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GENOCIDE IN RWANDA: UNDERSTANDING WHY THEY DIED

by

JOSEPH SAMBOU

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
Graduate Faculty in Liberal Studies satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree
of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

Genocide in Rwanda: Understanding Why They Died

by

Joseph Sambou

Advisor: Glenn Petersen

The primary objective of this research is to critically examine the elements that caused the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and provide an intelligible, logical explanation of why the victims were killed. I will also reveal how many civilian lives could have been saved if the international community had intervened appropriately. It is my contention that to understand why the 1994 Rwandan genocide occurred, three important and closely interconnected dynamics in the history of Rwanda need to be conceptualized - because absent one of them the genocide would not have taken place. First, the colonial political legacy, which established the political identities of the Hutu and Tutsi and glorified the Tutsi over the Hutu, initiated the animosity between the Hutu and Tutsi that precipitated a cascade of violent events leading to the genocide. Second, the 1959 revolution, which marked a strong demand for decolonization and freedom from the Tutsi absolute monarchy by the Hutu. This demand for decolonization and liberation ushered in a restructuring that vested the majority Hutu with absolute control and enforced their identities as the “rightful native” of Rwanda and the minority Tutsi as “nonindigenous.” Third, the invasion of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1990 - which Hutu extremists perceived as a challenge to “Hutu Power” and, a signal of the return to the days of servitude, was the last straw.

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Introduction

The systematic targeting and killing of a particular group or groups of people based on their race, gender, creed, origin, or ethnicity – otherwise known today as genocide – has been a constant evil presence that has been part of the history of humankind for many centuries. For example: The Greeks’ destruction of Troy; the Roman army’s demolition of the people of Carthage; and the Emperor Genghis Khan’s genocidal reign in Asia (Feierstein 2014). In the Old Testament, there are many stories in which armies were ordered to annihilate particular groups – including their women and children – such that they cease to exist as an identity. It is not clear when the word “genocide” itself was coined, but “[T]he term “genocide” was first used by the Polish-Jewish legal scholar Raphael Lemkin at a conference in Madrid in 1933” (ibid). Some anthropologists that have studied the history of genocide attribute the genesis of the term right after Christ. Notwithstanding, the gravity and severity in which genocides have been carried out over the years have differed. Some were carried out in such controlled, small scale that even calling them genocide could stir controversy. For example, Columbus’ encounter and subsequent annihilation of the indigenous people in America; the cultural destruction and extermination of the Dakota people and other native groups by the United States are events that provoke heated debates whenever they are referred to as genocides (Nunpa 2013). However, others - such as the terrible ordeal of the Jews in the hands of the German Nazi Party - were more pervasive and obvious. Even more recent is a case that provoked the writing of this paper: the Rwanda Genocide of 1994. The aim of this paper is to critically analyze the causes of the 1994 Rwandan genocide and provide a more intelligible understanding of why it happened.

The postcolonial era in the vast African continent left many African states in a dire struggle for survival and societies searching for a sense of indigeneity. Rwanda is no exception

to this phenomenon. Of course, not all outcomes of colonialism are negative or necessarily bad. Some societies have benefited – and still do – as a result of their colonial experience. For example, some had access to modern medicine to fight diseases that were deemed incurable with local, traditional medicine. Others experienced improved infrastructure, education, and progressive systems of governance and economic management. However, there are societies like in Rwanda whose encounter with Europeans and subsequent colonization proved utterly ruinous.

The consequences of colonialism in Rwanda started to manifest almost immediately after the 1959 revolution. But the most brutal effect of that era was realized starting on April 6, 1994, when within a period of just 100 days, 800,000 Rwandans were brutally murdered in one of the most horrifying conflicts of the 20st century (an average of 8000 people each day). The genocide was precipitated by a culmination of politically motivated violent events and a civil war during a four year period that claimed the lives of thousands of people in Rwanda. The Slaughter, which began with the assassination of the country's president when his plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile, was perpetrated and directed by members of a very influential Hutu extremist group (the *Akazu*) in an attempt to wipe the minority Tutsi group in Rwanda off the face of the earth. Some reports even indicate that up to a million people were slaughtered. According to Peterson (2001), “[T]he nature of the killing, with so many thrown into pit latrines or buried and dissolving in dank mass graves, makes an accurate count impossible.” For three months Tutsis, including some moderate Hutus and Tutsi sympathizers, were systematically targeted and butchered to death using machetes, guns, clubs, garden tools, and other sharp and heavy objects that could bleed the life out of the human body. The aftermath of that atrocious event has left politicians, scholars and philosophers, who were already overcome by similar upsetting events like the Holocaust that the Jews endured in Nazi Germany, searching for

answers to understand why they died. “Understanding why they died is the best and most fitting memorial we can raise for the victims” (Hintjens 1999).

As a consequence, this paper asks the following questions: 1) why did the Rwanda genocide occur, or why did the Hutu want to bring the extinction of the Tutsi? 2) How did the Hutu extremists go about orchestrating the genocide? 3) What postcolonial system of administration or political organizations were implemented that facilitated the genocide? 4) What justification(s) did the Hutu give for attempting to annihilate the entire Tutsi ethnic group? The main argument in this paper is that the cause of the Rwanda genocide can be attributed to three different but equally significant and devastating events: The Legacy of colonialism; the 1959 Revolution, and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invasion of 1990. I will also attempt to demonstrate how the international community could have significantly decreased the civilian death toll when the killing started. As stated earlier, the national suicide in Rwanda has netted the attention of scholars in virtually every discipline in academia. What follows is a review of what some of them have written about it.

Current Literature

The inhumane nature of genocidal violence motivated an overwhelming number of political analysts and scholars to pay particular attention to understanding the causes of genocide, and as a result several experts have since surfaced. For most of them (Mamdani 2001; Lemarchand 1995; Hintjens 1999) however, their focus has been on the effects of genocide - from its onset, during, and termination. Indeed, some of them have examined the causes of genocide. In his analyses of why the Rwandan genocide occurred, Mamdani (2001) maintains that the origin of the conflict is fundamentally related to how “Hutu and Tutsi were constructed as political identities.” In that system, Mamdani argues, Hutus were branded as indigenous and the

Tutsi as “alien.” Mamdani doesn’t really tackle the question of who is Hutu and who is Tutsi? Instead, he argues that the two identities have evolved over time to conform to the standards heralded by the post-revolution Hutu government. Consequently, there cannot be a “single answer that pins Hutu and Tutsi as [Trans historical] identities.” Essentially, the question is irrelevant as far as Mamdani is concerned. The two main important events that the genocide brings into focus, according to Mamdani, are the 1959 “social” revolution and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invasion of 1990. He notes that the revolution perpetuated the racial identities that were constructed by colonialism. And the RPF invasion, which signifies a “citizen crisis on both the Ugandan and the Rwandan sides of the border,” ought to be regarded as an “armed repatriation of Banyarwanda (people of Rwanda) refugees from Uganda.” At bottom, Mamdani and I both agree that the 1959 revolution and the RPF invasion played a weighty part in causing the genocide, but our analysis slightly differ. Mamdani doesn’t think the revolution, in and of itself, was a bloodbath as many claim. He argues that it was the “... attempted restoration and the repression that followed, that opened the gateway to a blood-soaked political future for Rwanda.” This assertion is not at all implausible, but is it conceivable to extricate the “attempted restoration” from the revolution itself? I think not. The “attempted restoration” that Mamdani attributes the cause of the “blood-soaked” political nature of Rwanda to is, in actuality, what makes up the revolution, which paved the way for the repression that followed.

Subsequently, in addressing the sequence of events that led to the genocide, Hintjens (1999) attempts to create a parallel between the Rwandan genocide and the Nazi Holocaust in Germany. She argues that if the aim is to identify the particular dynamics of a genocide in a particular case, such a parallel is desirable. She maintains that the similarities between the two events lies in the “extent of ideological and military preparation prior to the genocide, and in the

systematic use of conspiracy theories and myths to justify covert plans for slaughter.” To Hintjens, the sequence of events that occasioned the genocide originate from severe economic depression. She concludes that “the drop in coffee prices in the mid-1980s set off a period of political extremism and search for solutions that was to lead to scapegoating and physical extermination of a large part of the total Rwandan population.” I follow Hintjens’ conclusion in my analysis. However, in my approach below, my argument will show that the economic depression served both as an incentive and a justification for committing the atrocities. To demonstrate how structural factors contributed to the genocide, Uvin (1997) - in his article - asks, “What kind of social and political processes have taken place that can bring lose the values, restraints and ethics that under normal circumstances make these actions impossible, and abhorrent to contemplate?” He concludes that “racist prejudice was a structural feature of Rwandan society, fulfilling simultaneously important political functions for the elites and socio-psychological functions for the peasant masses.” He asserts that the “racist prejudice” was “institutionalized and state-sponsored.” My response to the structure-oriented question is somewhat similar to Uvin’s conclusion in that I, too, highlight how the government adopted exclusionary and discriminatory policies that made it hard for the Tutsi to gain any form of political power in the country. Nonetheless, unlike Uvin, I abstain from using “racial prejudice” to reason the cause of discrimination against the Tutsi. I believe vengeance for past abuses and fear of losing power was what motivated the government to discriminate against the Tutsi. This is not to say that Uvin’s argument is irrational. Of course, it is uncontroversial that Tutsis were targeted because they were Tutsi, but can we really justify the claim that racism, not vengeance, was what motivated the government to attempt to raze the Tutsi, given the Hutu experience under the Tutsi monarchy?

Furthermore, while the above studies provide a good account of what transpired, they have not sufficiently provided a critical analysis of why the decision was made to exterminate the Tutsi. Was it fundamentally a good versus evil affair? Or was it a result of dangerous misconception, ignorance, and stereotypes? My postulation suggests the latter. As stated earlier, the primary objective of this paper is to critically examine the elements that caused the 1994 genocide, and reveal how many civilian lives could have been saved if the international community had intervened appropriately. It is my contention that to understand why the 1994 Rwandan genocide occurred, three important and closely interconnected dynamics in the history of Rwanda need to be conceptualized - because absent one of them the genocide would not have taken place.

First, the colonial political legacy, which established the political identities of the Hutu and Tutsi and glorified the Tutsi over the Hutu, initiated the animosity between the Hutus and Tutsis that would later cause a cascade of violent events leading to the genocide. Second, the 1959 revolution, which marked a period of stout, robust demand for decolonization and freedom from the Tutsi absolute monarchy by the Hutu. This demand for decolonization and liberation ushered in a restructuring that vested the majority Hutu with absolute control and enforced their identities as the “rightful native” of Rwanda and the minority Tutsi as “nonindigenous.” Third, the invasion of the RPF in 1990, which Hutu extremists viewed as a challenge to “Hutu Power” and a signal of the return to the days of servitude, was the last straw. In order to put these events into perspective, I divide the paper into six different sections, with the first four introducing the role that the three dynamics highlighted above played in making the genocide a possibility. The fifth section discusses the role of the international community, and the final section is my conclusion. The key questions that this essay is attempting to tackle are: 1) why did the genocide

occur? 2) How did the Hutu extremists go about orchestrating the genocide? 3) What postcolonial system of administration or political processes were implemented that facilitated the genocide. 4) What justification(s) did the Hutu give for attempting to annihilate the entire Tutsi ethnic group? And finally, how should the international community have responded to the slaughter? The evidence used here to support my causal analysis is distilled mostly from extant literature, and a little from personal experience with refugees from Rwanda. I now turn to the discussion of the history of the two groups that concern this paper.

Historical Background of the Hutu and Tutsi

It is almost impossible to understand the cause of the genocide without a fairly good knowledge of who the Hutu and Tutsi really are. This is not to say, however, that the answer is straightforward. In fact, the question is one of the most serious issues that Rwandans, even today, struggle to address. Notwithstanding, there is another minority group, the Twa (a midget-like group that forms about 1% of the population), which seems to be left out of most conversations about the ethnic groups in Rwanda. Almost all of the literature on the genocide in Rwanda identify them as one of the ethnic groups in Rwanda, but virtually none discusses how the genocide affected them. Were they victims too or perpetrators? They must have been involved somehow; they are certainly not invisible or unimportant. I do not bring this up here because I intend to discuss them. That's a topic for another paper. My concern here is to examine why the Hutu targeted the Tutsi specifically. Who are the Tutsi and who are the Hutu? Are they the same people who, as a result of a social or political contract, assumed different identities? Practically all of the literature on Rwanda have asked these questions. The population in Rwanda consists of 85% Hutu, 14% Tutsi, and 1% Twa (UN.org). Therefore, it should be uncontroversial that Hutu and Tutsi are two different identities. I will explain this further below.

When asked where the Hutu and Tutsi are from, most Hutus argue that Hutus are the original Banyarwandans (people of Rwanda), and the Tutsis are nonindigenous herdsmen, who migrated to Rwanda from Ethiopia in search of greener pasture for their cattle. Indeed, there are recognizable physical differences between the three groups. Most Tutsis are taller, “with long thin noses and lighter skin.” The Hutu is often shorter and stockier, with flat noses and very black skin (Peterson 2000). The National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), a research institute based in France, revealed that “Tutsi[s] are taller than the Hutu by nearly ten centimeters” (Mamdani 2001). Many of the leaders that orchestrated the genocide buttressed this argument and used it to fuel the hostility against the Tutsi. On the contrary, when asked the same question, most Tutsis maintain that Hutus and Tutsis are all Rwandans.

Other theories about the differences between the two identities are even more interesting. Some (Peterson 2000; Gourevitch 1998) buttress the notion that the difference between a Tutsi and Hutu is fundamentally based on the number of cattle one owns. Any Rwandan with ten cows or more is considered a Tutsi and anyone with less is considered a Hutu or Twa. Hutus were mainly farmers and a majority of the Tutsi were cattlemen. But due to very devastating famines in those early days, Hutu farmers were not reaping enough from what they sow and hence generated little revenue, and Tutsis, who were well versed in the art of trade, accumulated a relatively good amount of wealth. Subsequently, “Tutsi came to mean rich.” However, “Hutus could become Tutsis in a special ceremony if they were wealthy enough, and Tutsis could fall into poverty” (Peterson 2000). The debate on this issue remains unsettled, and probably never will. As an individual of African descent, I can confidently say that trying to trace the real origin of most African ethnic groups is almost impossible. This is mainly because obtaining accurate, consistent information from societies whose genealogical history is orally passed on from one

generation to another is almost impossible. The narrative tends to shift to reflect the outlook of the person recounting it.

Nevertheless, a more convincing narrative, based on my conversations with Rwandans, follows that a hunter-gathering society known as the Twa are the original occupants of the Great Lakes. However, the group that identifies itself as Hutu today arrived in the Great Lakes area somewhere around the 11th century (Keller 2014; Mamdani 2001). There is no known account of resistance on the part of the Twa upon encountering the Hutu. Nonetheless, the agricultural practices of the Hutu forced the Twa to move deeper into the mountainous regions, where they form their own enclave. As noted above, the Twa were mostly hunters and gatherers, so when the Hutu started clearing fields to farm on, the Twa's way of life was significantly threatened. Given their physical size (dwarf-like), they have a more pacific disposition, and as such decided not to go to war with the Hutu over space. Instead, they made the choice to abandon their occupied territories and move farther up the hilly regions. Their view of human nature is humble and unassuming. Consequently, as the Twa continued their retreat in order to accommodate the Hutu farmers, the majority of the regions started to fall under the control of the Hutu. However, three centuries later a group of cattlemen (presumably from the eastern part of the continent) started to slowly appear in the region in search of fresh savannahs for their cattle. That band of herdsmen became the group that is identified today as the Tutsi.

Furthermore, it is important to note that before the advent of the Europeans and, despite the obvious differences with respect to the time of arrival in the region and their way of life, the initial encounter between the three groups was non-violent and benign. This resulted to the sharing of the same language (Kiyarwanda), cultural practices, interethnic marriages, and communities. Nevertheless, agriculture or subsistence farming was not a very reliable source of

food for the Hutu - given the poor and uncondusive climate conditions in the region, so the Hutu sometimes had to rely on the Tutsi for food supply. Consequently, the value and benefit of owning cattle – one being a great source of food for a lengthy period – gave the Tutsi higher, respectable statuses in society. Members of the community would go to those with higher titles and status in the community (mostly Tutsi) and ask them to preside over disputes, counsel them on a course of action to take on certain matters, and some even offered to work for free in exchange for feeding their families. This is a common predisposition that we Africans have. We tend to give high, unsought regards to people with wealth and knowledge. Although unintended, by engaging in that trend, the Hutu were unknowingly surrendering themselves to the Tutsi as subjects to be ruled. Over time, a Lord-Vassal type relationship developed between the Hutu and Tutsi. The Lords tended to be Tutsi, but a very small number of Hutu assumed such roles, too. The Hutu that became Chiefs or Lords were mostly those who acquired wealth and cattle by virtue of serving under a Tutsi Chief, or rewarded for services provided to a Tutsi Title holder.

Notwithstanding, among the chiefs themselves were those who were wealthier and more popular, leading to the formation of a traditional hierarchy - in which those with the most cattle and notoriety held even higher positions and presided over the chiefs that ruled over various communities. With this drift, Rwanda was on a fast track of becoming a Monarchy, with a very effective hierarchical and governing system. At the helm of all things was the King or (Mwami) - his name was Kigeri Rwabugiri – a Tutsi.

The Arrival of Europeans in the Great Lakes

After the vast African continent was divided up like a piece of pie among the Europeans at the 1884 Berlin Conference (Adogame 2004), Rwanda became part of German's East Africa. But before the Germans took charge of Rwanda and later relinquished it to Belgium at the end of

WW1, the Rwandan Monarchy did not politicize the ethnic identities in the country; there were no major tribal distinctions between the ethnic groups. King Rwabugiri ruled over all, including the Tutsi. In fact, he embarked on a crusade that effectively established him as the central figure in the entire region. Those who were against his rule, both Hutu and Tutsi – although very few – were slaughtered by the King's army. By the time the Europeans arrived, the region was under the full control of the Tutsi Monarch.

The Germans were the first Europeans to arrive in the region in 1897 (Sagall 2013), and they were surprised to find a well-organized centrally controlled society in the Great Lakes region. At the same time, they were glad to have discovered such a well-established system of governance; it was the perfect situation for them in furthering their imperial agenda. They decided not to disrupt the current system. Instead, they immediately established a relationship with King Rwabugiri, and subsequently initiated an effective system of indirect rule. They used the King and the Tutsi chiefs as enforcement agents of their policies. The King, however, died before the system of full collaboration and cooperation with the Germans was implemented, leading to an internal struggle among the Tutsi chiefs for a successor (Keller 2014). The Germans were utterly confused by the sudden disorderliness, which threatened their continued control over the means of production and distribution of goods and services.

As a consequence, the Germans decided to employ the use of military force in support of the immediate Tutsi nobility who served under King Rwabugiri (Keller 2014). And so with the unflinching support of the German military firepower, the Tutsi Nobles were able to effectively crush their opposition and tighten their grip over their subjects. This marked the beginning of the politicization of the ethnic groups in the region. The Germans did not want to have to experience another disruption to their rule, so they declared the Tutsi as the rightful and only rulers. The few

Hutus that had held positions of authority were immediately removed and relegated to the status of a Commoner. And with the assurance and the backing of the German military, Tutsi chiefs began to treat their subjects, mostly Hutu, as slaves, sometimes with complete ruthlessness. Hutu farmlands and properties were appropriated and given to the Tutsi. The Germans wanted to prevent the Hutu from amassing wealth because with wealth comes power, and if enough Hutus are able or allowed to secure that kind of influence, it could spell doom for the European-backed Tutsi leadership (ibid).

Subsequently, starting from 1918, after Rwanda was relinquished to the Belgians as part of a League of Nations mandate (UN.org), things went from bad to worse. In order to maintain an effective indirect rule system, the Belgians abolished the use of the natural or original ethnic differences between Hutu and Tutsi and invented a mechanism which made being Hutu or Tutsi reflect one's socioeconomic status. Those that were well-off were cast in the Tutsi class and the poor or farmers were classified as Hutu (Keller 2014). Consequently, wealthy Hutus were made Tutsi through a special ceremony and poor Tutsi fell to the ranks of Hutu. Additionally, in order to effectively enforce this new system, the Belgians introduced a law requiring everyone to carry an identification card, which would clearly show the class one belongs to. This highlights the challenge that it is not always easy to tell who is a Tutsi and who is a Hutu based solely on physical attributes. As a result, it would be plausible to argue that some Hutus may have been indeed killed by their own people during the genocide because their Identification cards identified them as Tutsi, when - in fact - they were Hutus who made the transition during the Belgian administration. Of course, the deliberate and purposeful killing of Hutus by Hutus in several instances during the genocide have occurred (Peterson 2000). The Hutu, like many ethnic groups around the world, have differences and disagreements among themselves. But the point I

am making here is the case of mistaken identity, where Hutus were slaughtered because their Identification cards presented them as Tutsi.

The Rise of Extremism

The zealotry that caused the genocide was born out the 1959 revolution. Immediately following the dismantling of the Tutsi monarchy by the Hutus, the leaders of the revolution wanted to make sure their newly-found power was unchallenged and everlasting, so they made sure not a single Tutsi was appointed or held a position in the new Hutu-led government. However, not all of the leaders supported the idea to completely marginalize the Tutsi. The promulgation of the plan to utterly relegate the Tutsi leadership caused the emergence of a drift between Hutus from the north and those from the south (Hintjens 1999). Within the Hutu ethnic group itself, those from north tend to hold lofty positions in government and the military. They had better and higher education than their brethren in the south. Government employers, for the most part, preferred northern Hutus to southerners. This is presumably due to the fact that the percentage of mixed marriages in the country is higher in the south than in the north. The Hutu northerners “considered themselves purer ethnically, and historically less subservient to the Batutsi than the predominantly ‘mixed’ southerners” (ibid). As a result, some Hutus from the south were deprived of the same privileges as Hutus from the north. To this end, the Hutus from the south did not fully support the plot to entirely dismantle the Tutsi leadership. They feared that if all the Tutsis were successfully banned from government and top military positions, Hutus from the south were most likely going to be next.

As a consequence, a good number of the southern Hutus sided with the Tutsi-dominated (RPF) rebel force and subsequent negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania to democratize the political process (Kuperman 2014). Most of the Hutus who were targeted and killed during the genocide,

whom scholars and others refer to as “moderate,” were either from the southern region or affiliates. They were considered “Tutsi sympathizers.” Conversely, the Hutus who decried the negotiations and any form of integration of the Tutsi in government and the army were subsequently classified as extremists (Mamdani 2001). Their views were too radical, and they mostly favored exclusionist policies. They championed the birth of “Hutu Power,” the demand for a Hutu nation. “The core of the ideology of Hutu Power was the conviction that the Tutsi were a race alien to Rwanda, and not an indigenous [ethnic group]” (ibid). This visible acrimonious relationship between the Hutu leaders from the south and those from the north raged, so that factions started to emerge within the Hutu-dominated government.

In the early 1990s proponents of Hutu Power in top military and government positions started to organize. They formed a fraternity named the *Akazu* (which means small/little/tiny house) or ‘le clan de madame,’ pioneered (for the most part) by President Habyarimana’s own wife (Agathe Habyarimana). Notwithstanding, it’s imperative to note that the former First Lady continues to maintain that she is innocent; that she never led the Akazu. In a 2007 interview published by *the guardian* newspaper, First Lady Agathe said this:

It's all lies. I deny the lot... These are inventions by the RPF. Long in advance, they spread these lies to cover their own crimes. My role was to be the first lady. I was busy looking after housekeeping and my husband. I also had charitable works. I used to visit the elderly and I was patron of several orphanages that I used to visit. I was involved in a women's sewing group. We went to the hospital with children's clothes. We tried to help the unfortunate. Occasionally when my husband was travelling abroad, other first ladies wanted me to come along, so I did.

Nevertheless, the existence of the Akazu is no fiction. “[T]his group had tight control of over President Habyarimana’s extensive networks of political patronage” (Hintjens 1999). The group established and sponsored two propaganda agencies: the radio RTL (Radio et Television Libres des Mille Collines) and the *Kangura* – “Wake It Up” - newspaper (Mamdani 2001; Hintjens 1999). According to members of the *Akazu*, the creation of these two institutions was a response to the 1987 establishment of a newspaper company called *Kanguka* or “Wake Up,” sponsored by a wealthy Tutsi businessman and headed by a Hutu from the South (Gourevitch 1998). The *Kanguka* was perceived by members of the *Akazu* as critical to president Habyarimana’s administration. Subsequently, the “Hutu Ten Commandments” were published by the *Kangura*. “The Ten Commandments forbade Hutu from entering into wide range of relations with Tutsi, whether in sex, business, or state affairs” (Mamdani 2001). It was through these institutions that the proponents of the Hutu Power expressed their outrage over the negotiations going on in Arusha. Additionally, prominent members of the Hutu community were interviewed by these two propaganda organs, in an effort to propagate and bolster their legitimacy. Through these publications, the extremists encouraged the Hutu to “stop having mercy on the Tutsi” (ibid). The radio played music that urged the Hutu masses to rise up and “defend” their rights “against those who want to oppress [them],” the Tutsi.

Why Exterminate the Tutsi?

It is puzzling how people who speak the same language, go to the same schools, share communities, and practice interethnic marriages could one day experience such shocking interethnic violence. For centuries, societies that share the same cultural practices have attempted to annihilate each other. Consider, for example, the American Civil War (1861 – 65), in which 620,000 lives perished (history.com). Other such devastating civil conflicts in Liberia, Sierra

Leon, Angola, and parts of Europe in which people that share the same community, language and culture cost unimaginable havoc and death to each other. Yet, with so much knowledge and experience to learn from these past violent events, we continue to be perplexed whenever there is a breakout of similar events. The Rwandan genocide is one such event that people who witnessed and others who hear what happened hitherto appear shocked and confused. Why? Perhaps I best leave it to psychologists and other experts to figure that one out. My concern here is to attempt to explain why the Hutu wanted to bring the extinction the Tutsi.

First and foremost, before I present my analysis, I cannot escape the impulse to describe the extreme brutality with which the victims were killed. The killers did not just want the Tutsi to disappear from existence, they want them to die in the most unimaginable ways. The sheer ruthlessness with which the killers carried out their murderous plot should shock the conscience of any human. Here is how one of the killers described his nature during the infamous Nyamata church massacre: “It was as if we were taken over by Satan. We were taken over by Satan. When Satan is using you, you lose your mind. We were not ourselves. Beginning with me, I don't think I was normal” (BBC Panorama, 2004). Perhaps that would help explain this particular incident: “[The] militias tied a woman named Innocent Mukadori and her child together and then thrust a stick through her genitals until it came out through the head. After that they nailed the child on her with another sharpened stick” (Kamau 2004). Such horror. Isn't there such thing as morality, even in killing? Why does it have to be so inhumane? I fail to understand the purpose it serves killers when they subject their victims through horrendous pain, such as the example of the mother and child above, before killing them. There was nothing humanly deficient about the killers, such that they would give their victims the most painful death imaginable. In other words, the killers were everyday humans, who had the capacity to reason; they knew right from wrong;

they react the same way that any normal human would react when or after they witness a traumatic event. A killer confirms this when he describes what seems to be a post traumatic syndrome disorder:

I saw people whose hands had been amputated, those with no legs, and others with no heads. I saw everything. Especially seeing people rolling around and screaming in agony, with no arms, no legs. People died in very bad conditions [...]. You wouldn't be normal if you start butchering people for no reason. We had been attacked by the devil. Even when I dream my body changes in a way I cannot explain. These people were my neighbors. The picture of their deaths may never leave me. Everything else I can get out of my head but that picture never leaves (BBC Panorama, 2004).

Additionally, during the church massacre in Nyamata, women and children were forced to choose between getting hacked to death or jumping into pit latrine. Seeing what the machete is able to do, the victims chose the latter (Krivoushin 2014). So what accounts for such revulsion of the Tutsi, so that they had to die in such callous manner?

The number of people killed and, the speed and effectiveness with which the perpetrators carried out the extermination, suggests that a tremendous amount of sophisticated planning and consideration was involved. Thus, the important question here is, why did the Hutu want to bring the extinction of the Tutsi? To answer this question, a flashback at the colonial era is necessary. As I noted above, it is out of colonialism that the political identities of Hutu and Tutsi were established and radicalized. Under colonial rule, Tutsis found favor in the eyes of their “colonial masters.” And the reason for this, according to Uvin (1997), was that the Germans and Belgians (colonial masters) were convinced that Tutsis were “more intelligent, reliable, hardworking – in short, more like themselves – than the Hutu,” and given that the Belgians and Germans measured

themselves “superior” to the indigenous Rwandans, anyone like them must also be regarded with, not necessarily equal, but high enough level of respect. Although Tutsis were not exalted to the same status as their “white masters,” they were made superior to the indigenous Hutus. This segregation marked the genesis of the political hostility that led to the bloodshed in 1994.

However, scholars like Uvin, Mamdani, and others - although not completely wrong about the Belgians perpetrating the philosophy of Tutsi supremacy – did not consider the question of why the colonial masters were inclined to stimulate and politicize the Tutsi ethnic identity. Most of them only followed the narrative that the Belgians wanted to brand the Tutsi ethnic group as the superior race in contrast to the Hutu. I argue that that approach only presents us with a historical account of what transpired. It does not produce a critical analysis that helps us understand the cause of the hatred that instigated the genocide. Therefore, we cannot continue to bolster that justification when analyzing the cause(s) of the genocide. Instead, we ought to analyze the question in a more rational sense.

First and foremost, it should be uncontentious that the notion that the Tutsis are superior and more intelligent than Hutus, which is the justification that the colonialist gave to explain why they favored the Tutsi over Hutus, is utterly absurd and unfounded (perhaps I am being too “politically correct”). It is my conviction that the colonialists found it more expedient to maintain the Tutsi authority that has ruled the people for decades instead of inverting it. Ordinarily, colonialists have a predisposition of exerting their authority on indigenous people through a system of indirect rule. Mamdani confirms this in the first chapter of his book, labeling Rwanda as a “*Halfway House*.” He asserts that “Like elsewhere in colonial Africa, in Rwanda, too, Belgian power constructed ‘customary law’ and ‘Native Authorities,’ alongside civic law authorities.” Thus, I would argue that it was in their interest to ensure that the authority of the

Tutsi leadership was not undermined, and hence concocted the preposterous supremacist ideology and racialized the two groups to make sure that Hutus do not challenge the Tutsi. Mamdani argues that “if the Tutsi were a [civilized race], then there would have to be institutions that would discriminate in favor of the Tutsi so as to make the theory a reality.” For example, Peterson (2000) recounts the following observations made by two colonialists: “The Watutsi are a tall, well-made people with an almost ideal physique.” In contrast, the same observer noted that the Hutus are “primitive inhabitants. They are a medium-sized type of people, whose ungainly figures betoken hard toil, and who patiently bow themselves in abject bondage to the later arrived yet ruling race, the watutsi.” The observer, a Belgian doctor, describes the Hutu as “childish in nature, both timid and lazy, and as often as not, extremely dirty. They form the serf class.” These kinds of dangerous misconceptions and stereotypes were propagated and ostensibly proved very successful. Of course, this was pure propaganda: no different from the era of Nazi Germany, when Hitler condemned and dehumanized anyone who does not possess certain physical attributes, in an effort to maintain his construal of a supreme human race.

Additionally, the White colonialists wanted to ensure the “Tutsi Supremacy” ideology was realized, so they built an educational and administrative system for the Tutsi. Mamdani adds, “The creation of a school system that could act as a womb of racial ideology was a priority.” Even later on when it was no longer possible to limit enrollment to the Tutsi, Tutsis were offered higher, superior education, whereas the Hutu only gained basic education. In the administrative sector, only the Tutsi were allowed to hold government positions. Thereupon, the colonial masters started incorporating the Tutsi hierarchy into their power structure. As a result, a greater number of the Tutsi were able to amass wealth and resources, such as cattle, farm land, and better homes, at the expense of the Hutu class. The ID Cards, a quintessential part of the

genocide, was part of the Belgians' ploy to maintain the Tutsi Supremacy. However, it is important to note forcefully here that the Belgians couldn't have known that the ID Cards that they have forced Rwandans to carry would facilitate the speedy extermination of the Tutsi years after they left the country.

Nevertheless, as I noted above, the reason why the Belgians sided with the Tutsi was not because Tutsis possess better human qualities or characteristics than the Hutu. It was all hoopla; a convenient way to propagate and effectively administer their system of indirect rule. In fact, I am convinced that if the Hutus were the ones in charge when the Europeans arrived, the Europeans would have favored them over the Tutsi. I should not struggle to defend this conviction; they proved my point during and immediately after the 1959 revolution, when they abandoned the Tutsi leadership - a group they proclaimed to be superior - and embraced the new Hutu elite, who, with Belgian help, completely dismantled the Tutsi monarchy and took control. Nonetheless, in hindsight, the use of propaganda allowed the Belgians to outfit the Tutsi (when it mattered) with the unimpeded authority, which the Tutsi elite also capitalized on and cast their Hutu brethren into servitude. "The objective was to turn the Tutsi, the 'born rulers of Rwanda, into an elite 'capable of understanding and implementing progress,' and thus functioning as auxiliaries to both the missionaries and the colonial administration" (Mamdani 2001).

Furthermore, it is imperative to consider and analyze the rationale behind the policies implemented by the Europeans in colonial Rwanda. Many writers blame colonialist for the troubles in the "dark continent," and I concur to a certain extent, but we must take care not to be too quick to blame colonialists and imperialism for all the violent events in Africa. For example, Belgium did not invade Rwanda and forcefully take control of the small east African nation. Its occupation of Rwanda was as a result of an internationally engineered, acceptable practice to buy

or claim ownership of territories in the continent. Moreover, the Belgian's occupation was supported by a League of Nations mandate to establish control and rule over the people of Rwanda (Keller 2014). The purpose of the mandate, it should be clear, was not to promote colonialism. Instead, it was meant to create a pathway to independence. Thus, in the eyes of the international community, there was no Rwanda; there was only the territory or colony of Belgium, over which the Belgians have every right to govern however they see fit – provided there was a plan to relinquish control to the Rwandans. But until such a time, Rwanda was part of Belgium (technically speaking). Accordingly, the Belgians chose to use the human capital (Rwandans) - in a land that they own and control - to extract its resources. Was it humane? No. Was it within their right? Yes. Certainly, we cannot argue that the Belgians took control of Rwanda for the sole purpose of destroying it or its people. The people were an integral part of its economy, and it was in their interest to make sure the country was stable. We could, however, criticize their lack of foresight and carelessness.

Against this background, the advent of severe economic crisis, caused by devastating famines, in post-colonialism left many of the Hutus scrambling over what little food they could find in order to survive, while most of the Tutsi had relatively enough food or resources to get by. This is not to say, however, that Tutsis did not suffer from the famine, but, compared to the Hutu, most Tutsi were economically secure, as generations before passed on wealth and properties to their next of kin. Moreover, the majority of the population had little or no education at all, so subsistence farming was one of the few options available for anyone (mainly Hutu) who wishes to make a living. Again, a great number of the Tutsi were established farm owners and mastered the art of trade (thanks to their colonial masters), so there was little concern for their welfare, compared to the Hutu.

Moreover, this problem was compounded by overpopulation. “Rwanda was the most densely populated country in Africa – second in the world only to Bangladesh...” (Peterson 2001). No amount of farming could produce nearly enough to feed the nation. The soil grew more and more infertile and overworked, due to the lack of a shifting cultivation system. Basically, the country was experiencing incessant, devastating famines, which ushered in an abysmal economic crisis. Consequently, Hutu extremists, upon comparing their welfare to the Tutsi – amid the depression, concluded that the Tutsi experience of the depression was not as severe as the Hutu. The “Hutu Power” and wealth that the Hutu extremists had envisioned after the revolution had not materialized. Although Tutsis were also among the Rwandans enduring the shattering effects of the famine, the Hutu (by virtue of consisting of mostly farmers) suffered the most. Subsequently, the Hutu extremists – who had control over virtually all of the government sectors following the revolution – formulated an ideology that prescribed the Tutsi as the cause of the agony that Rwandan Hutus were experiencing. Successively, the extremists called for the extermination of all Tutsis – a violent solution to end the devastation. They argued that if the Tutsis were not eliminated, it would lead to the kind of dependency that ushered in the Lord-Vassal relationship that existed between the two groups, half a century ago.

How the 1959 Revolution Caused the Genocide

In 1959 a band of Hutu elite drafted what they called the “Bahutu Manifesto,” which demanded a double liberation of the Hutu from both the Tutsi monarchy and white colonialists. During this time, however, a new breed of Belgian colonialists had also taken over from the original “masters.” The new Belgian administration was more liberal-oriented and consisted of mostly younger priests and administrators. As a result of this new development, more and more Hutus started gaining unrestricted access to quality education and important administrative

duties, whereas the Tutsi Aristocracy started to decline rapidly. This is how the Hutu elite emerged. It was “almost as if Belgian authorities had hit a switch – swept away the Tutsi monarchy” (Peterson 2000).

In 1957 nine members of this new Hutu Elite (among them was a man who would become president – Gregoire Kayibanda) greeted representatives from the League of Nations, who arrived to inspect how the Belgian administration was governing the people, and presented to them a document that they called the “Bahutu Manifesto.” The manifesto was a form of complaint, in which the group articulated inhumane treatment of members of the Hutu ethnic group by the Tutsi leadership, aided by the Belgian administration (Keller 2014). Furthermore in the manifesto, the Hutu leaders decried the Tutsi ethnic group and labelled them as foreigners who invaded the land of the Hutu and Twa (ibid). The Hutu elites called for the establishment of a more democratic system of governance, in which the majority (Hutu) would assume control of government. They also requested the departure from Rwanda all the colonialists.

When the Tutsi heard what the Hutu had done, they, too, wrote a document of declaration: they called it “*Mise au Point*” (Statement of View). In their document they argued that the problem in Rwanda is about race. Nevertheless, they also called for the departure of the Europeans but, instead of introducing a majority rule, they argued that power must rest with the Tutsi nobility, because they were the ones with the proper training to effectively govern the people. The difference between the two documents is that: one (Hutu) wanted democracy and independence, whereas the other (Tutsi) only wanted independence, not democracy. These dissimilarities led to a cascade of violent events that precipitated the revolution, and forced the Belgians to side with the Hutu (majority).

Nonetheless, this metamorphosis should not be misunderstood as the Belgians suddenly wanting to introduce a more reasonable system of governance, where the will of the majority is at play. Far from that. Despite their lack of foresight and ineffective leadership, the Belgians masters were very smart: they were quick to recognize the change in the dynamics of the society, and the emerging Hutu elite - as a result of the education they were receiving – so they decided to switch allegiance and focus their attention to the promotion and advancement of the Hutu class.

Consequently, the transition was accompanied by a series of politically-inspired violence against leaders of the Tutsi minority, which steered the forceful transfer and dismantling of Tutsi power at the administrative level. Hundreds of Tutsi were slaughtered and their houses and farms burnt down. Thousands of others were forced to flee Rwanda to neighboring Burundi, Uganda, and Zaire (now DR Congo). This political change served as a stimulus for the advent of Hutu extremism. The political system was utterly inverted. The Hutu were now at the helm of everything political; they had absolute control. The Tutsis were systematically targeted and brutalized. Politically and socially, The Tutsi were devalued and perceived as worthless. They were denied access to any form of political influence and forbidden from forming any political party. (Mamdani 2001) One very important characteristic of the 1959 revolution that solidified the Hutu Supremacy is the overthrow of the Monarchy and replacing it with a “republican” system of governance. Nonetheless, tensions continued to mount, and the Belgians, realizing how quickly they were losing power, decided to organize elections. The Hutu party, Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement (PARAMEHUTU), won 78% of the votes, and the Tutsi party – Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR) – lost with 22% (Keller 2014). This First Republic was born.

The First Republic

After the elections a small Hutu elite was effectively placed atop the political power structure. The new Hutu elite immediately classified the Tutsi as non-citizens. The new president (Kayibandi), however, wanted to include the Tutsis and reconcile, but he was under interminable pressure from Hutu hardliners to eliminate all the Tutsi and establish a Hutu nation (ibid). Thus, in order to establish a strong presence and ensure absolute control of the country, the new government developed a very sophisticated system of administration. It made sure it was represented even at the lowest levels of the postcolonial society; it adopted and effectively enforced a policy of systematic, institutionalized discrimination of the Tutsi. It introduced a quota system “that limited access to higher education and state jobs” to a number proportional to the Tutsi populace (Uvin 1997). Another very important legacy of the First Republic is the continuation of the identity cards introduced by the colonial masters, which was very useful - from the killers’ perspective – in identifying the Tutsis once the massacre began.

Notwithstanding, president Kayibandi was still reluctant to implement the extremists’ plan to annihilate the Tutsi and establish a Hutu nation, effectively marking himself as a moderate Hutu. President Kayibandi was from the center of the country and the hardliners were mainly from Northern part of the country. This is perhaps what accounts for the ideological differences. Arguably, because the president was not from the north, he did not share the radical views that the extremists from the north espoused. As a result, the hardliners were not too pleased with the president’s refusal to get on board with their immoderate plans and ideologies. Therefore, the president and his administration became the central focus of extremist, antigovernment rhetoric.

The opposition became so intense that the president himself feared for his life, leading him to a state of constant paranoia. Subsequently, the president created a secret police force to protect him; to investigate and weed out anyone suspected to be a threat to the administration (Keller 2014). This proactive, self-defense move instilled a great sense of insecurity in the Hutu extremists - and even the Tutsi, who didn't seem to share his paranoia (ibid). Consequently, most of the Tutsi fled the country, and the Hutu started to devise a plan to remove him.

The Second Republic

The extremists' plan to dethrone the moderate Hutu leader was initiated and executed on July 5, 1973, when an army Major General named Juvenal Habyarimana ousted him in a bloodless coup (Keller 2014). Habyarimana was from the northeastern part of the country. Nevertheless, president Habyarimana's priorities were not in alignment with that of the hardliners. His first decree as president was a guarantee of safety for all the Tutsi in the country, and declared himself protector of "all children" of Rwanda, Hutu and Tutsi (ibid). This declaration was both shocking and gut-wrenching to the hardliners, but the Tutsi welcomed the news – with a reasonable level of apprehension, of course.

Habyarimana's policies turned out to be even more moderate than his predecessor's. He eradicated almost all of the anti-Tutsi policies put in place by the preceding administration, especially the policies that perpetuated the assumptions that the Tutsi belong to a different race. All the Tutsi in the country at the time were recognized as citizens. Of course, external pressure did play a role in this metamorphosis. I will elucidate the role that the international community played in this process subsequently. The president, however, refused to accept the repatriation of the Tutsi that were forced to flee Rwanda during the era of the First Republic. He insisted that the country was "full up," thus any Tutsi who fled the country should settle wherever they are

(Keller 2014). Of course, this was a calculated attempt by him to prevent the expansion of the Tutsi population in the country.

Notwithstanding, the drastic changes that the president was making were still not enough to ease the suffering of the Tutsi in the country. They were still marginalized. Not a single Tutsi was elected even at the lowest political office. Education was limited: only 9% admission quota was accorded to the Tutsi (ibid). Life was still unbearable for the Tutsi in the country. The only positive thing that was happening to them at that time was the fact that there were no mass killing campaigns of the Tutsi by the hardliners.

In theory, president Habyariman's policies reflected a progressive and reasonable level of seriousness on his part in unifying the country. Nonetheless, not all of his policies were geared towards serving the interest of the entire country, and democratization. For example, he outlawed all opposition parties in the country and introduced a One-Party rule, one that he himself created and named it the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND). Membership in this party requires the acceptance and maintenance of very lofty standards of respect and discipline. Members were expected to conduct themselves with the highest level of dignity and appearance, and the people they spend time with must also possess similar mannerism (Keller 2014).

However, despite president Habyarimana's efforts to maintain dictatorial rule over the country, he could not escape the influence and reach of the hardliners – especially the *Akazu*. The *Akazu*, as I noted above, was headed by the president's own wife - proceeded to become the most fundamental organ that perpetrated the genocide and killing of the Tutsi (Peterson 2000). The group was the most influential radical anti-Tutsi group, with connections and spies embedded within the president's own administration. It heralded the extinction of the Tutsi group, and

arranged for the formation of different militant groups around the country, to be trained and armed ready for the holocaust that was to come. It was around this time that the Second Republic began to unravel drastically, causing the emergence of extremist factions, and serious mistrust within the Hutu leadership itself. After taking over from the oppressive regime of the First Republic, the Second Republic's tyrannical nature piloted renewed violence directed toward the Tutsi. Thus, by 1964, the atmosphere in Rwanda had become too agonizing for the Tutsi. It is estimated that between "270,000 and 370,000 had fled Rwanda" (UN.org). Mamdani (2001) argues that the "Second Republic's greatest failure was that it was unable to even pose the question of how to integrate the Tutsi diaspora with the postcolonial polity."

The president's efforts to maintain control were further paralyzed by the fickleness of the world's market economy. Rwanda's main export goods are coffee and tin, so when the prices for these goods significantly dipped, Rwanda's economy was severely crippled. Moreover, around the same time, international donors started to make strong demands for democracy, and conditional economic assistance were implemented. Towards the end of 1980, pressure within and outside the country, in the form of the Arusha Accord, increased exponentially, challenging the president to implement policies to end the corruption and democratize the political system. The donors used the economic crisis as a vehicle to demand full cooperation from the President. And, as if these demands were not challenging enough for the president, the Tutsi rebel force (RPF) invaded in October 1990.

The Emergence of the RPF

A whole generation had passed since the revolution that forced thousands of Tutsis to flee Rwanda. As I have stated above, most of the refugees crossed into Uganda, Zaire, and Burundi, where they, again, endured political violence – mostly in Uganda and Zaire (Peterson 2000). The

natives in those countries saw their presence there as a threat to their prosperity, because the Tutsi refugees were mostly preferred by government employers and some private institutions - due to their aptitude as intellectuals (Mamdani 2001). And just like the anti-Tutsi crusade that forced them out of Rwanda, Tutsis found themselves once again having to fight to survive in foreign lands. Consequently, a guerrilla rebel force, that called itself "*Inyenzi*" (cockroaches), was formed by the Tutsi to forcefully repatriate back into Rwanda (Kuperman 2004). Many commend the RPF for ending the slaughter. I, too, agree with that conclusion, but my argument here reveals that without the RPF invasion, the genocide would not have taken place. In other words, the actions of the RPF precipitated the genocide, but at the same time helped to end the bloodshed once the killing started.

They started by launching guerrilla-style attacks on the Hutu government in Rwanda from Uganda. These subsequent small-scaled yet devastating attacks gave impetus to the Hutu extremism born out of the revolution. The Hutus immediately formulated a propaganda intended to pit the Hutus against the Tutsis. They organized large gatherings throughout the country, in which they gave powerful speeches in an attempt to justify the preservation of the Hutu power, and why the extermination of all the Tutsis was obligatory. Most of their justifications were predicated on the unverifiable claim that the Tutsi are not Rwandans: they are aliens, and must never be allowed back into Rwanda. Hintjens (1999) states that "a key speech was made in 1992 by a leading Hutu power politician... who heralded the genocide when he said that all Tutsi should be sent 'back home to Ethiopia' where they supposedly came from." This hateful campaign raged and, ostensibly, proved successful. This was when the "Hutu Ten Commandments" was published, effectively condemned any form of relations with the Tutsis. Anyone caught having contact with Tutsis was charged with Treason (Peterson 2000).

According to the tenth commandment, Peterson adds, it was the duty of every Hutu to “spread widely the supremacist Hutu Ideology.” Another very effective mechanism that the extremists employed to proliferate the Hutu Supremacist ideology was the use of private as well as government-sponsored radio and television services. It was through these frequencies that Tutsi names and addresses were broadcast to the public as targets to be eliminated. The most notorious of these was the Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (1,000 Hills Free Radio, RTLM). From the highest political office, with authority to command the army, to the village elder – with the influence over local armed groups, the extremists made sure the directives on how to implement the slaughter were clear (Desforges 1999).

At this stage, all preparations for genocide were set; the country was ready for the horror to come - waiting only for the trigger to be pulled. And surely enough that trigger sound happens to come in the form of the RPF invasion of Rwanda in 1990. One might ask, how did the RPF invasion provoke the Hutu extremist groups to the extent that they believed it necessary to launch their “final solution:” the massacre? The answer is simple: Although political tensions were already at a zenith, with extremist rhetoric consistently alluding to genocide, there really wasn’t enough rationale to start the killings until the RPF invasion. The invasion gave the extremists impetus to propagate the call to go out and kill. Through the extremist-sponsored radios in the country, the Hutus were brainwashed into fearing their Tutsi neighbors. In an interview with the BBC, a killer explains how the perpetrators use the radio: they would say “that the rebels, the cockroaches, are now the RPF, and that they are all Tutsis. That is when the hatred started and when you met a Tutsi you would say it’s your relatives who are trying to kill us” (BBC Panorama, 2004).

The three-year war between the Hutu government and the RPF decimated the Rwandan society. Several hundred thousand lives (both Hutu and Tutsi) were destroyed. The extremists embraced this devastation to incite and direct hatred towards the RPF and all the Tutsi in the country. “The [RPF] invasion served the interests of the regime by increasing its legitimacy, and large parts of the population rallied around it” (Uvin 1997).

The first RPF invasion took place on the first day of October 1990. The Rwandan Army, however, was able to repel that invasion and destroy the rebel force. Subsequent attacks by the RPF met the same fate. All but one of the commanding officers of the invasion were killed. His name is Paul Kagame, and is today the President of Rwanda. Part of the reason for these devastating losses was as a result of the international military support that the Rwandan government forces were receiving, particularly from France, South Africa, and Belgium.

Consequently, Paul Kagame, the only surviving leader of the RPF, who was in the United States for military training at the time of the initial invasion, cut his training short and returned home to take command of the beleaguered rebel force. And it was under his leadership and knowledge in the art of war that the RPF reconvened; commenced training in modern warfare in earnest, while simultaneously launching demoralizing attacks on key Rwandan army barracks. A former Hutu government soldier describes the tenacity of the RPF in an interview:

“It was as if they were completely possessed by evil spirits. Nothing we do could stop them. And they always seem to know our next move before we even think it. Its craziness. It wasn’t normal.”

The French-trained and well-armed Rwandan army was being overrun with every attack. Notwithstanding, with every defeat in the battlefield, the Rwandan army made sure that Tutsi civilians paid the price. They accuse the Tutsi civilians of colluding with the enemy. And

thus thousands of Tutsi civilians in the southern region were killed in retaliatory attacks by the Rwandan army (Kuperman 2004). Conversely, as the RPF was carrying out its final assault in 1994 to seize Kigali (the capital), many villagers and communities (mostly Hutu) directly in its path abandoned their homes and villages and migrated to the inner cities. Some journalists attached to the RPF or following its movement described the villages upon arrival as “eerily calm.” According to Mamdani, Gerard Prunier, one of the famous writers who documented the war in Rwanda, described the villages as empty of life, and added that “the RPF soldiers had not looted anything and houses could be seen with chairs still set around a table and moldy food on the plates where people had fled so hurriedly as not to eat their last meal.” The exact number of people displaced is unknown, but a conservative estimate holds that up to 900,000 were displaced from 1990-94 (Mamdani 2001). As a result, Hutu extremists, seeing how livid the displaced population was, used it as a recruiting tool to ramp up their campaign and rhetoric, convincing the Hutu population that the only solution to this problem is the extinction of the Tutsi – who they accused of supporting the RPF. The displaced Hutus were promised that they would repossess their properties back, and authorized to claim Tutsi properties - if they agree to participate in the killing. This is one of the possible explanations of the unprecedented number of participants in the butchery. Before the invasion, for example, the Rwandan army only consisted of about 5,000 troops, but just a few weeks after the RPF invaded, that number was estimated to reach about 24,000 (Peterson 2001).

However, even with the huge spike in the number of conscriptions the government forces were unable to fend off the unwavering rebel force. As a result, realizing how successful its campaign was going and, how the Rwandan army was being demolished with every advance, the RPF made several demands, insisting that President Habyarimana and his government must meet

if he wants to avoid being dethroned. These demands were made under the auspices of the UN and other regional bodies, who have been working with both sides in Arusha, Tanzania to negotiate a ceasefire. The outcome of that convention is what is officially known today as the *Arusha Accord*, an agreement, signed by both parties. The most significant demands that the RPF made in that agreement were:

- *All Rwandan refugees (mostly Tutsi) who fled the state during and after the revolution be permitted to peacefully repatriate and reintegrated into the Rwandan society.*
- *The Habyarimana government must fully implement the rule of law, democratization, power sharing, and the creation of a unified military.*

Kuperman (2004) asserts that “following the RPF’s dramatic display of strength... Habyarimana soon conceded to virtually all of the rebels’ ... demands.” But those concessions almost immediately exacerbated the political tensions in Kigali between the government and the extremist factions, who made several desperate attempts to sabotage the Arusha convention. A Tutsi representative at the negotiations recalled, during an interview, one of the government representatives being “completely unreasonable: he was saying no to almost everything.” As a result, president Habyarimana was confronted with two tough options: (i) implement the agreed policies, which would undoubtedly ensure his removal from power by the extremists, or (ii) refuse to implement the terms and risk being destroyed along with his army by the RPF. But president Habyarimana’s ostensible ambivalence led both sides to question his commitment - to the extent neither side trusted him. As a result, he was no longer considered pertinent by both sides to achieving their respective goals. The RPF leadership accused him of deliberately delaying the implementation of the agreed changes, and the extremists found his unwillingness to

outright refuse the terms disconcerting. This is also what makes it difficult to definitively say who shot down his plane.

Accordingly, the last RPF invasion in 1993 coincided with a political upheaval in Kigali, and the climax of an intense anti-Tutsi campaign. As I have noted above, there was disunion within the Hutu political leadership, between those who wanted the president to accept the terms promulgated by the Tutsi rebels and those who were pushing for the exact reverse. There were some who wanted to integrate the Tutsi in the political power structure, and others who viewed any form of integration as coming to terms with the notion that the “Tutsi were as much a part of the Rwandan political community as were the Hutu” (Mamdani 2001).

Against this background, Hutu extremists embarked on a publicity campaign, urging Hutus not to support any form of integration of the Tutsi into the political sphere. They instill fear and anxiety within the Hutu community, by warning them of the return to subjugation if the Tutsis were ever allowed to hold onto any form of power. It is also during this period that the formation of the militia, such as the “*interahamwe*” (those who stand/work/fight together) - an armed civilian defense force - began in earnest. This crusade was so successful that when the RPF eventually invaded in 1993, the Hutu leadership was able to convince the Hutus in Rwanda that the invasion was the Tutsi’s attempt to forcefully take over power, and urged them to go out and fight for their security, their survival, and for their country. From influential community elders to religious leaders to youth representatives, all were forced to encourage their members to partake in this “noble course.” And virtually all of them listened or were forced to comply.

Nevertheless, when the Rwandan army, with all the support and training it was getting, shockingly failed to repel or halt the advancing RPF and, with defeat looming on the horizon, extremists in top government positions sounded the alarm to commence implementation of the

plan that they have carefully crafted: the annihilation of the Tutsis in Rwanda. Together with various armed Hutu civilian defense forces around the country, the Rwandan army, in its quest to ensure that the Tutsis never hold onto power – effectively started eliminating Tutsis and those who sympathize with them, just minutes after the President’s plane was shot down – killing the president and everyone on board, including the president of Burundi.

The Presidential Guards set up barricades on major highways, including the main route to the airport, and began stopping vehicles and asking the occupants to present their identifications, which – at that time – indicated the ethnic group one belongs to. Tutsis – men, women, and children - were forced out of cars and instantaneously shot or hacked to death, after their IDs confirmed who they were. In the rural areas, the militia, trained by the army and equipped with whatever they could use to bleed Tutsis to death or break their skulls – mostly machetes - went house to house, pulling families out of their homes and slowly decapitate them (Desforges 1999). Most women were brutally raped before being hacked to death; children were thrown against walls and trampled upon; and men were butchered. The speed and efficiency of the butchery were unprecedented. Consider, for example, this assessment by Scott Peterson, who documented the genocide in his book, *Me Against My Brother*:

A mathematical calculation of Rwanda’s national suicide makes the speed of any other recorded catastrophe or single act of war pale by comparison. The two atomic bombs dropped upon the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki killed 200,000 people. The toll of the entire four-year war between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia during the early 1990s also just topped 200,000...No system of genocide ever devised has been more efficient. The daily kill rate was five times that of the Nazi death camps.

Yet, this is not to say that the death toll in Rwanda tops all conflict-related deaths in recorded history. By the time Germany's Third Reich was dismantled, over Six million Jews had been exterminated. My intent is to demonstrate the sophistication of the plan and ferociousness of the killing by the perpetrators in Rwanda.

What I have demonstrated in the above sections of this paper is the ways in which the genocide was precipitated. The purpose is not necessarily to tell what happened but, instead, to create a framework to help develop and provide an understanding of the cause of the genocide. Identifying the cause is only a part of the bigger picture, which is what a significant part of the extant literature on this topic is about. I have taken this further: I provided a critical analysis of the cause of the genocide, examining the causal effects and how they triggered the genocide. The genocide was not a spontaneous outburst of hatred and violence. In the early days of Rwanda, before the coming of the Europeans, the people lived in relative peace and harmony. Their differences notwithstanding, they tolerated and accepted one another. Peterson recalled an interview he had with a Hutu in the aftermath, in which the individual confessed that, the idea that a Rwandan would use a machete to kill another Rwandan is strange and it is not the way Rwandans handle their problems. If Rwandans want to kill someone, the man claims, they use poison, not a machete (Peterson 2000). A confluence of several factors precipitated the genocide, and only by conducting a critical analysis of these factors and having a strong understanding of them can we, maybe, prevent another massacre somewhere else.

In the next section, I will discuss the intervention, or lack thereof, of the international community. My analysis will be incomplete if I do not discuss this here. Thus, in what follows, I shall consider the involvement of the international community in Rwanda from the beginning of the conflict, and how it failed to prevent the advent of the slaughter.

International Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect

It has essentially become a taboo to discuss the Rwanda genocide without making emphasis on how the international community failed to save the lives of the victims.” Many blame the US and the UN for not doing enough to stop the massacre. Indeed the UN’s Secretary General at the time, Boutros Boutros Ghali and, then Director of Peacekeeping Operations Kofi Annan, have publicly confessed that the UN could have done more to end the senseless killing. Annan asserted in 1998 that ‘state frontiers should no longer be seen as watertight protection for war criminals or mass murderers’ (Krain 2005). Upon visiting Rwanda after the genocide, President Bill Clinton also acknowledged that the US made a mistake by refusing to prescribe the conflict as genocide. Belgium, France, Germany, England, among others, have all expressed regret for the epic failure. There is plenty of blame to go around. Many regrettable mistakes were made. The most egregious of which is the refusal of the United Nations to reinforce instead of pulling out the troops at the most vital moment, when their presence could have curbed the civilian death toll.

Before I delve deeper into my analysis of the international community’s action (or inaction) in Rwanda, it is imperative to first consider the reasons that gave many, like me, cause to blame the UN. In 1948, after Hitler and his murderous Nazi party succeeded in exterminating 12 million people, global leaders came together and asked themselves how such a holocaust could have happened right under their noses. For this reason, world leaders, under the auspices of the United Nations, decided to adopt the Genocide Convention. The fundamental purpose of this convention is to prevent and punish crimes of genocide (Sarkin 2009). As a result, a famous phrase emerged during and after the convention to reflect the leaders’ resolve to prevent such heinous crimes against humanity from ever happening, “never again” (Mills 2015). Adopted by

United Nation Resolution 260 (III), Article 2 of the convention holds that “...genocide means...acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group...”

Notwithstanding, within 70 years of the adoption of this acclaimed resolution, almost 50 incidents of genocide have taken place around the world (Sarkin 2009). From Europe to the Middle East to Africa, Asia, and South and Central America; these regions have all endured - and still do – events tantamount to genocide. This is evidence that the international community and the United Nations as an institution, charged with the responsibility of preventing these crimes from happening, did not uphold their commitment to the United Nations’ resolution 206, and millions of people have paid the price with their lives as a result. Of course, the United Nations and individual states have indeed intervened in conflicts around the world, in an attempt to stop senseless killings of innocent civilians caught in the crossfire.

However, even in such cases where the United Nations has intervened, its capacity and involvement is always limited due to very narrow, ambiguous and abstruse mandates. Today the United Nations is involved, one way or another, in almost every conflict around the world. Therefore, the issue is not so much about the failure to intervene; it is fundamentally a question of competency and efficiency. For example, the United Nations was involved in Rwanda almost three decades before the genocide, but it still wasn’t able to prevent the holocaust. This is why many still blame the United Nations for the loss of civilian lives. How could it not have foreknown what was going to happen? Perhaps an examination of the UN intervention before the genocide is necessary. It is important to note here that the African Union was also actively involved in the ceasefire negotiations. The use of the UN here is meant to represent the efforts by

the two organizations to pacify the combatants. This is due to the fact that the African Union, for the most part, has to get authorization from the UN before any intervention.

Pre-genocide UN Intervention

The international community, under the rubric of the League of Nations, has been involved in Rwanda since its Transition from a German colony to a Belgian “Trusteeship.” But for the purpose of this study, I am only going to focus on the UN intervention from 1992-1994. Following the outbreak of the civil war between the RPF rebel force and the Rwandan National Army in 1990 (I will discuss this more in detail later), several ceasefire negotiations were arranged, as in most civil wars, to reconcile the warring parties. Subsequently, in 1993 the UN Security Council passed *resolution 846*, which authorized the establishment of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR). The purpose of this mission was to ensure the peaceful and successful completion of the ceasefire negotiations. Both parties were under pressure to fix their minds to purpose and quickly reach a comprehensive peace agreement.

On March 16, 1993 the UN Secretary General appointed a representative to lead the UN supervision of the negotiations in Arusha, Tanzania. The negotiation in Arusha had been under the patronage of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). However, due to the lack of adequate resources to facilitate its mission, the OAU requested that the UN take over responsibility of the security force. The force was deployed after a request made by the parties to the UN to send a security team immediately following the signing of an agreement. The mandate of the force was to ensure the following: public safety, facilitate the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid, conduct search and seizures operations of weapons caches, disband any armed elements seeking to compromise the deal, and demilitarize any militant extremist group (un.org).

Part of the agreement also included the formation a new single unified Rwanda National Army, which comprise of members of both the RPF and Rwandan Army. On August 4th, 1993 the convention in Arusha formally ended. However, the successful conclusion of the Arusha negotiations meant further involvement of the UN. As part of the deal, The UN Security Council was required to establish a new mission specific to Rwanda, to ensure the implementation of the agreed terms and realization of the transition government. To this end, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was effectively established in Rwanda on October 5th, 1993. The main objective of the mission was to investigate non-compliance with the terms of the agreement, and ensuring the amicable repatriation of the refugees who fled the country when the violence erupted. According to a UN report, one of the fundamental functions of UNAMIR was to “monitor the security situation during the final period... leading up to elections.” *Resolution 872* allowed UNAMIR to stay in effect until October 1995, after the successful implementation of elections and the new transitional government. The UN Security Council further authorized the deployment of a contingent in Kigali to lay the groundwork for the creation and implementation of the necessary institutions to ensure the smooth transition to the new government.

The commentary above reveals how involved the UN has been in Rwanda before the genocide. It was there to monitor and ensure the cessation of all hostilities and the transition to a new government, which should have effectively ended the conflict between the government and rebels. I find it imperative to emphasize this point here to prove that there was no way the UN could have missed the signs of escalation in the conflict that could lead to genocide. Any action taken by the two parties that was contrary to the Arusha accord was carefully scrutinized by the UN team on the ground. A day before the genocide began in earnest, on April 5, 1994, out of

serious concerns for the growing tensions and violent rhetoric against the Tutsi, the Security Council passed another resolution (909) to extend the mandate of UNAMIR. But it was already too late. The following day, on April 6, the President was assassinated on his way back from a peace talk, triggering the commencement of the slaughter.

Logical Explanations of Why Intervention Failed

In this section, I am going to attempt to present some logical explanations which I believe might have paralyzed the international community's intervention efforts. Nonetheless, it is important that these explanations not be viewed as excuses for inaction. Rather, they are meant to serve as rational analysis, from a political standpoint, with respect to the epic failure of the international community to save the lives of the civilians who died.

To this end, while I, too, strongly condemn the international community, not just one particular state, individual or organization for ignoring the warning signs, I believe, however, that 21 years of castigation and condemnation, which strongly and categorically expresses the world's resolve to never let an event like that occur, is more than enough to make that point. It is pointless to continue to blame world leaders, without holding them to account, for failing to do more. Besides, almost all of the leaders that were in charge at that time no longer hold any meaningful position in the context of world politics. What we need to do now is to critically examine the factors that may have prevented those leaders from acting, and work hard to create new ways to avoid repeating the same mistakes. Subsequently, I am going to argue how government-sanctioned killings, such as the Rwanda genocide, could effectively be prevented. My main argument is that military intervention in government killing is the most effective means to curtail civilian death toll. But first, I shall consider why intervention failed in Rwanda.

In 2005, the 20th century international community adopted a new mantra in the field of international relation, which it aptly defined as the “Responsibility to Protect or R2P,” with the hope that it would serve as a motivation as well as justification to intervene in ongoing conflicts to protect civilian lives. The introduction of this concept was as a result of the failure to efficiently intervene in Rwanda. The provision holds that:

[T]he individual governments promised to do their utmost to protect and prevent their populations from atrocities that can be categorized as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity. These are the broad pillars of focus, when talking of the R2P concept and when and how to act in case of atrocities being committed.

It further notes that:

In cases where there is a need for the international community to mobilize collective action and act in accordance with the R2P, it is a criterion that any involvement in a crisis does not take place without a UN mandate to confer legitimacy. That is an important element in the concept of R2P, in part to prevent states from exploiting the R2P concept as a convenient political tool that could be used as justification for an intervention.

Yet, around the world civilians continue to endure ceaseless persecutions by their governments. The most recent examples of these include Syria, Ivory Coast, and the Central African Republic. Still, none of these conflicts compare to the carnage that unfolded under the very nose of the international community in Rwanda. The genocide in Rwanda, as I have shown, is one of the most sophisticated and efficient government-sanctioned killing that the world has

ever witnessed. This was made possible fundamentally due to the failure of the international community to take necessary measures to curb the killing.

However, before the advent of R2P, “Never Again” was the motto that the international community came up with to prevent conflicts like the genocide in Rwanda from happening. Clearly this was a complete failure. Thus, in order to understand why the international community failed, I will now examine the factors that I believe paralyzed the international community from taking actions that could have prevented the deaths of thousands of civilians. Then later I will present my argument on how to discourage the implementation of government policies to exterminate civilians. The comment here is that two very important factors contributed to the United Nations and United States’ response, or lack thereof, to the Rwandan genocide: (1) Rwanda’s history of violence, and (2) the devastating consequences of the intervention in Somalia.

Rwanda’s History of Violence

I cannot stress enough how important it is to recognize that, just like in most countries in Africa, Rwanda has been engulfed in violent politically motivated conflicts well before the revolution in 1959. The genocide was not a spontaneous outburst of hostility; it was an attempt to execute a final solution to long and spread out hostilities that have existed between the Hutus and Tutsis for over half a century. For example, the United Nation has been involved in Rwanda, though only in observer capacity, since the early 60s, trying to repair the relationship between the two groups. A report released in 1961 by the UN – after the Hutu revolution - warned that “The developments of these 18 months have brought about the racial dictatorship of one party.” The report added that “It is quite possible that some day we will witness violent

reaction on the part of the Tutsis” (Peterson 2001). And like a prophecy, that “violent reaction” that the UN report presaged came to pass in the form of the RPF invasion in 1990.

When the civil war broke out, many civilian lives were lost. As I have indicated above, Tutsis were systematically targeted in retaliatory attacks by the Hutu government, with every advance or attack by the Tutsi-dominated RPF. This was a tactical move by government forces to discourage the Tutsi rebels from advancing any further, but the strategy did not seem to have worked, because the rebels continued to advance and eventually took control of the capital. Subsequent ceasefire deals were routinely broken by the actions of both sides during the civil war. The demilitarized zone that the UN created was also violated multiple times, and civilian lives were lost in almost all of those times. Most of these violent events were reported by the international media, so that anyone who followed the news during this period very likely heard or saw one or two things about the conflict in Rwanda. Furthermore, one week before the president’s plane was shot down and the genocide began in earnest, heavy fighting broke out between RPF soldiers stationed in Kigali, as part of the Arusha deal, and the Rwandan army (Peterson 201).

Against this background, it is not at all unreasonable for the UN to initially assume that the genocide that followed a week after the fierce battle in Kigali was just one of the series of on-again-off-again violent fighting that have ravaged the country for a very long time. Again, I must reiterate that the speed with which the perpetrators carried out the killing was unparalleled. Peterson argues that “Unless you had been a very close observer of Rwanda before the genocide, in those days it was not clear what was happening, nor how organized it was.” In the first two months of the genocide, the daily death rate was said to have reached 45,000. “One murder was committed every 2 seconds of every minute, of every hour, for days...” (Peterson 2001). As a

result and, with that kind of speed, one could discern – to some significant level – how the UN and the international community could have had a hard time arriving at the conclusion that it was genocide, and not the usual breakout of violent conflicts, that was happening. Remember, according to the genocide convention, genocide is the systematic targeting and killing, maiming, or injuring of a people belonging to a particular group. Consequently, the civilian deaths during the genocide could easily be mistaken as “collateral damage,” in a war between the rebels and government forces.

Moreover, it is imperative to bear in mind that, although UN observers and peacekeeping troops were present in Rwanda when the genocide started and, were transmitting information to headquarters about activities consistent with plans for a mass extermination, the UN is governed and operated through a bureaucratic process. There are protocols that need to be followed in reporting conflicts to the Secretariat, which then has to process the authenticity of the information that it is receiving and pass it on to the Security Council for deliberation. Undeniably the “warning signs” were plenty, but, again, how were the diplomats in NY to know that those warning signs were actually of an event that would come to pass? The anti-Tutsi rhetoric has been on-going since the revolution in 1959. Furthermore, with respect to the decision to pull out the peacekeeping troops at the peak of the genocide, which many argue was a decision championed by the United States, I want to bring into focus here events that unfolded in Somalia just months before the genocide in Rwanda began.

The Somali Fiasco

The confidence that the UN and U.S. had going into Somalia was fueled by its successful intervention in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait during the Gulf War to repel an invading Iraqi army. It was, to a significant extent, the most successful military intervention that the UN has ever had.

And as a result of that remarkable triumph, the UN's fundamental goal of maintaining world peace was finally starting to materialize, at least so it seemed. The UN Secretariat was very inspired by the outcome, and it was keen to engage in similar undertakings in other conflict-ridden nations around the world. Against this background, when the violence in Somalia became increasingly severe, the UN and the U.S., understandably, did not hesitate to once again assume the responsibility to bring peace to Somalia. Making the case for intervention both in the UN General Assembly and Congress was, for all intents and purposes, effortless. Given that the conflict in Somalia was more internal rather than an invasion by an established external military force, as was the case with Iraq, the UN and the U.S. thought it would be an easier, less intense undertaking. They were wrong. It was a disaster; one that would precipitate a cascade of tragic decisions that sealed the fate of the victims in Rwanda. The interventionists terribly misjudged the gravity of the situation in Somalia. They found themselves engulfed and trapped in the middle of a devastating clan war that they could not comprehend. Everything that could go wrong in such a scenario had indeed gone wrong.

Therefore, any analysis of the failure of the international community in Rwanda that does not consider how the Somali debacle impacted the decisions that were made is fundamentally incomplete. The role that the Somali effect played in the appalling intervention in Rwanda is unmistakable. It was the blueprint for the dreadful intervention in Rwanda. As highlighted earlier, the trouble in Somalia began when a well-intentioned UN "humanitarian intervention" in 1991 soon turned into a blood-soaked operation that shocked the world. To the extent that by 1992, the situation in Mogadishu had severely deteriorated, forcing the UN to create the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), spearheaded by the United States, and authorized to use force as necessary (UN.org). Notwithstanding, this, too, turned out to be a deadly mistake, which would

later haunt the US government, leading it to exercise devastatingly poor judgements when the genocide in Rwanda started.

Nevertheless, most of the conversations that I have had with people while researching this topic, and some of the materials that I have read with regards to the failure of the international community in Rwanda, point to the United States as the agent that championed the nonintervention campaign in Rwanda. This conclusion is, for the most part, based on the fact that the United States lost 18 service members in that mission. However, what most critics fail to realize is that the United States was not the only nation that suffered casualties in Somalia. For example, 25 Pakistani soldiers were brutally killed during a single operation; their bodies were mutilated and dragged through the streets. Nigerian soldiers, together with service members from other African states, were also among the dead in Somalia (Peterson 2001). It is incredible how these other factors do not seem to be considered when examining why the UN in general acted poorly in Rwanda. The image of the UN, as an institution charged with maintaining and promoting world peace, was altogether sternly tarnished as a result of that disaster. Confidence was drastically low.

Again, what I am attempting to do here is to provide another perspective as to why the United States and the international community, as a consequence of the Somali Fiasco, were reluctant to intervene in Rwanda. The terrible images of that disaster were still raw in the minds of world leaders and their citizens when the genocide in Rwanda broke out. The United States, for instance, had just finished pulling out its last troops from Somalia literally 12 days before the genocide in Rwanda started in earnest. The tragic events in Somalia, as far as Americans are concerned, were a vivid reminder of the horrendous experience in Vietnam. The most significant of these events occurred on October 3, 1993 (state.gov), when the forces of Farah Aideded shot

down two U.S. Black Hawk helicopters during a fierce firefight in which 18 American service members perished. This disastrous episode was replayed over and over in the American media, so that public support for the intervention decreased dramatically. American politicians were forced to revisit the American interventionist policy, and the degree to which it should participate in peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions in other regions of the world. And so when the Rwanda episode started less than a month later, it is conceivable that politicians in the U.S. chose to deflect attention from Rwanda.

Moreover, when the killing in Rwanda started, 10 Belgian-UN troops were viciously murdered when they attempted to protect the Rwandan Prime Minister from the Hutu militia. “Their Achilles tendons were cut so they couldn’t run, and... castrated and died choking on their genitalia” (Peterson 2001). Thus, with an unbearable incident like that – coupled with the horrendous images from Somalia still playing on CNN – we must ask ourselves, is it really conceivable to expect that world leaders would, without hesitation, refuel their war machines, rally their soldiers, and deploy them to another ethnic conflict in the same region? Critics, myself included, will do best to remember that the states that constitute the UN, including the United States, are governed by rational, political actors, whose primary responsibility is to protect the interest of their countries. Even if, allegedly, the United States spearheaded the denial of genocide in Rwanda, other states – after what they have witnessed in Somalia – would not require much convincing not to intervene. Peterson argues that the equation that the international community employed was, “failure in Somalia equals failure in Rwanda.” I do not think that equation was at all unreasonable, considering the circumstances. The tragedy in Somalia was a consequence of poor management on the part of the UN, and lack of knowledge about the indigenous people on the part of the interveners. These were not issues that could be fixed

overnight. Therefore, to expect the UN, the United States, and other states to rapidly deploy a response team to Rwanda – just twelve days after the US pulled out virtually every troop in Somalia – is, in my opinion, unrealistic. Anyone with minimal knowledge about politics or how governments function would know that gathering troops to intervene in conflicts is a process that requires much deliberation and consideration.

Intervention in Government Killings

The issue of intervention in conflicts has recently become the focus of a very heated debate. Scholars and others are divided with respect to the best means of interventions in civil conflicts. Some (Kathman and Wood 2011) argue that impartial intervention is the best means to reach a long term solution. According to Kathman and Wood, intervention in general “exacerbates hostilities,” in the immediate term. However, others (Krain 2005; DeMeritt 2015) – with whom I join in concurrence – hold that intervention against the government in a regime-sanctioned killing is the most effective means to save civilian lives. My argument below will show that any other form of intervention other than against the government would not have succeeded in Rwanda. Besides, as I have already shown, the UN had been involved in the conflict well before the genocide, and yet the massacre still took place. This reveals a fundamental weakness in the impartial intervention argument. The UN is a neutral third party that intervenes to attempt to prevent the escalation of violence against civilians, and end the war altogether, but the result of that impartial intervention speaks for itself. That is not to say that impartial intervention is ineffective. I think Kathman and Wood might be on to something with their claim that impartial intervention could “reduce the magnitude of violence over the long term.” However, this theory cannot be applied in the case of Rwanda. The reason is what follows.

The slaughter in Rwanda that claimed close to a million lives was orchestrated and facilitated by the Hutu government. And the intervention by the international community to stop the killing, in the form of the UN, was an epic failure. Next, I will present an argument supporting the theory that in government-sanctioned killing, such as the 1994 massacre in Rwanda, a military intervention against the government is the most effective means to curb the civilian death toll. Although the UN intervention in Rwanda was in the form of a military operation, I argue that one of the reasons why it failed to save civilian lives was because the directives given to the soldiers on the ground was to remain neutral. The mandate was to “observe” and “monitor.” My argument is that had the UN intervened against the Hutu government, thousands of Tutsis and moderate Hutu who perished would have been saved. A military intervention against the government in a government-sanctioned killing of civilians significantly limits civilian death toll (DeMeritt 2014). In her article, DeMeritt argues that we need to “conceptualize government killing as a principal-agent problem.” She asserts that, in today’s complex society, governments (principal) are finding it hard to codify policies and implement them on their own. Consequently, they choose to hire experts (agents) to help them implement their policies, which includes a policy to exterminate civilians. I follow DeMeritt’s argument here to contextualize my intervention argument in the Rwandan genocide.

A military intervention against the Hutu government would have perfectly demonstrated the significance of this theory. Foremost, it is imperative to understand that the Rwandan Army, for the most part, was not directly involved in the killing of the Tutsi once the genocide started. The army devoted almost all of its remaining resources to trying to fend off the fast advancing RPF rebels. So the only option that was available to the government was to activate the civilian defense force that it had trained and outfitted specifically for the purpose of killing Tutsi

civilians. Some of these militant groups were led by one or two government soldiers, but mainly, the leaders of these deadly groups were led by civilians. Their orders were very clear: they were to go out and kill. In most African cultures – especially in Rwanda – this was enough to get people to act in such heinous ways. “In Rwanda culture, everyone obeys authority. People revere power, and there isn’t enough education. You take a poor, ignorant population, and give them arms, and say: “It’s yours. Kill”. They’ll obey,” asserts a Rwandan lawyer in an interview with Philip Gourevitch (Gourevitch 1998). Moreover, not all of the participant in the killing volunteered or willingly joined the orgy. A good number of them were made to choose between them and the victims by the leaders of the perpetrators. Others were warned that refusal to participate was tantamount to denouncing one’s Hutu identity, which automatically makes the individual a sympathizer and a traitor. Sympathizers and traitors were hacked to death along with their Tutsi friends.

Given this, the objective of a UN military intervention in Rwanda would not necessarily have been to challenge the national army. Rather, it would have been against the ill-disciplined, poorly trained civilian defense force, speaking militarily. The war between the Hutu government and the RPF has been ongoing since the beginning of the 1990, and both parties were well-trained, established military groups. There was no urgent rush to save anyone. The unarmed civilians were the ones who needed saving. So any intervention effort would have been fundamentally directed to that purpose.

Besides, the reason why the death toll is so high is because most of the victims were lured to gather under single, respectable establishments (churches, hospitals, schools, stadiums, and other government and public places), where they were trapped and butchered to death. In such scenarios, very little military training was required to execute the trapped victims. The

perpetrators used weapons such as grenades, automatic weapons, tear gas, and machetes to efficiently accomplish their murderous mission. Had these locations been protected, the number of deaths would have been drastically decreased.

After the killing started, the victims quickly realized that the open streets were unsafe, due to the countless road blocks mounted by the killers. So they made the decision to gather in the only few places (churches, schools, hospitals) they felt safe and expected protection. But they were terribly mistaken. Those sanctuaries turned out to be where their fates were sealed. By agreeing to converge in large numbers in these respective spaces, they spared their killers the trouble of having to hunt them down in the bushy hills and other hidden locations. Consider the following examples:

On April 11, five days after the killing started, in a small commune south of Byumba Prefecture in the northern part of the country named Murambi close to 4,000 Tutsis were slaughtered under the same roof (Krivoushin 2014). They were lured into the church by the parish priest, who colluded with the infamous burgomaster, Jean-Baptiste Gatete - the leader of the militia in that region. The priest convinced the parishioners that the killing was a sign of the apocalypse cited in the Bible:

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the Earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming great and awesome day of the Lord, and it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Joel 2:30-32).

He told them that the only way to be saved was to gather inside the church to confess and pray to God to spare their lives. He locked them inside, and signaled Jean-Baptiste Gatete and his team of killers, who went in and butchered all of them.

Another similar incident occurred in the southern part of the country, where a Parish priest orchestrated the murder of 3,000 Tutsis who took refuge in his church (ibid). Cases like these, in which victims were lured in large numbers into spaces they thought no one would commit such horrible crimes, are the reason why the civilian death toll is so high. Similar horrific incidents took place in town halls, schools, and hospitals (see Krivoushin 2014; Peterson 2000; Gourevitch 1998; Des Forges, 1999). These are all huge spaces that could house thousands of people, and when Tutsis fled their unprotected homes and converged in these various respective places for safety, they unknowingly facilitated the successful achievement of the killers' mission: to decimate the Tutsi population in Rwanda. And given the death toll, it would be plausible to argue that the overall objective of the Hutu extremists was a success. 70% of the Tutsi population was annihilated by the time the killing ended (Gourevitch 1998).

The examples above are meant to demonstrate how a military intervention against the perpetrators, by guarding at all costs such public spaces, would have saved a significant number of the victims that perished. Thus, the primary objective of a military intervention would be to defend these places and provide a safe haven for the fleeing victims. In such instances, the security forces have to be instructed to use whatever force necessary to keep out the perpetrators, and to protect the victims taking refuge inside. Neutrality or impartial presence would be ineffective in such scenarios. The killing of the Belgians who attempted to protect the Prime Minister and her family is a clear testament of the impracticality of that strategy. The Belgian

soldiers were given strict orders not to engage the approaching, menacing militia (Peterson 2000), and as a result they were brutally murdered.

The International community must embrace the notion that in order for governments to implement a policy to kill civilians, they need to establish a relationship between them (the policymakers) and the perpetrators – the executioners of that policy. Further, it is best to always assume that both are rational actors, and each actor has interests, incentives, and motives. A perpetrator's interests and incentives may not necessarily match that of the government. Thus, it is safe to say that a perpetrator's interest could sometimes force him to deviate from the original government plan or directive to pursue his interest. The fundamental objective of a military intervention, therefore, would be to create disincentives for the perpetrators, and effectively sever the bond between them and the government. In the articles I referenced above supporting military intervention against perpetrators, the authors make several assumptions about perpetrators in government-sanctioned killings. I share three of them here to elucidate my argument of why a military intervention against the government in Rwanda would have been more ideal. I) Perpetrators have an interest in protecting their freedom. II) Governments and perpetrators value their lives above the lives of others. III) Governments have an unparalleled interest in retaining power.

Based on the first assumptions above and, in the context of the Rwanda genocide, I argue that a military intervention against the Hutu government would have threatened to take away the interest of freedom that the perpetrators. At bottom, the intervention against the government would serve as a disincentive for the perpetrator carrying out the order given to them by the government. Also, given the hostile nature of the military intervention that I am suggesting here and, based on the assumption that perpetrators value their lives above the lives of others, I argue

that the perpetrators in Rwanda would have shirked the order that the Hutu government had given them to kill Tutsis.

Any intervention attempt must focus on how the intervention would affect the behavior of the perpetrators (Krain 2005). Again, it is imperative to remember that the participants were conditioned into thinking that their freedom was in danger of being taken away from them by the invading Tutsi RPF rebels, and that if they did not act to protect their freedom the Tutsis would send them back to the days of slavery; they would lose everything. Therefore, a hostile military intervention would have served as counterincentive not to participate in the killing. The message must be crystal clear: any attempt to kill civilians would be treated with extreme prejudice. This increases the costs of participation, and sends a strong signal to the rational participant that the freedom which he thinks he is fighting to protect would be taken away if he attempts to kill or encourages others to kill.

This leads me to the second assumption that perpetrators value their lives above the lives of others. The killers in Rwanda were not terrorists who were ready to die for their cause. In other words, they did not strap bombs around their bodies and run into houses and churches and blew themselves up. For example, in areas where they encountered resistance or perceived danger of injury or death, they retreated and waited for reinforcements. This proves that while they were willing to kill Tutsis, they themselves were not prepared to lay down their lives in the process. This gives impetus to my assumption: if a military intervention makes it clear, or even demonstrates, that any perpetrator who kills a Tutsi or fellow Rwandan would be shot on sight the number of participants would have been drastically reduced. This was the strategy that the RPF rebel forces used, which is why they were able to stop the killing. Besides, a majority of the weapons (machetes, clubs, etc.) were unconventional, and would have been ineffective against a

hostile intervention military force, with advanced weapons that could take out targets from a distance. This would have been very useful in keeping perpetrators from approaching safe zones

Additionally, it should be uncontroversial that the main reason why the Hutu government went to war with the RPF and attempted to kill all the Tutsis was because it wanted to retain its power and the monopoly on the use of legitimate force. Therefore, as the third assumption holds, if the government suspects that the perpetrators would shirk the order to kill civilians, it would not transmit the order, as a refusal to execute the order would be tantamount to challenging the government's authority and legitimacy.

The narrative above that chronicles the events that led to the transition from the First Republic to the Second Republic proves that the Hutu government was not the most united administration. Not all of them supported radicalism. Therefore, assuming that the hostile intervention succeeds - with its explicit warning that anyone who tries to kill another would himself be killed and hence forcing the perpetrators to shirk the orders to kill – the government would not risk any further division by giving the order to exterminate the Tutsi. Doing so would have given impetus to opposition parties within the government to capitalize on the situation and maybe even convince the intervening parties to support them against the administration that wants to eliminate its own people.

Furthermore, with a hostile intervention, the government would have been confronted by a three-dimensional challenge: the RPF, the intervention force, and the victims themselves. It would have been forced to critically think of the feasibility and its capacity to take on all three agents. It clearly could not handle the two challenges of fighting the RPF on the one side and killing the civilian Tutsis on the other, which is why it lost the war. Now imagine if there were another (even more) hostile third party that it needed to fight or avoid in order to succeed. It does

not require a genius to know that as one of the poorest and smallest country in Central Africa, the government could not have been outfitted with the capacity to engage all three sides, or carry out its extermination policy, under the circumstances that I just described. Krain (2005) aptly defends this:

Challenging intervention force perpetrators to divert time and resources otherwise dedicated to a policy of genocide or politicide toward defense against the external challenge. Such interventions make state-sponsored mass murder a more difficult project fraught with even more serious military and/or political consequences than had existed previously. This, even if only temporarily, should stem the violence, especially if the genocidal policy is being carried out by ‘thugs’ or ‘opportunistic bullies,’ who are unlikely to put up too much of a fight against an outside force.

It is for this reason that I argue that a military intervention against the government in Rwanda’s government-sanctioned killing would have been more effective in decreasing the civilian death toll. The Hutus who participated in the killings, or watched while it occurred did not challenge or threaten to shirk the government’s order to kill the Tutsis, giving the government no cause to worry about its hold on power. And the Hutus did not challenge or ignore the order because there was no incentive not to. There was no threat to their wellbeing if they participated in the killing. Rather, they were rewarded for participation; by sharing the booty, feeding their insatiable sexual desires, and drinking to stupor.

Conclusion

What I have attempted to do in this paper is to demonstrate the fundamental factors that precipitated the 1994 Rwandan genocide, in an effort to provide a comprehensible explanation of

why the Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. I maintain that the most significant causes of the genocide were the political legacy of colonialism, the 1959 revolution, and the RPF invasion in 1990. With respect to the failure of the international community to prevent the slaughter, I argue that, although the international community could have saved thousands of lives had it properly and strategically intervened, we need to also consider the factors that may have prevented the international community from reacting fast enough. And the factors I highlighted were Rwanda's history of violence, and the fiasco in Somalia. I conclude with a theoretical presentation of how a military intervention against the government would have been the ideal recourse to employ in Rwanda. This is based on three assumptions: I) Perpetrators have an interest in protecting their freedom. II) Governments and perpetrators value their lives above the lives of others. III) Governments have an unparalleled interest in retaining power.

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