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THE HAMITE MUST DIE!
THE LEGACY OF COLONIAL IDEOLOGY IN RWANDA

by

AWA PRINCESS ZADI

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

2021

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The Hamite Must Die!
The Legacy of Colonial Ideology in Rwanda:

by

Awa Princess Zadi

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

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ABSTRACT

The Hamite Must Die! The Legacy of Colonial Ideology in Rwanda

by

Awa Princess Zadi

Advisor: Karen Miller

April 07, 1994 will forever remain in the history of Rwanda, as it commemorates the beginning of the Rwandan genocide. In 100 days, an estimated 800,000 people, who were overwhelmingly Tutsi, lost their lives at the hand of their neighbors, friends, and families. Although the genocide occurred 26 years ago, there is still much debate surrounding the cause of this tragedy. While some scholars have suggested that the genocide was triggered by contemporary economic and political factors, this thesis is taking a post-colonial approach by bringing into context the colonial history of Rwanda. In the discussion of these colonial roots, one important factor is taken into consideration: a colonial ideology known as the Hamitic hypothesis. This thesis argues that the Hamitic hypothesis or the Hamitic myth, which was exported by European colonizers to Rwanda, planted the seeds for the hatred that led to the massacre of Tutsis in 1994. The effect of the hypothesis was twofold. First, it shaped the institutionalization of ethnic differences through a series of discriminatory reforms and administrative systems that favored Tutsis during the colonial era. Second, the recontextualization and weaponization of the myth after independence resulted in discrimination against Tutsis during the first and second Hutu republics, and their subsequent extermination during the genocide.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the learning experience at the Graduate Center and I would like to pay special regards to my advisor Dr. Karen Miller for her support and guidance. She has allowed me to develop my own ideas while steering me in the right direction when needed. I am indebted to her for her valuable feedback and insightful comments which not only helped sharpen my thinking, but also proved monumental towards the completion of this thesis.

I wish to thank all the people whose assistance was significant during this M.A process: my fellow MALS classmates Nasa, Arelle, and Watson for their encouragement, and of course their friendship. My sweet mother for her prayers and her support. My friends Saran, Brandon, and Patricia for providing happy distractions outside of writing, for reminding me of my own strength, and for accepting nothing less than excellence from me.

I wish to praise God for his blessings and for good health during this pandemic. I would also like to thank me for pushing through, even when I felt too overwhelmed by stress.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to Rwandans: those who were lost during the genocide, those who survived, and those who are still mourning their loved ones. My thoughts and prayers are with you.

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1. Summary:

Violent wars and conflicts are not a product of modern societies, they are part of human history. From prehistoric times to our civilized era, many conflicts have threatened not only the stability of countries but the security of mankind as well. Although violent conflicts are still globally widespread, ethnic conflicts have been particularly prevalent in formerly colonized African nations. Several experts have sought to explain the emergence of these ethnic conflicts by primarily looking at the role played by political and economic factors. While some of the arguments made by these experts are valid, they tend to prioritize the modern context rather than looking at the historical context of these conflicts. And by historical, I mean looking at the colonial past of these countries to establish a possible link between a specific event or factor which happened then and the rise of post-colonial violence. In this thesis, the post-colonial violence I am studying is the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the factor is the Hamitic hypothesis.

The objective of this thesis is to locate the root of the 1994 genocide of Tutsis by looking at the colonial history of Rwanda. Most specifically, this paper seeks to shed light on the Hamitic hypothesis: a European ideology that attributed any evidence of superior life in Africa to Hamites, a supposed branch of the Caucasian race. I am arguing that this Hamitic hypothesis which was exported to Rwanda and used to justify the superiority of Tutsis over Hutus in the colonial era, planted the seeds for the hatred that led to the massacres of Tutsis in 1994. The effect of the hypothesis was twofold. First, it shaped the institutionalization of ethnic differences through a series of discriminatory reforms and administrative systems that favored Tutsis and therefore led to resentment among Hutus. Second, the recontextualization of the hypothesis after independence resulted in discrimination against Tutsis during the first and second Hutu republics and their

extermination during the genocide.

This paper will be divided into five (5) parts. The first part will include a summary, as well as a discussion of the theoretical framework and the literature review. The second and third part of the paper will provide a historical background to my study by first looking at the pre-colonial as well as the colonial history of Rwanda. The second part will answer the following question: How was Rwandan society structured in the pre-colonial period?

The third part will discuss how the use of European ideologies helped shape the relations between Hutus and Tutsis during colonial rule. In this section, I will apply Edward Said's theory of orientalism to the Rwandan case. I will discuss how the process of orientalizing of both groups using the Hamitic hypothesis, not only helped assign an ethnic and racial meaning to Hutu and identities, but also facilitated the capture of power by Tutsis deemed "the superior race," through the system of indirect rule. In this section, the following questions will be considered: What is orientalism? What is the history of the Hamitic hypothesis? How did the Hamitic hypothesis affect Hutus and Tutsis during the colonial period?

The Fourth part of the paper will discuss how the orientalisation of Rwanda during colonial rule led to violent conflicts post-independence. Firstly, it will demonstrate how the colonial/orientalist interpretation of Tutsi' identity was exploited by the Hutu regimes to generate conflict. This section will answer the following questions: How did Rwanda transition from a Tutsi monarchy to Hutu leadership? How did the Hamitic hypothesis influence Hutu elites' treatment of Tutsis during the two republics? How was the Hamitic hypothesis put into context before and during the genocide? The final part will be a conclusion.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This thesis research is built on the premise that the roots of post-colonial violence in

Rwanda can be found in its colonial past. To justify this premise, this paper will rely on a postcolonial approach. By postcolonialism, one does not mean “the historical era after colonialism, but rather its aftermath.”¹ Postcolonialism refers to a range of approaches that seek to criticize “the ongoing effects that colonial encounter, dispossession, and power have in shaping the familiar social, spatial and political structures, as well as the uneven global interdependencies of the world.”² In sum, the use of a postcolonial approach to the Rwandan case is salient in this paper as it helps highlight the legacy of colonial rule in Rwanda, and by legacies I mean how the policies or ideologies enacted during colonialism in Rwanda affected the possibility of peace long after the end of colonial rule. This approach provides an alternative explanation to traditional perspectives on the roots of conflicts.

I also use the postcolonial concept of orientalism discussed at length by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* to analyze the Rwandan genocide. According to Said, orientalism depends on the idea of “positional superiority.”³ Positional superiority relies on differences to assign meaning or categorizes as “others,” groups that are seen to be different due to some racial characteristic or cultures. It also helps justify the domination of those groups considered inferior by those seen as superior. In using Said’s orientalism lens to analyze the history of Rwanda, I am hoping to show the extent to which this positional superiority which was facilitated using the Hamitic hypothesis helped construct Tutsis and Hutus as two different groups: one embodying superiority, while the other, inferiority.

To establish the link between Rwanda's colonial past and the violent mobilization against Tutsis, this paper will draw on primary and secondary sources. These include journal articles,

¹ Allan Punzalan Isaac, "Postcolonialism," in *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, ed. Schlund-Vials Cathy J., Võ Linda Trinh, and Wong K. Scott (New York and London: NYU Press, 2015), 196.

² Tariq Jazeel, "Postcolonialism: Orientalism and the Geographical Imagination," *Geography* 97, no. 1 (2012): 5, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24412174>.

³ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1978), 7.

books, as well as radio transcripts, and testimonies sourced from the Genocide Archive of Rwanda collection.

1.3. Literature Review on The Causes of Conflicts:

Some scholars have examined how differences in British and French colonial ruling systems might explain ethnic violence in former colonies. Robert Blanton, David Mason and Brian Athow argued that former British colonies where the divide and rule strategy was implemented, were more likely to experience ethnic conflicts because they inherited “an unranked system of ethnic stratification.”⁴ This unranked system made it more likely for ethnic rivalries to arise because traditional patterns of social organization remained. The existence of these mobilizing structures allowed the mobilization of aggrieved minorities for collective action”⁵ to turn into violent rebellion after independence.

Other scholars have taken a rationalist approach to explain civil conflicts. According to scholars in this school of thought, violent ethnic conflicts are more the result of insecurity than inter-group differences or old feuds. David Lake and Donald Rothchild stated that information failures, problems of credible commitment, and the security dilemma can individually explain the outbreak of ethnic conflicts: According to the authors, these dilemmas can be worsened by et activists and political entrepreneurs who might rely “on political memories, myths, and emotions”⁶

Another strand of literature focuses on the role of politicized ethnicity in the eruption of ethnic violence. Lars-Erik Cederman et al. research showed that ethnic politics contribute to the development of ethnic violence when it leads to the “exclusion from state power or the

⁴ Robert T. Blanton, David Mason, and Brian Athow, “Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa,” *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 4 (2001): 489, www.jstor.org/stable/424898 .

⁵ Blanton, Mason, and Athow, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa," 481.

⁶ David A. Lake, and Donald Rothchild, "Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict," *International Security* 21, no. 2 (1996): 56, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539070>.

under-representation in the government of an ethnic group.”⁷

These theoretical perspectives can all be applied to explain the violence in Rwanda. Due to the plurality of evidence, it is undeniable that ethnic identities were politicized by the two Hutu governments, and that political leaders created and reinforced a climate of insecurity which helped justify the violence. It is also true that the British colonial style was also used in Rwanda. While I acknowledge that these factors all contributed to the divisive climate among Rwandans, what these theories do not further explore is the role of ideology as a cause of conflicts. To understand the Rwandan genocide, I believe that it is salient to elucidate the ideological factor that led Hutus to see Tutsis not only as a threat, but also as foreigners/settlers. My research will discuss this ideological factor by looking at the Hamitic hypothesis and how it shaped the history of the Rwandan society before and after independence.

⁷ Lars-Erik Cederman, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min, “Why Do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis,” *World Politics* 62, no. 1(2010): 114, www.jstor.org/stable/40646192.

Chapter 2: Rwanda: An Overview of Society in Pre-Colonial Times

2.1. Introduction

“Accounts of the genocide, whether academic or popular, suffer from three silences. The first concerns the *history* of genocide: many write as if genocide has no history and as if the Rwandan genocide had no precedent, even in this century replete with violence. The Rwandan genocide thus appears as an anthropological oddity. For Africans, it turns into a Rwandan oddity; and for non-Africans, the aberration is Africa. For both, the temptation is to dismiss Rwanda as exceptional.”¹

As suggested by Mahmood Mamdani in the above quote, to understand the Rwandan genocide, it is salient to first acknowledge that it has an history, which I argue begins with the colonial conquest of Rwanda. This historical event not only laid the basis for the deep fissure between Hutus and Tutsis during and after the colonial period, but also created the conditions that led to what we know as one of the greatest tragedies in modern history: the Rwandan Genocide. To make sense of the way colonialism contributed to the development of these differences and the subsequent Rwandan tragedy, a careful analysis of Rwandan society before colonialism is necessary. Through this examination, one can attempt to have a better understanding of the reasons why the genocide occurred by looking at the way society was structured in the precolonial period and the ways Tutsis and Hutus interacted then. This research will mostly focus on the two main groups: Tutsis and Hutus, as there is not much research on the Twas and their involvement in the Genocide. In this section, I will be using the terms farmers/agriculturalists to refer to Hutus and pastoralists/herders to refer to Tutsis.

2.2. The Structure of Rwandan Society in Precolonial Times

The structure of Rwandan society as we know it today, is very different to what it was

¹ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 7.

centuries ago. Historical sources about the precolonial period expose a complex system of courts and patron/client relationships that regulated interactions among groups. A very important information that the examination of the precolonial state discloses is the simple perception that many Rwandans back then had about their own identities. Did they identify themselves as Tutsis, Hutus, and Twas prior to the Rwandan state? Not necessarily, as I will show later, these identities took significance not as ethnic identities but as social economic identities within the consolidated Rwandan state and most particularly during Mwami (King) Rwabugiri rule (c. 1860-95). I believe that this piece of information which is revealed by history is major as it shows that there were no rigid ethnic categories in the precolonial state. These categories became problematic when the meaning of the terms Hutu and Tutsi became reinterpreted from their original meaning and given new significance imbued with ideological meanings during colonial rule. In this section, the focus will mostly be on Hutus and Tutsis.

The Three Groups: Twas-Hunter-Gatherers, Hutus-Farmers and Tutsis-Herders

While there is a lack of written documentation produced by Rwandans themselves during the precolonial period, oral traditions, travelers' accounts, and archaeological evidence have helped reconstitute the past of the Rwandan nation. Most historians concur that Rwanda was inhabited by three groups who came at different periods in time. The first group who inhabited the region, as early as 2000 B.C., were the Twas "...a pygmoid people who were hunters and collectors of fruits, seeds and roots."² They lived in the forest, and any interactions with the other groups was restricted to exchanges, as "Honey, skins and furs were swapped for agricultural products."³

² Aaron Segal, "Background to Tragedy," in *Massacre in Rwanda* (London: Fabian society, 1964), 4.

³ Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 2004), 36.

After the Twas came a group of Bantu, the majority group, who according to Peter Uvin migrated “probably from central Africa”⁴ because of the Bantu expansion. These Bantus were “agricultural people characterized by woolly hair, flat broad noses, thick lips often everted and middle stature.”⁵ Once arrived and settled, the Bantu farmers started clearing the forest by cutting trees and getting the land ready for farming activities. By the fifteenth century, they successfully formed several small states before the arrival of pastoralists and the rise of the Rwandan Kingdom. As discussed by Aaron Segal, “their political system was based upon clan chiefs grouping together several families to organize the cultivation of a single hillside. There was no centralized political system and land was owned communally through the clan.”⁶ This suggests that the Bantus known as the Hutus, already had a clear system in place in which they were able to assert their authority over their land and have their own leadership. However tremendous changes occurred with the arrival of the pastoralist group.

It is in my belief that acknowledging the history of the Bantu people before the rise of the Rwandan kingdom is essential to understanding why most Hutus were easily swayed by the propaganda before and during the genocide. There was already an existing belief among them that their ancestors, the Bantus, were conquered and forced into an inferior status by the pastoralist Tutsis, and many feared the same could happen again if Tutsis were not eliminated as suggested by political elites. The propaganda which was spread about the possible return of Tutsis to power exacerbated those fears which were translated into murderous actions.

After the settlement of the Bantus, a group of nomadic pastoralists which was later identified as the Tutsis, moved into the region with their cattle and settled in the hills around “the

⁴ Peter Uvin, “Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda: Different Paths to Mass Violence,” *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 3 (1999): 255, <https://doi.org/10.2307/422339>.

⁵ Segal, “Background to Tragedy,” 4.

⁶ Segal, “Background to Tragedy,” 4.

fifteenth century or earlier.”⁷ Unlike the previous groups, pastoralists were depicted as “tall, slender, haughty and exquisitely aristocratic.”⁸ After settling in, the interaction with the other groups not only led to exchanges of products but to the pastoralists assimilating the customs and language of the existing groups. Whether it was by diplomacy or conquest, the pastoralists succeeded in creating an expansionist state. This expansion led to several social alterations as pastoralists came to assume the leadership in society due to their cattle wealth. Power and resources such as land, which was originally administered by Hutu chiefs, came under the control of the pastoralist chiefs while Bantus had no option than to enter “clientage ties which became increasingly unequal.”⁹

It should be noted that discussions and ideological assumptions about the origin of the pastoralist group laid the ground for the tragic ending suffered by members of the Tutsi group. Moreover, it is also salient to mention that while there is a great emphasis on the physical description of the three groups in writings of the time, they were just observations made by European travelers and missionaries. As these distinctions became objects of interest for many scientists, many studies such as the one conducted by Laurent Excoffier et al. helped support the view that the herders were significantly different from their Bantu neighbors. In fact, their study showed that “The Tutsi and Hima are quite close to Cushites and Ethiosemites. This affinity is in agreement with their supposed history, as they migrated probably from the North (Ethiopia?) at the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th centuries.”¹⁰ This identification of Tutsis as being

⁷ J. K. Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda: A Reinterpretation." *Transafrican Journal of History* 2, no. 2 (1972): 29, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24520214> .

⁸ Segal, “Background to Tragedy,”4.

⁹ Nigel Eltringham, “Ethnicity’: The Permeant Debate” in *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda*, (London; Sterling, Virginia: Pluto Press, 2004), 13. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt183q4fm.6>

¹⁰ Laurent Excoffier, Beatrice Pellegrini, Alicia Sanchez-Mazas, Christian Simon, and Andre Langaney, “Genetics and History of Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 30 (1987):182. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/ajpa.1330300510> .

originally from Ethiopia was a significant component of the Hamitic hypothesis, which will be explained in more detail in the next chapter.

While there were further arguments regarding the origins of the Tutsis, all these speculations did not really reflect the reality of life in the hills as Twas, Hutus and Tutsis did not live as distinct cultural communities. They “spoke the same language, believed in the same God, shared the same culture and lived side by side throughout the country.”¹¹ Back then people attributed more importance to kin groups such as their family, their “clans and lineage”¹² therefore intermarriage among Hutus and Tutsis was common. It is worth noting that while marriage brought together these two groups (Hutus and Tutsis), the identity of one of the parties, mainly the mother became erased at the profit of the husband. Thus, it was common for a Hutu woman married to a Tutsi man, to take on the Tutsi identity and for the kids issued from such marriage to be assigned the identity of their father. For example, a child from a Hutu mother and a Tutsi father became Tutsi, and vice versa. The reason for such designation rests on the fact that historically in Rwandan society, “social identity was passed through patrilineal descent.”¹³ In my opinion, this information suggests that ethnicity, which became embedded in the structure of the state during and after colonialism, was never fundamental to social organizing in precolonial times. People valued other important factors such as their clans, also known as *Ubwoko* in Kinyarwanda, a language widely spoken in Rwanda. The clan system allowed for the integration and connection of all groups regardless of differences.

Another key point when it comes to the history of the groups is related to their identity. I believe that it is important to understand that these different identities were not defined in ethnic

¹¹ Peter Uvin, “Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide in Rwanda,” *African Studies Review* 40, no. 2 (1997): 92. www.jstor.org/stable/525158.

¹² Catharine Newbury, “Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda.” *Africa Today* 45, no. 1 (1998): 10. www.jstor.org/stable/4187200.

¹³ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 53.

terms in the precolonial state. While there is not much research regarding the Twas, the use of the word Twa referred to “foragers who lived in the forests and near the great marshes on the borders and also to a few communities of potters.”¹⁴ Hutus for example, did not also identify as Hutus prior to the consolidated state, as the term itself had different meanings. Many Bantus particularly those in the north, referred to themselves as “the *bakiga*, the people of the mountains, and they used the term *Banyanduga*, to refer to the southern Hutu who joined the Tutsi in the war of conquest.”¹⁵ In fact the word Hutu was commonly used by the elite to designate those with inferior status. It referred to “rural boorishness or loutish behavior... servants, even those who belonged to the Tutsi group, all foreigners...”¹⁶ From this information, it is evident that the earlier interpretation of the term Hutu did not imply a relationship with farming; this association took form with the development and the expansion of the Rwandan kingdom. Contrary to the term Hutu, the term Tutsi as well as the term Hima already designated herders living in the Great lakes’ regions. As explained by Jan Vansina, whereas the label Tutsi referred to “a social class among herders, a political elite,”¹⁷ Hima people were a class of non-prominent herders. The use of the label Tutsi instead of Hima became common with the expansion of the Rwandan kingdom, with every herder within the kingdom, identifying as Tutsis.

Social Status in Precolonial Rwanda

Throughout this paper, I am not seeking to portray the precolonial state as one where social inequality did not exist, I would be doing a great disservice to the history of this rich society and its people by engaging in such action. My intention is to show that Rwandans had their own set of

¹⁴ Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 36.

¹⁵ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 70.

¹⁶ Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 134.

¹⁷ Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 37.

norms and customs and categories before their society was disrupted. Social status for example, was contingent on wealth, cattle wealth. In fact, as “social and economic distinction existed between farming and animal husbandry. Of the two, animal husbandry had greater status and power.”¹⁸ These social functions which were less significant before the expansion of the state, formed the basis for the distinction between Hutus and Tutsis in the Rwandan kingdom. In fact, people who were assigned Hutu status were mostly “farmers of lower social status”¹⁹ while those who had Tutsi status had a more privileged status as they were pastoralists. While it is evident that Hutus mostly practiced farming or agricultural work and Tutsis, cattle herding, considering these identities as being tied to these social functions can be inaccurate as numerous pieces of evidence have suggested that each group had more than one activity. David Schoenbrun for example, reported that even before AD 800, “Great Lakes Bantu...developed large stock raising in order to expand their settlement options and to increase the productivity of their food systems.”²⁰ This assertion is also echoed by Alison Desforges who mentioned that “In early times, most people in the region were cultivators who also raised small stock and occasionally a few cattle. A far smaller number of people scorned cultivation and depended on large herds of cattle for their livelihood.”²¹ This reveals that the division of labor was not fixed from the beginning. Hutus might have owned cattle and Tutsis might have also engaged in agricultural work depending on certain circumstances. While I mentioned earlier that the label Tutsi was a designation for herders, I would like to add that

¹⁸ Scott Straus, "Background to the Genocide," In *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 20.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt24hg8g.5>

¹⁹ Straus, "Background to the Genocide," 20.

²⁰ David Schoenbrun, “Cattle Herds and Banana Gardens: The Historical Geography of the Western Great Lakes Region, Ca AD 800-1500,” *The African Archaeological Review* 11 (1993): 45, www.jstor.org/stable/25130559.

²¹ Alison Des Forges, *‘Leave None to Tell the Story’: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York, Washington, London, Brussels: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 31.

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/r/rwanda/rwanda993.pdf>

this designation did not necessarily mean that Tutsis only possessed cattle; it is in my belief that while many Tutsis and Himas were herders, they also had other sources of livelihood although cattle were the most valuable. To this point, Mamdani asserted that the fixed division of labor that has been ascribed to both groups is ahistorical and “should be better thought of as a division enforced through the medium of political power rather than a timeless preoccupation of two separate groups.”²²

Another important fact, which I feel should be considered in the Rwandan setting is the way Tutsi status was acquired, as this fact also provides a great insight about the flexible movement between groups and classes in the precolonial state. Considering the assumption that can be made from the distinctions between farming and herding, it is also essential to mention that although having cattle provided power, and while Tutsis were mostly pastoralists, not all Tutsis were wealthy, or members of the aristocracy. Mamdani also contested the generalization of Tutsis as rich cattle owning class, under the basis that such explanation omits the presence of another group of Tutsis called the “petits Tutsi.”²³ These Tutsis constituted a class on their own because they were neither too poor nor rich enough to be associated with the higher class, as they did not own cattle. Similarly, not all Hutus were part of the lower class. In fact, social categories were very much flexible because of the possibility of upward mobility and social decline through processes called “*kwihutura and gucupira*.”²⁴

While social redesignation was achievable through marriage, it was also possible through wealth under *Kwihutura*. Through *Kwihutura*, Hutus who succeeded in achieving wealth through the accumulation of cattle could move up the hierarchy ladder, identify as Tutsis and even marry

²² Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 51.

²³ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 57.

²⁴ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 70.

Tutsi women. Similarly, poor Tutsis or Tutsis who experienced a loss of wealth descended the ladder through *Gucupira*. They “were reduced to practicing agriculture and to taking Hutu wives and their families soon became considered Hutus.”²⁵ The category of Tutsi and Hutu therefore were not rigid but changing. They were not ethnic identities but socio-economic status which could easily be affected by a change in one’s social situation.

The Rwandan Kingdom: The Court and The Military

The nineteenth century was an era of expansion for the Rwandan kingdom. Most of the autonomous decentralized Hutus/farmers small states that existed in the northern or southern region were absorbed through a series of conquests led by *Mwami* Rwabugiri (c. 1860-95) a king from a royal Tutsi clan called the *Abanyiginya clan*. The Mwami was portrayed as an exceptional being possessing “strong ritual powers.”²⁶ He ruled alongside three chiefs mainly: “ the chief of men known as the army chief... the chief of landholding who was in charge of agricultural land and production... the chief of pastures who ruled over grazing lands and collected dues from stocks.”²⁷ Rwanda’s expansion led to the creation of a unique and complex state in which “Tutsi were rulers, warriors and herders; Hutu were subjects, cultivators, labourers and taxpayers; and the hunting Twa were incorporated as personal retainers, court jesters, executioners and potters.”²⁸ While the leadership of the monarchy was always a Tutsi king, several Hutu chiefs also enjoyed greater status in the king’s court as landholdings chiefs or as ritualists or *Abiirus*. This is worth noting as to show that while most Hutus did have an inferior status in society, some had the possibility to infiltrate the higher strata of society. Hutu Ritualists or *Abiirus* held great powers as they helped balance the

²⁵ Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda," 33.

²⁶ Catharine Newbury, “Colonialism, Ethnicity, and Rural Political Protest: Rwanda and Zanzibar in Comparative Perspective,” *Comparative Politics* 15, no. 3 (1983): 258, www.jstor.org/stable/421681.

²⁷ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 68.

²⁸ Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda," 32.

Tutsi military powers and ensure a system of check and balances in the court. In fact, “*the Ubwiruu* or the ritual prescriptions which the king was required to carry out periodically for the welfare of the country”²⁹ was a significant component of the king’s court and, the *Abiirus*, while unable to rule, advised the king on the rituals, and other important decisions. They “laid down the principles of rule and controlled the symbols of royal power, the drums.”³⁰ While they enjoyed a greater status in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they saw their power considerably reduced under the reign of king Rujugira (1656-65), and King Rwabugiri (c.1860-95).

Rwanda was also known for its impressive military system. Since the army was inclusive of all social groups, Hutu agriculturalists were also integrated in the second half of the eighteenth century. Even in the army, each group occupied a specific function which reflected their social status in society. For instance, “Tutsis were warriors and commanders; Hutus were camp-followers, plunderers and providers of food to the soldiers; while Twas contributed pots and iron implements.”³¹ It was only by the end of the nineteenth century that Twas and Hutus assumed military rather than administrative responsibilities.

Clientelism: Umuheto, Ubuhake, Ubureetwa

Clientelism, was an important institution which reflected the changes in the relationship between patrons and clients over time. The first system of clientelism was the *Umuheto* which was “a form of mutual alliance involving reciprocal obligations... and a bond of elites, rather than the arbiter of hierarchical status differences.”³² Through this system clients would usually give cattle to their patrons in exchange for alliance and protection. Since this system only involved cattle owning

²⁹ Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda," 34.

³⁰ Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda," 35.

³¹ Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda," 39.

³² Catharine Newbury, "Ethnicity in Rwanda: The Case of Kinyaga," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 48, no. 1 (1978): 19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1158708>.

lineages, it restricted access to patronage to those who did not own cattle.

With time, the *Umuheto* was replaced by the *Ubuhake*, another type of cattle clientship involving clients who were usually poor Hutus and patrons who were usually cattle wealthy Tutsis. Through this relationship, “In return for the prestige and 'protection' offered by a patron, a client was to provide loyalty, support, and services.”³³ The system worked as such:

The client (*garagu*) of a lord (*shebuja*) was given some cattle to look after. In return for enjoying the usufruct, the client rendered agricultural and labour services and made more or less regular presents to his lord. No standard services were prescribed. By this system the Tutsi maintained themselves as a privileged economic and ruling group gaining control not only over cattle but also over land cleared by the cultivators and enjoying the fruits of Hutu labour.³⁴

While this system provided a greater advantage to Tutsi patrons, it also exposed their clients (Hutus) to “more arbitrary forms of exploitations including possible confiscation of any personal cattle at the pleasure of the patron.”³⁵ It could also be argued that this system was sometimes beneficial to Hutus as those who were able to accumulate cattle were also able to achieve wealth and Tutsi status.

The last system is known as *Uburetwa*. It was introduced under king Rwabugiri, in the nineteenth century due to changes in the rules governing land tenures. Among these changes were the decline in the position of Hutus as land chiefs due to the shift of the land tenure “from lineage control over land (*ubukonde*) to control by the king (*igikingi*).”³⁶ Indeed, under previous circumstances, land tenure was controlled and passed down through lineage, mostly Hutu lineage, however under the new kingship, it was no longer possible. This shift in land tenure greatly affected the terms of clientelism and the relationship that existed between some Hutus (clients) and

³³ Newbury, "Ethnicity in Rwanda," 19.

³⁴ Rennie, "The Precolonial Kingdom of Rwanda." 33.

³⁵ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 65.

³⁶ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 65.

Tutsis (patrons). While *Ubureetwa* was not widespread, but confined to certain localities, it was based on a relation of exploitation rather than reciprocation. For instance, it involved “unremunerated manual labour for the chiefs”³⁷ as a payment for the use of the land. It also required farmers (Hutus) to practice “corvee-type labor”³⁸ as it exempted pastoralists (Tutsis) from such work. All things considered, I believe that the implementation of *Ubureetwa* was detrimental to the relation and interactions between Hutus and Tutsis. While there were already existing divisions in society related to the social economic status of the group, the practice of *Ubureetwa* aggravated these distinctions as only farmers became the target of this new system. The practice also restricted the possibility for some Hutus to acquire wealth as they were able to, under the *Ubuhake* system.

2.3. Conclusion

To conclude, while there has not been a consensus as to the origins of Hutus and Tutsis, pieces of evidence have shown that these different categories had different meanings than the ones they came to assume under the colonial state. The social distinctions of Hutus and Tutsis, which were more representative of socioeconomic status than ethnic groups, were not rigid as members of one group could easily redesignate their status through wealth or loss of wealth. In fact, the classification of Hutu or Tutsi indicated whether one belonged to a lower class or a higher class. While these classifications were salient in society, members of each group did share similar cultural identities as they interacted and intermarried. Prior to colonization, it is worth noting that the Rwandan kingdom had a distinct structure that not only incorporated all members of society through various institutions among which the most complex was the client-patron system. By the

³⁷ Newbury, "Ethnicity in Rwanda," 23.

³⁸ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 66.

end of the nineteenth century, numerous changes affecting the control of land and the system of clientelism undermined the status of Hutus in society and hardened the distinctions between Hutus and Tutsis. While these distinctions could have been a point of contention between both groups, such contention was lessened because some Hutus were still integrated in the institutions. With the colonization of Rwanda, these social distinctions were reinterpreted and hardened through a various processes and new meanings came to define what it meant to be Hutu and Tutsi. The reinterpretations of these identities were influenced by the premises of the Hamitic hypothesis.

Chapter 3: The Orientalization of Tutsis Through the Hamitic Ideology

3:1. Introduction

“John Hanning Speke, British explorer, sought the black Africans’ source, turned to Genesis, claimed those with dark skin were children of Ham, Noah’s sinful son, cursed by the Father and destined to be slaves. Then, in Rwanda, Speke encountered Tutsi—light-skinned, thin-lipped, a cause for revision. Ethiopian, he declared; descendants of milk-white Shem darkened through coupling with descendants of Ham— interlopers to Rwanda’s fertile hills.”¹

The Rwandan genocide might have occurred 26 years ago, but it will forever be remembered as one of the most brutal and deadly organized killings in human history. Some of the most frequently asked questions about the genocide include: “how could it happen? How could people who have lived together for decades turn against people they called, friends and family without showing mercy? In answering these questions many scholars have failed to study how certain dynamics during the colonial era created the path to the Rwandan genocide. In fact, they failed to analyze how the propaganda which was used to encourage the killings was rooted in the Hamitic hypothesis: a European ideology used to identify Tutsis as Hamites, a superior race. I argue that it is salient to examine the impact of colonial ideologies on the fragmentation of both Tutsi and Hutu identities because it was during colonial rule that European ideologies about races led to the orientalization of Rwanda. This orientalization was not made in comparison to the West. In the Rwandan context, it just helped create differences between Tutsis and Hutus through the Hamitic ideology, this ideology constructed Tutsis as an alien race, and in sum Tutsis and Hutus as being racially, and historically different. Moreover, this ideology helped re-designate the already existing differences between the groups in a very controversial way. The socio-economic differences between both groups were constructed into racial and ethnic differences by

¹ Laura Apol, “Genesis: The Source of the Nile,” in *Requiem, Rwanda* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2015), 3-4.

orientalizing Tutsis as the superior race and designating Hutus as the inferior group. Furthermore, the Hamitic ideology also influenced the choice of the ruling system and other reforms which were implemented in Rwandan society by the German and Belgian colonial administration. Before we get into how this orientalization occurred, we should first understand colonialism in Africa and the types of ruling systems it relied on.

3.2. Colonialism and Ruling Systems

Prior to colonization, Africa was a free and independent continent following its own course of history. The continent had an abundance of natural resources and was known for having established a prosperous economy based on trade. Trading routes allowed many neighboring and distant kingdoms and cities to connect with each other and engage in commercial activities across the Saharan desert. In the 15th century, African states also engaged in trade with Europeans as the latter “joined Arabs with the Portuguese initially acquiring slaves through trade and later by force as part of the Atlantic slave trade.”² Then, contact with Africa was limited, as trading centers were based on coastal locations. However, the industrial revolution in the late 18th century led many European countries, to start considering Africa as the source of raw materials, their growing industry desperately needed to prosper. To achieve such goal, “Europe used colonialism to assume direct administrative control over the territories that produced them.”³

The imposition of colonialism on the African continent changed its history forever, as it impacted the social, economic, and political future of African nations long after independence.

Colonization led to what is known as the scramble for Africa during the Berlin Conference of

² Muhammed A. Yinusa, Joseph A. Oluyemi, and Raji Abdullateef, "Africa and the Remedies to the Problem of Underdevelopment," In *Underdevelopment, Development, and the Future of Africa*, ed. Mawere Munyaradzi (Mankon, Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2017), 253. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvk3gm22.12>

³ Robert T. Blanton, David Mason, and Brian Athow, “Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict in Africa,” *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 4 (2001): 476, www.jstor.org/stable/424898 .

1884-1885. During this conference, European powers seeking to occupy African territories laid down the rules for the division and conquest of the continent.

Using the pretext of a “civilizing mission,”⁴ Europe destroyed the traditional structures, habits, and religion of African societies to fulfill its primary goal: exploitation and extraction of natural resources. Colonialism led to the “the entrenchment of a new political system and ‘robbery’ economy whose permanent cancer in Africa has been ethnic fragmentation and struggles, patronage politics, civil conflict, inequality, underdevelopment and poverty.”⁵

According to Walter Rodney, while it has been argued that colonialism benefited the continent by bringing in socio economic services such as “railroads, schools, hospitals”⁶, the reality is that these services were first imported to colonies to make life more comfortable for settlers as the continent was being drained from its resources. In agreement with Rodney, I would add that it would be certainly inaccurate to rely on such claims to define colonialism as a win-win situation while it was in fact a win-lose situation that affected the African continent for the worse as it benefited European countries.

Aside from the exploitative nature of the institution, there were also differences between colonial ruling systems that Europeans adopted to facilitate the governance of colonies. These types of administrations were defined as direct rule and indirect rule. Although they both were designed to ensure control of African territories and peoples, they were each based on different methods of control. The direct rule system was mostly favored by the French and it was a strategy

⁴ Shona N. Jackson, "Colonialism," In *Keywords for African American Studies*, ed. Edwards Erica R., Ferguson Roderick A., and Ogbar Jeffrey O. G. (New York: NYU Press, 2018), 54.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvwr5v9.14>

⁵ Zhou, Takavafira Masarira Zhou and Peter Machenjera, "Colonialism, Poverty and Under- Development in Africa," In *The African Conundrum: Rethinking the Trajectories of Historical, Cultural, Philosophical and Developmental Experiences of Africa*, ed. Mawere Munyaradzi, Mubaya Tapuwa R., and Mukusha Jowere (Mankon, Bamenda: Langaa RPCIG, 2017), 34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvh9vz16.6>

⁶ Walter Rodney, “Colonialism as a System For Underdeveloping Africa,” In *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (London; New York: Verso, 1973), 246.

based on “the idea of centralization and assimilation, derived from the experience of nation-building in metropolitan France... .”⁷ The direct ruling system aimed to centralize political power and control in the hands of colonial rulers instead of existing local authorities. Under this system, indigenous institutions were dismantled, giving European administrators total authority and control over the administration and legislation. This centralization of power meant that traditional chiefs were no longer the mediators between their people and the state, instead the native population “became directly linked to the colonial state through such devices as taxation, land tenure laws, and mandatory labor dues on public-works projects.”⁸

Another goal of this system was to assimilate all natives regardless of differences, by civilizing indigenous populations. In fact, the presupposed “barbary” of African people was widespread back in that time and many Europeans who after creating narratives about their own superiority, felt that it was their mission to bring the light to the supposed “dark world”. As mentioned above, one way through which they felt they could naturalize and legitimize their colonizing mission was by conceptualizing it as a civilizing mission. This civilizing mission consisted of having natives adopt not only the religion but also “the culture, language and nationality”⁹ of the colonial power. In fact, some of the local leaders who worked in collaboration with the colonial state were not chosen among the local elite, instead they were part of a new native elite “trained in French language and culture and in the administrative skills required to serve as effective agents of the colonial state.”¹⁰ While this project of assimilation was promising, its implementation was not even across ethnic groups living in the various colonies for geographical reasons. In fact, as stated by Blanton, Mason and Athow, “the ethnic group whose traditional

⁷ Christopher Clapham, *Third World Politics: An Introduction* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 21.

⁸ Blanton, Mason, and Athow, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict," 478.

⁹ Clapham, *Third World Politics*, 21.

¹⁰ Blanton, Mason, and Athow, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict," 478-9.

homeland happened to include the administrative capital of the colony and its major commercial enclaves simply had greater access to French educational opportunities.”¹¹

Unlike the French, the project of assimilation was considered unthinkable for British administrators who instead preferred to adopt a politic that maintained the racial differences between themselves and their indigenous subjects. In contrast to the direct system, the indirect rule system did not seek to dismantle the traditional ruling system in place but instead it sought to maintain the existing traditional structures of social organization to further the colonial state interest.

British administrators built a native administration in which power was delegated to local authorities belonging to a specific minority group. This specific group had access to privileges that other native people did not have claims to, leading to resentment. To exert control on these communities without direct involvement, British colonizers worked to exploit the existing ethnic strife by adopting a divide and rule strategy. This strategy was meant to “cultivate factional rivalries among members from different ethnic communities...”¹² to avoid the creation of anti-colonial groups. At the end of colonial rule, the different ethnic groups successfully assimilated the workings of the divide and rule strategy. In countries such as Rwanda, the native population, the majority Hutus came to despise the Tutsis who represented the agents of colonial rule. This resentment came to influence the series of event that led to the Genocide.

By bringing the conversation around colonialism and these different ruling systems, the point that I am making here is that European encroachment within the continent not only led to the disruption of existing social structure, but these disruptions were influenced by certain European ideas about the populations they colonized. When we look at the different styles of colonial rules,

¹¹ Blanton, Mason, and Athow, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict," 479.

¹² Blanton, Mason, and Athow, "Colonial Style and Post-Colonial Ethnic Conflict," 480.

and the ideologies behind their implementation, it is easy to foresee how the seeds of tensions which have been planted could affect coexistence after the independence. For example, a very important feature which differentiated the direct rule system from the British system was its non-reliance on ethnic differentiation to assign roles among natives, as the goal was to incorporate every native from different ethnic groups into a single system. While French colonizers did consider their subjects as inferiors to themselves due to imagined ideas of European superiority, they however defined this inferiority not in racial terms but as “being cultural rather than genetic.”¹³ Unlike the British system, France’s colonial policy did not exploit existing ethnic cleavages among natives and therefore did not affect “the formation of a shared national identity across ethnic groups.”¹⁴ The British system by contrast, made it unlikely for the population to see themselves as having the same history after independence. It planted the seeds of discords among groups by relying on myths or ideologies to create differences among groups and strengthen the control of one group over the other. Moreover, in doing so, it furthered inequalities between ethnic communities by centering wealth and benefits in the hands of the minority ethnic group at the expense of the other. These inequalities have since led to violent conflicts, the most notable being in Rwanda.

3.3. Orientalism and Hamitic Ideology in Rwanda during Colonial Rule

It might be peculiar to apply Said’s theory of orientalism to the case of Rwanda, but I would like to argue that it is relevant, as Orientalism did inform the colonization but also the hierarchization of the Rwandan population in the colonial period. By discussing the orientalization

¹³ Clapham, *Third World Politics*, 21.

¹⁴ Merima Ali, Odd-Helge Fjeldstad, Boqian Jiang, and Abdulaziz B Shifa, “Colonial Legacy, State-Building and the Saliency of Ethnicity in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *The Economic Journal* 129, no. 619 (2018): 2, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/econj.12595>.

of Rwandan groups it is also important to acknowledge that orientalism and colonialism operate at similar levels as from my perspective, they both interact with each other due to them having a Eurocentric component. In contemplating the dynamics of colonialism which clearly was an extractive and exploitative system, one cannot ignore how the system was also based on eurocentrism. The idea of colonizing other groups arose from western subjects' assertion of their own superiority not only over the rest of the world, but mainly over other groups whose sub humanity was defined by their race, culture, physical differences, religion and so on. It is the belief in what Edward Said called “positional superiority”¹⁵ that led German, British and French explorers, colonizers, and missionaries to occupy nations whose people they thought were uncivilized and barbaric.

While I cannot define orientalism as an extractive system, it is indeed a concept that arose out of the need to denounce western Eurocentric and racist depiction of non-western societies. When Said published his groundbreaking book *Orientalism*, he sought to criticize interpretations of the East/orient in western thought. He believed that western discourse about the East/Orient was mired with rhetoric that purposely promoted the hegemony or superiority of European ideas about the East presumed backwardness. And as we look at society today and some of the debates occurring about topics such as wars, religion and the veil, these ideas still prevail. Western knowledge production has helped spread an unfavorable image of the East which has proliferated in western culture, politics, and science, and influenced the ways people see and talk about the Orient and its people. It created a sort of self-consciousness that relied on racial, cultural, and even political ideologies to create distinctions between the West (self) and the Orient/East(other). Said argued so by saying that:

¹⁵ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1978), 7.

Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.¹⁶

It is noteworthy to point out that regardless of how prevalent orientalist ideas about the West and the Orient came to be in Western discourses, some of them did not necessarily rely on empirical truth. However, because they were produced by the West, they were immediately "taken for granted as having the status of scientific truth."¹⁷ These sets of ideas were not considered as mere theories, as according to Said, they became a system of knowledge which influenced and were also present in several scientific theories and works. Among them, the most notable being those pertaining to the racial classification of "men into types."¹⁸ Even this classification reflected this idea of positional superiority which is embedded in orientalism. This classification from an orientalist logic positions the West and its people on top of this imagined hierarchical ladder and legitimizes the inferiority of the oriental subject. This subject which, in contrast to his western counterpart, is considered strange, barbaric, backward, uncivilized, and therefore, needing civilization. Such excuses that led to the imposition of colonialism.

In fact, starting in the 18th century, racial ideologies spread by European thinkers shaped the perception of western subjects regarding non-western populations in colonies. Early attempts at racial classification relied on physiognomy and phrenology to determine whether differences in "facial profiles; head shapes and the prominence of multiple cerebral organs"¹⁹ could reveal an individual's character and intelligence. Later, the need to impose the superiority of the white race led to the adoption of a theory of race which consisted of dividing people into varieties using

¹⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

¹⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 46.

¹⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 119.

¹⁹ Martin S. Staum, *Labeling People: French Scholars on Society, Race, and Empire 1815-1848* (Montreal & Kingston; London; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 4.

criteria such as “skin color, geographic location with matching temperaments.”²⁰ Regardless of the criteria, which were considered to create such racial classifications, all led to conclusions which confirmed the hegemony of the white race over other races. In fact some of them classified among others “Europeans as being active , smart , inventive; and Africans as crafty, slow and foolish.”²¹ Similarly, unlike their white counterparts, other races particularly Africans were portrayed as primitive people who were “intellectually and morally inferior.”²² Whether it is disputable or not, I believe that it is nonetheless undeniable that these Orientalist discourse played a role in the legitimization of the western enterprises of imperialism and colonialism. They also played a significant role when European travelers came across various populations in the Orient, which in this paper is Rwanda.

By applying the concept of orientalism to the case of Rwanda, my intention is to show that ethnic differences among Rwandans were not fixed criteria to begin with. Rwandan society was not orientalized because it was discovered to be oriental, in fact it was made oriental due to European ideologies about what it meant to be black or white and inferior or superior. Indeed, the concept of positional superiority which I mentioned earlier, helped create a distinction between the western subject and the non-western subject; one superior and the other inferior. In Rwanda, this positional superiority was recontextualized to define what it meant to be Tutsi or Hutu. While Hutus became the inferior other, Tutsis became the superior race and their orientalization as a superior race was aided by ideology such as the Hamitic hypothesis.

The Hamitic Hypothesis

²⁰ Staum, *Labeling People*, 24.

²¹ Saeed Khan, “Race and difference: Orientalism and Western Concepts,” *Encyclopedia of the Human Genome*, (2003): 2, <https://www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/naturepaper.pdf?x40804>

²² Staum, *Labeling People*, 58.

Before discussing the role of the Hamitic hypothesis in shaping Rwandan society during colonial rule, I think it is necessary to first understand the history or origin of this myth or ideology, as the idea of a Hamite subject did not develop out of nowhere. The hypothesis was conceived in Europe by historians, archaeologists and scientists obsessed with the idea of race classification, then later, exported to regions such as Rwanda where it caused great damages. When Europeans became aware of the rich civilizations of African antiquity, many started questioning their beliefs about Africans, as they were convinced of the inferiority of non-western culture. They had to find a way to explain the achievements of the Black race. Charles Gabriel Seligman, one of the proponents of the Hamitic hypothesis, published in 1930 a book called *Races of Africa* in which he provided an explanation for the myth. He asserted that “the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites... who are Caucasians, i.e., belong to the same great branch of mankind as almost all Europeans...”²³ to put it another way, Seligman was arguing that the civilized institutions found in Africa were not the product of African’s doing, but the result of Africa’s invasion by a branch of “civilized Black Caucasians” called the Hamites. The assertion made by Seligman, shows that the Hamitic hypothesis is in essence racist, and I will even add, very problematic because it dismisses the accomplishments made by African on their continent. This dismissal of African people’s intelligence, in my opinion, was a way for Europeans to maintain their belief about the presumed inferiority of the Black race as it served their own interests. Although the hypothesis seems to have been forgotten in present time, the widespread belief that Africa needs the West to develop is still very much a reflection of this hypothesis and the numerous acts of white saviorism, humanitarian aids, and funds directed towards African are evidence of that.

²³ Charles Gabriel Seligman, “Hamites (Eastern Hamites),” in *Races of Africa*, (London, 1930) 96.

Seligman's conception of the Hamitic hypothesis is very important however it does not offer an overview of the earlier history of the hypothesis, which in fact originated from the Bible. While the description provided by Seligman leaves us to believe that the Hamite is a civilized, exemplary race, the same could not be said of the description provided of the same Hamite in the earlier version of the Hamitic hypothesis. One important conclusion that can be drawn from the changing context of the hypothesis is that it was just a reflection of the way Europeans conceived race relations at different times.

The earlier version of the Hamitic hypothesis could be found in the Bible. It was prevalent until the end of the 18th century. This interpretation linked the origin of the Black race to the curse of Canaan, which appears in the book of Genesis. It mainly provided the original impetus for the justification of slavery, as it presumed that God had predestined the Black race to serve the White race. According to this version, Noah as well as his sons Shem, Japheth and Ham were spared from the flood. However, after Ham saw Noah naked, the latter inflicted a curse on Ham's son Canaan. However, a quick search in the Bible also reveals that the curse only implied that Canaan would serve the descendants of Noah's other two sons, not that Canaan or his descendants would be Black. According to Edith Sanders, the designation of Hamites as being black originated from early oral collections recorded in the Babylonian Talmud, around 600 A.D. In this manuscript, "it states that the descendants of Ham are cursed by being black... endowed with both certain physiognomic attributes and an undesirable character."²⁴ This myth was widely accepted by Christians because it did not go against their religious beliefs. It was also strengthened by European travelers and traders whose orientalist writings and description of Africans helped legitimize the racist idea that all Black people could be enslaved and therefore exploited for economic gain. By looking at this

²⁴ Edith Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis; Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective," *The Journal of African History* 10, no.4 (1969): 522, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/179896> .

biblical interpretation, how did the original Hamite who is described as black, degenerate and cursed become associated with the Caucasian race and considered civilized? One significant event accounted for this change: Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798.

According to Saunders, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 led to new discoveries implying that Egypt had "a population of Negroids who were, once upon a time, originators of the oldest civilization of the West."²⁵ This discovery was controversial, as many opposed the idea that Egypt civilization, that is a Black civilization could be the predecessor of Western civilization. At last, the resolution of this dilemma came once again from the Bible. The story of Ham was carefully analyzed and from this came the idea that Egyptians were in fact "descendants of Mizraim, a son of Ham."²⁶ Based on these explanations, Egyptians were classified as Hamites, a branch of the Caucasian race. It made more sense for them to do so, since they had established that Canaan was the only son who had been cursed with blackness.

While the new Hamitic hypothesis was slowly gaining popularity in the 19th century, European travelers such as John Speke, played a significant role in the identification of some African groups as part of the Hamite Branch. Speke was not the only traveler who wrote about the African great lakes' regions, he was also joined by Richard Burton. Their respective essays: *The Lake Regions of Central Africa, A Picture of Exploration* and *Journey of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* were published in 1860 and 1863. Burton and Speke, after encountering the native inhabitants of the region, provided an historical source of evidence for the early construction of Tutsis as a superior race but also as a Hamite group originally from the Ethiopian region. As they both argued about the superiority of the Tutsi group, some of the descriptions they provided

²⁵ Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis," 525.

²⁶ Sanders, "The Hamitic Hypothesis," 526.

closely reflected the prevalent racial ideologies which were developed in their own societies to classify the different races and their locations.

Burton for example, while visiting present day Burundi, came across Tutsis which he identified as the Warundi. Providing an extensive description of the group, he hinted that the Warundi were Hamites due to their physical appearance. In fact, he stated that “they are probably the white people resembling Abyssinians... Their limbs are stout and well proportioned, many stand upwards of six feet high, and they bear the appearance of a manly and martial race.”²⁷

John Speke who passed near the Buganda region in 1855 also encountered the Wahuma, a Tutsi group which he believed were Hamitic Galla or Abyssinians. Having carefully examined their physiognomy and character, he concluded that the Wahuma were closer to Europeans, and foreign to the region as they displayed some superior traits that set them apart from other groups in the area. In fact, he made several claims. First, he provided a description of the physical attributes and the character of the Wahuma stating that they had “fine oval faces, large eyes, and high noses, denoting the best blood of Abyssinia.”²⁸ He also implied that they had a great character and intellect by mentioning that they were “warm and affecting unlike the common order of the natives of the surrounding districts.”²⁹ He also went on to imply that the Wahuma were a conquering and civilizing race as in every province where he encountered them, they had “invaded and taken possession, leaving the agricultural aborigines to till the ground, while the junior members of the usurping clans herded cattle just as in Abyssinia...”³⁰ From his own observation, Speke developed a theory that Wahuma were from no other race than the “ semi-shem-Hamitic of

²⁷ Richard Burton, *The Lake Regions of Central Africa, A Picture of Exploration* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1860), 872

²⁸ John H. Speke, *Journal of The Discovery of The Source of The Nile* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1863), 203.

²⁹ Speke, *Journal of The Discovery of The Source of The Nile*, 203.

³⁰ Speke, *Journal of The Discovery of The Source of The Nile*, 241.

Ethiopia.”³¹ Through his writings, a connection could be made between the Egyptian Hamites and similar groups who were found in other regions such as Ethiopia. In fact, Seligman made that connection as he stated that “the Eastern Hamites comprise the ancient and modern Egyptians ... the Galla, the Somali and Danakil, and, though mixed with Semites and Negroes, most Abyssinians”³² I believe that the idea of positional superiority also shaped the classification of these groups. While Hamites belonged to a Caucasian branch, it did not mean that Europeans considered this group as their equal, instead Hamites were an inferior group of Caucasians but a superior group in comparison to Black people. By the 20th century, the second interpretation of the Hamitic hypothesis story was fully established. This version was significant for the history of Rwanda and its Tutsi population. In fact, it ascribed a foreign identity to Tutsis by identifying them as being the descendants of Eastern Hamites, most specifically Ethiopians also known as Abyssinians. Because of this ideology, Hutus became convinced that Tutsis were invaders who conquered their ancestors and exploited them.

Based on this evidence, it is in my belief that the Hamitic hypothesis depended on several premises which were essential to distinguish between Hamites and native Africans. The first premise implied that unlike other Africans, Hamites were a superior, civilized race who were so “... politically sophisticated that they organized the conquered territories into highly complex states with themselves as the ruling elites.”³³ Second, that Hamites closely resembled Caucasians. Finally, Hamites had a cultural identity: they were pastoralists as opposed to their Black counterparts who were agriculturalist. According to Saunders “pastoralism and all its attributes became endowed with an aura of superiority of culture.”³⁴ These three claims were all verified in

³¹ Speke, *Journal of The Discovery Of The Source of The Nile*, 241.

³² Seligman, “Hamites (Eastern Hamites),” 97.

³³ Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis,” 532.

³⁴ Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis,” 530.

the case of Rwanda where Tutsis were considered by colonizers as the superior race, they were also mostly pastoralists and were said to share similar physical characteristics with Caucasians. These claims which I have made came at the forefront when Rwanda was colonized.

The Hamitic Hypothesis in Rwanda During Colonial Rule

As mentioned earlier, the orientalizing of Rwanda inhabitants started during the first encounters between European explorers. The project also continued when Rwanda came under control by German and Belgian during the colonial period. In fact, colonial administrators orientalized Tutsis and Hutus using the Hamitic ideology as a justification for their institutionalization of ethnic differences in Rwandan society.

After the 1884 Berlin conference, what would become present-day Rwanda, came under the suzerainty of Germany in 1897, before being passed down to Belgium in 1922. At the time of its colonization, Rwandan society did not rely on ethnicity as a marker of social difference, but rather on socio-economic factors. The structure of society was fluid as it allowed upward mobility to occur from one class to another under the *Gucupira* system, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. Identities were not racialized since Rwandans themselves did not establish such distinctions among themselves. Colonization changed the turn of Rwandan history as the racist Hamitic ideology informed many reforms which led to the formation of deep ethnic cleavages which continued even after the independence.

The claims Europeans had established about the existence of a superior Hamite group, informed the way the colonial administrators structured Rwandan society to maintain control. Even though Germany and Belgium assumed control of Rwanda at different times, they both came during times when Rwanda was a monarchy led by Tutsi kings called *Mwamis*. These colonial administrators admired the system of governance, these kings had managed to sustain. They also

realized that the society had in fact a hierarchy in which Tutsis who were mostly pastoralists, occupied a higher position in contrast to the Hutus who were mostly agriculturalists. This for them was an irrefutable proof of the racial difference and the superiority of Tutsis. They also noted the physical differences between Hutus, Tutsis, and Twas and according to Newbury (2001), they concluded that:

Tutsi" ethnicity was associated with power, pastoralism, and a distinctive physique-tall, thin, and often light-skinned; "Hutu" were assumed to be linked to servitude, horticulture, and stockier build; and "Twa" were seen as hunters or potters, living on the margins of the political order, and with their own physical characteristics-short of stature, with stocky legs, round heads, broad noses.³⁵

From their skewed observations, they interpreted these differences in racial and ethnic terms as they believed, these differences to be concluding with the premises of the Hamitic ideology: 'Tutsis had similar physical characteristics as Europeans, were intelligent rulers and were pastoralist.' It is without doubt that Tutsis already had a superior status in society over Hutus. The existence of clientelism which involved Tutsis as patrons and Hutus as clients, the ownership of cattle, the Ubureetwa,³⁶ the scorned label of Hutus; are evidence of the advantage Tutsis had in most aspects of society. However, they never expressed such superiority in racial or ethnic terms. Under German and Belgian rule, they became receptive and supportive of European ideologies about their superiority as they realized the benefits they could gain. Desforges made a similar claim as she stated that:

In the early years of colonial rule, Rwandan poets, and historians, particularly those from the milieu of the court, resisted providing Europeans with information about the Rwandan past. But as they became aware of European favoritism for the Tutsi in the late 1920s and early 1930s, they saw the advantage in providing information that would reinforce this predisposition. They supplied data to the European clergy and academics who produced the first written histories of Rwanda. The collaboration resulted in a sophisticated and

³⁵ David Newbury, "Precolonial Burundi and Rwanda: Local Loyalties, Regional Royalties," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 2 (2001): 258.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3097483>

³⁶ Ubureetwa was forced labor performed by Hutus. Rich and poor Tutsis were exempted.

convincing but inaccurate history that simultaneously served Tutsi interests and validated European assumptions.³⁷

The Hamitic hypothesis did not only have an ideological impact on Rwandan society, but also an institutional one. As German and Belgian officials were certain of the superiority of the Tutsi race over the Hutu's, the next step to making these differences tangible, was to institutionalize these racial distinctions. The same way that orientalism established the West, its people and culture as superior to those of the orient, colonial administrators relied on their Eurocentric ideologies of race to place Tutsis above the Hutus. While they considered Tutsis to be closer to Europeans than the Hutus, Belgians and Germans rulers still believed in maintaining their own superiority over both groups. Tutsis might have been like them, but they were not equal as the European race was considered as the supreme civilizing race. They, therefore, had to devise a ruling system which would not only allow them to control both Hutus and Tutsis but also assert the superiority of the Tutsis over the Hutus. By letting their racist ideologies of differences influence their decisions, European administrators started reforming Rwanda's traditional structure by institutionalizing Tutsi superiority in society.

The first institutions which were reformed to reflect the Hamitic ideology of race and therefore, the superiority of Tutsis, was the local government and other administrative institutions. Since Tutsis were considered a civilizing race as premised by the Hamitic ideology, German and Belgian officials saw them fit to rule on their behalf. Consequently, they decided to adopt the indirect rule system which was also a profitable alternative for them. Indirect rule significantly reduced the power of the King as many changes were implemented. For example,

³⁷ Alison Des Forges, *'Leave None to Tell the Story': Genocide in Rwanda* (New York, Washington, London, Brussels: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 37.
<https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/r/rwanda/rwanda993.pdf>.

in 1917, the Mwami was forbidden from pronouncing a death sentence without the permission of the head of the Belgian administration, the resident. From 1922 on, he was assisted in the exercise of his judicial duties by a resident's representative. In 1923, he was additionally forbidden to make or revoke appointments of provincial chiefs...³⁸

Under the new system advocated by the colonial rulers, the local administration became an extension of Tutsi power and superiority. In fact, as stated by Mamdani (2001) "all Hutu chiefs in the kingdom were systematically deposed and replaced by Tutsis chiefs"³⁹ who were in fact legally appointed Tutsi authorities trained by the colonial administration. By putting the local government and other administrative units under the control of Tutsi chiefs, the colonial administration helped "institute a rigid association between one's tribal identity and access to basic resources such as land and local government services."⁴⁰

Whether they were constrained or willingly accepted their new roles, Tutsi middlemen acted upon the order of European administrators and were delegated many roles which in other colonies would have normally been assumed by other Europeans. Some of their duties included "imposing taxation, these functions included imposing cultivation of obligatory crops (partly to ensure supplies of food to workers in European enterprises), corvee labor to build and maintain local roads, and, in some areas, the recruitment of workers for Europe."⁴¹ The power of the chiefs was extended when they were given customary authority.

Customary law highlighted the differential treatment between Tutsis and Hutus. While Hutus were the only ones being ruled through customary law as they were natives and indigenous groups, Tutsis in contrast were governed through civil law because they were considered "subject

³⁸ Jean Paul Kimonyo, "The Historical Context," in *Rwanda's Popular Genocide* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2016), 18.

³⁹ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 91.

⁴⁰ Ali et al., "Colonial Legacy, State-Building and the Salience of Ethnicity," 6.

⁴¹ Catharine Newbury, "Colonialism, Ethnicity, and Rural Political Protest: Rwanda and Zanzibar in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 15, no. 3 (1983): 263, www.jstor.org/stable/421681.

... identified as nonindigenous.”⁴² Customary law became a tool Tutsi chiefs used to repress Hutus since it allowed them to “assert and legitimize their power and control over the allocation of resources.”⁴³ With that being said, it was a system enforced by Tutsi chiefs using sanction, exploitation, and force which in most cases targeted Hutus whether they were affluent or poor. Most Hutus being agriculturalist, the group was required to perform various activities from which wealthy as well as petit Tutsis were excluded. For example, Hutus were not only required to pay taxes, but they were also tasked with doing *Ubureetwa and Akazi*. The *Ubureetwa* practice which was introduced by king Rwabugiri in the 19th century, required Hutus in some regions to perform a variety of unpaid labor for chiefs. It was reformed and legalized under Belgian policy, making it not only “compulsory” but also the norm in the whole region.”⁴⁴

Similarly to the *Ubureetwa*, *Akazi* was a type of forced unpaid labor which Hutus had to perform. They included “road and terrace construction and maintenance... compulsory cultivation of food crops such as cassava (to fight against famine) or of cash crops such as coffee”⁴⁵ and so on. Because these activities were a requirement, Hutus who failed to perform faced a variety of punishments. As stated by Dominique Uwizeyimana, these punishments include “public flogging (or *sjamboking*, *ikiboko*, a sentence of eight strokes with a stick or leather whip) and prison.”⁴⁶

Education was another institution through which the Hamitic hypothesis was spread, and the Catholic church played a significant role in the dissemination of the Hamitic ideology. Many

⁴² Mahmood Mamdani, “Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 4, (2001): 656, www.jstor.org/stable/2696665.

⁴³ Bruce J. Berman, “Ethnicity, Patronage and The African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism,” *African Affairs* 97, no. 388 (1998): 321. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/723213>.

⁴⁴ Kimonyo, “The Historical Context,” 20.

⁴⁵ Kimonyo, “The Historical Context,” 20-21.

⁴⁶ Dominique E. Uwizeyimana, “Social Exclusion in Rwanda Under Different Leadership Regimes,” *International Journal of Applied Business and Economic Research* 15, no. 24 (2017): 17. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321098790>

schools at the time were administered by missionaries who also influenced by the racist ideologies of the time made no effort to redress the wrongs being made to Hutus. The education system had an instrumental value, it was used to construct and perpetuate inequality among the groups by furthering the ideology of Tutsis' superiority. Some of the first schools opened in the early and mid-1900s only sought to educate the children of Tutsi elites. However, by the 1930's, while certain schools were restricted to Tutsi children, those that admitted both Hutu and Tutsi kids adopted a different training system meant to socialize each group in their future role in society. For example, Tutsi children were taught French and given a rigorous education meant to prepare them "as auxiliaries to both the missionaries and the colonial administration."⁴⁷ In contrast, Hutu children received a different training in the local language. This training was meant to "prepare them for manual labor but also to underline the political fact that educated Hutus were not destined for common citizenship"⁴⁸ as were children of Tutsi elites. It is also noteworthy to add that while children of the Tutsi elites could pursue higher education, "Hutus were excluded from higher education which was meant mostly as preparation for careers in the administration."⁴⁹ These administrative positions were reserved for Tutsis.

One of the most decisive moments in the racialization process was the census of 1933. It was a challenge for Belgians to identify Tutsis from Hutus because the physical characteristics they relied on were not always consistent due to intermarriage. They mostly had to retrace individuals' group affiliation by checking their family history. The use of genealogy to indicate an individual's status had its own flaws "it was time consuming and could be inaccurate given that individuals could change categories as their fortunes rose or fell."⁵⁰ As Belgians rulers sought to legally

⁴⁷ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 89.

⁴⁸ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 90.

⁴⁹ Des Forges, *'Leave None to Tell the Story'*, 36.

⁵⁰ Des Forges, *'Leave None to Tell the Story'*, 38.

identify members of their colonies to facilitate the distinction between both groups and provide resources accordingly, it made sense to implement a system which would help ensure that these resources went in the right hands. They did so by doing a census which culminated into the introduction of the identification card. The identity card helped consolidate what Belgians saw as a racial difference between Hutus and Tutsis, by attributing to each group, a fixed ethnic identity. This classification of groups did take into consideration European ideologies about the presupposed differences between the groups in terms of physical characteristics. It was also done based on the 10-cow rule which stated that “whoever owned ten or more cows was classified as a Tutsi.”⁵¹

The implementation of the identity card helped structure society in accordance with the Hamitic ideology. It helped set Tutsis apart from Hutus by legalizing the categorization between both groups, meaning that Rwandans could only identify either as Tutsi or Hutu from that moment. It also made it impossible for both groups to continue the *Gucupira* system, which in pre-colonial times allowed wealthy Hutus to become Tutsis and vice versa. Moreover, it is important to add that the institution of the identity card did not only affect society back then. It had further repercussions even after the independence, as it served a salient role in the demise of Tutsis during the genocide. It allowed perpetrators to identify their victims and kill them afterward.

3.4. Conclusion

To conclude, German and Belgian officials promoted the idea that Tutsis were a foreign and superior race and they made sure to drill that idea in the mind of Rwandans by institutionalizing these differences. The orientalizing of Rwanda through the premise of the Hamitic ideology helped assert the superiority of the Tutsis by centralizing power, wealth, and privilege in the hands

⁵¹ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 98.

of the subject races while depriving members of the Hutu group of these same rights. The Hamitic hypothesis which in essence was a product of European obsession with the racial classification of humanity, fragmented the structure of the precolonial Rwandan state by redefining the economic distinctions which existed between Tutsis and Hutus into racial differences. It is self-evident that a relation of inequality already existed between Tutsis and Hutus in the precolonial state. However, by reifying these differences through racially based reforms, the colonial state not only constructed and implanted ethnicity within the confine of the Rwandan society, but it also facilitated the fragmentation of Rwandan society and its politics along ethnic groups.

While Tutsis received preferential treatment by Belgians, anyone could argue that Hutus should have despised the colonial machinery for having favored Tutsis while relegating them to an inferior position. However, this was not the case as Tutsis became the object of Hutus hatred. I argue that Hutus despised their Tutsis counterpart for specific reasons. First, the institutionalization of Tutsis' superiority in Rwanda left the majority Hutus powerless. Second, although the colonial administrators gave the rules through which Hutus had to be governed, Tutsi chiefs and elite became the real despots as they represented the face of colonial rule. They were responsible for carrying the orders, they were responsible for executing the cruel floggings, exploitation, extraction which were in fact, a reminder to all Hutus of their humiliating position in society, in relation to Tutsis. Third, while not all Tutsis were part of the elite group, they all benefited from the colonial system in place as the laws in place exempted petit Tutsis from certain tasks and treatments such as the imposed *Uburetwa* and *Akazi* forced labor, Hutus alone had to bear. It was not enough for Tutsis to be hailed superior and non-natives, it is the very fact that they were also actively involved and complacent with the rules of the colonial machinery that made matters worse.

This led Hutus to resent Tutsi chiefs as well as the Tutsi community and associate them with the exercise of tyranny. It also made it clear for Hutus that there was a great need for them to

stop the discriminations they were victims of, and reclaim what they believed, as natives, was rightfully theirs; that is the Rwandan state.

Chapter 4. The Hamitic Hypothesis and the Genocide

4.1. Introduction

Despite colonialism's central role in the demise of many African states, there have been few efforts to explore the connection between contemporary ethnic conflicts and the introduction of racist ideologies during colonial rule. In linking the orientalizing of Rwanda to the genocide, my objective is not to simply ignore that many other processes or factors might have influenced Hutu's actions against Tutsis. What I am focusing on is the ideological root of the violence against Tutsis. In my previous chapter, I discussed how both groups were orientalized through the Hamitic hypothesis which served the purpose of designating Tutsis as a non-native, superior race and Hutus as a native, inferior ethnic group. In creating such demarcation between the population, colonial administrators did not really introduce differences among Tutsis and Hutus, as differences already existed. What these colonial rulers did was racialize these differences in ways that fit their interests and ideologies. In doing so they also fragmented the structure of Rwandan society by making it difficult for Rwandans to see themselves as having a shared national identity across ethnic groups. This strategy was in part, designed to undermine solidarity between ethnically distinct Rwandans against colonial domination and instead orient their animus toward each other. The orientalizing of Rwanda during colonial rule created a range of inequalities whose lasting effects remained, even after the departure of Belgians. Would there have been a conflict in Rwanda if colonial rulers had not introduced Rwandans to their racist fantasy? I do not know for sure, but I can also posit that maybe if Rwandans were exposed to direct rule, the outcome would have been different as Tutsis, petit Tutsis and Hutus would have all been affected similarly by colonial rule. Do I believe that Hutu elites played a key role in the demise of Tutsis or would there have been a mass hunt against Tutsis if Hutu elites had not designated Tutsis as the enemy? Yes, they did, and certainly not. But

in thinking about these questions, it is my belief that it is extremely crucial to understand how Hutu elites were able to successfully mobilize the Hutu population against all Tutsis whom they designated as the enemies. To understand how this happened, I think we should remember first that although Tutsis and Hutus lived in cohesion in the post-colonial state, Hutus already had a shared history and memory of oppression by Tutsis who were considered superior. Also, there was a shared memory of Tutsis as being the group designated as Hamites, which in that case meant that they were not only classified as a superior group but also as a settler/non-native group. These two points are salient as they influenced the way resources were allocated during the post-colonial state as well as the racist propaganda messages that were spread by Hutu elites and their sympathizers before and during the genocide. These messages which were in fact inspired by the Hamitic ideology of races were meant to revive collective resentment against Tutsis. In this section, I am arguing that the ideological construction of Tutsis as a racially superior and Hamitic group under Belgian rule was exploited and recontextualized by the Hutu regimes to not only exclude Tutsis from state power and administrative opportunities but to also facilitate their extermination. This section will answer the following question: How did Rwanda transition from a Tutsi monarchy to a Hutu government? How did Rwanda transition from a Tutsi monarchy to a Hutu leadership? How did the Hamitic hypothesis influence Hutu elites' treatment of Tutsis during the two republics? How was the Hamitic hypothesis put into context before and during the genocide?

4.2. Transition to independence

From the end of the 1950s to the early 1960s, the African continent experienced a major change: it was the era of independence. In fact, the end of the second world war (1939-1945) was the catalyst to the wave of decolonization which swept through Africa. Rwanda like many other African countries was also tremendously affected by this change which not only prompted the

capture of the bureaucratic machinery by Hutus but also the independence of the country in 1962. But How did Rwanda go from being a colony led by a Tutsi monarchy to an independent country led by a Hutu majority? Simply through a revolution.

During the period of decolonization, the struggle for independence was simultaneously an ethnic struggle as both groups sought to have control of the state. In fact, Hutus' growing disdain for Tutsis and the unfavorable condition they were put through, hoped to “overthrow the monarchy and replace it with a presidential republic.”¹ It is important to add that while independence and democracy were essential reforms advocated by the United Nations during the decolonization period, they were interpreted differently by both Hutus and Tutsis as seen in the documents produced at the time. In 1957, nine educated Hutus including the future president of Rwanda Gregoire Kayibanda, published a document called the *Bahutu Manifesto*. With this document, they hoped to raise awareness about Hutus' grievance and garner support from the UN trusteeship which was on its way to visit Rwanda. In this document, Hutus described the unequal race relations between Hutus and Tutsis as the main problems in Rwandan society. They also expressed their fear that the departure of Belgians might lead to the return of the Tutsi monarchy. To clarify, what I am saying is that Hutus were not against independence per se, they just feared that the centralization of power in Tutsis' hands at the eve of independence would lead to another period of Hutu domination and exploitation by Tutsis. Hutus demanded independence from the Tutsi monarchy and called for a majority rule. While Tutsi leaders asked for the elimination of the Identity card, Hutus rejected such demand as they wanted to maintain the racial distinctions between Hutus and Tutsis, I believe, as a protective measure. They blamed the social, economic, and political

¹ Peter Uvin, “Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide in Rwanda,” *African Studies Review* 40, no. 2 (1997): 96. www.jstor.org/stable/525158

inferiority of Hutus on the Tutsi race which they stated had “a political... economic... social... and cultural monopoly at the great despair of the Bahutu...”²

The *Bahutu Manifesto*, in my opinion, is a crucial piece of evidence of Hutus’ sentiments about Tutsis, as it gave an overview of the deep damage the Hamitic ideology caused in Rwandan society. The ideology infiltrated the minds and the language of Hutus and this was clear in the way the authors of the manifesto meticulously highlighted the race difference between Hutus and Tutsis to define the latter as an alien group and an oppressor. For example, in some passages of the manifesto, the authors when talking about Tutsis and their political power, kept using words such as ‘the Tutsi race, the Hamites, Hamitic colonialism, Hamite populations.’ Such language would not have been used if both groups, particularly Hutus had not been coerced to live with the consequences of such distinction. Hutus did not consider the racial privilege of Tutsis as a mere political problem, but as the central issue in Rwandan society because the Hamitic ideology guaranteed for Tutsis a total dominion over Hutus and society.

While Hutus were concerned about their fate after the independence, the Tutsi elite was fearful of the end of their rule as they hoped to maintain the existing social and political structure. Their fears were well founded as they were losing support from the Belgians who, starting in 1948, were pressured by the UN to prepare Rwanda for independence. In response to the political climate of the time, the Tutsi-led high council of Rwanda drew up a document called *Mise au Point* or Statement of Views (1957). In this document, the council interpreted the race problem in a totally different way than it had been described in the *Bahutu Manifesto*. I believe that the outcome in

² United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa 1957, *United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa 1957: Report on Ruanda-Urundi* (New York: United Nations, 1957): Annex I, 3, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3828641?ln=en>.
Trans. Awa Princess E. Zadi.

Rwandan society would have been different if Tutsi elites had acknowledged Hutu grievances, which they did not. While the latter formulated the Rwandan problem as being Hutu-Tutsi, the former, designated color prejudices or race relations between “white and black”³ as the main problem of Rwandan society. In fact, this is reflected in the statements they made in the *Mise au Point*. The Tutsi elites believed that as Rwanda prepared for self-governance, it was crucial for Europeans to provide “training to the current indigenous elite to facilitate the way they will govern the country.”⁴ In sum, unlike Hutus, Tutsis were hoping to achieve autonomy from the Belgians, their definition of independence was one that meant independence from Belgian rulers but not the dismantling of the existing political structure. In my opinion, the strategic decision to avoid mentioning the Hutu-Tutsi problem in the document reflected the attempt to depict an image of Rwandan society and its people as a homogenous group, but also a way for the Tutsi elites to reaffirm their position as the leaders of the country. Why would they not think so? they were the most educated, “a superior group,” they had been “successfully” ruling the land for a while and therefore believed that it was rational for them to continue holding that power. While the documents drafted by both groups were salient, as they provided each party’s account of what they defined as race relations issues in Rwanda, they failed to garner much reaction as the UN mission as well as the Tutsi nobility underestimated the severity of the race problem and its possibility to lead to a conflict most notably the Hutu Revolution of 1959.

The 1959 revolution occurred following specific events. In July of the same year, Mwami Rudahigwa, the King at the time, died in mysterious circumstances as he sought treatment from his Belgian doctor. The King’s death created panic among Tutsis who started attacking Hutus leaders, as they feared that the latter might use the circumstance to take control. By that time, Belgian

³ UN, *Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, Annex II, 10.

⁴ UN, *Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, Annex II, 3.

sentiments began shifting in favor of the Hutu Majority, as they were being pressured by the UN to assist in the democratization of Rwanda. It can also be argued that Tutsis' demand for freedom from Belgian rule might have constituted a threat for the colonial leaders, which might explain the swift shift of loyalty from Tutsis to Hutus. Hutus did not consider Belgians as an enemy, they mostly wanted to abolish the Tutsi monarchy which they blamed for their suffering. The first reason being the most evident, it explains the new changes that were adopted prior to Belgian departure. Many reforms implemented as directed by the UN greatly benefited the Hutu majority and improvised their political role. They included "naming several Hutus to responsible positions in the administration, admitting more Hutu into secondary schools, and conducting limited elections for advisory government councils."⁵ With such reforms, what we witnessed was the rise of a Hutu political class and the birth of multiple political parties divided along ethnic lines with the dominant parties being "the Rwanda Democratic Party/Party for the Movement and Emancipation of the Hutu (PARMEHUTU) and the Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR) or Rwandese National Union, which represented the Tutsi."⁶ The creation of these ethnic based parties led to increasing tensions between partisans, as the Tutsi elite was adamant to accept democratization, which meant the end of the minority rule.

The decisive moment occurred after a member of the PARMEHUTU party was assaulted by Tutsi youth belonging to the UNAR party and rumored to be dead. The news of the attack incited a widespread Hutus uprising. In fact, "gangs of Hutu roamed the countryside, chasing out Tutsi inhabitants and burning houses... much of the violence was aimed against ... (such as chiefs

⁵ Alison Des Forges, *'Leave None to Tell the Story': Genocide in Rwanda* (New York, Washington, London, Brussels: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 39.

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/r/rwanda/rwanda993.pdf>

⁶ Edmond J. Keller, "Rwanda: Exclusionary Nationalism, Democracy, and Genocide," In *Identity, Citizenship, and Political Conflict in Africa*, (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014), 131 . <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt16gzg15.11>.

or sub-chiefs) and members of the Tutsi aristocracy, rather than ...at all Tutsi.”⁷ Belgian authorities responded to the event by bringing in their troops and supporting Hutus. The uprising led to the loss of “21 Tutsis chiefs and 332 sub-chiefs”⁸ whose positions were soon filled by several Hutu members appointed by Belgian authorities. Hutus, who at last were supported by Belgians successfully overthrew the Tutsi monarchy. The 1959 social revolution also known as the Hutu or peasant revolt, triggered the first of many waves of Tutsi massacre and their subsequent exile to neighboring countries such as Uganda and Burundi. From these locations, some of the exiled formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF): a Tutsi militia group led by Paul Kagame and Fred Rwigyema, which began attacking Rwanda starting in 1961. This group was commonly referred to by Hutus as the “Inyenzi (Cockroaches)”⁹ however the term was used to designate all Tutsis during the genocide. In 1962, Rwanda gained its independence from the Belgians and prior to the genocide, was led by two Hutu leaders: Gregoire Kayibanda (1962-1973), a southern Hutu, leader of the predominantly Hutu party known as the PARMEHUTU and Juvenal Habyarimana (1973-1994), a northern Hutu, leader of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), a totalitarian party.

Before I further expand on the condition of Tutsis during both regimes, it is important that I mention that the 1959 revolution, was not only designed to overthrow the Tutsi monarchy; It was first and foremost the beginning of the rise of Hutu nationalism which in essence was meant to generate Hutu consciousness of their condition as native to Rwanda and remind them of the European belief of Tutsis as a foreign entity. As a seed planted during colonial rule, the Hamitic

⁷ Catharine Newbury, “Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda,” *Africa Today* 45, no. 1 (1998): 13. www.jstor.org/stable/4187200.

⁸ Jean Paul Kimonyo, “The Historical Context,” in *Rwanda’s Popular Genocide* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2016) 31.

⁹ Helen M. Hintjens, “Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 261. www.jstor.org/stable/161847.

hypothesis flourished, and negatively impacted Rwandan society even after independence. While some scholars blamed the genocide on the existence of a deep hatred of Hutus for Tutsis since the precolonial time, I am arguing that it is crucial to emphasize that the history of that hatred did not go as far back, as it only arose when the Hamitic hypothesis came to regulate the lives of Hutus and Tutsis during European rule. It became a double-edged weapon that first led to the subjugation of Hutus during colonial rule but then was used for the repression and the annihilation of the Tutsi group under the two republics and during the genocide.

4.3. The Hamitic Hypothesis: A Changed Rhetoric

As mentioned above, Rwanda gained its independence in 1962 and what we witnessed then was not only a change of leadership with the capture of the bureaucratic machinery by Hutu elites, but also the infiltration of ethnic politics and racism in the Rwandan state which is not surprising. It is my opinion that ethnicity and racism were inscribed in the political tissue of Rwandan society from the day Europeans established an indirect system of rule not only based on ethnicity but also influenced by the Hamitic ideology. Going from this logic, one of the best ways, I suggest, we interpret what happens next in Rwanda is through the Hamitic ideology. In fact, I believe that it would be erroneous to qualify Hutu elites' actions under the two republics as solely the result of revenge without bringing into the conversation, the impact of the Hamitic ideology on the mentality of Hutus and on the Rwandan state.

In making this point, what I am arguing is that, in the modern Rwandan state, the Hamitic hypothesis was appropriated by Hutu elites and recontextualized to justify the poor treatment of Tutsis under Kayibanda and Habyarimana's rule. While the ideology was originally used to glorify the foreignness and the superiority of Tutsis in relation to Hutus, it now became central to the

glorification of Hutus as the rightful “sons of the soil”¹⁰ and the denigration of Tutsis as a foreign oppressor group with no claims to state power. This belief in the primordality and the legitimacy of the Hutu group over the Tutsis led to the development of many discriminatory policies that had the objective to keep Tutsis from social opportunities and political power as Rwanda became a mono ethnic, single party state.

Under Kayibanda’s republic for example, the system of ethnic cards that was instituted during the Belgian rule was maintained to ensure the non-integration of Tutsis into the apparatus of the state such as “the military or government service.”¹¹ Kayibanda also adopted policies designed to forcibly relocate Tutsis and prohibit their movement outside of the region to which they were exiled. In fact, through a policy called *Paysannat*, Tutsis were forced to relocate from Ruhengiri, a fertile region to Bugesera, an inhabitable region which was “arid and infested with the tsetse fly”¹² and intimidated to remain there in the hope that they would not survive.

Intermarriage across ethnic groups was also prohibited for “persons in the military and in government.”¹³ While this might have been considered the best way to avoid recruiting Hutus born from a mixed marriage for state positions, I think this might have been pointless. Considering the history of intermarriage and the Gucupira/Kwihutura systems in precolonial Rwanda, it is certain that many individuals who in the modern state identified as Hutus or Tutsis had either a mixed ancestor somewhere down the genealogy line or had an ancestor who became Hutu through Gucupira or Tutsi through Kwihutura. As I mentioned in my previous chapters, these two systems

¹⁰ Hintjens, “Explaining the 1994 Genocide,” 254.

¹¹ Kenneth R. White, “Scourge of Racism: Genocide in Rwanda,” *Journal of Black Studies* 39, no. 3, (2009): 475. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40282573.

¹² Kyrsten Synema, “From Kayibanda to Habyarimana” in *Who Must Die in Rwanda’s Genocide? The State of Exception Realized* (Lanham; Boulder; New York; London: Lexington Books, 2015) 80.

¹³ White, “Scourge of Racism,” 475.

respectively allowed downward or upward mobility between classes. A loss of wealth led to inferior Hutu status (Gucupira), and a gain in wealth translated into Tutsi status (Kwihutura).

In addition to these reforms, there were also a series of attacks against Tutsis some of which occurred earlier from 1959 to 1961, and again in 1963-1964 and 1973. A few pogroms against local Tutsis (1963-1964) were conducted in retaliation for the attacks orchestrated by the RPF army whose grievances and demand to return to Rwanda were ignored by Kayibanda. He even threatened these rebels by mentioning that they “if they seek political power, may well find that the whole Tutsi race will be wiped out.”¹⁴ Aside from the killings, other acts of violence had as their objective to purge Tutsis from certain government institutions where a quota system was introduced to restrict Tutsis access to education and jobs. As reported by Synema,

In 1969, the PARMEHUTU Congress established a law creating ‘ethnic equilibrium’ in secondary schools, universities, and civil service. Enrollment in schools was limited to 9% for Tutsi children, based on the census conducted around the time of independence. Within civil service, no more than 9% of employees were allowed to be Tutsi. The 9% quota was even implemented within private industry and other sectors of employment. The effect was immediate. In the 1972-73 school year, no Tutsi students were accepted to any secondary schools in the nation, and not one Tutsi student was admitted into the National University of Rwanda.¹⁵

By looking at these reforms, it is clear that Kayibanda regime was based on radicalism, fear and segregation as Tutsis now had to experience some of the socio-economic and political discrimination which were once the lot of Hutus. By keeping Tutsis away from certain active roles in society, Hutus were able to exert authority and legitimacy over the Rwandan state and have Tutsis deal with the repercussions of being labelled an alien group.

Having been elected right after the revolution, Kayibanda assumed the role of leader for all Hutus and therefore made sure to craft a response to the Tutsi problem which was brought up at the

¹⁴ Uvin, “Prejudice, Crisis, and Genocide,” 99.

¹⁵ Synema, “From Kayibanda to Habyarimana,” 76-77.

eve of the independence. As Kayibanda was also one of the signatories of the *Bahutu Manifesto*, it is evident that his stance about Tutsis -- which was definitely clouded by racism, resentment and even hatred-- informed the repressive actions and reforms he crafted to ensure a separation of Tutsis from the majority in most aspects of society. He was a fervent believer in the need for separation, with “...no intercourse and no sympathy...”¹⁶ between Hutus and Tutsis. This lack of sympathy he harbored against Tutsis can explain why he did nothing to mitigate the unwarranted killings of local Tutsis by Hutus in reprisal for the RPF attacks. These local Tutsis became scapegoats because they were accused of working in complicity with the RPF rebels. In truth, they were targeted because they were just simply Tutsis which made them the enemy of the state.

While Kayibanda rule ended in 1973 through a coup, the politics of discrimination which existed during his rule, continued under Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu leader who led the second republic. With the hatred Hutus had against Tutsis, one would have believed that a strong unity existed among the Hutu group, however that was not the case, and this division among Hutus is one that goes back to the colonial period. When the Rwandan kingdom was expanding and conquering the Hutu chieftaincies in the region, they had great difficulties taking over the small Hutu states in the North. These northern Hutus succeeded in remaining independent until the early 20th when they were conquered by the Rwandan military, aided by German troops and former Southern Hutus who were now part of the state. According to Lisa Melvern, “in spite of their incorporation into the Rwandan state, the northern Hutu...formed a distinct culture. They had a historical loathing of Tutsis and Southern Hutu, blaming both for their subjugation.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Synema, “From Kayibanda to Habyarimana,” 78.

¹⁷ Lisa Melvern, “Genocides,” in *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (Verso, London; New York: Verso, 2004), 12.

With such information in mind, it becomes clear that the control of power for Hutus was not only necessary to eliminate Tutsis, but it also became another option for specific Hutu elites to centralize power in the hands of people from their region. And this is what happened with the two republics. When Kayibanda led the first republic, he not only recruited people from the south when forming his cabinet, he also gave more benefits to people from his region. This favoritism led to dissension, as northern Hutus felt like they were being excluded from power. The coup in question was not only a political action, but it was also an act of revenge in my opinion as it represented northern Hutus' retribution for southern Hutus' actions during colonial time. While in power, President Habyarimana continued the regional favoritism his predecessor had engaged in.

Habyarimana claimed that he wanted to create a climate of justice and peace in Rwanda, however he did not stop perpetuating discrimination against Tutsis. His idea of justice was to “redress historical wrongs”¹⁸ by placing Hutus in institutions that were historically dominated by Tutsis such as school and civil institutions. Similarly to President Kayibanda, he imposed quotas: “in education, Hutus received over 85% of places, Tutsis between 10 to 15% and Twas 1% ; in employment, 90% of post were allocated to Hutus, and 10% to Tutsis and Twas.”¹⁹ While these reforms affected Tutsis, in contrast to the previous regime, they lived a relatively peaceful life until October 1990, when an insurgency by the RPF militia led to a great panic among members of the Habyarimana government.

This insurgency culminated in a civil war which spanned over three years. The RPF militia fought against the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR). The war briefly ended when the warring parties agreed “to sign the “Arusha accords in august 1993,”²⁰ which mandated power sharing between

¹⁸ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002),139.

¹⁹ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 139.

²⁰ Bruce D. Jones, “The Arusha Peace Process in Rwanda,” in *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999),143.

Hutus and Tutsis. Despite signing onto the resolution, Habyarimana and his entourage were unwilling to yield to international pressures and objected to sharing power with the RPF whom they believed did not have any legitimate claim to Rwandan state power. The power-sharing was contested by members of the President's entourage, and by the president himself as he reportedly referred to the agreements as “scraps of paper”²¹ in a speech. Different disagreements within the government and the murder of president Habyarimana led to the radicalization of many factions and to an intense propaganda that culminated into the genocide. The genocide which lasted 100 days from mid-April 7th to July 1994 is estimated to have caused more than one million death according to the UN.

4.4. The Hamitic Ideology in Propaganda Messages.

In their frantic desire to retain control of the Rwandan state, it is without doubt that Hutu elites played a salient role in the unfolding of the genocide. They, indeed “ordered the killing, and deployed the resources they had at their disposal—loyal military units, government spokesmen, militias, and radio broadcasts—to spread the message of violence.”²² While these different resources helped in the occurrence of the genocide, they were not the root causes of it. In asking how were Hutu elites able to mobilize a whole group against another? Scholars such as Kellow C. L. and Leslie Steeves have highlighted the role of obedience. In fact, they stated that the existence of “strong traditions of hierarchy and authoritarianism in African countries had the tendency to increase the likelihood of blind obedience to the orders of officials on the radio. Norms

²¹ Joel Stettenheim, “The Arusha Accords And The Failure Of International Intervention In Rwanda,” in *Words Over War: Mediation And Arbitration To Prevent Deadly Conflict* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 226.

²² Scott Straus, “Background to the Genocide,” In *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2006), 22.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt24hg8g.5>

of rote obedience were, and continue to be, exceptionally strong in Rwanda.”²³ While I do agree that orders given through radios such as the RTLM did influence the mobilization, it is the ideological history behind the nature of the messages that actually incited the population to act. Going back to my introduction, I mentioned that although Tutsis and Hutus lived as neighbors in the modern state, they kept the memories of the past: Hutus as a collective, did not forget that they were once oppressed by Tutsis; they also did not forget that under colonial time, Tutsis were designated as Hamites. Based on the way the modern state was structured under the two republics, I believe that it should be a known fact that this memory permeated every aspect of society as Hutus not benefited from the changed rhetoric of the Hamitic hypothesis but also witnessed the attacks directed towards Tutsis prior to the genocide.

In answering the question asked above then, my argument is that by deciphering the racist components in the message sent by Hutu extremists, we might realize that it was the logic of remembering Tutsis as the invader, the oppressor, *the Inyenzis*(cockroaches), the Hamites, the enemy which facilitated the quick response of the Hutu population. As equally stated by Rene Lemarchand, Hutu extremists resurrected the Hamitic hypothesis and presented Tutsis as “being cruel and cunning, conqueror and oppressor.... all originally bad...”²⁴ During the period of 1990 to 1994, these reinterpreted facts --inspired by the Hamitic hypothesis-- were evident in the propagandist messages which were relayed in Rwandan society. As the RPF invaded Rwanda in 1990, Hutu extremists seized this opportunity to incite fear by basing their propaganda on what Jean-Pierre Chretien called “the myth of the Tutsi monarchy return.”²⁵ They made Hutus believe that the RPF invasion was a ploy for Tutsis/Hamites to return and subjugate them again. This was

²³ C.L. Kellow and H. Leslie Steeves, “The Role of Radio in the Rwandan Genocide,” *Journal of Communication* 48, no. 3 (1998): 116.

²⁴ René Lemarchand, "Ethnicity as Myth," in *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 58.

²⁵ Jean-Pierre Chretien, *Rwanda : Les Médias du Genocide* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1995), 113.

actually the main concern of Hutus at the onset of independence. In thinking about this moment, it is easy to understand (not to excuse) how just the thought of such a difficult period -- that many had not even experienced -- was enough to awaken animosities and ensure the participation of every Hutu in the annihilation of Tutsis. To ensure a successful implementation of that Tutsi fear, different means were used to propagate extremist messages.

These racist messages were spread through various channels, some of them included journal articles, communiques, speeches, and radio messages and they all mostly conveyed the same message which I mentioned above. They served to remind Hutus that they were the “*rubanda nyamwinshi*, the great majority”²⁶ and that the RPF was coming to reinstall a Tutsi monarchy. One of the first messages of racist propagandas was the *Hutu Ten Commandments* which was published in December 1990 in the number six issue of the *Kangura* newspaper. *Kangura* which means Wake Them Up, was an anti-Tutsi newspaper supported by the Habyarimana camp. The Hutu Ten Commandments appealed to all Hutus by prescribing a set of recommendations necessary for dealing with the Tutsis, who as the enemy was considered as a threat to the well-being and freedom of Hutus. The pamphlet in essence was written to convince Hutus that they should be wary of Tutsis’ attempt to reverse the effects of the 1959 revolution, and to reinstate Tutsi domination.

Some of the commandments proscribed any sexual ties with Tutsi women:

1. Every Hutu male should know that Tutsi women, wherever they may be, are working in the pay of their Tutsi ethnic group. Consequently, shall be deemed a traitor: any Hutu male who marries a Tutsi woman; any Hutu male who keeps a Tutsi concubine; any Hutu male who makes a Tutsi woman his secretary or protegee.
2. Every Hutu must know that our Hutu daughters are more dignified and conscientious in their roles of woman, wife and mother. Are they not pretty, good secretaries and more honest!²⁷

²⁶ Des Forges, ‘*Leave None to Tell the Story*’, 101.

²⁷ “Appeal to the conscience of the Hutu,” *Kangura*, no. 6 (December 1990): 24
https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=Kangura_No_6&gsearch=

According to these commandments, Tutsi women were a threat, spies and morally dishonest like their male counterparts since the assumption was that; they all hoped to benefit from the return of the Tutsi monarchy. I believe that the emphasis on Tutsi women as temptresses was done to legitimize violence against them. During the genocide, these women were not only targeted because of their ethnicity but also because of their gender. Tutsi women have historically been considered as more beautiful in comparison to Hutu women. The belief that they were the embodiment of “feminine grace”²⁸ came about due to the Hamitic ideology. When Europeans first encountered Hutus and Tutsis, they praised the physical traits of Tutsis which many Europeans believed were like theirs. Tutsis slim noses, complexion, and great height stood in contrast to those of Hutus whose traits were not considered unattractive. The need to devalue Tutsi women could have also resulted from the need to shun the supposed attractiveness of Tutsis in general, due to Hutus frustration and their internalization of the belief that their group was not desirable. In fact, as stated by Binaifer Nowrojee in a Human right watch report, Tutsi women were stereotyped as “being arrogant and looking down on Hutu men whom they considered ugly and inferior.”²⁹

Moreover, defining Tutsi women as temptresses and morally depraved was a strategic way to remind Hutu men of their obligation towards their group: they could only have pure Hutu children and they should consider Tutsi women as the enemy regardless of how beautiful they were. In certain cultures, women's reproductive ability is greatly valued as it represents the canal through which ethnicity is carried over generations. While there was a history of intermarriage between Tutsis and Hutus, the goal of this specific Hutu commandment was to put an end to such

²⁸ Lemarchand, "Ethnicity as Myth," 58.

²⁹ Binaifer Nowrojee, *Shattered Lives, Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and Its Aftermath* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996), 16.

practice as it threatened the purity of the Hutu group. As I mentioned in my second chapter, a child's ethnic group was determined through patrilineal descent, meaning that a child born from a Tutsi mother and a Hutu father was considered Hutu. However, to dissuade Hutu men from entertaining the idea, they were led to believe that any child born from a Tutsi woman would be a Tutsi regardless. Since the goal of the commandment was to denounce all Tutsi women as the enemy, it became normal for Hutu men to not only kill them but to also use brutal rape as a tool of humiliation and destruction, without impunity. It is common knowledge that during the genocide, Tutsi women were kept in sexual servitude and the target of degrading sexual acts of violence. Hutu perpetrators would "cut off breasts, puncture the vagina with spears, arrows, or pointed sticks, or cut off or disfigure body parts that looked particularly "Tutsi "such as long fingers or thin noses."³⁰ As mentioned above, the reason for such treatment, was due to their ethnicity and the gender stereotype that they were beautiful, too proud and morally depraved.

The following is the testimony of **Adeline** who was raped for being Tutsi. **Adeline** was 19 years old when the genocide occurred. She recalled that when the killing began, her family got separated. While her parents, her three sisters and two brothers got killed on the 14th of april; her younger sister, then 14 and herself hid in a trench. On the 16th, she stated that they came out of hiding believing that the situation had improved, but they were discovered by killers. She said:

When they were tired of killing, the men came to us and ordered us to take off our clothes. They each in turn raped us...A man called Marcel, who was our neighbour and had a reputation as a killer, came to the roadblock and recognised me. I begged him to save my sister and I. He told the interahamwe who were keeping us that I was his spoil and they let him take me...Marcel accused me of forcing myself on him. Saying that I was a whore that deserved what I got. He took me to his home and raped me every day.

By mid-June, there were few Tutsis left to massacre, and the killers got more and more agitated. They went from village to village to hunt any surviving snakes. Word got around that Marcel was keeping Tutsi spoils. The local leader ordered a search. I managed to sneak out of the house in time... but my sister wasn't so lucky... I was so distraught by the news

³⁰ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 307.

of my sister's death, that I handed myself over to interahamwe to be killed. Instead of killing me, another interahamwe took me to a disused house and raped me... He then called in his friends to punish me. They gang raped me. This went on for five days. I was left torn and bleeding. I don't know how I sustained the abuse. After a time I finally passed out. When I awoke, the place was silent...By that time, I didn't realise the Rwandan Patriotic Army had liberated the area...I have since found out that I am HIV positive. But I don't want to talk about it.³¹

Furthermore, Hutus were exhorted to sever any economic or political ties with Tutsis. They were also advised to not have any sympathy for them as they would seek to relegate them to an inferior position and even annihilate them once again:

4. Every Hutu male must know that all Tutsis are dishonest in business. They are only seeking ethnic supremacy. Shall be consequently considered a traitor, any Hutu male: who enter into a business partnership with Tutsis; Who invests his money or state money in a Tutsi company; who lends to, or borrows from, a Tutsi; who grants business favours to Tutsis [granting of import licenses, bank loans, building plots, public tenders...]

8. The Hutu must cease having any pity for the Tutsi.³²

The pamphlet also promoted the ideology of Rwanda as a rightful Hutu nation as it called for Hutus to unite and seek ties with other bantus only, as there was a belief that they belonged to the same race and therefore could trust each other. It also called for the total control of all Rwandan institutions by the Hutu majority.

5. Strategic positions in the political, administrative, economic, military and security domain should be entrusted to Hutu.

³¹ Survivor's Fund, "The Testimony of Adeline," Outreach Programme on the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda and the United Nations," accessed October 1, 2020, <https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/assets/pdf/survivor-testimonies/59%20-%20Adeline%202009.pdf>

³² "Appeal to the conscience of the Hutu," 25.

6. In the education sector (pupils, students, teachers) must be in the majority Hutu.

7. The Rwandan Armed Forces should be exclusively Hutu. That is the lesson we learned from the October 1990 war. No soldier must marry a Tutsi woman.

9. The Hutu, wherever he may be, should be united, in solidarity and be concerned about the fate of their Hutu brothers must have unity and solidarity and be concerned with the fate of their Hutu brothers. The Hutu at home and abroad must constantly seek friends and allies for the Hutu cause, beginning with their bantu brothers. They must constantly counteract Tutsi propaganda. The Hutu must be firm and vigilant towards their common Tutsi enemy.³³

Finally, the last commandment warned potential defectors of the consequences of not adhering to these Hutu ideologies. Based on report about the genocide, this commandment was put into effect as many Hutus who refused to engage in the killings, who hid Tutsis, or were accused of conspiring with the enemy were confronted with the same fate: death. It stated that:

10. Any Hutu who persecutes his brother Hutu for having read, disseminated, and taught this ideology shall be deemed a traitor.³⁴

Another propagandist piece seeking to discredit Tutsis claims to power was also published by the Coalition pour la Défense de la République, (CDR) a major far-right Hutu power coalition during the Arusha accords. Once again, the ideology of Tutsis as the returning oppressor was brought into context. Hutu political leaders who were against the power-sharing agreements made it clear by speaking about what they thought was the real goal of the “Tutsi enemy”. In a communique from March 03, 1993, Barayagwiza, Jean-Bosco a member of the CDR party made such claims:

The RPF demonstrated numerous times that they were against the institution of democracy but for the total control of the government by force and violence...the RPF which is mainly composed of the sons and grandsons of former Tutsis monarch who were evicted from power during the 1959 revolution, is now seeking to return, take back power, and rule the Hutu majority. RPF extremists are in fact seeking revenge, they are hoping to force the Hutu majority into servitude...The RPF has established concentration camps and forced labor in the zone they controlled which are primarily inhabited by Hutus ..RPF accomplices are within Rwanda in political parties such as the MDR, PL AND PSD...Essentially the Arusha accords would lead to the transfer of power from Habyarimana’s hands to a small group of political parties controlled by the RPF... the RPF’s main goal is to disintegrate the

³³ “Appeal to the conscience of the Hutu,” 25.

³⁴ “Appeal to the conscience of the Hutu,” 25.

national army, create a hybrid system that would allow RPF rebels to take over the national army and consolidate Tutsis power.³⁵

Speeches designed to promote hate were also common in the period leading to the genocide. Hutu authorities relied on hate speech to spread their views and advise their partisans. One of the most significant was delivered in November 1992 by Leon Mugesera, the vice president of Habyarimana's party the Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement (MRND). The ICTR defined this speech as the earliest record of genocidal discourse in Rwanda. Mugesera, like many extremists of the time, evoked the Hamitic narrative when discussing the RPF and Tutsis. In fact, he delivered a racist speech that was thought to have incited killings. Here are some excerpts:

...you should not let yourselves be invaded. Tell me, if you as a man, a mother or father, who are here, if someone comes one day to move into your yard and defecate there, will you really allow him to come again? It is out of the question

You know people they call "Inyenzis" (cockroaches), no longer call them "Inkotanyi" (tough fighters), as they are actually "Inyenzis". These people called Inyenzis are now on their way to attack us.

If justice therefore is no longer serving the people... we must do something ourselves to exterminate this rabble. I tell you in all truth, as it says in the Gospel, "When you allow a serpent biting you to remain attached to you with your agreement, you are the one who will suffer"

"The mistake we made in 1959, when I was still a child, is to let you leave". I asked him if he had not heard of the story of the Falashas, who returned home to Israel from Ethiopia? He replied that he knew nothing about it! I told him "So don't you know how to listen or read? I am telling you that your home is in Ethiopia, that we will send you by the Nyabarongo so you can get there quickly."

...the most essential is that we should not allow ourselves to be invaded, lest the very persons who are collapsing take away some of you. Do not be afraid, know that anyone whose neck you do not cut is the one who will cut your neck. Let me tell

³⁵ Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, "La Démocratie Ne Survivra Pas Aux Accords D'Arusha" *Coalition Pour La Défense De La République (CDR)*, (September 03, 1993) : 1-2, trans. Awa Princess Zadi. https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=La_D%C3%A9mocratie_Ne_Survivra_Pas_Aux_Accords_D%27Arusha.&gsearch=.

you, these people should begin leaving while there is still time and go and live with their people, or even go to the “Inyenzis”, instead of living among us and keeping their guns, so that when we are asleep, they can shoot us.³⁶

Mugesera's speech was extremely virulent, as he made certain claims that hinted at the presumed foreignness of Tutsis and the need for their extermination. In the first paragraph for example, I believe that he is referring to what many Hutus considered as the first “invasion or conquest” of Hutu chiefs and their lands by Tutsis in pre-colonial times. By designating the RPF and Tutsis in general as invaders, inyenzi, and snakes, he portrayed them as a threat which Hutus had to unite and eliminate. In fact, he encouraged his militants to resort to violence and exterminate Tutsis to avoid another conquest of Rwanda. In his speech, Mugesera brings up the need to protect Rwanda and in doing so he equates violence to self-defense or protection of the Rwandan land and its people against the Tutsi invader. In one of the passages, Mugesera also stated that “if someone comes one day to move into your yard and defecate there, will you really allow him to come again”, what he was trying to establish when talking about “your yard” was the claim of Rwanda as being the rightful home of Hutus.

He further expanded on this foreignness of the Tutsis when he called upon militants to send them back to Ethiopia through the *Nyabarongo* river. The Nyabarongo river, according to Desforges, “feeds into the rivers of the Nile watershed and hence is supposed to permit passage to Ethiopia.”³⁷ It is worth mentioning that Mugesera's reference to Ethiopia, reflects Europeans and most particularly Seligman and Speke's claims that Tutsis were a part of the “Nilo-Hamitic, Hamitic or Ethiopid group.”³⁸ The blunt message within Mugesera's speech did not fall on deaf ears as after the genocide, the bodies of murdered Tutsis were found floating on the said river.

³⁶ *Mugesera v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)*, [2005] 2 S.C.R. 100, 2005 SCC 40, Canada: Supreme Court, 28 June 2005, 38-101, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/470a4a6b1a.html> [accessed 30 December 2020].

³⁷ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 103.

³⁸ Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, 86.

The most reputable and effective way through which hate messages were directly delivered to Hutus and Tutsis, was the radio. While radios were originally a medium of entertainment and political information for all Rwandans, they soon became a tool of destruction. As the civil war between the RPF and the government army intensified, Hutu extremists sought to reach out to their supporters and the Hutu population on a wider scale. For that matter, they created a radio station called Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) which began broadcasting in 1993. The RTLM played a crucial role in the genocide as it became the instrument through which Hutu broadcasters spread their racist views and encouraged the locals to kill. The RTLM was used “to broadcast names of Tutsi and opposition targets, and report on the whereabouts of those hiding from militias during the genocide.”³⁹ Known presenters on the channel included Valerie Bemeriki and Kantano Habimana. Kantano who casually discussed and encourage his audience to murder Tutsis, referred to the genocide as a “Simusiga, or hurricane... a quasi-natural event which it was futile to resist.”⁴⁰

The radio also served other means. It not only encouraged Hutu perpetrators by thanking them for their daily work-- and by work, I mean killings-- but it also allowed the shaming of Hutus who failed to join their brothers on the killing fields. As mentioned in the 10th commandment of the Hutu manifesto, Hutus’ unity against Tutsis was salient for the survival of the Hutu ideology and therefore needed to be sustained. However, this was not always the case as many Hutus objected to the call to kill their neighbors, partners, and friends. Hutus who failed to assist their fellow men were reprimanded on the Radio and those who fled were labelled a “dishonor”⁴¹ to Hutus and the country. Kantano, stated that:

³⁹ Hintjens, “Explaining the 1994 Genocide,” 268.

⁴⁰ Hintjens, “Explaining the 1994 Genocide,” 272.

⁴¹ [Transcript of UNICTR RTLM Tape 11], Genocide Archive of Rwanda Collection, Human Rights Documentation Initiative, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin,

Those who are fleeing will regret. It is said that you refuse to die for your country and die like a dog. We must combat those dare-devils, who use doping; who spend their time running, crying and thinking that that is the way they can take the power, the country, by inspiring fear to ignorant coward Hutus⁴²

While some Hutus were lucky to be kept alive even after failing to follow order, others were not as lucky. Many Hutu rescuers recall the fear they had to be caught helping ‘the enemy’. Mutezintare Gisimba Damas for example worked at an orphanage where about 400 people survived. As he helped rescued and hide the children who came to the orphanage, he stated that:

I tried to stop the Interahamwe so that they don't take these people, but I realized that I could lose more. They could kill me and then kill the rest of the people that were still being protected and even destroy everything I had stood for. Due to the resistance, I had shown, one Interahamwe came and hit my back with the butt of his gun, I still feel the pain up to now. After that... I came back to my senses and realized that I could lose my life and everything I had protected could also be destroyed.⁴³

Although there has been no evidence of such facts, Tutsis were also blamed for the murder of President Habyarimana. His death was exploited by Hutu extremists who started warning the Hutu population of the danger that Tutsis represented. They made them believe that the murder of the president was the first stage, and that the Hutu population would be next. Valerie Bikindi, a popular RTLM presenter stated on air:

We know those behind those killings well. It is *Twagiramungu* and the *inyenzi inkotanyi* who shot down that aircraft and killed our father.”⁴⁴

Tutsis were also referred to as *Inyenzi Inkotanyi* or *Inyenzi* or cockroaches” as an act of dehumanization and othering. The term *Inyenzi* was originally not a derogatory term as Tutsi rebels

[https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/7191/unictr_rtlm_0011_eng.pdf?sequence=3].

⁴² [UNICTR RTLM Tape 11].

⁴³ “A Testimony of Gisimba Damas Mutezintare,” Genocide Archive of Rwanda, July 22, 2007, <https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=Kmc00016-sub1-eng-glifos&gsearch=> .

⁴⁴ [Transcript of UNICTR RTLM Tape 8], Genocide Archive of Rwanda Collection, Human Rights Documentation Initiative, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, [https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/7188/unictr_rtlm_0008_eng.pdf?sequence=1].

used the term to refer to themselves due to “their practice of conducting cross-border raids under cover of darkness.”⁴⁵ However in the period leading up to the genocide, the term became used conversely to designate Tutsis within the country as well as those members of the RPF. I feel that using these words interchangeably was a strategy for Hutu extremists to avoid making a distinction between both groups, as the belief was that all Tutsis were accomplices and therefore evil. By pushing the rhetoric that all Tutsis were inherently bad, RTLM presenters guaranteed that Hutus who listened to the programs and made the association between Tutsis and RPF fighters, would attack both. It was not uncommon to hear messages as this one made by Kantano:

If you are a cockroach you must be killed, you cannot change anything, if you are Inkotanyi you cannot change anything...If someone has a false identity card, if he is Inkotanyi, a known accomplice of RPF don't accept anything in exchange, he must be killed.⁴⁶

On the RTLM channel, presenters repeatedly discussed the same themes which in essence reflected the Hamitic hypothesis: they mentioned the history of Rwanda by reminding Hutus of “the conquest of their land” and the exploitation they were subjected to consequently. In fact, some of the messages included these:

Tutsi are nomads and invaders who came to Rwanda in search of pasture, but because they are so cunning and malicious, the Tutsi managed to stay and rule. If you allow the Tutsi–Hamites to come back, they will not only rule you in Rwanda, but will also extend their power throughout the Great Lakes Region (RTLM, 2 December 1993, author's translation from Kinyarwanda).⁴⁷

... those bloodthirsty *Inyenzi Inkotanyi* who are exterminating the Rwandans, lying that they are fighting for democracy while it is a killing and oppressive regime they want to reestablish.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Hintjens, “Explaining the 1994 Genocide,” 261.

⁴⁶ [UNICTR RTLM Tape 11].

⁴⁷ Charles Mironko, “The Effects of RTLM's Rhetoric of Ethnic Hatred in Rural Rwanda,” in *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 127.

⁴⁸ [UNICTR RTLM Tape 8].

In remembering the institution of indirect rule, Europeans were also accused of conspiring with Tutsis during colonial rule and of continuing such practice by aiding Tutsis and blaming Hutus for the ruthless attacks. In that logic, Valerie and Kantano made these claims:

Since the beginning of the war imposed on us by the Inyenzi Inkotanyi in October 1990, in the eyes of the Rwandans, the Belgians have been like some deformed rusted up spears. They did not hesitate to show their support for the Inyenzi Inkotanyi, which brought us all this misfortune. ...they spent twenty years blinded by the Inyenzi Inkotanyi and believed all their nonsense, including the monarchy and its remnants that we buried since the 1959 Hutu Revolution. They aim at digging those rotten things up while it is impossible as long as the descendants of Hutus remain united. And undoubtedly, they will never go back on that.⁴⁹

The wish of these white men is that the preferred race, by God, must rule Rwanda. It is like saying that the race of God has won in Kigali town. They tell lies to the international community so that it can continue assisting them.⁵⁰

Today, certain white people, especially Americans, Canadians and Belgians, believe that the villain in this country is the machete and cudgel-wielding Hutu, whereas the Hutu is only trying to ensure the Hutus are not annihilated by the descendants of Gatutsi⁵¹

While it is widely reported that the identity card which served as evidence of ethnic group, was used to identify Tutsis. The physical differences which were among the premises of the Hamitic hypothesis also played a significant role, as Tutsis were also identified just by their noses or height.

Kantano for example stated that:

The proof that we will exterminate them is that they represent only one ethnic group. Look at one person, at his height and physical features, look closely at his cute little nose and then break it⁵²

4.5. Conclusion

⁴⁹ [UNICTR RTLTM Tape 8].

⁵⁰ [UNICTR RTLTM Tape 11].

⁵¹ [Transcript of UNICTR RTLTM Tape 9], Genocide Archive of Rwanda Collection, Human Rights Documentation Initiative, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin, [https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/7189/unict_rtlm_0009_eng.pdf?sequence=1].

⁵² Jean-Pierre Chretien, "RTLTM Propaganda: the Democratic Alibi," in *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 57.

In sum, from the period leading up to the genocide and even during the genocide, the use of the Hamitic hypothesis in discourses spread through multiple mediums helped mobilize Hutus against their Tutsi neighbors. As I argued before, the Hamitic hypothesis was repackaged and used to support an anti-Tutsi rhetoric which not only justified the discrimination of Tutsis under both regimes but their annihilation during the genocide. Re-telling the Hamitic ideology story through these various mediums was salient as I believe they helped revive Hutus' hatred of Tutsis and therefore ensured that they would carry the killing orders with no sympathy as mentioned in the 8th commandment of the Hutu Pamphlet. By looking at the scale of the genocide, people may ask why did so many Tutsis remain behind instead of leaving when the killings started? To this, I believe that it is important to think back to the history of violence many Tutsis had already experienced under the Hutu regimes. Not to say that they were used to being persecuted and killed, but I believe that aside from the roadblocks which were put up, many victims did not foresee that this time, the propaganda, and the violence would surpass what they had already encountered. Some Tutsis were adamant to the threat, the growing conspiracies could cause their lives, while others were fearful that they could not escape. Once Habyarimana's plane was shot down and the roadblocks were put up once again, it became clear that the constructed identities which at different points in time shaped the lives of both Hutus and Tutsis, were going to lead to different events this time.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

The Rwandan genocide is more than a decade old, however it is still relevant to African politics and the study of civil wars, because it provides deep insights into the legacy of colonialism. While many researchers have explained the causes of this tragedy by looking at some of the political and even economic factors that might have contributed to the occurrence of violence, this thesis offered a different perspective. In fact, this thesis argued that the root causes of the Rwandan genocide could be found in the colonial history of the region. Most specifically, it argued that the Hamitic hypothesis which was introduced in Rwanda during European rule changed the course of Rwanda's history as it transformed the Tutsi and Hutu labels into racial and ethnic identities. The Hamitic hypothesis is a European ideology that posited that every trace of civilization in Africa was brought in by a superior group of Black Caucasians called the Hamites. When European travelers visited the Great Lakes region, they were surprised to see a diversity in the population inhabiting the region. As they observed the physical traits, the different occupations, and the status of each group in the region, they determined that Tutsis were Eastern Hamites, who immigrated to the Rwandan region from Ethiopia. The idea that Tutsis were Hamites and therefore superior to other groups such as the Hutus and the Twas deeply affected Rwandan society during and after colonial rule. It is worth recalling that before the arrival of colonizers, Hutus and Tutsis were labels reflecting the social economic status of different groups in society: While people with Hutu status were the inferior class, those called Tutsis were wealthy and had more advantages. Considering these differences, it is clear that there were already inequalities among Rwandans. Regardless of these distinctions, both groups never defined their respective identities as being ethnic identities.

As discussed in this thesis, the Hamitic hypothesis was central to the organization of Rwandan society where the idea of positional superiority also came into context. Europeans did not consider "Tutsi Hamites" as their equal, but they believed that they were superior to Hutus. They

institutionalized these differences between both groups by providing greater opportunities to Tutsis and centering political power in the hands of Tutsi elites. On the eve of independence, Hutus collectively organized and successfully took over the administration of the state through a revolution that led to the death and the exile of hundreds of Tutsis.

The reason why this thesis is arguing that the Hamitic hypothesis fueled the attack against Tutsis is because Rwandans were never able to do away with the Hamitic ideology even after independence. It regulated the political and social tissues of Rwandan society as it became weaponized by the Hutu government. Between 1962 and 1994, Rwanda was under the leadership of two Hutu presidents who during their rule relied on a modified version of the Hamitic hypothesis to discriminate and persecute Tutsis. While Tutsis' Hamite origins were once the reason for the explanation for their higher status in society, these origins became the alibi for their downfall. The Hutu elite weaponized their presumed foreign origins to exclude them from many aspects of social and political life. This thesis showed that in the period leading to the genocide, this myth was again resurrected and used to fuel racist propaganda that led to the genocide of Tutsis. As seen in the evidence used in this thesis, many speeches, radio broadcasts and newspapers relied on the Hamitic hypothesis to incite Hutus to attack Tutsis, who became the national enemy. We cannot really predict what Rwandan society would have been like, but one thing we can certainly assert is that the Hamitic hypothesis was detrimental to Tutsis and even Hutus as it affected them both in different ways and helped provide a justification for genocide.

While we cannot analyze the causes of all contemporary conflicts by looking at the ideological factor, as in the case of Rwanda, it is important for scholars involved in such research to not downplay the importance of history in revealing important factors. While traditional explanations on the causes of wars are still salient to understanding the development of conflicts, in the African context, using a historically rooted framework might be just as promising. When we

look at the historical roots of conflicts in African nations, it becomes clear that some of the current factors that many identify as the roots of these conflicts are in fact the outcomes of the legacies left behind by colonial practices. Identifying these colonial practices and tracing the way they affected societies over time, can provide scholars, policymakers, humanitarian workers and so on, a better way to assess conflicts and bring in solutions that can be effective not only in theory but also in practice.

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