR got 17. Kayibanda became president. PARMEHUTU was a Hutu party at its core, but the new president chose to build a multi party government together with UNAR and

¹⁶³ It added to the problem that many PARMEHUTU leaders, like Kayibanda, received their education at priest seminars which meant they lacked the formal papers graduates from higher education in Butare were in position off. For seminarists, a democratisation and consolidation process would make it difficult to get into higher political positions. Further reading; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 122-3; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 234.

¹⁶⁴ Mamdani: *When Victims Become Killers*, 124.

¹⁶⁵ Rwandese Democratic Rally. A second Tutsi party, it was founded a few weeks after UNAR. Different from UNAR, the RADER aimed to get rid of the old customs and keep the Belgians in the country. The party lead by Chief Bwanakweri was a moderate alternative with democratic ambitions. The party program was mainly appealing to university students and not to the population as whole. There was also a moderate Hutu alternative. See Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 154-60, Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 121.

APROSOMA. Tutsis in favour of a multi party democracy in Rwanda returned home from exile.

In the same period as the multiparty government started their political work, armed Tutsi guerrillas, popularly known as inyenzi, started attacks on Hutu officials in boarder areas. Killing of Hutus by the exiled Tutsis led to reprisal killings of Tutsis. The storm of hatred building up to the strength of the 1994 genocide was again growing in power. At first, the attacks and the following reprisals were overshadowed by cooperation in the government. This changed with the Bugesera invasion of December 1963 as Tutsi guerrillas reached far into Rwanda. Hutu reprisals were as swift as they were harsh. In many ways a preview on what was to come in 1994, the killing started on initiation of official authorities and involved popular participation. Not only were thousands of ordinary Tutsis killed, but also Tutsi members of the government suffered the same faith.¹⁶⁶ Lord Bertrand Russell, a British philosopher and peace advocate, argued that the massacres were “the most horrible and systematic extermination of a ‘people’ since the Nazi’s extermination of the Jews”.¹⁶⁷ The Rwandan political system became a tool for Hutu power ideology.

Rwanda became a one party state, a state for Hutus. Tutsis were sometimes targeted for being Tutsi. They were seen as enemies of the Hutu majority. Many Tutsis were forced to escape. Up to half of all Rwandan Tutsis are believed to have fled abroad in the 1960s. There was a further major expulsion in 1973.¹⁶⁸ Going to Uganda alone, the number of mainly Tutsi refugees was about two hundred thousand.¹⁶⁹ There were hundreds of thousands of more refugees going to Burundi, Tanzania and Zaire.

Reforms and Coups

The Hutu revolution came as a social and political answer to the historical suppression of the Hutu majority. The 1950s and 60s were marked by a series of “coups”. As we have seen; the Tutsi aristocracy installed a new king without conferring with the colonisers first, the

¹⁶⁶ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 129-30.

¹⁶⁷ Melvern, *A People Betrayed*: 17.

¹⁶⁸ G. Mthembu-Salter. Mediation and Genocide in Rwanda. *Track Two*. 5 (2002), 6.

¹⁶⁹ African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, Second Edition, 24.

Belgians introduced a new chief system, and PARMEHUTU abolished the monarchy and installed a republic with Kayibanda as prime minister and later president. Many Tutsis and some Hutus were killed over the two decades. It became evident that Hutus and Tutsis were not able to govern the Rwandan society together. According to many of my Rwandan informants, from this period on there was no way back, and genocide was inevitable.

3.4 The Second Republic

President Kayibanda's rule was, except from the first few months, marked by favouritism and exclusion. Tutsis were totally excluded from the political arena. Also many Hutus felt neglected. The president preferred to work with politicians from his own home town, Gitarama. This had important consequences for the future of Kayibanda. Against the backdrop of the 1973 expulsion, Habyarimana, Kayibanda's Defence Minister, an army officer and a Northern Hutu from Bushiru in Gisenyi, seized power through a relatively peaceful coup d'état.¹⁷⁰ At first, the political situation stabilised and Tutsis still residing in the country experienced less harassment. But President Habyarimana introduced an unfair new quota system. This system was supposed to provide all Rwandans the same educational and employment opportunities. In fact, it was a system giving Hutus and especially northern Hutus huge advantages.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless, compared to the First Republic the political situation normalised after Habyarimana took power.

In 1974, the year after President Habyarimana became president of the republic, obligatory voluntarily communal work with the name "umuganda" was introduced in Rwanda. Umuganda means "wood used for constructing houses". With reference to the uburetwa, President Habyarimana argued that umuganda was a healthy part of pre colonial Rwandan culture which was corrupted by the Belgian colonisers. However, there is little doubt that the uburetwa system was unbalanced and disadvantageous towards Hutu farmers as it was in pre colonial times. Nevertheless, umuganda became an important part of Rwandan everyday life in the Second Republic. In a seminar to mayors in 1975 Habyarimana told his audience:

¹⁷⁰ Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, 45.

¹⁷¹ ICTR documents case Ferdinand Nahimana, (ICTR-96-11).

The doctrine of our Movement¹⁷² is that Rwanda will only be developed by the sum of the efforts of its own sons and daughters; the product of their efforts belongs to them. That is why it has judged the Collective Works for Development [umuganda] a necessary obligation for all the inhabitants of the country.¹⁷³

Umuganda was one important institution in the well organised Rwandan society. Habyarimana kept the old Rwandan tradition of a complex organising structure alive throughout his administration. Despite being an underdeveloped country, Rwanda had a rigidly organised administration. There was a well organised bureaucracy where the government implemented its laws and controlled the society. The small country was organised into 11 prefectures¹⁷⁴ directed by prefects. These prefectures were again divided into sub-prefectures and the sub-prefectures into communes. There were 145 communes in Rwanda, inhabited by between 30- and 100 000 people and led by mayors who had much immediate power. All mayors were officially under the supervision of the minister of interior but had often more to do with the president. The president usually appointed new mayors himself. The mayor had to report all births, deaths and people moving in or out of his jurisdiction to the government. In addition to this, the mayor was supposed to give reports to the secret service on suspicious inhabitants. The 145 communes were again divided into 1 600 sectors, led by councilors who were elected. According to official rule, the councilors were supposed to advise the mayor, but the opposite was usually the case. Sectors were again divided into tens of thousands of cellules or cells, consisting of about 1 000 people. Each cell was led by a five person strong elected team. The cells were again divided into units of about ten huts. This group was led by the nyumbakumi.¹⁷⁵

Towards the end of the 1980s, economic problems grew and Habyarimana's popularity faded. International donors, states and NGOs, started requesting democratic change and economical accountability.¹⁷⁶ The ruling northern Hutu elite answered the new challenges by tightening

¹⁷² By the movement Habyarimana meant MRND, Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement, which he installed as the only party in Rwanda in 1975. Every Rwandan was automatically member of MRND.

¹⁷³ Philip Verwimp, *Development Ideology, the Peasantry and Genocide: Rwanda represented in Habyarimana's speeches*, [Available online] www.yale.edu/gsp/publications/Rwanda.pdf [08.09.2005].

¹⁷⁴ Number of prefectures, communes and sectors as in 1991. An eleventh prefecture was established in 1992, Kigali, and a twelfth, Mutara, was established in 1996. See Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 41.

¹⁷⁵ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 42.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, *A Time to Remember*, 15.

its grip on the country. The same leaders that stopped the worst harassments of Rwandan Tutsis committed by President Kayibanda in the First Republic started their Hutu Power campaign.

3.5 Hutu Power, Tutsi Guerrilla and Peace Negotiations

In the beginning of the 1990s it soon became evident that the Hutu dictatorship led by President Habyarimana was falling apart. The dictatorship was challenged by domestic as well as international actors, politically as well as militarily.

One of the most significant challenges to the existing rule was the RPF attack launched from Uganda in October 1990.¹⁷⁷ The rebel army sought to overthrow the ruling Hutu elite and install a multiparty democracy. The RPF was fighting for equal rights for all Rwandans and the return of hundreds of thousands of Rwandans in exile.¹⁷⁸ At least this was what they said.¹⁷⁹ However, with the RPF attack, the Hutu Power elite, those who organised the genocide, found a scapegoat and an excuse to turn violently towards Tutsi civilians and Hutus not supporting their anti Tutsi campaign.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Some of the RPF rebels had earlier fought for regime change in Uganda, and were instrumental in ousting Milton Obote. Yoweri Museveni later transformed Uganda into a democracy. Many of the Rwandans that fought alongside Museveni ended up in important positions in the Ugandan Army, many more Rwandans ended up as foot soldiers in the same army. On October 1, 1990 Rwandan soldiers deserted the Ugandan army, still in their Ugandan uniforms and with their Ugandan guns RPF rebels attacked Rwanda. RPF was officially fighting for the return of Tutsi refugees, democratic rights for all Rwandans, abandonment of compulsory identity cards, establishment of social services and a stop to the ethnic divide. Further reading; Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 13-6.

¹⁷⁸ Between 1959 and 1973 some seven hundred thousand Tutsi were exiled. The Hutu government, both during the first and second republic, told that Rwanda was already overpopulated and would not except a return of Rwandan refugees. Rwanda was like a filled glass of water the government said, it was not possible to fit more people into the country, Interview with Pascal, Kigali, 24.09.2004.

¹⁷⁹ Ultimately, the RPF won the battle against the Hutu Power extremists. Today, there is a multiparty democracy in Rwanda. However, former RPF fighters and returned refugees are overrepresented in public offices and on political arenas. The former leader of the RPF, Paul Kagame is the president of Rwanda today. Kagame won an overwhelming victory with 95.1 percent of the votes in the first democratic election after the genocide on the 25th of August 2003. [Available online] Electionworld, *Elections in Rwanda*, www.electionworld.org/rwanda.htm [18.11.2005].

¹⁸⁰ Thousands of civilian Tutsis were killed in the early 1990s. Some were murdered by killing squads. Mobile killing squads were driving around towns on motorbikes shooting opponents of the ruling elite in front of their own houses. Others were killed while in custody. Thousands of people, mostly Tutsi, were detained after the RPF attack for being accomplices of the rebels. The prisoners had usually no direct contact with the RPF. The detentions was a convenient way to put political active persons behind bars and make Tutsis and moderate Hutus scapegoats for the troubles in Rwanda. Interview with Chris, Rwanda, 10.09.2004.

In the wake of the RPF attack, thousands of Tutsis and Hutus under the suspicion of being opponents to MRND rule were jailed.¹⁸¹ The attack provided a welcoming possibility for President Habyarimana to unify the people against one common enemy. This was desperately needed since Rwandans were increasingly negative toward Habyarimana's rule. The RPF and its accomplices became the enemy Habyarimana was looking for. When RPF pushed into the country in October 1990, Habyarimana arranged a fake attack within Kigali itself, and blamed the Tutsi inside the country for it.¹⁸² Under "accomplices of the RPF" it soon became evident that Habyarimana understood all Tutsis and moderate Hutus, not only Rwandans that were actively supporting the RPF. Under these circumstances, thousands of Tutsis were jailed. Some of the detainees were killed and many more were only released after months in detention after experiencing horrendous conditions.¹⁸³

In January the following year, the Habyarimana regime massacred Bagogwe in northern Rwanda. This happened after another RPF offensive and a staged fake attack on a military camp. The massacres were organised by leading politicians, orders were given by local authorities and the killing was carried out by military and ordinary people, much like the 1994 genocide. Ordinary people were told that the task of killing the enemy was to be considered special communal work. In other words, it was a special form of umuganda.¹⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the opposition from within Rwanda and from the international community towards MRND policies, together with the RPF attack, became a too strong pressure to bear for the existing rule. Thus, President Habyarimana saw no other solution than permitting the introduction of a multi party state. On 10 June 1991 a new constitution was adopted with new parties allowed.¹⁸⁵

The newly established opposition parties were at first reluctant to collaborate with the MRND. It was, therefore, almost exclusively MRND members taking part in the first

¹⁸¹ ICTR documents case Nahimana, ICTR-96-11.

¹⁸² Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 49-50.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 49.

¹⁸⁴ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 17.

¹⁸⁵ ICTR documents case Nahimana, ICTR-96-11.

transitional government in 1991.¹⁸⁶ One year later this had changed. After huge demonstrations, especially in Kigali, and large political pressure, in April 1992 MRND became a minority party in the second transitional government.¹⁸⁷ “Only” nine out of 19 minister posts were hosted by MRND members.¹⁸⁸ It was this transitional government that started negotiations with the RPF.

The political parties involved in the Arusha process leading to the Arusha Peace Agreement decided to abstain from violence as well as inciting violence.¹⁸⁹ The total opposite was actually the case. Political parties in the newly established multi-party system saw an important potential in creating youth wings of their parties. It soon became obvious that these youth wings were not created for democratic purposes but rather as an effective force for implementing extremist policies.¹⁹⁰ Many of the members of these youth wings received military training. In effect these political organisations became militias. By the end of 1991, the youth of Habyarimana’s party MRND, were organised into a militia known as the Interahamwe. The youth wing of CDR was also tuned into a militia, namely the Impuzamugambi.¹⁹¹ Especially the Interahamwe were famous for their notorious killing during the genocide.¹⁹² The militias were financed, trained and led by important Rwandan civilian and military leaders belonging to the so-called Hutu-Power faction of the Rwandan society. Hutu Power was a relatively loosely defined group of people radically anti-Tutsi and committed to genocide. Many of the Hutu Power members were closely connected to President Habyarimana and his inner circle, namely the Akazu. Others were closer to the PARMEHUTU fraction that led the country during the first republic.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 52.

¹⁸⁸ ICTR documents case Nahimana ICTR-96-11.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² The Interahamwe was well organised after a defined structure. The members became military training, sometimes by regular troops, and meetings were held where important Hutu power issues like the otherness of the Tutsis was discussed. Massacres of Tutsi and other crimes by the Interahamwe went unpunished even before the genocide started. In the Murambi commune, east of Kigali Interahamwe is known to have taken part in organised killing as early as in November 1991. Attacks by other groups, like The Zero Network carrying out assassinations against the opposition, contributed to normalizing violence, See Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*. 24-29.

In the early 1990s, there was an ongoing struggle between extremists and moderates, both among politicians and army officers. There was a fight between supporters of Hutu Power and a multiparty democracy. This conflict left Habyarimana in difficulty. The president did not know what to do. A decisive event in the development towards genocide was a meeting held in Kigali on 4 December 1991 where more than 100 army officers were assembled on invitation from President Habyarimana to discuss how to win the war against the RPF. A witness, one of the officers present at the meeting, said he could see Habyarimana's power eroding during the meeting.¹⁹³ Even though nothing was decided during the meeting itself, a commission was put together to address the issue. A ten man strong team of hardliners and moderates was told to work out a report: "What do we need to do in order to defeat the enemy militarily, in the media and politically?"¹⁹⁴ The leader of the Kanobe Military camp in Kigali, Colonel Bagosora, an outspoken Hutu Power extremist, took control and ended up writing most of the report. Some commission members even claim not to have seen the report, much less having taken part in developing it.¹⁹⁵ The outcome of the "report", or parts of it, was circulated among Hutu extremists; it said:

[The main enemy is as follows]: The Tutsis from inside or outside the country, who are extremist and nostalgic for power, who do not recognize and have never recognized the realities of the Social Revolution of 1959, and are seeking to regain power in Rwanda by any means, including taking up arms.

[The secondary enemy is as follows]: Anyone providing any kind of assistance to the main enemy. [It is further specified that the enemy was being recruited from some certain social groups, notably]: the Tutsis inside the country, Hutus who are dissatisfied with the present regime, foreigners married to Tutsi women.¹⁹⁶

This report making all Tutsis and moderate Hutus enemies of Rwanda was mirrored in political speeches and in the media in the years that followed. Mugesera, the Vice-Chairman for the MRND in Gienyi prefecture, did for instance in a speech on 22 November 1992 call for the extermination of the Tutsi population and moderate Hutus, "why are we waiting to get

¹⁹³ Melvern *A People Betrayed*, 21.

¹⁹⁴ ICTR documents case Nahimana, ICTR-96-11.

¹⁹⁵ Melvern *A People Betrayed*, 21-2.

¹⁹⁶ ICTR documents case Nahimana, ICTR-96-11.

rid of these families ... We have to act. Wipe them all out.¹⁹⁷ The speech was also broadcast on Radio Rwanda.¹⁹⁸

Even though the Hutu elite had no intention of sharing power, negotiations in Tanzania with the RPF resulted in the signing of the Arusha Accords on 4 August 1993. The accords sought to integrate all Rwandans into one multiparty democracy. The Arusha Peace Agreement was structured around five pillars:

- 1) The establishment of the rule of law;
- 2) Power-sharing
- 3) Repatriation and resettlement of refugees and internally displaced people;
- 4) The integration of armed forces
- 5) Other miscellaneous provisions.¹⁹⁹

The peace agreement sought to unite the two sides' armed forces. The joined force was not to exceed 13 000 men.²⁰⁰ However, in the beginning of the 1990s Rwanda saw a dramatic increase in the number of troops and militias. The Army increased their ranks from 9 335 troops at the time of RPF invasion to 27 913 by the end of 1991.²⁰¹ This development did not stop in 1991 and went parallel with the negotiations in Arusha.

A free multiparty democracy was an important goal and agreed on in the Arusha Accords. It was decided to put together an interim government until Rwanda was ready for an elected government. The Arusha Accords also directed the number of representatives for the different political parties in the interim government. MRND was given five posts plus the Presidency, RPF five, MDR four, PSD three, PL three and PDC one.²⁰²

The peace accords was seen as a big success by many observers; however, many others like

¹⁹⁷ See Gérard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis* 171-2; CBC Documentary, *The Spokesman of Hatred*.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹ See Republic of Rwanda, Official Website [Available online] www.gov.rw/.

²⁰⁰ The FAR – RPF quotas for low rank soldiers were to be 60 – 40, commanding posts were to be equally shared. The number of Gendarmerie was limited to 6 000 men and FAR-RPF quotas equally regulated as in the army. ICTR documents case Nahimana, ICTR-96-11.

²⁰¹ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 12-22.

²⁰² ICTR documents case Nahimana, ICTR-96-11.

Philippe Gaillard, who headed the International Committee on the Red Cross mission in Rwanda at the time, understood the reality of the situation:

I think I never read it [the Arusha Accords]. Maybe because I never believed in it, I don't know. A couple of weeks later, after the agreement was signed I had a talk with the President of the MRND [Mathieu Ndirumpatse], the government party, which is the only real party. ... I will never forget what he told me: "In Africa, peace agreements are usually toilet papers." This was end of August, beginning of September '93. [This] gives you some idea about the context.²⁰³

Also Harald Skjøli who worked for a Norwegian NGO, Norwegian Church Aid, in the region during the genocide did see an escalation rather than signs of peace before the genocide started in Rwanda, the Interahamwe was growing in strength.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, on paper the agreement looked promising.

Hutu Power extremist Lieutenant Nsengiyuma in the Rwandan army was also negative about the negotiations. However, he was more concerned about the demoralising impact the negotiations had on his soldiers in their fight against the enemy, "The men are beginning to think that the cockroaches [Tutsis] are their kind brothers".²⁰⁵ In April 1994 it turned out that Nsengiyuma had no reason to worry about his men and their motivation to kill.

Radicalisation and Hutu Power

The ideology was growing in popularity at the beginning of the 1990s. As we have seen in previous sub chapters, the ideology has historical roots. However, international pressure, democratisation, and the RPF attack were important factors making the Hutu Tutsi dichotomy genocidal.²⁰⁶

²⁰³ See Interview with Philippe Gaillard [Available online] www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/interviews/gaillard.html.

²⁰⁴ Interview with Harald Skjøli, Kigali, 13 September 2004.

²⁰⁵ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 35.

²⁰⁶ Holocaust scholars like Hans Mommsen argue that the mass annihilation of European Jews was more a result of a radicalization process in the German society as such than a direct order from above. Mommsen argues that this radicalization was caused by domestic (i.e. the young democracy, economical hardship) and international pressures (i.e. foreign recognitions of the Nazis). As we have seen, domestic and international pressures were also relevant during the Rwandan genocide. Further reading; Hans Mommsen. "The Realization of the Unthinkable." In Gerhard Hirschfeld, ed., *The Policies of Genocide: Jews and Soviet Prisoners of War in Nazi Germany* (London: Allen Unwin, 1986) 93-144; Hans Mommsen. *The Rise and Fall of Weimar Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

Firstly, international pressure for democratic change grew in strength towards the end of the 1980s. Foreign governments and organisations were forcing the two sides to the negotiation table in Arusha. These negotiations were seen as a success by many, but in reality they were used as a cover up for extremists. For many Hutus, the negotiations were understood as a deceit towards relatively newly won rights.

Secondly, under the justification that they were only executing democratic rights, extremists were drawing up a genocidal scheme. Interahamwe was officially the youth wing of MRND; in fact they were trained as militia fighters. Political meetings were used to spread genocidal hatred.

Thirdly, the RPF attack spread panic among leaders and ordinary people. Hutu Power extremists told the population that the attack was not only aimed at the leaders of the country, but also ordinary people.

As we have seen, the Rwandan kingdom became increasingly centralised towards the end of the pre-colonial period. In the same period, Hutus lost ever more political and social rights. However, royal myths were still highlighting common ancestry of Hutus and Tutsis. As the Europeans arrived with the notion of racial difference and the myth about separate ancestry (the Hamitic hypothesis), the Hutu - Tutsi divide was made absolute. In the Colonial era, these notions were adapted by the Rwandan population at large. However, through the involvement of the former Bakiga elite, education and external pressure, Hutus became increasingly critical of the notion about Tutsi supremacy. According to the growing Hutu elite, the Hamitic hypothesis gave Hutus the right to govern Rwanda; Hutus settled in Rwanda before the Tutsis, thus, they were the real Rwandans. The Hutu revolution showed that the divide between the two groups was so deep that any cooperation between them was next to impossible. Rwanda became a Hutu republic. In the 1990s, the social and political situation was radicalised through war and economical hardship and the introduction of democracy, allowing extremists to spread their lethal propaganda based on manipulation of history and the Hamitic hypothesis.

In summary, there is a historical tension between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. This long history of political and social tension was reinforced by myths. The Hutu Tutsi dichotomy became ever more important for every historical epoch. The politics of distinction became more extreme, and the myths became more lethal. Thus, in 1994 there was both a potential for mass murder in real history and in the understanding of this history influenced by myths. The political and social history along with myths was necessary for genocide to take place, but in no way sufficient to motivate Hutus of Rwanda to commit mass murder.

University of Cape Town

IV

Ideology

University of Cape Town

Ideology can be lethal. It is necessary to take racial ideology into account when exploring motivations behind the Rwandan perpetrators. In this chapter, we shall look at my second hypothesis on motivations behind the Rwandan mass murderers: *as a result of the Hutu Power ideology, the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide looked upon themselves as qualitatively different from their victims. Thus, Tutsis were seen as legal targets of mass annihilation.*

When searching for reasons for the inexplicable, for genocide, one almost instinctly starts looking for an ideology, an ideology which can explain why seemingly ordinary people become killers. It is both usual and comforting to start searching for a “guilty” ideology, not guilty people. Ideology has been an important topic in Holocaust studies. When Daniel Goldhagen published *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* in 1996, it immediately became a popular bestseller around the world. The young historian wrote what many people thought that Germans during the Second World War were mainly ideological in their actions against Jews. This resonated with a widely hold assumption that Germans were poisoned by an ideology of eliminationist antisemitism. In other words, Jews were killed because Germans were antisemites. Such a mono causal explanation has rightly been met by much criticism. However, ideology matters during mass murders. Ideology was lethal during the Rwandan genocide, as it was during the Holocaust. It is important to be critical to both downplaying and overemphasising the importance of ideology as the main reason for mass-murder.

4.1 Racial Dichotomies

The Hutu Power ideology, with its associated stereotypes, was influenced by myths and historical narratives. Based on the Hamitic hypothesis, the European colonisers established the “truth” about Tutsi racial superiority during colonisation. The theory was internalised by the population of Rwanda through education and the organisation of society. During the two Hutu republics following independence, the Hamitic hypothesis lost most of its original meaning without losing much meaning at all. From then on, the hypothesis was understood differently, at least by Hutus. The idea that Tutsis came from abroad and tricked the native Hutu population into becoming their servants became an important ideological backdrop in the Hutu Power ideology. Hutu Power ideologues led their people into genocide based on negative stereotypes about Tutsis; Tutsis were regarded as foreign and dishonest aristocrats and invaders.

The single most important Hutu Power racial dichotomy was native - alien. Hutu extremists saw themselves as Rwandan, Tutsis as foreign.²⁰⁷ Hutu Power sympathisers championed the past of the Hutu as a people distinct from other Rwandans. This distinction made Tutsi foreign. Tutsis had once colonised them, but they were defeated in the early 1960s, and now they tried to take the power back. In the early 1990s, the Rwandan military high command argued that Tutsis “refused to accept the [1960s] revolution and wanted to reconquer power by any means.”²⁰⁸ The Tutsis had not yet realised the consequences of the Hutu Revolution. The Tutsis were regarded as dangerous elements within, and the Hutu extremists were determined to “wipe them all out”.²⁰⁹ With a 500 years long history, the Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy was not a new phenomenon in Rwanda. But, as we have seen, the distinction between Hutus and Tutsis became ever more important in the Rwandan society for every historical period leading up to the genocide. An alienation of the enemy was necessary for genocide to happen; in 1994, Tutsis were defined out of the Rwandan society, historically as well as morally.

Hutus are usually agriculturalists. Different heritage was the single most important component in Hutu Power ideology. According to Rwandan narratives, different heritage also meant different vocation. Hutu narratives exalted the nobility of fair and simple Hutu agriculturalists, the original Rwandans, compared to the foreign pastoralists. President Juvenal Habyarimana pointed at the importance of farming in his 1.May speech in 1974, one year after taking power. The President argued that “manual labour, especially agricultural labour is the basis of our economy. We want to repeat that agriculture will stay the essential base of our economic system for the years to come.”²¹⁰

In other words, the Hutu Power ideology was not only focusing upon race and different origin but also profession. Hutu ideologues developed the romantic concept of the noble farmer. The Rwandan genocide was in this way also motivated by peasant ideology. In the romanticising ideology of the Rwandan farmer there was room only for Hutus, since they were the only real

²⁰⁷ Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, 29 -32.

²⁰⁸ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 77.

²⁰⁹ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis 171-2*; CBC Documentary, *The Spokesman of Hatred*.

²¹⁰ Philip Verwimp, *Development Ideology*.

peasants of Rwanda. At the same time, Tutsis were seen as petty bourgeois; they did not work for the common good of all Rwandans, Tutsis only exploited the hard working Hutu agriculturalists. The peasant ideology did not tolerate the existence of its enemy. This romanticising of the Hutu peasant combined with racism based on the Hamitic hypothesis were two interconnected ideological motivation factors paving the way for genocide.

4.2 Cleaning the race – Cleansing its enemies

Racial theory was brought to Rwanda by its colonisers and adopted by its population. Even though Hutus and Tutsis had lived side by side for centuries, Hutus were influenced by the Hamitic hypothesis to believe they were qualitatively different from their Tutsi neighbours – that they, the native agriculturalists were worthier than their Tutsi neighbours.²¹¹ As a logical consequence of this, Hutus had to keep Rwanda clean from the Tutsi invaders. The Hutu Power ideology was made genocidal in the heart of the Rwandan ruling elite in the early 1990s; it was important to the Hutu Power leaders to separate Hutus from Tutsis mentally as well as physically.

This worldview, that people were responsible for keeping their own race clean, was inspired by racial academic theories combining natural and social sciences. In the 18th century, French academic Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau who introduced the first comprehensive racial theory, believed that inherent racial inequalities were the motivating force behind all historical development. According to de Gobineau, this development was led by the “Aryan master race”. This view never became prominent, however. It was not before the British naturalist Charles Darwin developed his theory of natural selection that race became interesting to large numbers of political constituencies. The umbrella term Social Darwinism building upon Darwin’s theories is used to describe the increasing number of scientists and politicians that argued that human beings should take charge of their own evolutionary process. Different Social Darwinists supported for the sake of keeping their race healthy the abandoning of the poor, sterilisation, and some even argued for the killing of mentally and physically defective people. Racial hygienist Alfred Ploetz even argued that medical specialists should determine who should marry and reproduce.²¹² Like Holocaust

²¹¹ As we have seen, the Hamitic hypothesis originally regarded Tutsis worthier than Hutus.

²¹² See Walter Laqueur, *The Holocaust Encyclopaedia* (Yale University Press, 2001), 509-51.

leaders, leading Hutu Power ideologues took this ideology to its extreme, and sought to clean their race from unworthy elements, which meant killing Jews and Tutsis.²¹³

Both leaders and ordinary people were influenced by such ideas during the Rwandan genocide. MRND vice-chairman for Gisenyi prefecture and political science professor Léon Mugesera held a devastating speech at a local political meeting on 22 November 1992 which was broadcasted over the radio.

Why are we waiting to get rid of these families? ... We have to take responsibility in our own hands and wipe out these hoodlums. ... The fatal mistake we made in 1959 [the Hutu revolution] was to let them [Tutsis] get out. ... They belong to Ethiopia and we are going to find them a shortcut to get there by throwing them into the Nyabarongo River. I must insist on this point. We have to act. Wipe them all out.²¹⁴

The speech made explicit references to the Hamitic hypothesis (they belong to Ethiopia) and an ideology of annihilation (wipe them all out). Lauren Renzaho, a 50 year old Rwandan father of ten and Gitera Rwamuhizi, father of four, living from small patches of land, were among tens of thousands of Rwandans who made genocidal words into genocidal acts one and a half years later. At the massacre in Nyarubuye, the two fathers were motivated by this vicious brain-washing ideology:

Renzaho: Of course we hated them [Tutsis]. The plan to kill them was ready. It had been finished. The hatred was deeply embedded so anyone who saw a Tutsi killed him. That is why we left our homes and went from one area to another.

Rwamuhizi: And I had heard that they [Tutsis] used to be regarded as superior to Hutus. For example, a Hutu could only improve himself by serving in a Tutsi household

Mugesera, Renzaho and Rwamuhizi were all perpetrators of genocide. However, they belonged to two different groups of perpetrators during the 1994 genocide. Mugesera was a

²¹³ According to Nazi ideology where the Aryan race was seen as worthier than the Jews, the Germans had a responsibility to keep the race clean. Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* "There is only one holiest human right, this right is at the same time the holiest of plights, namely to make sure that the blood is kept clean, in order to, through preserving the best of humanity, to give these beings the possibility of a nobler development". See Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 444.

²¹⁴ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis 171-2*; CBC Documentary, *The Spokesman of Hatred*.

well educated politician and ideologue who was forced to leave Rwanda before the genocide.²¹⁵ Renzaho and Rwamuhizi on the other hand, were ordinary farmers committing face to face killings together with the local Interahamwe.²¹⁶ They belonged to the large group of ordinary people taking part in the genocide.

Leaders

The racial Hutu Power ideology was extreme to the core. But what motivated the leaders to organise the genocide? Was it first and foremost based upon a notion where power was important to achieve the deeper meaning of racial justice, or was ideology at the end of the day an instrument for serving personal interests? As usually is the case, there was something of both, but I shall argue that ideological motivations were important to the genocide leaders in Rwanda.

Leaders in Rwanda felt responsible for keeping their country free from unhealthy elements. Ferdinand Nahimana, in many ways Rwanda's Goebbels,²¹⁷ was a leading figure in creating propaganda directed against Tutsis, a central Hutu Power ideologue and cofounder of Kangura, an extremist newspaper that was distributed to local leaders around the country.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ After the speech, the equivalent of an arrest warrant was issued against Mugesera for inciting hatred in the population. This shows that Hutu extremists could face serious difficulties when spreading anti Tutsi propaganda in the early 1990s. Still, the speech made an important impact on the population of Rwanda. In 1993, he successfully applied for permanent residence in Canada where he worked as a social science professor until the past caught up with him and he was brought on trial for his role in the 1994 genocide. On the 28th of June 2005 the Canadian high court decided that Mugesera should be deported to Rwanda See LexisNexis Canada Inc., *mugesera v. canada (m.c.i.)* [Available online] <http://www.lexisnexis.ca/documents/05scj039.pdf> [10.11.05]; CBS Documentary, *The Spokesman of Hatred*.

²¹⁶ Both ended up in Rwandan prison immediately after the mass murder ended. His case is being tried in the Gacaca court.

²¹⁷ Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Propaganda Minister.

²¹⁸ From the end of 1990, Nahimana was appointed director of the Rwandan National Information Office (ORINFOR). Nahimana oversaw all media related activities in the country, including the activities of the state owned Radio Rwanda and all newspapers. In February 1992, Nahimana was dismissed from his position at ORINFOR because of being Hutu power extremist. Later that year, he and other Hutu Power sympathisers, mainly members of the MRND, made plans to create the RTLM. During the genocide, in June 1994, Nahimana became advisor to the president of Rwanda, Theodore Sindikubwabo. See "The media trial" *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Hassan Ngeze and Ferdinand Nahimana*. Case no ICTR-99-52-T.

Nahimana was responsible for much of Kangura's content. In 1990, the "Hutu Ten Commandments", not unlike the Nuremberg Laws,²¹⁹ were printed in the newspaper.²²⁰ The Hutu ten commandments were imposing a view where the need to maintain Hutu purity and to avoid contamination from the Tutsi was preached.²²¹ The Hutu population had to keep the blood clean. It was argued that the Tutsis were dishonest and wanted supremacy for their group. The first and fourth commandment comments upon this;

One:

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

Four:

Every Muhutu should know that every Mututsi is dishonest in business. His only aim is the supremacy of his ethnic group. As a result, any Muhutu who does the following is a traitor: makes a partnership with Batutsi in business; invests his money or the government's money in a Tutsi enterprise; lends or borrows money from a Mututsi; gives favours to a Batutsi in business (obtaining import licences, bank loans, construction sites, public markets...)²²²

Also Colonel Théoneste Bagosora, in many ways Rwanda's Himmler,²²³ who took control over much of the killings during the genocide, was extreme in his judgements of Tutsis living in Rwanda. He argued that Tutsis had come to Rwanda with "arrogance and pride" and

²¹⁹ Joseph Goebbels wrote in his diary after the meeting where the Nuremberg Laws were made official German policy in 1935, "if we do not fight the Jews, they will destroy us, it is a life and death struggle between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus" Ronnie S. Landau, *The Nazi Holocaust* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd 1992), 162.

²²⁰ Laws like the Nuremberg Laws were implemented to reduce Jewish role in German society and to keep the Aryan race clean. In addition to defining the term "Jew", the Nuremberg Laws limited Jewish rights in German society. In the introduction to the laws especially concerning "Protection of German Blood and Honour" there is to read: "Moved by the understanding that purity of the German Blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people, and inspired by the inflexible determination to ensure the existence of the German Nation for all time, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following Law..." see Yad Vashem, *Documents on the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), 78-9; Laquer, *The Holocaust Encyclopaedia*, 451-55 and 509-11.

²²¹ Des Forges, *Leave Non to Tell the Story*, 83.

²²² P. Twagiramutara, "Ethnicity and Genocide in Rwanda". In Okwudiba Nnoli, ed. *Ethnic Conflicts in Africa*, (Dakar, Senegal, 1998), 119-120

²²³ Heinrich Himmler was commander of SS and the Gestapo. He controlled much of the killings during the Holocaust.

imposed “their supremacy” on the good Hutus of Rwanda before colonisation.²²⁴ As a result of this, the Tutsis of Rwanda had to die. In the already mentioned 1992 military report on “how to defeat the enemy”, Bagosora stated that all Tutsis are enemies of Rwanda. Bagosora probably dictated the “report” or racist propaganda (which is a better way to describe it). The “report” stated that Tutsis and moderate Hutus are enemies of Rwanda:

[The enemies of Rwanda are] the Tutsis from inside or outside the country, who are extremists and nostalgic for power, who do not recognize and have never recognized the realities of the Social Revolution [the Hutu Revolution], and are seeking to regain power in Rwanda by any means, including taking up arms, [this would include] Tutsis inside the country, Hutus who are dissatisfied with the present regime, foreigners married to Tutsi women...²²⁵

Throughout the Rwandan genocide, Colonel Théoneste Bagosora always made his voice heard in every decision regarding the genocide. He was also controlling much of the genocide apparatus, including the militia.²²⁶ Bagosora argued that Tutsis in Rwanda were naturalised into the country despite the fact they did not belong there. The Tutsis had replaced all Hutu kings in the country and had taken over the country. Bagosora argued there were differences between Rwandans by pointing at moral differences of the Hutus and Tutsis, humble – self-important, honest – tricky, loyal – untrustworthy.²²⁷

Another high ranking leader during the Rwandan genocide, Jean Kambanda, who became prime minister of the Rwandan interim government two days after President Habyarimana was killed, never hid his hatred towards the Tutsis. He was in strict opposition to make any deal with the Tutsi enemy during the Arusha peace negotiations. Kambanda was convinced that Tutsis were racial alien to Rwanda and acknowledged that the purpose of the genocide was to exterminate Tutsis.²²⁸ He was also convinced that there is no such thing as moderate Hutus, just Hutus. At the same time, Kambanda understood that the role of the Hutu Power fraction in Rwandan politics would be weakened as a result of successful peace negotiations

²²⁴ Bagosora, as cited in Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 3.

²²⁵ ICTR documents case (colonel) Théoneste Bagosora [ICTR-96-7] [Available online], <http://65.18.216.88/ENGLISH/cases/Bagosora/index.htm> [02.07.2005].

²²⁶ Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, 386.

²²⁷ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 1-3.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, 1-2.

in Arusha.

Most Hutu Power leaders held important positions in the Second Hutu Republic, which they most likely would have lost under a representative democracy. Mugesera had to leave the country, for inciting hatred in the population, before the genocide started. Personal interest, to keep their high positions in society, was probably important to the genocide leaders. In order to do so, the Hutu Power leaders had to gain popular support in the population. As political and economical problems increased towards 1994, the Tutsi minority became the scapegoat they needed to win the people (the Hutu masses) for their cause. Whereas moderate voices sought to solve the problems of Rwanda through dialogue and democracy, the Hutu Power extremists sought to solve the problems through confrontation and cleansing. Similar thoughts were noticeable in Nazi Germany. Hitler argued that his country had to be built as a unified, authoritarian state, without any outsiders or inner dispute. Therefore, any criticism of the state had to be silenced. Democratic control had to be brought to an end because freedom of thought and speech would weaken the ability to fight for the cause.²²⁹ Hitler argued that to achieve its goals, the Aryan race had to unite under one leader.²³⁰ The man best suited for this job in Germany was according to Adolf Hitler, Adolf Hitler. Similarly, the Hutu Power leaders picked themselves to become responsible for the Rwandan genocide.

However, even though personal interest probably did play a role for the leading perpetrators, one main goal behind their involvement in the genocide seems to have been ideological. A feeling of commitment for taking responsibility in a world where they saw themselves as the

²²⁹ Georges Bataille wrote in 1933 an article about the rise of fascism in Italy. Bataille uses the notion homogeneous – heterogeneous to explain what happens when a society ends up in madness. In times of peace and order, the society is homogeneous. Everything fits together in a logical world order. The homogeneous society is productive and useful. Elements that do not fit into this order is oppressed and made an unconscious part of society. In times of crisis, in times of economical or political hardship, a large part of the homogenous society might loose comfort in the existing world order. They become members of the heterogeneous group, they are excluded and do not let themselves be assimilated. This group is organic and unites people from different classes in an emotional stage. When the homogeneous world order has lost its power, the heterogeneous group can be led into a stage of madness by strong leaders. Bataille argues that Hitler and Mussolini represented the immediate and different, the heterogeneous, while democratic politicians in the two countries represented the homogeneous society and its immanent power. An uprising based on heterogeneous powers ignores the normal order of society, and puts themselves above the people, parties and laws. See Georges Bataille "La structure psychologique du fascisme" *Agora* nr.3 2005 first published 1933 in *La critique sociale*.

²³⁰ See, Harald Ofstad, *Vår forakt for svakhet. En analyse av nazismens normer og vurderinger* (Oslo: Pax forlag, 1991 [1971]).

most able to rule played a decisive role for this group of perpetrators.²³¹ It was important for them to keep their privileged position in the Rwandan society, but also to defend their own race against “foreign intruders”.

Ordinary People

With the Hamitic hypothesis, Europeans taught Rwandans new and racial ways to hate. It was next to impossible for ordinary Rwandans not to internalise the Hamitic hypothesis and its associated stereotype versions. During colonisation schools and churches taught it, and the country was governed by it. In this way, leading perpetrators and ordinary people became authors of their own tragedy. Stereotypes and dichotomies that followed these not only served as raw material for extremist ideology, but also made it plausible for ordinary people to take part.²³² At the same time, leading perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide targeted ordinary Hutus with laws and propaganda making them increasingly vulnerable to the extremist ideology.

As we have seen, value systems connected to the Hamitic hypothesis did not lose their importance after Hutus gained power in Rwanda. The history of Rwanda told by Rwandan official authorities and Rwandan academics before and after the genocide reflects upon this. In both cases traditional understanding of history and race is more or less invented.²³³ Many Rwandans trusted in what they heard from their leaders during the Hutu republics about racial differences. Alex, a Rwandan refugee of mixed origin became confused. Are Hutus and Tutsis really different races or were notions about difference exaggerated?

... it is easy to see how history is changed... in the [refugee] camp I went to after the genocide... they told me - Tutsis told me something very else than history books [written during the two Hutu Republics] I had read told me... I get very confused: the history books told me one version of history, the Tutsi another. Who is right?²³⁴

History books read by Rwandans before the genocide told a long history of oppression by foreign Tutsis upon native Hutus. This understanding of history was often mentioned by

²³¹ We shall come back to the importance of self-gain in the next chapter.

²³² Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, 29 -32.

²³³ Further reading; Ernest Gelner, *Nations and Nationalism* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

²³⁴ Interview with Alex, Cape Town, 28.03.2004.

people I talked with in Rwanda as a probable motivation behind ordinary people that took part in the 1994 genocide. A 25 year old refugee living in Norway was highlighting differences between the groups existing from pre-colonial days; “during the kingdom, Tutsis sometimes killed Hutus, even babies, for no reason; no wonder that Hutus were scared of Tutsis”.²³⁵ It was this version of history Alex referred to as he talked about history books. Others argued that there was no hostility between Hutus and Tutsis before the Europeans arrived. A lady in her eighties I visited in her house in Nyamirambo, Kigali, argued that the “difference between us only became important after the Europeans came”.²³⁶ In her view, the categorisation of Hutu and Tutsi by the Belgian colonisers and the chaotic first years of independence made the importance of the Hutu Tutsi dichotomy gaining significance. This version of history is similar to what Alex was told in the refugee camp.

However, discussions and interviews indicate that even though there was a notion of race and difference in the population, there was no general murderous hatred against Tutsis among Hutus. It was argued that leading perpetrators, who institutionalised the hatred, were responsible for making the imbedded notion of race lethal. The situation was similar during the Third Reich. It seems that antisemitic hatred against Jews, as a race, did not play any central role in German society as a whole during the 1930s and the Holocaust, but there existed a notion about different races much the same way as it did in Rwanda. An example: the majority of ordinary Germans (and Austrians) were shocked by the Kristallnacht. The well organised violent attack on Jewish property all across the German Reich on November 1938, was not well received by the civilian population at large, not even in Vienna, known to be one of the most antisemitic cities in the German Reich.²³⁷ On the other hand, the population did not make much effort to stop the radicalisation process either. Even though

²³⁵ Interview with Theo, Oslo, 30.08.2004.

²³⁶ Compared to the average Rwandan, when the genocide started, grandmother was rather well off. She owned a three bedroom house. Even though her husband was dead, children and grandchildren often came visiting. When the genocide broke out, the whole family gathered together in her house. One of the first days of the genocide, the local Interahamwe came to the small house. They did not have to show their ID. It was well known in the area that they were Tutsis. Luckily most of the children got away in time. But grandmother and her oldest son were still in the house when the killers forced their way into the living room. One of the Interahamwe were told to do the killing, the rest of them continued their search for Tutsis. The grandmother told the man to kill her and leave her son alive. The killer looked nervously around before he killed the son, the mother he left alive. Interview in Kigali with grandmother in her eighties, 20.09.2004.

²³⁷ Private conversation with eyewitness to the destructions caused by the Kristallnacht in Vienna, May 2003.

Germans and Jews had been fellow German citizens for hundreds of years, very few Germans raised their voices against anti Jewish measurements such as the Nuremberg Laws, defining Jews out of the German society. The legal term “mischlinge” was introduced with the Nuremberg laws to categorize German citizens with racially mixed parentage. Later, German protesters were successful in preventing the killing of many so-called “mischlinge”. Germans were ready to protect close family and friends, but not Jews they did not know.

Similarly, a large percentage of ordinary Hutus in Rwanda probably did not look upon the Hutu Ten Commandments, explaining to Hutus how to protect themselves from the alien Tutsi race, as very controversial. But differently from Nazi Germany, there “existed” no “mischlinge” in Rwanda. Before the Rwandan genocide started, there were many cases of mixed marriages, but people of mixed origin were either defined Hutu or Tutsi. People of mixed origin with Hutu ID sometimes had to prove themselves worthy of their identity by acting more violently than others during the genocide. There were also examples of Hutu family fathers killing their Tutsi wives along with those of their children looking most Tutsi, despite the fact that children automatically inherited their father’s categorisation. There are also examples from the genocide where Hutus showed great bravery and rescued Tutsis.²³⁸

The Hamitic hypothesis, based on myths and racism constituted the ideological strata in the Hutu Power ideology. The original perception of the Hamitic hypothesis regarded Tutsis as worthier than their Hutu neighbours. The understanding of the Hamitic hypothesis was fundamentally changed to represent Hutu righteousness after Rwandan independence in the

²³⁸ Marck Msabimana, a Hutu and former soldier in the Rwandan army, was nearly killed for being married to a Tutsi and for suspicion of hiding her and their Tutsi friends at home. To be married to or hide Tutsis was against the regime. However, Hutus who came looking for Tutsis in Msabimana’s house could never find them. Since they could not prove their allegations, his neighbours decided they would pay someone to kill him. “I kept on telling Tutsis to come and hide in my house, especially the ones who were my wife’s friends. I hid them under the bed, in the ceiling, in the cupboard. The first time the Hutus came looking, there were 40 people in my house. I was very scared hiding them, especially when I found out that outside, people were collecting money to pay someone to kill me because they suspected me. They had collected 26,000 Rwandan francs [almost 50\$], but the killer wanted 30,000.” Msabimana, his wife and her friends survived the genocide. Further reading; Paula Slier “Dark Continent” In *The Jerusalem Report* (February 7, 2005 Volum XV No. 21) 29. Sources on mixed marriage and killing; Interview with Amy, Kviteseid, 30.08.2004; Interview with Mr Rutimburana, Kigali, 19.09.2004; Laqueur, *The Holocaust Encyclopedia*, 420-5.

early 1960s and taken to the extreme by Hutu Power ideologues in the 1990s. Goldhagen writes that during the Holocaust, Jews were killed because Germans were antisemites, I believe that antisemitism and the Hutu Power ideology were important motivations behind the perpetrators during the two mass murders. But is this motivation enough to commit mass murder? Probably not. To grasp motivations behind the Rwandan perpetrators one must go one step further; we have to look into ordinary human psychological traits.

University of Cape Town

V

Human Nature

University of Cape Town

Beatha Uwazaninka survived the Rwandan genocide, she tells us that no one can really understand what happened in 1994.

Don't expect an answer to the question, "Why?" No one can really understand genocide. It's like a different world with a different set of values and logic. Everyone thinks and behaves differently; people accept things that are unacceptable and do things that are unimaginable. That goes for everyone – perpetrators, bystanders and survivors.²³⁹

Uwazaninka argues that there is no answer to the question "Why?" However, she probably has some of the answer in her explanation why there is not. History and ideology can not explain genocide alone. Leaders and ordinary people seem to lose their usual sense of right and wrong during genocides, and usual sets of values and logic lose ground to genocidal motivations. There can be no doubt that most perpetrators during mass murders would not have killed under other circumstances. But were the perpetrators psychologically different from those who did not let themselves become perpetrators? Did the perpetrators during the Rwandan genocide really lose their mind or were they rather acting normally under the given circumstances? Much of the literature related to these questions is found in connection to Holocaust studies. In this chapter I shall discuss questions about ordinary human traits and perpetrators during mass murders with empiric data from both the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust. There will also be some references to the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia & Herzegovina. I shall investigate my third hypothesis on motivations behind mass murderers: *Ordinary people have the capacity of committing mass murder; the Rwandan perpetrators were motivated by common human weaknesses.*

5.1 Personality and Situation

Are mass murderers different from other people? In the first two decades following the Second World War, scholars argued that the men carrying out mass killing of civilians during the Holocaust had a potential of cruelty that not everybody possesses. That they were not ordinary men, was the consensus at the time. Steiner argued that Nazism was cruel because Nazis were cruel. In other words, cruel people picked themselves to become perpetrators. According to this theory, people with "sleepers traits" live ordinary lives under ordinary circumstances but turn into perpetrators of mass murder under extreme circumstances, such as

²³⁹ Smith, *Rwanda: The years after Genocide*, 73.

National Socialism or Hutu Power.²⁴⁰

Hitler during the Holocaust and Kambanda during the Rwandan genocide were certainly cruel. They orchestrated genocide by picking themselves to become perpetrators of mass murder. It would have been comforting if only bearers of certain “sleeper traits”²⁴¹ followed orders by architects of genocide; unfortunately this does not seem to be the case. During the Holocaust, reservists of Police Battalion 101, killing Jewish civilians in Poland, were according to Browning ordinary men.²⁴² Still, the middle-aged family fathers of working-class and lower middle-class background from Hamburg turned into mass murderers.²⁴³ During the Rwandan genocide, thousands of ordinary Rwandans became killers. Chris who survived the Rwandan genocide puts it this way, “it was my neighbours that tried to kill me. I did not expect them to want me dead. They were like everybody else.”²⁴⁴

In the famous Stanford Prison Experiment carried out in 1971, Philip Zimbardo showed that ordinary people could commit cruel deeds under the right circumstances. Zimbardo filtered out participants; they were students at Stanford, for his research that scored normal in a whole range of different psychological tests. This was important because scholars like Theodor W. Adorno argued that persons with “sleeper traits” were indeed overrepresented among the perpetrators during the Holocaust. In Zimbardo’s experiment, the homogenous “normal” group was randomly divided into two, prisoners and guards. The project was stipulated to last two weeks. However, after only six days the guards became so sadistic and the prisoners became so depressed and stressed that the project had to end prematurely.²⁴⁵ Ordinary decent

²⁴⁰ Further reading John M. Steiner, “The SS Yesterday and Today: A Sociopsychological View”, in *Survivors, Victims, Perpetrators: Essays on the Nazi Holocaust*, ed. Joel E. Dimsdale, Washington, 1980.

²⁴¹ Adorno and colleagues investigated German perpetrators just after the Second World War. They argued that the perpetrators had a tendency to stereotyping, aggressiveness towards out groups and preoccupation with power. Further reading; Theodor W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York, 1950).

²⁴² See Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (London, Penguin Books, 2001 [1992]); Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners. Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Abacus, 1996).

²⁴³ The 500 policemen in Battalion 101 were directly responsible for the shooting of 38 000 Jews, this is a conservative estimate. In addition, they deported at least another 45 200 Jews to the gas chambers of Treblinka. See Browning, *OrdinaryMen*, 191-2.

²⁴⁴ Interview with Chris, Kigali, 10.09.2004.

²⁴⁵ Philip G. Zimbardo *The Stanford Prison Experiment* [Available online] www.prisonexp.org/ [13.11.2005].

students had turned evil against fellow students.

In 1992, Christopher Browning published a groundbreaking study of Reserve Police Battalion 101 operating in Poland during the Holocaust.²⁴⁶ In *Ordinary Men*, Browning argues that the policemen did not display any qualities at all that would make them obvious mass murderers. They were ordinary men committing great evil. This is in strong contrast to theories about “sleeper” traits prevalent in the 1950s. Most of the drafted policemen ended up taking part in face to face killing of tens of thousands of civilian Jews, despite offers made by their commander not to do so.²⁴⁷ Browning points at some striking similarities between his own findings from Reserve Police Battalion 101 and those of Zimbardo’s project. Most of the ordinary men of the police battalion became killers in Poland; most of the ordinary Stanford students acted cruelly during the experiment. Even though it was possible to say no, very few did.²⁴⁸

More than thirty years after Zimbardo presented his theory that most good people have the potential to turn bad in an evil place, American guards acted cruelly against their Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. This was no experiment but a real life tragedy that showed the same tendencies as Zimbardo’s project did. American soldiers working on night shift in the prison under horrific conditions started to abuse their prisoners. The Pentagon called the soldiers bad apples while Zimbardo argues that they were not. “It’s not the bad apples; it’s the bad barrels that corrupt good people”.²⁴⁹ Situations make people kill, but the situation did not kill for them.

²⁴⁶ In *Zentrale Stelle der Landesjustizverwaltungen*, in Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart, there is an extensive collection of indictments and judgments for German trials of Nazi crimes. It is here Browning (1992) and Goldhagen (1996) found the sources for their analysis of the mass murder carried out by Reserve Police Battalion 101 in Poland during the Second World War. The different conclusions presented by the two Holocaust scholars after investigating the same data, clearly shows the importance of being critical when analysing secondary sources.

²⁴⁷ See Browning, *OrdinaryMen*, 2.

²⁴⁸ In the prisoner-guard experiment only two out of eleven guards, or less than 20 percent, were acting as “good guards”. They did not punish the prisoners and even did them small favours. Two thirds of the guards were “tough but fair” one third “cruel and tough”. In Police Battalion 101 there was between 10 and 20 percent who did not kill, a relatively small group was enthusiastic about the killing and policemen belonging to a larger group killed but were not actively seeking opportunities to do so. In other words, most members of the battalion joined the killing. See Browning, *Ordinary Men*; Zimbardo *The Stanford Prison Experiment*.

²⁴⁹ You Can't Be a Sweet Cucumber in a Vinegar Barrel: A Talk with Philip Zimbardo in Edge, January 19, 2005 [Available online] www.prisonexp.org/edge/ [23.11.2005].

In Rwanda, the bigger massacres were joint operations between police, army, militia and civilians. Not all police and army units did take part in the genocide, nor did all militias or civilians kill either. Some were trying to hold back. Daniel, a student in his mid 20s, told me that not all Hutus sought to kill during the genocide, but there were far more followers than resisters of genocide.²⁵⁰ Presidential Guards and the militias were the most notorious killers, at least the first few days. On the first day of genocide 1 500 to 2 000 mainly elite troops, especially Presidential Guards together with about 2 000 militias, carried out killings of unarmed civilians in and around Kigali.²⁵¹ Many of the Presidential Guards were recruited from the Hutu Power strongholds in the north of the country, the home of President Habyarimana. People from the north were generally more committed to Hutu Power ideology than other Rwandans, for historical reasons. However, there is no reason to believe that the percentage of Rwandans with cruel personalities was accumulated in that area. Presidential Guards were first and foremost there to protect the President who came from the same area as they did. Later during the genocide, popular participation in the killing reached high numbers. It was not only people with tight connection to the Hutu Power ideology that took part in the killing.

Ervin Staub argues that both conditions and personality are important in making people perpetrators during genocides. He argues that under the right circumstances, some human beings become capable of killing. In fact, most human beings have the traits that make participation in genocide possible. The percentage of “sleepers” is thus so high that it is of no good use in explaining genocide. Staub argues that “ordinary psychological processes and normal, common human motivations and certain basic but not inevitable tendencies in human thought and feeling (such as the devaluation of others) are the primary sources of evil”.²⁵² According to Staub, not all people are equally likely to become perpetrators. Differences in socialisation and experiences shape people differently, and they have the potential to be either altruistic or aggressive. Security is in this sense important, both psychologically and physiologically.²⁵³ Many Rwandans lacked this sense of security. The economic situation was for most people extremely difficult, and they experienced fear and insecurity as a result of the

²⁵⁰ Interview with Daniel, Kigali, 16.09.2004.

²⁵¹ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 21.

²⁵² Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) 26.

²⁵³ *Ibid* 27.

war and political suppression.

Let us first take a brief look at how economic insecurity influenced people to become members of the Interahamwe. They became some of the most notorious killers during the genocide. Interahamwe were recruited among mainly poor men and farmers with few signs of ever accumulating any wealth at all. They lacked economic security and were easy targets of propaganda. The militias were well organised and paid with food, clothes and small amounts of cash. Sometimes members of the Interahamwe were even promised future seizure of Tutsi goods. The men experienced some kind of economic safety in an insecure world while they were being prepared for killing.²⁵⁴

If many Interahamwe members found some kind of security in becoming part of the movement, this was destroyed by the killing of the President. "After our President died, Tutsis were hated. Renzaho from Nyarubuye argued "We didn't want to go back to the old days, so we had to kill every Tutsi wherever they were. That's the truth".²⁵⁵ The insecurity was cobbled with historical tensions between Hutus and Tutsis. According to Renzaho, ordinary Hutus did not want to go back to the time when Tutsis were having all the privileges and Hutus were their servants.²⁵⁶

Many Rwandans were after the death of President Habyarimana afraid of Tutsi tyranny. The interim government of Hutu Power extremists instigated on the 8th of April told Hutus that their President had been killed by Tutsis of the RPF. Fear is a powerful emotion that the extremists knew how to take advantage of. Lack of security spread in the population. In Nyarubuye, Rwamuhizi argues that: We thought that if they had managed to kill the leader of the country, how were ordinary people supposed to survive?²⁵⁷ Some were also moved by the loss of a respected leader. Rwandans told me that even though the President had many problems at the time, his death was deeply traumatic to the Hutu majority.²⁵⁸ Some even told

²⁵⁴ We shall come back to economic motivations behind the Rwandan perpetrators later.

²⁵⁵ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Interview with Theo, Oslo, 30.08.2005; Interview with Shaffy, Kigali, 23.09.2004.

me that the genocide was the result of a vendetta.²⁵⁹ It is obvious that the genocide was not a result of a vendetta alone. However, some of the perpetrators could very well have been motivated by anger after the killing of their president.²⁶⁰

The Impact of War

Rwandan history, especially since independence in the early 1960s, was troubled by much violence. As we have seen, Tutsis were victims of several murderous campaigns during the decades leading up to the 1994 mass murder. There were three waves of killing and expulsion campaigns during the two Hutu republics; the first in the wake of the Hutu revolution; the second during the mid 1970s, and the last one started with the 1990 RPF attack. Even though many Rwandans were involved in these campaigns and that Rwandans in general were “used” to violence, during the 1994 genocide a large majority of the perpetrators had never before been involved in killing. Ordinary people like Renzaho, in jail today for taking part in the Nyarubuye massacre, told that before the genocide “I’d never killed anyone...I wonder how it came into my mind”.²⁶¹

The war in Rwanda made people insecure. Alex, a well educated Hutu of mixed origin was before the genocide afraid that Tutsis were going to launch an attack on all Hutus in Kigali as a result of the war.

This is a Hutu... this is a Tutsi... it was a fight. The war didn't start in 1994... it was a fight from 90... I think the genocide started 1990 ... Hutus killed Tutsis... Tutsis killed Hutus in the war. When I was at the University of Kigali soldiers who came back from battle even said that they killed Tutsis... the genocide started by two sides with the war... they were targeting each other.²⁶²

Even though many of the men that carried out the massacres during the Rwandan genocide

²⁵⁹ Interview with Alex, Cape Town, 28.03.2004.

²⁶⁰ Hutu Power leaders were not motivated by a trauma and anger caused by the death of president Habyarimana when launching their killing campaign in April 1994. When the message of the president's death was confirmed during a meeting between high rank Hutu leaders and UN General Dallaire, the messenger could not avoid smiling at the fact that the plane had crashed in the garden of the presidential compound. Sometimes showing an emotion tells more than thousand words, he was certainly not very sad about the loss. In fact, Hutu Power extremists were waiting for an excuse to launch their attack. Through the killing of the president they had one. This is not to say that Hutu Power sympathisers killed the president, however, it is not impossible they did. Further reading, Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*.

²⁶¹ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

²⁶² Interview with Alex, Cape Town, 28.03.2004.

had previously not fought in battle themselves, a climate of fear and hardship was very real in the country. This climate was highlighting difference. Even though war experiences did not cause the face to face killing in itself,²⁶³ an implementation of mass murder or a program of annihilation was more likely to be successful in an environment of war than peace.²⁶⁴ It was us or them. Alex continues:

They told us... the leaders... they told us that all Hutus were to be killed. It's not about believing... its facts... my father is Hutu my mother is Tutsi... so I'm neutral. Let me give an example: before RPF attacked [the killing of president Habyarimana] Tutsis had been digging holes in their gardens... in every garden. I don't know if it was the purpose but it was told us that these holes were supposed to be used to hide weapons to kill Hutu. All Tutsi made holes in their gardens... I saw it myself... but the ones who ended up in the holes were the Tutsis during the genocide ... We were all ready to kill, on both sides. People were made parts of the leaders' thoughts. All were ready to fight.²⁶⁵

It is very unlikely that many Tutsis were digging holes in their gardens to hide weapons. There is no record of Tutsis digging such holes before the genocide started. This rumour was one out of many lies presented to make the Hutu – Tutsi dichotomy lethal. There were also rumours in Rwanda before the genocide started about pits being dug by the RPF to serve as Hutu mass graves. Some extremists even claimed that Tutsis had prepared holes in the dirt floors in their own homes to bury Hutus. This is unthinkable because of the health hazard and psychological burden it would cause.²⁶⁶ In the already tense wartime situation, lies were spread in the population to cause fear and anger; they were spread to motivate Hutus to become killers.

Returning to World War Two, we can observe that the reservists of Police Battalion 101 were

²⁶³ Wartime brutalization can cause massacres, however. One example of this is the killing of civilian Vietnamese by American soldiers at My Lai during the Vietnam War. The soldiers were not acting upon orders but were rather motivated by wartime brutalization; like the loss of comrades in previous battles, the normality of taking lives and a regard of the enemy as inhuman.

²⁶⁴ Also the Armenian catastrophe that started in 1915 was happening in an environment of war and hardship. See Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil*, 173-5.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Alex, Cape Town, 28.03.2004.

²⁶⁶ To bury victims into house floors has never been any common practice, however, after the king of Ethiopia Haile Selassie died in capture under suspicious circumstances in 1975, he was buried into the cement floor of the royal castle, right under the toilet. Further reading, BBC, *Haile Selassie laid to rest*, [Available online] <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1007736.stm>. [14.11.2005]. According to other rumors, Haile Selassie was buried under the desk of the new president.

indeed influenced by the wartime situation, maybe not so much by wartime brutalisation before the killing started but more by wartime stereotyping. Most of the policemen came from Hamburg, a city spared from the worst violence and destruction at the time. However, the neighbouring city of Lübeck was bombed in March 1942. Without making any direct link between the killing of civilians in Germany and the policemen's murderous task in Poland, Major Trapp told his men that if it would make the regrettable task of murdering civilian Jews in Józefów any easier for them, they should think about the bombings in Germany.²⁶⁷ If this made the killing any easier is dubious. Furthermore, only very few of the reservists of battalion 101 had previously experienced battle. Some of the oldest men had fought during the First World War.²⁶⁸ A few had witnessed or taken part in fighting and killing in Eastern Europe before the summer of 1942.²⁶⁹

In other words, the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101 were hardly motivated by violent experiences from before their assignment in Poland, but more importantly, after some time in Eastern Europe many of them were getting attuned to the killing. But the Nazi leaders saw a potential in the war. Joseph Goebbels described in his diary on the 27th of March 1942 that "No other government and no other regime would have the strength for such a global solution as this [the Holocaust]... Fortunately a whole series of possibilities presents itself to us in wartime which would be denied us in peace. We shall have to profit by this."²⁷⁰ During an environment of war; people feel unsafe, previous unimaginable attacks on civilians suddenly seem to become acceptable, even right.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 2.

²⁶⁸ Some of the victims of Reserve Police Battalion 101 had also fought during World War One. One 101 policeman remembered after the Holocaust that his first victim of face to face shooting was a Jew from the neighboring city of Bremen who was a decorated World War One veteran. See Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 67.

²⁶⁹ At no point before departure to Poland the policemen were made aware of the murderous task waiting for them there. Even the leading officers were probably not aware of the enormity and cruelty of their task before heading for Poland. The men of battalion 101 were led to believe that they would perform guard duty in Poland. It was still quite dark as the men [of Reserve Police Battalion 101] climbed into the waiting trucks. Each policeman had been given extra ammunition, and additional boxes had been loaded onto the trucks as well. They were headed for their first major action [since they arrived in Poland some three weeks earlier], though the men had not yet been told what to expect. ... Just as the sky was beginning to lighten, the convoy halted outside Józefów. It was a typical Polish village of modest white houses with thatched straw roofs. Among its inhabitants were 1,800 Jews. ... He [Commander Major Wilhelm Trapp] turned to the matter at hand. ... The male Jews of working age were to be separated and taken to a work camp. The remaining Jews – the women, children, and elderly-were to be shot on the spot by the battalion. Further reading; Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 1-2, 38-48.

²⁷⁰ Louis Lochner, *The Goebbels Diaries (1942-1943)* (Hamish Hamilton, 1948) 103.

War makes mass murder more likely to take place. Some massacres are results of wartime brutalisation. Others like those happening during genocides are influenced by a climate of war. War is an extreme situation. The whole complexity of a given situation is important for how people act. In cases where embedded negative racial stereotypes (us against them and good against evil) are added to a wartime situation, the psychological distancing between two groups seems to motivate people to become mass murderers. As we have seen, stereotypes and dichotomies existed before the war started in Rwanda.²⁷¹ In Rwanda, at least after independence from Belgium, being Hutu or Tutsi was decisive in many situations. There were many narratives in Rwanda that descended from the Hamitic hypothesis. These narratives were building upon dichotomies of difference. War is brutal. People experiencing wars - both policemen, soldiers, militias and civilians - are exposed to extreme violence. Lengthy exposure to violence can often lead to brutalisation, a brutalisation that can cause atrocities or at least makes it more likely that one's own usual values are corrupted. There are numerous examples of massacres of civilians during wars, massacres that are not result of policies but rather wartime brutalisation. American soldiers killing hundreds of Vietnamese civilians at the My Lai Massacre is just one example of this. Thus, wartime brutalisation can cause atrocities and mass murders. However, massacres of civilians are not always the unwanted result of wars. The mass murder of civilian Tutsis during the Rwandan genocide did not happen by chance. The genocide was not part of the war but was influenced by it. More importantly than brutalisation, there were polarising and stereotyping processes going on during the wars, stereotyping that reinforced racial importance. This racial stereotyping regarded the enemy less worthy than themselves.²⁷² Mass murder was a policy during the

²⁷¹ Before the wars and ethnic cleansings splitting up Yugoslavia started, many pupils in Bosnian schools did not know what ethnic group to associate with, during the ethnic cleansing everybody knew. Further reading Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: identity and community in a central Bosnian village* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1994).

²⁷² In a private conversation with Steven Katz, he argued that war was necessary for the Holocaust because it provided the right environment for Hitler and the Nazi leaders to do what they really wanted to do, to annihilate the Jews of Europe. In the 1990s an important debate in Holocaust studies between Functionalists and Intentionalists was at its peak. Steven Katz is a moderate Intentionalist, arguing that there always was a plan to kill Jews in Nazi policy but the right moment had to be there for executing it. Functionalists are highlighting a series of events ended with the Final Solution and argue that there was never a master plan of annihilation from the beginning on and that it was more a result of the circumstances at the time. Further reading Katz *The Holocaust in Historical Context. Vol. 1*; Richard Breitman *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (University Press of New England, 2006) ; Christopher Browning "The Decision Concerning the Final Solution," in Christopher Browning, *Fateful Months: Essays on the Emergence of The Final Solution* (1985); Christopher Browning "Beyond 'Intentionalism' and 'Functionalism': The Decision for the Final Solution Reconsidered," in Christopher Browning *The Path to Genocide: Essays on Launching the Final Solution* 86-121; Ian Kershaw *Hitler 1936-1945: Nemesis*.

Rwandan genocide; this does not automatically make wartime brutalisation less important. However, many perpetrators carrying out face to face killing during the Rwandan genocide had previously little wartime experience.

Democratisation and the Media

In newspapers and speeches, ideologues and Rwandan leaders were inciting hatred by introducing rumours in the population. Hutu extremists were presenting news about RPF plans to commit genocide against the Hutu of Rwanda. Propagandists did by mid 1993 assert that “We know that they have attacked us with the intention of massacring and exterminating 4.5 million Hutu and especially those who have gone to school.”²⁷³ This statement came after democracy was reinstalled in 1991 and peace negotiations with the RPF had been going on since July 1992. However, this did not mean that there actually was a time of reconciliation in Rwanda, the peace negotiations and democratisation process was worrying to Hutu extremists. Lieutenant Nsengiyumva was complaining that the process towards democracy was demoralising his troops. “The men are beginning to think that the cockroaches [Tutsis] are their kind brothers who want to return and we will live together in peace”, Nsengiyumva warned that the RPF was working through political channels to gain control of Rwanda.²⁷⁴

Other Hutu Power leaders saw a great potential in the newly introduced democracy. It became possible to spread propaganda that even the MRND dictatorship would not have allowed. It is a fact that Hutu Power hardliner Mugesera was expelled from Rwanda after inciting hatred between Hutu and Tutsi in the early 1990s. This did not stop other Hutu extremists from spreading the words of a speech given by Mugesera in which he said what extremists generally thought. He argued that Hutus must not let themselves be invaded by the Tutsi enemy. He said that it was a mistake that some of the Tutsis were allowed to get away during the liberation towards the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s.²⁷⁵ Under the excuse that it was done in the name of free press, extreme anti-Tutsi propaganda was spread all across the country.

²⁷³ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 78-9.

²⁷⁴ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 35.

²⁷⁵ See *CBS Documentary*, *The Spokesman of Hatred*; Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 85.



Document: Cartoon from Kangura, In Gisozi Genocide Memorial

In Kangura, a newspaper controlled by Hutu Power ideologues like owner Hassan Ngeze and co writer Ferdinand Nahimana, this caricature was presented in July 1993. The soldier at the front is portraying RPF leader Paul Kagame, president of Rwanda today, saying “Inyenzi, eminent Inkotanyi (the tough fighters) let’s go! We are coming to live by force with those from whom we have robbed everything”.²⁷⁶ “Inyenzi”, a word used to describe Tutsi guerrillas attacking Rwanda from abroad in the 1960s, was often used to describe Tutsis in the early 1990s. It was meant to dehumanize the enemy. Hassan Ngeze, later wrote that “We... say to the Inyenzi that if they lift up their head again, it will no longer be necessary to go fight the enemy in the bush. We will...start by eliminating the internal enemy...They will disappear”.²⁷⁷ This fierce propaganda was not only a verbal attack on Tutsi rebels or guerrillas; it was meant for all Tutsis of Rwanda.

Cyasa Habimana, the local Interahamwe leader in Nyarubuye, argues that “Ordinary people tend to believe whatever the radio says because the radio is the main source of information. You want to tell lies to the people, just use the radio.”²⁷⁸ In a mountainous country with bad

²⁷⁶ Cartoon from Kangura, In Gisozi Genocide Memorial.

²⁷⁷ Hassan Ngeze, Kangura newspaper article on display at Gisozi Genocide memorial, Kigali.

²⁷⁸ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, “The Triumph of Evil”.

roads and a high percentage of illiteracy the radio was a popular source of information and entertainment. This is also why the leader of the UN mission to Rwanda, Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, asked for the necessary permission and gear to put up a radio station in Rwanda. Dallaire understood the large importance of Radio broadcasts in the country.²⁷⁹ The force commander of the UN mission to Rwanda wanted to give the population an alternative to Hutu Power radio, to provide them with objective news instead of hateful propaganda. But as so many times in the build up and during the 1994 genocide, Dallaire did not receive the necessary orders or material to protect the population of Rwanda.

The Hutu Power extremists had a powerful weapon in the media which did influence the perpetrators to commit genocide. Ngendahimana, also a member of the Interahamwe in Nyarubuye, blames the media for his hatred against the Tutsis; "They kept on saying that the rebels, the cockroaches, are now the RPF, and that they are all Tutsis. That is when the hatred started, and when you met a Tutsi, you would say it's your relatives who are trying to kill us."²⁸⁰ The propaganda was worsening the general climate between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. It was also part of the reason why so many ordinary people joined the police, army and militias in their killing during the genocide, or at least did nothing to stop it when genocide broke out.

During the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the early 1990s, similar thoughts were apparent. There were spread false rumours about the enemy through the media. Two Serb women living in a former "Muslim apartment" in Banja Luka argues:

...no, there was no fighting between Muslims and Serbs in the village", she said. "Then why were the Muslims arrested?" "Because they were planning to take over the village. They had already drawn up lists. The names of the Serb women had been split into harems for the Muslim men." "Harems?" "Yes, harems. Their Bible says men can have harems, and that's what they were planning to do once they had killed our men. Thank God they were arrested first." She wiped her brow. "How do you know that they were planning to kill the Serb men and create harems for themselves?" "It was on the radio. Our military had uncovered their plans. It was announced on the radio." How do you know the radio was telling the truth?" I asked. "Why", she demanded to know, "would the radio lie?"²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*.

²⁸⁰ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

²⁸¹ Peter Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor: A Story of War* (New York: Knopf, 1996) 113 f.

Both in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia, people did not believe their leaders were lying to them. And why should they? The answer is as simple as it is brutal: the leaders wanted mass murder to proceed. The logic of states taking care of their population was turned upside down. Banja Luka was no longer a place for both Muslims and Serbs; Rwanda was no longer a place for both Hutus and Tutsis.

Different Races – Different Rights

Tutsis were not killed by chance, for the Rwandan genocide was a result of an active policy of mass murder. This meant that laws usually protecting all citizens were cancelled as they were under Hitler. The men of Police Battalion 101 like the Rwandan police, army and militias were acting upon orders to annihilate. Laws and rules governing society usually protect human lives, but these were turned upside down during the Rwandan genocide. In addition, in giving orders of annihilation, the new laws offered the “righteous” civilian population the possibility of gaining some extra wealth. In Rwanda, people were not held responsible for harassing or killing Tutsis even when the object was purely self gain. Impunity is a motivation factor that was mentioned quite frequently during private talks and interviews conducted by me in Rwanda. There were people in Rwanda that definitely took advantage of a legal system that virtually collapsed and was corrupted by Hutu Power ideologues at the beginning of the 1990s.

There were numerous political attacks during 1992 and 1993, attacks that were meant to destroy the merging democracy and to create an atmosphere of fear in the country. Opponents to Habyarimana and his supporters were attacked by killing squads dressed in black on motorbikes. Civilians were victims of bus and market bombings. In a press release by the general army staff of Rwanda, these attacks were blamed on the RPF and their “accomplices”, meaning Tutsis.

So-called security forces were driving motorbikes around town [Kigali] shooting at opponents to the existing rulers. There were two men on the motorbikes... one driver and one killer. They both wore all-black helmets. They would drive to the houses of opponents to Habyarimana... and kill them in front of their houses. Wives and children could see everything.²⁸²

²⁸² Interview with Chris, Kigali, 27.09.2004.

The International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda, did after an independent investigation of the violent situation, ascribe the attacks to the "Zero Network"²⁸³. This network stood in close relation to the leaders of the country or the Akazu and Hutu Power.²⁸⁴ The attacks were in other words supported - even organised by the very same people who were blaming their enemies for doing it. The members of the "Zero Network" were not made accountable for their crimes. This could be regarded a classic example of impunity. However, there is little doubt that these attacks were the result of a policy of terror. Also massacres and other crimes by the Interahamwe went unpunished before the genocide started. In the commune of Murambi, east of Kigali, Interahamwe was known to have taken part in organised killing as early as in November 1991.²⁸⁵ In this way, Rwandan authorities not only let criminal attacks happen, but were also involved in organising them. Thus, Rwanda became a country of terror.

Impunity as a result of the war and genocide gave poor Hutu farmers a historic opportunity to obtain more land. However, they had to kill their neighbours first.²⁸⁶ For many Rwandans, this possibility was only too tempting; all too many ended up killing former friends. The farmers killing their neighbours were not brought to court accused for killing or stealing their victims' land; they were rather encouraged to do so. In other words, this horrendous practice seems to have been the result of a willing policy and not impunity alone. Habimana from Nyarubuye explains, "They [the Interahamwe] were taken by soldiers for training, and were given uniforms and some were given military boots". After receiving these rewards "they also started acting as soldiers."²⁸⁷ Later, during the genocide, perpetrators were even promised the

²⁸³ The name "Zero Network" was first used by Christophe Mfizi when denouncing their activities in August 1992. The "Zero Network" consisted of people belonging to Habyarimana's inner circle of contacts and friends mainly from his and Mrs. Habyarimana's home region. See Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 44, 58.

²⁸⁴ See Africa Watch, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, Inter-African Union for Human and People's Rights and the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development, *Report of the International Commission of Investigation on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda since October 1, 1990* (March 1993) 43.

²⁸⁵ ICTR documents case (colonel) Théoneste Bagosora, ICTR-96-7.

²⁸⁶ Interview with Joseph in Kigali, 22.09.2004.

²⁸⁷ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

land and belongings of their victims.²⁸⁸ On the 14 April, the mayor of the Rusumo commune, Sylvestre Gacumbitsi ordered communal police and militias in Nyabitare sector to kill all Tutsis in the region by nightfall. Whoever killed a Tutsi could keep his belongings.²⁸⁹ In other words, many attracted to the Interahamwe for economic protection were not satisfied by obtaining only new boots and other small payments, but they wanted more, and the genocide provided them this possibility. As mentioned earlier, Silas Ngendahimana from Rusumo went to loot during the genocide. He found a woman alone in her house. He looked upon killing her as less criminal than stealing a sack of milk powder; "... I thought that if I let her live, I was very scared that she would testify against me for breaking into the building. That is why I took her outside and killed her."²⁹⁰

There was also an economic dimension of the Holocaust. For most ordinary people living in Germany in the years leading up to the Holocaust, racial antisemitism seems to have been less important than economic self interest. Even though organised boycotts of shops and vandalism on property made everyday life increasingly difficult for the Jews of Germany,²⁹¹ "Aryan" Germans continued to do business with and buy goods from Jewish enterprises for years after Hitler took power. Self interest alongside widespread passivity and emotionless acceptance was a normal reaction in Germany. A shortage of housing, deportation made houses available.²⁹² At the same time as people knew about the mass deportation of Jews, at least 100 000 residents of Hamburg were allowed to buy "Jewish goods" in auctions beginning in 1941.

²⁸⁸ Interview with Joseph in Kigali, 22.09.2004.

²⁸⁹ ICTR documents case Gacumbitsi [ICTR-2001-64].

²⁹⁰ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

²⁹¹ Nazi policy towards the 500 000 Jews living in Germany when Hitler came to power was increasingly hostile in the 1930s. Jews were immediately targets of harassment and persecutions after Hitler took power in 1933. An example is Nobel Prize winner Albert Einstein who lost his German citizenship just shortly after Hitler came to power. In 1935, not only the Nuremberg Laws were introduced but also an anti Jewish campaign having two features, boycott of Jewish shops and a high frequency of physical attacks on Jews and their property. The next major step in Nazi policy against the Jews was Kristallnacht 9-10 November 1938, when Jewish businesses and institutions in all German Reich were attacked. In 1939 the first Ghettos were opened. Further reading; Saul Friedlander *Nazi Germany and the Jews, Vol 1, The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*, (New York, 1997); Ian Kershaw *The Persecution of the Jews and German Popular Opinion in the Third Reich*, in: *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* (1981); Ian Kershaw *Genocidal Mentalities. Remembering for the Future Inaugural Lecture* (London, 21 January 2002); Ulrich Herbert, New Answers and Questions about the History of the "Holocaust" in German Historiography, in Ulrich Herbert, ed., *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies* (2000).

²⁹² Kershaw, *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook*, 282-9.

Such auctions were held throughout Western Europe.²⁹³ The women in Banja Luka were also sitting in their newly confiscated apartment talking warmly about their former Muslim neighbours from whom they had taken everything.

Even though poverty in itself hardly was a reason for the genocide, poverty was probably a motivating factor for many of the Rwandan killers to let themselves become part of a genocidal system. At least the leading perpetrators were helped by poverty to speed up their campaign. In Rwanda, poverty, lack of land, poor health care and limited schooling were everyday problems. Things went bad especially after the coffee prices dropped dramatically on the international market at the end of the 1980s. The number of illiterates was high, probably about sixty percent. There was also a lack of land, many young people were frustrated about their future and were desperately fighting for a better standard of living. This situation made people more vulnerable for genocidal ideas. Tutsis became scapegoats in a difficult situation.

5.2 Collective and Individual Evil

Obedience

Rwandan prisons are overcrowded. There are still tens of thousands of prisoners waiting to have their cases tried. Given the high number of prisoners, the security is very relaxed. It is very easy to escape. Groups of prisoners are doing communal work during the day by building roads and digging channels. They are guarded by very few personnel. It is common to see groups of 20 prisoners working along a road in their funny looking pink dresses only watched over by two guards. It is easy to escape, both from jail and during work. However, Rwandan prisoners do not escape. I was repeatedly told that Rwandans are obedient. During the genocide they were told to kill; thus, they killed. Now in prison, while escape is simple, they do not escape.²⁹⁴

It is always convenient to blame others for own wrongdoings. A common "excuse" produced by perpetrators of mass murder is fear of harsh punishment. Perpetrators of genocide often

²⁹³ See Ulrich Herbert, *National Socialist Extermination Policies: Contemporary German Perspectives and Controversies*, 29.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Abdul, Kigali, 21.09.2004.

blame their murderous behaviour on orders from high ranking leaders. During the Rwandan genocide it was an order from above to kill Tutsis. To protect Tutsis was not permitted; Hutus were sometimes killed for doing so. However, for many Hutus it was probably not necessary to kill in order to survive the genocide, but the fear for dire punishment was most certainly very real.

In the southern province of Butare, the prefect Jean-Baptiste Habyalimana was Tutsi and naturally opposed the genocide. The region resisted the genocide as long as he governed the prefect. However, on the 17 of April Habyalimana was replaced and later executed.²⁹⁵ Kambanda installed personally the new prefecture; at the same time he flew in presidential guards and the Interahamwe, and the killing started. It was then passive Hutus within the prefecture were woken up. Once Hutu extremists got power, the population stopped resisting the genocide, probably partly out of fear for their own lives, and many joined the killing.

Out of the twenty communes in the Butare prefecture, eighteen have genocide sites with more than 5 000 people killed. In churches, health centres, seminaries, communal offices, playing fields, markets and schools around the prefecture people were killed.²⁹⁶ In the Mutunda sector, a massacre took place at the stadium on April 25. The residents of Mutunda woke up at 5.30 in the morning from gunshots fired at the stadium. Soldiers and communal policemen had started the annihilation of defenceless children, women, men and elders seeking refuge there. In the afternoon, after a long day of killing there was no more ammunition left. The soldiers and policemen went out to call for reinforcement from the civilians living in the area. Neighbours were ordered to the stadium, and their job was to finish off those who remained alive. Francois Nyangezi was one of them. Most of the 5 000 to 7 000 people assembled at Mutunda stadium were killed on that day.²⁹⁷

We were forced to go with the other killers. The strongest ones forced us to also go and kill the Tutsis. They said that they were going to clean up all the Tutsis. They used the word 'Gusafisha' which means to clean up carefully. The mayor was present during all of this and I never heard him say that they should not kill.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 265.

²⁹⁶ Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 224.

²⁹⁷ African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, 21.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 21.

Jean Baptiste Muranga, a confessed killer, similarly tells that he was forced to kill during the genocide.

The first time I killed someone was because a militia commander came to my house in search of my wife, who was Tutsi. This person told me that I had to kill. If not, he would return to my house and kill my wife and children.²⁹⁹

In Bosnia Herzegovina, some perpetrators were also forced to kill.

One common method used was for a group of Serb fighters to enter a village, go to a Serb house, and order the man living there to come with them to the house of his Muslim neighbour. As other villagers watched, he was marched over and the Muslim brought out. Then the Serb would be handed a Kalashnikov assault rifle or a knife – knives were better – and ordered to kill the Muslim. If he did so, he had taken that step across the line the Chetniks had been aiming for. But if he refused, as many did, the solution was simple. You shot him on the spot. Then you repeated the process with the next Serb householder. If he refused, you shot him. The Chetniks rarely had to kill a third Serb.³⁰⁰

There can be no doubt that Nyangezi, Muranga and the Serb villagers were under extreme pressure to kill. However, to judge what people say after committing murder is always problematic. German perpetrators after the Second World War argued they were forced to kill. However, this has not been possible to prove in any case where Order Police, like Police Battalion 101, were involved in shooting civilians. According to Browning (1992), after investigating hundreds of post war trials, the defence attorney has never ever been able to document one single case where refusal to obey orders to kill unarmed civilians resulted in dire punishment. It could be argued though, that perpetrators might have believed that they would be severely punished if they did not follow orders. That could have played a role in some cases but the argument is hardly applicable on the men of Reserve Police Battalion 101, they were told on the first morning in Józefów that the men not ready for the task would be excused from taking directly part.³⁰¹ However, many of the policemen probably wanted to show that they were up for the task, and wanted to show strength, not weakness.³⁰² Under the given circumstances usual moral standards were put aside, it was weak not to kill.

²⁹⁹ Pbs, *Hope on the horizon* [Available online] www.pbs.org/hopes/rwanda/transcript.html [12.11.2005].

³⁰⁰ David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse. Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (London: Virago, 1995) 110.

³⁰¹ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 2, 170.

³⁰² *Ibid*, 241.

Milgram did several famous and groundbreaking psychological studies of obedience at Yale University in the early 1970s. He was investigating whether people were obeying orders that normally would be morally unacceptable without fear of harsh punishment. When evaluating the experiment, the conclusion was yes. Milgram made explicit comparison between his project and acts carried out by Germans during the Second World War. During the experiment, Milgram wanted to see how far the teacher, would "proceed in a concrete and measurable situation in which he is ordered to inflict increasing pain on a protesting victim".³⁰³ The aim was to see "when and how people would defy authority in the face of a clear moral imperative."³⁰⁴ The subject was put to a test when he had to choose between feedback from authority and his supposedly fellow naïve subject. The result was as unexpected as it was disturbing. Two thirds of the naïve subjects went all the way to inflict extreme pain on the learner. The ordinary Americans were ready to inflict people with painful electric shocks in an environment where fear of dire punishment did not play any role at all. The subjects acted cruelly, much more cruelly than Milgram expected them to during the experiments.

Milgram argues that people have a tendency to comply with directives from people above on the hierarchical ladder not as a result of fear of dire punishment but as a result of socialisation and evolution. Evolution is important because people conforming to authority adapt more easily to different situations in society. Socialisation teaches people that obedience rewards the subject; this is internalised and made relevant also outside usual situations (like mass

³⁰³ There were three persons involved in every single step of Milgram's initial experiment, the experimenter, one naïve subject and the victim. Two people arrived the laboratory at the same time. A scientific authority told the naïve subject that he was randomly chosen to become teacher, the other person believed to be a naïve subject by the genuine naïve subject became the learner. The teacher first had to see how the learner was strapped to a chair and got an electrode attached to his wrist. The learner was told that he was going to learn a list of word pairs, like blue box, nice day and wild duck, every time the learner made an error in putting the words together, he would receive an increasingly intense electric shock. The teacher was told that the experiment was concerned with the effect of punishment on learning. The teacher was taken into another room where he was seated in front of a generator. On the impressive generator, there were thirty switches in 15-volt increments on a horizontal line ranging from 15 to 450 volts. There were also verbal designations, varying from "slight shock" – "moderate shock" – "strong shock" – "very strong shock" – "intense shock" – "extreme intensity shock" – "danger: severe shock" to simply but horribly "XXX". During the experiment, the learner complained more and more loudly about the pain he was inflicted when he was not able to match the correct words, after a while the learner was crying out in agony. Every time the naïve subject wanted to abort the experiment after repeatedly requests from the learner to stop it, the scientific authority asked him to continue the experiment, Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View* (Harpercollins, 1974) 16-24.

³⁰⁴ Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*, 3 – 4.

murder).³⁰⁵ Not only personal reward is important in making people follow their leaders. People tend to believe that authoritative leaders are good; due to this goodness, they feel obliged to follow orders.³⁰⁶

Mayor Gacumbitsi, Rusumo commune, was a respected leader before the Rwandan genocide started. Pendo Uwimana, a Tutsi, did seek protection at the Catholic Church in Nyarubuye: "He [Gacumbitsi] was so powerful. Everything he ordered would be done immediately. You could see he was very powerful."³⁰⁷ Notably, fear of harsh punishment was not mentioned by Uwimana as a possible motivation behind the neighbours trying to kill him, but respect for the mayor was. People move away from usual norms as a response to wishes from people believed to have authority, like the major in Nyarubuye. Milgram varied the experiment several times and found that different situations produced different results. For instance, it was important for the subject that the leader of the experiment was an authority figure. Conformity dropped to almost zero when the leader of the project did not look serious about the task. The study did tell something crucial about the importance of normal psychological processes in situation where cruel orders are given.

The men of the Interahamwe could have chosen not to become members of the militia in the first place. After becoming militias, they became part of a system designed for genocide. In this system, there was a relatively strict line of orders. There were meetings held on different perpetrating levels within the militia before and during the genocide. I was told by Thareisse Mukama, an elderly man close to Nyamata, that the local Interahamwe met once a week in the months before the genocide. Like the German policemen in Reserve Police Battalion 101, the militias must therefore have felt they were under political authority, an authority they believed in or at least respected. There must have existed some form of extreme loyalty to the leaders of society.³⁰⁸

In Rwanda, perpetrators often had the chance to kill only once. In many cases there were more perpetrators than victims. Different from Nazi Germany, in Rwanda it was seen as

³⁰⁵ Browning, *Ordinary Men*, 172–173.

³⁰⁶ Milgram, *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*, 7.

³⁰⁷ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, "The Triumph of Evil".

³⁰⁸ This was mentioned in several interviews, most notably by Mr Rutinburana, Kigali, 19.09.2004.

important that as many people as possible become perpetrators. However, the cost of refusing to take part in the killing could be high in Rwanda. In Nazi Germany, the crucial point in the extermination campaign was to kill, not who killed. Even though most members of Reserve Police Battalion 101 did kill during the Holocaust, the policemen that refused to do so, were allowed to take care of less emotional “work” as long as there were enough people who felt up for the task.

Bureaucracy and Organisation

It is not possible too look at motivations and genocide without taking bureaucracy into account. Since the beginning of the 1960 this has been a central model for explaining motivations behind the Holocaust perpetrators. Even though 1994 Rwanda was not as well organised as Nazi Germany, we shall see that bureaucracy did play a role also during the Rwandan genocide.

In 1961, Raul Hilberg³⁰⁹ published a monumental work on the Holocaust. The central idea in *The Destruction of the European Jews* is the assumption that modern bureaucracy made Holocaust possible. Bureaucrats, who felt no guilt, were but small pawns in the machinery of annihilation. According to Hilberg killing is “not as difficult as it used to be. The modern administrative apparatus has facilities for rapid, concerted movements and for efficient killings”.³¹⁰ Very few of the Rwandan perpetrators were desk murderers or “pawns” in the killing machinery. The killing took place all across the country – it was close to impossible not to see the killing personally. Thus, the bureaucracy in Rwanda was different from the one in Germany; however, there existed one.

Even though 1994 Rwanda was not as thoroughly organised as Hitler Germany, it was not a country of wild tribesmen fighting an uncivilised war. Despite bad infrastructure and limited economic resources, Rwanda was a relatively well structured society experiencing a well organised genocide. Existing social and political institutions were made parts of a genocidal system in Rwanda. At Nyarubuye, Habimana, the local Interahamwe leader, took part in many meetings with higher ranked Interahamwe and political leaders before the genocide

³⁰⁹ Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*.

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, 1187.

started. They discussed how to create hatred “between ordinary people”.³¹¹ At meetings near Nyarubuye orders were given to local commanders from the very top of government. Such meetings were taking place all over Rwanda. The intricate old organisation of the country was effective for spreading genocidal instructions. The information was brought to the common Interahamwe member through meetings at the local level.

Interim president Théodore Sindikubwabo told the population of Rwanda on April 19 1994 that they were a government of saviours. They would come to the people “to tell you what it expects of you”. The administrative head of ministry of interior and communal development Callixte Kalimanzira told his subordinates in the Rwandan bureaucracy to “alert the population to the necessity of continuing to track the enemy wherever he is to be found and wherever he hides his arms”. In Rwanda, orders from the government were given to the prefects and the prefects passed the news to the mayors. The mayors then held meetings where standardised information was given throughout the communes. After meeting with Kalimanzira, mayors wrote to councillors and cell heads in their communes and told them to gather the inhabitants to scheduled meetings to spread Hutu Power propaganda.³¹²

On the sports field in Kibungo in the district of Nyamata, about 30 kilometres south of Kigali, the mayor, the leader of the sub-prefecture, and the municipal councillors were coordinating the first attacks on the Tutsis in the region. Among the attackers were Interahamwe, soldiers, retired policemen and civilian Hutus from the area. According to one perpetrator, Pancrace Hakizamungili, on the first day of the attacks, “a messenger from the municipal judge went house to house summoning us to a meeting right away. There the judge announced that the reason for the meeting was the killing of every Tutsi without exception. It was simply said, and it was simply to understand”.³¹³ “Rule number one was to kill. There was no rule number two. It was an organization without complications.”³¹⁴ Later, official leaders did not have to tell the killers in the district of Nyamata what to do. “Later on the bravest young guys became

³¹¹ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, “The Triumph of Evil”.

³¹² Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 231-4.

³¹³ Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season. The Killers in Rwanda Speak*, 11.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 10.

leaders, the ones who gave orders without hesitation and strode eagerly along.³¹⁵

Meetings and communal work were not new in the Rwandan society but were rather institutional parts of everyday life. Umuganda obligation was, as in previous years, taken seriously during the Rwandan genocide. Mayors together with councillors and cell leaders were organising genocide. These leaders often gathered people for umuganda and used them to work for the authorities, to repair roads, to cut down trees and to patrol their village together. But this time the objective was to find, hunt and kill Tutsis which they did in cooperation with the army and, or police. In Gafurwe forest for instance, close to Butare, the cell committee of Tonga, decided that all Hutus in the area should go out there the next morning to cut down "bad branches".³¹⁶ To cut down unwanted bushes and trees they were used to; this time they were to "cut down Tutsis", often referred to as tall trees during the genocide.³¹⁷ Well-known institutions in Rwandan society were made lethal structures of annihilation; this was important for making the genocide possible. Even though Interahamwe in itself was a new institution in the Rwandan society; patrolling and other communal work was not.

Bureaucracy and Morality

During the Rwandan genocide, the victims were looked upon as alien to their country. During the Holocaust Jews were also looked upon as alien enemies within. According to Zygmunt Bauman, the Holocaust cannot find reason without considering morality in modernity. Modernity believes in human rationality that guarantees a certain moral world order which might become genocidal. The decisive error in the cognitive ethical order of modernism is, according to Bauman, inter-human distance. There will always be one or more groups falling outside the ethical boundaries.³¹⁸ Thus, the others or the aliens, become potential enemies. The Tutsis of Rwanda did indeed fall outside the ethical boundaries of the Hutu Power extremists. According to Bauman, bureaucratisation makes it possible to blame the system for one's own wrongdoings, while morality is distancing perpetrators from victims on a psychological level. To follow his argument, for hundreds of years, groups of people with

³¹⁵ Ibid, 12.

³¹⁶ Des Forges, *Leave No to Tell the Story*, 547-8.

³¹⁷ Interview with Desire, Kigali, 15.09.2005.

³¹⁸ See Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

more or less different worldviews lived closely together in Rwanda. This social spacing made the other neighbour. At the same time, the other continued to be a stranger and disregarded. Bauman argues that this leads to “miss-meeting”, people meet each other without meeting each other. The physical space ends up not being a social space. People that lived constantly together in the same community continued to be strangers, despite intermarriages and daily interaction. One or more groups could in this way fall outside the ethical order of society. Tutsis were defined as “out” of society.

The notion of difference between Hutus and Tutsis was stronger in the north of the country, where the Bakiga lived, than in the south. Hutus and Tutsis in the north of Rwanda did not really interact with each other, intermarriages were rare. Many Hutus (originally Bakiga) in that region were embittered over losing their own governing structure in the beginning of the 20th century. People from the north ran many central posts in the country, among them president Habyarimana. Northern Rwanda was a Hutu Power stronghold. In the south, there was a higher percentage of intermarriage and social mixing which made the Hutu Tutsi division almost insignificant. Through social interaction, people got to know each other and became familiar faces. Even though laws were leaving Tutsis with far less rights than Hutus, the prefect of the southern region of Butare was Tutsi. Hutu Power did not play any big role in this region of the country. Tutsi were mainly looked upon as fellow citizens. In the south it took time for the genocide to start, extremist leaders had to force their will through. However, some weeks into the genocide popular participation became prominent also in the south.

Hanna Arendt, a leading figure among the growing number of Holocaust scholars in the 1960s, also argues that bureaucratisation was an important factor making genocide possible. Arendt took much interest in the Eichmann trial.³¹⁹ The trial forced Arendt to rethink her former ideas about evil. She expected to see a monster motivated by deep-felt hatred. She did not. Eichmann appeared during the Jerusalem trial to be an “ordinary” man. It was not possible to recognize any “sleeper traits” in his personality; he did not seem to suffer from any psychological “defect” or madness. One of the most important organisers of the Final Solution testified that he only followed orders and gave detailed accounts of dates, numbers

³¹⁹ Eichmann was former SS-Obersturmbannführer and head of the Department for Jewish Affairs at the Gestapo headquarters in Ernst Kaltenbrunn's Reichssicherheitsamt during the Second World War. Ricardo Klement, this was Eichmann's cover name while in hiding after the war, was kidnapped in Buenos Aires and transported to Jerusalem for court by Israeli Mossad agents in 1960. For further details: Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report of the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1994).

and reports without showing any sign of being insane. He rather looked and behaved ordinarily. His motivation for leading the killing of six million Jews did not seem to be in proportion to the result at all. He only wanted to carry out his work thoroughly and conscientiously. The banality of evil became evident to Arendt who developed a theory on the Holocaust where bureaucracy and modernity became important ingredients. Eichmann was, at least according to himself, a careerist who by accident ended up in the position he held.³²⁰ Arendt argues that this “new” kind of evil does not need evil motives on the personal level. Rather the opposite is the case; acts of evil are most effective when carried out by individuals not influenced by strong personal emotions or motivations but by rules and bureaucracy. Arendt concludes that Eichmann was quite simply thoughtless: “Wickedness may be caused by an absence of thought”.³²¹ This of course did not make the acts less evil, but it says something about the motivation behind the acts.

A thoughtless wickedness as motivation for committing genocide is well illustrated by Eichmann’s pathetic act of friendship towards Kommerzialrat Berthold Storfer. Storfer was a prominent representative for the Jewish society in Vienna. Through his work, Eichmann worked closely with Storfer and regarded him as a friend. Storfer sought to escape when he saw no future in Nazi Europe but failed and ended up in Auschwitz. Storfer asked camp commander Rudolf Höss to arrange a meeting between himself and Eichmann, a meeting was organised. In Jerusalem almost two decades later, Eichmann argued that:

With Storfer afterward, well, it was normal and human. He told me all his grief and sorrow. I said: “Well, my dear old friend, we certainly got it! What rotten luck...And then I said to Höss: “Work. Storfer won’t have to work!” But Höss said: “Everyone works here.” So I said: O.K., I’ll make out a chit to the effect that Storfer has to keep the gravel paths in order with a broom, and that he has the right to sit down with his broom on one of the benches.³²²

Arendt asks herself after listening to this extremely out of touch with the real life testimony whether this was a “textbook case of bad faith, of lying self-deception combined with outrageous stupidity”.³²³ Eichmann does seem to be out of touch with the evilness he is

³²⁰ Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report of the Banality of Evil*.

³²¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1978), 13.

³²² Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 50-1.

³²³ *Ibid*, 51.

creating and surrounded by; after all he is heading the extermination of Jews and is asking for easier conditions for one of them – in one of the camps under his authority.

People also lost contact with reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. The two women at Banja Luka seem not to grasp the evil they were witness to and even supportive of. When they were asked whether any of the Muslims in their village used to harm them, the answer was a clear “no”. One of them answered that “My relations with Muslims in this village were always very good. They were very nice people.”³²⁴ At the same time, the two women were residing in an apartment that was formerly owned by Muslims. The righteous owners had been deported and likely killed. In Rwanda many perpetrators seem not to have fully understood the evilness of their actions. They only did what they were supposed to do. In this way they could distance themselves from the evilness of their wrongdoings. Close to Nyarubuye, Ngendahimana killed a woman even though she begged for mercy, but “mercy wasn’t part of the deal.”³²⁵ He had been told, and he had learned that she was not a human being like himself. Ngendahimana did not feel any relation to the woman because she was Tutsi and argued that he was more afraid of getting caught for stealing a sack of food than killing the person.

The different Hutu – Tutsi dichotomies were looked upon as collective and absolute: you are your group and your group is your destiny.³²⁶ Levinas puts it this way.

What characterizes violent action, what characterizes tyranny, is that one does not face what the action is being applied to. One does not see the face of the other, one sees the other freedom as a force, savage; one identifies the absolute character of the other with his force. ... Violence consists in ignoring the opposition of the face, ignoring the face of the being, avoiding the gaze, and catching sight an angle whereby the *no* inscribed on a face by the very fact that it is a face becomes a hostile or submissive force. ...

³²⁴ Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor*, 113 f.

³²⁵ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeterman, “The Triumph of Evil”.

³²⁶ Schütz argues that our knowledge about the world surrounding us is stratified into different layers, layers of insights and knowledge that are connected to situations. The social world can according to Schütze not be understood to be a result of an individual’s purposes and actions, our knowledge is connected to situations. Berger and Luckmann takes this logic further and show how reality is shaped through interpretations of the world which are gaining support from the masses. The reality is shaped through interpretations of our surroundings that are social in nature, the group share the same understanding of reality which sometimes are taken for granted. Further reading Arvid Brodersen: “Alfred Schütz og motet med den amerikanske sosiologi” in *Sosiologisk årbok* (1986); Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The social construction of reality: A treatise in Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967).

Violence, which seems to be the direct application of force to a being, in fact denies that being all its individuality, by taking it as an element of its calculus, and as a particular case of a concept.³²⁷

To the mass murderers in Rwanda, Bosnia Herzegovina and Germany, the face of the other lost its ethical appeal. But there were no changes in the faces as such. The faces of Jewish victims in Poland killed by the ordinary policemen, the faces of the Muslim victims in Bosnia Herzegovina killed by their Serb neighbours, and the faces of the Tutsi victims in Rwanda killed by former friends, were robbed of their ethical appeal. The face of the victim was crying for help; it asked for mercy, but the perpetrator did not see it; there was something blocking the usual sense of right and wrong. This blocking was in Rwanda largely caused by the absolutism of the Hutu – Tutsis divide, by a worldview or ideology where Hutus were looked upon as righteous native Rwandans. It was not a question about me and you; it was a question about us and them.

Attacked by the Devil

At the Catholic Church in Nyarubuye, Laurent Renzaho felt as if he was taken over by Satan.

I'd never killed anyone before. All of this came like madness. I'd never had any mental problems before. We planned to kill Tutsis and it was in our mind to kill Tutsis. After all that killing at the church, it felt like we'd done something terrible. I wondered how it got into my mind...It was as if we were taken over by Satan. When Satan is using you, you lose your mind. We were not ourselves. Starting with me, I don't think I was normal. You couldn't be normal and start butchering people for no reason. We'd been attacked by the devil. There's nothing I can say. Even when I dream, my body changes in a way I cannot explain. These people were my neighbours. The picture of their deaths may never leave me. Everything else I can get out of my head, but that picture never leaves.³²⁸

The 1994 genocide is explained by many Rwandans by the influence of the devil upon the population. Rwandans I talked with told me that many of the perpetrators were taken over by the devil. Other Rwandans told me that people telling me this probably were perpetrators themselves. Fulgence was killing neighbours in the district of Nyamata, he argued after the genocide that: "God preserved us from genocide until the crash of the president's plane; afterward He allowed Satan to win the match...it was Satan who pushed us into this

³²⁷ Emmanuel Levinas. *Collected Philosophical Papers* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993) 19f.

³²⁸ Steve Bradshaw and Ben Loeteman, "The Triumph of Evil".

predicament.”³²⁹ In a country where perpetrators felt that they were taken over by Satan, many probably felt they fought against evil when killing. A Norwegian psychologist working for the UN in Rwanda just after the genocide was surprised by the way some perpetrators explained their motivations.³³⁰ He met schoolteachers that only some few months earlier tried to kill their pupils. One of the teachers said that he apologised to the pupils every morning, and asked them for understanding that it was the devil which had made him evil, but now the devil was gone so now they could be friends.

A missionary who left Rwanda during the genocide told journalists “There are no devils left in Hell. They are all in Rwanda.”³³¹ On the 15 of April 1994, the killers at the Catholic church of Nyarubuye were exhausted after a long day of killing; however, there were still some Hutus alive. The perpetrators decided to kill them the next day. Therefore, the killers cut the Achilles tendons of the survivors so they could not run away during the night. Then the perpetrators went behind the church to feast. They were roasting cattle they had stolen from their victims.³³² The devils in Nyarubuye were ordinary people, many of whom were fathers. Most of the perpetrators were small scale farmers and not violent criminals. In the well organised Rwandan society, under difficult circumstances and with an extremist leadership using the media as a powerful weapon genocide could happen. Old notions of difference between Hutus and Tutsis became a crucial part of Hutu identity allowing the perpetrators to define their victims out of human obligation.

³²⁹ Jean Hatzfeld, 142.

³³⁰ Personal talks with Magne Raundalen in Ijartdal, July 2006.

³³¹ Time, Vol. 143 No 20 May 16, 1994, front page, 57.

³³² Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families* (Picador, 2000) 18.

VI

Conclusion

The Rwandan genocide was a massive catastrophe. The perpetrators were committing great evil against fellow Rwandans. Today, perpetrators, survivors and bystanders ask how it could happen. What motivated tens of thousands of apparently ordinary Rwandans to kill during 100 days of genocide? There can be no simple answer to the question. The acts are too complicated and too evil to contemplate an understanding. Very few people would normally want to kill, but during genocide many do. An overwhelming majority of the Rwandan perpetrators had never killed before and they have never killed after April, May and June of 1994. In this thesis, we have investigated why tens of thousands of Rwandans killed in 1994, and pointed at different motivational factors that together made the Rwandan genocide possible. In this thesis we have seen that historical events together with myths constituted a dangerous ideological backdrop, the war and unstable political situation a dangerous venue and the human psyche a vulnerable target of evil thoughts and ideas.

In the introduction to this thesis, I put forward three hypotheses about motivations behind the Rwandan genocide. In the second chapter, these were objects of a preliminary analysis. The aim was to find out whether history, ideology and ordinary psychological traits were mentioned as motivational factors by perpetrators behind one massacre, the killing of several thousand Tutsis at the Catholic Church in Nyarubuye. This first analysis gave the clear impression that the hypotheses were relevant as a basis for further investigations of motivations behind the Rwandan killers.

***Historical approach:** The perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide were motivated by a long history of distinction.*

In Rwandan history, it is possible to detect four historical periods leading up to genocide: the centralisation of the Rwandan kingdom, the construction of racial distinction during colonisation, the Hutu revolution followed by two Hutu Republics, and the extremist anti-Tutsi politics and propaganda of the early 1990s. These four periods, or events have one crucial element in common; the politics of distinction. Like a tornado building up, the distinction between Hutus and Tutsis became for every important political change more lethal. In retrospect, it seems obvious that these turning points were important steps towards genocide. However, it was only from the early 1990s that it became apparent that the

historical chronicle of events could lead towards a state sponsored and countrywide genocide.

It is likely that Tutsi was one ethnic group in pre colonial Rwanda. However, it is unlikely that Hutu was one before the rise of the Rwandan state. There existed several small Bantu chiefdoms where Rwanda came to be. It was probably a result of the state building that Hutus became Hutus. However, even though I accept that Rwandans actually are of different origin, this does not mean that the shaping of one common cultural community in Rwanda was less important. Just the opposite is the case: there existed one common culture in Rwanda. It was the politics of difference and not historical differences as such that caused the polarisation in Rwanda. Even though there had existed Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda for a long time, the 1994 Rwandan genocide was not a continuation of pre colonial tribe wars between the two groups. The community of Banyarwanda seldom fought against each other. There were more factors uniting than separating Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda before colonisation. And still, many people I met in Rwanda argued that pre-colonial history was important in motivating people to become perpetrators during the genocide. Freud's notion about the narcissism of small differences could very well describe this situation; groups or individuals that were very similar to each other, in this case Hutus and Tutsis, exerted themselves to make the difference between them relevant and important.

It was not history as fact that motivated the perpetrators but rather myths about the distant past influenced by the present, and the Hamitic hypothesis brought to Rwanda during colonisation. Misconceptions and political manipulation of history, the notion that Tutsis and Hutus are qualitatively different and that Tutsis were foreign invaders that suppressed Hutus, the original Rwandans, were aiding leading perpetrators in their genocidal project. The evil Tutsi played an important role in Hutu narrative. It is argued that Tutsis were mistreating and killing Hutus throughout the centuries. In the 1990s, usual understandings of time and space lost much of its relevance as group belonging was understood to be absolute and timeless. The supposedly violent attacks on Rwanda by Tutsis in the fifteenth century and Hutus supposedly tragic fairs as slaves in the pre colonial kingdoms suddenly became of great relevance in the present. Hundreds of years were no longer a long time. In this environment of historically based hatred everything became filled with meaning; nothing and no one was

indifferent, neutral or untouched.³³³ Everybody was either Hutu or Tutsi, good or bad, friend or foe.

In short, history is important to Rwandans. For the perpetrators behind the 1994 genocide, history was a reason to kill, both directly and indirectly – both as a result of actual or fictive historical events and as a result of being Hutu. The perpetrators appealed to history and myths in their murderous campaign, the organisers more explicitly and consciously so than the ordinary killers. History was used as a reason to draw distinction. In public speeches and through the media, leading members of the Hutu Power fraction called Tutsis foreign invaders.³³⁴ Ordinary Hutus looked upon Tutsis as different from themselves, it was Hutus against Tutsis, it was good against evil. Tutsis, by being Tutsi, were held responsible for their forefathers' "evildoings" hundreds of years earlier. The Hutu Tutsi distinction was imperative for the genocide to take place. Genocide implies that a defined group is targeted as such; Tutsis were in Rwanda targeted as such by their own government and Hutu neighbours.

Ideological approach: As a result of the Hutu Power ideology, the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide looked upon themselves as qualitatively different from their victims. Thus, Tutsis were seen as legal targets of mass annihilation.

The categorisation of Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda could theoretically have been unproblematic. However, notions about racial difference (biological essentialism), and belonging (history and myths), were motivating perpetrators during the Rwandan genocide to commit atrocious killings. They were not killing because of the existence of Hutus and Tutsis alone but because the perpetrators saw their own race as righteous and their enemies as evil. The Hutu perpetrators were motivated by a set of ideas about Tutsis that marked them as less valuable than themselves, Tutsis were unworthy and evil and thus legitimate targets of annihilation. There were similarities in extreme racial motivations among leading perpetrators and to a lesser extent ordinary people during the genocide.

³³³ Vetlesen applies similar words to describe the historical dimension of the Ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia. See Arne Johan Vetlesen; *Memneskeverd og Ondskap* (Oslo: Gyddendal Norsk Forlag, 2005), 270.

³³⁴ See, i.e. Mugesera speech cited in Gérard Prunier, *The Rwandan Crisis 171-2*: CBC Documentary, The Spokesman of Hatred.

The leading perpetrators behind the Rwandan genocide were motivated by an anti-Tutsi worldview. Browning argues that during the Holocaust leaders like Himmler and Goebbels were “ideological antisemites who sought to transform their beliefs into actions, their words into deeds”.³³⁵ This is a good description of how things were in Rwanda as well. Bagosora and Nahimana were to a large extent motivated by ideological ideas. The systematic and deliberate evil these men preached was presented as something necessary, even good. Through secret plans and official speeches the leaders played the ideological card.

To be Hutu and to kill Tutsis was not regarded as wrong by the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide - it was rather looked upon as good and right. Most perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide did not necessarily want their Tutsi neighbours, friends or relatives dead. It was the collective non-optional Hutu Tutsi divide that made the killing possible. It was notions about different race and different belonging that made Tutsis victims. In other words, the ideological basis of Hutu Power was motivating Hutus to become perpetrators. The ideology or Hutu narrative was decisive for how they looked upon Tutsis. In Hutu narrative Hutus were good – Tutsis bad, Hutus native - Tutsis foreign.

It is not only the racial issues that have this potential of marking other groups less valuable. There can be different reasons like nationalism, political ideals³³⁶ or specialised knowledge why groups regard themselves as more worthy than others. During the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust, other ideological motivation factors did impact along with racial motivations, like farmer ideology in Rwanda. However, the bottom-line of this argument is that motivations for committing mass murder are based upon the idea that “we are worthier than you are”; the reason why the perpetrator feels this way is only of secondary interest as these could be different and still lead to the same result. It is nevertheless interesting to see that the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust are more similar than just sharing the same mentality; they also share the racial aspect.

³³⁵ Christopher R. Browning, “Holocaust Perpetrators: Ideologues, Managers, Ordinary Men”, Speech given at U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, committee on Conscience, March 6, 2002. [Available online] www.ushmm.org/conscience/analysis/details/2002-03-06/browning.pdf [06.02.2005].

³³⁶ One example out of many was the mass murder in Cambodia of the economic and academic elites in order to achieve a socialist society.

Psychological approach: ordinary people have the capacity of committing mass murder; the Rwandan perpetrators were motivated by common human weaknesses.

Facts and myths about the past influenced by a politics of difference did motivate Hutus to kill Tutsis. The ideology that developed as a result of notions about history and race was important in turning neighbours into enemies. However, there exist different groups living side by side around the world. It is not uncommon to regard members of other groups as less valuable or worthy than members of the own group, but usually, people do not start butchering each other on a massive scale. In some situations murderous ideologies can under other circumstances be totally harmless and regarded acceptable even in democratic societies. To regard oneself as worthier than members of other groups does not usually lead to violence; it is rather accepted and common.³³⁷ So why did genocide happen in Rwanda in 1994? What was it about the situation in the country and what was it about the people of Rwanda that made genocide reality there and not here, in Norway or South Africa?

There was a war going on in Rwanda in the early 1990s. Genocidal leaders, believing in the Hutu Power cause and in their own supremacy, used violence to spread fear. Rieff puts it this way when discussing motivations behind the perpetrators during the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia Herzegovina; "What animated him [the perpetrator] was fear, and what made him able to respect himself was the belief that everything he had done had been in self defence."³³⁸ Fear was very real also in the Rwandan population; the responsibility for the killing was put upon the victims themselves and not the responsible perpetrators. This fear was shaped by Rwandan Hutu Power leaders and ideologues when blaming Tutsis for preparing weapons, for attacking villages at the border, for attacking targets inside Kigali, for attempting genocide, etc. Thus, the 100 days of killing in 1994, was by many perpetrators regarded as a defensive war.

³³⁷ There is for instance in many western societies today a tendency towards regarding populations in poorer countries less valuable than their own. Even though richer countries do not actively seek to kill the poor, there is a certain attitude in richer countries that poor countries deserve their poverty and people living there "gets what they deserve". It must be underlined that this disregard is in many ways lethal, however, there is no active policy in richer countries to kill the poor. During the Rwandan genocide, European and American nationals were evacuated by well trained elite troops. Together with the UN troops already stationed in the country, the elite soldiers would probably have been capable of halting the genocide and save many, many lives. See Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, 284.

³³⁸ Davis Rieff, *Slaughterhouse, Bosnia and the failure of The West* (London: Virago, 1995), 111.

The killers in Rwanda were not spared from realizing the cruelty of their actions through physical distancing or depersonalization of the task. The Rwandan killers were face to face with their victims. Sometimes they were under pressure of dire punishment and sometimes they did it voluntarily. As we have seen, civilian Serbs killing their neighbours in Bosnia Herzegovina were under extreme pressure to do so. To say no often meant death. The policemen of Reserve Police Battalion 101 operating in Poland killed their victims without fear of dire punishment; they killed their "enemies" (civilian Jews) in round up shootings. In Rwanda, Bosnia Herzegovina and Nazi occupied territory, no matter if the killing was voluntarily or not, the perpetrators probably felt that under the given circumstances their victims forced them to kill; it was us or them. This was a result of the violent, but also the ideological environment at the time.

It seems that many perpetrators during the genocide knew the Hutu Tutsi dichotomies better than their own Tutsi neighbours. These dichotomies defined Tutsis out of society, a separation that after years of misgoverning and under the guidance of genocidal leaders became fatal. There is a danger that too much emphasis is put on human rationality (or irrationality) and too little on human emotions and personal moral. If people regard others as objects and not fellow human beings there is a higher risk of evil.

In Rwanda, under physical and psychological pressure from Hutu Power leaders and the war, there was an eradication of the me – us distinction, in other words collectivisation. At the same time, the us – them polarisation grew in strength. To mix extreme collectivisation with extreme polarisation is extremely dangerous. Under these circumstances, Hutus lost personal responsibility for evil acts committed against Tutsis. At the same time, Tutsis lost their emotional influence on the Hutus. At the same time as Hutu narrative about the evil Tutsis (influenced by history, myths, racist ideology and propaganda) was blocking Hutus understanding of the evil they were inflicting on Tutsis, Hutus were not held personally responsible for their evil acts against Tutsis. During the genocide, there lived not eight million Rwandans in Rwanda; there lived Hutus and Tutsis. Hutus were supposed to kill Tutsis; far too many did.

Probably about 75 percent of all Tutsis living in Rwanda on the sixth of April 1994 were dead 100 days later. They were killed by neighbours motivated by factors discussed in this thesis. In the introduction, I told the story about Chris and his friends enjoying life at the best club in Kigali the night President Habyarimana was killed and how the genocide started. In a matter of minutes, a delightful night turned into a nightmare. This night changed their lives forever. Chris and his friends became targets of mass murder. Miraculously, Chris survived, whether his friends were as lucky, we do not know. Chris's story is one out of far too few stories about rescue from the Rwandan genocide.

Kigali Night was almost empty when Chris and his friends arrived, only a few UN soldiers were there. It was still only nine o'clock though. Valentine knew one of the Ghana UN soldiers in the club, Kalkara. He bought the five of them drinks and snacks. They had chips and brochettes. Life was good.

Close to eleven, after about two hours in the club, it happened. The music suddenly stopped. UN soldiers in uniforms came rushing in - they looked scared to death. Chaos erupted, and everybody ran out of the club. It was told that president Habyarimana's plane had crashed. No one knew exactly what was going on. The streets outside were dead quiet. Sometimes shots broke the silence, but not more than usual they thought. However, the quietness of the street and the few rushing cars made them afraid.

Marcel was driving some other people home when the UN soldiers came with the news. Chris and the three girls were left with no transport. All four of them wanted to go home. They were standing in the street worried, not knowing what to do. They decided to wait and see if Marcel was coming back. He was not. Kalkara, had already left in a hurry.

Luckily Kalkara returned to Kigali Night to look for his friends. He did this on his way to Hotel Des Mille Collines. He wanted to give them a lift home, but first he had to go to the hotel of the thousand hills. Chris and his friends did not want to wait in front of Kigali Night until he came back from the hotel, so they went with him there. Kalkara told them the

situation was dangerous; he did not know more. He and many other UN soldiers were ordered to go to the Hotel Des Mille Collines. When they arrived at the hotel, it was obvious that things were serious. Bad things were going to happen to the people of Rwanda. There were many people inside the hotel compound. People looked scared; the UN soldiers were afraid, the Rwandan soldiers outside the gates looked scared as well. People were talking loudly. The only thing people knew for sure was that the president was most probably was dead. Foreigners at the hotel wanted to leave the country.

The UN soldiers took up guard around the hotel. They engaged in loud discussions with Rwandan soldiers. The Rwandans looked very angry and dangerous. The UN troops closed the gates. The girls and Chris decided to stay. If we are going to die anyway, a luxury hotel is not the worst place to do that, they decided. The UN soldiers gave comfort; the four believed they could make it. No one left the area that night, no one was allowed in either. Intensive shooting was heard from around town.

People outside the gates were desperate to come in. People got killed in the streets of Kigali. In the middle of the night some people managed to jump into the back garden of the hotel. They were jumping the high fence. Rwandan soldiers started shooting into the garden, nobody inside was hit, outside we do not know. The UN soldiers were more or less in control of the situation inside the compound.

Many refugees inside the compound were gathered in the parking lot and the garden. After intensified shooting, it was no longer possible to keep people there. People forced their way into the hotel building itself, seeking refuge from the bullets outside. People were afraid even though the UN soldiers had blocked most areas where it would be possible to fire at people from outside.

There were probably about a thousand people in the hotel compound that first night. Some of the more fortunate had money to stay in nice hotel rooms, but many of the rooms were crowded. For others, the many corridors and the big garden were their only options. To make a fire in the garden, people were cutting down trees and tearing the carpet of the tennis court. The swimming pool served as a water tank.

On the second day, shooting and killing outside the hotel compound continued - it intensified. Foreign citizens were called by name to be evacuated. Foreigners were escorted in small groups to the airport. Every time the UN soldiers returned from the airport to pick up a new group of people they looked scared to death. Many of them were crying.

On the third day, most western foreigners had been evacuated. This made the situation more dangerous for the Rwandans still in the compound. The Rwandan soldiers wanted their people back, so they said. The UN soldiers were not prepared to agree. The soldiers tried to calm the people down. At four o'clock, a UN general arrived. The UN soldiers told the people to divide themselves into two groups; those who wanted to join the Rwandan soldiers and those who chose to stay. Very few decided to join the Rwandan soldiers. Chris refused to give himself over to soldiers he could not trust. By now all he knew was that Tutsis were in danger. Chris managed to talk to some of the UN soldiers, this gave him some comfort. The UN soldiers told them that they would try to escort Rwandans who were interested in going to the North East of Rwanda. This was an RPF controlled area. Some of the UN soldiers were going that direction anyway.

On their fourth day at the Hotel Des Mille Collines it was time for evacuation for Chris and the two girls. Some people chose to stay in the hotel though. Some of them probably survived the genocide there. For Chris this was not an option. Four UN trucks were filled up by Rwandans trying to save themselves from their own national army. Chris believes that there were about 100 people in every truck. Chris and the girls were sitting in the same truck. The trucks were carefully marked with UN signs and flags. The soldiers were standing among the sitting refugees with their weapons on guard. The refugees, mainly Tutsi but also some Hutu, were hiding in the trucks.

There were many violent roadblocks to cross before freedom, especially in Kigali. The UN soldiers tried not to provoke the militias, soldiers and civilians "working" at the roadblocks. This was difficult, but still it was possible. However, the UN trucks did not escape the capital without casualties, the Rwandan driver of the first UN truck was shot. Chris believes he survived but remembers to have seen quite a bit of blood in the front seat of the truck after arriving in RPF controlled territory. The convoy was forcefully stopped at one other occasion as well and shots were fired at the tires. Outside the capital, the big UN cars with armed

soldiers made Hutus afraid of stopping them.

It was very quiet when they arrived. RPF, the Tutsi rebel army, with the help of some aid organisation operating from Kabale in Uganda, managed to put up a refugee camp for them there. They provided tents and blankets. The RPF soldiers did not have much. Thus, the refugees had to help the soldiers getting food and wood from the forest. The men who arrived were given two choices by the rebels. Become warriors or take care of the refugee camp. Quite a few of the young men volunteered to become RPF soldiers. Chris stayed in the camp.

Chris stayed in the refugee camp for six or seven days. He was out in the forest looking for water and wood when his group was told by some locals that they were very close to Uganda. This was a good opportunity for them to leave the miserable life of the refugee camp behind. The men were hungry and afraid. Out of originally ten men, Chris, Habirmana and Osmani (from Tanzania) did not return to the refugee camp and went to Kahala in Uganda. Osmani had some family members in Embarara, a bit further east in Uganda. The three young men decided to go there. On their way, they met a lot of friendly people feeling very sorry for them. They received food, shelter and sometimes even money from people that had very little themselves. They also met other refugees from Rwanda. Terrible stories made Chris feel lucky after all.

The three of them stayed four months with the family of Osmani in Uganda. They were all treated like members of the family. In October they decided to return to Kigali. Life was terrible in Kigali. Most of Chris friends were dead. One of his few friends was still alive, shot four times; he was the only survivor of his family. Chris did not want to stay and he headed for South Africa.

Chris managed to get some money together and get hold of a Burundian passport since it was not possible to get a Rwandan passport at that time. He went to Uganda-Tanzania-Malawi-Mozambique and South Africa. In Malawi he was broke; he had to start selling fish from Lake Malawi. He had to jump the electric fence between Mozambique and South Africa with a stick. Chris ended up in Cape Town, surviving by begging for money, before he returned to Rwanda in 2004.³³⁹

³³⁹ Interviews and private conversations with Chris, Kigali, September 2004.

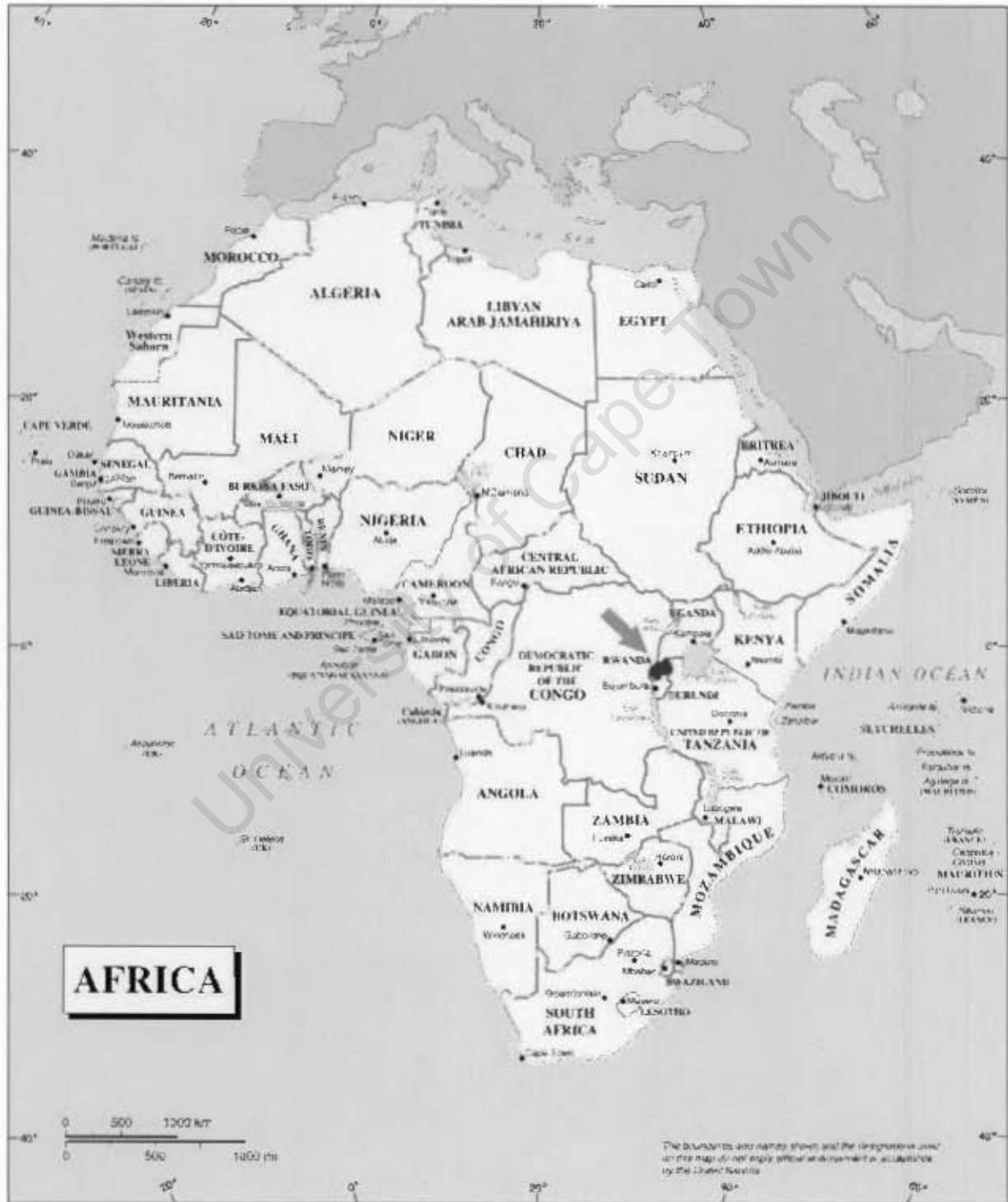
Glossary

- MRND:** Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (National Revolutionary Movement for Development) after June 1991, Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement (National Revolutionary Movement for Democracy and Development), the only legal party in Rwanda during most of President Habyarimana's reign. Habyarimana created MRND in 1974, one year after he ousted President Kayibanda in a coup. Every single Rwandan had to be a member of the MRND until 1991, when Rwanda became a multiparty state. MRND had its stronghold in the northwest of Rwanda.
- MDR:** Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (Democratic Republican Movement), rooted in the PARMEHUTU movement. PARMEHUTU played a decisive role in Rwandan politics and society in the revolutionary years between 1959 and 1962 when Belgium left the country and the Tutsi elite lost power. President Kayibanda, a leading PARMEHUTU, stayed in power until the 1973 coup. MDR's stronghold was in the south and centre of Rwanda.
- CDR:** Coalition pour la Défense de la République (Coalition for the Defence of the Republic), an anti-Tutsi party with a violent agenda.
- PSD:** Parti Social Démocrate (Social Democratic Party), a moderate party most popular in the south.
- PL:** Parti Libéral (The Liberal Party), said to have been closest to the RPF.
- Interahamwe:** "Those who attack together", The youth wing of the MRND, operated as killing squads during the genocide and played a major role during the genocide.
- Impuzamugambi:** "Those who have the same goal", a militia attached to the CDR party, also operated as killing squads but were not as significant as the Interahamwe.
- Akazu** "Little house"; used to refer to group of individuals close to President Habyarimana
- Hutu Power:** Hutu extremists who organised the genocide.
- FAR:** Forces Armées Rwandaises, the Rwandan Armed Forces.
- RPF:** Rwandan Patriotic Front, a rebel army composed of Rwandans in exile, mainly Tutsis. The RPF attacked from Uganda on October 1, 1990 and ultimately put an end to the genocide in July 1994.

UMAMIR:	The United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda, a peacekeeping force, about 2 500 strong, established to protect a democratisation process.
RTLM:	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines, an extremist hate radio that spread anti Tutsi propaganda prior to the genocide and guided the perpetrators during the genocide. RTLM was owned by people close to Habyarimana.
Kangura	“Awaken”, name of an extremist newspaper published in Kinyarwanda and French.
Inyenzi:	Literarily cockroaches. A term frequently used by Hutu Power sympathisers in the build up and during the genocide to describe Tutsis. Originally used by a group of refugees set up in 1959 to overthrow the new regime; sympathetic to the RPF.
Umuganda:	Obligatory public work. A praxis that was important during the rule of President Habyarimana and the genocide.

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Maps



Timeline

	Waves of people started populating Rwanda about 2000 years ago.
Late 1800s	Tutsi King Kigeri Rwabugiri establishes a unified kingdom.
1858 -	John Hanning Speke, a British explorer, is the first European to visit Rwanda. ³⁴⁰
1884	At the Berlin Conference, European Nations divides Africa between them.
1890s	Rwanda becomes a part of German East Africa.
1894	Adolf von Götzen is received by the Rwandan monarch King Rwabugiri at the royal court. The king of Rwanda is unaware of welcoming the first foreign governor of his country.
1900s	German Schutztruppen and Tutsi-lead southern troops defeated the northern Hutu.
1916 -	Belgian forces occupy Rwanda.
1923 -	Belgium becomes a mandate from the League of Nations to govern Ruanda-Urundi. Rwanda is ruled indirectly through Tutsi kings.
1932 -	The Belgian Colonial Administration issues ID cards that clearly categorised people as Hutu, Tutsi and Twa on the basis of physical appearance and wealth.
1946 -	Ruanda-Urundi becomes UN trust territory governed by Belgium.
1957 -	The beginning of the end to colonisation and Tutsi rule. Hutus issue manifesto calling for democratic change; Hutu political parties formed.
1959	King Rudahigwa dies under unknown circumstances in Bujumbura, Burundi. Thousands of Tutsis forced into exile.
1960	Belgium manipulate communal elections, which were "overwhelmingly won" by PARMEHUTU under Gregoire Kayibanda, who becomes Prime Minister of the provisional government then formed.
1961 -	Rwanda proclaimed a republic.
1962 -	Rwanda becomes independence with Gregoire Kayibanda as president of the First Republic, Tutsis continues to leave the country.
1965	Gregoire Kayibanda is re-elected as President of Rwanda. Juvenal Habyarimana is appointed Minister of Defence. Rwanda is practically a one party state.
1969	PARMEHUTU is renamed Mouvement Democratique Republicain (MDR) and "wins" elections the following election.
1973	A further violent discrimination campaign against the Tutsis of Rwanda. Minister of Defence Juvenal Habyarimana ousted President Gregoire Kayibanda in relatively peaceful a "coup d'etat".
1975	Juvenal Habyarimana establishes Mouvement Revolutionaire et National pour le Developpement (MRND). Political parties are banned in the Second Republic.
1978	MRND introduces a "new constitution", Juvenal Habyarimana is re-elected.
1980s -1990s	The dictatorship is increasingly challenged by domestic as well as international actors and factors, economically, politically as well as

³⁴⁰ See. John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Nile* (London: J.M. Dent, 1969 [1863]).

	militarily.
1990	RPF attacks from Uganda in October. The Hutu Ten Commandments are printed for the first time in Kangura.
1991	The N'sele (Zaire) Ceasefire Agreement is signed between RPF and the then the government of Rwanda, it soon brakes. A new constitution is bringing is multi-partyism, creation of political parties.
1992	Militias, Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi are built up by MRND and CDR. Formal peace negotiations starts in Arusha. Léon Mugesera tells at a local MRND party meeting that Tutsis should be sent back to Ethiopia by rivers. A commission is given the task of answering the question "What do we need to do in order to defeat the enemy militarily, in the media and politically?"
1993 -	President Habyarimana signs a power-sharing agreement with the Tutsis in Arusha, the Arusha Accords. A UN mission is sent to monitor the peace agreement RTLM starts broadcasting. In December, RPF sends 600 troops to Kigali as part of the Arusha Accords.
1994	President Habyarimana dies in a plane crash on the 6 April. Genocide begins. RPF launches a massive offensive. Within 100 days approximately one million Rwandans are dead.

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