

# IN THE FACE OF VIOLENCE

IDENTITY, JUSTIFICATION AND THE INDIVIDUAL IN RWANDA

Audiovisual Master's Thesis

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Abstract			
<p><i>In the Face of Violence</i> is an audiovisual Master's thesis comprising of a traditional research thesis <i>To Be or Not to Be?</i> as well as a documentary manuscript <i>Open Wounds</i>.</p> <p>Part I <i>To Be or Not to Be</i> revolves around the questions of identity construction and the relationship between traditional general explanations of the genocide and individual justification of the conflict. It looks into the Rwandan group identities and how they were constructed in several historical phases into the group identities that finally took part in the genocide. The construction of identities is looked at through three general explanations of the genocide – ethnicity, colonialism and leadership. Secondly, with the use of interview materials, it looks into the categories of perpetrator, bystander and rescuer and to the elements used by individuals to justify the movement between these categories as well as into the prevalence of signs of the use of identity intensification mechanisms – such as use of enemy images, dehumanization and notions of hatred and fear.</p> <p>Ultimately the thesis seeks to show the discrepancies of these two levels, the general explanations and the individual level, as well as to bring forth the relationship between these two levels.</p> <p>Part II is a documentary manuscript that is constructed also around the idea of individuals and around the interviews by Jean Hatzfeld. The documentary does not focus solely on the killers but brings also the survivors in front of the viewer. The documentary <i>Open Wounds</i> shows us the horrors of the genocide, but not through showing the actual act of killing, but by showing us the mental scars that it has left in its wake in the minds of the people. In the documentary we will quiet down with the survivors and the killers and listen as they tell us their memories and their nightmares of the 100 days that changed their lives.</p>			
Key words			
Genocide, group based violence, Rwanda, identity, ethnicity, race, explanations of violence, justification			

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

AKAZU – “little house” was an informal power elite in the Habyarimana regime, that consisted mainly of president Habyarimana’s wife and relatives. The Akau has been blamed for the planning of the genocide.

CABARET – Rwandan bar/restaurant

DRC – Democratic Republic of the Congo

ETHNIC CLEANSING – A form of extreme ethnic violence striving towards ethnic homogeneity of a region.

GENOCIDE – The most of extreme form of ethnic violence, striving for elimination of the victim group through violence and other measures.

HUTU – The largest ethnic group in Rwanda, which members were the killers in the genocide.

HUTU POWER – An extremist political movement that was active in Rwanda during the 1990s.

IBYITSO – a RPF accomplice

INKOTANYI – “the invincible”, a term used to describe the RPF rebels.

INTERAHAMWE - “those who work/stand together”, Interahamwe was a partly armed Hutu organization that enjoyed the full support of the second Habyarimana government. Interahamwe was largely responsible for a majority of the killings, organization and supervision during the genocide. It had especially a large role in the organizing and training of the killers and in the propaganda preceding the genocide.

INYENZI – “cockroach”, a derogative term used to describe the RPF rebels and to some extent also all Tutsi in Rwanda.

KWIHUTURA – “to shed hutuness”, a process of social climb, where a Hutu would become a Tutsi along with a rise in economic well being.

MACHETE – A traditional jungle knife used in the killings.

MWAMI – Traditional Tutsi kings, who ruled Rwanda before and also during colonialism.

PRIMUS – A common Belgian beer often consumed in Rwanda.

**RPF – Rwandan Patriotic Front**, Rwandan Patriotic Front is a Tutsi dominated rebel group that consists mainly of refugees, who fled the ethnic violence to Uganda in the decades following independence and their children. In 1990, RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda. RPF's attempts to overthrow the Hutu government failed and in 1992 peace talks between the RPF and the Rwandan government started. The talks resulted in the signing of the Arusha Accords in 1993, which formed a power sharing government to Rwanda. The accords did not bring peace, but instead increased the support for the Hutu extremists and resulted in the collapse of Habyarimana's first government and to the delaying of the enforcement of the accords. The civil war had a big influence in the propaganda and the attempts to raise a sense of threat among the Hutu population before the genocide. In June 1994 during the genocide RPF invaded again to Rwanda from Uganda and with its successful invasion it was able to bring the genocide to a halt.

**UBUHAKE** – a form of patronage and forced labor used in Rwanda before and during colonialism. For more information see chapter 3.3.

**UBWOKO (amoko)** – a term used to describe tribe, ethnicity or race, literally meaning category.

**UMUGANDA** – traditional communal work

**UNAMIR** – United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

**URWAGWA** – banana beer

**TUTSI** – the second largest ethnic group in Rwanda, that was the main target in the genocide.

**TWA** – The smallest ethnic group in Rwanda consisting of mainly pygmies that lived in the forests as hunter gatherers and potters.

PART I.

# TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

## QUESTIONS OF IDENTITY AND JUSTIFICATION IN RWANDA

*Fear not your enemies,  
for they can only kill you.*

*Fear not your friends,  
for they can only betray you.*

*Fear only the indifferent,  
who permit the killers and the betrayers  
to walk safely on the earth.*

- Edward Yashinsky -



# 1. INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1994 Rwanda witnessed a wave of violence which undoubtedly was one of the most hostile, cruel and violent events in contemporary African history. It surprised the world as well as the Rwandans themselves in its ferocity and after it was all over the world stood in horror in front of the level of destruction. In a matter of one hundred days, approximately 75 percent of Rwanda's Tutsi population was wiped out<sup>1</sup>. Approximately 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered, hacked to pieces, mutilated and left to rot in the marshes, ditches and mass graves. In addition in weeks following the genocide, half a million people died as a result of disease, famine and military action e as the RPF marched into Rwanda and as millions of Hutus escaped to Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Whole villages were ripped to pieces by the looters who attempted to carry their new wealth to DRC and at the same time fields and banana groves were abandoned and all crops were lost leaving the country empty and in ruin.

The destruction was total. It was not only the country that was ruined but also the people. The level of destruction was hard to believe and even harder to explain. It was nearly impossible to explain for Western media at the time and as the years went on it resulted in an abundance of different explanations from researchers around the world. Some blamed ethnicity, others colonialism and yet others the Rwandan post-independence leadership. Still others looked into psychological factors as others to poverty. As some looked for explanations from Rwanda, others turned and blamed the Western countries for letting the things happen. As the world was trying to explain the events and shed blame, Rwandans themselves were just as much struck with disbelief of the events and of ever finding a common future again. It was a mystery to the killers themselves who were drowned in guilt and disbelief in the wake of their own actions. It was above all a mystery to the survivors who were left to wonder how their own neighbors turned against them. For the survivors, what happened in Rwanda that spring will never be explained, because for them the reasons are too many and too tangled up to ever be fully known as we can see from this statement.

*I think, by the way, that no one will ever line up the truths of this mysterious tragedy and write them down – not the professors in Kigali and Europe, not the intellectuals and politicians. Every explanation will give way on one side or another, like a wobbly*

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<sup>1</sup> Verwimp 2004, 233.

*table. A genocide is a poisonous bush that grows not from two or three roots, but from a tangle of roots that has mouldered underground where no one notices it.<sup>2</sup>*

Even though the violence seems to escape all explanations, it does not take away the need to try and explain it. There is a lot of truth in the previous statement by one of the survivors. Genocides do not happen because of few simple and easily understandable reasons. They happen because of hundreds or maybe thousands of reasons that happened to coexist at the right time at the right place. Some of these reasons are big and reach all the people involved and explain the grand scale of how for example Rwanda arrived at the situation where genocide was seen as the only option. Some on the other hand are small, affect only in the minds of a few individuals, and explain why they took part in the events. But no matter big or small, they are all needed to get the full picture. It is my hope that by combining the two levels of explanations - the collective level emanating from foreign and local scholars on the genocide and the events in Rwanda and the individual level from the interviews of the Rwandans themselves - we can gain some new knowledge about the Rwandan genocide that will lead us closer to understanding the events. Then maybe it can help us understand also other similar events.

Ethnic violence and genocide as concepts focus on groups for the victims are defined by their group membership. However, violence is always experienced by the individual and in Rwanda it was also largely perpetrated by them. None-the-less, traditionally most existing research on genocides has concentrated on the top and the elites, but there has been a change in the recent years. Some researchers have focused more on the bottom. This micro political turn in the study of political violence focuses on the individual and local. The main focus has been put on violence on local level and the people involved in it, not the national or international conflict and its political ramifications. For example, Lee Ann Fujii and Scott Straus have focused on the micro level and the role of local ties in the Rwandan genocide. In fact, the Rwandan genocide, which consists of thousands of specific attacks and instances perpetrated by groups and individuals, instances that share a common character and purpose, is a perfect case study for focusing on the individual level of conflict. Why individuals kill is an important issue especially in Rwanda since civilian participation was high. Actually, civilians were responsible for majority of the violence in Rwanda. Therefore, I believe the conflict must be seen through the individuals and thru what was the force that drove them to participate. With the interview material collected by Jean Hatzfeld we can achieve this individual level. Especially when combined with the interviews by Fujii and Straus we can look at the violence

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<sup>2</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 83, 84 (Claudine Kayitesi, survivor).

in Rwanda through the eyes of the killer, through the eyes of an individual. Through the eyes of the people who ultimately made the decision to kill for their own group.

When asked of Rwanda many seem to believe that what happened was a storm of violence that hit unexpectedly. Surely it was unexpected for the victims, who despite all the signs never believed their neighbors would turn on them, as we will later see. Similarly, it was unexpected for some of the killers, however not for all.

*I remember one evening, a few weeks before the attacks, I was returning home from work in the company of a Hutu neighbor and colleague. [---] Half-way home, he stopped looked at me and said: "Innocent, you are going to be exterminated." I retorted: "No, I do not think so. We are going to suffer once again, but doubtless we shall survive." He repeated to me: "Innocent, listen to me, I must tell you that you are all going to die." I later happened upon this colleague in the neighborhood, riding along in an army van from the camp at Gako, pointing out the houses of people who had to be killed. He spotted me and then got on with his job.<sup>3</sup>*

What happened in Rwanda was not a question of mere violence. It was not a question of killing people at random. As can be seen also from the quote above, it was systematic, bureaucratic and well planned project, designed all the way down to lists naming the most important victims that needed to be taken care of first. It was effective on a new level, for during the peak approximately 300 people were killed every hour. That is five times more than on an average day in the Nazi concentration camps.<sup>4</sup> It can be hard to imagine how such effectiveness could be achieved in a place like rural Rwanda. How the use of machetes, clubs and small arms could outdo the Nazi concentration camps specifically designed for killing. The answer does not lay in the weapons. It lies in the Rwandan society itself.

In genocides, there are usually four stages. First the humiliation and loss of rights of the victims; second the marking of the victims; third the deportation and concentration of the victims and last the elimination. What is crucial for the effective killing is to easily identify and concentrate the victims, but the genocide in Rwanda seemed to skip these steps. Many have wondered how the killers in Rwanda identified their Tutsi victims in the midst of the killings, since members of both groups speak the same language, live intermixed and do not have any clear physical distinction. The racial identity cards that were used to document the ethnicity of the Rwandans since 1931 have

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<sup>3</sup> Hatzfeld 2000, 66 (Inocent Rwililiza).

<sup>4</sup> Adhikari 2008, 173; Hintjens 2001, 25; Jones 2006, 232; Mann 2005, 430.

often been blamed, but those cards did not play a role in the rural areas. The answer is simple. In a society like rural Rwanda, there was no need for marking the victims for one very simple reason. Everyone was already known.<sup>5</sup>

Rwanda is a country of villages with four out of five Rwandan families living in the countryside and more or less 90 percent of the population drawing their income from the land. Even the capital Kigali is more like a vast string of villages than a big city. What makes this important is that, as we all know, in a village everyone knows everyone. So in rural Rwanda, where majority of the killings occurred, the killers did not need to mark their victims for they already knew their victims personally.<sup>6</sup> Like Hatzfeld puts it when talking of identity cards;

*The inhabitants of the district of Nyamata all agree that those documents played no role in the killing there. The ethnic background of the region's sixty thousand Tutsis was well known to their neighbors, without exception, even in the case of recently arrived families, civil servants in temporary posts, drifters and hermits in rickety shacks in the depths of little valleys.<sup>7</sup>*

Concentration was neither needed. There was a tendency of Tutsis gathering themselves. They took refuge first in areas where there was a high concentration of Tutsis and secondly from public institutions like city halls, hospitals and especially churches. In the town hall of Nyamata the Tutsis did not find much comfort or security however, but instead were asked to leave. In the words of the burgomaster:

*If you go back home, you will be killed. If you escape into the bush, you shall be killed. If you stay here, you shall be killed. Nevertheless you must to leave here, because I do not want any blood in front of my town hall.<sup>8</sup>*

This led many to seek refuge in the churches of Nyamata and Ntarama. A couple days later, in the church of Ntarama alone over 5000 people were killed.

In this thesis, the focus will be on the town of Nyamata, that is the capital city of the Bugesera district approximately 30 kilometers south of the capital Kigali. Nyamata is the district where Hatzfeld conducted all his interviews and therefore the main source material is from Nyamata. The

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<sup>5</sup> Hintjens 2001, 37.

<sup>6</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 60, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 61.

<sup>8</sup> Hatzfeld 2000, 68 (Innocent Rwililiza, survivor.)

rural Nyamata can be used as an example to get a better understanding of the event in general, although it has a slightly higher percentage of Tutsis than most regions in Rwanda. As I already mentioned at the peak of the killings the speed of the killings was very fast. But how extensive were the killings in Nyamata? In the hills of Nyamata the population around the time of the genocide was 119 000. More specifically on the three hills of Kibungo, Kanzenze and Ntarama that are located in Nyamata the population was around 12 700 before the genocide. Within six weeks of genocide the population of Nyamata had dropped to 50 500 or 42 percent and the population of the three hills to 5 000 or to 39 percent what it was before the genocide. More importantly five out of every six Tutsis in Nyamata had been killed.<sup>9</sup> In addition to interviews from Nyamata, there will be interviews also from other regions in Rwanda by Scott Straus, Lee Ann Fujii and Philip Gourevitch, that will be used to give the findings a wider reference.

But it is not only the mere effectiveness, the ferocity, the level of killing or its planned nature that makes what happened in Rwanda unique. What was even more extraordinary was the level of participation in the killings. Rwandan government managed to force a large part of its population into murderers. It can be actually suggested that the violence was so extreme precisely because so many participated. Mass participation left no room to escape – not for the victims or for the people trying to avoid taking part. The genocide happened in a time of economic and political crisis when it was easy to manipulate public opinion. According to my hypothesis, the unstable circumstances were used to gain popular compliance through a mixture of terror and bribery. At the same time constructed forms of ethnic identities were used to justify compliance. They were formed around myths of origin and nativity, and these different forms of citizenship were enforced through discrimination and dehumanization in order to make the genocide thinkable.<sup>10</sup>

After all the propaganda and manipulation and coercion that the people of Rwanda went through there is no certainty on how big of a percentage of Hutus actually took part in the killing. Whatever the true number is a statement from one the killers from Hatzfeld's interviews gives a chilling starting point. As he says; *There was no one on the hill who can say to God, eyes closed in prayer, that he never went hunting.*<sup>11</sup> Many have stated that people took part in turns and people who refused to act on some occasions acted in compliance on other instances, which makes the estimates hard. The same logic of participation was also found in DRC where the genocide of Rwanda spilled

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<sup>9</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 17.

<sup>10</sup> Hintjens 2001, 25; Straus 2004, 86.

<sup>11</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 66 (Alphonse Hitiyaremye, killer). Killing Tutsis was commonly referred to as hunting or by other terms used related to collective work such as cutting trees.

after peace was restored to Rwanda. There is a strikingly similar quote in Philip Gourevitch's book from a priest from North Kivu, a region in DRC.

*“Everybody in the village was an accomplice, by silence or by looting and it is impossible to divide responsibility,” he said. “It is like Rwanda – one can't say all of them are guilty, but to sort it out is impossible. Father Victor had been in Kigali on April 7, 1994, the day after Habyarimana's assassination, and he told me, “It was the same scenario.”<sup>12</sup>*

Perhaps for this reason the estimates of the amount of people participating in Rwanda range from three million to tens of thousands. Steven K. Baum estimates by citing Ben Valentino that it was actually less than 9 percent of Hutus that were responsible of 750 000 out of the estimated 800 000 deaths.<sup>13</sup> This means that the majority of people taking part acted in minor roles as Adhikari has also noted. A far greater number were accessories to the crime by a variety of actions like betraying whereabouts of Tutsis, by other forms of violence or by stealing property from the victims.<sup>14</sup> Scott Straus has also attempted to make a more detailed estimate of the number of killers in Rwanda by doing a study based on regional estimates.<sup>15</sup> In his study he concluded that the estimate of the active participants is between 175 000 to 210 000. This would equal 7 to 8 percent of adult Hutu population and around 14 to 17 percent of the adult Hutu male population, which falls close to Baum's and Valentino's findings.<sup>16</sup>

We can look at the number of participants from one more view point. In the previous estimates by Baum, Valentino and Straus focus on category 1, which comprises of the people who were in charge of the killings and planning on local and national level as well as for the most brutal participants, and on category 2, which is the people who followed orders to kill. According to Pesonen and Lintunen people on trial under the traditional gacaca trials amounted to 761 000 in 2006. The gacaca trials deal only with category 2 and category 3 offences, where category 2 comprises of followers that took part in the killings and category 3 of people that took part only in looting or destroying property. Therefore, even though the numbers for gacaca trials bring out the huge numbers of people participating in some way, the cases brought forward in gacaca focus

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<sup>12</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 279.

<sup>13</sup> Baum 2008, 30.

<sup>14</sup> Adhikari 2008, 174; Straus 2004, 85.

<sup>15</sup> For more detailed description of his methods and the findings see Straus 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Straus 2004, 93, 94.

heavily on people accused of minor involvement and a large portion of the accused fall under category 3.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, when looking into the meaning of identities in conflict, one of the issues in this thesis must be the relation between the group and the individual. Groups amplify whatever is there – good or bad and as can be inferred from the people participating, people in groups may do things they would never do alone. That is why identity-based groups can be problematic. In groups, anonymity is the key, because it gives discharge from individual identity and more importantly of individual responsibility. This was one of the problems in Rwanda when it came to prosecution in the court cases after the genocide. Defining responsibility for taking part in group attacks was in many cases difficult, because group participation gives room for different levels of participation. For this thesis, the difficulties of prosecution or the levels of participation per se are not relevant but instead whether individual use their membership in the group as a justification for their participation. Group mind has properties that cannot be understood by looking at the individual, but the individual is none-the-less affected by the group. Therefore, by looking at the individual we move away from the anonymity of group membership and can get a deeper view of the justification for the conflict.

It is often thought that all Hutus took part in the killings in Rwanda. The idea that a whole section of society would take part in a violent conflict voluntarily has been partly created by Western media where ethnic violence tends to be portrayed as an eruption of mindless violence between the groups, often stemming from ‘ancient tribal hatreds’ that cannot be controlled.<sup>18</sup> However, that view paints a rather one-sided picture. When going through the vast volumes of research conducted on the holocaust, it is practically impossible to find an author explaining the cause of holocaust as being one of centuries of ethnic or racial conflict between the Germans and the Jews.<sup>19</sup> In the same manner it is not seen as a reasonable explanation for the Second World War to have been caused by ethnic hatred between the Germans and the French. However, when explaining some conflicts in Africa and especially the genocide in Rwanda deep rooted ethnic and racial hatred dating back hundreds of years is still viewed as the main cause by many. In Mohammed Adhikari’s (2008) words, it is unbelievable;

*“how and why the hatred of one social group towards another, when the two had lived together for centuries, intermarried extensively and shared an identical culture,*

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<sup>17</sup> Pesonen & Lintunen 2007, 56.

<sup>18</sup> Seaton 1999, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Hintjens 2001, 45.

*could become so virulent that hundreds of thousands of members from one group could in a three-month-long rampage kill over 800 000 compatriots. Most of the slaughter was conducted in face-to-face encounters involving acts of unspeakable cruelty and in many cases the victims were the colleagues, neighbors, friends, even family of the perpetrators.”*<sup>20</sup>

Adhikari presumes that people took part in the killings in accordance to the hatred that their group shared against the victim group. Hate might have been one of the factors affecting people's participation, but surely, it was not the only one. That is why, just as we strived to find a more comprehensive explanation for the holocaust and the Second World War, we should also strive to understand the full picture of the Rwandan genocide.

## 1.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

When it comes to group relationships and participation, intergroup struggle is often viewed as a sufficient factor explaining group participation in violent conflict.<sup>21</sup> Intergroup struggle however can take many forms and according to contemporary understanding, even though group composition and intergroup relations are in a big role in ethnic conflicts, ethnicity in itself does not cause conflict. Therefore, identity alone is not the reason for the violence, but in ethnic conflicts identity always has a major role. That is because identity is the thin red line that divides people on the other sides of the conflict and thereby often constitutes the borders between groups in the conflict. That was surely the case in Rwanda as the conflict was mainly between two clearly demarcated identity groups - the Hutu and the Tutsi. The most common determinant of group identity is ethnicity and also the difference between the Hutu and the Tutsi has most commonly been accredited to ethnicity. Therefore the role of ethnicity is crucial because using the term “ethnic” implies in itself a division between insiders and outsiders and predetermines one of the root causes of the conflict at hand as one dealing with identity issues and intergroup relations.<sup>22</sup> However, the role of ethnicity in Rwanda can also be very deceptive as an explanation. In the words of Helen Hintjens;

*Ethnic identities in Rwanda do have a tangible influence in conflict, because such identities have been deliberately manipulated from above until it now appears as if*

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<sup>20</sup> Adhikari 2008, 177.

<sup>21</sup> Gould 1999, 356.

<sup>22</sup> Smyth 2005, 9, 10.



*they are based on primordial ties of kinship or race. But explaining genocide through ethnicity is like explaining the movement of the stars through astrology; in both cases, appearances are highly deceptive.*<sup>23</sup>

That is why the first the main questions in this thesis must be, how Rwandans identify themselves, how they learn the meanings attached to identifying and whether there has been changes in their identification. In this, the focus will be on their identification to their ethnic groups – the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa.

Valk and Karu argue that persons with a strong sense of ethnic identity have developed ways of handling threats to their ethnicity and therefore are less susceptible to negative feelings towards others. However, it is my preliminary assumption that with politically manipulated group identity the impact is opposite. This is because identities in general are multifaceted, which means that the basis for belonging can vary slightly and this gives room for interpretation. Manipulated identities on the other hand are often based on a single defining factor as the basis of identity, which removes all flexibility from the process of identification. Therefore the stronger the belief in the manipulated identity the more actively the person is likely to take part in the violence. In fact, it can be argued that in the case of Rwanda systematic persecution did not arise from centuries of hatred but instead it aroused as social and political identities were racialized and as the state withdrew its protection from a selected group of individuals – the Tutsi.<sup>24</sup> Going through the history of how these constructions were done, along with the changes in identifying, is crucial for understanding how they later affected the worldview of all Rwandans.

It is part of my original assumption that people's justification for participation is not determined merely by outside factors like ethnicity or group composition. Neither is participation due to collective reasons that have been used to explain the genocide in Rwanda, such as colonialism or leadership. These elements of course affect the world that individuals live in, often on a practical and subconscious level, but it is a wider set of variables that affect the participation of individuals and it is the second purpose of this thesis to find out what those variables are. The starting hypothesis is that individuals do not justify killing members of the opposing group by for example colonialism, but instead they justify it by elements that are closer to their everyday life. This hypothesis derives from my Bachelor's thesis "*Kuoleman Anatomia*" where I studied the ways the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide explain the conflict. Their explanations derived from their

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<sup>23</sup> Hintjens 2001, 26, 27.

<sup>24</sup> Hintjens 2001, 45, 46.

everyday lives and micro level factors, not big macro level explanations like colonialism. I presume that the collective level does not penetrate to the individual's reality as a dominant factor even when looking into their rational for taking part themselves. Therefore, I presume that even though the collective explanations have their own importance in explaining the events in Rwanda and in explaining the forces that are surrounding the individuals, they are failing to manifest in the thinking of the individuals themselves. It is precisely this friction between the collective and the individual level, which we will focus on as we go on.

Finally, we will look into the relationship between these two main questions. That is, how did the people participating justify their participation to themselves and what was its relation their group identity? This relationship between the justification and group identity is very interesting because the composition of the groups that take part in the conflict and how they identify themselves actually has a deep impact on the nature of the conflict.

We will start looking for the answers by looking shortly into the concept of genocide and how conflicts and participation in conflicts is generally explained. To get into the root of this thesis, we will quickly move to identity. We will start by looking at individual identities in their natural form from where we move to group identities and especially to ethnic identities. After going through the basic characteristics of group identification, we will look into two special cases – into the process of forming the boundaries between two different groups and finally how identities react under hostile circumstances.

In chapter three, we will finally move to the first main research question. In order to find an answer to the question of justification, we need to first find out what Rwandan identities were like, how they were constructed and how they changed in time and what construction of identity means. Throughout this chapter there will be three main ideas that will be carried along simultaneously. First, is the Rwandan identities of Hutu, Tutsi and to lesser degree the Twa. Secondly, we will look at the changes that happened in the meanings attached to these groups. We will especially look into the correlation between these changes and the three general explanations ethnicity, colonialism and post-independence leadership. Lastly, we will carry along the idea of constructing or manipulating identities that Helen Hintjens already mentioned in the quote above. We will try to see, how previously fluctuating social identities were hardened into legal forms of identification that prevented any compassion for those redefined as alien be understood.

In chapter three we will also take a look at the meaning of race and how it became part of the Rwandan group identities during the periods of identity construction. Finally we will look into the final phase of Rwandan identity construction the period after the genocide.

In chapter four, we will look into three psychological categories presented by Steven K. Baum in *The Psychology of Genocide* (2008) – perpetrator, bystander and rescuer. More specifically we will look at the change from bystander to perpetrator. There is a problem of collectivizing entire collectivities as either perpetrators or victims. In Rwanda, even though the conflict was seen as fundamentally between the Hutu and the Tutsi, many Hutus were also targeted by the Interahamwe and many found ways of not participating. In addition, many Hutus who participated lost many family members or were themselves victims of attacks. Therefore, we cannot hold these categories as stable. In the same manner, we cannot hold individuals behavior as stable. In a polarizing context, identity categories refer to collectivities, but ethnicity is still ultimately experienced, and enacted by individuals who have a range of opportunities. This range of opportunities provides the people with many motivations and options in defining the forms of actions that for many changed over time.

The change from bystander to perpetrator is always justified somehow and to find out ways of justifying we look if the mechanisms that lead from ethnicity to violence (for example dehumanization, antipathy, propaganda, prejudice, discrimination) were present in the worldviews of the interviewees. Even though most theories of ethnic conflict do not deal with issues of emotions, most often use emotions to explain the question of individual motivation.<sup>25</sup> Therefore we will look into hatred and take a look into what the role of ethnic hatred was. We will also look into ethnic fear and the role of the security dilemma in individuals justification.

Finally, we will look into practical factors that the interviewees themselves bring up. We will look into the notions of nativity, land and overpopulation that have been often used to explain other conflicts in Africa. Secondly, we will look into greed and poverty. Especially the role of protection and promotion of economic interests as forms of group protection have been prevalent in other genocides, like for example the holocaust. When looking into the economic interests of the community and its individuals we will look especially into the notion of greed as a driving force for the violence. Lastly, we will look into the meaning of authority and obedience. Gustave LeBon

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<sup>25</sup> Petersen 2002, 17.

suggests that anonymity and suggestibility combine in such a way that the individual is reduced to an inferior form of evolution when compared to groups. Submerged in a crowd an individual loses self-control and becomes a puppet violating all personal and social norms.<sup>26</sup> We will look into this notion through the role of authority and through the role of other group members. We will try and find out to which extent people justify their actions through going along with others and through the notion of following orders. Many have argued that this social pressure and obedience actually played a surprisingly big role in Rwanda, where there is a strong tradition of adherence to authority. However, it must also be kept in mind that group solidarity as a form of upholding group cohesion in times of conflict is imperfect. Even when members of the lineage, tribe or ethnic group have common interests and customs that set them apart from others, group members also have individual interests that set them apart from other group members.<sup>27</sup> This is where we get back to the friction between group interests and individual interests again.

## 1.2 SOURCE MATERIAL

Ethnic violence is always directed against a community, but as I already mentioned it is always experienced and justified on some level by the individual. This individual personal level is hard to come by using official and media sources, because they always look into the conflict from the perspective of the community, region and on a larger scale also on national and international level. The individual gets lost and buried in numbers and statistics in this form of information. But by using interview material of the survivors and perpetrators of the genocide we get a unique look into ethnic violence through the eyes of the individual.

The source material in this thesis consists mainly of the interviews conducted by a French journalist Jean Hatzfeld. These interviews were published in three books *Into the Quick of Life – Rwandan Genocide: The Survivors Speak* (2000), *A Time for Machetes – The Rwandan Genocide: The Killers Speak* (2003) and *The Antelope Strategy – Rwanda After the Genocide* (2007). Additionally also the interviews and analysis published in Lee Ann Fujii's *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (2009), Scott Straus' *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (2006) and *Intimate Enemy: Images and Voices of the Rwandan Genocide* (2006) that was published in cooperation by Scott Straus and Robert Lyons, a photographer, and finally in Philip Gourevitch's

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<sup>26</sup> LeBon in Baum 2008, 158.

<sup>27</sup> Gould 1999, 359.

*We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* (1998). These have been used as supporting material.

Source material based on interviews has its own problems. Especially the nature of memory as a tool is an important aspect of interviews. Time that passes and memory in itself can alter the relations of events, because all memories are closely connected to one's own individual experiences. Personal experience is always true to the individual, but it should not be accepted as the norm for all experiences. Everybody experiences things differently and therefore from an individual point of view there are an infinite number of true experiences. Therefore we have to always keep in mind the personal experience and the worldview of the interviewees. Every one of us feels things differently and handles events and hardship in different ways. That is why we need to find a balance between experience-based information received from the interviews and the information from the research literature.

Since a lot of emphasis is put on the justification of the genocide and people's actions in this thesis, a lot of focus must also be put on the interviews of the perpetrators. It is especially with the interviews of the perpetrators of the genocide that the interviews also present another problem. That is the motivations and the agendas of the person being interviewed. Jean Hatzfeld wrote in *A Time for Machetes*, that when he was making the interview he felt a deep mistrust between himself and the interviewees. It was a different kind of mistrust than the one he had felt while gathering interviews for the *Into the Quick of Life*.

*The first thing I felt in front of each member of the group was not aversion, or contempt, or pity, or even antipathy, but distrust: it was immediate and mutual. What I did not know when the meetings began was that this feeling would never be entirely dispelled, no matter what particular bond I managed to form with each man. With time, the hostility gradually faded... Yet never for one instant did I feel free of that distrust. Everything about them kept it alive.*<sup>28</sup>

Especially the ones who had had an active role in the genocide feared Hatzfeld's motivations and thereby also the consequences that the confessions made in the interviews might bring with them. The interviews were shadowed by the fear of further punishments, accusations and resentment that would follow them. The fear of resentment and accusations was not only focused on Hatzfeld as the

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<sup>28</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 36.

interviewer but also towards all the readers of the book and especially towards other inmates for many inmates condemned openly other inmates that had confessed.

Even making the interviews with the survivors was not unproblematic though. While making the interviews for the *Into the Quick of Life* the mistrust had been directed to Hatzfeld by the survivors, because he presented the foreigners, who had not lifted a finger to save them. The survivors thought that it was too late for the world to hear their stories since it would not save the ones they lost and that even if their stories were heard no one would believe them. This mistrust is visible in their stories. The survivors also feared that telling their stories would revive the pain they had gone through and this was fear and disbelief was still present even in the last interviews by Hatzfeld.

The killers on the other hand do not fear that you do not believe them, they fear that you do and that you will bring forth accusations against them. That is why after several attempts with Hutus that lived in Nyamata, Jean Hatzfeld was convinced that interviews would only prove productive with killers that were in prison and already sentenced. It was because they knew that the interviews would no longer affect their judicial position, nor would it affect their return to the hills for they would first have to serve their sentences. Therefore Hatzfeld came to the conclusion that only *an imprisoned killer, a killer who has not yet lived at liberty, can or will tell his story.*<sup>29</sup>

It is important to remember that none of the interviews of the perpetrators are complete, because it is the first instinct of the killer when questioned of the killings is to remain silent or deny their share in it and then to lie about the nature and extent of their involvement in it. This does bring along some limitations to the use of these interviews. Hatzfeld also realized this limitation and to some extent, he has made note of pieces of interviews he knew to be untrue. But however since the main goal of this thesis is not to determine the actions of the killers that have been interviewed, but their worldview and how that affected their involvement in the killings, the material can be seen as more suitable for this thesis. In fact the stories of the instances that are known to be untrue in fact might tell us more of the beliefs and values of the killers, for it shows which stories the killers hope to retell in a different light. It shows how they hope the events had gone, and sometimes this ideal picture tells more than the truth. For even if it is in their instincts to lie of their actions, it is not likely, that they feel the need to lie of their beliefs.

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<sup>29</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 119, 120.

In this thesis a lot of focus is put on the second Hatzfeld book *A Time for Machetes* which contains the majority of the interviews of the killers. The main interest of this thesis is to look at the individual justification of participating and its relation to identity and that justification is mostly done by those who took part in the killing. In addition, the interviews done by Lee Ann Fujii and Straus are used to get a more comprehensive picture of the killers in Rwanda. Fujii conducted her studies in two rural areas in Rwanda – Ngali in the province of Gitarama and Kimanzi in the province of Ruhengeri. She interviews both lower-level participants as well as survivors. Straus on the other hand interviewed only convicted killers. He conducted his interviews in a total of 20 prisons spread around Rwanda.

In Rwanda killings were done by groups, not individuals and therefore Hatzfeld also used a gang of ten men who killed together in his interviews. The existence of these groups created a possibility for different levels of participation. Majority of the interviewees, especially in Straus' and Fujii's study, were ordinary Rwandans who participated as lower level perpetrators. But the ten men that were interviewed by Jean Hatzfeld were all higher level perpetrators including a municipal leader of Nyamata Joseph-Désiré Bitero who was later condemned to death for his actions in the genocide and additional two *interahamwe* members Léopold Twagirayezu and Adalbert Mungizura. Adalbert actually became the *interahamwe* chief of Kibungo during the genocide. However belonging to *interahamwe* was not a precursor for participating in the killing and looting. All ten men took part actively in the killing and all of them were later convicted for their crimes. Also all of Straus' interviewees were convicted killers, for he did his interviews in the prisons. But unlike Hatzfeld and Lee Ann Fujii, he does not give out the names of his interviewees.

Rest of the gang members that Hatzfeld interviewed were Élie Mizinge, an older man and a former soldier and a police officer, Jean-Babstiste Murangira, a civil servant who was married to a Tutsi and four young farmers Fulgence Bunani, Pio Mutungirehe, Alphonse Hitiyaremey, and Pancrace Hakizamungili from the Nyamata area. Nearly all of the younger men had been friends since childhood and they shared close ties spending time together nearly daily. The last member was Ignace Rukiramacumu, an old timer who had lived already during the Tutsi rule before independence. Although not highly active in the marshes due to his old age, he was very active in promoting the hatred towards Tutsis before and during the genocide and his feelings have not changed even with the genocide. Ignace has claimed that he regards the genocide as his failure.

Whether it is his failure as a man for resorting to such action or the failure of the Hutus to wipe out the Tutsis, remains unclear.<sup>30</sup>

Léopold is the only one of the ten men who broke down and confessed to everything he had done. First he confessed in a Congolese refugee camp where he was still working as a member of *interahamwe* and later in the penitentiary of Rilima, where the interviews were also conducted. Hatzfeld believes that for this reason Léopold's interview paints a somewhat different picture than those of others. Because he is not hiding the depth of his actions, he comes out as more active in the killing than the others. Hatzfeld also believes that Léopold's testimony and interviews are the most precise accounts with regard to his actions and to those of his superiors. Also Jean-Baptiste testified partly later in prison hoping for forgiveness and a more lenient sentence.

Few more issues need to be taken into account when interpreting the interviews. All the interviews were done years after the genocide and the passing time has surely affected the issues coming up in the interviews through the basic functions of memory making if no other. Additionally, for example, the use of ethnic and racial labels as a form of identification were banned and sanctioned in Rwanda after the genocide. This has surely affected the prevalence of ethnic commentary on the interviews. Also other changes in the surrounding society may have similarly affected the content in the interviews. Additionally, the time of the interviews is crucial in trying to find how some historical elements have affected the ways Rwandans identify themselves. Majority of the interviewees for example have not lived during colonialism, therefore the references made to effects of colonialism, must be taken as signs of how these elements have been integrated into the Rwandan society and not as reliable descriptions of Rwandan societies during colonialism.

Finally, even though these interviews provide a good and wide base of material for this analysis, the fact that they have been collected by different interviewers and also that they have been collected for different purposes brings along some weaknesses. The lack of some elements in one interview, while them being dominant in the others, may just be a matter of that line of questioning missing from the interview or that they have simply been left out from the printed version. We must keep in mind that the published versions are not the whole interviews, but only sections of them and this might potentially give the wrong impression.

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<sup>30</sup> See Hatzfeld 2003, 24-30, 36-41 or 231-238 for more information on the interviews of the perpetrators and their relations and for the interviewing process see Hatzfeld 2003, 140-147.



## 2. IDENTITY AND CONFLICT

### 2.1 GENOCIDE

When writing about genocide one must of course define what genocide is<sup>31</sup>. At first it might look like a simple task, but the further one looks into it the more complicated it becomes. In its simplest definition genocide means the destruction of a nation or an ethnic group. For many destruction has been simplified into killing, but defining genocide merely as a process of killing misses the social agendas that lie behind the killing. Genocide should be seen more as a process of social and cultural destruction that in addition to violence and military involvement covers legal, administrative, political, ideological and economic aspects<sup>32</sup>.

Even though mass killings is the most commonly recognized form of genocide, for Raphael Lemkin, the founder of the term, genocide was also a form of economic and social destruction and persecution. In his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944) Lemkin focused on the existence of a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.<sup>33</sup> These actions might include for example the destruction of the possibilities for self-governing, disrupting the social cohesion by forced relocations and propagandist education, preventing child reproduction or by prohibiting certain trades and professions from the people of a certain ethnic or social group.

In majority of later definitions the main focus has been laid upon killing, bodily harm and indirectly caused bodily destruction instead of the social aspect of genocide that Lemkin focused on. Although there is a growing variation in definitions, still all these definitions have to explain the six basic elements of genocide that Lemkin named – *agents, victims, goals, scale, strategies* and last but not least *intent*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis on the meaning of genocide see for example Strauss Scot 2001, or Jones Adam 2006.

<sup>32</sup> Shaw 2007, 34.

<sup>33</sup> Lemkin 1944, 79.

<sup>34</sup> Jones 2006, 19; Shaw 2007, 27. For more information on the different definitions of genocide see either Jones 2006 or Strauss 2001.

When discussing the *agents* of genocide there is a unanimous belief in the role of an authority. Predominantly scholars emphasize the role of the state as the authority, but some raise also non-state actors as the perpetrators and agents of genocide. In the case of Rwanda state and authority clearly had a strong influence in the planning of the genocide but in the actual perpetration civilians had a major role, which brings a new twist to the agents of genocide. However the role of the authorities in Rwanda will be looked at more closely in chapter 6.4.

As for *victims* the range of definitions is quite clear. Victims are mainly identified as social or ethnic minorities that have no or little capabilities for defending themselves. In addition, genocide is always directed against innocent civilians. Ethnic violence is most often motivated by a desire for ethnic homogeneity of a region and therefore in ethnic violence the victims are not selected because of what they have done. It is not a question of revenge or retaliation. Instead in ethnic violence the victims are selected and they are hated for who they are, for who they have been born as. So in a way ethnic violence is always a war against group identity – or group membership to be more precise. For it is not the chosen identity, but the group membership that is defined by birth, that defines the groups in ethnic conflicts. In the United Nations<sup>35</sup> definition of genocide, which is the corner stone of the legal definition of genocide, the victim group has been identified as a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. This definition puts emphasis on ethnic identity, which contains in principle all aspects of the definition. For ethnic identity most commonly comprises of three factors – birth, language and religion.<sup>36</sup>

The only question raising controversy in the identification of the victims is the definition of the target group. There is discussion, especially between Frank Chalk, Kurt Johansson, Helen Fein and Martin Shaw, on whether that group must be defined by the group itself or if the group can be defined by the agent.<sup>37</sup>

For *goals* of genocide there is clear agreement among scholars. The goal of genocide is the destruction of the target group and its culture either in part or totally. As for *strategies* of genocide, they vary in accordance with the extension of the goals. Whether genocide is done by one-sided mass killings as Israel Charny suggests, or by destroying the essential foundations of life as Lemkin proposed, or by some other means in between, is a matter of disagreement. Although as I already

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<sup>35</sup> U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948, <[http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/p\\_genoci.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm)>.

<sup>36</sup> Schlee 2004, 137.

<sup>37</sup> Jones 2006, 19-20; Shaw 2007, 4.

mentioned the focus has been on the physical destruction in later studies. As for the *scale* this is perpetrated in there are vast differences. The scale varies from destruction of the target group in its totality to its destruction in part. However, there is common understanding that the amount of victims must be quite substantial.<sup>38</sup>

Genocide is still the only legally defined form of ethnic violence, and therefore the only international humanitarian crime with an ethnic component. Other forms of ethnic violence can only be charged as war crimes or crimes against humanity. Along with the legal requirements of prosecuting genocide we come to the sixth element of genocide, *intent*. According to the UN General Assembly Resolution from 1948, genocide is defined as follows;

*Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:*

- (a) Killing members of the group;*
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*<sup>39</sup>

All international and national legislations regarding genocide are more or less based on the UN definition. In legal proceedings, a lot of focus has been put on the intent to destroy and the aspects of physical violence, but what is important for the understanding of the process of genocide is that “Genocide always involves physical violence, but it involves many other things as well”<sup>40</sup>. As mentioned Raphael Lemkin, the founder of the term genocide actually believed that genocide is not a destruction of life per se but rather a destruction of a way of life.<sup>41</sup> None-the-less the existence of a coordinated plan in behind the strategies and means of genocide is essential in proving intent. And it is only when intent is proven that one can be prosecuted for genocide.

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<sup>38</sup> Jones 2006, 20-21; Shaw 2007, 30-31.

<sup>39</sup> U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948. For all fundamental articles of the Convention see Appendix 1.

<sup>40</sup> Shaw 2007, 34.

<sup>41</sup> Lemkin 1944, 79.

### 2.1.1 OTHER WAYS OF CALLING IT

In addition to genocide other terms have been used to describe ethnic violence. In fact when it comes to naming conflicts there has been considerable avoidance of the word genocide, for labeling the conflict as genocide might bring political consequences. According to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, all contracting parties must undertake to prevent and to punish. This has been taken to mean that defining a conflict genocide will result in the responsibility to intervene. Therefore, many synonyms and euphemisms are used, like tribal fighting, humanitarian crisis, ethnic civil war and so on. One of the most prominent however is ethnic cleansing.

What distinguishes ethnic cleansing from genocide is not clear for the two terms overlap on many aspects. One clear distinction however exists. In genocide the destruction of the victim group is the key. The whole existence of that group is seen as an insult and as something that needs to be rectified. In ethnic cleansing however the goal is the forming of a homogeneous ethnic region, either by killing all other ethnic groups or simply by forcing them to move from the region.<sup>42</sup> So in a way the goal is the forming of an ethnically clean region, not necessarily wiping out the other groups in the region.

Ethnic cleansing as a political term was formed in the ethnic conflicts of the former Yugoslav region in the 1990s. The use of ethnic cleansing as a term spread like wild fire through the late 1990s. It was first used by the perpetrators in an effort to justify their desire of ethnic cleanliness of the region. Soon it was adopted by the international press to describe the events. From the journalists it spread to politicians and from there on it gradually penetrated the official language of diplomacy and international organizations and it has been there to stay ever since.<sup>43</sup> Later it has re-emerged especially in the contemporary conflicts in Darfur. Also Scott Strauss (2010) has studied the genocide in Rwanda through notions of organic purity.

Shabas has attempted to tackle the problematic legal status of ethnic cleansing. According to him ethnic cleansing as a charge has been used mostly in cases where the legal requirements for proof of intent to commit genocide have not been satisfied<sup>44</sup>, in other words, in cases where the perpetrator

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<sup>42</sup> MISTÄ? Muistaakseni petrovic, tarkista!!

<sup>43</sup> Petrovic 1994, 15, 16.

<sup>44</sup> Schabas 2000, 200.

cannot be prosecuted for genocide. Charges of ethnic cleansing are most commonly charged as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

## 2.2 EXPLAINING CONFLICT

According to Gunther Schlee (2004) people take sides in a conflict for two types of reasons. He argues that people take part in conflict either for reasons of belonging and loyalty or the advantages and disadvantages that may arise from identification with a certain group.<sup>45</sup> Gould has another explanation. According to him, attempts to explain group conflicts usually revolve around three factors – interests, identity and social organization. Interest based explanations are the most popular types of explanations today and both Gould and Schlee see them as central to explaining conflict. Explanations revolving around interests usually look at resources such as territory, capital or access to markets and political power as the motivation. Conflict is seen as a result of competition over these resources that usually escalates due to migration, subsistence crisis or changes in relative group strength. On an individual level, these views focus on the benefits the individual can gain from the group identification or from pursuing the group's interests and goals.<sup>46</sup> In the case of Rwanda interest-based explanations are very fruitful when we are looking at people who changed their behavior from bystander to perpetrator during the conflict. This identification based on interest will be looked at in chapter 4 when we look into the change from bystander to perpetrator. And especially in chapter 6 where we look into forms of justification that derive from interests, such as nativism and economic interests.

Identity arguments on the other hand focus on the idea that human beings are prone to see themselves and others as members of categories such as ethnic groups rather than as unique individual persons. Individuals' need for self-esteem on the other hand leads to emphasizing positive values attached to in-group members and also attaching negative values to members of other groups. These explanations are also in line with Shlee's view of why and how individuals identify with groups in a conflict situation. According to these views conflict is often viewed as a result of deep cultural differences that create misunderstandings, hostility and resentment between the groups.<sup>47</sup> This explanation has also been prominent when explaining the Rwandan genocide.

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<sup>45</sup> Schlee 2004, 136.

<sup>46</sup> Gould 1999, 357.

<sup>47</sup> Gould 1999, 357, 358; Shlee 2004, 136.

Especially in the Western media ethnicity has been painted as the main cause for the conflict. The conflict was seen as an inevitable result of ethnic relationships that escalated due to ethnic hatred.

Finally, the explanations based on social organization focus on the norms and relationships that bind people into groups. These explanations are most commonly used especially to explain group conflicts in weak or failed states where the state cannot provide for the people's security but instead they are forced to find security through group memberships. Most typically, the basis of these memberships is in kinship ties. According to these views conflicts escalate because offences against one member of the kinship group are often viewed as offences against all members of the group by all members of the opposing group. This view puts a lot of emphasis on collective action of ethnic groups as the power that is driving the conflicts. When dealing with a conflict like the one of Rwanda, where a large percentage of the civilian population took part in the conflict, the notion of social organization cannot be overlooked.

Even though Gould has found three types of explanations for group conflicts, ethnic conflicts are very complicated by their very nature and there is not always a clear reason why they develop. Genocide as the highest form of ethnic violence is no exception. There is no reliable formula to predict the eruption of genocides, because there is no unilateral reason that causes them. In the words of one of the survivors of the Rwandan genocide: *When there has been one genocide there can be another, at any time in the future, anywhere – if the cause is still there and no one knows what it is.*<sup>48</sup>

Even though there has been a lot of research, it is impossible to say for sure why some threatening situations develop into genocides and others do not, but finding an answer to the question why is one of the key elements when it comes to genocide prevention, management and also when finding ways for rebuilding afterwards. Because like Jeannette, one of the survivors of the Rwandan genocide, said, if the cause is unknown, there can be another genocide in the future.

There are some elements that have been found to affect the eruption of extreme ethnic violence. According to Bridget Conley-Zilkic and Samuel Totten extreme ethnic violence and genocide may develop due to one or more of the following reasons – extremist ideology (for example authoritarianism, nationalism or ethnocentrism), unequal distribution of power and/or wealth in

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<sup>48</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 145 (Jeannette, survivor).

plural societies, social fragmentation (such as ethnic hierarchies, discrimination and disenfranchisement) and last the scarcity of and competition over resources. None of these elements alone cannot cause the violence to erupt and when combined they do not necessarily do so, because when it comes to ethnic violence, there is no working and reliable model to predict its eruption. Instead it is always a question of interpretation by case by case parameters.<sup>49</sup>

In the case of Rwanda however, we can say that all the elements mentioned above were present in the pre-genocide Rwandan society. In fact, many elements had been part of the Rwandan society for decades if not centuries before the conflict escalated to genocide. Hutu extremists that were in power in the early 1990s were highly ethnocentric and due to their political dominance the Rwandan society was increasingly defined by ethnic hierarchies and ethnic discrimination. However, the hierarchies and discrimination were not simply a Hutu extremist construction, but instead they had been part of the Rwandan society even long before the Hutu extremists took power. We will look into the development of these hierarchies and the unequal possibilities resulting from discrimination from pre-colonial to colonial, and from colonial to independence and their effects on the identities in Rwanda and the structure of the society in more detail in chapter 3. In the same chapter, we will link these developments to the most common explanations of the Rwandan genocide.

Other explaining factors that Conley-Zilkic and Totten believe can cause the escalation of violence into a genocide will also be looked at more closely. Authoritarianism is a common feature in Rwandan society even today and the role of authorities has been studied to some extent in Rwanda. The meaning of following orders and obeying came up regularly also in the interviews and for that reason we will also look into it later in chapter 6.4. Also the distribution of wealth and opportunities in a factor that will come up in several following chapters, especially in 6.2 where we will discuss the meaning of economic competition, opportunities and greed.

There are yet other popular theories explaining conflict. For example Preben Kaarsholm has argued by citing Richard Sandbrook that democratization as a process often leads to violent conflict in a heterogeneous state by aggravating the communal tensions. Kaarsholm continues that free party-based competitive elections in heterogeneous societies encourage leaders to manipulate regional, ethnic or religious animosities as a way to mobilize electoral support and thereby form a basis for

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<sup>49</sup> Conley-Zilkic and Totten 2009, 510.

ethnic conflicts.<sup>50</sup> In Rwanda the onset of the conflict and first instances of avoidance between the groups did coexist with the pre- and post-independence period and the first wave of violence hit Rwanda in 1959 along with independence. In 1994 however democratization was not the cause of the conflict, but party-based manipulation did affect the conflict strongly for as already mentioned there was a powerful pro-Hutu coalition gaining power in Rwanda in the early 1990s.

## 2.3 IDENTITY

Identity is one of the key concepts in this thesis, and also seen as one of the reasons why people take part in a conflict by both Gould and Schlee. That is why it is a good starting point for looking into conflicts more closely. To start with it needs to be stated, that to be able to freely define one's identity without coercion is a basic human right<sup>51</sup>. Additionally identity tends to have positive connotations and therefore it has often been overlooked as an explanation or precursor for communal violence. In a culturally plural society however, once the armed conflict is connected with politics, identity is certain to become part of the larger pattern of confrontation. In Rwanda for example as we will later see identity politics became a means to justify and legitimize collective violence.

In the last decade the subject of identity has become more important as many traditional frameworks of explaining conflict have proven inadequate. Identity and according to Attahiru Jega even primordial sentiments attached to ethnic identity are becoming a significant element of political organization in the contemporary world, including crisis-ridden African countries like Rwanda.<sup>52</sup> As Yusuf Bangura has noted, “the subject of identity has gained prominence in recent years as dominant theoretical frameworks prove inadequate in explaining the crisis of development and the complexities of present day conflicts”<sup>53</sup>.

Identity has to however be properly understood in order to understand it's role in sparking conflict for identity in its most basic form is not hostile. Identities for one are both personal and communal at the same time. Identity is a combination of choices, definitions of who a person is, but those choices cannot be made simply by choosing. When societies were more stable, identities were

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<sup>50</sup> Kaarsholm 2006, 1, 2.

<sup>51</sup> Hintjens 2008, 6.

<sup>52</sup> Hintjens 2001, 25; Jega 2000, 12; Young 2002, 540.

<sup>53</sup> Sited in Jega 2000, 12.



rather assigned than chosen and even today choosing to be something does not make a person that. The choices are never free and some aspects of identity like birth, for example, cannot simply be chosen or changed.<sup>54</sup> For that reason identities are always constructed in cultural and social context, which means that they are always influenced by the society around us and that they need to be accepted by that society. Therefore, the role of the society and the political atmosphere can be substantial in constructing identities. The individual may not always acknowledge this pressure by the society but it is none-the-less there. In Rwanda, the society had a strong influence on the political identities of Rwandans in the immediate pre-genocide period but also in the decades preceding it. We will look into the construction of identity in the case of Rwanda more closely in chapter 3, but here it must already be highlighted that identity needs to be accepted both by ourselves as being a part of whom we are and at the same time they need to be accepted by the society around us. That means that in processes where identities are constructed by the society simply inventing an identity is not possible since an identity must be supported by others in order to exist.<sup>55</sup> In other words in the constructions of identity that we will look into in chapter 3 there is always old elements that are used in forming the new identities.

If we focus on identities on a personal level, David Moshman has argued that identities are “theories of ourselves through which we consciously create ourselves”. Thereby identities are not only used to understand oneself but in some cases also to define oneself as a person. By defining ourselves we also change how we and others view ourselves. The definition can alter our perceptions of us and others and it can also change our behavior.<sup>56</sup> Even though the process of identification is complex, the way in which people classify themselves and others is still systematic in nature. Identity is dictated by plausible reasons for either accepting an identity or rejecting it. To belong to a group one must possess the characteristics typical for the identity.<sup>57</sup>

Identity generally refers to a certain social category, for example man, Rwandan or Catholic. Social categories are sets of people given a label and they are distinguished by two main features: 1. Rules of membership that decide who is and is not a member of the category and 2. Content that is a set of characteristics (such as beliefs, desires, moral commitments and physical attributes) thought to be typical of members of the category.<sup>58</sup> More importantly, identity refers most commonly to a social

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<sup>54</sup> Howard 2000, 367.

<sup>55</sup> Moshman 2004, 197; Schlee 2004, 136, 137.

<sup>56</sup> Moshman 2004, 194.

<sup>57</sup> Schlee 2004, 136, 137.

<sup>58</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 848.

category that an individual member either takes special pride in or views as more or less unchangeable and socially consequential.<sup>59</sup>

Gunter Schlee uses mathematics to explain identity. In mathematics, the location of objects in space is described by giving certain values in three different dimensions – x, y and z. Identity has more variables than three, but in a similar manner we can map out the basic form of social identification by giving values to different variables. Three basic variables that determine a large part of the core of our identity are language, religion and descent. To that core we can add with a more varied set of variables with the same method by giving values to different variables such as one's profession, social status and marital status.<sup>60</sup> With this process we can slowly map out the nature of one's identity.

But what makes identity a basis for conflict? Like said the identity needs to be accepted by the surrounding society as well as the individual itself. In cases where identity is not mutually accepted or where it is forcefully coerced there is basis for identity-based conflict. Moshman (2004) gives forth two aspects of identity that however reduce the risk of identity-based conflict. He claims that the identities need to be self-constructed and multifaceted in order to lower the risk of conflict. He believes that self-constructed identities are more genuine than those that are imposed by socialization and are thereby less susceptible for manipulation. Since they are not someone else's theory of you, but your own they are more flexible and more accurate. Additionally, self-constructed identities are usually a result of self-reflection and discussions, why they are also more likely to be multifaceted than externally imposed identities. The positive side to multifaceted identities is that since one's identity is not fixed on one category but the identity is a combination of many facets, people with multifaceted identities are less likely to take part in group conflicts where participation in the conflict is often demanded on the basis on one factor of group identification.<sup>61</sup> In times of turmoil and trouble people tend to become polarized and cling on to their social identity as a lifeline. Actually when ethnicity, religion or political orientation is the only source for identity one can become "an identity fundamentalist".<sup>62</sup> Instead of polarization, a multifaceted identity often forms a basis for solidarity on the basis of other elements of identity, which is why individuals with a multifaceted identity are less likely to take part in group conflicts. Due to the nature of their identity they feel a connection also to individuals on the other side of the conflict and therefore

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<sup>59</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 848.

<sup>60</sup> Schlee 2004, 137.

<sup>61</sup> Moshman 2004, 200.

<sup>62</sup> Baum 2008, 59, 60.

might refrain from taking part. However, in Rwanda the pre-genocide Hutu government used a massive campaign of propaganda that replaced the multifaceted identities of Rwandans with ones that were based solely on ethnicity and race. Ethnic identity was the only allowed form of identification, as we will see later in chapter 3. In the Hutu Power frame of mind a Hutu had to always be Hutu first and a Rwandan or a Nyamatan or a doctor or a priest second.

## 2.3 GROUP IDENTITY AND ETHNICITY

The conflict in Rwanda has always been painted as one between groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi. This is understandable since in ethnic violence much of the conflict boils down to the formation of groups and the intensification of group identity. Ethnic division, and in fact the mere use of the term ethnic, implies the division between insiders and outsiders as one of the basic aspects of the conflict.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, group identity is an important concept to understand when we are looking at conflicts that have been described as ethnic. As Baum has said, the social nature of identity is the key component to understanding hate and genocidal mindedness.<sup>64</sup>

Before going further, we should take a look at different types of group identities. Mamdani has divided group identification into three different kinds – market-based identities, cultural identities and political identities. Mamdani argues that political identities need to be distinguished from market-based identities and cultural identities, for he sees political identities as a result of state formation and as a consequence of how power is organized in that society. Therefore they are not voluntary forms of identification, but rather a set of identities constructed from above for political purposes. Mamdani says that political identities are defined in law and therefore define the rights and responsibilities of individuals based on identification. Additionally their law-based nature also means they lack the flexibility of cultural identities and even market-based identities.<sup>65</sup> That means that political identities are also more susceptible to polarization. When we are discussing the group identities in Rwanda we need to keep in mind that from the onset of colonialism at the latest, the two main groups, Hutu and Tutsi, need to be understood as political identities for belonging in those groups defined a person's political rights. Those identities have ethnic and racial components attached to them, but they should not be considered as purely cultural identities as ethnic identities

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<sup>63</sup> Smyth 2005, 9, 10.

<sup>64</sup> Baum 2008, 26.

<sup>65</sup> Mamdani 2001, 21-23.

by their core nature are. However, we will look into the Rwandan identities more closely later, let us now turn to group identities in general.

Seeing people as part of a collective rather than as individuals is common to all societies. Groups can be problematic however, since they amplify whatever is there – good or bad. People in groups may do things they would never do alone.<sup>66</sup> So, in an antagonistic society, when group identity is forcefully constructed to fit the political goals, identity intensification and group participation can potentially lead to extreme actions.

Identifying in itself however, is not a negative phenomenon. Individuals in general base their existence on group identities and intergroup relations. Actually group membership is one of the most salient and important human characteristics. People both consider themselves as group members but also categorize and perceive others as group members and treat them according to their group identity. According to Daniel Bar-Tal and Yona Teichman the categorization of self as a group member and others in terms of group membership is a pervasive and central human cognitive process that enables the organization of the complex social world into a meaningful structure.<sup>67</sup>

People find solidarity and meaning in belonging to groups. As we develop, we increasingly see ourselves as belonging, not only to groups of people with whom we have face-to-face contact or other personal relationships, but also to more abstract groups. These more abstract groups are defined based on shared characteristics and/or commitments associated with various categories of race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender, profession, nationality, political ideology, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and so forth.<sup>68</sup> However, this categorization is nearly always accompanied with some value statements that declare one group better than the other and it is within these value statements that the risks lie<sup>69</sup>.

Ethnicity is often seen as the focus of identity or as the primary source of identity. It especially is one of the most salient and emotionally charged components of social identification. Most often emphasized aspects of ethnic identity include the feeling of belonging and commitment to the group, attitudes toward one's own group and the cultural aspects of ethnic identity. According to Valk and Karu (2001) ethnic identity is a) a combination of attitudes towards one's group of origin

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<sup>66</sup> Baum 2008, 36, Hintjens 2001, 43.

<sup>67</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman 2005, 20.

<sup>68</sup> Moshman 2004, 200.

<sup>69</sup> Howard 2000, 368.

and its common cultural practices and b) one's feeling of attachment to the group. The feeling of attachment to one's ethnicity is common to all people and self-identification as a group member is a prerequisite for ethnic-identity formation.<sup>70</sup>

Ethnicity became an influential part of the academic forum largely along with the work of Donald Horowitz in mid-1980s. Horowitz argued that ethnicity was at the nucleus of conflicts and that everything revolved around it. His argument is in line with the core hypothesis of this thesis, that is that stronger ethnic group identification leads to more active participation in the conflict. However, I must note that according to my hypothesis this only applies to coerced or forcefully constructed identities that according to Mahmood Mamdani should be considered as political identities and not all ethnic identities that in turn should be understood as cultural identities. Horowitz also argued that even though identity and ethnicity can be separated in the West in Africa and Asia they are inseparable parts of one whole.<sup>71</sup> Even though African identities are often imbued with ideas of primitivity and traditionality, especially in Western eyes, it must be made clear that African ethnic identities are not primitive, but they were constructed largely in the same manner as identities in other parts of the world.<sup>72</sup> Ethnic identity is a continuous process, where identity is made and remade, no matter in which part of the world this process takes place. In other words ethnicity is not a single identity, but a complex set of dynamic and interactive identities than can change. Therefore, ethnicity is nothing primordial or unchangeable, but on the contrary, it is something that is constantly changing and evolving.<sup>73</sup>

Using the term "ethnic" however implies in itself the division between insiders and outsiders and predetermines one of the root causes or root explanations of the conflict at hand as one dealing with identity issues and intergroup relations. Importance of group relations cannot be discarded, but the use of the term "ethnic" in describing conflicts has been widely criticized for masking other causal explanations of the conflicts.<sup>74</sup>

There are at least two reasons why ethnicity becomes part of the conflict. One is need to unify the people to support the conflict. The reason for the violence is in most cases dressed in ethnic terms to unify the groups that are on opposing sides in the conflict. In addition to uniting people on the other

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<sup>70</sup> Howard 2000, 374; Valk and Karu 2001, 583, 584.

<sup>71</sup> Horowitch in Braathen, Bøås, Sæther 2000, 8.

<sup>72</sup> Fardon 1999, 74.

<sup>73</sup> Braathen, Bøås, Sæther 2000, 4, 5.

<sup>74</sup> Smyth 2005, 9, 10.

sides of the conflict there is another rational reason for using ethnicity to form conflicts. Many conflicts are strongly based in identity and ethnicity, because the language of justification is always dressed in ethnic terms. Especially in situations where there is a desire to avoid compromises leaders tend to address conflicts as ethnic as was the case in Rwanda. Political problems are reframed as ethnic, because ethnic conflicts warrant the use of different methods than political ones. Ethnic conflicts call for policies of partition, annexation, irredentist policies, ethnic cleansing and genocide, whereas political conflicts call for acts such as bargaining and negotiations. It is with ethnic mobilization that leads to the polarization of interests, that democratic politics are rendered virtually impossible.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, it must be admitted that in many civil wars the role of ethnicity cannot be wholly discarded. Even in cases where ethnicity or religion is not per se the reason for the conflict, the violence inevitably incorporates discourses of difference. What is needed is that ethnicity must be put into the right political, historical and economic context. Better understanding of both the collective identities taking part in the conflict and the political and economic struggles that guide the conflict is essential for true understanding of the conflict.<sup>76</sup> In the words of Crawford Young;

*Even in the many cases where ethnicity or religion is not per se the precipitant of disorder, violence inevitably incorporates discourses of difference. Ethnicity armed escalates mutual fears, anxieties and insecurities; communal targeted violence inscribes memories of ineffable loss of kin and fellow ethnics and inspires dreams of vengeance. Thus the dangers of protracted disorder should not be underestimated.<sup>77</sup>*

So as political violence and civil wars in Africa spread, the role of ethnicity becomes more eminent as well. It is when identity becomes fixed on one source, for example ethnicity, religion or political orientation, problems may arise and one can become an "identity fundamentalist".<sup>78</sup> In Rwanda the idea of ethnicity and race was tightly wrapped around the conflict in 1994 and formed a basis for this fundamentalism and ultimately the basis for the conflict. In line with this notion, James Waller argues that in situations, when group membership is fixed on race, ethnicity, tribe, kin, religion or nationality, the potential to view other groups as threats is heightened.<sup>79</sup> For this reason in hostile surroundings and circumstances people may side with the hostile side, take part in the violence.

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<sup>75</sup> Fujii 2009, 10; Ojie 2006, 548.

<sup>76</sup> Braathen, Bøås, Sæther 2000, 9; Keen 1999, 82; Schlee 2004, 135; Young 2002, 556.

<sup>77</sup> Young 2002, 556.

<sup>78</sup> Baum 2008, 59.

<sup>79</sup> Waller 2007, 174.

This active component of group behavior however means also that under more supporting and positive circumstances bystanders may just as easily turn the other way and become rescuers.<sup>80</sup>

## 2.5 FORMING THE LINE BETWEEN US AND THEM

Finally let us look into factors that can alter the line between “us” and “them”. The key starting point for group identification is the distinction of the groups and the distinction of the boundaries of belonging. Social construction of an ethnic group identity requires distinction between oneself and the other. Creating this boundary between the self and the other has potential for a violent, antagonistic relationship with the other due to the mechanics that form that difference.<sup>81</sup>

For ethnic conflicts this division between “us” and “them” is very strong and the simplification of group membership requirements enforces this even more.<sup>82</sup> In war situations identification is often simplified into two opposing groups - you are either friend or enemy. There is no middle ground. The juxtaposition of the friend and the enemy actually carries in it a double effect on the relation of the groups. Because in war people kill others at the same time as they sacrifice themselves for their own group.<sup>83</sup> People are seen as group members, not as individuals and when this happens the individual differentiation is replaced by differentiating between “us” and “them”.

The differentiation is crucial, but ethnic groups do not engage in conflict because they are fundamentally different but instead because they are very similar and have enjoyed at one time a unified collective narrative. In other words the potential for conflict arises most often in situation where the division to “us” and “them” is under threat by the diminishing of the difference or if that difference has been manufactured or coerced. It has been suggested by many that racial intolerance finds more ground in small differences than in fundamental ones. People create social categories on the basis of the most trivial differences and people tend to favor their own group over outsiders even when the groups are minimally distinguished. Actually the most violent and hostile conflicts arise in situations where the difference is diminishing altogether and the differentiation is based on a diminishing differentiating factor. In other words conflict arises not from the endangerment of objective difference, but rather under hostile conditions the focus is put more heavily on the

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<sup>80</sup> Baum 2008, 153, 154, 162, 164.; Fujii 2009, 5; Schlee 2004, 136, 137.

<sup>81</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 851.

<sup>82</sup> Baum 2008, 40.

<sup>83</sup> Braathen 2000, 189; Žižek 2008, 41.

unrealistic or nonexistent minor difference. This is known as Sigmund Freud's theory of the *narcissism of minor difference*. Such minor differences can mark social distinction in the mind of the collective self, but should not be treated as objective differences between the self and the other.<sup>84</sup>

In Rwanda it was clear that even though the difference between the three groups existed in the minds of the people especially many of the physical features had lost their dominance and most Rwandans are no longer capable of distinguishing between the groups solely based on appearance.<sup>85</sup> In Straus' interviews people had many ways of distinguishing between Hutus and Tutsis. For example physical appearance, height and skin color or occupation was used. However when asked to explain the difference two thirds said that that Hutus and Tutsis belonged to different amoko.<sup>86</sup> Ubwoko (plural amoko), is used to refer to race, ethnic groups, clans, but also even to relative quality of a product and even different car manufactories. In short it means category.<sup>87</sup> So in Straus' interviews the main source of distinction in people's minds seemed to be that they were simply different from each other, that they belonged to a different category. It was not that they had different features, customs or values. However, as can be seen from the following quote, the different categories were seen as ethnic or as we will later see as racial.

*Ethnicity – I certainly know something about that now. Being Tutsi, being Hutu, they're not the same. The Hutu is the Tutsi's most dangerous enemy.*<sup>88</sup>

In everyday intercourse, the practices that are similar can establish unity, but in a time of conflict practices that vary slightly can establish distinction between two groups. A collectivity in a state of crisis may become obsessed with a minor difference – a difference in a traditional outfit, varying traditions regarding a single celebration, a different dialect or a different religious customs. The differences that will become the subject of narcissism are the unwanted traits that are projected to the enemy. As a result the other becomes a walking, breathing, living embodiment of everything the self wishes to cast of.<sup>89</sup> And after a long process of dehumanization the other has been so thoroughly reduced from the self that its humanity is no longer visible and any act required for maintaining the boundaries between the self and the other, even violence or genocide, can be

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<sup>84</sup> Jones 2006, 262; Murer 2002, 212, 213.

<sup>85</sup> Kressell 1996, 93; Prunier 1995, 5,6.

<sup>86</sup> Straus 2006, 130.

<sup>87</sup> Straus 2006, 129; Taylor 2004, 360.

<sup>88</sup> Hatzfeld 2007, 65 (Médiatrice ?, survivor).

<sup>89</sup> Murer 2002, 214, 216.



justified.<sup>90</sup> In Rwanda a lot of this otherness was placed solely on belonging, or on birth and also on characters attached to form of income, more importantly to owning cattle and thereby to eating meat or drinking milk.

These differences that create the feeling of otherness are not always clear to all. Or more importantly they are not natural, but learned or socialized aspects of people's realities. A good example of this learned aspect of the division between Hutu and Tutsi comes out in the following quote of a Hutu boy who was yet to learn the *proper line between the ethnic groups*.

*I know a case of a Hutu boy who fled into the marshes with the Tutsis. After two or three weeks they pointed out to him that he was Hutu and so he could be saved. He left the marshes and was not attacked. He had spent so much time with Tutsis in his early childhood that he was a bit mixed up. His mind no longer knew how to draw the proper line between the ethnic groups.*<sup>91</sup>

In the previous quote the young boy had yet to learn the difference between the groups and in fact as one of my main interest is the meaning of group identity the process of learning this difference is crucial. Lee Ann Fujii studied the methods of learning the difference between the groups. There was different method to learning the clan and the ubwoko. Through interviews, Fujii learned, that information about ones clan<sup>92</sup> was most commonly taught at home by parents or grandparents. Whereas information of one's ubwoko was learned outside the home from neighbors or at school by teachers if one was not aware of it before entering school. Learning of one's clan was often accompanied by explanations of what the clans meant, whereas the ubwoko was presented as a matter of fact. When asked, it was said that ubwoko meant nothing, but its existence was however enforced in the minds of all children. Additionally, what was noteworthy was that even people who did not attend school learned their ubwoko at a relatively young age. They learned to categorize people in terms of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, even though not aware of the meaning of these categorizations. Many said in their interviews that even though they were aware of amoko, they did not understand the meaning of ubwoko until in their teens. By then, many had learned to attach some negative elements to ubwoko. For example, many Hutus had learned either in school or by talk of elders that the Tutsi were to blame for the past injustices of the Hutu. Still when asked, the interviewees did not prefer belonging to one group over the other.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Murer 2002, 215.

<sup>91</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 114 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira).

<sup>92</sup> Consisting of members of all three ethnic groups.

<sup>93</sup> Fujii2009, 105-109.

However, Fujii goes to show that these categories were very flexible in the past. She showed examples of people changing their *ubwoko* along with becoming richer or losing fortune. This changing of ethnicity along with the change of economic class has been well documented in other instances as well and we will get back to it in chapter 3. But Fujii also argues, that many strived to change their identities for political reasons. In the censuses taken before independence there was a tendency of rich Hutus to present themselves as Tutsi and vice versa in the censuses after independence many represented themselves as Hutu and more importantly this self-identification in the censuses was accepted by the government without questioning.<sup>94</sup> The prevalence of these changes did become less frequent, but as we will later see there are some instances of changing *ubwoko* even during the genocide.

Despite the fluctuating identification that was just described, the pre-genocide Rwanda was model example of a society “obsessed” with a minor difference. It was linguistically, culturally and religiously very homogenous with a highly intermingled population, but still uniformly aware of the existence of different ethnic categories. These groups have taken part in several conflicts both in Rwanda and also in neighboring Burundi and to lesser degree in DRC and there are doubts on whether lasting peace has been found in Rwanda even today. For even though the use of ethnic categories has officially been banned, identity categories still hold a lot of power in Rwandan society and the memories of the genocide run deep.

### 3.6 IDENTITIES UNDER THREAT

Finally, let us look into factors that can alter the line between us and them. Like it has already been mentioned, identity and ethnicity are not by their basic nature hostile. It is only in situations where an identity-based group feels that they as a group or the boundaries of belonging to that group are threatened that hostilities can arise. In these situations identity management strategies are often used to manipulate group comparisons to ensure the boundaries of the groups<sup>95</sup>.

Several components can lead to ethnic groups reforming the boundaries of belonging and to becoming hostile. One component affecting the relations between ethnic groups is social and

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<sup>94</sup> Fujii 2009, 110, 115-118.

<sup>95</sup> Howard 2000, 371.

geographical dislocation. The dislocation often follows a breakdown of a controlling regime, such as imperialism or a strong central government or as a result of rapid fugitive movements. In the face of radical social dislocation, collective identities can be radically altered and in the process of restructuring the boundaries of ethnic identity conflict can develop.<sup>96</sup> In Rwanda one such period was the period around independence. The departure of the Belgian colonial rulers and switch of political power from the Tutsis, who were the political elite during colonialism, to the Hutu lead to a volatile period in Rwanda. It was a period when the collective identities that had been formed under colonialism were under pressure and were forced to adapt to a new situation. During that time the first waves of violence swept through Rwanda. As a result of this violence there were also strong refugee waves of Tutsis leaving Rwanda and also massive dislocation inside Rwanda. This dislocation affected the composition of collective ethnic identities and the relations between them. Also in the 1990's refugee movements had their effects on the developing conflict. Following the 1993 presidential elections and the assassination of the elected Hutu president in neighboring Burundi, there was a cycle of revenge killings that lead to 250 000 Hutus moving to Rwanda as refugees. These hostilities and the flux of Hutus had a big influence in the Rwandan genocide on many levels. We will look at some of these elements later, but for now it is sufficient to note that they had a big influence on the intensification of the group boundaries by changing the composition of the groups in some territories.

In addition to dislocation, as we already saw the shape of political power also has its effect. In colonial Africa the European administrations often relied disproportionately on collaboration with people from particular geographical areas or ethnic groups, and institutionalized tribal divisions within the systems of indirect rule. This contributed to a 'dialectic' of ethnic conflict, most notably in the post-independence era, as other groups sprang up to challenge the hegemony of apparently favored identities, and ethnicity was subsequently further manipulated by political elites to preserve their privileges.<sup>97</sup> In Rwanda this lead to the first waves of violence and the disproportionate rule of Tutsis during colonialism was a source of long grudges between the groups.

Another aspect that needs to be highlighted along with the shape of the political power is also the role of the rising elites in ethnic violence. The provocation of violence by elites can construct groups in a more antagonistic manner. Elites may seek to alter what it means to belong to the group, what it means to be a member. Commonly the boundaries of identity are intensified and clarified in

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<sup>96</sup> Murer 2002, 212.

<sup>97</sup> Keen 1999, 83.

order to form clear opposing groups that make it easy to distinguish who is a member and who is not. In cases where manipulation alone is not enough, extremist may also use violence to force support from moderates. Moderates on the other hand usually seek to blur the boundaries of belonging so as to create a wider common base for support. It is often a political battle between the struggle between the extremists and moderates over the definition of boundaries of group identity.<sup>98</sup>

Manipulating ethnicity is a powerful technique for deflecting class alliances and mobilizing military. It also serves a powerful tool for political mobilization. In fact manipulating ethnicity may be one of the easiest ways of getting a political constituency where a plural political culture is not nurtured.<sup>99</sup> As a result requirements such as political views are replaced by ethnicity and people's ethnicity, whether coerced or not, becomes the only defining factor as well as the only source of protection. In the words of Braathen, Bøås and Sæther (2000):

*People seek protection and support where it is available... The point is not whether the enforcing of identities in a conflict situation is false or coerced, but that there are very few choices available during such circumstances. As wars mount and fear and hate spread, people do not choose to support their armed community companions out of persuasion. Instead, their place of birth or family relationship decides which group people belong to: any person or group could be attacked irrespective of political views and solely by certain descriptive qualities. Under these circumstances ethnicity becomes the only possible 'safe haven'. Thus, the mechanism for defense and counter-attack based on community affiliations reinforce each other. The basic point is that when things start to fall apart, people are often left with no protection but the solidarity of their ethnic kinsmen.<sup>100</sup>*

This was also the case in Rwanda. As hostilities started to form in the months preceding the genocide people started to line with their ethnic identity more strongly and believe that ethnicity was the most important element of social life. Ethnicity became the most powerful form of identification and the differentiation between "us" and "them" became widespread. Attaching to ethnic or tribal identities has a long history in Africa and even the survivors of the genocide realize the potential problems it may bring.

*In Africa, you can escape from your family, your country, your religion, but not your ethnic identity. When an African hears danger rumble and takes fright, he clings to his*

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<sup>98</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 865.

<sup>99</sup> Keen 1999, 84.

<sup>100</sup> Braathen, Bøås, Sæther 2000, 12.

*ancestors, to his hill, to what he's used to, and in the very depths of fear he turns to his ethnic group. That's really your last hope. When war thunders on the horizon, you run to your people, and that's when you die in great numbers.*<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Hatzfeld 2007, 151 (Eugénie Kayierere, survivor).

### 3. IDENTITY IN RWANDA AND THE GENERAL EXPLANATIONS OF THE GENOCIDE

*Atrocity cannot be its own explanation. Violence cannot be allowed to speak for itself, for violence is not its own meaning, to be made thinkable it needs to be historicized.*<sup>102</sup>

History is always needed to make sense of the past. However, history is not only knowledge of the past, it is also power. It is power that can be used for good or for bad. It can be used to create peace and stability or hatred and conflict. When it comes to Rwanda, it can be truly said that the history of Rwanda is dangerous and very powerful.<sup>103</sup> All states and regimes use myths of origin to legitimate their rule over the society. These myths are based on collective identity markers like race, origin or common blood and only secondly to subjective forms of identification such as feelings of belonging, language or sense of nationalism.<sup>104</sup> But as we will see in the following chapters, in Rwanda these myths and the history of Rwanda were not only used to unite the Rwandan people, but also to divide them. However, we must not see Rwanda as merely a country of endless conflicts. There has been many violent conflicts, but when it comes to Rwandan history it needs to be remembered that despite the long history of violence, there is a vastly longer history of peaceful coexistence.<sup>105</sup>

Researchers have sought to explain the events of the spring of 1994 in Rwanda from many perspectives, but most commonly the explanations can be put under three different views – ethnicity, colonialism or national leadership. What is typical to these explanations is that they focus solely on the collective level of the conflict, searching the answers from macro level factors. Also especially the ethnicity based and colonialism based explanations focus very heavily on history in explaining the events. As we go through these explanations in more detail, we will carry the perspective of the construction of identity along the explanations in order to tie the general explanations to the viewpoint of identity and to find the changes that have occurred in the Rwandan identity. In fact, it is my assumption that all these three general explanations in fact have had their role in forming the contemporary Rwandan identity and the identities that took part in the conflict. But these three historical explanations should not be seen purely as events but as periods when the

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<sup>102</sup> Mamdani 2001, 228, 229.

<sup>103</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 48.

<sup>104</sup> Hintjens 2001, 41.

<sup>105</sup> Pesonen & Lintunen 2007, 84.

Rwandan identities were constructed to fit new categories or as Hintjens put it periods when they were *deliberately manipulated*<sup>106</sup>. Focus should be put on the institutions that were directing the development during those periods of identity formation, for as Mahmood Mamdani has also stated; *If it is true that the choices were made from a historically limited menu, it is also the case that the identity of agents who made these choices was also forged within historically specific institutions.* In this case, we need to especially look at three aspects or periods; the notions of ethnicity, the effects of colonialism and finally the effects of the Hutu Power regime during the pre-genocide period. The purpose of this chapter is to take a look at the whole span of Rwandan identity construction from a historical perspective. We will start by looking into the three groups of Rwanda and especially into how they were organized before colonialism. Second, we will look into ethnicity and processes of identity construction in general, after which we will move to the two crucial time periods of identity construction; colonialism and the time of the Hutu rule spanning from independence to the genocide. As a conclusion of those two periods we will take a look into the meanings of race. Finally, we will look into the final construction of Rwandan identities. That is the post-genocide identities.

### 3.1 THE GROUPS IN RWANDA

To understand why ethnicity ended up being used as an explanation, we need to look at the groups of Rwanda more closely, how they were originally defined and formed and also into why and how identity politics work. The Rwandan society is very homogenous when it comes to common culture, language and religion and it has been that way for centuries. In pre-colonial Rwanda Hutu and Tutsis were neither ethnic nor racial identities. The distinction between Hutu and Tutsi was not even rigidly defined by birth, but was essentially a political one – about who exercised power and who was subject. This is evident even in the names of the groups. If taken literally, the word Hutu means “servant”. Whereas the word Tutsi means “rich in cattle”.<sup>107</sup> The flexibility of the system and mobility of people from one group to another prevented conflict between the groups and at the same time Hutus and Tutsis intermarried extensively and already centuries ago came to share the same language and customs.<sup>108</sup> Even though majority of the unifying factors are still present today, the Rwandan society is anything but unified when it comes down to sharing a common identity. The

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<sup>106</sup> Hintjens 2001, 26, 27.

<sup>107</sup> Adhikari 2008, 180.

<sup>108</sup> Adhikari 2008, 180, 181; Hintjens 2001, 31.

society is divided in three main groups; the Hutus, the Tutsis and the Twa. These three groups are usually described as the three tribes of Rwanda, but that is incorrect, since they lack the main characteristics of tribes which is why anthropologists agree that Hutus and Tutsis do not constitute separate tribes or even separate ethnic groups. A tribe or an ethnic group is a small nation which has its own language, culture, way of doing things, religion and/or territory. The Hutus and Tutsis have none of these, but instead they share a common language, religion, culture and territory.<sup>109</sup> Still however there is a clear distinction between the groups. A lot of the original difference between the groups has been based on the mode of subsistence, on whether one was a farmer, cattle herder or a gatherer. Later, the difference has been reinvented during two periods when the Rwandan identity was heavily constructed and manipulated. These two eras were colonialism and the independence period of political Hutu hegemony and during these periods the difference was turned into ethnicity and race. But to start with, it was neither.

To describe the division shortly let us start with the prevalence of these groups. In numbers Hutus have always been the overwhelming majority in Rwanda consisting around 84 percent of the population before the genocide. Most commonly, they are described as having dominant bantu-features, with a short and sturdy stature and a darker complexion and who often are farmers. In the same manner the Tutsis, the cattle herders, the second largest group in Rwanda with around 15 percent and who in the traditional Rwandan society were at the top, are commonly described as much taller and skinnier with a lighter complexion and finer facial features. In short according to the European colonial lords the Tutsis had a more “European appearance”.<sup>110</sup> In traditional Rwandan society as well as also today the third group the Twa were at the bottom. The Twa numbering only around 1 percent of the population are pygmies who get their living almost directly from the forest by gathering and by building pottery.<sup>111</sup> This was the original inequality: cattle are more valuable asset than produce and they served as the only way to gain political power. And although some Hutus owned cows while some Tutsis tilled the soil, in time the word Tutsi became synonymous with political and economic elite.<sup>112</sup>

Even though the external features had a big role in forming the stereotypes attached to group identities, especially during colonialism, there are differing opinions on their relevance. Many of the features are not dominant and even though it is possible that the features were more dominant in the

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<sup>109</sup> Moshman 2004, 185.

<sup>110</sup> Jones 2006, 234, kts. Mahmood Mamdani; Kressell 1996, 93-96; Prunier 1995, 5, 13, 14.

<sup>111</sup> Kressell 1996, 93; Prunier 1995, 5,6.

<sup>112</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 48.



past, due to extensive intermarriage and mixing between the groups, distinguishing between group members based on appearance is very difficult in contemporary Rwanda and even most Rwandans are not capable of distinguishing between the groups solely based on appearance. Possessing the typical features for belonging to a group does not necessarily mean that one belongs to that group.<sup>113</sup>

There is a story of a Hutu doctor Odette, in Gourevitch's book *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We and Our Families Will Be Killed* (1998) that well highlights how these stereotypes hold a meaning even though their prevalence may be questionable. The following events took place in October 1990 after the RPF attack, when the relations between Hutu and Tutsi started to aggravate and nearly 10 000 people were arrested under claims of being *ibiyitso* i.e. a RPF accomplice.

*For instance, when men were sent to the hospital to arrest Odette they got the wrong person. "I had been given my job back," she said, "and I had a colleague who had the same name. She was a Hutu and she denied that she was me, but she was much taller than I am and they said 'There is only one Tutsi doctor named Odette.' So she was imprisoned and tortured, and in 1994 she was again mistaken for a Tutsi and killed."*<sup>114</sup>

To some extent, even the people realized that these stereotypes were not real. Especially in the countryside where there was no difference in wealth between the groups, the talk of the difference appears to be more of a custom and expression of the old hierarchies than proof of true difference.

*People said that Tutsi women seemed too slender to stay on our hills, that their skin was smooth from their secret drinking of milk, that their fingers were too delicate to grab a hoe, and all that foolishness. In truth, Hutus noticed none of that hearsay in the Tutsi women of their neighborhood, who bent their backs beside the Hutu wives and lugged water home the same way they did. Yet Hutus enjoyed repeating such common talk.*<sup>115</sup>

In fact, Helen Hintjens (2001) has argued that the Tutsi stereotype was in fact formed based on the Tutsi monarchy, not the economic caste of Tutsis as a whole. The members of the Tutsi monarchy conformed largely to the Tutsi stereotype of a tall in fair body and were in fact often much taller

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<sup>113</sup> Kressell 1996, 93; Prunier 1995, 5,6.

<sup>114</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 83-4.

<sup>115</sup> Hatzfeld 2005, 204, 205 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira).

than even Europeans. She suggests that the differences between the average Hutu and Tutsi were in fact minimal even during colonialism and therefore differentiating between the Tutsis and Hutus based on physical features today is almost impossible.<sup>116</sup>

There are differing opinions on whether the friction between the groups started to surface before colonialism or during it, but the source of original distinction is undisputed. Hutus were cultivators and Tutsis were herdsman. These groups were seen as economical castes. They were not cultural or physical and neither were they political. In pre-colonial Rwanda it was even possible to move between these classes. The most successful Hutus could become Tutsis by a process called *kwihutura*, meaning to shed Hutuness, if he succeeded in buying a sufficient amount of cattle to make a living as a herder. In the same manner, a Tutsi could fall in social status and become a Hutu in case he lost his fortune.<sup>117</sup> Movement between these castes was however somewhat rare and mainly the movement was only upward. The relationship was further complicated after the 1930s when the movement between the classes was stopped. After this point no matter how rich a Hutu became he could not become a Tutsi and neither could a Tutsi fall and become a Hutu under any circumstances.<sup>118</sup> However, in Lee Ann Fujii's interviews this change of *ubwoko* was still seen as a natural and common phenomenon.<sup>119</sup> As can be seen from the following quote, where it is seen natural that when losing the cows the interviewee's family automatically was turned into Hutu and that is how they remained unless they could get their cows back.

*IN THE PAST, WAS IT POSSIBLE TO CHANGE YOUR UBWOKO? Yes, when a Hutu was rich, he would become Tutsi and when a Tutsi was poor, he would become Hutu right away. DID THAT HAPPEN OFTEN? WHEN SOMEONE BECAME RICH OR POOR AND AS A RESULT CHANGED HIS UBWOKO? Yes, that would happen often. DID YOU CHANGE OYUR UBWOKO SEVERAL TIMES? My wife changed her ubwoko one time. In the beginning we were Tutsi and when there was a decrease in cows, we became Hutu. [---] DID YOU BECOME RICH AGAIN AFTER LOSING YOUR COWS? Since that time, we have been doing agriculture and we have been Hutu.*<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Hintjens 2001, 31.

<sup>117</sup> Adhikari 2008, 180; Hintjens 2001, 28.

<sup>118</sup> Hintjens 2001, 30.

<sup>119</sup> Fujii 2009, 116, 117.

<sup>120</sup> Fujii 2009, 116, 117.

In addition to movement between the classes, even belonging to these groups was not clearly marked before colonialism. The difference between a poor Tutsi and a rich Hutu was basically nonexistent and the distinction was further complicated by the patronage system. The patronage system allowed that in some instances an individual could identify as both Hutu and Tutsi in different situations<sup>121</sup>. For example, it was possible to be both Hutu in relation to your patron and a Tutsi in relation to your own clients. So Hutu and Tutsi were used more in status terms not ethnic.<sup>122</sup>

The patronage system had many forms, mainly *umuheto*, *ubuhake* and *ubureetwa*.<sup>123</sup> The different forms of patronage were widely spread to the extent that before independence it was commonly believed that all Rwandans, except the king, were simultaneously a patron and a client to someone.<sup>124</sup> For the purpose of identifying the *ubuhake* system had the most profound influence. *Ubuhake* was a form of service where the master gave the servant a cow in exchange for labor services. These contracts were often done either between a Tutsi master and a Hutu servant or between two Tutsi families. This system had traditionally a big influence in the Rwandan society for gaining cattle was the only route to social and political power. Owning cattle was and still is viewed as a sign of wealth as well as also a sign of good upbringing and status in Rwanda.<sup>125</sup> Cattle and meat were seen as Tutsi symbols still during the genocide and were a very prominent topic in the interviews, which is to show the importance of cattle in the Rwandan society. Therefore, it needs to be highlighted that in its original form the *ubuhake* system was seen positively and getting a patron was a desirable goal for it gave the possibility to social and economic improvement.

Even though the end of the social movement between the groups blurred the economic difference between the groups, the view that the Tutsi were the upper-class remained in the minds of the people and this had long term effects in the group hierarchies. Despite this construction of social hierarchies and differentiation between the groups, cross-cutting allegiances - such like the patronage system, clan system, common military service, communal forced labor system and

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<sup>121</sup> Hintjens 2001, 27.

<sup>122</sup> Hintjens 2001, 27.

<sup>123</sup> Umuheto was a form of patronage most commonly between two Tutsis, where the serf gave the patron a cow in exchange for protection. Ubureetwa on the other hand was a form of patronage between Hutu and Tutsi that did not surface until later along with land reform. In ubureetwa the Tutsi gave land to a Hutu who had no land in exchange for labor services and a portion of their crops. This form of service was closely related to a slave like service and was a seed for growing resentment. For more information on the other forms of patronage, see for example Mamdani 2001, 64 or Fujii 2009, 64.

<sup>124</sup> Mamdani 2001, 64.

<sup>125</sup> Adhikari 2008, 181; Kressell 1996, 96; Mamdani 2001, 65; Prunier 1995, 12, 29.

common religious and cultural practices - served to prevent the crystallization of separate ethnic identities in pre-colonial Rwanda.<sup>126</sup>

### 3.2 CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY AND NOTIONS OF ETHNICITY

The ethnic explanation focuses on the differences of the three ethnic groups. Especially it highlights the status of the Tutsi as the traditional leaders of the Rwandan society and to the inequality of the Rwandan society, both before and during colonialism. It sees the conflict as a way to highlight this inequality and to break free of the domination. Additionally, the antagonistic relationships that existed between different groups is essential for the ethnic explanation. In accordance to this explanation the two groups, in the case of Rwanda the Hutu and the Tutsi, see each other as the total opposite of the other group. In addition to a clear division, these groups also must view the other group as of lower value, even inhumane.<sup>127</sup>

This ethnic explanation is often also called the primordial thesis. According to this primordial thesis people often believe that particular social categories are fixed by human nature rather than by social convention and practice. It claims that social categories are something natural, inevitable and unchangeable facts about the social world.<sup>128</sup> More specifically primordialists believe that conflicts between group A and group B are inevitable because of unchanging, essential characteristics of the members of these categories. Especially they see that ethnic violence results from antipathies and antagonisms that are enduring characteristics of an ethnic group and this is the core of the ethnic explanations of the genocide in Rwanda. Constructivists have tried to combat this view by repeatedly arguing that even though group A and B are currently in conflict it does not mean that the hostility needs to be a permanent and eternal condition.<sup>129</sup>

Since most killers were Hutu and most victims were Tutsi the Western view of the Rwanda genocide was one of ancient tribal hatred that exploded. This was in line with the emphasis and the views attached to ethnicity that was very prominent especially in the media reports of the conflict in Rwanda. Popularly the killings in Rwanda are still often attributed to tribal fighting and ethnic

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<sup>126</sup> Hintjens 2001, 28.

<sup>127</sup> Kamukama 1997, 5.

<sup>128</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 848.

<sup>129</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 849.

hatred and even some Rwandans understand these events in the same light.<sup>130</sup> Yet the genocide was not a result of tribal, racial or ethnic differences per se, for the existence of different ethnic groups does not inevitably cause conflict. In fact, majority of ethnic groups exist in harmony with other groups. And that is why the story of Rwanda according to David Moshman rather than being one of ethnicity was instead a story of “ideology and identity”.<sup>131</sup> It is not the mere identity but the ideology attached to belonging to that group that led to the conflict. Identities that kill are likely to be false or coerced. They are often premised on false beliefs about self-relevant matters of biology, ancestry and history rather than subjective views of one’s self and the others and are therefore more antagonistic and more prone to conflict situations.<sup>132</sup> Also they are neither self-constructed nor multifaceted.

Despite growing criticism, ethnic violence still tends to be portrayed as an eruption of mindless violence, often stemming from ‘ancient tribal hatreds’. Many ethnic conflicts have been represented as reincarnations of some historical ancient animosity that has erupted before in the past and has no resurfaced. The intermission period in the fighting, however long, is usually explained by the restraining force of external factors, such as the power of the Communist party in the former Yugoslavia or the power of the imperial governments during the colonial period in Africa. Once this power ceases to exist the conflict that emerges from the power vacuum is seen as the same age old hostility that prevailed before. This is even though there might be 50 or 100 years since its last eruption or even though it erupts in a new form or between factions that did not exist before.<sup>133</sup>

In these ethnicity-based approaches violence is presented as the outcome of ethnic group relations, which are viewed as competitive and often antagonistic. Ethnicity based explanations locate the causes in the ethnic groups and in the collective characters that connect the groups. In these situations the meanings attached to ethnicity often include ideas of primitivism, backwardness and exoticism, which according to recent studies are not correct. In certain contexts, the notion of ethnicity can even contain an idea of violent traits as an important part of the group’s identity or even its genetic or cultural characteristics. In these situations where the violence is seen as a result of inherent qualities of the communities involved, ethnic conflicts are often described as more or less inevitable and intractable. According to these views under the right conditions these groups will

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<sup>130</sup> Hintjens 2001, 26; Howard 2000, 375.

<sup>131</sup> Moshman 2004, 183.

<sup>132</sup> Moshman 2004, 202.

<sup>133</sup> Seaton 1999, 44.

commit violence against an enemy group.<sup>134</sup> This view has especially been prominent in the media and it can be discussed whether this view of inevitability and intractability can lead to a certain avoidance of intervention in these conflicts by outside parties.

Explaining violence as a manifestation of ethnic hatred does not bring forth the political and economic processes that generate the violence. It does not address the complex relationship between violence and the distribution of economic resources, because it hides the fact that ethnicity in itself does not cause conflict. It has been suggested, that even though factors such as religion, revenge and cultural cleavages have their role in generating and sustaining civil conflict, the rational pursuit of economic goals is the key motivation guiding warfare and other conflicts forward and it has been the focus of most current conflict theories. Actually most current conflict theories currently focus on the economics of the conflict in explaining conflict. In other words the conflict is explained by the resources that the competing parties are fighting about, and which thereby motivate the conflict.<sup>135</sup> I believe that when we are discussing ethnic violence it is important to keep in mind that the motivation behind the conflict indeed is something else than ethnicity. Ethnicity and ethnic division in itself does not cause conflict, even though it might have a role in the conflict. The conflict is always a result of a combination of reasons.

Today, ethnicity is most often seen in accordance to this constructivist view which highlights the socially constructed and changing character of identity.<sup>136</sup> Especially the constructivist school has highlighted the socially changing nature of ethnic identity instead of primordialism or fixed characteristics.<sup>137</sup> Social categories and their membership rules are products of human action and speech and can therefore change over time. This view of ethnic identities as processes gives ethnic identities the flexibility that allows them to be used as means and tools of power and to be easily manipulated for political aims.<sup>138</sup>

It is for this reason that Mahmood Mamdani has claimed that the ethnic categories in Rwanda should be understood as “political identities that changed with the changing nature of the Rwandan state”<sup>139</sup> for these identities were used as tools in politics that were reconstructed to fit the

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<sup>134</sup> Seaton 1999, 44; Smyth 2005, 9.

<sup>135</sup> Schlee 2004, 135.

<sup>136</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 847.

<sup>137</sup> Marttila 2003, 26.

<sup>138</sup> Marttila 2003, 35.

<sup>139</sup> Young 2002, 549.

contemporary motives. We will look into two of these changes in the following two chapters, but we will still focus on the methods of the constructions.

Construction of identity is a social process that can take many forms, but it is not arbitrary. The construction is always based on elements that support each other and form a coherent entity. The construction may be based on old elements or old elements can be used as building material, but most often in construction also new elements are added or invented. It should also be kept in mind that social categories, such as ethnic groups, even though being constructed, are none-the-less real.<sup>140</sup> The pre-genocide forms of ethnic identity in Rwanda were manufactured with existing elements of antagonism and historical elements. However, ethnic conflict is not something inherent in the Rwandan society. When it comes to the construction of identities in the Great Lakes region or anywhere else, the construction can be used to mobilize people in conflict or to demobilize them. Ethnic identities however important people view them emotionally need not have political meaning in order to promote conflict.<sup>141</sup>

Identity politics in general are considered as movements that use the manipulation of ethnic, racial or religious identities as tools to gain or maintain power. In these cases national leaders often create a binary division between the ethnic groups in order to ensure political support.<sup>142</sup> In addition, violence influences ethnic identities by making them more antagonistic and rigid. It has been shown that in most cases the newly constructed or reconstructed identities tend to increase their support for the elite who provoked the violence. It is unclear however why ethnic publics follow the elites in situations where it serves interests of the elites, not the public's.<sup>143</sup>

Even though manipulated identities tend to derive from the elites, identities need not be constructed by elites. Social identities are actually produced and reproduced mainly through everyday action of ordinary folk. Individuals think of themselves in terms of a particular set of social categories, which lead them to act in ways that collectively confirm, reinforce and propagate these identities.<sup>144</sup> So in fact, even though it is the elites that seek to manufacture and construct the identities these identities cannot exist without the individual that reinforce them and give them substance.

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<sup>140</sup> Schlee 2004, 148.

<sup>141</sup> Hintjens 2001, 42.

<sup>142</sup> Marttila 2003, 11, 12.

<sup>143</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 846.

<sup>144</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 856.

Official propaganda had of course a role in spreading the new identities, but the constructions were spread often also through very ordinary and invisible ways. Especially in the countryside, one popular way of reinforcing identities was through stories by parents and elders.

*Basically, Hutus and Tutsis had been playing dirty tricks on one another since 1959. That was the word from our elders. In the evenings, Primus in hand, they called the Tutsis weaklings, too high and mighty. So Hutu children grew up asking no questions, listening hard to all this nastiness about Tutsis.*

*After 1959 the oldsters jabbered in the cabarets about eliminating all the Tutsis and their herds of trampling cows. That came up often around the bottle: it was familiar concern to them, like the crops or other business matters. We young people made fun of their old-folks grumbling, but we didn't mind it.*

*All through his youth, a Hutu could certainly choose a Tutsi friend, hang out and drink with him, but he could never trust him. For a Hutu, a Tutsi might always be a deceiver. He would act nice and seem obliging, but underneath he was constantly scheming. He had to be a natural target of suspicion.<sup>145</sup>*

Also schools spread the propaganda, but more importantly, as can be seen from the following quote the schools also made sure that even the children knew who belonged to which group.

*They took pleasure in spreading the most unlikely rubbish so as to drive a thin wedge of discord between the two ethnic groups. The important thing was to keep a distance between them and try to aggravate the situation. For example, on the first day of school the teacher had to call out the background of every pupil, so that the Tutsis would feel timid about taking their seats in class of Hutus.<sup>146</sup>*

There is a propensity to see the world in ethnic terms in Rwanda and this world view is enforced on all sectors of society. Ethnic differentiation in Rwanda is seen in fact as quasi-natural and it lives strongly in the worldviews of the people.<sup>147</sup> In Fujii's interviews, for example, the violence was described in ethnic terms. It was simply described as "Hutu going after the Tutsi". At the same time participation was not explained through belonging to an ethnic groups. Nobody explained that someone participated because he was Hutu, but still the conflict was described as one that was fundamentally about the Hutu going after the Tutsi.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Hatzfeld 2005, 204 (Adalbert Munzigura, killer).

<sup>146</sup> Hatzfeld 2005, 204, 205 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).

<sup>147</sup> Taylor 2004, 358.

<sup>148</sup> Fujii 2009, 89.



### 3.3 COLONIALISM AS AN EXPLANATION AND AS A CONSTRUCTION

Colonialism is the second general explanation that has been used to explain the conflict in Rwanda. The explanations revolving around colonialism have a lot in common with the ethnicity explanations. The main difference is that in the colonialism explanations the relations between the Hutu and Tutsi prior to colonialism are seen as peaceful without any specific hatred between the groups. The hatred between the groups, on the other hand, is seen as a result of the actions of the Belgian authorities.

There is no consensus among scholars when the hostility between the groups surfaced but it is clear that it did happen before the independence of Rwanda at the latest. Before colonialism, Rwandan society was characterized by a hierarchical relationship between the three groups based on the form of income, but also a growing opposition between the Hutu and the Tutsi. It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that practices of avoidance first started to surface between the Tutsi and the Hutu and to categorize their relations.<sup>149</sup> However, there was no clear hostility between the groups at that time<sup>150</sup>. In fact, first waves of violence between the groups did not emerge until the pre independence riots in 1959-1962.<sup>151</sup>

Hatred among the ethnic groups inside a state is not a unique condition to Rwanda, but instead it has been typical also in other African states. For example, Leo Kuper and Wilbur Smith have claimed, that when a society has two spheres of control and domination side by side there is great potential for a genocide or other forms of ethnic violence to erupt, as the colonial rule ends and the power is handed to the local authorities. This was for example the case with colonialism and indirect rule. This is because as the Europeans left they left behind a dominated class that was angry for the discrimination it has been subjected to. On the other side of the coin, the ruling class had no support network to back their leadership or dominating status without the Europeans backing.<sup>152</sup>

Germans as well as Belgians used indirect rule in Rwanda, which promoted the Tutsi structures of domination. Both German colonial administrators and missionaries saw Tutsi political domination and their tall and thin stature as evidence of their racial superiority and believed that they were of

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<sup>149</sup> Taylor 2004, 363.

<sup>150</sup> Taylor 2004, 364.

<sup>151</sup> Kressell 1996, 93; Prunier 1995, 5,6; Taylor 2004, 364.

<sup>152</sup> Kamukama 1997, 5; Kressell 1996, 99.

Hamitic origin. At the same time the Hutu were classified as Bantu and racially inferior.<sup>153</sup> The Belgians later followed down the same principle as they used the minority Tutsis as the ruling elite through the indirect rule. The Belgians first contemplated in favoring the Hutus, since favoring the majority was believed to give a wider base of support as well as access to the group that was controlling the landowning farmer class. After a few years however the Belgians moved their alliance to favor the Tutsis, since there was already a ruling structure based on Tutsi dominance in Rwanda and especially since the minority status of the Tutsis made them more vulnerable and therefore also more reliant on the Belgians to maintain their power.<sup>154</sup>

The indirect rule used in Rwanda, however, differed from one used in many other areas in Africa. In fact, Mahmood Mamdani has called the type of rule used in Rwanda during colonialism a half way house between direct and indirect rule.<sup>155</sup> Direct rule is categorized by a bipolar opposition between the colonizer and the colonized based on racial hierarchy. Indirect rule on the other hand is characterized by a control mechanism where the divided indigenous ethnicities were ruled by their own chiefs, who in turn were ruled by the colonizers. The system that the Belgians used in Rwanda used a control mechanism where the ethnicities, or in the case of Rwanda the Hutu, were ruled by the Tutsi, who in turn were ruled by the Belgians. What is special in this, is that the Hutu were the only group constructed as indigenous ethnicity where as the Tutsi were constructed as an alien race that was higher on the racial ladder compared to the Hutu. This gave rise to stark opposition between the Hutu and the Tutsi.<sup>156</sup> Additionally this had serious political consequences later on, for this form of rule politicized Rwandan identities as it made them the basis of political power.<sup>157</sup>

During colonialism the Tutsi elite became actually more powerful by using the colonial backing to extend its control beyond the reach of their pre-colonial powers and to exact for example higher tribute payments and more intense labor service through the traditional patronage systems.<sup>158</sup> In fact, the *ubuhake* and *uburetwa* systems during colonialism have been viewed as a form of inner colonialism between the Hutu and the Tutsi for the service of *ubuhake* and *uburetwa* was focused more heavily on the Hutu during that time. For the ordinary Hutu peasants the indirect rule meant and especially the growing pressure through the patronage system meant that their lives were not

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<sup>153</sup> Adhikari 2008, 181.

<sup>154</sup> Jones 2006, 234; Kamukama 1997, 7; Kressell 1996, 97; Prunier 1995, 26.

<sup>155</sup> Mamdani 2001, 34, 35.

<sup>156</sup> Mamdani 2001, 34, 35.

<sup>157</sup> Mamdani 2001, 100.

<sup>158</sup> Adhikari 2008, 181; Kressell 1996, 96; Prunier 1995, 12, 29.

dominated by the colonial masters but increasingly by the local Tutsi elite.<sup>159</sup> This focus on the Tutsi as the source of the domination was another issue adding to the hatred between the groups and many have even claimed that the patronage system was the main institution, that sowed the first seeds of friction between the groups.<sup>160</sup> There was even talk of it in the interviews even though the majority of the interviewees had not lived to see it.

*From what we learned from the old folks, we might even be compelled to work clearing ground, tending stock, or doing masonry, as in the time of the mwamis. Forced, unpaid labor – that could pinch a farmer way beyond reason.*<sup>161</sup>

Especially in Rwanda the system was faced with a lot of tension and problems for the Tutsi power had always relied on the Hutu acceptance of the justification and right of the Tutsi rule. With the education brought by the Belgians and the wrongs that the Hutus had been subjected to during colonialism, the acceptance for the Tutsi rule had practically ceased and the Hutus were eager to rule themselves.<sup>162</sup>

Another of the key events that created the hostility was that during colonialism the division between the groups finally turned from economic to ethnic and as many also claim into racial. Belgians did a lot of improvements and changes in Rwanda in order to rule, develop and understand Rwandan social, political and cultural life. However, despite their good intentions race theory, that was gaining ground in Europe, started to influence their actions more and more and as we already saw, it initially lead the Belgians to support the Tutsis. Eventually this lead to complete rewriting of the Rwandan history from the view point of racial determinism. The future and the present were justified by projecting it to the past.<sup>163</sup> Under the Belgian rule ethnic difference was codified and systemized. In an attempt to secure its role as the leading entity in Rwanda the Belgian colonial administration used the existing social distinction between the Hutus and the Tutsis by elevating it as the guiding principle of the Rwandan society. Group identification was intensified in order to divide the people and to make them more easily controlled. Constructing divisive group identities was common in divide and rule politics.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Adhikari 2008, 181; Kressell 1996, 96; Prunier 1995, 12, 29.

<sup>160</sup> Kressell 1996, 95; Prunier 1995, 21, 27, 29, 30, 42.

<sup>161</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 205, 206 (Fulgence Bunani, killer).

<sup>162</sup> Kamukama 1997, 5; Kressell 1996, 99.

<sup>163</sup> Kressell 1996, 97-98; Prunier 1995, 35-37.

<sup>164</sup> Young 2002, 549.

Mahmood Mamdani has written of Rwanda and the effects of colonialism and especially indirect rule. Mamdani claims that the indirect rule used in Rwanda, as well as in other areas like South Africa, Zanzibar and Burundi, produced a new racial class between the colonizer described through race and the subjects described in ethnic terms. This middle ground between races and ethnicities Mamdani calls subject races, set apart as apart from the indigenous but at the same time lower in the hierarchy than the colonizers themselves. By the use of these subject races as tools of implementing rule, the colonizers set the subject races apart from the masses and at the end they became integrated to the machinery of colonial rule and were seen as the instruments as well as beneficiaries of colonial rule by the masses. The subject races often received preferential treatment, whereas according to Mamdani, the subject ethnicities were the core victims of colonial rule. Even though the subject races, like the Tutsi of Rwanda, were seen as part of the colonized population by the colonizers, they became anonymous with the colonizing power in the eyes of the ethnicities.<sup>165</sup> The key in this construction is, that as the Tutsi were presented as a subject race it was also presented as nonindigenous part of Rwandan society. There were no ethnic differences in Rwanda, for there were no multitude of ethnicities all with their own native authorities. The only difference was racial.<sup>166</sup> This notion of Tutsi as nonindigenous was the key notion in the Hamitic myth. However, Mamdani highlights that this representation *needs to be understood more as a legal and political construct rather than as historical and cultural reality*<sup>167</sup>.

The colonial state implemented a racial theory in order to justify the hierarchy, in the form of a now discredited Hamitic myth on top of the already existing categories. According to the Hamitic myth the Tutsi were a racially distinct set of immigrant conquerors from Ethiopia, who were thought to be physically, intellectually and culturally superior to the Hutu masses.<sup>168</sup> Along with the Hamitic myth the once flexible system of identification became more rigid and the division between Hutu and Tutsi became more central to identity.<sup>169</sup> As the Belgian colonizers solidified the ethnic groups into racial castes they removed the flexibility and the possibility for social mobility which had prevented the conflict in the past.<sup>170</sup> Whatever Hutu and Tutsi identity may have stood for in the pre-colonial state no longer mattered. The Belgians had made “ethnicity” or in fact even race the defining feature of Rwandan existence as the pre-colonial Hutu and Tutsi identities had been recast and mythologized. Institutionalization of the hierarchies and the division to higher and lower ranks

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<sup>165</sup> Mamdani 2001, 37,

<sup>166</sup> Mamdani 2001, 99.

<sup>167</sup> Mamdani 2001, 38.

<sup>168</sup> Young 2002, 549.

<sup>169</sup> Moshman 2004, 185.

<sup>170</sup> Adhikari 2008, 182

was, of course, not welcomed by all sects of society, but especially the ruling Tutsi class welcomed the newly found “scientific” proof of their superiority and were therefore eager to assist the Belgians in creating a new history for Rwanda that justified the Tutsi rule, dominance and superiority.<sup>171</sup>

This construction of identity created the new ultimate difference between the groups. Additionally, the construction had a great influence during later decades as the hostility, and difference between the Hutus and the Tutsis was further constructed. The use of the Hamitic myth is important because it constructed Tutsis as an alien, conquering race, not even African, as opposed to Hutus who were characterized as indigenous. The Hutu nationalists later took up this idea, of Tutsis as racially distinct foreigners or as invaders.<sup>172</sup> The use of the same ideology for a totally different purpose only highlights the nature of constructing identities. In every construction some old elements are used and combined with new elements to create something new. The use of the core idea of the Hamitic myth also highlights how deeply it had been absorbed into the minds of the Rwandan people.

Another aspect about the Hamitic myth that highlights the role of constructions is, that the Hamitic myth was not only used in Rwanda, but it was actually originally used to explain all signs of civilization in central Africa. It was not only Tutsi, but many other groups, such as the Bahima and Baganda, that were constructed as Hamites. But the key in why the relationship against the Tutsi escalated only in Burundi and Rwanda, and not in other regions where the Hamitic myth was used lies in the way that Tutsi superiority and status as a race was constructed into the institutions. As Mamdani has noted, it was only in Rwanda and Burundi, that the Hamitic hypothesis became the basis of a series of institutional changes, that fixed the Tutsi as a race in their relationship to the colonial state.<sup>173</sup>

Along with a new history the Belgians made many changes that affected the everyday life of Rwandans more closely. For example, they reorganized the bureaucracy, church and education system based on race theory that was founded in the Hamitic myth. It must be noted however that not all Tutsis benefitted from the improvements, but instead a large poor class of Tutsis was also formed in Rwanda. As many of the new Tutsi chiefs tried to maximize their property under the

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<sup>171</sup> Kressell 1996, 97-98; Prunier 1995, 35-37.

<sup>172</sup> Adhikari 2008, 182.

<sup>173</sup> Mamdani 2001, 35.

colonial rule the majority of the public, both Hutu and Tutsi remained poor.<sup>174</sup> During that period, chieftaincy became a Tutsi monopoly. In just a few years, the Belgians replaced practically all Hutu chiefs with Tutsis in the traditional chiefdom system by moving from the three headed chiefdom system to a single chiefdoms in 1929. This system greatly favored the Tutsis, since in the traditional chiefdom system approximately a third of the chiefdoms (Chiefs of Landholdings) had traditionally belonged to Hutus<sup>175</sup>. The takeover of the traditional Hutu rule of lands was another element adding to the growing resentment of the Tutsi among the Hutu and it was well remembered and repaid in the 1959 Hutu rebellion that led to independence.<sup>176</sup>

Education and church had also an especially strong influence in spreading the Belgian ideology of the Hamitic myth and also in institutionalizing the racial policy. The arrival of Christianity to Rwanda was very slow in the beginning. At first Christianity attracted mainly the poor and the alienated, for many of them saw the church as a form of the white man's *ubuhake*. They believed that serving the church was better than surviving on their own. In the 1920's however the situation turned upside down. The Tutsi upper class realized that the Belgians were remaking the Rwandan society and that Christianity was the key to get close to the Belgians. It was then that the Tutsis started to convert to Christianity in masses in order to maintain their status on the eyes of the Belgians.<sup>177</sup>

In the 1930's the church became so powerful that it was also put in charge of education in Rwanda. The involvement of the church in education had both its good sides and its bad sides. The good side was that the church guaranteed a rather good level of education that was also open to the Hutus. But also at the same time the church favored the Tutsis in education because it saw it necessary to instill Christianity especially to the ruling class of Rwanda. These changes in the Rwandan education system had the most far reaching effects, for it was through education, that the racial determinism and hierarchy was subjected to the society.<sup>178</sup> With every schoolchild reared in the doctrine of racial superiority and inferiority, the idea of a collective national identity was steadily laid to waste. Along

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<sup>174</sup> Prunier 1995, 28.

<sup>175</sup> Hintjens 2001, 30; Prunier 1995, 26, 27.

Traditionally Rwanda had three types of chiefs, who all had their own area of responsibility. These chiefs were the Chief of Men, Chief of the Landholdings and Chief of the Pastures. More information on the traditional Rwanda chiefdoms and the social structure in Prunier 1995, 9-23.

<sup>176</sup> Prunier 1995, 28.

<sup>177</sup> Prunier 1995, 31-33.

<sup>178</sup> Prunier 1995, 33.

with it on either side of the Hutu-Tutsi divide, there developed mutually exclusionary discourses based on the competing claims of entitlement and injury.<sup>179</sup>

Despite this new construction most Hutus and Tutsis still maintained fairly friendly relations; intermarriages went ahead, and the fortunes of poorer Tutsis in the hills remained quite indistinguishable from those of their Hutu neighbors. Even though there was a difference in the way Hutus and Tutsis were treated when it came to for example education possibilities, those effects did not lead to better conditions for all Tutsis.<sup>180</sup> However, the systematic different treatment of the Tutsi in all social circles of life lead to the situation, that even the poor Tutsis started to believe, that they were better than their Hutu counterparts. At the same time, the Hutus started to increasingly turn against the Tutsis. The economic status of the Tutsi did not matter since even the poor Tutsi were seen as members of the “more evolved race” and thereby the ones to blame for the worse situation of the Hutus.<sup>181</sup> The Belgians took the last step in enforcing racial categories in 1933 when they conducted a census dividing the population into Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. After the census all Rwandans were forced to carry identity cards. It has been suggested that the identity cards played an important role in identifying the victims in the genocide.<sup>182</sup> At the end of colonialism these racial categories had become fully immersed in the Rwandan society and the main divisive character had become ethnicity. Especially the emergence of the race-concept to social and political vocabulary can be seen as evidence of moving from a pre-colonial Rwandan society to colonial and post-colonial Rwandan society.

To sum things up, as we saw in the previous chapter Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda had primarily a class rather than ethnic meaning in pre-colonial times. However according to many researchers the ethnic identities of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa were not purely colonial constructions either.<sup>183</sup> They do not agree that the ethnic identities where fully a colonial construction but rather that ethnic distinction had already formed in Rwanda before colonialism. Still there is agreement that colonialism did play a role in enforcing and rigidifying them.<sup>184</sup> Colonialism exacerbated the ethnic problems, but it did not invent them.<sup>185</sup> In my opinion, it is impossible to say whether the relationship between the two groups – Hutu and Tutsi – would have escalated as it did without the

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<sup>179</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 57, 58.

<sup>180</sup> Adhikari 2008, 179; Gourevitch 1998, 57, 58.

<sup>181</sup> Prunier 1995, 38-39, 46.

<sup>182</sup> Adhikari 2008, 183.

<sup>183</sup> Taylor 2004, 357.

<sup>184</sup> Hintjens 2008, 15.

<sup>185</sup> Taylor 2004, 358.

effect of colonialism. But at the same time, as we saw, the colonialist rulers simply used already existing elements of society to their advantage and re-enforced them to manipulate the society in a way that is was easier to rule. However, the influence of race and racist ideology, was purely a colonial construction and it had a huge impact on the later events in Rwanda. According to Mamdani the racialization of the identities was central for the genocide, since mere ethnicity did not satisfy the level of difference needed to render the mass killing thinkable.<sup>186</sup> That is why we will look more into race soon after going through the last general explanation – leadership.

### 3.4 HUTU POWER

The last general explanation used to explain the genocide in Rwanda has been leadership - especially the post-independence and pre-genocide leadership. There are two ways to see genocide. From the bottom up, deriving from hatred of the people and as directed from above by ruling elites. We will look into ethnic hatred and other issues of the bottom level later. However, as can be seen from the following quote, the people in Nyamata did not take the first step on their own.

*When you get right down to it, it is a gross exaggeration to say we organized ourselves up on the hills. The plane came down April 6. A very small number of local Hutus went straight for retaliation. But most waited four days in their houses and in the nearest cabarets, listening to the radio, watching Tutsis flee, chatting and joking without planning a thing.*<sup>187</sup>

The view focusing on elites highlights the elite's role in manipulating and magnifying social differences. The elites always have some role, for according to many scholars, all major genocides have exploited social distinctions and myths to intensify and maximize interethnic conflicts to some extent.<sup>188</sup> Views focusing on the role of elites claim that elites foment ethnic violence to build political support. This process has the effect of constructing more antagonistic identities; which in turns favors more violence.<sup>189</sup> It is also possible that leaders take advantage of constitutional and institutional rules and norms that the groups allow them to centralize power if they can claim a

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<sup>186</sup> Mamdani in Young 2002, 549, 550.

<sup>187</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 13 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira).

<sup>188</sup> Baum 2008, 26.

<sup>189</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 853.



security threat. In other word provoking ethnic violence might be used to legitimize a coup d'état as was the case in Rwanda.<sup>190</sup>

Explanations revolving around leadership have especially focused on the failure of the post-independence Rwandan leadership to address the issue of racial separation. Especially the use of racial theory to justify the Tutsi derogation by turning the Hamitic theory on its head and embracing the racial differentiation of the two groups has been seen as one of the main issues leading to genocide. Also especially the Habyarimana administration that controlled Rwanda from 1973 until the genocide has been one of the main sources of blame. President Habyarimana himself did make some considerable efforts into easing the relationship between the two major groups in Rwanda as a result of foreign pressure and especially in Straus' interviews many saw this period as a peaceful time. In fact, it was the *akazu*, a ruling section inside the administration comprising of the president's wife and close relatives, and not the president himself that has been blamed for planning the genocide.<sup>191</sup> We will look shortly to the periods around independence and before the genocide next.

Tutsis were the dominant ruling class in Rwanda traditionally, but right of the Hutus to rule was considered from time to time by the missionaries and there were some signs of preferential treatment also towards the Hutus in the church throughout colonialism. As the education level of the Hutus was raising and spreading ideas of justice and equality to Rwanda, their desire to form a Hutu elite to compete with the Tutsis also emerged.<sup>192</sup>

Around independence, there were many different claims for power, ranging from the Hutu extremist claims to those by the Tutsi extremists. Tutsi extremists used the Hamitic myth in trying to proof their claim for control. They saw the Tutsi rule as a natural and legitimate result of their superior status. Interestingly also the Hutu extremists used the Hamitic myth in their attempts to justify their right for the political power and control. As expected the Hutu extremist did not think that Tutsis were racially superior but instead they hang on to the idea that Tutsis were foreign invaders, a race of oppressors from another region. This in the minds of Hutu extremist justified their right, the right of the native Bantus, to rule Rwanda.<sup>193</sup> It was around this time that the class and race identities were fused into a single Rwandan citizenship which was strongly based in exclusionary ideas. In

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<sup>190</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 855.

<sup>191</sup> Kamukama 1997, 7; Kressell 1996, 106.

<sup>192</sup> Kressel 1996, 99; Prunier 1995, 41-46.

<sup>193</sup> Moshman 2004, 187.

addition, the political ideology attached to these identities started to increasingly take on totalitarian forms, and control the lives of Rwandans.<sup>194</sup> Additionally, in the 1950's as the Tutsi elite was starting to become more anti-colonial, the Hutu desire for rule started to also get the backing of the Belgians. The Hamitic myth proved important, as, unlike before, the Bantu origins of the Hutus were seen as proof majority status and African roots were seen as proof of their right to rule Rwanda instead of the "immigrant" Tutsi.<sup>195</sup>

However, it was not until the 1959 Hutu revolution that the Hutus were able to gain power. As a result of the hostilities, the Belgians moved from ideas to action and switched their alliance from the Tutsis to the Hutus to stop the revolts. The chiefdoms that had been given to the Tutsis in the 1920s were now switched again and given to the Hutus. As the Hutus gained the power, the blame for the colonial period and the discrimination that the Hutus had faced, was but solely on the Tutsis. The Belgians on the other hand managed to escape their responsibility for the policies totally.<sup>196</sup> However, Tutsis were able to keep their level of welfare mainly through the advantage given by their previous preferential access to education and other benefits.<sup>197</sup> Even as the colonial notion of Tutsi superiority was rejected the notion of differentiation did not disappear. Following independent governments maintained and upheld the idea of ethnic differentiation between Hutus and Tutsis and continued the system of ethnic identity cards.<sup>198</sup>

After independence, the Tutsis were politically disenfranchised as an alien conquering race and at the same time, the Hutus started to organize persecutions and massacres against the Tutsis forcing waves of Tutsi refugees to escape to neighboring countries. This was the first time in the history of the whole Great Lakes region when there was any systemized political violence between the Hutus and the Tutsis and the first instance of the killing of Tutsis in Rwanda. Prior to this, even though the use of violence had been wide spread in colonial Rwanda, it had never taken the form of organized killings of one part of Rwandan's society against the other.<sup>199</sup> The wave of hostilities that was seen at the brink of independence against the Tutsi amounted to 130 000 refugees by 1963.<sup>200</sup> Since independence, the refugee movements between Rwanda and Burundi have had a strong impact on the polarizations of the Hutu and Tutsi identities. The mirroring events in Burundi, especially the

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<sup>194</sup> Hintjens 2001, 32.

<sup>195</sup> Hintjens 2001, 31.

<sup>196</sup> Prunier 1995, 48-54.

<sup>197</sup> Moshman 2004, 188.

<sup>198</sup> Moshman 2004, 188.

<sup>199</sup> Hintjens 2001, 32.

<sup>200</sup> Prunier 1995, 48-54.

Hutu massacres of 1972 and 1993, have had strong influence in Rwandan events, since they indirectly lead to hardening of Hutu-Tutsi relations and raised fears of possible Tutsi revolts in Rwanda and thereby resulted in the 1973 coup and the 1994 genocide.<sup>201</sup>

Throughout the 1960s and the early 1970s there were several outbursts of violence mainly against the Tutsis, but relative peace was restored to Rwanda in 1973 when the minister of defense General Juvenal Habyarimana staged a coup d'état. The Habyarimana government was successful in easing the tensions inside Rwanda, by allowing Tutsis participation in government and administration by a quota system. Their access to political power was limited due to the notion of majority rule, which in Rwanda was understood as the rule of the majority Hutu. The *akazu* saw the power sharing agreements that president Habyarimana were forced to sign as a betrayal of the *akazu*, and started increasingly to use Rwandan media to pursue their own goals. The media was especially used for an intimidating campaign aimed to convince the public that the country's problems were due to the RPF and their allies the Tutsi.<sup>202</sup> The fear of the RPF started soon to provoke hostilities in the communities, but nobody, especially not the Tutsis knew what was coming.

*Those folks were hardworking, experienced farmers who could be very nice and helpful. Still, they gradually absorbed the anti-Tutsi frustration and jealousy their parents brought with them from Gitarama. During the killings of 1992, they suddenly fired themselves up against the Tutsis and turned very threatening. Those brawls ended without consequences in the neighborhood, thanks to the wisdom of the municipal judge. Afterwards we sensed that cruelty had hooked them and could make them go wrong at any time. They seemed more and more hostile, on edge, especially whenever we had news about the war of the Tutsi inkotanyi. Yet never did we think they might one day kill at such a great pace.*<sup>203</sup>

The Tutsis were also discriminated in the field of education and economic possibilities and other aspects of life. President Habyarimana attempted to change the dominant Hutu nationalistic view of the Tutsi as a separate conquering alien race, to a one that presented Tutsis as indigenous ethnic group of Rwanda. Many of his efforts were however guided by the pressure of the neighboring countries and the international community as well as by the tension created by the RPF attacks organized by descendants of the Tutsi refugees in Uganda that started in 1990. The Habyarimana government was not successful in addressing the threat posed by the Tutsi exile community and the

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<sup>201</sup> Adhikari 2008, 184; Hintjens 2001, 32, 33; Moshman 2004, 188.

<sup>202</sup> Hintjens 2001, 36.

<sup>203</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 27, 28 (Innocent Rwililiza, a survivor speaking of the gang of killers that Hatzfeld interviewed.)

RFP and Habyarimana's failure in regards of the exile Tutsi community was one of the main failures that lead to the civil war and eventually to the genocide. This failure gave the *akazu* that lead the Hutu extremist movement and the Hutu Power movement legitimacy to invoke fears against the Tutsis.<sup>204</sup> Media was used to invoke fears of a possible future Tutsi rule that would inevitably result from the compromises. Along with the fear, also anti-Tutsi sentiment was fired up in the months preceding the genocide.

Recasting the difference between the groups was a long process. In 1990s the process gained some new momentum along with the Hutu Power movement. The identity formation in the Hutu Power frame of mind was to find one's essential Hutuness. People were supposed to consider themselves primarily Hutu, not Rwandan.<sup>205</sup> In the 1990s prior to the genocide the Hutu extremists had used the racist ideology provided by the Hamitic myth, in an attempt to justify the violence against the Tutsi to the extent that the Hutu-Tutsi divide was the only reliable and legitimate source of identity construction. The Tutsis were viewed as a race of oppressors, who had entered as alien conquerors and who therefore did not have the right to be fully Rwandan. However, there is uncertainty as to how deeply the ideas of Hamitic myth and the notions of Tutsi as a racial caste had penetrated the rural Hutu mass.<sup>206</sup> Straus says there is evidence that the propaganda had not completely reached the rural communities. For example, only four percent of the interviewees in Straus' study understood the anti-Tutsi sentiment embedded in Hutu Power and supported it. However, there is a correlation between the ones who were aware of the propaganda and the most violent perpetrators. But just because the Hutu Power propaganda had not penetrated all levels of society, it does not mean that the knowledge of the racial categories had not penetrated the society. There is evidence that everyone was aware of racial categories. But again, awareness does not however mean that they viewed them negatively.<sup>207</sup> We will look into this notion of race more in the next chapter. For now, it is enough to say that, it is clear that prior to the genocide a Hutu doctor for example was first and foremost a Hutu, who happened to be a doctor, not the other way around. Moshman argues that if the professional identities of Rwandans would have been stronger before the genocide than their ethnic identity there would have been greater potential for national, linguistic or religious solidarity across the Hutu-Tutsi divide.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Adhikari 2008, 184; Moshman 2004, 188.

<sup>205</sup> Moshman 2004, 197.

<sup>206</sup> Young 2002, 550.

<sup>207</sup> Straus 2006, 131-134.

<sup>208</sup> Moshman 2004, 201.

In the second part of this thesis, these macro level reasons guiding the genocide are however only seen as constructions that guide the individual level of the conflict. The old Tutsi tradition of domination of rule has been used as one of the main explanations for the genocide but it is questionable how a grudge over a rule that had ended over thirty years ago could have resulted in such drastic actions in 1994. This grudge most likely was one of the main causes in the hostilities resulting in independence but in order for it to affect the conflict 1994 it must be reinforced by some means. We saw how the post-independence leadership and especially the Hutu extremist movements in Rwanda had manipulated the social sphere of Rwandan society through identities. These constructions and manipulations of identities were crucial in forming the individual level of the conflict and in fermenting and sustaining the hostility amongst the people.<sup>209</sup>

### 3.5 RACE VS. ETHNICITY

Race may not be a politically or scientifically valid dividing point between people from a modern point of view, but none-the-less it has some historical value all over the post-colonial world and especially in the case of Rwanda and Africa. Not because it serves as a useful category, but because it has had an effect on the development of identities in the region.<sup>210</sup> When discussing race from a European point of view the dividing point has usually been between Caucasians and others. However, in an African context, as I already mentioned, it has been said that race is the dividing point between the natives who are divided in tribes and the non-natives who historically has been described as races. In colonial law in Africa races and tribes had a different legal status. People defined belonging to races, such as Caucasians, Asian and Arabs, mustered more political power and rights in African societies. The rules guiding the races were simplified into one, but the rules guiding the tribes were multiplied and the differences between tribes or ethnicities were reinforced and exaggerated. This had an impact on the forming of ethnic identities in Africa.<sup>211</sup> In the case of Rwanda the identities were first reinforced and then further constructed as racial, which made the relationship between the Hutus and the Tutsis as one of the native and the settler and which also made the Tutsis higher on the racial hierarchy. We already saw in the previous chapters how with the Hamitic myth the Tutsi were repainted as the invading settler race or as the subject race, whereas the Hutu were seen as the native ethnic people of Rwanda.

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<sup>209</sup> Kressell 1996, 106-107.

<sup>210</sup> Hintjens 2001, 25; Winant 2000, 170.

<sup>211</sup> Mamdani 2002, 138.

Actually Mahmood Mamdani has claimed that the real distinction between race and ethnicity should not be viewed as one between biology and culture as it is commonly seen, but rather they both need to be seen as a polarization of identities or as a result of a process of construction. Race as the political identity of those who are seen as not indigenous, in other words the settlers, and ethnicity or tribe as a political identity of those who are seen as indigenous, in other words the natives.<sup>212</sup>

There is a difference between milder forms of ethnic violence and genocide. Ethnic violence deals with questions of borders, transgression of borders and land rights or access to economic or political rights. They deal with the problems guiding neighbor relations. Genocide and other forms of extreme ethnic violence on the other hand require a stronger dividing point between the groups than ethnicity, because in extreme ethnic violence it is a question of existence. For example, one of the reasons why the ethnic violence exploded into a genocide in Rwanda was because in a sense it was not ethnic, but racial. Political identities in Rwanda were not ethnicized, but racialized during the colonial period. The two largest groups in Rwanda, the Hutus and Tutsis, were not seen as separate tribes with their own native authorities, or ethnicities in post-colonial time, as was the case in many other parts of the colonized Africa, but they were seen as separate races. This means, that the Tutsi were living intermingled among the Hutu, without having their own native authority or territory. Therefore according to race theories the Tutsi were not seen as truly Rwandan and the conflict could not be one of borders of group territories for the Tutsis did not have a territory in Rwanda. Therefore the conflict could only be one of exterminating the Tutsi from Rwanda. In fact Mahmood Mamdani claims that *it is only with a race that the very presence of a group can be considered illegitimate and its claim for political power an outright usurpation. This is why when political violence takes the form of genocide; it is more likely between races, not between ethnic groups.*<sup>213</sup>

In order for ethnic violence to exist there needs to be popular awareness of ethnic and racial categories.<sup>214</sup> People need to be aware why they are divided in such a way in order to act accordingly. In Scott Straus' interviews people had many ways of distinguishing between Hutus and Tutsis. For example people distinguished by physical appearance, height and skin color or occupation.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Mamdani 2002, 149.

<sup>213</sup> Mamdani 2002, 140-144.

<sup>214</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 850.

<sup>215</sup> Straus 2006, 130.

Especially the great height of the Rwandan monarchy that distinguished them from the ordinary Tutsis, Hutus and Twas was used as proof of their racial superiority over the rest of the Rwandans and this belief has been so thoroughly immersed in the Rwandan frame of mind that height is one of the most common features said to distinguish the groups.<sup>216</sup> As can be seen in the next quote from Hatzfeld the focus on height had some very radical implications.

*Often in the talk of evenings and even in the old days, people would say, “Look at those Tutsis, how they seem so tall. That’s why they show themselves so proud and consider us inferior people. That’s why their daughters are so prized.” So when killings came, if a killer with a jaundiced eye caught a tall girl in the reeds, he might well strike her in the legs, at the ankles for example, and the arms likewise, and leave her cut shorter without the fatal blow.<sup>217</sup>*

However, the height of the Rwandan monarchy was also a rather complicated issue, since many of them were also much taller than the Europeans. The racial hierarchy based on height as the determining factor was therefore rather controversial to many European colonial lords since it complicated the whole question of who was inferior and who superior.<sup>218</sup>

Height and other physical features had their relevance but when asked to explain the difference two thirds of Straus’ respondents simply said that that Hutus and Tutsis belonged to different amoko.<sup>219</sup> Race does not have a direct translation in Kinyarwanda. Closest is ubwoko (plural amoko), which refers to ethnic groups, clans, but also even to relative quality of a product and even different car manufactories. In short it means category.<sup>220</sup> Even though called by the same name Rwandan ethnic or racial identities and tribal identities are very different and the later focus on constructed ethnic or racial identities is in contrast with pre-colonial view of tribes in Rwanda. Pre-colonial Rwanda recognized around twenty clans. Rwandan clans were never clearly identified or defined. They were only vaguely allied groups, with practically no notion of common ancestry and what is important; clans could consist of people from all of the three groups.<sup>221</sup>

Majority of the people who were killed in 1994 were the poor rural Tutsi who were basically no different from their Hutu neighbors. In fact, ever since 1959 there is evidence to show that the

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<sup>216</sup> Hintjens 2001, 29.

<sup>217</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 126 (Pancrace Hakizamungili, killer).

<sup>218</sup> Hintjens 2001, 29.

<sup>219</sup> Straus 2006, 130.

<sup>220</sup> Straus 2006, 129; Taylor 2004, 360.

<sup>221</sup> Taylor 2004, 360.

difference in the economic wellbeing between the average Hutu and Tutsi was practically non-existent. Unfortunately, this did not however affect the racial stereotypes that people had. Instead the racial stereotypes of inferiority and superiority were adopted by the Rwandans themselves as part of their inner identities.<sup>222</sup> Below is a quote from a Tutsi survivor who is talking of why she thinks the Hutus hated the Tutsis. The quote clearly shows how the Tutsis had learned to think of themselves as physically superior.

*Hutus still suffer from a bad idea of Tutsis. The truth is, our physiognomy is the root of the problem: our longer muscles, our more delicate features, our pride carriage. That is all I can think of – the imposing appearance that is our birthright.*<sup>223</sup>

In his research, Straus has found proof that the different categories that the Rwandan people divided themselves were understood in racial criteria. According to Straus' findings, awareness of ethnic categories was widespread but he has found evidence suggesting that the awareness could be even more prominent.<sup>224</sup> However, even though difference existed and even though it was understood as racial, it did not necessarily mean that there were hatred between the groups.<sup>225</sup> In fact, 94 percent of Straus' respondents claim that there were no hatred of Tutsi among the Hutu.<sup>226</sup> However, here we need to keep in mind that Straus did his interviews nearly ten years after the genocide and people's claims may be affected by the post-genocide project of reconciliation. In fact, Hintjens notes that in times of conflict entire groups can act like they have no common humanity with other groups of people. The human capacity to extend and limit compassion gives racial ideology its fatal power, giving identity the power to sever social ties.<sup>227</sup> Therefore conflict situation might have sparked inter-ethnic hatred.

When Rwanda and its ethnic groups are discussed the focus is always almost solely put on the two largest groups - Hutu and Tutsi. However, the third ethnic group the Twa also participated in the genocide - some as killers and many as victims.<sup>228</sup> But more importantly all of them served as an example. The Twa were the first of Rwanda's groups to suffer social exclusion and discrimination. Traditionally in Rwanda occupations with the least amount of contact with the land were esteemed because the earth was perceived as impure. The Twa, who lived in the forest and worked as potters

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<sup>222</sup> Hintjens 2001, 30.

<sup>223</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 199 (Francine, survivor).

<sup>224</sup> Straus 2006, 130.

<sup>225</sup> Straus 2006, 131.

<sup>226</sup> Straus 2006, 132.

<sup>227</sup> Hintjens 2001, 27.

<sup>228</sup> Taylor 2004, 353.



and basically got their livelihood directly from the earth, were at the bottom of the hierarchy. Hutus who got their livelihood through farming were in the middle. The Tutsi who got their livelihood from the cattle and therefore had the least contact with the earth were at the top. These distinctions in themselves do not lie at the origin of the hierarchy, but once in place they became as much cause as effect.<sup>229</sup>

*No one was going to the fields anymore. Why dig in the dirt when we were harvesting without working, eating our fill without growing a thing?*<sup>230</sup>

But it was not only a question of disliking the mud. It was also a question of valuing milk and meat.

*During the killings, passing neighbors dropped off more food than you could fit in your pot – it overflowed at no cost to you. Meat became as common as cassava. Hutus had always felt cheated of cattle because they didn't know how to raise them. They said cows didn't taste good, but it was from scarcity. So, during the massacres they ate beef morning and evening, to their heart's content.*<sup>231</sup>

The Twa's example served as a model which influenced the latter polar relationships of Hutu and Tutsi.<sup>232</sup> More importantly the Twa's pariah status continues to contribute to the reproduction of the ethnic hierarchy.<sup>233</sup> The forming of the hierarchy between the groups was crucial because hierarchies are not part of the discourse of ethnicity. Ethnic groups are viewed as equal. Even in situations of conflict ethnic groups do not form hierarchies. Race on the other hand forms a different identity that is based on a different discourse. Race contains within it an ideal of hierarchy, which is the core notion in racism.<sup>234</sup>

It has been said that the genocide in Rwanda was the most dramatic example of race science in action since the holocaust.<sup>235</sup> Scott Straus (2010) argues that in many conflicts as for example Cambodia and Rwanda similar core ideas based on anthropological pseudo-scientific evidence of past glory were used as a basis for notions of organic purity. According to Straus, these ideals of organic purity work to explain mass violence. In Rwanda, the basis of these notions in the Hutu

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<sup>229</sup> Taylor 2004, 367.

<sup>230</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 54 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).

<sup>231</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 57 (Fulgence Bunani, killer).

<sup>232</sup> Taylor 2004, 354.

<sup>233</sup> Taylor 2004, 355.

<sup>234</sup> Young 2002, 550.

<sup>235</sup> Hintjens 2001, 25; Winant 2000, 170.

Power frame of mind was founded on the presumed period prior to Tutsi arrival when the Hutu owned all of the land.<sup>236</sup>

The influence of anthropology was crucial in the forming of the racial categories in Rwanda. Hutu and Tutsi were seen as natural, homogenous, biologically based and unchangeable from generation to another. The groups were also believed to share distinct territorial origins. Importantly the group members were thought to have fixed, inherited and identifiable physical and social characteristics that remained as unchanged from one generation to another. That made group members unidentifiable from the whole. These groups were also believed to have unequal capacities.<sup>237</sup> In short the Tutsi were seen as racially one and so their goals and interests were one. Therefore, the Tutsi were viewed to be collectively responsible for the actions of the RPF. Also since the Tutsi were seen as having the same characteristics from generation to another they were still believed to harbor desire for Tutsi domination. The only way to remove this threat was extermination.<sup>238</sup> Organic purity is concerned with uncontaminated wholeness, clean and natural unity and a mythic state of original existence. Killing is seen as a way to eliminate the perceived domestic threats to organic purity and as a way to purify the society.<sup>239</sup> So in short organic purity is concerned with same ideals that motivate ethnic cleansing and genocide.

Like with the construction of identity also the notion of organic purity in Rwanda was constructed in several stages. Straus' notions of organic purity in Rwanda are founded in three periods of constructions, which are largely the same periods of construction also discussed earlier along with the construction of Rwanda identities. It is important to notice the emphasis the Straus attaches to these periods and to notions of race. In fact, according to Straus the first source of the theories of organic purity emerged along with the influence 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century theories of race.<sup>240</sup> These theories influenced the colonial constructions of the groups and were later transformed to new forms. Second period Straus attaches to the period around independence, when the Hutu majority first was able to stake their claim to control of the Rwandan state and territory. The final stage of the creation of the notion of organic purity was conducted in early 1990s when the notion of the pure Hutu only state was introduced by the Hutu Power movement.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Straus 2010, 48.

<sup>237</sup> Straus 2010, 58.

<sup>238</sup> Straus 2010, 60.

<sup>239</sup> Straus 2010, 48, 49.

<sup>240</sup> Straus 2010, 56.

<sup>241</sup> Straus 2010, 56.

### 3.6 IDENTITY IN POST-GENOCIDE RWANDA AND THE BANNING OF RACE AND ETHNICITY

We have discussed the changes in the Rwandan identities that happened before the genocide and it is important even for Rwandans to acknowledge those changes. Christopher Taylor has said that in order to bring about reconciliation in Rwanda, they must themselves start with a mature critique of the effects of colonialism and then move on to acknowledge, question and finally criticize the effects that colonialism has had on their own minds.<sup>242</sup> Knowing these effects is important because, they create the grounds of Rwandan identification, but it is not enough to only know these changes, because there has been a significant change also after the genocide.

In the name of the national reconciliation ethnic identification has been banned, but Rwandans still have only few possibilities to identify themselves freely. Even after the genocide the Rwandan's have been labeled from above and the state continues to exercise tight control over identification.<sup>243</sup> Rwandans have been relabeled once again from the top down and certain forms of identification have been forbidden leaving only very limited choices for identification. The post-genocide government and political leadership was strongly against all forms of tribalism and ethnic and racial differentiation and it has presented itself as fighting an invisible enemy by policing people's attitudes towards race and ethnicity.<sup>244</sup> In fact, after the genocide new legislation has been passed where ethnicity has been declared as an illegal form of identification.<sup>245</sup> Banning ethnicity will not make it disappear however. In fact, making Rwandans disregard their ethnic identities after decades of having no reliable forms of identification but their ethnicity seems like a monumental task. Banning ethnic political parties has actually been used in 22 African countries as an attempt to reduce ethnic politics and conflicts, but its effects have varied.<sup>246</sup> Talking of the banning of ethnicity Susanne Buckley-Zistel has said that '*Arguably ethnic identity is more important today than it was during the preparations for the genocide.*'<sup>247</sup>

In post-genocide Rwanda the official categories of social and political identification that are used in legal documents are survivor, old caseload returnee, new caseload returnee and suspected génocidaires. There is overlap between these categories and more importantly these categories are

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<sup>242</sup> Taylor in Hintjens 2008, 8, 9.

<sup>243</sup> Hintjens 2008, 5.

<sup>244</sup> Hintjens 2008, 9, 11.

<sup>245</sup> Hintjens 2008, 10.

<sup>246</sup> Ishiyama 2009, 57.

<sup>247</sup> Buckley-Zistel in Hintjens 2008, 8.

problematic since many do not fit any of the new categories and more importantly since they make the Twa into an invisible minority.<sup>248</sup> Additionally they generalize the roles of the survivors and suspected génocidaires to cover the whole ethnic groups. Tutsis have been painted as the sole survivors of the genocide whereas the Hutus have been cast as those to blame in varying degree. According to Helen Hintjens the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda has unwillingly strengthened this view as it has failed to prosecute the war crimes committed by the RPF. This has enforced the view that the Tutsis were the only victims of crimes committed in Rwanda.<sup>249</sup> Even if we lay aside the crimes committed by the RPF as they fought to stop the genocide and their crimes after the genocide there is still a vast group of Hutus that were victimized by the Hutu Power movement and who are now facing problems of identifying with the political identities. Many Hutus were killed in the genocide and additionally there is a large group of people of mixed parentage who have been denied access to either of the groups and in fact discriminated by both. There are many who have for example lost most of their families and who spent the genocide hiding but who still are painted as potential genocide killers or as state enemies due to affiliation with known killers. As an example of one such individual I will shortly describe the story of Julius Gasana.

Julius is a son from a mixed parentage of a Hutu father and a Tutsi mother. Children in Rwanda take the ethnicity of their fathers, therefore officially Julius was a Hutu, but at the same time he shared some of the stereotypical features of Tutsis and he was politically loyal to the RPF government that took power after the genocide. Due to his mixed parentage, Julius' family was targeted during the genocide. His mother was killed at the first days of the genocide and Julius' father was killed for trying to protect his wife. Julius himself, survived barely by hiding and by simply waiting for the RPF to reach their village and end the violence. Julius should be considered as a genocide survivor by any means, since he lost his parents in the genocide and was himself threatened. But since he was a Hutu, and because his uncle was a known killer in the genocide, Julius' status as a survivor has been tainted and instead he has been painted as a killer by association. As the oldest male survivor of his uncle, who is presumed dead, Julius is regarded as being responsible for his actions. In fact, Julius became a target of attacks by other genocide survivors who blamed Julius of the actions of his uncle and for associating with a known genocide suspect - his own uncle. The attacks escalated to such heights that Julius eventually applied for an asylum in the United Kingdom, but even his asylum was first denied despite substantial evidence of

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<sup>248</sup> Hintjens 2008, 14.

<sup>249</sup> Hintjens 2008, 16, 24.

the attacks, because it was not believed that other survivors would attack Julius merely because he was related to a suspected genocide killer. In later appeals, he received his asylum.<sup>250</sup>

This story goes to show how deeply the prejudices of innocence and guilt are stuck in present day Rwanda.<sup>251</sup> It also shows how deep the ethnic categories still are even though their use has officially been denied. In post-genocide Rwanda the Tutsis have gained the status of the innocent or of the victim, even those who were not inside Rwanda at the time of the genocide. Old case load returnees or the Tutsi refugees who had left Rwanda prior to genocide are considered as victims such as are the ones who were in Rwanda at the time of the genocide. At the same time Hutus, even those who were targeted themselves or who lost their family have been denied the right to mourn and are in fact most commonly regarded as being responsible for the killings.<sup>252</sup>

Interestingly also these new categories still uphold the old racial categories. New caseload returnees and suspected génocidaires consist solely of Hutus and the old caseload returnees cover almost solely former exiled Tutsis, whereas survivor is a category consisting of Rwandan born Tutsis, even though it must be noted that also some Hutus and Twa would deserve to be casted in the survivor category.<sup>253</sup> Also other forms of upholding the ethnic divide have survived. For example, the use of Hamite and Bantu is growing trend in the whole Great Lakes region.<sup>254</sup> A new division has also been introduced into the Rwandan society between the Francophone and the Anglophone Rwandans, where the Anglophone returning Tutsi refugees from Uganda have managed to gain prominence under the new government.<sup>255</sup> However, it must be highlighted that after the genocide the Rwandan nation has been somewhat divided between the Anglophone and Francophone sections, but Kinyarwanda still works as a common language uniting all groups.

In pre-genocide Rwanda ethnic identities were strongly favored instead of national identities and choosing one's identity was not a voluntary choice. Cultural context set real constraints to the choice, but there were also other forms of identification besides ethnicity. In a similar manner, there are choices available today, but the reality sets many fences on the way of identifying freely. However, it is important to know that there was such a thing as a Rwandan identity at some point in

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<sup>250</sup> Hintjens 2008, 28, 29.

<sup>251</sup> Hintjens 2008, 30.

<sup>252</sup> Hintjens 2008, 31, 32.

<sup>253</sup> Hintjens 2008, 30.

<sup>254</sup> Hintjens 2008, 13, 14.

<sup>255</sup> Hintjens 2008, 13.

Rwandan history, because that means there can be one also in the future. The kingdoms that existed in the Great Lakes region before colonialism took part in many clashes against the neighboring kingdoms. But what is important, is that they did not take part and fight as Hutus and Tutsis, they fought united as Rwandans.<sup>256</sup> The cross-cutting allegiances - such like the patronage system, clan system, common military service, communal forced labor system and common religious and cultural practices - served to prevent the crystallization of separate ethnic identities in pre-colonial Rwanda, but instead united the Rwandans as one entity.<sup>257</sup> Even later one could identify for example based on descent or lineage, by profession or economic specialization, regionally or by one's clan. What is important is that clans could consist of people from all of the ethnic groups.<sup>258</sup> In Fujii's interviews, she came to know that even during and after the genocide awareness of people's clans was just as widespread as awareness of their *ubwoko*.<sup>259</sup> These forms of subgroup identity can provide an important form of strengthening unity in Rwanda, for some studies suggest that subgroup identification may be more pervasive than the development of loyalties to the whole group.<sup>260</sup> In addition to subgroup identification also national identification could use to unify people.

*Rwandan television showed footage of a man who confessed to having been among a party of génocidaires who had killed seventeen schoolgirls and a sixty-two-year-old Belgian nun at a boarding school in Gisenyi two nights earlier. It was the second such attack on a school in a month; the first time, sixteen students were killed and twenty injured in Kibuye. The prisoner on television explained that the massacre was part of a Hutu Power "liberation" campaign. His band of a hundred fifty militants was composed largely of ex-FAR and interahamwe. During their attack on the school in Gisenyi, as in the earlier attack on the school in Kibuye, the students, teenage girls who had been roused from their sleep, were ordered to separate themselves . Hutus from Tutsis. But the students had refused. At both schools, the girls said they were simply Rwandan, so they were beaten and shot indiscriminately.*<sup>261</sup>

People can choose to be Rwandan only if that category exists. In order for it to exist a number of people need to identify themselves as Rwandans. Choosing to be Rwandan is meaningless unless others do the same.<sup>262</sup> And the role of people as the ones choosing is also crucial. Banning ethnic categories did not stop people discussing things in ethnic terms. Therefore a question raised by

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<sup>256</sup> Hintjens 2001, 28.

<sup>257</sup> Hintjens 2001, 28.

<sup>258</sup> Fujii 2009, 105; Hintjens 2001, 43.

<sup>259</sup> Fujii 2009, 105-111.

<sup>260</sup> Howard 2000, 375.

<sup>261</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 352-3.

<sup>262</sup> Moshman 2004, 199.

Helen Hintjens is still ever relevant; can unity ever be forced from above to a country with a history like that of Rwanda? <sup>263</sup>

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<sup>263</sup> Hintjens 2008, 6.

## 4. PSYCHOLOGY OF GENOCIDE

When looking at genocides from an individual point of view the logistics and macro level reasons and ramifications lose their meaning and one is ultimately faced with the question; who are the people who take part in the violence and especially why do some people perpetrate while others stand by? The psychological elements attached to identity and the groupings based on them have actually been a rising trend in genocide studies recently. In a way, scholars like Steven K. Baum and James Waller have put the focus not on belonging to groups and the behavior of groups as traditionally, but on groupings based on behavior. Steven K. Baum (2008) in *Psychology of Genocide* has come across three different categories of behavioral patterns in genocides. These three groups are the perpetrators, the bystanders and the rescuers. These categories refer to the roles and forms of activity that people take on in conflict situations. The basic distribution of these types is the same everywhere and the differences in the distribution are based on the environment and the nature of the surrounding culture. In short, hostile environments increase the number of bystanders perpetrating and decreases the activity of the rescuers. The same applies vice versa.<sup>264</sup>

### 4.1 PERPETRATORS, KILLERS AND PARTICIPANTS

Perpetrators by definition, are people who take part in the conflict either directly by killing or indirectly by for example other forms of violence, by giving away locations of hiding victims, by looting or by working at roadblocks or other venues related to the violence. In an average population the number of perpetrators ranges from 2 to 15 percent.<sup>265</sup> According to Steven K. Baum these perpetrators are not all the same. There are vast differences in their personalities as they range from antisocial personalities to narcissists and other forms of psychopathic personalities, and from lawless antisocial tendencies to simple obedient authoritarians. Despite their differences perpetrators have one thing in common though – they kill and steal without remorse.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Baum 2008, 105, 106.

<sup>265</sup> Baum 2008, 119.

<sup>266</sup> Baum 2008, 119, 124.



In addition to lack of remorse key components of perpetrators are impulsivity, numbed feelings, all-or-none thinking, intolerance of ambiguity and multiple deficits in ego and identity development.<sup>267</sup> Additionally they show no signs of concern for the opinion of their neighbors. According to Baum perpetrators think not of what their neighbors think of their actions, but rather would the authorities approve their actions.<sup>268</sup>

Even though there was a high number of people participating in the violence in Rwanda, this does not however mean that the percentage of perpetrators would be any higher than in any other state. The number of perpetrators or sadists or psychopaths is roughly the same in all societies. Therefore the key in mass violence like the genocide in Rwanda is the role of bystanders. James Waller claims that in order to have a genocide you need thousands of other willing participants on top of the perpetrators.<sup>269</sup>

Here, I think it is appropriate to take a look at the amount of killers in Rwanda again. Many have stated that people took part in turns and people who refused to act on some occasions acted in compliance on other instances, which makes the estimates hard. Perhaps for this reason the estimates range from three million to tens of thousands. It has been suggested that it was actually less than 9 percent of Hutus that were responsible for a large portion of the killings. This means a majority of the killers acted in minor roles. This view is in line to some extent with the prevalence of Baum's psychological categories. When compared with the amount of people arrested, the notion that a majority acted in minor roles and were, in fact, not prosecuted becomes even stronger. At the end of 1998, an average of 125 000 persons remained officially detained.<sup>270</sup> The number of killers may be much higher for according to the interviewees even in Nyamata a thousand people gathered every morning to go off to killing.

*We'd gather in a crowd of about a thousand on the soccer field, head into the bush with one or two hundred hunters, all led by two or three gentlemen with guns, soldiers or intimidators.*<sup>271</sup>

However if we combine the amount of killers with all of those who participated in some ways the numbers become much higher. For example, according to Pesonen and Lintunen people on trial

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<sup>267</sup> Baum 2008, 119, 124.

<sup>268</sup> Baum 2008, 119.

<sup>269</sup> Waller2007, 51, 52.

<sup>270</sup> Reyntjens 1999, 14.

<sup>271</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 11 (IgnaceRukiramacumu, killer)

under the traditional gacaca trials on charges of looting or minor participation amounted to 761 000 in 2006.<sup>272</sup> What is special about the amount of killers and participants is that it took away the possibility of not participating because the net of killers was able to monitor the rest of the public closely.

*In the marshes, we felt bumped around, we found ourselves too crowded, too carefully penned in. The hubbub in other sectors sometimes bothered us. When the interahamwe noticed idlers, that could be serious. They would shout, "We came a long way to give you a hand, and you're slopping around behind the papyrus!" They might yell insults and threats at us in their anger.*<sup>273</sup>

Scott Straus has also attempted to make a more detailed estimate of the number of killers in Rwanda by doing a study based on regional estimates.<sup>274</sup> In his study he concluded that the estimate of the active participants is between 175 000 to 210 000. This would equal 7 to 8 percent of adult Hutu population and around 14 to 17 percent of the adult Hutu male population, which falls close to Baum's findings.<sup>275</sup>

In Rwanda majority of the killers were men. Only 3 percent of prisoners in Rwanda after the genocide were reported as female. There have often been claims that the majority of the killers in Rwanda were frustrated unemployed youth who had lost their trust in the future. In the cities, this is somewhat accurate, because *interahamwe* often recruited members from the poor, the homeless or the unemployed. Additionally, some petty criminals were enlisted by offering them the chance to steal, kill and rape without consequences and eat and drink as much as they wished as a reward of perpetrating. Many took advantage of this. Actually, Philip Gourevitch describes how actually all the inmates were let out of the prisons during the genocide.<sup>276</sup> But in the countryside, where the majority of the killers were, they were not youth, but men with families and children. They were aged between 20 and 49 years, but most commonly in their thirties. Almost 80 percent of them were farmers, although many of them had additional incomes as well. As a group they were slightly more educated than average Rwandans, but this is to large part explained by the fact that many local leaders of the genocide, who were either local elite or administrative officials, had higher education and were active in organizing the genocide.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Pesonen & Lintunen 2007, 56.

<sup>273</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 56 (Fulgence Bunani).

<sup>274</sup> For more detailed description of his methods and the findings see Straus 2004.

<sup>275</sup> Straus 2004, 93, 94.

<sup>276</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 242; Jones 2006, 265; Prunier 1995, 4, 231, 232; Straus 2006, 100.

<sup>277</sup> Straus 2006, 100, 103-107.

Most violent perpetrators were most commonly either ones with military or firearms training or young farmers. These most violent perpetrators did the lion's share of the killings<sup>278</sup> and were the ones who would most likely fit Baum's perpetrator category. In Rwanda however the majority of the killers would psychologically be categorized as bystanders, because the majority of people taking part acted in minor roles and a far greater number were accessories to the crime by a variety of actions like betraying whereabouts of Tutsis, by other forms of violence or by stealing property from the victims.<sup>279</sup> All these people acting in minor roles can be defined as bystanders, not as perpetrators.

Therefore, the concepts perpetrator and killer must be distinguished from each other. In this context perpetrators are those fitting into Baum psychological category and killers are those who participated in the killings and the violence in Rwanda. Out of the killers some were perpetrators, but a majority were bystanders who got sucked into participating. Additionally there is a third category, the participants, who participated in other activities, but did not kill. They can be defined mainly as bystanders.

The percentage of bystanders in an average population is around 50-65 percent. A bystander is generally someone who is present but refrains from involvement. However, there is also an active component to bystanders. In certain surroundings and circumstances bystanders may take part and perpetrate and in other circumstances turn the other way and rescue.<sup>280</sup> Variations of anonymity create bystanding, which means that the masses and mass involvement create bystanders. Standing back or silence is seen as the least evil option when faced with fear.<sup>281</sup>

Especially in Rwanda where killings were mainly done in groups, that were often larger than needed for the amount of victims, bystander's need for conformity was put under a lot of strain. Additionally, in groups many were often forced to participate, so that no one could individually be blamed.

*The person was taken. This person was asked where he came from. He told us his origin. Instead of giving his ID card, he said, "I am Rwandan. I don't have an ID*

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<sup>278</sup> Straus 2006, 112.

<sup>279</sup> Adhikari 2008, 174; Baum 2008, 30; Straus 2004, 85.

<sup>280</sup> Baum 2008, 153.

<sup>281</sup> Baum 2008, 153, 172; Fujii 2009, 6.

*card.” At the time, there was a law that said that those who did not have ID cards were inyenzi. This member of the cellule mentioned this law. The cellule member said, “Since you don’t have a card, you must be killed.” Some refused. Some said that because he did not have his ID card he should not be killed.[---] He told the man to lie down on the ground. He hit him twice on the back of the neck and once to the back and he died. When the member saw he had done a crime, he wanted us to do the same thing. He said, “You too, you have to do something. Everyone must hit him twice with a stick.” And we said, “Do we have to hit and already dead person?” He said, “If you do not do it, I’ll kill you too.”<sup>282</sup>*

The killings in Rwanda were social and as we just saw within a group there were always different levels of participating, ranging from the direct killing to a large number of onlookers. In fact, in many cases defining the actual killer was very difficult, because killing one often involved many, since killing with a machete took many hits that did not always come from only one killer.<sup>283</sup> Bystanders, who are concerned with a need to appear normal, see this environment as one where participating is the prerequisite for social fit. This social pressure is attached to the social nature of identity and that is the key component to understanding hate and genocidal mindedness.<sup>284</sup> Fujii argues that it is precisely this environment of violence and the public social nature of the killing that separated Rwanda from other genocides and led to the participation of the masses in Rwanda.<sup>285</sup> Even the participation women and children was required, not as killers, but in other forms.

*The killers would call everyone to watch. All the women and children would gather to see the show. There were people still carrying drinks or nurslings on their backs. The killers would cut off the victims’ limbs, they would crush their bones with a club, but without killing them. They wanted them to last. They wanted the audience to learn from these torments. Shouts would rise up from all sides. These were raucous village jamborees, quite rare and quite popular.<sup>286</sup>*

Combining these public shows with the element of fear and the atmosphere where participating was seen as the norm many felt the need to take part or at least act the part of a killer.

*But other colleagues were all thumbs right up to the finish. Their moves were slow, they did not dare – they hit in the arm instead of the neck, for example, then ran away yelling, “That is it, I killed this one dead!”<sup>287</sup>*

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<sup>282</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 65.

<sup>283</sup> Mamdani 2001, 6.

<sup>284</sup> Baum 2008, 26.

<sup>285</sup> Baum 2008, 162, 164. Fujii 2009, 7.

<sup>286</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 124 (Clémentine ?).

<sup>287</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 31, 32.

Standing by can also be seen as a result of bystanders' vulnerability to social norms. Bystanders are vulnerable, because their primary identity is social. Social identity means that they are mainly concerned with safety and a desire for social fit and conforming to the social structure. Especially in a time of crisis, when people's latent prejudices and fears in general tend to come forth, bystanders feel great pressure to conform to social norms and they tend to align with their own group against the perceived threat.<sup>288</sup> The need to act the part led also to people claiming to have killed more than they actually had. This was partly due to the pressures from outside but also to the need to fit in, as was the case in the quote earlier where a killer claimed to have killed even though only hitting the man in the arm. However, claiming to kill more than actually had came up only in Hatzfeld's interviews. In the following quote the killer is speaking of rewards that killing brought to the one that could claim the kill for himself and to how it led to overt exaggerations in some cases. We will look to greed as a motivator more closely later, but what is special about this quote in this context is how some exaggerated the number of their kills for a better status in the surrounding society.

*In the cabaret, we made comparisons and had contests. Many upped their numbers to increase their shares. Others lowered their numbers because it bothered them to recount the blood spilled and to boast about it. People cheated both ways and made fun of those who exaggerated too obviously.<sup>289</sup>*

As a result of the pressure of the society where hatred against the Tutsi and participation in the violence was seen as a norm, many bystanders were turned into killers. In a conflict situation where no plausible identities are available for identification, one might be forced to choose a side by the expectations of others. This led to people being forced to choose between the two legitimate categories, the Hutu and the Tutsi. Variations of identification were not allowed and identification became more collectivistic. In collectivist cultures the conflicts are practically always inter-group, since as James Waller points out group membership is seen as enduring, stable and permanent and as having an existence beyond the individual. In Rwanda, people were seen as representatives of their own groups. They lost some of their individual characters in exchange for being seen through their group characteristics.<sup>290</sup>

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<sup>288</sup> Baum 2008, 153, 154, 162, 164.; Fujii 2009, 5; Schlee 2004, 136, 137.

<sup>289</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 89 (Fulgence Bunani, killer).

<sup>290</sup> Waller 2007, 174.

The need for conformity and to fit in also derives from the collectivistic nature of the Rwandan culture. Collectivistic cultures focus on the group and the core values in collectivist cultures are obedience, conformity, tradition, safety and order.<sup>291</sup> Genocidal regimes tend to emphasize these collectivistic values because they make group membership central to personal identification and also to foster a sense of duty and obligation towards the in-group.<sup>292</sup> In collectivist cultures people think of themselves as parts of their collectivities rather than as individuals. In these cultures people rarely leave their own group and collective goals often take precedence over individual goals.<sup>293</sup> Jean Hatzfeld also noticed this in his interviews, when he noted that the killers that he interviewed seemed to consider their activities in collectivist terms. “I” was always replaced by the collectivist “we”. When asked individually they stayed silent, but when asked what they did collectively they felt at ease to discuss the events.<sup>294</sup>

As it was already noted, the majority of participants in Rwanda were average males whose participation was actually mainly in other forms than killing. In Straus’ study over 70 percent of the participants interviewed claimed that they had not personally killed anyone and an additional 20 percent claimed to have killed only one person.<sup>295</sup> Keeping in mind that according to Baum’s estimates less than 9 percent of the Hutus that took part killed 750 000 or almost 94 percent of the 800 000 victims<sup>296</sup> we can conclude that Straus interviews provide a quite realistic picture of the level of activities during the genocide. The fact that killing was concentrated on a smaller active group goes hand in hand with the distribution of Baum’s categories and with the fact that most of the killers had no prior history of violence supports the vulnerability of bystanders.<sup>297</sup> Additionally, since the killing was concentrated on somewhat small groups, it means that many found ways of not perpetrating or participating only when in the presence of leaders or other killers.

Especially in Fujii’s interviews where she studied the lower-level participants that she calls joiners, many claimed that they were simply following the groups, but not taking part or appearing to participate, because failing to take part invited harassment, beatings, suspicions and death threats. Many also claimed to have acted to divert the attention away from their homes, where they were

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<sup>291</sup> Waller 2007, 173,174.

<sup>292</sup> Waller 2007, 178.

<sup>293</sup> Baum 2008, 48.

<sup>294</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 147.

<sup>295</sup> Straus 2006, 112, 113.

<sup>296</sup> Baum 2008, 30.

<sup>297</sup> Straus 2006, 96.

hiding Tutsis.<sup>298</sup> These elements were also present in Hatzfeld's and Straus' interviews. In fact, this lead Fujii to come to the conclusion that people acted as a result of group relationships and dynamics that lead to a forming of what she calls *interahamwe identity*. In becoming a part of this group identity every day relationships, like friendships, family ties and work relations were crucial to the extent that Fujii found even some Tutsi men, who became members of these groups, due to friendship ties. In addition, local leaders instead of national leaders had a big role in forming these groups.<sup>299</sup>

*Interahamwe identity* was associated to group action, where certain group activities (in this case taking part in the killings and other forms of violence and looting) were reinforcing people's identification with that group and as a result identifying with the group lead people to participate in these activities more actively.<sup>300</sup> This is based on the idea that people become like those around them through regular contact and interaction. Their beliefs, actions and attitudes converge toward those in their immediate social environment. This process is natural and perhaps unavoidable. People simply just take on new ways of behaving from their environment and start to follow step by step.<sup>301</sup> Fujii saw this adaptation from the surroundings as one factor turning Hutus into killers.<sup>302</sup>

Importantly however, people acted out these activities only in the presence of that group. While alone or in small groups group members did not act according to group incentives, but instead strived to save people.<sup>303</sup> To explain the nature of this form of identification Fujii used some examples, as for example being a soldier. Fujii explains how a soldier is not an individual actor but a member of a collective actor – the army. While a member of this collectivity the soldier is expected to shoot and kill, but only in a certain context. A soldier gains valor and respect for performing duties in the context of war, that in other contexts would be deemed wrong, horrible or illegal. However, when in another context and outside the collectivity of the army. a soldier must again hold up the rules of the wider society.<sup>304</sup> In the same manner, people that started to identify with the *interahamwe identity* became to see violence as a part of membership in that group, but felt no need to behave similarly when outside that group.

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<sup>298</sup> Fujii 2009, 122, 123.

<sup>299</sup> Fujii 2009, 174-179.

<sup>300</sup> Fujii 2009, 174-179.

<sup>301</sup> Fujii 2009, 99.

<sup>302</sup> Fujii 2009, 101.

<sup>303</sup> Fujii 2009, 174-179.

<sup>304</sup> Fujii 2009, 174-179.

Also James Waller agrees with the notion of extraordinary group action. He says that, group dynamics can alter the thoughts, feelings and behaviors of individuals within that group. However, he also highlights that being in a group will not inevitably lead people to commit acts of extraordinary evil that we would not dream of doing as individuals.<sup>305</sup> Therefore, we must not think that group dynamics alone can cause wide spread participation in violence.

The categories of perpetrator and bystander however do pose a problem. Categories in themselves are static, whereas genocide and violence in general is dynamic. The conflict changes over time and as we already saw often also people change their behavior along with the nature of the conflict. Participating was very multidimensional. Participating or watching others commit violence can change one's relations, perspectives, motives and even have effects on identities. Also in a situation like the one in Rwanda in 1994 where much of the violence was done by neighbors and friends people changed their behavior also along with their prospective victims. Many of the most active and brutal killers went out of their way to rescue some close friend or a family member.

The genocide in Rwanda was wrought with changes and shifts, and static categories cannot capture these shifts. Especially in Rwanda, where many were first faced with the violence as onlookers and then mobilized first through pillaging and looting and the move to killing and perpetrating happened later. The growing demands and pressure forced many to change from a bystander to perpetrator. In this sense Rwanda does not bend to the psychological categories.<sup>306</sup> However it is precisely this switch from bystander to perpetrator which makes the Rwandan case interesting and ultimately renders these categories useful. Not as static categories but as behavioral categories that change in time. I believe that it is with this movement between the categories that the mechanics of the Rwandan genocide and its justification come forth. The true question with these categories is not how many people belonged to each category in Rwanda, but rather what justified the move from a bystander to a perpetrator or from a rescuer to bystander.

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<sup>305</sup> Waller 2007, 52.

<sup>306</sup> Fujii 2009, 8.



## 4.2 BECOMING ACTIVE

There were many ways to react to the initial pressure of taking part in the killings. In some cases, the switch took long, but for some the switch was instant as was the case for Adalbert in the following quote.

*The Saturday after the plane crash was the usual choir rehearsal day at the church in Kibungo. We sang hymns in good feeling with our Tutsi compatriots, our voices still blending in chorus. On Sunday morning we returned at the appointed hour for mass; they did not arrive. They had already fled into the bush in fear of reprisals, driving their goats and cows before them. That disappointed us greatly, especially on a Sunday. Anger hustled us outside the church door. We left the Lord and our prayers inside to rush home. We changed from our Sunday best into our workaday clothes, we grabbed clubs and machetes, we went straight off to killing.<sup>307</sup>*

The words of Adalbert may sound extreme, but participation in mass murder does not necessarily require emotions as extreme or demonic as one might presume. In fact, ordinary people can commit horrifying acts when put under extraordinary conditions. Following prevailing circumstances people will perpetrate.<sup>308</sup> James Waller also notes, by citing for example Zygmunt Bauman and Jacques Semelin that under specific circumstances ordinary people can commit acts of extraordinary evil.<sup>309</sup>

In Straus' interviews, there is even one case where the interviewee who was fighting with the Tutsis when the first attacks against them came, but changed his behavior after the death of the president and pressure from outside he started to fight against them. For him, the extraordinary circumstances caused an extreme reaction. The quote is long and raises also many issues that we will talk of in more detail later. Especially some attention should be paid to the reference to war in explaining the events and to how all Tutsis were believed to be equal with RPF. Also in the end the way in which the interviewee has no other explanation but anger, shows how even he himself cannot fully explain these events. He was taken over by unexplainable anger that derived from the death of the president and agitation from others. These feelings of unexplained extreme anger must be seen as expressions of rage, according to the definitions by Petersen that we will look into in chapter 5.3.

*WHY DID YOU JOIN THEM [THE TUTSIS] TO FIGHT IN THE ATTACKS? We were together. Sharing life and death. YOU WERE NOT ANGERED BY THE DEATH OF*

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<sup>307</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 132 (Adalbert Munzigura).

<sup>308</sup> Baum 2008, 72, 73.

<sup>309</sup> Waller 2007, 91.

*THE PRESIDENT? People became angry later, because of the attacks from other regions. They said that the Tutsi had just killed our parent. They had to be killed. EXPLAIN WHAT YOU MEAN. We lived together for a long time, under the government of Habyarimana. We killed them because the RPF had begun a war. [...] WHAT CHANGED FOR YOU? YOU SAID BEFORE YOU HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE TUTSIS. YOU WENT TO FIGHT THE ATTACK. What changed was the death of Habyarimana. BUT AFTER HIS DEATH YOU WENT TO FIGHT IN ANOTHER ATTACK. When the attacks came back, they said, "The Tutsi are bad. They killed the president." And that is when we killed them... WHY WERE THE THREE KILLED IN THE ATTACK? Because they had killed the head of state. WERE THEY WOMEN AND CHILDREN? Children... Two others were about twelve. SURELY IT WAS NOT THEY WHO HAD KILLED THE HEAD OF STATE? After the death of the head of state, people said the Tutsis were mean. [---] HOW DID YOU IDENTIFY PEOPLE WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO BE KILLED? In our cellule, we knew where those people were. WERE THERE LISTS? No. WHAT DID PEOPLE SAY THEY WERE DOING? Killing the enemy. [---] BUT HOW CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO YOURSELF KILLING WOMEN AND CHILDREN? It was anger. IF A SOLDIER KILLED SOMEONE HUNDREDS OF KILOMETERS AWAY, I WOULD NOT GO KILL MY NEIGHBOR'S CHILD. It was necessary because of anger.<sup>310</sup>*

In fact, as noted before, most evil is the product of ordinary men caught up in unusual circumstances. These people are not equipped to cope with the extraordinary circumstances and are thereby compelled by persuasive authorities and peer pressure.<sup>311</sup> We will look into the meaning of authorities in more detail later, but in the following long quote, we can see how an official although first hesitant or even a rescuer in previous outbreaks of violence, was turned into a perpetrator through orders from above.

*In Kibungo we has had a very nice councilor named Servilien Kambali. a rich farmer who never wanted any problems on his hill. During the ethnic massacres of 1992, he had behaved quite calmly and had separated groups of troublemakers without even a single man dead on either side. He was a Hutu of a peaceful disposition.*

*On April 10, three days after the crash, he warned his people: 'All right, it is too hot in the country – but I will not accept commotion or bloodshed in my sector. I am setting out for Nyamata to bring back security reinforcements. Until I return, do not leave your houses, all of you, or it will go badly with you. Anyone who utters a threat will be punished. Anyone who lifts a hand, watch out.'*

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<sup>310</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 90, 91.

<sup>311</sup> Baum 2008, 170.

*In Nyamata he explained about the hotheads and asked for help. The burgomaster replied: 'Servilien, you're an idiot. No more of your screw-ups. Instead of reinforcements, you will return to your hill with strict orders.'*

*When Servilien came back, he told the Hutu farmers waiting for him in a circle: 'Well, it's already been decided. They have already started. We must kill them all.' He grabbed a gun and from then on he was out in front as a prominent organizer, from the first day to the last.*

*Could that fellow remain a nice guy in the middle of the genocide? Obviously not, it he wanted to keep his position as councilor. And if he wanted his share of the spoils, he clearly couldn't sit on his front porch with his arms crossed. Since he was well known, he couldn't lie low on his hill watching it all either, without risking the wrath of the Hutu youths.*

*But he could certainly have behaved timidly in killing and seeking advantages. He could have lagged behind the advancing line, or gone to Gitarama with his family, if it disgusted him to get out his gun. At his trial he said it had never occurred to him.<sup>312</sup>*

Bystanders are primarily concerned with safety and regulation of identity and their place in the world.<sup>313</sup> Even the interviewee supposed that one reason for Servilien's turn into a perpetrator was his need to keep his position as a community leader. For some, active participation was also a way for social rising as was the case in the case of Adalbert, who as we already saw before was very active from the first moment. James Waller also agrees that in some instances, aggression and violence often function to increase our status and power within a social hierarchy.<sup>314</sup> Adalbert showed great pride over his status as a leader and in fact spoke of it on several occasions. Below are two quotes.

*Later on the bravest young guys became leaders, the ones who gave orders without hesitation and strode eagerly along. Me, I made myself the leader for all the residents of Kibungo from the very first day. Previously I was a leader of the church choir, so now I became a real leader so to speak. The residents approved me without a hitch.<sup>315</sup>*

*Me, it so happens, I am strong and vigorous, I had made myself a boss. It was a position of advantages for looting.<sup>316</sup>*

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<sup>312</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 170, 171 (innocent Rwililiza, survivor).

<sup>313</sup> Baum 2008, 154.

<sup>314</sup> Waller 2007, 184.

<sup>315</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 10 (AdalbertMungizura, killer).

<sup>316</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 78 (AdalbertMunzigura, killer).

As we earlier noted, bystanders are concerned with a need to appear normal. They also share a desire for social fit and conforming to the social structure.<sup>317</sup> In a genocide, bystanders can get easily overwhelmed and switch sides on a whim, like the interviewee above who switched from fighting with the Tutsis into fighting against them. Threat, anxiety and stress cause a need for structure, which makes compliance under a hostile regime more understandable.<sup>318</sup> For some, like Pio, it was not even clear when and how they turned into killers. For Pio, who was one of the youngest in the gang at the time the need to fit in seemed to play the biggest part.

*Me, I don't know why I started detesting Tutsis. I was young and what I liked most was soccer: I played on the Kibungo team with Tutsis of my own age, we passed the ball around without any hitch. I never noticed any unease in their company. Hatred just showed up at killing time; I latched on to it through imitation, to fit in.<sup>319</sup>*

In fact, imitation had a big influence for some. Straus found that around five percent of his interviewees claimed imitation as their main reason for participating<sup>320</sup>. The killings in Rwanda were often done in groups larger than was necessary for the amount of victims and there were also public shows where derogation of the Tutsis was shown. For many of the joiners, their activities aggravated from watching shows, to following groups and finally to violence through imitation. In these cases, the role of authorities and the tendency to obey were crucial. Here is one such case from Straus' interviews.

*The interahamwe militia who were the leaders of others came to my place, carrying a list of people who had not participated. They said, "You, you come with us." [---] I left with them. I looted. I took a basket of beans. [---] The next day, since the leader of the interahamwe was my neighbor, he took me again. I was with them as a sort of self-protection. We arrived at a place where a man was killing a woman. The one who came to kill said, "You who have not killed must bury this person. If you refuse, we'll kill you also." We buried her. There was seven of us.<sup>321</sup>*

We already saw examples of the need to conform, but in this context it is good to note that in some cases the need to conform stepped over the group limits. In the following story of a Tutsi, it is startling to see how in order to save his own life he was willing to conform to the need for violence and turned on his own group members.

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<sup>317</sup> Baum 2008, 162, 164.

<sup>318</sup> Baum 2008, 158.

<sup>319</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 206 (Pio Mutungirehe, killer).

<sup>320</sup> Straus 2006, 136.

<sup>321</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 50.

*There is one known case of a soccer player reaching understanding – one case of mutual help out of hundreds of players. [...] During the killings, he denounced his Tutsi neighbors, he unearthed hiding places, he tracked on hunting expeditions for the killers. He hoped to save his life by helping them cut his Tutsi teammates. The interahamwe used him, and at the bloody end they laid him out across a path, not even pushing him into a ditch.<sup>322</sup>*

In fact, taking part without consequences seemed to have a strong importance for some of the interviewees, especially for the ones who were turned into killers. There is a precedent in the past for killing Tutsis without any serious consequences which made some take part with more ease.

*YOU SAID BEFORE YOU HAD GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE TUTSIS. HOW COULD YOU TAKE A MACHETE AND SUDDENLY GO AND KILL THEM? It is because of bad leaders who told us to do these things. If I had killed someone and they had arrested me, there would not have been these killings. If you hit a child when he makes a mistake, he does not repeat the mistake.<sup>323</sup>*

This comparison to a child is interesting. It shows how this particular killer saw himself as a child following his parent's orders. Additionally many interviewees in Straus' interviews refer to the death of president Habyarimana as the death of their parent<sup>324</sup>. This points heavily to high levels of obedience to orders. In fact, Baum's findings indicate that all other things being equal, most Hutu men would have just as easily complied with orders for peace as with orders of violence.<sup>325</sup>

#### 4.3 RESCUERS AND INTER GROUP SOLIDARITY

According to some psychological tests when people are anxious, they will believe what their group or the prevailing culture tells them.<sup>326</sup> Gustave LeBon suggests that anonymity and suggestibility combine in such a way that the individual in reduces to an inferior form of evolution when compared to groups. Submerged in a crowd an individual loses self-control and becomes a puppet violating all personal and social norms.<sup>327</sup> However, in all classic conformity tests there are a

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<sup>322</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 94 (Innocent Rwililiza, survivor).

<sup>323</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 93.

<sup>324</sup> For example Lyons and Straus 2006, 90.

<sup>325</sup> LeBon in Baum 2008, 158.

<sup>326</sup> Baum 2008, 86.

<sup>327</sup> Baum 2008, 37.

substantial number of subjects that did not conform.<sup>328</sup> According to the Milgram experiment, 65 percent of people will comply with a legitimate authority's request to injure another person, but this leaves out 35 percent of people who defied. Milgram concluded that people who defied orders are more emotionally developed?<sup>329</sup> The Milgram experiment's results cannot be taken directly from the laboratory and used to explain participation in genocides for the conditions and the setting is too vastly different, but as Waller points out they can be used to give some reference. Milgram's experiment shows how social and situational pressures can lead ordinary people to commit violence or other acts of evil, but also that even under those conditions not all comply.<sup>330</sup> Also in Rwanda, even though compliance was the rule there were also those who disobeyed.<sup>331</sup> However, in some cases the situation first overwhelmed people and made them act in ways they could not justify later. That was for example the case for one of Straus' interviewees. The extraordinary situation lead him to participate. When pressured he killed a man on the first day. But even on the first day he talked a group of soldiers out of killing a widow that he knew. Later he changed his actions even more.

*That day I had not been prepared for what happened. When I returned home, my wife asked where I had been. I did not respond. I reflected. I saw that what we were doing was not good and that my wife had asked me a question. I reflected and saw that what we were doing was not understandable. I made the decision not to go again. I learned later that a Jehova's witness leader was hiding some people. I was alone when I heard this I went to look for this man who hid people, and I helped them cross the border. I lived near the border. It was easy for me.*<sup>332</sup>

This shows how many, like this man, were overwhelmed. Group mind has properties that cannot be viewed through looking at the individual. For example. it gives discharge of individual responsibility.<sup>333</sup> But rescuers, on the other hand, view others personally and as individuals, and not in terms of their social or group identity.<sup>334</sup> Seeing people as individuals opens the way for also feeling responsible for actions against them and responsibility leads to regret. Viewing responsibility individually may lead to actions like described above. Also we saw earlier in a quote where Pio was thinking of what turned him against the Tutsis when he had no bad feelings before. He came to think that his involvement grew out of the need to fit in. This highlight his

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<sup>328</sup> Baum 2008, 88.

<sup>329</sup> Baum 2008, 3, 86, 87.

<sup>330</sup> Waller 2007, 111-113.

<sup>331</sup> Hintjens 2001, 40.

<sup>332</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 76, 77.

<sup>333</sup> Baum 2008, 37.

<sup>334</sup> Baum 2008, 108.

categorization as a bystander in Baum's terms. However, in the following quote from Pio we can also see a pinch of regret, that lead Pio to spare the lives of his friends.

*Advancing as a team, we would run into a scramble of fugitives hiding in the papyrus and the muck, so it was not easy to recognize neighbors. If by misfortune I caught sight of an acquaintance, like a soccer comrade, for example, a pang pinched my heart, and I left him to a nearby colleague. But I had to do this quietly, I could not reveal my good heart.<sup>335</sup>*

However, Pio can under no circumstances be considered as a rescuer. In fact, his actions can be seen as a way to fight his need for conforming and there are many other remarks like the one of his. Even Adalbert, one of the most active killers and an *interahamwe* chief of Kibungo, says that sparing a life of an acquaintance was possible, however saving his life for good, was not.

*It was possible not to kill a neighbor or someone who appealed for pity, gratitude, or recognition, but it was not possible to save that person. You could agree together on a dodge, decide on a trick of that sort. But it was of no use to the dead person. For example, a man finding someone with whom he had popped many Primus in friendship might turn aside, but someone else would come along behind and take care of it.<sup>336</sup>*

Even though there were not many accounts of rescuers, but only of those who spared lives on some instances, in Hatzfeld's interviews it does not mean they did not exist in Rwanda. The Rwandan genocide is known for mass participation it must be noted that rescuers also existed. There were some who tried to maintain law and order and there were others who refused to take part in the killings. But only a few of those who did survived and even fewer have been acknowledged.<sup>337</sup> Talking of saving someone or showing kindness to Tutsis was forbidden to the extent that even talking of it, could prove fatal.

*Your position and your fortune could not save you from death if you showed a kindness to a Tutsi before unfamiliar eyes. For us, kind words for Tutsis were more fatal than evil deeds.<sup>338</sup>*

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<sup>335</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 111 (Pio Mutungirehe)

<sup>336</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 111 (Adalbert Munzigura, killer).

<sup>337</sup> Hintjens 2008, 16.

<sup>338</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 70 (Pio Mutungirehe).

Additionally there is one case of a famous rescuer, whose efforts have even been turned into a movie. Paul Rusesabagina was the acting manager of the Hotel des Milles Collines in Kigali at the time of the genocide. Rusesabagina, a Hutu who was married to a Tutsi, used all means possible to keep his family as well as the 1268 refugees hiding in the hotel safe from the *interahamwe* and soldiers who were patrolling outside the hotel gates.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Pesonen & Lintunen 2007, 89-91.



## 5. DYNAMICS OF IDENTITY FORMATION AND INTENSIFICATION

We have been going through the changes in the Rwandan identities. It has become clear that even though the way Rwandans view the groups Hutu and Tutsi have changed during different times the awareness of those two groups existing is a factor that has been present throughout. We also looked into the psychological categories of participation and to the question of how people became active. Now it is time to turn into the group identity management strategies. These strategies can explain the shift from bystander to a killer, for they are the strategies that affect the minds of the killers. With this, we will start our move towards the justification for the violence on the individual level.

The existence of the boundaries of the ethnic categories or ethnic groups, as they are more commonly called, has importance in explaining conflict, especially when the processes by which the content or the boundaries of that group identity have been formed has required violence.<sup>340</sup> The social construction of an ethnic group identity requires distinction between oneself and the other. We looked into peaceful means of differentiating between “us” and “them”, but especially in times of turmoil and trouble people tend to become polarized and cling on to their social identity as a lifeline<sup>341</sup> and in these times different more hostile forms of division are used. Creating this boundary between the self and the other has potential for a violent, antagonistic relationship with the other due to the mechanics that form that difference.<sup>342</sup> That is why these mechanisms have to be discussed when events like the ones that unfolded in Rwanda are discussed. Especially when we look at the meaning of identity in ethnic conflicts, the mechanisms that create the borders for identifying are crucial.

Many of these mechanisms are normal parts of everyday living. For example, people use stereotypes daily in their attempts to make sense of the world around them. Existence of stereotypes is not a problem; instead it is a necessity for surviving in the social world. In the same manner, enemy images do not necessarily lead to conflict either. But when we look at ethnic conflicts, stereotypes, discrimination and enemy images are always part of it and often so are also notions of race. The events in Rwanda demonstrate the power that these stereotypes and enemy images as well

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<sup>340</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 850.

<sup>341</sup> Baum 2008, 60.

<sup>342</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 851.

as ethnicity and race still hold in raising fears, hatred and emotions as strong that they may lead to genocidal killings.<sup>343</sup> The role of these emotions will be looked at shortly.

## 5.1 STEREOTYPING AND DISCRIMINATION

There are several ways to enforce the difference between the groups. The starting point however is self-categorization. As an individual learns to categorize oneself the outcome is the intensification of the similarities between the self and other in-group members and the differences between the self and members of other groups. Categorization operates together with social comparison, which generates the basis for group behavior, such as intergroup differentiation, discrimination, in-group favoritism and stereotypic group images. Most commonly stronger emphasis on a specific categorization leads to more extreme stereotyping.<sup>344</sup>

The use of stereotypes is merely a normal coping mechanism and ethnic, religious and political conflicts are all part of that experience. Group members simply act on that. Prejudice is a normal human feeling. Members of one group simply act toward other groups on the basis of shared beliefs, attitudes and stereotypes.<sup>345</sup> In fact the existence of stereotypes and biases largely defines the nature of intergroup relations. Intergroup relations can take either a positive or a negative nature ranging from cultural exchanges and visits between nations or cultural groups to public disagreements, war and even genocide.<sup>346</sup> When faced with intense, severe and persevering conflicts, a powerful context that has a determining influence on the forming of stereotypes and biases is formed. The context of conflict breeds a particular culture that highlights issues related to the conflict and shapes the representation of one's own group and the adversary group. Simply said, situations of conflict generate negative stereotyping and prejudice.<sup>347</sup> These negative stereotypes and prejudice can in turn make creating a positive group image or going through a proper identity development more difficult for minorities because they are often the target of negative stereotypes as outside groups often view them negatively. This negative pressure often can alter the development of the minority identities.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>343</sup> Hintjens 2001, 26.

<sup>344</sup> Valk and Karu 2001, 585; Waller 2007, 174, 175.

<sup>345</sup> Baum 2008, 30.

<sup>346</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman 2005, 21.

<sup>347</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman 2005, 57.

<sup>348</sup> Howard 2000, 369, 374.

Stereotypic images of the opposing group were strong in Rwanda as can be seen in the following quote and also in some quotes that have been in previous chapters. But what is noteworthy, is that the interviewee in this case seems to clearly realize that stereotypes are merely stereotypes and not a real depiction of reality. When it came to wealth or intelligence the difference is nonexistent as is also the evil attached to the Tutsis.

*Many Hutus could not bear Tutsis anymore, and that's the truth. Why? That stubborn question haunts the banana groves, I can see there are differences between the two groups that made the Hutus resentful. Tutsis sometimes have longer necks and straighter noses. They are more sober of disposition and more affected in their manner... But as to wealth and intelligence, there is no difference at all. Many Hutus distrust the a so-called malice in the Tutsi character that simply does not exist.*<sup>349</sup>

Refusing the same ethical rights to those outside our own group as to our group goes against basic human ideals, since, at least in theory, all humans should be equal and have the same rights, possibilities and opportunities. On the intergroup level the negative group views however lead to violent acts against the rival group and often to the discrimination and control of rival group's members. The discrimination most often takes place when the rival groups live in one state and the majority group has the power to subjugate the rival minority, as was the case for example in Rwanda.<sup>350</sup>

Discrimination based on stereotypes is not however simply an act done out of ethnocentric or racist reasons but also as part of the coping strategies created to deal with the threat and danger that the view of the rival group implies.<sup>351</sup> Additionally, discrimination does not always lead to violence and it must be remembered that only a fraction of group conflicts and ethnic disputes ever amount to mass mobilization and to even lesser degree to violence or war. Explanations of group conflicts usually presuppose that the factors that breed hostility between the groups also create internal solidarity within the group.<sup>352</sup> Escalation of the conflict is usually avoided by a show of this intragroup solidarity. When both groups are seen as equally coherent, the conflict tends to dissipate. However, these displays of group coherence and solidarity may also lead to intensification of the conflict if they fail at dissipating the original conflict.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 199 (Claudine Kayitesi, survivor).

<sup>350</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman 2005, 90; Žižek 2008, 41.

<sup>351</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman 2005, 90; Johnsson 2006, 96; Mamdani 2002, 136.

<sup>352</sup> Gould 1999, 356.

<sup>353</sup> Gould 1999, 357.

Discrimination based on ethnicity is a common form of discrimination. According to Mamdani political identities and cultural identities should be viewed as separate, because it is in situations where political identities are drawn from cultural identities such as ethnic or religious identities where problems arise. There is a constant danger that too much becomes self-evident when an identity is construed as ethnic. It is with this link between cultural identities and political power that a strong discourse for discrimination is formed. Because when ethnic identity becomes the basis for political power we deal with a situation where discrimination based on ethnicity is bound to arise in one form or another.<sup>354</sup>

To form a basis for political, social and civic discrimination state needs to identify and legally recognize the separate groups and by that process form a distinction between the groups. A situation where ethnic identities are legally enforced is therefore one of the possible signifiers that can predict an ethnic conflict.<sup>355</sup> In Rwanda the racial identity cards were introduced in 1933. Along with the cards all Rwandans were categorized according to race that was passed on through the father's lineage.<sup>356</sup> In Julius' case in chapter 3.6, we already saw some of the problems that this type of official identification can bring. The story of Julius clearly highlights the problem of assuming one's ethnic identity and political loyalties are identical and the perplexity that children of mixed marriages bring to this overtly simplified form of political identification even in post-genocide Rwanda where racial identity cards are officially banned.

## 5.2 ENEMY IMAGES AND THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND THEM

In order for group identification to turn into genocide there needs to be a need to eliminate the enemy and for there to be a need to eliminate the enemy, the enemy needs to be identified.<sup>357</sup> In Rwanda identifying the enemy was easy for there was a propensity to see the world in ethnic terms and through an opposing relationship between the Hutu and the Tutsi. After identification, however, there is still a long way to go until the other group becomes inhuman to the level that the use of violence against them becomes thinkable.

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<sup>354</sup> Fardon 1999, 65; Mamdani 2002, 137.

<sup>355</sup> Mamdani 2002, 136.

<sup>356</sup> Hintjens 2001, 30.

<sup>357</sup> Mamdani 2001, 9.

Togetherness and difference are created through different aspects of the same process. Members of ethnic groups often highlight their common ancestry. They share a common mythological origin and cultural heritage. These legends and myths can be used to create togetherness. In the same manner they can also create and politicize “us” and “them”. Highlighting this border between “us” and “them” can be used to further emphasize otherness.<sup>358</sup> Ethnic groups often politicize their identities when they come in contact with the “other”. When this competition over cultural, political and social power is created the boundaries of “us” and “them” can alter.<sup>359</sup> In these instances when boundaries are under threat, those who identify with the group are likely to uphold the boundaries, even to the extent of threatening with violence.<sup>360</sup>

Frederik Barth argues that ethnicity is not defined by the similarities inside a group but by the differences that are thought to distinguish it from others.<sup>361</sup> This idea will come up again later once we discuss Sigmund Freud’s theory of narcissism of minor differences, but Thomas Hylland Eriksen takes the view one step further stating that it is not in fact even the differences that matter, but the way they are emphasized and highlighted by the group members and the members of the opposing groups. He sees ethnicity as a result of social life that entails processes of dividing out and including in. Through these processes the feeling of otherness is created that is crucial for enemy images.<sup>362</sup>

For the purpose of looking into the role of identity in justifying the conflict the words of Steven Baum (2008) are crucial. Baum argues that the more strongly one identifies and connects with one's own group the more hostile and violent one also becomes in their feelings in regards of outsiders especially when the boundaries of belonging are threatened.<sup>363</sup> At the same time Aune Valk and Kristel Karu (2001) offer a opposing viewpoint in saying that a strong sense of identity can prevent group conflict for persons with a strong sense of ethnic identity have developed ways of handling threats to their identity and therefore are less susceptible to negative feelings towards others.<sup>364</sup> The key to get over this difference is the idea of self-constructiveness. We already discussed how identities that are self-constructed are less likely to take part in conflict because they form a more

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<sup>358</sup> Eriksen in Marttila 2003, 25, 26, 35.

<sup>359</sup> Marttila 2003, 66.

<sup>360</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 856.

<sup>361</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 856.

<sup>362</sup> Eriksen in Marttila 2003, 25, 26.

<sup>363</sup> Baum 2008, 53.

<sup>364</sup> Valk and Karu 2001, 586.

coherent basis for identity than the ones that are imposed from outside.<sup>365</sup> While self-constructing an identity one has already had to deal with threats against that identification. Identification imposed from outside and based on one factor are vulnerable for attack because the individuals using this identification do not know how to deal with those threats and therefore do not feel secure of them. Through this viewpoint, Baum's argument that strong identification may lead to hostility, is preserved only to cases where that identification is imposed from outside. Strong attachment to ethnic, religious, or nationalistic identity that is not a matter of choice but an imposition, may lead to hostility, because imposed identities lack other supporting aspects of identification, that come along in the process of self-construction.

In the case of Rwanda we already saw in chapter 3. that Rwandan ethnic identities were constructed and manipulated by outside actors during three historical phases – colonialism, independence and the pre-genocide period. In these periods ethnic identification seemed to be a matter of free choice, but rather something defined by racial identity cards. In this environment, the threat against one's group identification may prove too much for many individuals. As Moshman argues, people with multifaceted and self-constructed identities are less likely to take part in group conflicts where participation in the conflict is often demanded on the basis on one factor of group identification.<sup>366</sup> However, demanding participation based on identification as a Hutu was common and what is important is that the identification was done from outside. Because no matter if the individual had other ways of identifying himself or not, what mattered was that in order to ensure safety one had to be accepted as a Hutu. Other elements did not matter, so the official identity was based on one determining factor. In fact, in some cases participation was seen as a way to prove one was indeed Hutu, not Tutsi.

*We arrived to another house. When we got there a man in our group said he was not Tutsi. So the head of the interahamwe said, "If you are not Tutsi, you have to kill this person." The man from our group took a club and hit him several times.*<sup>367</sup>

However, even more common was demanding participation from those Hutus who were affiliated to Tutsis and trying to protect some of them. Participation against others was demanded on the basis of saving one. This was the case especially in mixed marriages, where the men were forced to participate to save their wives. This brings forth an interesting aspect of group identification, where

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<sup>365</sup> Moshman 2004, 200.

<sup>366</sup> Moshman 2004, 200.

<sup>367</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 72.

forced categories define allegiances to own groups more vigorously from those who are seen as a threat to the purity of the group. In Rwanda those with ties to Tutsis were commonly seen as cheaters or traitors. This was a notion raised especially from the Ten Hutu Commandments. To prove allegiance to one's own group and to escape being viewed as a traitor one was forced participate. Just like the previous quote, the following quote seems to also suggest that killing or participating was seen as a way to strengthen identification as a "true Hutu". In fact, David Moshman has said that some identities are largely defined by membership in a particular category and in some cases the category itself is largely defined by shared hostility to an enemy group.<sup>368</sup>

*I heard my name. They called me because they knew I was married to a Tutsi...Someone said from the audience: "Jean-Baptiste, if you want to save the life of your wife, you have to cut this man right now. He is a cheater! Show us that you're not that kind."... The crowd had grown. I seized the machete. I struck a first blow. When I saw the blood bubble up, I jumped back a step. Someone blocked me from behind and shoved me forward by both elbows. I closed my eyes and delivered a second blow like the first. It was done. People approved, they were satisfied and moved away. I drew back. I went of to sit on the bench of a small cabaret, I picked up a drink and I never looked back in that unhappy direction. Afterwards I learned that the man had kept moving for two hours before finishing. Later on we got used to killing without so much dodging around.<sup>369</sup>*

Group identity and the division between "us" and "them" provides emotional borders that protect the individual self from injury. None-the-less group identities may ferment hostility even when there is no clearly defined enemy. In fact, the rise of enemy images is not often a result of real threat and therefore the enemy is usually not subjectivised.<sup>370</sup> In these cases enemy images are often used to unite group members and they most often arise in situations of competition between groups that are similar in cultural status and in capabilities. This context of conflict generates a sense of threat and motivation to eliminate the threat by attack. By creating an enemy a given collectivity can reassure itself of its cohesion and its very existence.<sup>371</sup>

Gourevitch has argued that the RPF attack in 1990 actually offered the Habyarimana government its best tool for uniting the Hutu – a common enemy. Gourevitch wrote that; "*Following the logic of the state ideology – that identity equals politics and politics equals identity – all Tutsi were considered to be RPF 'accomplices', and Hutus who failed to subscribe to this view were counted*

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<sup>368</sup> Moshman 2004, 200.

<sup>369</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 20 (Jean-Baptiste, Murangire, killer).

<sup>370</sup> Žižek 2008, 39.

<sup>371</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman 2005, 71; Mamdani in Social Register 2003, 2002, 136; Murer 2002, 213.

*as Tutsi loving traitors. Habyarimana's crowd did not want a border war, but they welcomed nationwide turmoil as a pretext for rounding up 'internal enemies'.*<sup>372</sup>

In Straus' study there was a clear focus on seeing the Tutsi as the enemy. This was a stronger tendency compared to dehumanization. In fact, only 0,6 percent frame the conflict through *killing the inyenzi*<sup>373</sup> whereas 22 percent saw it through notions of war against the RPF<sup>374</sup>. However the word *inyenzi* was used to diminish the difference between the Inkotanyi or the RPF and the civilian Tutsis. Since all were called the same all needed to be killed. This led to all Tutsi labeled as enemies and therefore as legitimate targets.<sup>375</sup> The notion of all Tutsi as the enemy was very widespread.

In general, ethnic identity is associated with negative out-group images only when the group is viewed as salient, competitive and threatening to the in-group identity.<sup>376</sup> But in stressing circumstances the outbreak of violence does not need to be heavily provoked, because the majority may feel threatened even when most of the minority group does not take part in violence against the majority group.<sup>377</sup> A small hostile section of the minority is enough to create the feeling of threat which is then spread to cover all individual belonging to the minority group. For example, the Tutsis in Rwanda were defined as the enemy through racial terms as the Hamitic race of the Tutsi and further on all Tutsi were equated with the RPF militants.<sup>378</sup> All Tutsis were cockroaches, like the RPF soldiers were often called, and like we can see from the following piece of interview, none of the Tutsi were no longer viewed as an individual, just a part of a group.

*Our Tutsi neighbors, we knew they were guilty of no misdoing, but we thought all Tutsis at fault for our constant troubles. We no longer looked at them one by one; we no longer stopped to recognize them as they had been, not even as colleagues. They had become a threat greater than all we had experienced together, more important than our way of seeing things in the community. That's how we reasoned and how we killed at the time.*<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Gourevitch 1998, 83.

<sup>373</sup> Straus 2006, 158, 159. Inyenzi means cockroach, but has also a secondary meaning as describing the RPF rebels. It was not until in the 1990s that the Hutu extremist started attaching a negative denigrating aspect to the inyenzi. Calling Tutsis and the RPF rebels inyenzi was very prominent part of the dehumanization process.

<sup>374</sup> Straus 2006, 136.

<sup>375</sup> Straus 2006, 162, 163.

<sup>376</sup> Howard 2000, 370; Valk and Karu 2001, 587.

<sup>377</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman 2005, 90; Žižek 2008, 41.

<sup>378</sup> Hintjens 2001, 26.

<sup>379</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 113 (Léopold Twagirayezu, killer).



Ironically, however, the RPF consisted mainly of the offspring of the Tutsi refugees who left Rwanda after the independence or in the 1970s. The average Tutsi still living in Rwanda had very little in common with the RPF. None-the-less, in Rwanda the differences amongst the Tutsi disappeared and for Hutus, they were all the same. Gerard Prunier (1995) has captured the mindset of Rwandan identification and the generalization of hatred towards the Tutsi well.

*Deprived of all political power and materially exploited by both the whites and the Tutsi, [the Hutu] were told by everyone that they were inferiors who deserved their fate and also came to believe it. As a consequence, they began to hate ALL Tutsi, even those who were as poor as they.<sup>380</sup>*

Generalized hatred is not the only option deriving from intergroup conflict. There is a consensus on in-group preference among scholars, meaning that it is commonly agreed that groups favor their own members. In fact, for example James Waller claims that *the mere perception of belonging to a group is sufficient to trigger preferential treatment of in-group members.*<sup>381</sup> Additionally, explanations of group conflicts usually presuppose that the factors that breed hostility between the groups also create internal solidarity within the group.<sup>382</sup> However, this does not mean that the in-group preference automatically produces out-group derogation. In other words, the group's need for positive social identity can easily be met through other means than the derogation of the out-group.<sup>383</sup> In Rwanda one example of using this in-group preference in order to raise out-group derogation or hatred and discrimination of the Tutsis was the Ten Hutu Commandments<sup>384</sup>. In the following commandments, for example we can see clearly the efforts to unify the Hutus against the Tutsis, while at the same time attempting to turn Hutus against the Tutsis.

*4. Every Hutu male must know that all Tutsi are dishonest in their business dealings. They are only seeking their ethnic supremacy. "Time will tell." Shall be considered a traitor, any Hutu male:*

- *who enters into a business partnership with Tutsis;*
- *who invests his money or State money in a Tutsi company;*
- *who lends to, or borrows from, a Tutsi;*
- *who grants business favors to Tutsis (granting of important licenses, bank loans, building plots, public tenders...) is a traitor.*

*[...]*

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<sup>380</sup> Prunier 1995, 35, 36.

<sup>381</sup> Waller 2007, 177.

<sup>382</sup> Gould 1999, 356.

<sup>383</sup> Howard 2000, 370; Valk and Karu 2001, 585.

<sup>384</sup> See Attachment 2 for full version.

8. *Hutus must cease having pity for the Tutsi.*
9. *The Hutu male, wherever he may be, must be united, in solidarity and be concerned about the fate of their Hutu brothers;*
- *The Hutu at home and abroad must constantly seek friends and allies for the Hutu Cause, beginning with our Bantu brothers;*
  - *They must constantly counteract Tutsi propaganda;*
  - *The Hutu must be firm and vigilant towards their common Tutsi enemy.*
10. *The 1959 social revolution, the 1961 referendum and the Hutu ideology must be taught to Hutus at all levels. Every Hutu must propagate the present ideology widely. Any Hutu who persecutes his Hutu brother for having read, disseminated and taught this ideology shall be deemed a traitor.*

Hostility aside let's look once more into enemy images. What is important about the enemy images is that an enemy is someone whose story you have not heard. Therefore in a context of ethnic violence the subject of violence is not another human being with a rich inner life filled with personal stories, but someone who is distanced from yourself and of your group.<sup>385</sup> In order to be capable of the violence the victim needs to be distanced from yourself on a mental level.

*I had killed chickens before but never an animal the stoutness of a man, like a goat or a cow. The first person, I finished him off in a rush, not thinking anything of it, even though he was a neighbor, quite close on my hill. In truth, it came to me only afterwards: I had taken a life of a neighbor. I mean, at the fatal instant I did not see in him what he had been before; I struck someone who was no longer neither close nor strange to me, who wasn't exactly ordinary anymore, indeed similar to those of the person I knew, but nothing firmly reminded me that I had lived beside him for a long time. I am not sure if you can truly understand me. I knew him by sight, without knowing him. He was the first victim I killed; my vision and my thinking had grown clouded.*<sup>386</sup>

Like we saw in the previous quote, ethnic violence is usually between neighbors. However, in many other cases the neighbor is a more abstract neighbor – one that neighbors your group, not exactly you personally. The violence is a question of borders, transgression of borders and land rights.<sup>387</sup> However, it is often this proximity between neighbors, that makes ethnic violence unthinkable and unacceptable. In Rwanda, where majority of the population lives in rural settings neighbors in fact are a lifeline to many.

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<sup>385</sup> Žižek 2008, 39.

<sup>386</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 20, 21 (Pio Mutungirehe).

<sup>387</sup> Mamdani in Social Register 2003, 2002, 140-144.

*...neighbors have great importance in Rwandan custom. A neighbor is indeed the only person who knows how you wake up, what you need, whether you can help one another. If you no longer know your neighbor you have lost such a great deal.*<sup>388</sup>

It is not the mere physical proximity of the victim but the mental proximity of the neighbor as well. In the case of ethnic violence the images of the neighbor are important for it is the abolition of the dimension of the neighbor – someone similar to us – that distances us from the other group and makes violence possible. Once the victim is no longer a neighbor, but an object whose pain is neutralized and who has been reduced to a property that has to be dealt with in a rational utilitarian calculus, the threshold for violence diminishes.<sup>389</sup> But abolishing the neighbor cannot be done simply through enemy images. What is needed is dehumanization and for there to be dehumanization there needs to be hatred and fear. These are the things we will look at next.

### 5.3 ROLE OF EMOTIONS

There is a debate over whether participation in ethnic violence is a rational choice or an emotional one. Roger D. Petersen argues that rational choice is difficult to justify, because one individual's actions against a collective group are likely not to have an effect on group level.<sup>390</sup> Therefore he has studied the meaning of emotions to participation. Petersen argues that emotions result from structural change based on the processes of conceptualization and evaluation, which he calls belief-formation. Petersen describes a loop of information, belief formation and the resulting emotion that are interconnected and produce an emotion based desire that is answered through action. He sees emotions as mechanisms that explain shifts in individual motivation.<sup>391</sup>

Petersen focuses on four basic emotions in his model of ethnic violence – three rational emotions fear, hatred, resentment and finally one irrational emotion – rage. When looking at these emotions there can be several emotions at work at the same time or different ones at different times.<sup>392</sup> Therefore emotion-based action is not a simple process.

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<sup>388</sup> Hatzfeld 2007, 87 (Sylvie Umubyeyi, survivor).

<sup>389</sup> Žižek 2008, 38.

<sup>390</sup> Petersen 2002, 32.

<sup>391</sup> Petersen 2002, 20-23.

<sup>392</sup> Petersen 2002, 20.

According to Petersen, fear is a result of a specific threat that another group imposes. Under the motivation derived from fear, the target of ethnic violence is the group that is perceived as the biggest threat. Petersen highlights that the theory is not supported if the target does not pose a threat or if it is not able to physically threaten the group. When dealing with hatred, on the other hand, the target of ethnic violence will be the group that has been frequently attacked with similar justification over an extended period of time. For hatred to be the driving emotion, Petersen argues that the attacked ethnic group must have been attacked based on the same justification. However, Petersen does not give in that the hatred must not be truly ancient. Similar attacks over several generations are sufficient. When it comes to resentment, Petersen sees the violence as driven by discrepancies in status hierarchies. The target of ethnic violence will be the group that is perceived to be furthest up the status hierarchy, but not so far ahead that it cannot be subordinated through violence. With rage, Petersen defines the emotion as a desire to lash out his or her frustration on someone if not anyone.<sup>393</sup>

The study of genocide has more commonly, however, focused on two of the four emotions that Petersen has studied. These two are ethnic hatred and fear. Before going into hatred in more detail, let me note, that in the case of Rwanda, a large part of the hatred that was present in the interviews between the groups is in fact what Petersen calls resentment. There is clear resentment between the groups that is based on the old hierarchies that have their roots in pre-colonial and colonial periods. These elements were already discussed in detail in chapter 3 and also in the previous segment on stereotypes, so I will not go into more detail here. What needs to be noted, however, is that even though people were aware of these resentments and even might have talked of them openly, there was a realization that their neighbors personally were not the targets of this resentment, but that it was directed against an abstract notion of Tutsi.

### 5.3.1 FEAR

As we already saw, violence inevitably incorporates discourses of difference because there is a need to form an enemy image to distinguish the enemy from one's own group. The forming of enemy images is closely connected to the ethnic hatred and ethnic fear thesis, for enemy images can only operate in a surrounding where there are aspects of ethnic hatred and fear present. Ethnic fear focuses on elite ambitions and moves. According to the ethnic fear thesis, elites foment mass fear of

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<sup>393</sup> Petersen 2002, 25-30.

the ethnic other with extremist media, riots and statements in pursuit of their political goals, so ethnic fears are closely connected to political manipulation of conflicts. Ethnic fears in themselves are not a part of ethnic identity, but rather a resource exploited by political leaders. The fear is always a powerful part in genocides and also in Rwanda, for a large part of the justification in genocides is done through fear.

When looking at it from the perspective of the victims there are basically two types of fears – fear of death and fear of existence. In the fear of death, we are dealing with the individual's ability to stay alive and their physical safety, that can be threatened with a show of violence.<sup>394</sup> In Rwanda public killings, excessive violence and the use of mutilation were guided to raise this fear in the Tutsi public. Existential fear on the other hand is fear over identity, social status and fate. When we are dealing with existential fear humiliation, shame and dishonor are in a big role<sup>395</sup> and these were the targets of propaganda and dehumanization. But if we look at fear from the point of the perpetrator there is also fear as a motivator. According to the ethnic fear thesis elites foment mass fear of the ethnic other in pursuit of their political goals. Many recent explanations of popular involvement in ethnic violence have been made through the security threat. Simply you have to kill your neighbor, before he kills you.<sup>396</sup>

There is debate over the role of the elites in constructing, manipulating and fomenting these emotions. Manipulative leaders will always exist, but in order to succeed they need the backing of ordinary people, in other words the support of the masses.<sup>397</sup> Aggressive ethnic or national policy is in fact impossible without the backing of the people and in order to support violence the people must believe there is a threat.<sup>398</sup> The elites can therefore influence the course of ethnic relations in many ways, but are the elites responding to the emotions of the people or manipulating them to develop. Petersen himself believes that seeing millions of individual as mindless robots participating in violence under the manipulation of their leaders is an oversimplification of the role of the individuals.<sup>399</sup> Petersen argues that the everyday interactions of the population and their emotional content work to constraint elites and as well as provide opportunities for mass mobilization of the people into violence.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>394</sup>Jones 2006, 265

<sup>395</sup>Jones 2006, 265

<sup>396</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 856.

<sup>397</sup> Baum 2008, 7.

<sup>398</sup> Marttila 2003, 85.

<sup>399</sup> Petersen 2002, 36.

<sup>400</sup> Petersen 2002 38.

In the Rwandan case, fear over the actions of the opposing group was valid and it was used to motivate people to take part, to save them from the fear of death. The 1994 genocide was organized in the wake of a violent massacre of Hutus that happened in the neighboring Burundi. The fatalities were around 50 000-100 000 but more importantly the massacre caused a wave of Hutu refugees of over 350 000 to come to Rwanda. Many of these Hutu refugees were very active in the *Interahamwe* in the spring of 1994. The events in Burundi also raised memories of the 1972 massacre in Rwanda when the Tutsis had organized a wave of killings designed to wipe out the educated section of the Hutu population. When combined with the 1990 attack of the RPF Tutsi refugee rebel army to Rwanda and the shooting down of the presidents plane at the eve of the genocide, it is somewhat clear that it did not even require heavy manipulation to raise the level of fear and the feeling of threat amongst the Hutus.<sup>401</sup> In fact, Scott Straus found out that 50.5 percent of interviewees reported being afraid of the RPF in 1994.<sup>402</sup>

*The inkotanyi, they were Tutsis; they were Tutsis so we believed the solution was to kill the Tutsis... We said we were defending ourselves against the enemy... All the things that happenend in Rwanda were caused by the war between the RPF and the MRND.*<sup>403</sup>

In the interviews the fears raised by the events in Burundi were at times even combined with the fear over the return of the Tutsi monarchy as is the case in the following quote. However, the fear of the Tutsi monarchy was prevalent only amongst the oldest of the interviewees.

*I was raised in the fear that the mwami – the Tutsi kings – and their commanders might return; that was because of all the stories old folks told us at home about unpaid forced labour and other humiliations of that sad period for us, and because of the awful things happening to our brothers in Burundi.*<sup>404</sup>

The Hutu Power promoted the extermination of the Tutsi as the final solution. The core notion of organic purity in the frame of Hutu Power regime was the elimination of the Tutsi threat to successive Hutu regimes in the name of the organic purity or ethnic cleanliness.<sup>405</sup> In the

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<sup>401</sup>Jones 2006, 265-267.

<sup>402</sup> Straus 2006, 124.

<sup>403</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 81.

<sup>404</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 157 (Joseph-Désiré Bitero, killer).

<sup>405</sup> Strauss 2010, 48, 49.

propaganda the genocide was seen as the final solution that would erase the problems for future generations.

*I think the possibility of genocide fell out as it did because it was lying in wait – for time’s signal, like the plane crash, to nudge it at the last moment. There was never any need to talk about it among ourselves. The thoughtfulness of the authorities ripened it naturally, and then it was proposed to us. As it was their only proposal and it promised to be final, we seized the opportunity. We knew full well what had to be done, and we set to doing it without flinching, because it seemed like the perfect solution.<sup>406</sup>*

Thus identity politics became a way to legitimize collective violence and to scapegoat the Tutsi population.<sup>407</sup> According to Scott Straus the Hutus were told that the desire to control, oppress and even exterminate the Hutus was in Tutsi blood. With this in mind they invoked fear in the Hutu public and presented the “final war” against the Tutsi as the only option that would save their lives.<sup>408</sup> The described fear over the oppositions possible actions against the physical security of the groups often create a powerful psychological projection. The opposition must be eliminated before it will do the same for us. In these cases the opposition is often first dehumanized and lowered to a brutal level before killing, because this lowered status is believed to justify the killing.<sup>409</sup> It is cumbersome to some extent why so many people went along with the Hutu Power propaganda, but if an ethnic public is scared of what might happen if the other group harbors aggressive intentions, this might be enough to increase their loyalty to the incumbent leader of their own group.<sup>410</sup> The incumbent leader in this case was the Hutu extremists.

In 1994 there was also a widespread and strong fear against the Hutu authorities. Many feared for their safety in case they did not take part in the killing. It was somewhat common that people who did not take part could find themselves and their families also killed as vengeance. There were penalties for not obeying and in some instances not following orders could lead to death. That is why many of the interviewees in Hatzfeld’s interviews seemed to share a common feeling of fearing the authorities more than the spilling of Tutsi blood in the marshes.

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<sup>406</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 53 (Ignace Rukiramacumu, killer).

<sup>407</sup> Hintjens 2001, 25.

<sup>408</sup> Straus 2010, 60.

<sup>409</sup> Jones 2006, 265-267.

<sup>410</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 854.

*Anyone with the idea of not killing at all could not let on, or he himself would be killed while others watched. Voicing disagreement out loud was fatal on the spot.*<sup>411</sup>

As already mentioned it was not only your own life that was at stake but also the life of your immediate family. Marriages between the groups were quite common in Rwanda before the genocide and a Hutu man could save his Tutsi wife, if he himself was actively taking part and paying the authorities bribes. A Hutu wife on the other hand could not save her Tutsi husband under any circumstances and even attempting to save her husband she would often also have to witness the murder of her children<sup>412</sup> before also losing her own life in the hands of the killers.

One of the actual interviewees also shared a similar fate. Jean-Baptiste Murangira who was one of the killers that Hatzfeld interviewed had a Tutsi wife. Throughout the genocide he was forced to kill and bribe in order to save his family, but no matter how actively he took part he was always living under fear of losing his wife and children.<sup>413</sup> Here are his own words.

*Me, I went through those festivities with a pretend smile and a worried ear. I had posted a young watcher to make rounds about my house, but I stayed on the alert. The safety of my Tutsi wife tormented me, especially during the drinking sessions.*<sup>414</sup>

That is not the only instance. The following extract is a common story amongst the interviews.

*Some young guys cut her to punish her husband, who had refused to kill... Afterwards the husband took part without whining- in fact, he was one of the busiest in the marshes.*<sup>415</sup>

### 5.3.2 ETHNIC HATRED

*To kill so many human beings without wavering, we had to hate with no second thoughts. Hatred was the only emotion allowed for the Tutsis. The killings were too well managed to leave room for any other feeling.*<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>411</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 11, 33-34, 43, 65-66, 70 (Léopold Twagirayezu, killer), 123.

<sup>412</sup> According to the racial identity system children took the ethnicity of their father and were therefore in the case of a Hutu husband and a tutsi wife considered as Hutu.

<sup>413</sup>Gourevitch 1998, 21-22; Hatzfeld 2003, 20, 87.

<sup>414</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 87 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).

<sup>415</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 68 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer), 69, 88.

<sup>416</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 208 (Alphonse Hitiyaremye, killer).



Ethnic hatred is based on the existence of deep rooted hatred between the groups that may lay dormant even over generations, but can then erupt into violence. Ethnic hatred played a big role in Rwanda, but it was not ancient. It is my assumption that the hatred was not natural but rather constructed over decades to serve a particular purpose, much like ethnic identities in general in the pre-genocide Rwanda. Also Fujii has noted this. She says that the historical record shows very little evidence of simmering ethnic hatred between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Instead, history shows evidence of relentless, or even at times violent, processes of state-building where rival elites competed for power and control. In accordance with the findings of chapter 3, Fujii also concludes that these processes transformed local power relations and turned the fluid social categories to more rigid ethnic categories.<sup>417</sup> In Fujii's interviews, people do not point to fears or hatred or when they do their reference is contextualized. People differentiate between those who hated Tutsi and those who did not and between those who participated out of fear for their lives or out of greed or jealousy. Fujii comes to the conclusion that ethnic hatred is more a result on inter-ethnic violence than the reason for it.<sup>418</sup>

The hatred can also be linked to manipulated emotions.<sup>419</sup> In fact, Waller explains with the help of Robert Sternberg, that three components of hatred need to be present in order for hatred to be sufficient to raise a feeling so strong that it might lead to the need to annihilate the group perceived as a threat. These three components are *negation of intimacy*, which is a form of distancing the other group; *passion* as a form of intense anger or fear that motivates a response towards the perceived threat; and finally *decision/commitment* which is the perceptions of devaluation towards the targeted group that is often nurtured by institutions.<sup>420</sup> This highlights the fact that in order for hatred to turn genocidal it needs to be institutionalized and nurtured by institutions or in other words constructed. Therefore, individual hatred is not enough to turn into genocidal violence.

No matter constructed or natural, hatred has a significant role in violence and war, including genocide, but how can such hatred be directed against a specific target? According to Helen Hintjens only some forms of hatred were nurtured in Rwanda in the period leading to the genocide. Disputes and hatred between the Hutu were actively suppressed whereas hatred against the Tutsi, the identified legitimate target or enemy, was nurtured.<sup>421</sup> Additionally, outburst of violence against

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<sup>417</sup> Fujii 2009, 73, 74.

<sup>418</sup> Fujii 2009, 102.

<sup>419</sup> Johns 2003, 374.

<sup>420</sup> Waller 2007, 187.

<sup>421</sup> Hintjens 2001, 26.

the Tutsi were also left unpunished. This goes in line with the view of in-group preference and out-group derogation that was discussed before. Putting down the disputes between the Hutus does not mean that disputes did not exist. In fact, as Joseph-Désiré Bitero, the leading official in charge of the genocide and its implementation in Nyamata, stated in his interview conflicts between different Hutu groups surfaced in the months leading to the genocide. His first victims were in fact Hutus that were protesting either for peace or for a full-blown war with the Tutsis, and not Tutsis.<sup>422</sup> In fact, disagreements between the Hutu in general were buried. Whatever the differences among the Hutus, it was drummed in the media that the Hutu shared something more profound, which united them against the Tutsi, who were seen as members of another race.<sup>423</sup> Even in the interviews this newly found Hutu consensus was noted and there were several mentions of how all the Hutu-Hutu quarrels were soon forgotten.

*After the plane crash we no longer worried about who has followed the teachings of the presidential party or the teachings of a rival party. We forgot all quarrels, and who had fallen out with whom in the past. We kept only one idea in the pot. [...] We obeyed on all sides, and we found satisfaction in that. Suddenly Hutus of every kind were patriotic brothers without any partisan discord.*<sup>424</sup>

Even though there is some evidence in the interviews to support that hatred had become a big part of the Rwandan society, like the following quote; *The Hutu infant was swaddled with hatred for the Tutsis before first opening his eyes to the world.*<sup>425</sup>, still for many of the killers that Hatzfeld interviewed talking of the anti-Tutsi sentiment was difficult. Many of them seemed more at ease discussing issues like their first kill rather than their hatred of the Tutsi. Many in the gang, including the leader of *interahamwe* Joseph-Désiré Bitero, did not seem to have any anti-Tutsi sentiment prior to the last few months before the genocide. Even Pio, one of the youngest in the gang said that his hatred was sparked only along with the killing. However, these men were one of the most active in the marshes. In fact, according to Hatzfeld's interviews it was in fact the most vicious Tutsi-haters in the group like Ignace that killed the least.<sup>426</sup> Ignace's old age may account for this, but still Hatzfeld's data seems to be in stark contrast with Straus' findings. Straus found that even though hatred did not affect the participation for many, for those who it did there was a clear correlation between the intensity of hatred and the level of participation in the killings.<sup>427</sup> As well as with the

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<sup>422</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 158.

<sup>423</sup> Hintjens 2001, 37.

<sup>424</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 13 (Ignace Rukiramacumu).

<sup>425</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 201 (Adalbert Munzigura, killer).

<sup>426</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 201, 202.

<sup>427</sup> Straus 2006, 151.

statement from Baum that the more strongly one identifies and connects with one's own group the more hostile and violent one also becomes in their feelings in regards of outsiders.<sup>428</sup> In the quote below we must note that even the interviewee is highlighting how talking of hatred has changed it's meaning. Therefore, the information in the interviews on hatred may not be truthfully represented.

*It is awkward to talk about hatred between Hutus and Tutsis, because words change meaning after the killings. Before, we could fool around among ourselves and say we were going to kill them all, and the next moment we would join them to share some work or a bottle. Jokes and threats were mixed together. We no longer paid heed to what we said. We could toss around awful words without awful thoughts. The Tutsis did not even get very upset. I mean, they didn't draw apart because of those unfortunate discussions. Since then we have seen: those words brought on grave consequences.<sup>429</sup>*

Léopold claims that awful words, were not accompanied with awful thoughts and to some extent this seems to be true. There were no mentions of hatred, especially in the form that ethnic hatred would suggest. Hatred was not the natural state of Hutu-Tutsi relations. In fact, interestingly one of Straus' interviewees notes that hatred was only something present in the thinking of the intellectuals. *There was hatred. But this hatred was limited to people who were educated at school, the intellectuals. Peasants did not know this hatred.*<sup>430</sup> This would also refer towards the constructed nature of the hatred that was present in Rwanda.

Let us end with a short summary on the meaning of ethnic hatred and ethnic fear. Both ethnic hatred and ethnic fear have often been used to explain ethnic violence, but in the light of the interviews from all three sources it seems that hatred was not a key motivator for the violence in Rwanda. This is not to say that there were no people who hated members of the other group, because those people surely did exist. For example, Ignace from Hatzfeld's interviews was one such individual. Additionally there was a view among the interviewees that this hatred existed among the educated elites, even though it did not manifest in their own lives. Many interviews point towards the fact that there was no ethnic hatred that penetrated the mind of all Rwandans. Additionally as we saw in chapter 3, the view of ethnicity as something naturally unchanging and hostile entity is incorrect. In fact, it has even been claimed that the notions of hatred were actually only a reserve used by the leading elite to affect the way the conflict was seen outside of Rwanda. If painted as an outbreak of

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<sup>428</sup> Baum 2008, 53.

<sup>429</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 206 (Léopold Twagirayezu, killer).

<sup>430</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 46.

age-old animosity the leading political elite could attempt to escape some of the responsibility for the events of 1994. We will look into one final feeling, greed in chapter 6.2.

## 5.4 DEHUMANIZATION AND THE ROLE OF PROPAGANDA

In the quote on the previous page, Léopold talked of the grave consequences of their words, but what he is really talking of are processes used for dehumanization. Even though the words seemed to lose their meaning, they had power. What they actually did was make the derogation of the Tutsi an everyday phenomenon and then slowly the Tutsis became of less value in the minds of the people. The whole point of dehumanization is to make derogative talk and eventually action seem normal.

*On the radio we'd hear that the inkotanyi had tails or pointy ears; even if no one believed it, it did us good to hear it. Those were not very nice jokes, but we laughed anyway. It was better than hearing nothing at all.<sup>431</sup>*

We already talked of the process of distancing, but dehumanization is more extreme. The process of dehumanization excludes members of the dehumanized group from the range of the moral community. Once dehumanized, one feels no obligation to apply moral standards that are reserved for fully human.<sup>432</sup> In fact, dehumanization can lead to emotional coldness where extreme evil no longer feels as extreme.

*They no longer were what they had been, and neither were we. They did not bother us, and the past did not bother us, because nothing bothered us.<sup>433</sup>*

One might think that these processes in themselves would also need to be extreme, but words like the one Léopold talked of already go a long way. The key is in normalization. If talking of killing and hurting a group is acceptable it already shows that dehumanization and distancing the Tutsis has been quite prevalent in Rwanda. This we can also see from the following quote.

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<sup>431</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 214 (Pancrace Hakizamungili, killer).

<sup>432</sup> Baum 2008, 172.

<sup>433</sup>

*We no longer considered the Tutsis as human or even as creatures of God. We had stopped seeing the world as it is, I mean as an expression of God's will. That is why it was easy for us to wipe them out.*<sup>434</sup>

In general, people extend compassion to other human beings but in times of conflict, entire groups may act like they have no common humanity with other whole groups of people. The human capacity to extend and especially to limit compassion gives racial ideology its fatal power, giving identity the power to sever social ties.<sup>435</sup> In order for groups to distance each other so far as to commit genocide, the meaning of the original difference must be highlighted. We already talked of the narcissism of minor differences earlier, but a short reception is in order. The difference between the groups is not necessarily real, but rather a difference that is diminishing or seizing to exist. In Rwanda the difference between the groups based on economic or physical features had already vanished. It was only the racial identity cards, and the form of income to some extent, that kept up the difference. The differences that will become the subject of narcissism are the unwanted traits that are projected to the enemy. As a result the other becomes a walking, breathing, living embodiment of everything the self wishes to cast of.<sup>436</sup> After a long process of dehumanization the other has been so thoroughly reduced from the self that its humanity is no longer visible and any act required for maintaining the boundaries between the self and the other, even violence or genocide, can be justified.<sup>437</sup>

*We no longer saw a human being when we turned up a Tutsi in the swamps. I mean a person like us, sharing similar thoughts and feelings. The hunt was savage, the hunters were savage, the prey was savage – savagery took over the mind.*<sup>438</sup>

At the time of the genocide using this talk was especially common before the killings. It seemed as it was used for igniting the Hutus or as a way to remind the Hutus of the lower status of the Tutsis.

*Before the killings, they used to harass Tutsis. They would lay ambushes to throw taunts and punches at them. Some in the gang spoke extreme words against the Tutsis, calling them cockroaches and threatening them with an evil end. The older ones especially did that, and it made the young ones laugh.*<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 136 (Léopold Twagiryezu, killer).

<sup>435</sup> Hintjens 2001, 27.

<sup>436</sup> Murer 2002, 214, 216.

<sup>437</sup> Murer 2002, 215.

<sup>438</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 42 (Pio Mutungirehe, killer)

<sup>439</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 89 (Clémentine)

Once again we can see the role of the elders in talking of hatred. Additionally other ways, beside talking were used. There were rapes, public humiliations and violence. Also there is an earlier history of dehumanization in Rwanda. The Twa were early on discriminated by both the pastoralists and the cultivators. They were not considered as entirely human.<sup>440</sup> In the discrimination of the Twa the contact with land, that was thought to make people impure, was used against them. The Rwandan belief that land is impure showed also in the dehumanization of the Tutsi, especially in Nyamata, where the Tutsis were forced to hide in the marshes covered in mud. This had also an effect on the Tutsis themselves.

One of the main tools used in dehumanization was propaganda. A lot of the propaganda was done through the radio or through cartoons. In cartoons the RPF were described as wild beasts, snakes, cannibals, rapists and capable of all sorts of atrocities. As was already mentioned while discussing the meaning of race in Rwanda, the biological elements attached to the identities in Rwanda meant that the characteristics of the RPF were believed to be the unchangeable characteristics of all the Tutsis. All Tutsis were the same, now and in the past. Therefore linking the RPF into animals and demons in the cartoon was in fact dehumanizing all Tutsis. At the same time these cartoons were used to depict the Hutus as innocent victims of Tutsi atrocities.<sup>441</sup> In fact, mentions of using derogative names such as cockroach or snake appear frequently in the interviews. Here is one example that also highlights the meaning of the radio.

*There are people like me who bad-mouthed the Tutsis easily. We repeated what we had been hearing for a long time. We called them arrogant, fussy, even spiteful. But we saw no such arrogance or haughty manners when we were together in the choir or the at the market. Not even in the cabarets.*

*The oldsters all had a hand in muddling things between us, but they did it in good faith, so to speak. Afterwards the radios exaggerated to get us all fired up. "Cockroaches", "snakes" – it was the radios that taught us those words. The evil-mindedness of the radios was too well calculated for us to oppose it.<sup>442</sup>*

One of the more important reasons was to create a sense of fear and hatred in the Hutu public. The meaning of propaganda, especially through the radio, in preparing the masses for the killings and in igniting the hatred featured heavily in Hatzfeld's interviews. Even though the radio was prominent

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<sup>440</sup> Taylor 2004, 361.

<sup>441</sup> Hintjens 2001, 43; Straus 2010, 58.

<sup>442</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 208 (Adalbert Mungizura, killer).

in the interviews and its role has been regularly cited by researchers as well, Straus has claimed that its role should be re-examined. Straus has claimed that the role of the radio propaganda has not been thoroughly examined. According to Straus there has been very little empirical research on issues like exposure, timing, frequency, reception and audience selectivity.<sup>443</sup> In his study on the role of the radio propaganda he found several factors that could suggest that the role of the radio was not as strong as has earlier been suggested. He does not dismiss the role of the radio, but rather sees it as sustaining and reproducing the violence and not as inciting it. However, he notes that reliable and comprehensive data is available and therefore there can only be speculation and not definite results.<sup>444</sup>

The remaining fact is that propaganda existed and that it was used to dehumanize the Tutsi as well as to make the Hutus believe that the only way to protect their own families from the coming Tutsi attacks would be to take part in the genocide.<sup>445</sup> Repeated reporting of RPF attack on unarmed civilians and reports on the wishes of the Tutsis to wipe out the Hutus in a campaign of ethnic purification was used to instill an environment of fear amongst the Hutus. Despite these reports and constant dehumanization of the Tutsis in the media people still continued their lives in rural Rwanda surrounded in a sense of normality.<sup>446</sup> A great example of the veil of normality that surrounded the propaganda and dehumanization is the following statement from Innocent Rwililiza, one of the survivors of the genocide.

*Those gentlemen were famous artists, great comic virtuosos. What they said was so cleverly put, and repeated so often, that we Tutsis as well, we found them funny to listen to. They were clamouring for the massacre of all the cockroaches, but in amusing ways. For us, the Tutsis, those witty words were hilarious. The songs urging all the Hutus to get together to wipe out the Tutsis – we laughed out loud at the jokes. Same thing for the Ten Hutu Commandments, which vowed to do us in. We got so used to these things that we didn't listen to the horrible threats anymore.<sup>447</sup>*

Also in Fujii's interviews people expressed shock at the sudden transformation of their neighbors and even family members from friends into killers. All of the people that Fujii interviewed said they could not foresee the outbreak of violence. Additionally majority explained that the relations between Hutu and Tutsi had been good before the outbreak of violence. Fujii explains further that

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<sup>443</sup> Straus 2007, 610.

<sup>444</sup> Straus 2007, 609-637.

<sup>445</sup> Gourevitch, 2001, 22; Hatzfeld 2003, esim. 9-11, 13, 65, 85, 123.

<sup>446</sup> Hintjens 2001, 45.

<sup>447</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 50 (Innocent Rwililiza, survivor).

even if some believed that some animosities or mass fears existed, none believed that the Hutu they knew would act on these animosities.<sup>448</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Fujii 2009, 90, 91.



## 6. JUSTIFICATION

In addition to the most common macro level explanations for the Rwandan genocides, many other factors have been used to explain the events. What is common for these factors is that none of them can alone cause genocide, but which have still had an influence in the events. Some of these factors are clearly based on cultural processes that have been used to construct the meaning of ethnicity in Rwanda or to make the violence seem more acceptable or simply based on ideologies that have been prominent in the society at that time. These processes, like construction and manipulation of identity, propaganda, dehumanization and forming of enemy images are often used to overcome intragroup problems, that might prevent collective against the enemy group. These processes we have looked at in the previous chapters, but these are not the only ways to explain the events in Rwanda. On studies of collective violence the issue of interest is most commonly not on how groups overcome internal obstacles to collective action and on how they form a cohesive group but on why different groups see their interests to be in conflict with those of another group.<sup>449</sup> In the days of the genocide people's participation was not necessarily a matter of choice. Instead like already mentioned everyone's participation was required in Rwanda and if it was not voluntary it would be forced by for example killing family members or by promising rewards. The rural and urban Hutu population was persuaded to kill strangers as well as their neighbors, friends and even family members.<sup>450</sup> In this final chapter, we will look at the factors used to persuade people and how they rise up in individual interviews as part of the feelings and experiences that the interviewees have used to justify the events and their actions to themselves. The factors in the previous chapters were ways to prepare them for the violence. The following are the ways they themselves justified action. Many of these reasons are rational.

According to Gunther Schlee (2004) people take sides in a conflict for two types of reasons. He argues that people take part in conflict either for reasons of belonging and loyalty or the advantages and disadvantages that may arise from identification with a certain group<sup>451</sup>.

The reasons are likely to overlap and interpenetrate. Especially in a situation where there is room for reasoning around identities and belonging. In these situations identity categories can be transformed, stretched or redefined to fit the needs of actors. They can be used either for widening

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<sup>449</sup> Gould 1999, 356.

<sup>450</sup> Hintjens 2001, 25; Jones 2006, 232; Mann 2005, 430.

<sup>451</sup> Schlee 2004, 136.

the group or for excluding people out of the group.<sup>452</sup> In Rwanda, group identification determined the side a person was on automatically around the time of the genocide. Possibilities of widening group requirements were few and this caused a lot of pressure on descendants of mixed parentage or who are in mixed marriages. As an example, we saw earlier the cases of Julius Gasana and Jean-Baptiste Murangira. Therefore, in a conflict like the one in Rwanda where participation was wide, taking side because of belonging loses some of its significance. We looked at the effects of ethnicity and methods used to manipulate belonging and it seems that for many group identity was more of a nuisance than a cause of pride during those 100 days. Therefore, despite manufactured notions of ethnic hate, actual justification for participation must be done mainly through the second category, which is advantages and disadvantages. The second reason uses a cost and benefit analysis on identity and how a certain identification may benefit the person in the conflict.<sup>453</sup> In the case of Rwanda especially this second category of reasons is very fruitful when we are looking at people who changed their behavior during the conflict. We will look into the motivation and justification of changing from a bystander to a perpetrator or from rescuer to bystander.

During the genocide even remaining neutral was a risk for your own security, since many Hutu were also targeted by the Interahamwe if they did not cooperate. In this environment of threat, the benefits of identification became more potent and according to my initial assumption led to more intense identification with the dominant group, the Hutus, and to more active participation.

## 6.1 NATIVISM, LAND AND OVERPOPULATION

The idea of nativism was already briefly discussed along with the idea of the Hamitic myth, but we must now look at it in more detail. The idea of local nativism has been prominent throughout Africa. It has been used to define one's own ethnic group as indigenous to a certain territory in order to exclude others from gaining access to resources and political power. Especially these claims of origin have been exploited to exclude fellow citizens.<sup>454</sup> Elliot D. Green studied the meaning of nativism in the inner population movements in Uganda. Interestingly he came to the conclusion that when it came to conflict between the groups it was not that the groups were different from each other, but that the Bakiga who were considered as the invaders were also

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<sup>452</sup> Schlee 2004, 136.

<sup>453</sup> Schlee 2004, 136.

<sup>454</sup> Green 2007, 729.

considered as foreign. Green found that the foreign or nonindigenous nature of the Bakiga was the key in driving the conflict. The original population claimed that the Bakiga should return to “their lands”.<sup>455</sup>

In the relations of Hutu and Tutsi it has always been the Tutsi who have been painted as the invaders. Even though there is no certainty of which group came first to the region the notion of Hutus (or the Twa) being the natives is strong. A good example of the notions of nativity among the Hutu, can be found from Liisa H. Malkki’s *Purity and Exile* (1995) where she studied notions of ethnic identity, nativism and ethnic purity among Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania.

Notion of Hutu nativism and Tutsi superiority developed during colonialism due to the Hamitic myth that described the Tutsis as a foreign invading race. Post-independence Hutu government did not reject this idea, but instead turned it around in their own benefit. Tutsi were from far away so they could not be considered as true Rwandan citizens.<sup>456</sup> While at the same time the Hutus were attached to the notion of “the people” in the name of the Hamitic myth and this made them the dominant or true group in Rwanda.<sup>457</sup> In the following quote, we can see the notion of Tutsis coming to the Hutus land, or as it expressed to *our land*.

*Maybe we did not hate all the Tutsis, especially our neighbors, and maybe we did not see them as wicked enemies. But among ourselves we said we no longer wanted to live together. We even said we did not want them anywhere around us anymore, and that we had to clear them from our land. It’s serious, saying that – it’s already sharpening the machetes.*<sup>458</sup>

In addition to some references to our land, like above, or some other indirect references to the foreign origin of the Tutsi, there was only one direct mentioning of Tutsis emigrating from Ethiopia, as the Hamitic myth would suggest.

*AT THE TIME, DID YOU THINK THAT HUTUS AND TUTSIS WERE DIFFERENT AMOKO? Yes, one cannot tell lies. There was an emigration. They came from Ethiopia with their cows, and the Hutus came from the center of Africa, but we lived*

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<sup>455</sup> Green 2007, 728.

<sup>456</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 862; Prunier 1998, 80.

<sup>457</sup> Hintjens 2001, 31.

<sup>458</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 206 (Pio Mutungirehe, killer).

*together well... There was hatred. But this hatred was limited to people who were educated at school, the intellectuals. Peasants did not know this hatred.*<sup>459</sup>

Still in Straus' interviews when asked if Rwanda is a country of Hutus, 94 percent answered no.<sup>460</sup> This goes to show that despite active propaganda declaring the Tutsis as foreign a huge majority still believed them to be legitimate members of the Rwandan society. Also the quote goes to show that even notions of hatred were not part of the way peasants saw the relations. According to the interviewee above, ethnic hatred was something only the educated were aware of.

It is hard to determine who actually came first to Rwanda or whether either group came as an entity from any specific region, since there are no remnants of Nilotic languages in Banyarwanda. In fact, some have even suggested since pastoralism is the more highly valued form of livelihood in the Rwandan value hierarchy it may be that it was the Hutus who were the later immigrants to the area.<sup>461</sup> However, when we look into the notions of nativity in Rwanda there is a key factor that has affected the lack of nativist ideology in Rwanda. In chapter 3, we discussed the indirect rule used in Rwanda. What made the indirect rule used in Rwanda special was that instead of dividing the Rwandan population into many ethnicities all with their own national authority, the Belgians divided the Rwandans basically into two groups – the Hutu, who were described as an ethnic group and the Tutsi who were described as a race. What is important is that ethnic groups have their own territories or native authorities, whereas races live intermingled amongst the ethnic groups. Since the Rwandan population was divided on a racial basis, there were no native authorities one group could claim as its own.<sup>462</sup> There were no questions of territory or boundaries. This explains why even though there were some notions of the Tutsi as foreign to Rwanda, 94 percent of the Hutu said they were still legitimate members of the Rwandan state. This also reinstated the notion that the violence in Rwanda was not ethnic or tribal, for it was not about issues of territory or boundary as tribal violence most commonly is. The violence was racial. It was over existence.

However, it is not a question of mere origins, but also high population growth and lack of land were issues in Rwanda. In his study of the Bakiga in Uganda Green also studied the connection between ethnic diversity, population growth and conflict. The correlation between the three is still unclear but still highly relevant to many developing countries since many of the worst conflict zones in

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<sup>459</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 46.

<sup>460</sup> Straus 2006, 131.

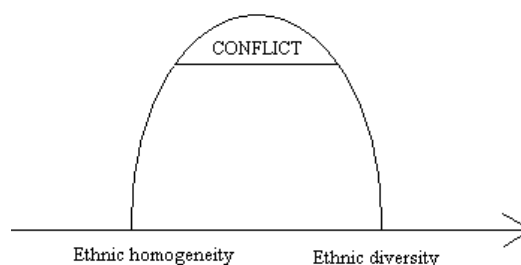
<sup>461</sup> Hintjens 2001, 29.

<sup>462</sup> Mamdani 2001, 26.

Africa for example are areas that have rapid population growth and extreme ethnic diversity.<sup>463</sup> Ethnic fractionalization does not necessarily equal conflict. It seems it is the countries that have both ethnic fractionalization and high population growth are the ones with repeating conflicts. Two of these countries are Rwanda's neighbors Uganda and DRC.

Among scholars, there is somewhat agreement that relative population growth promotes development. However, there is also agreement that high population growth raises to possibility for conflict. High population growth is seen to be correlated both with unemployment and resource scarcity. Both increase the probability of conflict, since high unemployment drives many young men to join rebel armies and since the pressure population growth combined with resource scarcity promotes conflict over land, water, forests and other natural resources. High population growth has especially proved hostile in a situation where the groups are growing with different speeds, because the change in inter-group dynamics causes tension.<sup>464</sup> In fact, even in his studies on the Bakiga Green found out that the conflict did not break out until the Bakiga became the majority in the region. This changed the power relations to the extent that it ignited the violence.<sup>465</sup>

Unlike population growth, ethnic diversity does not have a linear relationship to conflict. Actually, the relationship between ethnic diversity and conflict is an inverse-U, where high and low levels of ethnic diversity discourage conflict. Extreme ethnic homogeneity may prevent potential rebel leaders from gaining support on the basis of ethnic cleavages, while extreme ethnic diversity may prevent the ability of enough citizens to act collectively.<sup>466</sup>



Since the two variables seem to contradict each other Green comes to the conclusion that while ethnic diversity inhibits conflict on a national level, it does not prevent local communal conflicts from taking place, which is the reason why Uganda and DRC are the hot spots of conflict that they

<sup>463</sup> Green 2007, 717, 718.

<sup>464</sup> Green 2007, 719.

<sup>465</sup> Green 2007, 728

<sup>466</sup> Green 2007, 719.

are.<sup>467</sup> However, the highest potential for large scale ethnic violence is in societies where there is ethnic duality or a relatively small number of different ethnic identities.

Green's conclusion that high population growth and a divided society between two ethnic groups makes a society prone to conflict fits the situation in Rwanda perfectly. Rwanda is a small country, with high population growth and ethnically divided nation between the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. In fact, the lack of land was one of the main reasons for participating in the genocide, for example. For him it was not the hatred, but simply lack of land that motivated many people according to him.

*Actually, Hutus did not detest Tutsis as much as that. Not enough to kill them all, anyway. Evil spells much worse than stubborn hatred meddled in this ethnic rivalry and sent us into those marshes. Lack of land, for example – we spoke of seriously about that among ourselves. We could clearly see we would soon run out of fertile fields. We told ourselves that our children would have to leave one by one, seeking land over by Gitarama or farther away, towards Tanzania. Otherwise they would come under obligation off the Tutsi on their own hill, and we might see confiscation of crops we ourselves had sown<sup>468</sup>*

## 6.2 GREED

*When Satan offered the seven sins to mankind, the African took gluttony and anger. I don't know whether he was the first to choose or the last. I don't know what the White or Asians snagged for themselves, either, because I haven't traveled through this world. But I do know that our choice will always work against us. Greed sows more strife and warfare across Africa than drought or ignorance. And in the mayhem, it managed to sow our thousand hills with genocide.<sup>469</sup>*

Greed was present prominently in the interviews and explaining genocide through greed is not a new phenomenon. The chance of stealing the victim's property or buying it with a lower price has had a role in many genocides, including the Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda. In Rwanda greed was not desire for wealth as much as it was fear of poverty.

*I am happy to be African. I love African song, from Rwanda and Congo alike. I believe that Africans are the nicest people in the world. But they are greedy among*

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<sup>467</sup> Green 2007, 720.

<sup>468</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 205 (Fulgence Bunani, killer).

<sup>469</sup> Hatzfeld 2007, 3 (Claudine Kayitesi, survivor).

*themselves. It isn't the Whites who blow on the glowing coals of massacres: no Whites raised a machete in Nyamata or forced a Hutu to raise his. It was envy and fear of poverty.*<sup>470</sup>

In fact, in Rwanda there is a powerful precedent for both civilians participating in violence but more importantly on dividing the victim's property between the perpetrator. This was already the case in earlier massacres of Tutsis in Rwanda.<sup>471</sup> The first Hutu government was fiercely anti-Tutsi and it unleashed a reign of terror in the first months after independence which resulted in the death of several thousand Tutsis. The exile-Tutsi community responded to the violence by unleashing an unsuccessful invasion in 1963. To respond to the invasion attempt the Kayibanda government massacred between 10 000 and 14 000 Tutsis in the country. This set a powerful precedent for blaming the internal Tutsi population for the actions of the hostile exile community and for civilians participating in the violence and for the property of victims being divided between the perpetrators.<sup>472</sup>

As we already saw, in Rwanda high population density and fast population growth still generate competition over survival on a diminishing land and resources and this possibility of combating this threat has been seen as one of the motivations behind the genocide especially among the common people. Hatzfeld's interviews seem to support this view since poverty and greed do come up quite regularly in the interviews. Many killed to combat their own poverty and they seemed to believe that the more people they kill, the more resources there will be for the living. The property of the victims was generally seen as a resource that was open for all.<sup>473</sup>

*People would steal anything – bowls, pieces of clothes, jugs, religious images, wedding pictures – from anywhere, from the houses, from the schools, from the dead. They stole blood-soaked clothing that they were not afraid to wash. They stole stashes of money from underwear.*<sup>474</sup>

The greed or desire for better livelihood was mainly answered through stealing and looting. Everybody in Rwanda took part in the looting, even women and children did their part and the rise in the economic wellbeing was prominent in the interviews as can be seen from the following extract which describes the time of the killings.

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<sup>470</sup> Hatzfeld 2007, 65 (Médiatrice, survivor)

<sup>471</sup> Adhikari 2008, 184.

<sup>472</sup> Adhikari 2008, 184.

<sup>473</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 67; Jones 2006, 264-265; Prunier 1995, 4, 231-232.

<sup>474</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 80 (Léopold Twagirayezu, killer).

*But in the Tutsis' abandoned houses, we knew we'd find quantities of new goods. We started with the sheet metal, and the rest followed. The daily Primus, the cow meat, the bikes, the radios, the sheet metal, the windows, everything. People said it was a lucky season and there would not be another.*<sup>475</sup>

Some actually declared that it was not the killing, but the things that could be attained, that motivated them on.

*At bottom, we didn't care about what we accomplished in the marshes, only about what was important to us for our comfort: the stocks of sheet metal, the rounded up cows, the piles of windows and other such goods. When we met a neighbor on a new bike or waving around a radio, greed drove us on.*<sup>476</sup>

The profitability of the killing came also forth when discussing the harshness of the work and the way the profits were divided. Many saw the killing as easier when compared to farming and during the genocide. Pillaging was also seen to benefit all equally.

*We got up rich, we went to bed with full bellies, we lived a life of plenty. Pillaging is more worthwhile than harvesting, because it profits everyone equally.*<sup>477</sup>

Additionally especially the worries over having sufficient nutrition disappeared. Majority of the Rwandan agriculture is produced for local consumption and during the genocide abundances of food and merchandise were distributed for free from the shops to the farmers. Additionally majority of the Tutsi's cattle was killed and divided to the people for consumption. Eating the meat had also a huge symbolic meaning for the Hutus. Traditionally meat has been seen as a Tutsi privilege along with owning cattle and it is also seen as a sign of power and prestige. Moreover, they were rewarded for their actions with an unlimited supply of food and alcohol.<sup>478</sup>

*We roasted thick meat in the morning, and we roasted more meat in the evening. Anybody who once had eaten meat only at weddings, he found himself stuffed with it day after day.*<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>475</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 9, 58 (Alphonse Hitiyaremey, killer), 76-81, 87, 101, 125.

<sup>476</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 77 (Adalbert Munzigura, killer).

<sup>477</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 8, 54-59, 58 (IgnaceRuciramacumu, killer); Kressell 1996, 93-95.

<sup>478</sup>Jones 2006, 265; Prunier 1995, 4, 231-232.

<sup>479</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 54 (Adalbert Munzigura, killer).



Along with meat also alcohol was freely offered to all who wanted it and in the interviews it was apparent that many used alcohol in vast quantities throughout the genocide. The following quote also shows the envy that the cows caused among the Hutus.

*The cows and the land are what came before the jealousies about looks. Especially the cows, because the Tutsis had the habit of herding them together so you couldn't count anymore which were whose. They never wanted to admit how many they owned – not to their wives, or their sons, or the authorities. Us, we could see the herds going by, hidden in the thickets, tended by cowherds in rags, and it would eat at us. On the hills, secrets about possessions are dangerous.<sup>480</sup>*

However, as Alphonse points out, it is not likely that cows were truly the reason for the violence, no matter how much envy they raised. *I do not believe the cows presented a truly hateful problem, or else we could just have slaughtered cows.<sup>481</sup>*

The material security that was provided through looting was also enforced through rewards that were received from the killing. Killing was seen as a duty for all, but for individuals that were successful in it there were also handsome rewards for their activity. The rewards were also used to punish people. If you did not perform, you did not receive rewards.

*If you proved too green with the machete, you could find yourself deprived of rewards, to nudge you in the right direction. If you got laughed at one day, you did not take long to shape up. If you went home empty-handed, you might even be scolded by your wife or your children.<sup>482</sup>*

In fact, many did not necessarily wish to kill, but instead wished to be accredited for the killing in order to qualify for rewards. It was not important how many you had actually killed, but instead how many kills you were able to claim. As Elie Mizinge says; *We no longer counted up what we had killed but what it would bring us.<sup>483</sup>* This is in a way in dark contrast with the later statements where due to possibility of criminal charges people tended to belittle their involvement. Some saw violence as a form of careerism, as a way towards a better social standing.<sup>484</sup> We already saw the stories of Servilien, who killed to remain a counselor for his community and the one of Adalbert, who killed to become a *real leader* in his own words.

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<sup>480</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 207, 208 (Élie Mizinge, killer).

<sup>481</sup> Hatzfeld 2003,208 (Alphonse Hitiyaremye, killer).

<sup>482</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 33 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).

<sup>483</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 12, 31-33, 69, 76 (Élie Mizinge, killer).

<sup>484</sup> Baum 2008, 173.

As we saw many of the farmers found the killing as "more rewarding" activity and it was also the same in cities. In cities the genocide guaranteed better living conditions and opportunities for those willing to participate. *Interhamwe* tended to recruit members from the lower classes and many took advantage of the opportunity. The homeless, the unemployed and the petty thieves and small criminals were offered a possibility to steal, kill, rape and loot without any consequences for their actions.<sup>485</sup> The knowledge of knowing your actions would bring you consequences seemed to ease participation for some.

*Killing is very discouraging if you yourself must decide to do it, even to an animal. But if you must obey the orders of the authorities, if you have been properly prepared, if you feel pushed and pulled, if you see that the killing will be total and without disastrous consequences for yourself, you feel soothed and reassured<sup>486</sup>.*

Large missions organized by the *interahamwe* that brought people from other regions to Nyamata, however, caused some ill feelings among the people in the country side.

*People would bristle only when the leaders announced compulsory collections of money to pay the men who went to help in neighboring sectors. Folks grumbled especially about collections organized to give bonuses to *interahamwe* from nearby areas. As for us, we frowned on big operations, finding it more profitable for everyone to stick to his own backyard. We knew those who came long distanced expected large rewards. Deep down, we didn't like them; we preferred handling things ourselves.<sup>487</sup>*

The greediness combined with the endless killing had its effects on some of the killers. Jean-Baptiste paints a grim picture.

*The more we killed, the more greediness urged us on. Greediness – if left unpunished, it never lets you go. You could see it in our eyes bugged out by the killings. It was even dangerous. There were those who came back in bloodstained shirts, brandishing their machetes, shrieking like madmen, saying they wanted to grab everything. We had to calm them with drinks and soothing words. Because they could turn ugly for those around them.<sup>488</sup>*

Jean-Baptiste had a grim view of the future as well.

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<sup>485</sup> Jones 2006, 265; Prunier 1995, 4, 231-232.

<sup>486</sup> Hatzfeld 2005, 43 (Pancrace Hagizamungili, killer).

<sup>487</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 11, 12 (Élie Mizinge, killer).

<sup>488</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 44 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).

*If the inkotanyi had not taken over the country and put us to flight, we would have killed one another after the death of the last Tutsi – that's how hooked we were by the madness of dividing up their land. We could no longer stop ourselves from wielding the machete, it brought us so much profit.*

*It was clear that after our victory, life would be truly rearranged. The obedient ones would no longer obey the authorities as before, accepting poverty and riches the usual way. They had tasted the overflowing plenty. They were sated with insolence. They had cast off obedience and inconveniences of poverty. Greed had corrupted us.<sup>489</sup>*

However, Straus came up with some evidence which seems to contradict the evidence found from Hatzfeld's interviews. Straus claims that 61,9 percent of interviewees report having positive situation before 1994 and 48,3 believed they had a positive future ahead of them. This would suggest that they would therefore not take part in the violence for economic motivation. Additionally, his interviewees were not poor, undereducated or unemployed and not angry about their station in life before the genocide.<sup>490</sup> More importantly, the violence did not start in the poorest regions of Rwanda, as could be assumed if poverty and greed would have been the main motivation.<sup>491</sup>

For many of the interviewees economic gain was a major factor. In fact, in Hatzfeld's interviews economic reasons were the most used for justifying participation. Role of poverty and greed deserves due diligence also, because as Helen Hintjens has also noted, it is still unclear why these groups have been more easily directed towards killing in times of economic and political turmoil<sup>492</sup>. The genocide happened in a time of economic and political crisis when it was easy to manipulate public opinion. According to my hypothesis, the unstable circumstances were used to gain popular compliance through a mixture of terror and bribery. At the same time constructed forms of ethnic identities were used to justify compliance. They were formed around myths of origin and nativity, and these different forms of citizenship were enforced through discrimination and dehumanization in order to make the genocide thinkable.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>489</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 81 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).

<sup>490</sup> Straus 2006, 126, 127.

<sup>491</sup> Straus 2006, 127.

<sup>492</sup> Hintjens 2001, 32.

<sup>493</sup> Hintjens 2001, 25; Straus 2004, 86.

## 6.3 ROLE OF AUTHORITY AND OBEDIENCE

*I will tell you that Rwandans, we are like cows. When authorities say move to the left, we move to the left.*<sup>494</sup>

A good starting point to discussing the role of authority and obedience can be found from Straus's study. In his interviews 91% of interviewees claimed never to have disobeyed authorities.<sup>495</sup> That gives a startling view into the country where obedient law-abiding citizens turned into killers.

But let us start from the role of authority in the worldview of perpetrators. Authoritarianism has an especially strong role in the worldview of perpetrators. In an average population the number of perpetrators ranges from 2 to 15 percent when at the same time the percentage of authoritarians in an average society is around 15-20 percent.<sup>496</sup> So not all authoritarians are categorized as perpetrators, but it is likely that under hostile circumstances in societies where obedience and respect of authorities is highly valued more bystanders may take part along with the perpetrators. This is partly also due to the collectivistic nature of bystander identification. Obedience, conformity and order are some of the core values of collectivistic cultures and forms of identification.<sup>497</sup> Genocidal regimes tend to emphasize these collectivistic values because they make group membership central to personal identification and also because they foster a sense of duty and obligation towards the in-group.<sup>498</sup>

In fact, as we can see from this extract from Israel Charny on how the fascist mind works or is prepared to obey and believe in the dominant ideology we get a good look at how the genocidal mind operates as well. *"They punish you for not obeying: they instill in you a sense of superiority toward all those you consider inferior, because they know you observe the one and only correct way to do things... Fascist mind compels the person, couple or family to conform and obey the totalistic dictates of its ideology."*<sup>499</sup> The orders were simple and therefore obeying was uncomplicated.

*Rule number one was to kill. There was no rule number two. It was organization without complications.*<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 39.

<sup>495</sup> Straus 2006, 148, 149.

<sup>496</sup> Baum 2008, 119.

<sup>497</sup> Waller 2007, 173, 174.

<sup>498</sup> Waller 2007, 178.

<sup>499</sup> Baum 2008, 131.

<sup>500</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 8 (Pancrace Hakizamungili).

However simple the rules may be, there are of course always people who disagree. But among the killers, who were interviewed by Hatzfeld, voicing disagreement was not an option. For the people inside the gang disagreement meant death.

*Voicing disagreement out loud was fatal on the spot so we don't know if people had that idea. Of course you could pretend, dawdle, make excuses, pay – but above all you could not object in words. It would be fatal if you refused outright, even hush-hush with your neighbor.<sup>501</sup>*

Some however claim that killing people for not obeying was not common. In fact, there are few instances only that they heard of people being killed for not participating. In all of these, there is always some involvement with the Tutsis that is actually used to somehow lessen the significance of the act.

*I don't know anyone who was struck because he refused to kill. I know of one case of punishment by death, a special case, a woman. Some young people cut her to punish her husband, who had refused to kill. But she was in fact a Tutsi. Afterwards the husband took part without whining – in fact, he was one of the busiest in the marshes.<sup>502</sup>*

In Straus' interviews however there were many instances of forcing people to take part. Below there is a story of a man who was forced to kill his own brother, because the brother had married a Tutsi and because the man was suspected of helping Tutsis himself.

*When I arrived, the burgomaster said, “You, you have brought food for the Tutsis. So that you do not begin again, you take a machete and you have to decapitate your brother.” I refused. The burgomaster asked the reservist to force me to decapitate my brother and said if I refused the reservist would kill me. The reservist took me and gave me a machete. He put a gun to my head and said, “If you do not cut, I will fire.” So I cut. That is my crime.<sup>503</sup>*

There is no consensus why perpetrators develop. Some believe that genealogy has its own affect others believe it is a result of surroundings. Either way, perpetrators seem to evolve from

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<sup>501</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 70 (Pio Mutungirehe).

<sup>502</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 68 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).

<sup>503</sup> Lyons and Straus 2006, 41.

perpetrator homes.<sup>504</sup> This means that the way children were raised had a big influence. In fact, there is such a correlation between the perpetrator homes and the development of the new generation of perpetrators, that some have blamed the punitive, authoritarian and rigid child rearing practices in Germany and Rwanda for the unusually high number of people taking part in the activities during the genocides.<sup>505</sup> Also James Waller notes the influence of culture and ideologies as a part of the explanation for cultural characteristics, like a culture of obedience, that are relevant to the identity forming of the participants.<sup>506</sup>

In fact, many believe that the tendency of most ordinary Rwandans to do as they are told affected the participation in the genocide. Rwandan people are traditionally viewed as extremely obedient to authority.<sup>507</sup> Straus however believes that people did not participate because of a culture of obedience but rather due to coercion and pressure. He believes that to minimize ones role one would claim he was forced. Straus also believes this to suggest that in fact for many the true motivation was too horrible to admit which lead them to highlight the meaning of coercion.<sup>508</sup>

Obedience had a huge importance in Rwanda even after the genocide. The prisons are known for overcrowding and shortage of guards. Pesonen and Lintunen (2007) begin their book *Tuomio ja Sovitus – Ruandan kansanmurhan tilinteko* with a description of a few prisons in Rwanda. Although the obedience does not come up directly in their own writings it is present in every word that describes the situation in the Rwandan prisons. In the prisons, the leaders of the genocide still hold the power, but instead of giving out orders to kill, they are now in charge of the work groups inside the prison. In their example, a crew of 30 prisoners is working outside the prison repairing the damages caused to an administrative building in the genocide. The group is taking orders from a convicted genocide leader and guarded only by one guard. Yet still, work goes on and everyone follows orders in peace.<sup>509</sup>

Hintjens even goes as far as to suggest that special measures were used to make most Hutus view the killings as a civic duty rather than as an act of cruelty. Many euphemisms were used to refer to the genocide. Especially terms referring to collective works such as cutting trees, or clearing grass and weeds were used and especially the word *umuganda* was used to refer to the killings.

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<sup>504</sup> Baum 2008, 120.

<sup>505</sup> Baum 2008, 120.

<sup>506</sup> Waller 2007, 53.

<sup>507</sup> Hintjens 2001, 27.

<sup>508</sup> Straus 2006, 139, 140.

<sup>509</sup> Pesonen & Lintunen 2007, 9-22.

*Umuganda* is a form of collective work in Rwanda. Hintjens argues these coded terms and orders served both to disguise the horror of the orders that were demanded of people and also to remind the people that the killing was a civic duty, just like any other communal duty that they had to take part in. Taking part in these communal duties was highly valued in Rwanda.<sup>510</sup> In Straus' interviews taking part as a duty was very prominent. Many especially talked of taking part in order to protect the country or to protect one's *ubwoko*. Also Mamdani notes that the killings were often seen and called as a national duty. He however, also highlights that resisting to take part in the national duty invited harassment and often threats of violence.<sup>511</sup>

Since participating was seen as duty, many said they did not take part voluntary and as in the following quote, some even said that if ordered to do so, they would do it again, just as before.

*I went as someone who defends his country that was attacked. I thought that if the enemy came, he would kill me. I went as someone who loves his country, but after receiving command ... WOULD YOU SAY YOU PARTICIPATED VOLUNTARY? No. It was law. Whenever a leader gives you a command, you do it. Even now, if someone said, "Look for the enemy", we would do it. We are not above the law. If you disobeyed the authorities, you were killed. Even Hutus.*<sup>512</sup>

Interestingly it seems that especially lower level perpetrators in the Kibungo gang were incapable of remorse. In fact, while equally guilty of savagery bystanders seem to reflect on the events and demand forgiveness from both their victims and themselves.<sup>513</sup> According to Hatzfeld killers speak of forgiveness regularly, but not as something that should be asked for. They saw pardon as something that comes on its own and is available on request.<sup>514</sup> This phenomenon amongst the killers interviewed by Hatzfeld could be taken as a sign of an agentic shift. Agentic shift is a situation where a person feels responsible to the authority directing him but feels no responsibility for the content of the actions that the authority prescribes. While in this agentic state people reduce their personal responsibility by attributing the responsibility to the authority that they are unable to defy.<sup>515</sup> The people simply see themselves as performing a duty that someone else is responsible for. The interview material seems to support the possibility of such a psychological shift in the minds of some of the killers in Rwanda, for the role of authorities, the need for obedience and the

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<sup>510</sup> Hintjens 2001, 38, 39.

<sup>511</sup> Mamdani 2001, 1.

<sup>512</sup> Lyons & Straus 2006, 78, 79.

<sup>513</sup> Baum 2008, 123, 124.

<sup>514</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 198, Baum 2008, 124.

<sup>515</sup> Milgram in Waller 2007, 114.

lack of personal responsibility or more over the lack of any personal ability to affect the course of actions seemed to go hand in hand.

In Hatzfeld's interviews the role of propaganda is also noted in preparing people to know what is required of them and to make following orders easier.

*It was obligatory. A special group of hothead boys was assigned to search the houses of those who tried to hide. We feared the authorities' anger more than we feared the blood we spilled. But deep down we had no fear of anything. [...] When you receive a new order, you hesitate but you obey, or else you are taking a risk. When you have been prepared the right way by the radios and the official advice, you obey more easily, even if the order is to kill your neighbors.<sup>516</sup>*

The meaning of the Hutu extremist movements and especially of the *Interahamwe* has in fact become prominent along with the emphasis on authorities and obedience. In Rwanda the orders of authorities have traditionally been obeyed without much hesitation or questioning. Like Gerard Prunier states, the obedience to authority in Rwanda was centralized and unconditional.<sup>517</sup> With the history of rule by authorities going back to the early Tutsi kings<sup>518</sup>, it is not surprising that even during the genocide local leaders and judges had a big role in sparking the genocide. For example in Nyamata, the area where Hatzfeld contacted his interviews, on the first day of the genocide the village chief and the local judge gathered everyone together for motivational speeches and for giving the first orders to kill. Many felt these direct orders to kill relieved them from individual responsibility.<sup>519</sup> The same was true also for many in Straus' interviews.

*..the municipal judge in Kibungo sent his messengers to gather the Hutus up there. Lots of interahamwe had arrived in trucks and buses, all jostling and honking on the roads. It was like a city traffic jam. The judge told everyone there that from then on we were to do nothing but kill Tutsis. Well we understood: that was a final plan. The atmosphere had changed.<sup>520</sup>*

The culture of obeying is closely connected to traditional fatalistic Rwandan religious practices, which are a combination of catholic and traditional African beliefs. The religious culture is

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<sup>516</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 65 (Pancrace Hakizamungili, killer).

<sup>517</sup> Prunier 1995, 141.

<sup>518</sup> Waller 2007, 181.

<sup>519</sup> Gourevitch, 2001, 22; Hatzfeld 2003, for example. 9-11, 13, 65, 85, 123.

<sup>520</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 9 (Fulgence Bunani, killer).



characterized by a strong belief that natural phenomenon or once own fate cannot be controlled by human interventions. In the same manner as people accept their own faith they also accept the orders of the authorities. Most Rwandans are raised to accept their fate, instead of attempting to confront or change it. Even when faced with violence, many Tutsis seemed to submit to fate and some Hutus saw that this made killing them easier especially during the first days.<sup>521</sup>

*Many Tutsis showed a dreadful fear of being killed, even before we started to hit them. They would stop their disturbing agitation. They would cower or stand stock still. So this terror helped us to strike them. It is more tempting to kill a trembling and bleating goat than a spirited and frisky one, put it that way.*<sup>522</sup>

It was not only accepting the faith but also the fact that only few fought back.

*At the marketplace, I saw a man running towards me. He was coming down from Kayumba, all breathless and scared, looking only for escape, and he didn't even see me. I was heading up, and in passing, I gave him a machete low at neck level, on the vulnerable vein. It came to me naturally, without thinking. Aiming was simple, since the gentleman did not fight back. He made no defensive move – he fell without shouting, without moaning.*<sup>523</sup>

The last theme surrounding authorities, is the authority of the whites. Many saw the evacuation of the whites as a sign of silent acceptance. This gave people more freedom to accept the authority of local leaders and *interahamwe*, for there were no competing authorities to give opposing orders. As was already discussed before along with the nature of bystanders, it is as likely that bystanders would have followed orders of peace just as likely if not more, than orders to kill.

*We witnessed that flight of the armored cars along the road with our own eyes. Our ears no longer heard murmurs of reproach. For the first time ever, we did not feel we were under the frowning supervision of the whites. [...] We were certain of killing*

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<sup>521</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 32, 124; Kressel 1996, 92.

<sup>522</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 32 (Pio Mutungirehe, killer).

<sup>523</sup>Hatzfeld 2003, 23 (Léopold Twagirayezu, killer).

*everyone without drawing evil looks. Without getting a scolding from a white or a priest.*<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>524</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 85 (Adalbert Munzigura, killer).

## 7. CONCLUSION

The central question that is at the heart of this thesis is why people participate in genocides and other forms of collective mass violence. As we have seen answering that question is not simple. James Waller is right to rephrase H. L. Mencken in saying that *for every complex problem, there is a solution that is simple, neat and wrong*. Simplifying the answer into one, would be to overtly simplify the issue, but as Waller also notes, it is not that the existing theories are completely wrong, but that they are incomplete.<sup>525</sup> Therefore, the true reason is one of a combination of reasons.

In the first half of this thesis, we looked into the three general explanations – ethnicity, colonialism and leadership and saw that even though all of them affected the formation of identities, none of them alone was able to explain the events. First of all, the role of ethnicity in the case of Rwanda was complicated. Understanding ethnicity as a primordial and unchangeable is not the way ethnicity is seen today, which takes a lot away from explaining conflicts through ethnicity. Additionally, ethnicity as a cultural identity is not a factor causing conflict. However, as we saw ethnicity in Rwanda was not understood in cultural terms. Ethnicity was understood in racial terms and more importantly, it served as a political identity that was later polarized. In fact, I believe that the common phenomenon of explaining African conflicts through ethnicity derives from the political ethnic identities in Africa. The politization has made the identities part of the conflict and therefore ethnicity is directly taken as the culprit. But in fact, it is not a conflict between ethnic identities, but rather a conflict between political identities that have just constructed through ethnicity for political reasons. Understanding conflicts to be based in interests, whether political or economic, is vastly more widespread than understanding them through other factors and the construction of ethnicities should also be seen as an extension of political agenda.

None-the-less the meaning of ethnicity and race were crucial in Rwanda and their meaning should not be disregarded. That is because in order for ethnic violence to exist, there needs to be popular awareness of ethnic categories.<sup>526</sup> People need to be aware why they are divided in such a way in order to act accordingly. Talk of ethnicity in the interviews was seen as a matter of fact. Ethnicity was not used as an explanation, but the conflict was essentially seen as one between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Additionally, people shared several stereotypes and proved capable of distinguishing

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<sup>525</sup> Waller 2007, 137, 138.

<sup>526</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 850.

between the groups even though they seemed to understand that those stereotypes were not realistic depictions of reality. All these facts, show that ethnic division in Rwanda was strong and it reached all levels of society and awareness of these divisive identities was a prerequisite for group based conflict.

Secondly, colonialism has also been a major factor for many. Mahmood Mamdani for example sees that the way Rwandan identities were institutionalized during colonialism was the key event leading to the genocide. The form of rule, “the half way house between direct and indirect rule”, proved decisive, according to Mamdani, in starting the polarization of the identities in Rwanda. This was the time when first instances of avoidance begun to become a part of the Rwandan society. Colonialism was also the period when the hierarchies were turned into racial hierarchies. Existence of racial hierarchies, on the other hand, lead to the forming of ethnic resentment. According to Petersen in the case of ethnic resentment the violence is driven by discrepancies in status hierarchies. The target of ethnic violence will be the group that is perceived to be furthest up the status hierarchy, but not so far ahead that it cannot be subordinated through violence.<sup>527</sup> This view by Petersen seems to be plausible in explaining the process of defining the Tutsi as the targets of violence. Feelings of resentment are strongly based in history and this would also support the notion that identities as well as the feelings of resentment were constructed along a long period of time and were affected by events that took place during colonialism and independence.

None-the-less, talk of hatred was not common and in fact, some of Hatzfeld’s interviewees admitted that talking of hatred between the groups made them uncomfortable while others claimed that hatred only sparked at killing time. Straus claims, that the majority of people did not kill because they hated Tutsis or because of ethnic prejudice or antipathy.<sup>528</sup> Also Lee Ann Fujii claims that ethnic hatred was actually more a result of the violence and not a cause for it<sup>529</sup> which would support the fact that hatred actually sparked along with the outbreak of violence. I believe this to be true also when it comes to hatred on a personal as well as group level. But when it comes to the idea of three components of hatred, that was presented by Waller the situation seems different. Waller argued, that three forms of hatred – that he called negation of intimacy, passion and commitment – need to be present in order for hatred to be sufficient to raise a feeling so strong that it might lead to

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<sup>527</sup> Petersen 2002, 25-30.

<sup>528</sup> Straus 2006, 9, 96.

<sup>529</sup> Fujii 2009, 102.

the need to annihilate the group perceived as a threat.<sup>530</sup> Existence of commitment or perceptions of devaluation towards the targeted group that is often nurtured by institutions, was clearly present in Rwanda. State authorities were strongly discriminative and additionally radio and newspapers spread anti-Tutsi sentiment. Also negation of intimacy which could be achieved through dehumanization was strongly present in the interviews. Derogative speech had become an everyday occurrence and this talk was so commonplace that it had nearly lost its significance for some, which shows that it had been so ingrained in the society that instead of being a rare occurrence people had actually gotten so used to it that they had stopped paying attention to it. This leaves that in order for hate to be a reason for the spark of genocide all that is left is what Waller calls passion. Passion in this context is understood as a form of intense anger or fear. We already saw that this hatred did not exist on society level, but for some individuals it clearly existed. Therefore, it seems, that with hatred we are again in a situation where elements of hatred existed and surely affected the violence, but did not alone cause it.

The polarization of identities that started during colonialism continued all through independence, while new elements were added to the identities. The leadership that was the third general explanation had a role in restructuring the identities. Along with explanations around leadership, the role of fear over the RPF attacks and the actions of the Tutsi were prominent, as well as the death of the president in the interviews. Fear for security was a legitimate concern, although not necessarily as potent as the action it provoked. The threat of war had two effects. It legitimized the killing in the sense of killing enemies and produced an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear. Additionally the heavy local administration and the history of civilian labor provided institutional means to gain citizen compliance quickly.<sup>531</sup> Along with leadership, the role of authorities in the form of obedience and coercion is undeniable. This was prominent in the interviews and many claimed coercion as the main reason for their participation.

In addition, the pressures caused by the lack of land, population growth and poverty became potent during independence and especially in the pre-genocide period. The explanations and justifications revolving around greed and poverty were very prominent in the interviews, especially in the interviews by Hatzfeld. However, Helen Hintjens claims that the threats that were posed by economic recession and the imposing civil war against the RPF, were transformed into a single conflict over ethnic hatred and race fundamentalisms. Through this, the conflict was simplified into

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<sup>530</sup> Waller 2007, 187.

<sup>531</sup> Straus 2007, 631.

one between the Hutu and the Tutsi and it was painted as inevitable.<sup>532</sup> Hintjens' view of transforming the economic crisis into an ethnic conflict once again highlights the role of constructing group relations. Hintjens states that the Rwandans did not take part in masses because of economic reasons, but rather because of a system of terror and propaganda and because of misuse of Rwandan history that was used to manipulate people's views of the sources of social conflict.<sup>533</sup> This transformation was very prominently present in the propaganda that was surrounding the conflict. This goes also along with Straus' opinion that that majority of people killed because of the mechanisms that made existing categories change. He believes these mechanisms include war time uncertainty and fear, social pressure and opportunity to gain status and property. Hutus killed because they wanted to protect themselves from punishment and rebels.<sup>534</sup> Simply the main motivations according to Straus were pressure from other Hutus, security fears and opportunity<sup>535</sup>. Also Gerard Prunier, thinks that in the end the main motivation was not greed but belief in a deeply absorbed ideology and obedience. More precisely Prunier argues that the ideology and its effects are the most important factors in explaining Hutu peasants' participation in the genocide.<sup>536</sup> Gerard Prunier claims that the *Tutsi and Hutu have killed each other more in order to upbraid a certain vision they have of themselves and of their place in the world than because of material interests*<sup>537</sup>. The denial of the meaning of economic reasons does not take away the fact that notions of greed and economic opportunities were very prominent in the interviews. I believe that this division between the views of the interviewees and scholars, brings forth the original assumption that macro level factors do not penetrate to the individual level as determinant factors. Instead people see rational every day events, like the chance of getting the neighbor's property as justification to take part.

However, the above quote from Prunier shows the meaning of constructions. It is precisely the process of construction that makes the macro level reasons become invisible for the interviewees. Construction hides the fact, that people take part in violence for psychological or ideological reasons and aspects that are either naturally or more likely have been constructed or manipulated as parts of their identity. Also Waller, admits that there is no reason to assume that people who participate in violence would not be ideologically motivated and only thoughtlessly following orders. The level of ideological commitment however can vary vastly amongst the participators.

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<sup>532</sup> Hintjens 2001, 37.

<sup>533</sup> Hintjens 2001, 37.

<sup>534</sup> Straus 2006, 9, 96.

<sup>535</sup> Straus 2006, 97.

<sup>536</sup> Fearon and Latin 2000, 862, 863.

<sup>537</sup> Prunier 1995, 40.

Waller notes that there is in fact more heterogeneity than homogeneity in the levels of ideological commitment.<sup>538</sup> At the same time Fujii and Straus claim that many of the lower-level killers were not aware of these ideologies.<sup>539</sup> This might seem to suggest that these ideologies did not have any effect on the interviewees, but I believe that rather it goes to show how deeply ingrained they were in the institutions and everyday practices in Rwanda. Their absence from the interviews just shows that they had become a part of the worldview of individuals and had therefore ceased to be something that they actively saw as influencing their behavior.

Waller distinguishes between two types of causes; proximate causes and ultimate causes. According to Waller proximate causes refer to the immediate real time influences that affect the behavior of individuals, like hunger, whereas ultimate cause is the rational that lead to the evolvement of the proximate cause, like need for nutrition. According to Waller the model consists of three proximate constructions that interactively impact the behavior of individuals in conflict situation. These are cultural construction of a worldview, psychological construction of the other and the social construction of cruelty.<sup>540</sup> I will not go into the constructions that Waller sees as the causes of conflict for Waller is looking for the explanation from a predominantly psychological perspective, but I will however borrow the concepts of ultimate and proximate causes to build my own model of explanation for the genocide in Rwanda.

My initial research question had two parts. What were the Rwandan identities like and how they were constructed and secondly how did individuals justify their participation in the violence? We came to see that Rwandan identities changed to fit political needs on times of turbulence. First drastic changes came along with colonialism and the second waves along with independence and the pre-genocide period built on these changes. As a result of these constructions, the two main group identities in Rwanda – the Hutu and the Tutsi came to be understood in opposition to each other. This construction of identities was amplified by processes of identity formation such as enemy images and dehumanization and finally propaganda was used to construct feelings of hatred and fear and to ensure maximum penetration. This level of explanation that ultimately compasses all three general explanations through the notion of construction of identity as well as other elements attached to identity, forms the ultimate cause for the genocide. In my opinion, the construction of hostile, salient groups that penetrate all levels of society and more importantly that

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<sup>538</sup> Waller 2007, 185.

<sup>539</sup> Fujii 2009, 103; Straus 2006, 151.

<sup>540</sup> Waller 2007, 139.

are so ingrained in these identities that they do not question their relevance is the baseline that needs to exist in order for group based violence, such as genocide. Moreover, these identities need to be divisive and the construction needs to be based on the minimum amount of variables. For as was we saw in chapter 2 multifaceted identities lower the possibility of conflict. Existence of these identities is the ultimate cause or need for nutrition, so to say. We also saw how belonging to these identities guarded and for example people thought to be in danger of slipping out of the confines of their group identity were forced to take part to prove their loyalty to their own group. Upholding the lines between these identities this vigorously only shows how crucial this division was.

Which brings back to Straus and Fujii who claim that the political ideologies did not penetrate the local levels. I argue, that the base notions of the constructed identities were so deeply ingrained in the Rwandan society, that knowledge of the official propaganda was not necessary, for the effects of the earlier decades had already prepared the two groups for the outbreak of violence. Additionally, these constructions are not by their very nature conscious. Constructed identities work best when they are accepted both by the society and by the individuals. Therefore, the individuals are not necessarily aware of these constructions and their effects on their worldviews. Finally, knowledge for example the notion of Tutsi as an invading race was not necessary for participation, because the key element what was justified by the notion of Tutsis as alien, the racial hierarchy, had been established. It is just like Fujii herself also said, the killers needed not to believe in the ethnic claims for the violence to act them out. Just as Jean-Baptiste did not need to be able to name what he was doing in order to take part.

*The whole time the killing went on, I never heard the word genocide. It reached our ears only through the voices of international reporters and humanitarian officials, first on the road – and then in the camps in Congo.*

*This is a truth: among ourselves, we never said that word. Many did not even know the meaning of genocide. It was of no use. And yet if we were getting up every morning to go hunting, even when we were tired or had other workleft unfinished, it was certainly because we thought we had to kill them all. People knew what job they were doing without needing to name it.*<sup>541</sup>

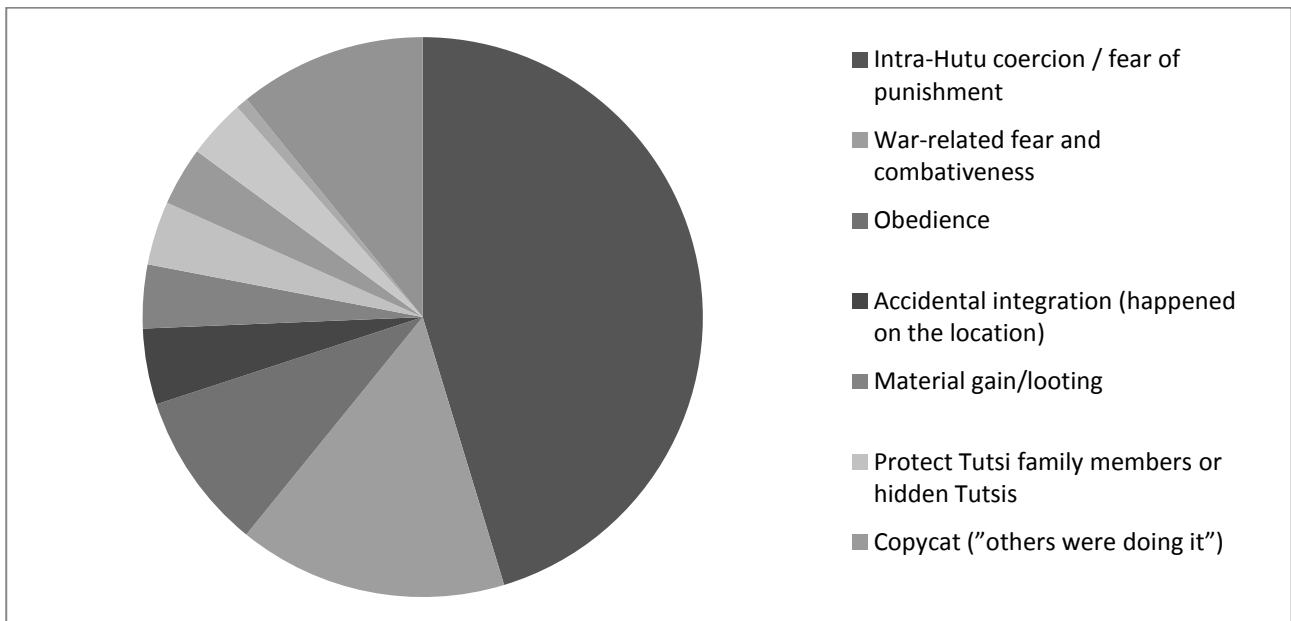
If identity was the need for nutrition, then what was the hunger? Fujii has argued that people justified their participation through situational circumstances. Similarly, Straus has highlighted the

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<sup>541</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 215 (Jean-Baptiste Murangira, killer).



meaning of factors like coercion and obedience, whereas Hatzfeld added material gains as one of the main motivators.



Reasons for participation. Formulated, based on Straus 2006, 136.

These elements were all prominent in the interviews, along with just happening on the location, killing to save others or killing out of fear that the death of the president had caused. All these reasons form the proximate causes that individuals consciously use to explain why they themselves took part. These reasons are very different from the ultimate causes that are the macro level causes most often used by scholars to explain the conflict in Rwanda. These reasons vary from individual to individual or moreover from situation to situation, for people behaved differently in different situations. These are also the reasons used by the interviewees to explain their change from bystander into a killer.

Finally, we must consider one question. If the way Rwandan ethnicities were constructed was the ultimate cause for the genocide, then why were the elements attached to it in such a minor role in the interviews, when compared to the causes labeled as proximate? The answer is simple. You do not consciously think every time you eat that you are eating because you need nutrition, you eat because you are hungry. In the same way, the ultimate causes had become a part of the way the world was seen in Rwanda, that people did not consciously think of them or talk of them. But at the same time they were part of every comment. They were visible between the lines.

There is one last question still to answer – what was the role between justification and intensification of group identity. We have already seen that identities were a crucial part in the genocide in Rwanda or that it in fact was the pre-requisite for the conflict, but that the identities were not used to explain the conflict by the interviewees. Only active explanations of issues relating to ethnic identity were some distant notions of nativism. However, I believe Fujii’s concept of *interahamwe identity* can erase this distance. Fujii claimed that group dynamics lead to people participating when in the presence of the group.<sup>542</sup> It appears that these groups and participating in them reinforced the group identification and actually used participation as the means for this intensification. Taking part made you more Hutu. While in these groups and under the heightened Hutu identity people participated more intensely. This led also to the high prevalence of justification through obedience and authority, for people did not see participation in the groups as fundamentally a matter of identification as a “Hutu soldier” but rather as one of doing as they were told.

To end with I will give one more explanation. This is an explanation from Joseph-Desiré Bitero, the municipal leader of Nyamata, who received a death sentence for his involvement in the genocide.

*It is buried too deep in grudges, under an accumulation of misunderstandings that we were the last to inherit. We came of age at the worst moment in Rwanda’s history: we were taught to obey absolutely, raised in hatred, stuffed with slogans. We are an unfortunate generation.*<sup>543</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> See chapter 4.1 or Fujii 2009, 174-179.

<sup>543</sup> Hatzfeld 2003, 164 (Joseph-Désiré Bitero, killer).

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# Appendix I. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

*Adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948.*

*Copied from <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>.*

## **Article 1**

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

## **Article 2**

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

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

## **Article 3**

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

## **Article 4**

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

## **Article 5**

The Contracting Parties undertake to enact, in accordance with their respective Constitutions, the necessary legislation to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and, in particular, to provide effective penalties for persons guilty of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3.

## **Article 6**

Persons charged with genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall be tried by a competent tribunal of the State in the territory of which the act was committed, or by such international penal tribunal as may have jurisdiction with respect to those Contracting Parties which shall have accepted its jurisdiction.

## **Article 7**

Genocide and the other acts enumerated in Article 3 shall not be considered as political crimes for the purpose of extradition.

The Contracting Parties pledge themselves in such cases to grant extradition in accordance with their laws and treaties in force.



**Article 8**

Any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3.

**Article 9**

Disputes between the Contracting Parties relating to the interpretation, application or fulfillment of the present Convention, including those relating to the responsibility of a State for genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in Article 3, shall be submitted to the International Court of Justice at the request of any of the parties to the dispute.

**Article 10**

The present Convention, of which the Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall bear the date of 9 December 1948.

**Article 11**

The present Convention shall be open until 31 December 1949 for signature on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State to which an invitation to sign has been addressed by the General Assembly.

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

After 1 January 1950, the present Convention may be acceded to on behalf of any Member of the United Nations and of any non-member State which has received an invitation as aforesaid.

Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**Article 12**

Any Contracting Party may at any time, by notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, extend the application of the present Convention to all or any of the territories for the conduct of whose foreign relations that Contracting Party is responsible.

**Article 13**

On the day when the first twenty instruments of ratification or accession have been deposited, the Secretary-General shall draw up a proces-verbal and transmit a copy of it to each Member of the United Nations and to each of the non-member States contemplated in Article 11.

The present Convention shall come into force on the ninetieth day following the date of deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

Any ratification or accession effected subsequent to the latter date shall become effective on the ninetieth day following the deposit of the instrument of ratification or accession.

**Article 14**

The present Convention shall remain in effect for a period of ten years as from the date of its coming into force.

It shall thereafter remain in force for successive periods of five years for such Contracting Parties as have not denounced it at least six months before the expiration of the current period.

Denunciation shall be effected by a written notification addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

**Article 15**

If, as a result of denunciations, the number of Parties to the present Convention should become less than sixteen, the Convention shall cease to be in force as from the date on which the last of these denunciations shall become effective.

**Article 16**

A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any Contracting Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General.

The General Assembly shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such request.

**Article 17**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall notify all Members of the United Nations and the non-member States contemplated in Article 11 of the following:

- (a) Signatures, ratifications and accessions received in accordance with Article 11;
- (b) Notifications received in accordance with Article 12;
- (c) The date upon which the present Convention comes into force in accordance with Article 13;
- (d) Denunciations received in accordance with Article 14;
- (e) The abrogation of the Convention in accordance with Article 15;
- (f) Notifications received in accordance with Article 16.

**Article 18**

The original of the present Convention shall be deposited in the archives of the United Nations.

A certified copy of the Convention shall be transmitted to all Members of the United Nations and to the non-member States contemplated in Article 11.

**Article 19**

The present Convention shall be registered by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the date of its coming into force.

## Appendix II. The Ten Hutu Commandments

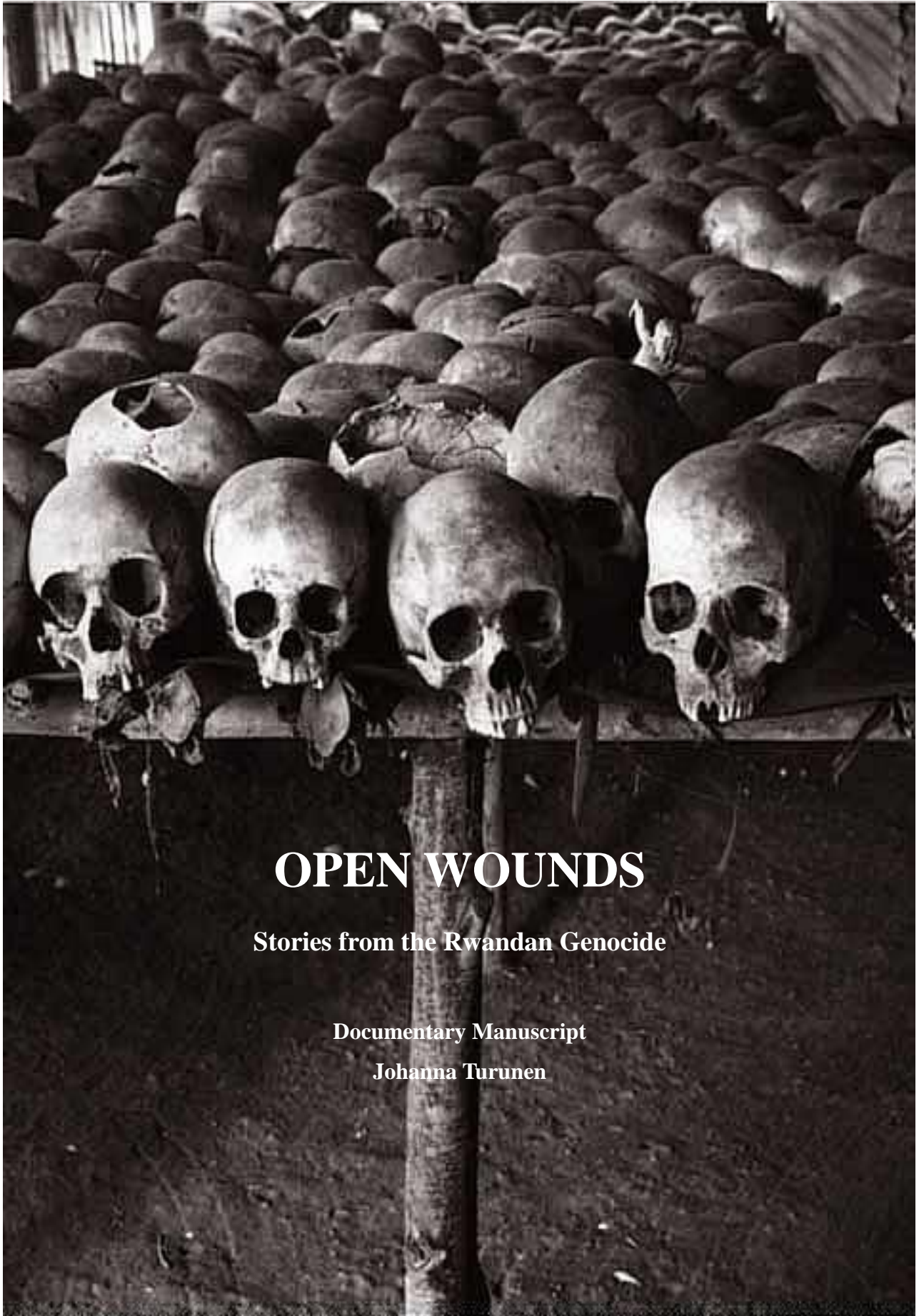
1. Every Hutu male should know that Tutsi women, wherever they may be, are working in the pay of their Tutsi ethnic group. Consequently, shall be deemed a traitor:
  - Any Hutu male who marries a Tutsi woman;
  - Any Hutu male who keeps a Tutsi concubine;
  - Any Hutu male who makes a Tutsi woman his secretary or protégée.
2. Every Hutu male must know that our Hutu daughters are more dignified and conscientious in their role of woman, wife or mother. Are they not pretty, good secretaries and more honest!
3. Hutu women, be vigilant and bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to their senses.
4. Every Hutu male must know that all Tutsi are dishonest in their business dealings. They are only seeking their ethnic supremacy. “Time will tell.” Shall be considered a traitor, any Hutu male:
  - who enters into a business partnership with Tutsis;
  - who invests his money or State money in a Tutsi company;
  - who lends to, or borrows from, a Tutsi;
  - who grants business favors to Tutsis (granting of important licenses, bank loans, building plots, public tenders...) is a traitor.
5. Strategic positions in the political, administrative, economic, military and security domain should, to a large extent, be entrusted to Hutus.
6. In the education sector (pupils, students, teachers) must be in the majority Hutu.
7. The Rwandan Armed Forces should be exclusively Hutu. That is the lesson we learned from the October 1990 war. No soldier must marry a Tutsi woman.
8. Hutus must cease having pity for the Tutsi.
9. The Hutu male, wherever he may be, must be united, in solidarity and be concerned about the fate of their Hutu brothers;
  - The Hutu at home and abroad must constantly seek friends and allies for the Hutu Cause, beginning with our Bantu brothers;
  - They must constantly counteract Tutsi propaganda;
  - The Hutu must be firm and vigilant towards their common Tutsi enemy.
10. The 1959 social revolution, the 1961 referendum and the Hutu ideology must be taught to Hutus at all levels. Every Hutu must propagate the present ideology widely. Any Hutu who persecutes his Hutu brother for having read, disseminated and taught this ideology shall be deemed a traitor.

PART II.

# OPEN WOUNDS

STORIES FROM THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE

DOCUMENTARY MANUSCRIPT



# OPEN WOUNDS

Stories from the Rwandan Genocide

Documentary Manuscript

Johanna Turunen

## **BRIEF SYNOPSIS**

*Open Wounds – Stories from the Rwandan Genocide* is a documentary describing the horrors of extreme ethnic violence through the eyes of the individual. *In the Face of Violence* does not take the easy route and show the gore and bloodshed of the violence, but instead it attempts to show the other side – the side which forces the viewer to look into the eyes of the victims and the killers and hear their voices and to feel their pain. *Open Wounds* shows the mental scars, the memories, the nightmares, the pressure to take part, the regrets, the sorrow and the fear. It shows how humanity was turned upside down and ripped apart in a matter of days. All in all, *Open Wounds*, shows the weight of the events that took place during the 100 days of killing in Rwanda in the spring of 1994.

By using interviews from the survivors and perpetrators of the 1994 Rwandan genocide the documentary gives the violence a face and makes it more comprehensible and real for the viewer. It has been said that suffering that is distant is never fully realized, because it fails to become real to a distant by-stander. At the same time, it fails to raise our emotional response. *Open Wounds* attempts to diminish that distance, making it impossible for the viewer to ignore the suffering that still shadows the lives of every Rwandan.

Besides giving the violence a face, *Open Wounds* brings forth the total destruction of the society that occurred during the genocide. It shows how the security networks disappear, how neighbors turn on each other, how even families are divided according to ethnic cleavages and how humanity seems to lose its basic core. More importantly *Open Wounds* shows you all this through the words of actual people, who have lived through the madness - and survived.

## **BACKGROUND**

Since independence Rwandan history has been a history of conflict. Combined with neighboring Burundi the two biggest ethnic groups of the region, the Hutus and the Tutsis, have taken part in several communal conflicts in the region fueled by political mistrust and access to power. These conflicts have resulted in the death of thousands and thousands of people. The most violent and destructive of these conflicts has been the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. In the wake of the genocide at least 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.

The genocide started on April 6<sup>th</sup> 1994 when the Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana and the Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira were killed when Habyarimana's plane was shot down

near Kigali Airport. The plane crash ignited the events that had been bubbling under the surface and unleashed a violent plan for ending the violence for good. The extremist Hutu faction had decided to “cut the tall trees”, meaning they had decided to kill the Tutsis into extinction.

The violence started instantly after the crash in Kigali, the capitol of Rwanda, and spread outwards. First of the killings were done according to lists marking the most influential Tutsis of the communities, those with either political power, connections to abroad or extensive wealth. From there the violence spread to the streets and to the hands of the common people. The fact that ordinary people took part is one of the reasons why the violence had such a profound impact to the



communities. The Rwandan genocide has been the first of its kind, where the controlling regime has managed to turn the ordinary citizens into active perpetrators of genocide. This had a devastating effect because it destroyed the communities from within, turning the violence personal and scarring all communities and cutting all ties.

In Nyamata, the violence begun on April 11<sup>th</sup>. The commune on Nyamata consists of 15 hills and it is located in the Bugesera region. Nyamata is surrounded by three marshes that lead to the rivers of Nyabarongo and Akanyaru and in the south

to Lake Cyohoha. The surrounding marshes come up in the interviews quite regularly for they were the place where majority of the killings took place.

Even though the violence lasted only a month in Bugesera, the region was one of the most volatile during the genocide. Founding two genocide memorials, one in Ntarama church and another in Nyamata church, is a big testament to it. In the Nyamata church over five thousand people lost their life in the course of just a couple days. None of the victims, that lost their lives in Nyamata, have been identified for sure. The bones of the victims of Nyamata church have been cleaned and collected into the church to remind people of the events. In addition, the church great hall has been filled with the clothes of the victims. They have been hanged on the ceiling and on the walls or piled on the floor. None of the destruction that was done to the actual building, like the bullet holes

have been repaired nor has the blood been cleaned.

In the documentary the church has a big role, since it is the one thing connecting all the characters. All of the people who were interviewed either were at the church during the first days of the genocide or lost family members in the church massacre.



## **FORM AND STYLE**

The document consists nearly solely of interviews so most of the visual material comes from the actual interviews. All of the characters are interviewed in specified location – a location which is important to them. Cassius is filmed in the Nyamata church where he escaped the interahamwe, Jean-Baptiste on his farm, Francine at her house, Pancrace at the Rilima prison and Innocent in the Nyamata primary where he used to teach.

In addition to interview materials there is only some short visual sections that show the Nyamata region and the town. These sections are used purely to give a needed break from the intense interviews and also to give to viewers some insight to the Bugesera region.

With the interviews there is a lot of focus put on the details. Due to the sensitivity of the subject and the strong emotions that the memories may cause to the interviewees there is a lot to be seen in extreme close ups or focusing on the movement of the hands, the eyes, lips or the nervous tapping of the feet. For that reason, a lot of close-ups will be used. Also in several occasions the background of the person speaking is used to give more information or to put the comment into context. For example, when the person is speaking about the loss of family members, the camera pans to his children, who are playing in the yard somewhere in the distance behind him.



## **CHARACTERS**

*Open Wounds* shows the interviews of five individuals from the Nyamata commune. These five people have all gone through the violence on one side or the other. Three of the people interviewed are survivors of the genocide, two are convicted perpetrators. All of the interviews that are used in this manuscript are from the books of Jean Hatzfeld (*Into the Quick of Life* and *A Time for Machetes*). All of the interviews are made on real people that talk of their own experiences. These exact interviews will not most likely be used in the final product, but they serve as to give an example of the stories that Rwanda is filled with.

### **Cassius Niyonsaba**

During the genocide Cassius was ten years old. Cassius escaped the massacres at the church of Nyamata and hid in the marshes surrounding Nyamata. While escaping the church he was injured badly to his head and he would have died if a stranger called Mathilde had not healed his wounds and saved him. Later Mathilde was killed by her husband when he found out that she had been helping the young Tutsi-boy.

Cassius lost his whole family in the genocide. After the genocide he went to live with his aunt, working on her farm and taking care of her goats. Cassius always dreamed of becoming a doctor or an engineer and hoped that his education would get him a ticket out of Ntarama. He returned to school for a while after the genocide, but he was only able to finish the fifth grade. This was for two reasons. For one, he could not stay in school, because he was needed on his aunt's farm and secondly because his head injury made studying beyond the fifth grade impossible for him.

### **Francine Niyitegeka**

During the genocide Francine was only 18 years old, but still already a mother of two and engaged to marry Théophile. Théophile and Francine got separated during the hiding. Occasionally they would meet in the marshes, but the constant killing and horror had killed their romance. They were almost like strangers meeting in the night. Barely exchanging a word and too afraid to touch each other. Then one day everything changed. The interahamwe found Francine and one of her children and hacked them. Francine survived, barely, but her baby boy died instantly. Later Théophile found

Francine lying in the mud and healed her back to life.

After the genocide they started a life together and got married. They now live in a small house with their one surviving daughter, Francine's two little sisters and four adoptive children who lost their whole families in the genocide. Like Cassius Francine still carries her wounds in her everyday life. She was badly cut in her torso and in her head. Her head injuries still force her to mainly stay inside during the day. The constant sun gives her extensive headaches. Due to being confined inside by her injuries she has started working as a seamstress.

### **Innocent Rwililiza**

Innocent was 38 years old in 1994. Before the genocide he was a teacher at the Nyamata primary school. He was and still is very liked by his peers and he has managed to keep a curious outlook on life and everything that surrounds him, even though everything he has been through.

Innocent lost his whole family at the massacre in Nyamata church. Not a day goes by that he does not think of them and still nearly daily he thinks he sees his wife somewhere, only to notice he had been mistaken. However, Innocent himself did not take refuge in the church. Instead he headed towards the eucalyptus forests in Kayumba. Thousands hid in the forests of Kayumba and only twenty survived.

In Kayumba Innocent was taken low by malaria and malnourishment, but he continued to spend his days running and sprinting trying to save his life. It was not until the end of the genocide that Innocent got his scars. He stepped into a landmine that had been hidden during the genocide and lost his leg.

### **Jean-Baptiste Murangira**

Jean-Baptiste was also 38 years old at the time of the genocide. Afterwards he escaped to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, just like many others. After his return, he was imprisoned and he was one of the first to be tried in early 1997. He was sentenced to fifteen years, a sentence that he did not appeal. However, he was released already in 2003.

Jean-Baptiste is married to a Tutsi and they have six children. Many think that the marriage was not

a sign of tolerance and love, because many successful Hutus married Tutsi women for reasons of snobbery. While Jean-Baptiste was incarcerated he heard hardly any news of his wife or his children. However, after his release he returned home to his wife and children. Jean-Baptiste worked as a civil servant before the genocide, but he is currently working as a farmer, even though he is still hoping to get a job as a civil servant.

### **Panrace Hakizamungili**

Panrace was twenty-five at the time of the genocide. He was young and strong, and well connected to the interahamwe, which is why he fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for several years. Panrace was convicted in Nyamata in a local gaçaça court. The courts were traditional tribal courts that were reinstated after the genocide, because of the vast caseload and the collapse of the judiciary. Panrace spent several years in Rilima waiting for his conviction. He was finally sentenced to 12 years in prison in 2002, but just less than a year later he was released from prison and sent to a re-education camp for four months before becoming a free man.

After being freed Panrace did not return to Nyamata, but instead started working in an old family farm with his brothers and sisters. Panrace has never married and he has no children.

## Scene 1. PROLOGUE

The screen is black.

Early morning sounds of the forest. A bird is singing somewhere in the distance.

The sounds start before the picture switches from the black towards a view of a mountainous forest, which characterizes the Rwandan landscape.

It is early morning. Everything is still covered in a blanket of mist and fog. The view is very beautiful and calm – almost too calm. Almost like a dream. There are no people, just the nature and the sounds of it.

A man begins to speak and the sounds of the forest die out.

Killer 1. Jean-Baptiste

*In my dreams I revisit scenes of bloody hunting and looting. Sometimes, though, it is actually me who gets the machete blow and wakes up shaking. He wants to cut me and bleed me out. I try to see who is striking me, but my fear hides the face of the man who wishes me harm. I do not know if he is Hutu or Tutsi, a neighbor or inkotanyi. I would like to know if he is a victim, to ask pardon of his family and hope for peace of mind that way, but the sleeping man refuses...*

Silence.

The screen goes black.

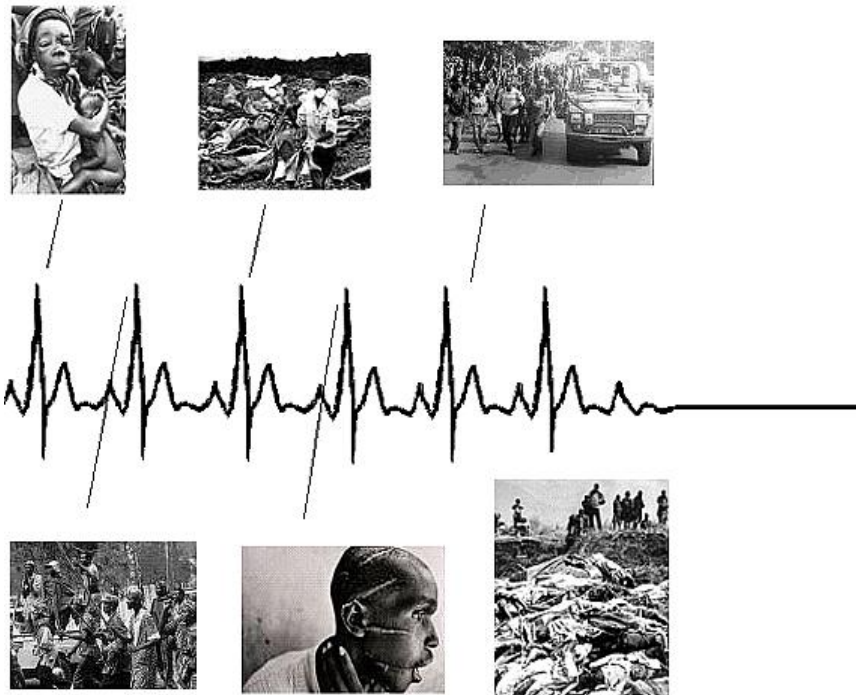
## Scene 2. OPENING CREDITS

The screen is all black and everything is silent.

A heart-beat starts, slowly and quietly at first, but growing stronger with each beat.



The screen is all black. Then in sync with the heart-beat a picture flashes in the screen with every beat - an injured woman with her baby, an angry mob walking angrily on the street, a man carrying away bodies from a mass grave etc...



The heart-beat flat lines and everything goes quiet.

The screen is black. The title comes on.

### **Scene 3. AT THE MEMORIAL**

Camera pans around the church and the courtyard. You can see goats in the bush behind the church and young boys playing football in the background. Camera pans to a young man, who is sitting in a hall doorway in front of the church.

As Cassius starts speaking, the camera focuses solely on him and his gestures and the background becomes fuzzy. It shows the scar on his head, his eyes, the hands that are clutched in his lap and the lips that are trembling with the words. Cassius is speaking slowly but clearly, taking a long time to think. His slow speech is due to the blow he got in the church massacre in 1994. His head injury has

made it hard for him to keep up.

Survivor 1. Cassius

*What I love most is to spend bits of time in the church courtyard - in the place where I escaped the massacres. Every day I come here. On Saturdays and during holidays I also come here. Sometimes I drive my aunt's goats, other times I take a friend who has a ball or I sit alone. Every day I look at the holes in the walls. I go to the shelves, I look at the skulls, the bones which were once all those people who were killed around me...*

When Cassius is speaking about the skulls, the camera pans to show the lines of skulls that have been placed on shelves inside the church.



*... In the beginning I felt the tendency to cry on seeing these skulls without names and without eyes looking at me. But little by little you get used to them. I stay sitting a long moment, and my thoughts go off*

*in the company of all those before me. I force myself not to think of particular faces when I look at the skulls, because if I venture to think of someone I knew, fear catches up with me. I simply travel amongst all these dead, who were scattered here and there and who were not buried. The sight and the smell of these bones causes me pain and at the same time soothes my thoughts though they trouble my head.*

#### **Scene 4. TALKING EASES THE PAIN?**

First the view of the fields comes to the screen. Endless lines of plots and fields, which are coloring the hills of Rwanda, the land of a thousand hills. Sun is shining.



From the hills we slowly move to Francine. First we see her farm, her small brick house and then we move inside the house. Francine and her family, which consists of her husband, her two younger sisters, her child and four adoptive children, are all living in a small brick house. She is small and shy, and like Cassius she also has a scar in her head. She was hit in the head by a machete, a blow which nearly killed her. By a miracle, she survived. She still suffers from her injury daily. She cannot work the fields anymore, because the sun causes her violent headaches. That is why she spends most of her days inside in the dark, working as a seamstress and taking care of the house and the children.

Francine sits alone in her kitchen, in front of the window. There is a sewing machine and a pile of clothes on the table. Through the window you can see her children working on their fields somewhere in the distance.

While Francine is speaking the camera zooms to her face.

#### Survivor 2. Francine

*With neighbors, we talk of the killings nearly every day, otherwise we dream of them at night. Talking does not soothe our hearts, because with words we cannot return to times past. But to be silent encourages fear, withdrawal and all such feelings of mistrust.*

*When you have lived through a waking nightmare for real, you can no longer sort your day thoughts from your night ones as before. Ever since the genocide, I have felt pursued day and night. In bed, I turn away from the shadows; on the road, I look back at figures that follow me. I am afraid for my child each time my eyes meet those of a stranger's.*

The camera switches to Pancrace, who is filmed at the Rilima prison. Pancrace is one of the convicted perpetrators of the genocide. Even though Pancrace has been released several years ago, his interviews are filmed at the penitentiary of Rilima, where he served his sentence. The Rilima prison incarcerated more than eight thousand prisoners, suspected or convicted of having taken part in the genocide in the Bugesera region, mainly in the commune of Nyamata. Once people were incarcerated for the genocide, the inmate population ten folded. The prison was intensely overcrowded, unhygienic and hostile. There is a lot more room now, for many of the prisoners have already been released.

Pancrace sits inside the prison on the prison courtyard, and you can see guards and hundreds of men dressed in pink clothes on the background. They are prisoners who are still waiting for their court date or the end of their sentence. The pink shirts and shorts are the only clothing the prisoners have. Pancrace is dressed in normal clothes, which separates him from the rest. He is sitting under a tree, in the shade. His eyes are fixed to the groups of men huddled on the courtyard. Then he gets up and walks to the prison building.

Pancrace is sitting in a small and dark prison cell.

#### Killer 2. Pancrace

*In prison, malaria and cholera have taken a heavy toll. Fear of vengeance has killed. The miserable life here and the fights have killed, but regrets – never. Life proves too vigorous against regrets and the like. Someone who killed too much in the marshes tends to abandon his bloodstained memories among the corpses he left behind. He wants only to remember the little he did in the marshes that everyone saw and that he cannot deny without being called a liar. He hides the rest. He mislays remorse that is too damaging. His memory serves his own interest; it zigzags to guide him through the risks of punishment.*

We switch to another man by the name of Innocent. Innocent was a teacher before the genocide and he has now returned to the school. He is sitting in his class room. The kids, the few that are able to attend school after the genocide, are all playing outside. After the genocide most children have been forced to work at home, because there are not enough people to take care of the plots and cows



anymore. Only a handful has returned to school.

Survivor 3. Innocent

*I know of one instance of a killer who buried alive his Tutsi neighbor in a hole behind his house. Eight months later, he heard his victim call to him in a dream. He went into the garden, he removed the earth, he pulled up the corpse, he was arrested. In prison ever since then, he walks day and night, carrying this fellow's skull in a plastic bag. He cannot let go of the bag even to eat. He is haunted in the extreme. Once you have burned alive in front of the church at Nyamata, organized hunts for old people in the woods and disemboweled babies from pregnant women in the marshes, you cannot pretend to have forgotten how you could have done this, nor that you were forced to do it.*

## **Scene 5. HATE, REGRET AND FORGIVENESS**

The same man as in the prologue starts speaking. He is now shown for the first time. His name is Jean-Baptiste. He is sitting in a field. He has a machete in his hand. He has just been clearing the field. He looks just like anyone else - a man in his 50s, slowly growing grey, wearing old and torn up clothes, sweating from the heat and the hard work. But if you look deep into his eyes you can see a deep feeling regret and of tiredness.

Killer 1. Jean-Baptiste

*In the camps many came to feel intimidated by what they had done, and others changed in prison, like me. I wrote short notes of apology to some families of victims I knew and had them delivered by visitors. I denounced myself and I spoke of my guilt to the families of people I killed. Now I'm going to take up ordinary life again, but this time with good will. I'm going to turn a kind eye on my neighbors bright and early every morning.*

The camera moves back to the fields, more specifically to the fields of Francine. The camera pans to the house from the fields and zooms to Francine. She walks out of the house and sits down on the veranda in the shade.

Survivor 2. Francine

*I do not want to weep vengeance, but I hope that justice will offer us our share of peace of mind. What the Hutus did was unbelievable, above all for us, their neighbors...Sometimes, when I am sitting alone, in a chair, on the veranda, I imagine this possibility: one day, in the distant future, a*

*neighbor will walk slowly up to me and say, "Good morning, Francine. Good morning to your family. I have come to speak to you. Alright, it is I who hacked your Maman and your little sisters, or it is I who tried to kill you in the marsh. I want to ask for your forgiveness." Well to this person, I would not have a good word to answer with. If a man has drink one Primus too many and he beats his wife, he can ask for forgiveness. But if he has worked a whole month killing, even on Sundays, how can he hope for pardon?*

We move back to Pancrace and the Rilima prison. The courtyard of the prison is filled with men wearing pink outfits. They are sitting on the ground and speaking in small groups. Here and there you can see guards with their weapons. The guards dressed in blue suits stand out like a sore thumb from a sea of men dressed in pink.



The camera moves into the prison and switches to Pancrace who is sitting deep in the darkness. The camera zooms to Pancrace and to the cross that is hanging on a chain on his neck.

#### Killer 2. Pancrace

*Speaking the truth to someone who has suffered is risky but not wounding. Hearing the truth from a killer is wounding but not risky. Both have their advantages and their disadvantages. So seeking forgiveness is a wrenching as granting it. Therefore many prisoners prefer begging pardon from God*

*rather than from their neighbors, and they push their way to the front during prayers and hymn-singing. They entrust their forgiveness to God and nothing to their neighbors. With God, words are less dangerous for the future, and more comforting.*

## **Scene 6. THE KILLING**

An old car is driving through a dusty and bumpy road. The car goes through the main street, past the church and to the edge of the marshes.

Camera switches to Francine who is alone in her house again.

Survivor 2. Francine

*One day, in my watery hiding place, I got caught. That morning, I had run off behind an old woman I knew. We were hunkered down in the water in silence. The killers sprang her first. They hacked her before my very eyes, without going to the trouble of pulling her out of the water. Then they meticulously searched the undergrowth because they knew all too well that a woman never hid alone, and they found me. I was holding my child in my arms. They slew it. I asked to be let up onto the grass and not die in the mire of mud and blood where the woman already lay. There were two men; of their faces I have not forgotten a single feature. They dragged me through the papyrus, and they laid me out with a blow full in the forehead, they did not chop my neck. Often, they left wounded people in the mud for a day or two, before coming back to finish them off. In my case, I believe they simply forgot to come back that way, which is why there is some work they left undone.*

We switch to Pancrace. He is sitting in a dark room inside the prison. Light sheds from the window to his face and his torso. The bars in the window make a stripe pattern on his face. His voice is slow but strong and certain. He sounds like a man who has heard it all and seen the worst that humanity can offer. He has come out intact, with no regrets.

Killer 2. Pancrace

*Killing is very discouraging if you yourself must decide to do it, even to an animal. But if you must obey the orders of the authorities, if you have been properly prepared, if you feel yourself pushed and pulled, if you see that the killing will be total and without disastrous consequences for yourself, you feel soothed and reassured. You go off to it with no more worry.*

*In a war, you kill someone who fights you or promises you harm. In killings of this kind, you kill the Tutsi woman you used to listen to the radio with or the kind lady who put medicinal plants on your*

wounds, or your sister who was married to a Tutsi. Or even, for some unlucky devils, your own Tutsi wife and your children, by general demand. You slaughter the woman same as the man. That is the difference, which changes everything. Also saving the babies was not practical. They were whacked against walls and trees or they were cut right away. But they were killed more quickly, because of their small size and because their suffering was of no use.

## **Scene 7. PICKING SIDES**

Footage from the neighborhood well where a small crowd of people are getting water and talking with each other. The group contains both Hutus and Tutsis. From the well the camera pans to the nearby fields. A Hutu is working in the field with his machete, another one is using a plow. Few Tutsis walk by with their cows. They are on their way to the fertile bushes where they feed their cattle.

Jean-Baptiste is sitting by a field.

Killer 1. Jean-Baptiste

*I know the case of a Hutu boy who fled into the marshes with the Tutsis. After two or three weeks they pointed out to him that he was Hutu and so could be saved. He left the marshes and was not attacked. He had spent so much time with Tutsis in his early childhood that he was a bit mixed up. His mind no longer knew how to draw the proper line between the ethnic groups. Afterwards he did not get involved in the killings. That is the sole exception. The only able-bodied person not forced to raise the machete, even coming along behind. It was clear his mind was overwhelmed, and he was not penalized.*

Innocent is walking on the main street. The main street in Nyamata is never empty. There are children coming from school, teenagers huddling in groups, people selling their crops, civil servants walking to the city hall. According to Innocent the main street is empty only when the local football club has a match at the stadium and even then the crowd flows to the main street during half time. Any other time, there are people going about their business or just simply talking with others to find out the latest gossip.

Nearly everyone seems to know Innocent. The main street is very familiar to him. He probably knows every inch of it. He spent ten years studying in the schools around main street, another fifteen teaching in them. Today he spends most of his time on the main street and the cabarets,

because he is afraid to face the shades of the smaller streets and his home.

Even though Innocent is a known teacher, the biggest reason why everyone knows Innocent, is because he is one of the twenty heroic survivors from the eucalyptus forest of Kayumba. Thousands hid in the forest when the genocide begun, only twenty survived. Most people wave to him, others stop and chat and offer to buy him a Primus, the rest just stare. He has crutches. Once you look closer you notice he is missing a leg. After the genocide Innocent stepped into a land mine and lost his leg. Ironic, since it was his legs that saved him during the genocide.

He walks along and the camera switches back to him sitting in his classroom.

### Survivor 3. Innocent

*I remember one evening, a few weeks before the attacks, I was returning home from work in the company of Hutu neighbor and colleague... Half-way home, he stopped, looked at me and said: "Innocent, you are going to be exterminated." I retorted: "No, I do not think so. We are going to suffer once again, but doubtless we shall survive." He repeated to me: "Innocent, listen to me, I must tell you that you are all going to die." I later happened upon this colleague in the neighborhood, riding along in an army van, pointing out the houses of people who had to be killed. He spotted me and then got on with his job.*

*In the commune today, we know of Hutus who were forced to kill their Tutsi family so as to escape death themselves. But only one case of a Tutsi who killed Tutsis to try and save himself, one person out of several tens of thousands of people. This fellow was a much hailed player for Bugesera Sport, the local football team; he wanted to convert himself into an interahamwe; he denounced his neighbors, he helped to kill, to try and save himself by the grace of his footballing colleagues. The interahamwe used him for their ends and then, at the end of all ends, slew him in the middle of a road.*

We switch back to Jean-Baptiste. Jean-Baptiste speaks about the one of the biggest choices of his life. He is still sitting by his field, but the camera pans around so that we can see his house with his family on the background. He is married to a Tutsi and during the genocide marriages between the two groups were not looked upon nicely.

### Killer 1. Jean-Baptiste

*I heard my name. They called me because they knew I was married to a Tutsi...Someone said from the audience: "Jean-Baptiste, if you want to save the life of your wife, you have to cut this man right now. He is a cheater! Show us that you're not that kind."... The crowd had grown. I seized the*

*machete. I struck a first blow. When I saw the blood bubble up, I jumped back a step. Someone blocked me from behind and shoved me forward by both elbows. I closed my eyes and delivered a second blow like the first. It was done. People approved, they were satisfied and moved away. I drew back. I went of to sit on the bench of a small cabaret, I picked up a drink and I never looked back in that unhappy direction. Afterwards I learned that the man had kept moving for two hours before finishing. Later on we got used to killing without so much dodging around.*

## **Scene 8. ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE CHURCH**

Film from the town and the market. The market is very busy. People are yelling. People seen some how hostile - glancing at the camera from under their eyebrows and then turning their backs on it. Camera pans the courtyard of the town hall. There is a lot of people walking around and going about on their business.

Background noise. People speaking.

Then the camera switches to Innocent.

Survivor 3. Innocent

*On the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, there was a great commotion in town. A crowd rushed to the town hall. We stayed two hours or so in the courtyard, waiting for words of reassurance. Then the burgomaster came out, dressed in his blue ceremonial costume. He declared: "If you go back home, you shall be killed. If you escape into the bush, you shall be killed. If you stay here, you shall be killed. Nevertheless, you must leave here, because I do not want any blood in front of my town hall." Women, children and the weakest began walking to the church.*



Footage of the Nyamata church. If footage of the church in its pre-genocide condition is available it should be used, rather than footage from the church's current state. The church suffered greatly during the genocide and it has been made into a memorial.

The camera switches to Cassius speaking.

Survivor 1. Cassius

*The day the killing began in Nyamata, in the street of the big market. We ran to the parish church. A large crowd had already assembled there, because when the massacres begin it is Rwandan custom to take refuge in houses of God.*

*Time granted us two peaceful days in the church, and then the soldiers and the local police came to patrol around the church, yelling that we would all soon be killed. The interahamwe arrived before midday, singing; they lobbed grenades, they tore down the railings, they rushed into the church and started chopping people up with machetes and spears. They wore manioc leaves in their hair, they yelled with all their might, laughing scornfully from the throat. They thumped left, right, centre, they chopped randomly. People who were not flowing with their own blood flowed in the blood of others, it was totally awful. Then they began to die without any more protesting. There was a great din and a great silence at the same time. In the middle of the afternoon, the interahamwe burned little children before the front door. With my own eyes, I saw them writhing from the burns completely alive, truly. There was a strong smell of meat, and of petrol.*

.After Cassius stops speaking, the screen goes black for a few seconds, and then a man appears on screen. The man is Pancrace.

Killer 2. Pancrace

*I don't remember my first kill, because I did not identify that one person in the crowd. I was in the church and I just happened to start by killing several without seeing their faces. I mean, I was striking and there was screaming, but it was on all sides, so it was a mixture of blows and cries coming in a tangle from everyone. Still, I do remember the first person who looked at me at the moment of the deadly blow. Now that was something. The eyes of someone you kill are immortal, if they face you at the fatal instant. They have a terrible black color. They shake you more than the streams of blood and the death rattles, even in a great turmoil of dying. The eyes of the killed, for the killer, are his calamity if he looks into them. They are the blame of the person he kills.*

At the end of Pancrace's comment the camera zooms into his eyes.

Cassius has stood up. He is standing in front of the church on the courtyard.

Survivor 1. Cassius

*I crept out of the church among the corpses. Unfortunately, a boy managed to push me with his metal bar, I dropped onto the bodies, and I didn't move anymore, I made dead man's eyes. At one moment, I felt myself being lifted and thrown, and other people fell on top of me. When I heard the interahamwe leaders whistle the order to pull out, I was completely covered in dead people. Later we took refuge in the marsh.*

## **Scene 9. THE HIDING**

Francine is sitting in her kitchen.

Survivor 2. Francine

*During the day, we lay in the mud in the company of snakes and mosquitoes, to protect ourselves from the interahamwe attacks... Here we lived days darker than despair. Every morning, we hid the littlest ones beneath swamp papyrus, then we sat on the dry grass and tried to exchange calm words. When we heard the interahamwe arriving, we ran, splitting in silence, deep into the leaves, and into the mud. In the evening, once the killers had finished their work and had turned for home, those who were not dead came out of the marsh. Those who were wounded just lay down in the damp riverbank or in the forest... We knew nothing of life anymore, except that all Tutsis were being massacred where they lived and we would shortly all have to die.*

Footage from the Kayumba forest.

Switch to Innocent, who is standing in the class window but then walks to a chair in front of the chalkboard. The camera focuses on the beat of his foot and the crutches, the way his fingers press against the handles and to his face as he turns his eyes towards the ground.

Survivor 3. Innocent

*On the hill of Kayumba, the situation immediately became somber. It is a eucalyptus forest as I have already pointed out. Eucalyptuses are tall trees which grow too widely apart for there to be any hope of hiding amongst them, unlike the dense papyrus in the marshes. So the bottom of the hill was encircled by interahamwe. In the morning they came up in rows, singing, and then shouting, they began their pursuit. To have any hope of escaping them, you needed to be able to do a hundred meter*



*dash in nine seconds. You had to slip through the trees, you had to duck and dive all day without ever slowing down. If you got tired or twisted an ankle, you were dead.*

We switch to Cassius who is still at the church.

Survivor 1. Cassius

*I was badly injured. I ought to have be dead, then I insisted on going on living. I do not remember how. A woman passing that way, whose name was Mathilde, found me and carried me off to a hiding place under the umunzenze. Umunzenze are giant trees. Every evening, in the darkness, she brought me water and food. My head was going rotten, I felt as if the worms were gnawing me. But the woman laid African medicinal leaves on my head. This good-hearted woman, she was a Tutsi, the wife of a Hutu administrator. When her husband found out that she had cared for a Tutsi child, he took her to the edge of the pond at Rwaki-Birizi, a good kilometer away and he killed her with a single thrust of his knife.*

#### **Scene 10. KILL ME!**

Survivor 3. Innocent

*I saw women throw themselves into the river, children in their arms, so their children's blood would not flow. Above all women, because women and children surely suffered greater torments than men.*

*One single time though, a day of sorrow, I decided to put an end to it all and fling myself into the Nyabarongo River. On the way there, a group of interahamwe surged forward and altered my itinerary; in some ways I owe them my life.*

The camera pans first to the street and the people there. There are musicians and singers, crowds of people. Then the camera pans toward a large building with a orange gate – the prison of Rilima.

Beyond the gate you can see inmates in their pink attire greeting family members close to the gate before going back in. The camera pans towards Pancrace who is sitting outside the prison now with his back against the wall.

First you can hear the noises of the street, but the sounds of the street disappear as Pancrace starts to speak.

Killer 2. Pancrace

*It was possible not to kill a neighbor or someone who appealed for pity, gratitude, or recognition, but it was not possible to save that person. You could agree together on a dodge, decide on a trick of that sort. But it was no use to the dead person. For example, a man finding someone with whom he had popped many Primus in friendship might turn aside, but someone else would come behind to take care of it. In any case, in our group that never happened.*

When Pancrace stops talking he stands up and walks to the crowd. We switch to Cassius who is still at the courtyard of the church.

Survivor 1. Cassius

*My first sister asked a Hutu of acquaintance to kill her without any suffering. He said yes, and he dragged her by the arm onto the grass, where he struck her with a single blow of his club. But a next door neighbor, nicknamed Hakizma, yelled that she was pregnant. So he ripped open her belly like a pouch in one slicing movement of his knife.*

**Scene 11. THE END OF LIFE**

Footage from the marshes. Francine is not at her house anymore, but she is now standing at the marshes. After the genocide Francine has never been able to go back to the church where the violence started, but she occasionally comes to the marsh. When she does a great feeling of unease takes over her. She seems small and she is shaking slightly.

Survivor 2. Francine

*It was a habit with us to hide in small groups. One day, the interahamwe sprang Maman from beneath the papyrus. She stood up and offered them money if they would but kill her with a single machete blow. They first chopped her two arms and next her two legs.*

*My two little sisters saw everything because they were beside her, and they were struck too. As for me, all I could hear were noises and screams, because I was hiding in a hole a little further away. I was not bold enough to spend the night with Maman. I first had to look after my little sisters, who were very hurt, but not dying. The following day, it was not possible to stay with her, because we were forced to hide. This was the rule of the marshes: when someone had been badly chopped, you had to abandon them there for the lack of safety....*

*Maman lay in agony for three days before finally dying.*

Innocent has arrived to the hill of Kayumba. He is surrounded by the tall eucalyptus trees.

Survivor 3. Innocent

*In the end, there were only us sprinters left. We had begun as five or six thousand; one month later, when the inkotanyi arrived there were twenty of us alive. That's the arithmetic. If the inkotanyi had lingered on the road one week more, our exact number would be zero....If the Hutus had not been so worried about getting rich, they would have succeeded in the exterminating every Tutsi in the country. It was our good luck that they wasted so much time pulling down sheet metal roofs, searching houses and squabbling over the spoils.*

We switch to Cassius, who has walked into the church. He is standing on the small aisle between the piles of clothes. You can see the altar in the background.

Survivor 1. Cassius

*In the church, I clearly recognized one neighboring man who was thumping. He was from Ntarama, and he thumped as though he could not stop himself. He was more than just out of breath. Often near the market I come across his family which has returned to its plot and that makes me feel uneasy. I know he is locked up in the prison at Rilima. I do not think he should live anymore; because a man who has thumped too much with his club has not a thought for those who he has killed and how he killed them, and he is never going to lose his appetite for killing. In the church I saw how ferocity can replace kindness in a man's heart, faster than a rainstorm. It is a terrible anxiety which unsettles me.*



Jean-Baptiste is still in his fields. He has his machete in his hands.

Killer 1. Jean-Baptiste

*If the inkotanyi had not taken over the country and put us to flight, we would have killed one another after the death of the last Tutsi – that's how hooked we were by the madness of dividing up their land. We could no longer stop ourselves from wielding the machete; it bought us so much profit.*

When Jean-Baptiste stops talking he throws the machete to the ground and walks away from the camera.

The screen goes black and the end credits begin.