

# **TWO REBEL ROADS TO POWER**

## Explaining Variation in the Transition from Genocidal Violence to Rebel Governance in Contemporary Rwanda and Burundi

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty  
of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy  
at Tufts University

By

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

*April 2014*

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## ABSTRACT

Rwanda and Burundi are often considered twin countries, exhibiting almost identical historical and linguistic heritage, cultural norms and practices, and social and political structures. Equally landlocked, poor in natural resources, and aid-dependent, the two former Belgian colonial territories have since the 1990s emerged from comparable instances of genocidal violence and rebel-led transitions. Yet, these transitions occurred in radically different ways. The Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) came to power through a military victory and established a strong, donor-darling state with an exaggerated presence in the international arena. Burundi's Hutu-dominated Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de Défense de la Démocratie, (CNDD-FDD) forced a Tutsi-controlled army to negotiate a power-sharing arrangement and now presides over a divided government with little influence beyond its national borders. This dissertation argues that these divergent transitions are not simply an outcome of contingent and idiosyncratic factors such as war, genocide, conflict endgame, external influences or individual leaders. Instead, the differences are better understood as the continuation of longstanding political patterns. The argument rests on four empirical findings.

First, the coming into being of Rwanda and Burundi was the result of complex processual developments of political negotiation rather than instantaneous structures created whole each under one founding father. Nevertheless, the origins of the current patterns of governance can be traced back to the early political foundations of each state. One of Rwanda's foundational monarchs, Ruganzu Ndori, came to power by force in a time of extreme turmoil; he introduced two innovative political tools -- a strong army and a clientele system known as *ubuhake* -- which allowed the central court increasing control over its expanding territory. Burundi's founder, Ntare Rushatsi, rose to prominence in peacetime, by gradually extending his influence over complex

webs of power-holders; the resultant royal structures were based on a delicate web of relations among several semi-autonomous princes. As Ruganzu's successors consolidated power, by the mid-eighteenth century Rwanda came to be a highly militarized and fairly centralized kingdom. By contrast, Burundi retained its features of a confederation among regional authorities.

Second, the foundational political styles responded to the challenges of their times, adapting to shifting dynamics; neither colonial domination nor the post-independence rise of military rule, democratization processes or rebel governance reversed the age-old trends.

Third, this dissertation explains why, upon assuming power, new leaders tend to reproduce the same governance systems they once vowed to eradicate. I argue that political entrepreneurs, including rebellions, find themselves obliged to preserve institutions and practices that resonate most with the society as a whole. They do so both in their individual efforts to minimize the risks of uncertainties (as instrumental-rational theorists may correctly suggest), and because, having been socialized into these norms and practices, they have had to internalize and work within them to achieve success.

Fourth, the prevailing patterns of governance--centralization in Rwanda, fragmentation in Burundi--, while self-reinforcing, are neither linear nor deterministic. The analysis examines five pairs of variables whose interactions and trade-offs shape each society's responses to ever-changing challenges and opportunities: relations between past and present; center and periphery; agency and structure; elites and multiple lay groupings; internal and external factors.

Put together, the findings suggest that good understanding of the core norms and practices likely to shape the boundaries of choices and margins of maneuver available to individual and institutional actors is key for designing balanced, well-informed, context-sensitive and change-oriented policies.

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# DEDICATION

Ku nyabutatu kimazi mu ndashyikirwa  
Au trio qui a fait toute la différence  
For the trio who made all the difference

**Alison Des Forges**

Wandandikiye umucyaho  
Qui m'a mis sur le droit chemin  
Who showed me the right way

**André Guichaoua**

Wambaye imbanyi inzira uko yakabaye  
Qui a été tout près de moi tout le long du trajet  
Who has been ever near me all along the way

**Peter Uvin**

Wangumije icyanzu mu mikokwe y'inkereramucyamo  
Qui a pour moi gardé ouverte du Labyrinthe la voie de sortie  
Who has kept open for me the Labyrinth's exit door

**Murakoze! Merci! Thank you!**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the course of designing, researching for and writing this dissertation project, I have incurred so many debts from so many people. Place of pride goes to my dissertation committee, Peter Uvin, Eileen Babbitt and Jens Meierhenrich. I also owe a tremendous gratitude to all and each of the faculty and staff of the Tufts University in general and the Fletcher School in particular for their dedicated work, passion for excellence and kindness. I would like to especially acknowledge Jenifer Bucket-Picker, PhD Program Director at the Fletcher School, for her support, guidance and encouragements throughout my struggle to walk the delicate line between schoolwork and family life.

It is unlikely I would have ventured into this intellectual journey without a long chain of ‘good Samaritans’ whose joint efforts saved me from the pit of despair when I was forced to flee my sweet home ten years ago. I especially want to recognize the Scholars at Risk Network’s director, Rob Quinn, for his invaluable support and encouragements.

For support for the project, I thank the Institute for Human Security at the Fletcher School, the Henry J. Leir Foundation, the Fletcher Ph.D. Program Summer Research Fund, the Dean’s Discretionary Fund at the Fletcher School, and the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University. My appreciation also goes to the IDES at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, the University of Dar es Salaam, the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation, Smith College and the World Peace Foundation--all of which hosted me at critical points along my intellectual journey.

My efforts at venturing into the arcana of Rwandan and Burundian politics would have yielded little if any result without inspiration, guidance, advice and/or sustained interest in my work from a number of prominent experts whose footsteps I have strived to follow. To Catherine and David Newbury, René Lemarchand, André Guichaoua, Claudine Vidal, Danielle de Lame, Phillip Reyntjens, Timothy Longman, Scott Straus, Lars Waldorf, Susan Thompson, Jennie Burnet, Marie-Eve Desrosiers, Stef Vandengiste: Merci!

This dissertation owes a particular debt to hundreds of people who welcomed me into their homes and workplaces, some allowing me to interview them, others connecting me to key informants and other sources of valuable information.

In Burundi, special thanks go to Christophe Sebudandi, Willy Nindorera, Pie Ntakarutimana, Augustin Nzojibwami, Emile Baribara, Fr. Emmanuel Ntakarutimana, Nestor Nkurunziza, Agricole Ntirampeba, along with numerous officials and many other informants who shared their deep insights about Burundi: Ndabakengurukiye!

In Tanzania, I am particularly indebted to Professor Rwekaza Mukandala, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam, for his mentorship, guidance and constant support, and to Theresa and Freddy Kaijage for their warm hospitality. To Issa Shivji, Benson Bana, Mohabe Nyirabu, Gaudence Mpangala, Gelase Mutahaba, Daudi Mukangara, M. Muya, Bruce Heilman, Ambrose Kessy and John Williams Malwa: Aksante Sana!

To numerous Rwandan fellows who helped me to stay in touch with a motherland that I miss so much, especially to the brave officials in both the military and civil services who found my research project objective enough to deserve their support and input: Murakoze!

To Mark, Samantha, Emily, Laura and Ameya: Thank you for your editorial input.

Above all, my daughters Solange, Mugisha, Mahoro, and especially Gladys whose birth mid-way through this journey deepened my determination to see this through, bear witness to the deepest gratitude I owe to my family, through the rock of my life, Seraphina: Your love, encouragements, faith and sacrifice have made all the difference: Custimpumu!

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## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| ABASA    | Alliance Burundo-Africaine pour le Salut (Burundian-African Salvation Alliance)   |
| ACPP     | Africa Conflict Prevention Pool   |
| ADEP     | Alliance pour la Démocratie, l'Équité et le Progrès [Alliance for Democracy, Equity and Progress]   |
| ADL      | Association Rwandaise pour la Défense des Droits de la Personne et des Libertés Publiques [Rwandan Association for the Defence of Human Rights and Civil Liberties]       |
| ANADDE   | Alliance Nationale pour le Droit et le Développement [National Alliance for Rights and Development]   |
| APROSOMA | Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse [Association for Massive Social Progress]   |
| ARDHO    | Association Rwandaise pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme [Association for the Defence of Human Rights]   |
| AV       | Alliance des Vaillants [Alliance of the Brave]  |
| AVP      | Association des Volontaires de la Paix [Association for Peace Volunteers]   |
| BBC      | British Broadcasting Corporation  |
| CAURWA   | Communauté des Autochtones Rwandais [Community of Indigenous Peoples of Rwanda]   |
| CCM      | Configurational Comparative Methods   |
| CIB      | Commission of Inquiry for Burundi   |
| CLADHO   | Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme [Federation of Leagues and Associations of Human Rights in Rwanda]                                  |
| CNDD     | Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie [National Council for the Defence of Democracy]   |
| CNDD-FDD | Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de défense de la Démocratie [National Council for the Defence of Democracy- Forces for the Defence of Democracy] |
| CHRI     | Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative  |
| CPT      | Comité de Pilotage Tripartite (Burundi)   |
| DFID     | Department for International Development (UK)   |
| DMI      | Directorate of Military Intelligence  |
| DRC      | Democratic Republic of Congo  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| EISA       | Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa  |
| EX-FARS    | Former Rwandan Armed Forces  |
| FDD        | Forces de Défense de la Démocratie [Forces for the Defence of Democracy]   |
| FOR        | Forum des Organisations Rurales [Forum of Rural Organizations]   |
| FRELIMO    | Frente de Libertação de Moçambique [Liberation Front of Mozambique]  |
| FRODEBU    | Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi [Democratic Front in Burundi]  |
| FROLINA    | Front pour la Libération Nationale [National Liberation Front (Burundi)]   |
| HRW        | Human Rights Watch   |
| ICG        | International Crisis Group   |
| ICHRP      | International Council on Human Rights Policy   |
| ICTR       | International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda   |
| IPA        | International Peace Academy  |
| JEDEBU     | Jeunesse Démocratique Burundaise   |
| LDGL       | Ligue des Droits de la Personne dans la Région des Grands Lacs [League for Human Rights in the Great Lakes Region].                  |
| LIPRODHOR  | Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme [Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights] |
| LRA        | Lord's Resistance Army   |
| MDR        | Mouvement Démocratique Republicain [Democratic Republican Movement]  |
| MRAC       | Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale [Royal Museum for Central Africa]  |
| MRND       | Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement [National Revolutionary Development Movement]                               |
| NEC        | National Electoral Commission  |
| NRA        | National Resistance Army   |
| ODI        | Overseas Development Institute   |
| OECD       | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development   |
| PALIPEHUTU | Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu [Party for Hutu People Liberation]   |
| PARENA     | Parti pour le Redressement National [Party for National Redress]   |
| PIT        | Parti Indépendant des Travailleurs [Party for Independent Workers]   |
| PL         | Parti Libéral [Liberal Party]  |
| PP         | Parti du Peuple [Peoples' Party]   |
| PRA        | Populaire Resistance Army  |
| PRI        | Penal Reform International   |
| PRP        | Parti pour la Réconciliation du Peuple [Party for Peoples' Reconciliation]   |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| PSD    | Parti Social Démocrate [Social Democrat Party]   |
| PSP    | Parti Socialiste et Panafricaniste [Socialist and Panafricanist Party (Burundi)]   |
| RADDES | Ralliement pour la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social [Rally for Democracy and Economic and Social Development] |
| RADES  | Rasssemblement Democratique Rwandais [Rally for Democracy in Rwanda]   |
| RANU   | Rwanda Alliance for National Unity   |
| RPB    | Rassemblement du Peuple Burundais [Burundian People's Rally]   |
| RPF    | Rwandan Patriotic Front  |
| RTLTM  | Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines  |
| UK     | United Kingdom   |
| UN     | United Nations   |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme   |
| UNHCR  | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  |
| UPC    | Uganda People's Army   |
| UPRONA | Union pour le Progrès National [Union for National Progress]   |
| USA    | United States of America   |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development   |
| USCIS  | United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services   |
| USIP   | United States Institute of Peace   |
| VNSA   | Violent Non-State Actors   |
| VOA    | Voice of America   |

Map # 1: Rwanda and Burundi in Regional Context



**The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.**

**\_\_ Hartley, *The Go-Between* (1953).**

**The past is never dead. It's not even past.**

**\_\_ Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (1951).**



## Chapter one

# RESEARCH PUZZLE & ARGUMENT

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### The Puzzle

Settled in “a land of almost ideal beauty”<sup>1</sup> in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Rwanda and Burundi exhibit almost identical historical and linguistic heritage, cultural norms and practices, social and political structures, and ethnic composition. They also share a longstanding, mutually contagious course of historical junctures, including colonial domination, post-independence ethnopolitics, and military dictatorship until the 1990s, and post-Cold War failed external pressures for democratization. Against this shared backdrop, however, both countries now emerge from comparable instances of genocidal violence opposing rival elites from two main social groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi, in radically different ways. In Rwanda, the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) toppled and forced into exile a three-decade old Hutu-centered regime and went on to establish a strong state government. In Burundi, the Hutu-dominated Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD) established a consociational regime after forcing a three-decade old Tutsi-controlled army to negotiate a golden exit.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase is one of the bucolic metaphors used by early European travelers to highlight the contrast between the savage ‘Dark Continent’ they were expecting to encounter and the fascinating setting of Rwanda and Burundi--“a kind of tropical Switzerland whose geographical outline of a human heart is an appropriate reminder of the countries’ central location on the map of Africa.” (Lemarchand 1970, 13).

By the same token, equally devastated by civil war and genocidal violence, both countries have benefited much from the still emerging donor-driven “new post-conflict agenda” (Uvin 2001). However, while Burundi has remained an obscure country at the international level, Rwanda has risen to become not only a 'donor darling' but also a small country with a big voice and remarkable visibility in international arena. In short, Rwanda has moved from genocide to strong-man-centered dictatorship (Reyntjens 2004; Roth 2009; Straus and Waldorf 2011) while Burundi has moved from civil war –locally known as 'la crise' [the crisis] — to a consociational, albeit increasingly fragile, model of power-sharing (HRW 2010; Lemarchand 2007; Sullivan 2005; Uvin and Bayer 2013; Vandengiste 2006).

### **Dominant explanations**

When it comes to accounting for the remarkable variation between Rwanda’s and Burundi’s contemporary trajectories, the existing literature tends to emphasize contingent and idiosyncratic factors. Thus, many observers insist on significant variation in the magnitude of the conflicts at issue. The overall argument is that, while both countries experienced the maelstrom of genocidal violence (Reyntjens 1994; Guichaoua 1995), the uniqueness of the horrors of the 1994 Rwandan tragedy—what one keen observer has termed “the power of horror” (Roth 2009) — provided the RPF with extraordinary margins of maneuver over both local and external challengers, whereas the CNDD-FDD was bound by negotiated arrangements. Other analysts emphasize the weight of external interventions as a key game-changer. The dominant assumption is that the CNDD-FDD opted for a peaceful conflict settlement as a result of local, regional, and international pressures (Nindorera 2008; Sullivan 2005), while the RPF militarily defeated the Hutu regime due to massive support from regional military powers such as Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia and world powers including the UK and the USA (Musabyimana 2003; Pottier 2002).

Other observers insist on a close link between remarkable variation in the post-conflict dynamics and the conflict endgame scenarios. The core argument is that the negotiated settlement obliged the CNDD-FDD to preside over a consociational regime (ICG 2004; Lemarchand 2007; Uvin and Bayer 2013; Vandeginste 2006), while coming to power through a sweeping military victory ensured the RPF's power monopoly (Guichaoua 2010; Kinzer 2008; Pottier 2002). Others still assume that, were all things equal, the exceptional leadership of the RPF, embodied by its all-powerful, albeit controversial, military leader Paul Kagame, could make all the difference. The dominant logic is that difference in leadership capabilities offers an explanation as to why the RPF remained a unified movement while the CNDD-FDD was confronted with internal division. This view seems equally appropriate to explain why the RPF proved far more successful than its Burundian counterpart in mobilizing external support throughout its road to power and monopoly thereof.

### **Knowledge Gaps**

Contingent and idiosyncratic arguments shed light on many aspects of variation in the trajectories of the two rebel movements. What they do not—and indeed cannot—explain is that these variations seem to be the continuation of much longer, deeper trends where the past looked very much like the present in many respects. For one, if it is true that compared to the CNDD-FDD, the RPF has a far more unified, more authoritarian and stronger leadership, it is also true that Rwanda's top leadership was far better than Burundi's at monopolizing power and mobilizing international support long before the rise of these rebel movements:

whether in the early 1960s, in the early 1990s, or now, the Burundian political system has always tried to revert to a compromise-based and ethnically inclusive system of political governance [...]. Rwanda has always been a much more winner-take-all political culture. In both cases, it is possible to make parallels with the pre-colonial systems of governance. (Uvin 2009, 172-173).

In this regard, nothing can better illustrate the limitations of contingent explanations of variation in the roads that brought the RPF and the CNDD-FDD to power than a parallel reading of these roads and those divergent trajectories that took both countries from colonial administration to independence in the 1960s. One scholar accurately sums up the difference:

In one case a violent, genuinely revolutionary change has taken place, involving ‘a drastic, sudden substitution of one group in charge of the running of a territorial political entity for another group’. In the other a process of evolution has occurred which, however close it may have come to the threshold of revolution, focuses attention on very different forces, institutions and events. (Lemarchand 1970, 6).

Note that the first case of history repeating itself concerns Rwanda: In the 1960s, a Hutu-led coup ousted from power and forced into exile the Tutsi aristocracy; following in 1994 a Tutsi-dominated rebellion ousted from power and forced into exile the hitherto Hutu-centered regime. Inversely, in Burundi, ‘a process of evolution’ embedded in the spirit of power-sharing between Hutu and Tutsi characterized both the passage from colonization to independence in the 1960s and the coming into power of the CNDD-FDD in 2005.

This parallel reading begs the following empirical question: Why has history seemed to have repeated itself in each country and why have their respective political transitions seem to have followed quite opposite, but predictable trajectories—i.e., ‘smooth evolution’ in Burundi and ‘revolutionary change’ in Rwanda? To begin with, it is worth noting that a number of studies have hinted at the idea that current political landscapes in both countries may reflect deeper historical patterns and dynamics. Thus, commenting on the “basic facts about the social, economic, political, and military institutions and practices” in Rwanda, a team of American researchers in the late 1960s observed:

Although the 1960's have been a decade of ferment because of the changes caused by revolution, by the pervasive effects of Christian teachings over the past 70 years, and by the growing economic system and commercial enterprise, the traditional values have been slow to change. In spite of the national upheaval and turmoil, the people generally retain pre-independence attitudes toward the relationship of man to his world. (Nyrop 1969, 76).

Three decades later, a prominent anthropologist comes to the same conclusion: "In spite of the breaks," writes de Lame referring to the aftermaths of the 1990-1994 genocidal violence, "the gaping holes and the new arrivals, it [Rwanda] reveals continuities to this day." (de Lame 2005,xiii). Adopting a more systematic and longitudinal historical analysis, Vansina concludes that despite "the great change that occurred during the last century, the overall social and cultural conditions in the country today are not so different as to render the experience of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries invalid." (Vansina 2004, 202).

While such accounts concur with the weight of the past in the present, they generally suffer from empiricism, i.e., to use Meierhenrich's carefully chosen words, "the practice of describing without theorizing," rich in "descriptive narratives" but with little "innovative nomothetic interpretations." (Meierhenrich 2008, 5). What is missing then is a comprehensive account of

what process determined the identities and number of players, why these players value the ends they pursue rationally and which variety of rationality guides their choices, how the institutional arena for the game evolved, where the payoffs come from, why the rules sometimes change in mid-game, and how the power distribution among actors determines the macro outcome. (Coppedge as quoted in Meierhenrich, 2008, 47).

Examined from the perspective of rebel-led dynamics, the puzzle of accounting for the rules of the game at work between the 'determining processes' and the 'outcomes' as theorized by Coppedge speaks to a two-fold puzzle raised by Thelen in her comparative-historical analysis of institutional development (Thelen 2003,34).

One puzzle is to understand the ways in which “actors who are initially on the periphery themselves become invested in the prevailing institutions” (Thelen 2003, 34). The other puzzle is to explain how and why “shifts in the balance of power that go their way may result in institutional conversion rather than breakdown” (Thelen 2003, 34; see also Thelen 2004 and Mahoney and Thelen 2009)<sup>2</sup>.

Applied to contemporary Rwanda and Burundi, this puzzle begs better explanations of why rebels who moved from the periphery as change-seekers could have ended up perpetuating, rather than departing, from pre-existing rules of the political game. This question is of particular relevance because given these countries’ political and economic dependence vis-à-vis the donor community (Index Mundi 2012), the latter should normally be of significant weight in the balance of power structure. How then, for instance, did post-genocide Rwanda manage to reconcile “aid dependence and policy independence” (Zorbas 2011, 103) to the extent that millions of dollars from the world’s leading democracies from the USA and UK to the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries did little more than reinforce what is generally termed by Rwanda scholars as “the undemocratic nature of transition in Rwanda” (Longman, 2011, 25)?

Here and again, one may invoke as a decisive explanatory variable the post-genocide leadership incarnated by President Kagame—whether as a ‘visionary,’ ‘new type of African leader,’ (Kinzer 2009,1-2) or as a master of manipulation (Pottier 2002) exceedingly skilled at “cosmetic operations for international consumption” (Reyntjens 2004,210).

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<sup>2</sup>Thelen argues that such puzzles of incremental change call for a new framework grounded in a power-distributional view of institutions and emphasize ongoing struggles within but also over prevailing institutional arrangements. Such an analytical framework accounting for the historical origins of institutions on one hand and the patterns of « ambiguity, agency and power » (Mahoney and Thelen 2009) on the other hand, will be the cornerstone of this dissertation.

This variable proves less convincing, however, when it comes to explaining why “the undemocratic nature of Transition in Rwanda” has prevailed under Kagame as much as it did under his predecessors, notably Kayibanda (1962-1973) and Habyarimana (1973-1974) despite unwavering dependence on foreign aid (Uvin 1998).

By the same token, if compared to his obscure Burundian counterpart, Pierre Nkurunziza, whose name is barely known beyond the national borders, Kagame's personal charisma and feats seem enough to justify his outstanding visibility in the international arena. Nevertheless, one cannot help but wonder why most of Kagame's predecessors from King Mutara Rudahigwa to Kayibanda and Habyarimana were seen by Western powers as “pearl[s] of great price” (Prunier 1995, 31), at a time when their Burundian counterparts from the very charismatic Prince Rwagasore to Micombero, Bagaza, and Buyoya were generally treated with suspicion, if not contempt (Guichaoua 1995; Guichaoua 2010<sup>3</sup>; Lemarchand 1970).

What is missing in the existing accounts is, therefore, a comprehensive understanding of where the persistent trends of difference come from in the first place and why they continue to unfold, vary, and prevail the way they do. This lack of understanding triggers a specific research question: how and why do change-seekers who were initially on the periphery (i.e., rebel movements) become so invested in the dominant institutions they seize that, upon assuming power, they reproduce the norms and practices of their predecessors?

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<sup>3</sup> Guichaoua (2010) drew an excellent contrastive comparison of how the donor community took part in the ceremonies marking the 25th anniversary of independence in both countries on July 1, 1987: Everyone was eager to praise Habyarimana's achievements, whereas everyone was fed up with Bagaza's tired policies in Burundi.

### **Alternative Explanation**

To bridge the gaps in the existing literature, this dissertation puts forth an argument revolving around the influence of past dynamics in molding the way new actors in the political arena choose to act—or react—in the present. The argument builds on Eckstein’s paradigm of ‘the law of congruence’ (1997). Conceived of as one of “the fundamental conditions of stability for key social or political institutions,” (Eckstein 1997, 23), this paradigm assumes the existence of “old ways of doing things” which require new-comers to “compromise with old regimes, both of persons and of institutions.” (Eckstein 1997, 23). In this respect, I argue that new actors—in this case rebels—are likely to preserve or retain pre-existing institutions and practices of governance. They do so, I contend, not only in their individual efforts to minimize the risks of unpredictable moves and uncertainties that lie ahead (as instrumental-rational theorists may correctly suggest), but more importantly because they have been socialized into these norms and practices, and have had to internalize and to work within them to achieve success.

To make this case in a manner that is empirically grounded, theoretically sound and methodologically innovative, my inquiry embraces an emerging methodological approach known as “redescription.”<sup>4</sup> Conceived of as a long-awaited response to the dominant emphasis in political science “on modeling for its own sake and on decisive predicative tests,” redescription emerged as a synthetic methodology in which nomothetic reasoning converges with ideographic methodology in such a way that “[t]he analysis moves back and forth between theoretical and historical levels, using one to amplify and illuminate the other.” (Meierhenrich 2008, 10).

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<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Jens Meierhenrich for having drawn my attention to this emerging methodological device to the development of which he has contributed enormously.

In this respect, my dissertation is a redescription of the roots and routes of remarkable variation in the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi, past and present. As detailed in the next chapter, the empirical redescription I put forth is embedded in the logic of “serial history of changes over the long term” in the tradition of Braudel.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the endeavor of documenting and making sense of the impact of “longer timespans” (Braudel 1980; 1992; 1995), efforts are made to stick with “close-to-the-ground” descriptions and “explanations of reality” in the tradition of Shapiro (2005, 181) through a rigorous “process-tracing,” meant not only to “evaluate causal processes” but also to “investigate and explain the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes.” (George & Mckeown 1985, 35).

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<sup>5</sup> Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) was one of the French thinkers (including Marc Bloch, Lucien Febvre and Ernst Labrousse) who revolutionized the study of history as, not a collection of the histories of ‘great men’ such as kings and warlords, but a scientific study of the multiple facets of ‘human histories’ with a particular attention to long stretches of time. A scholarly journal devoted to this cause, *Annales d’histoire économique et sociale* was launched in 1929. Now known as “*Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*” since 1994, the journal began in 2013 publication of an English edition, with all the articles translated. A rich body of 334 Issues covering 13,717 articles published from 1929 up to 2002 is now available free of charge at <http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/revue/ahess> .

## Chapter Two

### RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODS

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Every discourse...carries with it a system of rules for producing analogous things and thus an outline of methodology.

—Jacques Derrida (1995, 200).

#### Research Scope and Methods

The puzzle at the heart of this dissertation is: what explains variation in the rebel roads to and exercise of power in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi? As highlighted in Chapter 1, the dominant literature addressing this puzzle focuses on contingent and idiosyncratic factors such as magnitude of the horrors, military victory, negotiated settlement, leadership and external influence. The problem with these explanations is that they do not establish connections between the patterns among these factors, nor do they explain where these patterns come from in the first place. To bridge this gap, the purpose of this dissertation is threefold. First, it seeks to empirically document in a comprehensive way the nature and extent of the similarities and differences between the roads that brought about contemporary rebel-led governments in Rwanda and Burundi. Second, it strives to compare in a systematic way the general patterns of variation between the rebel trajectories to the longstanding patterns of variation between the respective countries now led by the two rebel groups under consideration. Third, and as a way forward, it tries to explain why the persistent trends of variation continue to unfold, vary, and prevail the way they do. The three tasks above are undertaken from a comparative politics perspective.

By comparative politics, I refer to that field of inquiry that “is better defined not as one that makes preeminent use of a comparative method but as one that utilizes many methods to compare politics across nations.” (Hall 2004, 2). For the purpose of this dissertation, the comparative politics I put forth builds on the emerging method of “redescription” which, in turn, draws, inter alia, on three methodological devices--long timespans, case selection, and process-tracing.

### **Redescription**

The notion of “redescription” --or precisely “problematizing redescription” to use Shapiro’s words-- is conceived of “as a problem-driven enterprise” (Shapiro 2005, 202) whose ultimate goal is to develop and apply “close-to-the-ground” descriptions and explanations of reality (Shapiro 2005, 181; see also Geller 2008). This view stems from Shapiro’s thesis, “*The Flight from Reality in the Human Sciences*,” according to which orthodox quantitative social science methodologies are prone to lose contact with the actual objects under investigation. To minimize the risk, Shapiro recommends taking the object of investigation as the research’s starting point. While acknowledging that any access to reality is biased, it is Shapiro’s contention, and I agree, that “close-to-the-ground” evidence-driven descriptions confine research in the least possible way. In doing so, adopting a realistic approach holds the promise not only to help to better understand a particular real case, but also to allow for predictions in comparable cases. In this respect, the dissertation’s contribution consists of an empirical redescription of the phenomenon of variation as it unfolds in the governance systems of Rwanda and Burundi.

## **Long timespans**

The empirical redescription I put forward also draws on the method of “serial history of changes over the long term” in the tradition of Braudel (1995). This method evolved as a response to the limits of the traditional understanding of history as a collection of the episodic acts and facts of ‘great men’. To bridge the gap between ‘histories of great men’ and ‘total history,’ Braudel recommends embracing the logic of longer timespans (Braudel 1980; see also Ludtke 1995). Under Braudel’s paradigm of long-run timespans, the focus is on “the social history of everyday life.” (Braudel 1992; see also Bailey and Santamaria 1984). For the purpose of this dissertation, however, it is beyond my pretension to account for variation in all aspects of “everyday life” in the context of Rwanda and Burundi. Instead, I opt for case selection.

## **Case selection**

By case selection, I refer to the method of drawing specific and general conclusions from detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of conditions and their relationships (Yin 1984). This view concurs with the promise of “realistic models” in the tradition of Shapiro, as summarized by one of his commentators:

Every time a realistic model helps to better understand a particular real case it adds up to our knowledge about a set of comparable cases. From this set of cases, a theory can be eventually derived that describes a particular social phenomenon in general and that allows predictions with regard to causalities and mechanism in other cases. (Geller 2008).

In this regard, the dissertation puts forth two contextualized levels of analysis, macro and micro units. At the macro-level, the roots and routes of variation in the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi are examined through six real-life instances of governance: (i) From the founding fathers to the eve of colonialism; (ii) colonial domination; (iii) the struggle for independence; (iv) the fall of kingship and the rise of republican regimes; and (v) post-Cold War

democratization process that paved the way for civil wars from which the current rebel-led governments emerged; and, finally, (vi) the transition from civil war to rebel governance.

At the micro level, variation in the landscapes dominated by the RPF and the CNDD-FDD throughout their paths to and exercise of power is examined through the lens of four areas of intervention: Value-setting; peace negotiations; military integration; and transitional justice.

### **Process-tracing**

Throughout the inquiry, focus is on documenting and explaining the nature and extent of correlation, if any, between the “long timespans” trends of governance and the current rebel-led governance systems. To this end, the inquiry puts forth a “process-tracing” approach meant not only to “evaluate causal processes” but also to “investigate and explain the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes.” (George & McKeown 1985, 35).

This choice builds on the premise that

The process-tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that then occurs; the effect of various institutional arrangements on attention, processing, and behavior; and the effect of other variables of interest on attention, processing, and behavior. (George & McKeown 1985, 35).

Thus defined, process-tracing is used to uncover a number of longstanding structural foundations and institutional arrangements which may have something to tell us about variation in the core patterns of rebel governance in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi. If my hypothesis concerning the influence of the past in the present is valid, empirical evidence should corroborate the view of variation in the rebel roads to power in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi as an instance of what is referred to in comparativist terminology as “micro *replicata* of the macro outcomes.” (Lijphart 1971, 689).

## Data collection: Sources & Techniques

The data informing the analysis are drawn primarily from three main sources: Documentary sources, qualitative interviews, and my first-hand experience with the issues under consideration.

### Documentary sources

There is a rich and varied body of sources about Rwanda and Burundi from immemorial times to present-day accounts. The sources I used, limited to French, English, Kinyarwanda, and Kirundi, can be roughly grouped into five main categories. The first group includes bibliographical and reference works that give general overviews of the major works published on Rwanda and Burundi over the last century<sup>6</sup>. The second category concerns oral traditions and other forms of local knowledge worth collecting and critically analyzing as a source of potential scientific evidence. They include poetry, ritual codes, songs, proverbs, maxims, and other genres that a prominent student of oral sources has defined as “a varied and very rich corpus of oral traditions.” (Vansina 2004, 3; see also Vansina 1985; Coupez et Kamanzi, 1970; Kagame 1960; Kagame 1969; Mbonimana et Nkejabahizi 2011). This source proved the most challenging for me as Burundians, like Rwandans, are the masters of metaphors revolving around past shared experience, conventional wisdom, legendary figures, etc. Thus for instance, in response to my question about why many Hutu preferred CNDD-FDD to FRODEBU during the 2005 elections, a half-dozen of interviewees in a focus group in a remote village of Muyinga in north east Burundi sharply debated the issue and came up with a conclusion that a wise man in his 60s summed up in a beautifully concise metaphorical sentence: “Sahwanya<sup>7</sup> yari Samandari, Semidede<sup>8</sup> iza ari Mirerekano.”

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<sup>6</sup> This survey draws on the extensive bibliographic and historical work that I have undertaken over the last three years on Rwanda (Twagiramungu 2012) and Burundi (Twagiramungu, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> Sahwanya, literally “the unifier,” is the official nickname of FRODEBU.

<sup>8</sup> Semidede, a term I heard from several Burundian peasants, is the malformation of the acronym CNDD. Linguistically, this term is an onomatopoeia referring to the notion of endurance or resistance.

Literally, “FRODEBU was Samandari, CNDD was Mirerekano.” It took me considerable time pondering and doing research on what Samandari<sup>9</sup> and Mirerekano<sup>10</sup> stand for in the eyes and minds of ordinary Burundians before I grasped the whole point the wise men of Burundi wanted me to understand: Like Samandari, FRODEBU was good at doing the talk; like Mirerekano, CNDD proved the master of walking the walk.

The third category includes published collections of primary sources ranging from narrative accounts left behind by the first European explorers to official documents including the colonial administration’s regular reports and memos, post-independence constitutions, and other legal texts as well as policy memos, reports and official speeches. The fourth category comprises secondary sources including scholarly works published in books and articles. The fifth category comprises an ever-increasing and varied body of grey literature associated—at least in the context of Rwanda and Burundi—with the rise of the human rights movement in the 1990s and

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<sup>9</sup> Samandari, son of Mandaranga, is a legendary folk hero known for his “mordant and aggressive irony” toward the rich and the powerful including the king (Rodegem 1974, 758). According to one commentator, “Samandari projects a world-turned-upside-down imagery that articulates the iconoclastic aspirations of the weak and the downtrodden; his imagery illustrates a form of cultural resistance in which symbolic inversion, deceit, and trickery are the only remedies against oppression.” (Lemarchand 1995, 40). The tale of Samandari is recounted, inter alia, in a song by Burundian musician Yves Kami (personal archive).

<sup>10</sup> Paul Mirerekano was one of the most influential fathers of independence in Burundi and probably the most articulated leader that Burundi has ever seen. His is best known for his 1962 famous pamphlet in Kirundi, *Mbwire Gito Canje, Gito c’uwundi yumvireko* [Let me speak to my rascal of a son in hopes that someone else’s rascal will get the message] which is beautifully described by one commentator as “several things wrapped into one: a paean to the monarchy, an appeal to unity, an invitation to heed the wisdom of the ancestors, a warning against the ferments of divisiveness imported from the West, and an impassioned plea for the reconciliation of progress and tradition.” (Lemarchand 1995, 58). Adds Lemarchand, “Replete with countless references to age-old metaphors, proverbs, and emotional buzzwords (progress, unity, force, solidarity, subjection, solicitation, protection), it stands as a perfect example of a neoconservative, nationalist profession of faith, entirely in keeping with the ideology of the UPRONA” (1995, 58-59).

the development of modern tools and channels of communication, particularly internet-based forums, YouTube, Skype, etc.<sup>11</sup>

### **Qualitative interviews**

Following Rubin and Rubin (1995), I conceive of the qualitative interview method as the art of “building conversational partnerships” whereas interviews can be characterized as “guided conversations.” Before going any further however, I have to confess that this methodological insight was not a tool that guided my inquiry from the start, but a lesson learned throughout my fieldwork. All started in the summer of 2010 in Burundi. Before departing for Burundi, I had spent a considerable amount of time redesigning a detailed research roadmap in light of both my coursework as well as literature on the procedures, methods and techniques of empirical inquiry (Yin 1984; George and Benett 2005; Gerring 2007; Faletti and Lynch 2009). At the heart of this process was an open-ended questionnaire in English, translated into 3 languages, French, Kinyarwanda, and Kirundi. Prior to my departure, the questionnaire had been tested through 34 interviews, of which 11 were done through phone and Skype interviews with people based in Rwanda and 23 face-to-face interviews notably within the Rwandan and Burundian Diaspora ( 9 in the USA, 3 in Canada, 6 in France, 4 in Belgium, 1 in the Netherlands). Initially, I intended to interview 124 people over the course of six months. The target population included former and current top, middle-range, and grassroots leaders, as well as ordinary members, sympathizers, and rivals of the CNDD-FDD. Included were also local civil societies and members of the media along with external actors based in Burundi including embassies, INGOs and individual practitioners. Upon my arrival in Bujumbura in July 2010 however, my work plan took a

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<sup>11</sup> Despite numerous practical and ethical problems associated with internet-based sources, this category has gained extraordinary audience and popularity in Rwanda and Burundi, the main reason being probably its affinities with the prevailing culture of oral traditions.

different turn within the first days thanks to several serendipitous opportunities that allowed me cover nine out of the 17 provinces (Bujumbura the capital; Kayanza, Ngozi and Muyinga in the north, Muramvya and Gitega in the center; Bururi, Rutana and Makamba in the south) and to interview key informants who provided valuable information. For instance, the first round of my interviews involved four Tutsi officers none of whom was on my initial list: A colonel who had served as top aide to President Buyoya and who proved instrumental in negotiating a 'golden exit' for the Tutsi army; a general in charge of the DDR program; and two officers who were then serving as close aides to the minister of defense. Two days later, I held my first interview with a CNDD-FDD high-ranking military officer. The latter introduced me to his close aides and volunteered to arrange for several gatherings including informal talks in a bar and one three-hour, closed-door, formal meeting in which a dozen of his former 'comrades-in-arms' contributed valuable information regarding what they enthusiastically referred to as "the extraordinary and irreversible" road that took the CNDD-FDD to power.

By the same token, a no less serendipitous encounter in Bujumbura with a Tanzanian scholar, who had worked closely with the Tanzanian mediation for both the Rwandan and the Burundian peace processes, convinced me of the necessity to extend my trip to Dar es Salaam. I eventually spent one week in Dar es Salaam on my way back to the U.S. in early September 2010. Thanks to this unplanned trip, I secured a part-time teaching position in Dar es Salaam where I spent the period January 2011- July 2012 in the Great Lakes of Africa, touching base with key informants in a far closer and more intimate way than I could have anticipated. Thus, following my informal talk with two Rwandan civil servants on the margins of a regional conference held in Arusha in the Spring of 2012, the head of their delegation heard about our talks and 'summoned' me to interview him lest "[I] got wrong the true facts" underlying "the

historic mission” of the RPF along with its “irreversible” and “uncompromising” determination to “build a new Rwanda [*kubaka u Rwanda rushya*].” This unsolicited interview proved especially fruitful, since my interlocutor went on, long after the conference, to share with me a bulk of primary data and to arrange for phone interviews on my behalf with a number of key RPF insiders in Rwanda that I could seldom reach, even if I were to travel to Rwanda for that purpose. In total, from a corpus of 264 people (including 164 in one-on-one chats and up to 100 in focus groups) with whom I spoke with throughout my three-year long fieldwork, I recorded a consolidated set of 122 meaningful accounts. Among the recorded accounts, the majority (65 in total) were from Burundians compared to 35 Rwandans, 12 Tanzanians, and nine outside observers including international scholars, policy-makers, and diplomats. The greater focus on Burundians is explained primarily by the necessity to bridge the gap between my lesser understanding of the Burundian society in comparison with my first-hand knowledge and familiarity with Rwanda (see *\*\*firsthand experience\*\** below). In the process, I have also learned to deal with unconventional sources of information ranging from hearsays, *déjà vu* and repetitions to baseless allegations and propagandist clichés<sup>12</sup>.

### **Firsthand experience**

While this dissertation is purposefully meant to be empirically grounded and thus original in scope and significance, it also has strong roots in my intimate knowledge of and firsthand experience with the complexities of social and political dynamics in Rwanda and indeed in the Great Lakes region of Africa as a whole. Born and raised in post-independence Rwanda, I have

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<sup>12</sup> During the early stages of my research, I was eager to avoid any source or piece of information considered obviously biased. However, I gradually remarked that even a biased source could prove valuable in casting light on some facets of the complexities at issue. A case in point was about the extremely divergent accounts of the origins of the CNDD-FDD which, put together, proved to speak volume about the empirical fragmented nature of this rebellion.

first-hand experience with the mayhem of structural violence ranging from fear-driven state—society relations to ethnic and regional discriminations. Having joined the then burgeoning human rights movement in the early 1990s, I was presented with hitherto inexistent tools and opportunities to ‘speak out’ in a society where silence was the norm. In the wake of the 1994 genocide that proved wrong Rwanda’s hopes for democratic change, for a decade, I held various positions as a civil society leader first in Rwanda and, from 1999 to 2004, as the director of a regional umbrella of 27 organizations based in Rwanda, Burundi and the DRC<sup>13</sup>. Such was the starting point of my interest in historical roots, regional ramifications and international dimensions of the social, political and economic problems of this part of the world.

Moreover, the last decade has presented me with numerous opportunities to collect empirical data on the complex dynamics of post-conflict Rwanda and Burundi through consultancy work (Rubaduka and Twagiramungu 2002; Kimonyo, Twagiramungu and Kayumba 2004; Twagiramungu 2009; Twagiramungu 2012); collective works (Cruvellier et al. 2004) and international conferences (Twagiramungu 2010). In light of this life experience, this dissertation draws equally from my social background and civic engagement as well as my pluri-disciplinary formal training<sup>14</sup> and professional life. However, despite this vast and intimate first-hand knowledge, it was only later in the course of researching for this dissertation that I became aware of some recurrent patterns in what seemed at first glance unprecedented dynamics or ad-hoc events.

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<sup>13</sup> I was then Executive Director for the Ligue des Droits de la Personne dans la Region des Glands Lacs [League for Human Rights in the Great Lakes of Africa] (LDGL). See for detail [www.ldgl.org](http://www.ldgl.org)

<sup>14</sup> My undergraduate studies in Linguistics and African Literature is of particular relevance in the study of Rwandan and Burundian political trajectories. For instance, I wrote my senior thesis on Rwandan poetry under King Cyirima Rujugira (1770-1786).

### **From Data to Evidence to Argument: Basis for Analysis & Interpretation**

For the sake of simplicity, the recorded data at my disposal can be grouped into three categories in regards to their evidential value: objects, events, and narratives. By objects, I mean tangible or visible things—guns and bullets, military uniforms, a cemetery for fallen soldiers as the one I visited in Burundi, meeting minutes, photos and videotapes, maps and charts, books and manuscripts, etc. By event, I refer to situations or activities that took place at a given time, in a given place. This includes various scenarios such as an outbreak of violence, massacres, appointment or destitution of leaders, etc. By narrative, I refer to information, whether an idea or claim, real or imagined, framed from different, if not conflicting points of view. Narratives range from experts' views gathered from books and other scholarly writings and journalistic accounts to official speeches, actors' testimonies, witnesses' accounts, and popular wisdom. In this regard, following Aminzade (1993), I strove to provide “theoretically explicit narratives that carefully trace and compare the sequences of events constituting the process [of interest].” (Aminzade 1993, 108). For the sake of accuracy, I made it my habit throughout the interview process to double-check with most of the interlocutors to ensure that the recorded narratives fully depicted their experience and views. I also made efforts to verify the accuracy of information drawn from secondary sources or received through various channels including informal talks and social media like Facebook, Skype and Twitter. Finally, I took time to systematically compare the data collected from various sources in order to notice commonalities, contradictions, and inaccuracies.

Moreover, drawing on my formal training in linguistics and African literature, along with my familiarity with the research environment, special efforts were made to juxtapose local discourses against the theory and assumptions of international scholars and policy-makers in a

way that can help illuminate both shared aspirations and divergent world-views. By doing so, and following in the tradition of Sartori as revived by Collier and Gerring (2008), my overall hope is to contribute significantly to the much-needed endeavor of avoiding unintended consequences of conceptual imprecision and policy misunderstandings resulting from unwise cross-cultural translations and transpositions (see particularly Schaffer 2000).

### **Methodological Challenges and Gap-bridging Strategies**

The burden of documenting and explaining the roots and routes of variation between Rwanda and Burundi, past and present, comes down to reconstructing, step-by-step, the longstanding polities of these sister countries. The daunting nature of such an ambitious endeavor obliges one to acknowledge a number of methodological challenges, which in turn require us to anticipate creative and gap-bridging strategies. To be concise, the major challenges encountered throughout this inquiry speak to the overall puzzle of a three-fold knowledge gap beautifully theorized by one African-American feminist scholar as “Situated Knowledge,” “subjugated Knowledge,” and “Partial Perspectives” (Collins 2000). Understanding knowledge as “situated” has made me more aware of the weight of the source and surrounding environments on the content and quality of the available data. The notion of “subjugated” ideas has forced me to be more alert to the omnipresence of power relations at all levels and in all situations. Finally, the notion of “partial perspectives” has cautioned me not only to take any ‘truth’ I have been told with a grain of salt, but also to be more aware of my own biases. Empirically, the three-fold knowledge gap can be grouped into five sets: (1) reconstructing a remote past; (2) the nexus between knowledge and power; (3) the weight of genocidal violence and its aftermath; (4) the limits to and fallacy of scientific rigor; and (5) my personal biases and barriers as a “researcher-actor” (Reyntjens 2009).

### ***Reconstructing a remote past***

Like any society whose past is only known through oral traditions, the pasts of Rwanda and Burundi pose numerous obstacles to knowledge, ranging from fragmented evidence to silent episodes, let alone misleading anachronisms and political manipulations.

In the field of African studies, these obstacles have pitted two schools of historians against one another, namely, “liberal historians” vs. “radical Historians” (Davidson quoted in Chrétien 2003, 37). The former tend to idealize ancient African kingdoms whereas the latter tend to dismiss any idea of a pre-colonial state in Africa as “Third World feudalism” (Chrétien 2003, 37). A proponent of the “liberal” school may be Rwandan scholar Alexis Kagame who, as I once wrote elsewhere, “used his distinguished and multidisciplinary scholarship along with his social prestige and the Catholic Church’s facilities to reveal, illuminate, and sometimes embellish or ‘Europeanize altogether various aspects of Rwanda.” (Twagiramungu 2012, 1). Fortunately, there are several exemplary historians who have distinguished themselves in studying the trajectories of Rwanda and Burundi in a more rigorous way by critically appreciating the available data on their own terms while acknowledging the inescapable gaps and limits (see particularly Vansina 1985, Newbury 2001). This caution pleads for “methodological doubt” as, in the words of a respectable Africanist, “a prerequisite for a reliable reconstruction of the past, despite objections from those who are certain they know the truth.” (Chrétien 2003, 37).

### ***Of knowledge and power***

Undertaking a comparative analysis of two political trajectories implies a fair amount of reliable, comparable recorded knowledge and empirical data about the entities under consideration. In many cases however, the notion of ‘reliability’ proves problematic because the empirical reality of “recorded knowledge” raises always the question of the nexus between power and knowledge:

“those who possess power,” write two scholars, “are those who decide what truths will be trumpeted around the world and what truths will be ridiculed, silenced, or suppressed” (Paul and Elder 2006,3). While Burundi is no paradise in this respect, Rwanda is a casebook of its kind.

To begin with, there is now a consensus among the historians that “the data on Rwanda are much dense and accessible” while “detailed knowledge of Burundi dynastic history is limited before about 1800” (Newbury 2009, 307). According to Newbury, Burundi’s “fragmented traditions [...] may well reflected the weak, fluid, and regionally circumscribed character of central court power in Burundi” (Newbury 2009, 310). By analogy, one can assume--and indeed I will show later in the analysis -- a close correlation between the impressive body of ‘dense’ and ‘accessible’ — though too standardized to be reliable— data about Rwanda and the latter’s highly centralized and standardized model of governance. It thus comes as no surprise that Rwanda is considered by some scholars as a casebook of the “*art of knowledge construction*” (Pottier 2002; Inglise 2010; see also Sommers 2012), or to use one scholar’s harsh words, an all-out warfare of “constructing the truth, dealing with dissent, domesticating the world” (Reyntjens 2011). By the same token, ancient Rwanda is particularly known for remarkable isometric quality of words and power at the court: “The exquisite subtlety of Kinyarwanda and the cultural value placed on its manipulation,” writes one historian, “from poetry to politics, lent themselves to the same end: at the court, the artistry of words was part of the craft of power.” (Newbury 2011, xxxvi). A Rwandan proverb sums up the challenge: “One who knows nothing about what the spoken words are meant to refer to, may believe that the wind is grey.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> “Utazi irengero ry’amagambo agira ngo umuyaga in igaju.” To emphasize the power of spoken words, the proverb suggests that, at face value, words can fool people to believe in non-existing realities such as the color of wind.

Even when people are willing to talk openly about power, they so often do nothing more than “whispering truth” as Thomson (2013) put it rightly to describe her encounter with a fearless Rwandan genocide survivor:

On our previous meeting, in June 2006, Jeanne had hugged me for a long time, perhaps five minutes, and when she broke our embrace she said: “I am glad you have come into my life. You gave me a safe space to share my inner thoughts. It is not always safe in the new Rwanda to share what you really think. [...] But Rwandese, we need secrets, we don’t share easily. But with you, I shared, and my heart feels lighter. [...]. But our time is now over. I can’t see you anymore because people know that our official time together is now over. I want you to know you will always be my friend in here [taps her chest], but you must go and not greet me if we meet, and do not visit. I sometimes told you more than I should have but I wanted to and you can tell my story in your book. But it is best for my family and I if you never come back here again.” (Thomson 2013, 4).

Several accounts by scholars familiar with post-genocide Rwanda (Frontline 2005; Guichaoua 2010; Ingaere 2006; Sommers 2012) concur with the idea that post-genocide Rwanda is a “truly hostile environment” (de Lame et al. 2013 contra Clark 2013)<sup>16</sup>. One consequence of this “hostile environment” is that I was not welcome to go back to Rwanda<sup>17</sup> and therefore had to devise alternative ways to collect and verify the needed information. Paradoxically, as the increasing authoritarianism in Rwanda has pushed a good number of key RPF insiders in exile over the last decade, I was lucky to connect with those who were now willing to share lots of otherwise

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<sup>16</sup> British scholar Phil Clark (2013) claims that a great many international scholar who have fallen out with the post-genocide leadership are those who exaggerate the government’s intimidation and interference, do know neither how to do research properly, nor how to constructively engage the ruling elite. In response, a group of 11 prominent experts on Rwanda who, in their words, “have studied the country for decades, reject these suggestions of professional inadequacy and what we perceive to be ad hominem attacks against some in our midst.” They include Danielle de Lame, Howard French, Villia Jefremovas, René Lemarchand, Timothy Longman, Jens Meierhenrich, Catharine Newbury, David Newbury, Gérard Prunier, Filip Reyntjens, and Susan Thomson. They argue, inter alia, that “In setting out a false dichotomy between those who can no longer conduct research in Rwanda and those who can, Clark fails to ask more important questions about why, how and to what effect the Rwandan government so often attacks scholars whose research raises critical questions about the virtues of Rwandan policy or its implementation that they have experienced.” (de Lame et al. 2013).

<sup>17</sup> The hostile environment that I left behind when I was forced in exile in 2004 has been well-documented in, inter alia, Frontline 2005.

inaccessible information. I was indeed in the right place at the right moment. As one of them confided to me, “it’s high time for us to tell ...and thus ensure that both wonderful news and painful stories behind the RPF’s extraordinary odyssey be told as they are before they get lost or hijacked by our power-hungry megalomaniacs.” (interview, 2013).

On balance, judging from the difficulties I encountered to make sense of the RPF’s power loci, during my ten-year long work in Rwanda, it would be no exaggeration to assert that my interviews with Rwandans in the Diaspora yielded far more precious data than what I could expect to get from inside Rwanda. Nevertheless, it did not take me long to realize that much of the narratives I collected were too colored by the informants’ bitterness toward the current RPF’s ruling elite to be objective. It was therefore with a grain of salt that I used them as, not evidence per se, but as possible sources of evidence that warranted corroboration by other sources. Luckily, the vast majority of the RPF insiders, loyalists and foes alike, have fond memories of the period I was interested in (the odyssey from rebellion to government) and only diverge in their accounts of the current situation (a period for which other more reliable sources abound). I was also lucky to work in Burundi at a time when, despite the problem of insecurity in the countryside and police intimidations, people from all walks of life were more eager than ever to talk about their varied experiences. A major constraint that took considerable time to overcome was the one of decoding the stories behind many of my interviewees’ omnipresent reference to local tales, proverbs and other forms of local knowledge.

### ***Genocidal violence and its aftermath***

The horrors of genocidal violence that Rwandans and Burundians are emerging from are, if anything, an extreme instance of what one scholar has rightly dubbed “unspeakable truths”

(Hayner 2001). The notion of unspeakability is particularly evident when one takes into account the multiplicity and complexity of the narratives and images associated with these horrors.

A recent philosophical work titled *After "Rwanda"* (Martinot 2013) captures well the challenging task of making sense of genocidal violence and its aftermath. [The words] "After Rwanda," writes Martinot, "evoke in most people's minds outside of Rwanda a mediated account of an incomprehensible human tragedy: footage of militiamen branding machetes and nail-studded cudgels, scenes of slaughter, images of rotting corpses, pictures of orphaned children and widows, and recordings of survivors' testimonies." (Martinot 2013, 1). "On a different register," he adds, "they also evoke the times that follow this specific tragedy: overcrowded refugee camps in Zaire, the outbreak of cholera, overpopulated prisons, the return of exiled Rwandese, and the remarkable rebuilding of a nation ever since. (Martinot 2013, 1). "Finally," he observes, "on yet another register, the words After "Rwanda" also evoke the guilt of not acting on time and the need to pay some kind of moral debt." (Martinot 2013, 1). To some extent, what the author says about Rwanda holds also true for Burundi. In both countries, talking about the horrors and their aftermath is precisely quasi-impossible "because the images and words are now often mixed up with other images and words thus confusing historical events" (Martinot 2013, 1). In this regard, while efforts have been made to make sense of the contending narratives about how Rwandans and Burundians as well as external observers and analysts make sense of the transition from genocidal violence to rebel-governance, it is beyond my pretension to have uncovered the whole truth.

To this problem of unspeakability, biases and intellectual militantism of some observers and analysts add another layer of complexity. The most extreme form of intellectual militantism

seems to be the rise of two polarized and polarizing camps vis-a-vis the Rwanda genocide -- camps known in the literature as “genocide deniers” (Caplan 2013) and “white liars” (Péan 2004). The nasty debate around a recent book, *The Politics of Genocide* (Herman and Peterson 2010), illustrates this point. For instance, one Canadian scholar described this book as a collection of “bizarre fictions” and “strange biases and excesses in belaboring its thesis” (Caplan 2010). He went a further mile to describe the authors as part of “a tiny band ... [of] most notorious deniers of the Rwanda genocide” (Caplan 2013). In response, one of the named ‘deniers’ took further the naming game by calling Dr. Caplan “a fine example of the worst kind of imperialist ...[committed] to advance authoritarian ideas meant to silence critics of the Kagame regime; promote fear of being labeled with the ‘genocide denier’ in academia and the mainstream press; propagandize the masses and falsify history; ...suppress freedom of speech and thought” (Snow 2013). Such verbal wars require us to be extremely cautious when it comes to distinguishing facts from feelings, evidence from assumption, and scholarship from intellectual warfare.

### ***The limits to and fallacy of scientific rigor***

One may rightly think that the verbal warfare described above has to do with the horrors associated with the Rwanda genocide for instance. However, the impressive body of scholarship that has developed in and on Rwanda and Burundi since colonial era suggests otherwise. One telling case is the enduring legacies of the nineteenth century theories of race in Europe that fueled the Hamitic myth and thus translated the fluid categories of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa into rigid social and political barriers that eventually culminated in genocidal violence (see Chapter 3 for ample detail). Another revealing case of longstanding polarizing clichés is “the French quarreling schools” (Chrétien 1991), a reference to two sides formed by the French-speaking prominent experts on Rwanda and Burundi who mutually accused one another of being pro-Hutu or pro-

Tutsi. To name just one example: Historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien, who some accuse of championing the ‘Tutsi cause’ (Lugan 1995), offers the following criticism against one of his rivals, René Lemarchand: “This Franco-American expert, very critical in 1970 of ambiguities in the Rwandan ideology, then evolved toward a position close to Hutu ethnic fundamentalism” (Chrétien 2003, 411).

These examples and the like concur with the caution against the scholars’ tendency to invoke the shield of scientific rigor to back biased accounts (e.g. Herman & Peterson 2010; Gourevitch 2009 and Clark 2013). That being said however, the work of exemplary scholars shown that “engaged scholarship” and “informed activism” are neither bad things in themselves, nor are they incompatible. A case in point is the work of Alison Des Forges, a renowned student of Rwandan history whose life “is a model of the conjunction of human rights activism and scholarship” (Newbury and Reyntjens, 2010). As two prominent scholars put it forcefully, “Des Forges’ life work exemplified the mutually reinforcing nature of these two forms of commitment - scholarship and work toward human rights and social justice.” (Newbury and Reyntjens, 2010). Such exemplary work is the hallmark against which to measure the limits and fallacies of scientific rigor in the face of sensational or biased sources and data.

### ***Personal biases and barriers***

As stated above, one of the strengths of this dissertation is to build on my genuine and intimate knowledge of the cultural features and factual elements underlying the issues under consideration. However, this advantage goes hand-in-hand with a painful recognition of my own biases and barriers to objectivity in my capacity as a “researcher- actor” (Reyntjens 2009).

Core subjective factors that I have struggled to avoid --or at least to minimize-- lest blind me to new realities or expose me to jump to unwarranted conclusions can be summarized as follows.

The first challenge has been to avoid my day-to-day exposure to Rwandan ways and logics that blind me to the subtle and unexpected peculiarities of Burundi. Thus for instance, I spent a considerable amount of time in Burundi before I got used to the preference of many CNDD-FDD officials to be interviewed in the open air with little if any discretion. By the same token, throughout my interviews with people in offices, in IDPs camps, in bars or in remote villages, I was amazed to see how Burundians were far more open than I could anticipate when it comes to discussing hot topic such as ethnic problems, power abuse, social inequalities, etc. Not least, sometimes I could seldom hide my disbelief when I saw some people in position of authority tolerating, ignoring or even encouraging blatant instances of petty corruption or insubordination.

The second set of biases for me has to do with my own background *vis-a-vis* the powers-that-be in Rwanda, past and present. To begin with, as a native of Kinyaga --a remote region in South Western Rwanda known for its odds with central government from pre-colonial era onwards (see Newbury 1988)--, and having witnessed various forms of power abuse from ethnic and regional discriminations to authoritarian practices, I cannot hide my biases concerning the first and second republics (1962-1994). On the other hand, having devoted myself to the cause of peace, justice and human rights as a civil society activist in post-genocide Rwanda before being forced into exile in 2004, I can hardly escape judging the so-called RPF's "success stories" without a dose of suspicion. By the same token, having enthusiastically embraced the movement for democratic change in the early 1990 before the 1994 genocide proved wrong my faith in the international community, I can seldom ignore my biased views on the weight of international norms and donor-driven agendas in local dynamics. More importantly, as a Rwanda-born scholar, I can only ignore at my intellectual peril the looming danger of allowing my cultural background prevent me from understanding the subtle specificities of Burundi. Not the least, as a

West-educated student doing research in a part of the world where the relationships between elite and laypeople are mutually suspicious at best, I couldn't be more aware of the dangers in failing to give room and voice to the views and experiences of ordinary people, especially the poor and powerless—metaphorically referred to in Burundi as *Abanyabitoke*, literally, “banana growers”.

### Conclusion

This dissertation is a comparative case study that draws on empirical data from various sources including written materials, oral traditions, interviews and personal experience. The inquiry journey has evolved through a challenging but rewarding process of learning embedded in popular wisdom that “we make the road by walking.” Specifically, the inquiry I put forth is a “redescription” of the roots and routes of remarkable variation in political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi, past and present. Throughout the daunting redescription journey, methodological doubt and open-minded curiosity have remained my guiding principles. Fortunately, as the data began to abound, the patterns of difference and similarity became clearer and more consistent than I could have anticipated. To be sure, it is beyond my pretension to claim that my findings along with the data they are drawn from are totally immune to the inescapable influence of the various layers of bias and barriers described above. Nevertheless, I am confident that the body of data at my disposal is empirically representative and reliable enough to make it possible to draw solid conclusions. The remainder of the dissertation strives to document and explain the causal mechanisms underlying remarkable variation in the rebel governance systems as it unfolds in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi.

## Chapter Three

# MACRO COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: Rwanda and Burundi in Long-run Perspective

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### Introduction

This chapter documents the patterns of variation in the trajectories of Rwanda and Burundi. Drawing on a rich and varied corpus of oral traditions and written materials, the inquiry is built around Braudel (1992)'s theory of "the social history of everyday life" according to which

Everything must be recaptured and relocated in the general framework of history, so that despite the difficulties, the fundamental paradoxes and contradictions, we may respect the unity of history which is also the unity of life. (Braudel 1958)<sup>18</sup>.

One of the difficulties Braudel's statement hints at is the extent to which one can recapture everything past. Another one is about how far back in history one can go to uncover the unity of history. Such problems and the like are of particular relevance in societies like Rwanda and Burundi where oral traditions are the core sources of pre-colonial history. Regarding the paradoxes and contradictions, the most important one is probably the central position of 'great men' in "the social history of everyday life" which, in societies such as Rwanda and Burundi whose existence spans over four centuries, hints at a methodological puzzle: which histories

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<sup>18</sup> Braudel conceives of the study of history as a dialectic of duration meant to account for the unfolding of human action : « L'histoire est une dialectique de la durée; par elle, grâce à elle, elle est l'étude du social, de tout le social, et donc du passé, et donc aussi du présent (Braudel as quoted in Bailey and Santamaria 1984, 78). At the center of this view is the notion of « structure » defined by Braudel in deterministic terms as a set of self-reinforcing limits which, inter alia, "can distort the effect of time, changing its scope and speed . . ." and "from which man and his experiences can never escape" (Braudel as quoted in Bailey and Santamaria 1984, 78).

should we document? In light of the available data, it is beyond my pretention to recapture everything past. Nor is it my intention to ignore the central role of the “great” men and women who shaped the trajectories this dissertation seeks to document and explain. Instead, I put forth an understanding of history founded on the Durkheimian idea of the “history of mentalities” according to which, since the historical world is created out of perceptions, not out of events, we need to recognize that the whole of history is a “construct of human impressions” (Durkheim 1960). The work before us is therefore to tie together the available pieces of recorded “perceptions” in an effort to reconstruct long time spans of two “historical worlds,” namely, Rwanda and Burundi, from the beginning until now (seventeenth century- 2014). In the process, key actors, memorable dates and important events that have captured “human impressions” the most and thus shaped the boundaries of “the unity of history” will be singled out. The chapter begins with an overview that places Rwanda and Burundi in a broader physical, social and historical context. In section two, focus is on documenting the origins of the two countries from their simultaneous emergence in the early seventeenth century until the eve of the colonial era. In section three, we discuss the extent to which the core patterns of variation in the general political trajectories cemented throughout the pre-colonial era shaped the successive dramatic junctures both countries have evolved through. Four historical junctures are considered, namely: Colonial administration, the struggle for independence, the rise of ethnocratic republic, and the post-cold war process of democratization, which culminated into civil war. Section four discusses the 1990s civil war period and its aftermath from which emerged the rebel governance systems whose variation is the puzzle this dissertation seeks to decipher.

## SECTION I

### **Milieu or the Physical, Social and Historical Environment**

Understanding societies like Rwanda and Burundi comes down first and foremost to grounding them in their *milieu*. The French phrase *milieu* is generally used in English to designate the totality of surroundings in which people live and by which they are influenced. For the purpose of this chapter, *milieu* refers to “human social environments” which “encompass the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural milieus within which defined groups of people function and interact” (Barnett and Casper 2001, 465). This all-encompassing definition challenges the traditional divide between the physical and the social.

In fact, “[t]he social environment subsumes many aspects of the physical environment, given that contemporary landscapes, water resources, and other natural resources have been at least partially configured by human social processes internal and external forces” (Barnett and Casper 2001,465). This is particularly true in the context of Rwanda and Burundi where overpopulation and land scarcity, along with man-led endeavors such as urbanization, deforestation, tourism, and the ever-changing land policies have dramatically changed for better or worse the natural setting of this part of the world. In light of this conceptual framework, this section provides an overview of three interrelated factors: the physical setting; the social environment; and finally, a historical survey.

**Illustration # 2: Map of Rwanda and Burundi in Regional Context**

### **The physical setting**

Located south of the equator in the heart of Africa, Rwanda and Burundi form a high plateau divided by several steep mountains and deep valleys, whence their shared French nickname of *pays des mille collines* [country of a thousand hills]. Wedged between two giant countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west and Tanzania to the east, the twin landlocked countries are among the smallest nations in Africa with a total area of 26,338 sq. Km (10,169 sq. mi) and 27,830 sq. Km (10,745 sq. mi) for Rwanda and Burundi, respectively. This general physical setting shows roughly three geographical zones: Open grasslands covering the Kagera River basin in the east; the western mountainous highlands comprising the savanna plateaus of the Congo-Nile divide, and the volcanoes in the northwest Rwanda; and finally, the dry zone, called *Imbo*, covering the vast lowlands stretching from the eastern Lake Tanganyika shore through the Rusizi River Valley (Chrétien 2003; Lemarchand 1970; Newbury 2009).

To be sure, the dominant patterns of the three distinct geographical zones shadow a great number of irregular micro-environments ranging from deep forests and huge swamps to lakes and rivers which impacted human movements and activities in many ways. This being said, there is little, if anything, in the physical setting of both countries that can explain variation in their authority patterns. This is particularly significant because both countries prove wrong what one scholar has theorized as “the fundamental problem confronting African leaders: How to extend authority over sparsely settled lands (Herbst 2000, 3). In fact, unlike most of the modern African countries, which emerged as new states with geographical and political borders imposed arbitrarily by colonial powers, Rwanda and Burundi are among those rare “ancient political zones that were real potential nations, comparable to European states in the early nineteenth century” (Chrétien 2003,291).

## The Social environment

“Social environment” refers to a delimited setting characterized by a number of shared features around which a society develops a common identity. This notion echoes the French paradigm of *milieu social*, which implies the existence of social structures reinforced while reproducing internalized norms and representations of social forces (Durkheim 1960). Thus, like any other “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983), the communities that identify themselves as Barundi and Banyarwanda have multiple and overlapping social features that have changed over time.

To be sure, available data is too inconclusive to determine when social life as we know it today started in this part of the world or whether there is any relation between the first inhabitants and the current populations. For instance, archeological remnants suggest that human settlement in this region is tens of thousands of years old (Noten 1983). Nevertheless, dominant hypotheses hold that the current populations may derive from a mixture of the Bantu migrations from West Africa to the south and east between 3000 B.C.E. and 1100 A.D (Ehret 2001; Vansina 1995) and the Nilotic migrations, which are believed to have occurred between eighth and fifteenth centuries A.D. Without engaging the controversies surrounding the hypotheses of migration, one can conclude that social life in this part of the world, as elsewhere, was first and foremost organized largely on the basis of kinship. Later on, it evolved through complex processual dynamics and developed into larger groupings based on common blood relations, marriages, and other forms of social alliances, immigrants’ integration, regional ties, and political boundaries. It is nevertheless worth noting that, in addition to sharing linguistic affinities and other cultural features including religion and arts, Banyarwanda and Barundi are best known for their similar social categories, namely, clans and ethnicities. The label “clan” is generally used to translate the local term *ubwoko* which, in both Kinyarwanda and Kirundi, originally referred to a multiethnic,

trans-regional social category that claims to have the same mythic ancestors, a common totem, and shared values and taboos (The Regents of the University Of California 2006). Regarding “ethnicity,” it is a label with no local equivalence first used by Europeans to design an empirical reality of the fluid social class categories found in Rwanda, and to lesser extent in Burundi: Tutsi, referring to the ruling elite; Hutu, designating the mass populace; and Twa, referring to a marginalized minority assumed to be pygmoid. These categories developed in pre-colonial Rwanda and were later institutionalized by the colonial administration in line with the nineteenth century emergence of the pseudo-science of race. Eventually, these categories ended up becoming the cornerstone of post-independence vicious ethnopolitics pitting Hutu against Tutsi in both Rwanda and Burundi.

The road to hell started when John Hanning Speke, an English scholar, who had spent four-and-a-half months at the court of King Muteesa of Buganda, theorized in his famous *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* the existence of an aristocratic race assumed to belong to “a small residue of the original European stock” (Speke 1863). Four decades later, Speke’s theory was to find fertile ground in those colonial policies that used pseudo-scientific measurements to validate, as I summarized elsewhere, “the alleged biological evidence pertaining to Tutsi and Hutu as different races—the former being associated with a Caucasian appearance (taller, with thin lips and pointed noses), the latter seen as true Negroes (shorter, with broader lips and flat noses)” (Twagiramungu 2011). Once biological differences were assumed “scientifically” established (see particularly Hiernaux 1956) and the Tutsi declared Caucasian under the white man’s terms, Rwanda, and to lesser extent Burundi, was deemed a paradigmatic test case to validate white supremacy and the inferior nature of the savage Africans. Thus, for instance, in an essay titled *Un royaume hamite au centre de l’Afrique* [A Hamitic Kingdom in the

heart of Africa], Father Pagès (1933) imagined the Tutsi as distant descendants of Ham, the biblical son of Noah, and therefore the founders of the highly civilized “Hamitic kingdom” of Rwanda amidst savage Hutu Negroes and Twa pygmies. Without delving into the fiery debates surrounding the process of making and unmaking the shifting boundaries within and between clans on one hand and ethnic groups on the other hand, two notable differences are worth mentioning. First, in both countries, clans were originally conceived of as “the starting point of all the social organizations at some level of collectiveness” (The Regent of the University of California 2006, 8) during the pre-colonial era. However, it is also worth noting that the Banyarwanda belong to no more than 18 clans while the Burundi were subdivided into more than 200 clans (Chrétien 2003). Second, until the demise of the Burundi’s monarchy in 1966, the royal family had managed to form a social rank of its own known as “Ganwa,” positioned above the mass of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, while the Rwandan court ended up becoming synonymous with the Tutsi ethnic group. To understand the nature and extent of these divergences, a brief overview of major historical phases through which both polities emerged and evolved is in order.

### **Historical survey**

Significant archeological remnants, including agricultural practices, cattle, pottery, and smelted iron, suggest that humans first settled in the region covering modern Rwanda and Burundi several thousand years ago (see particularly Hiernaux and Marquet 1960; and Nenquin 1967). However, little if anything is known about the nature and extent of the social and political life in this region until the rise of the institution of kingship. The latter developed between the tenth and the eighteenth centuries to become the standard model of governance in the vast region covering current Rwanda and Burundi, as well as eastern Congo, southwestern Uganda, and northwestern Tanzania. By all accounts, the history of pre-colonial Rwanda and Burundi revolves

around two royal dynasties, the Nyiginya dynasty that reigned over Rwanda until 1960 and the Ganwa dynasty that reigned over Burundi until 1966. In this respect, we can roughly distinguish three generations of kings: founding fathers and immediate successors; reformist kings; and puppet kings. The founding fathers and their immediate successors laid down the political foundations of the kingdoms of Rwanda and Burundi. Reformist kings, also known as the ‘new founding fathers,’ shaped the geographical and political boundaries of the two nations as we know them today. Puppet kings are those whose power was overshadowed by colonial domination and, in the case of Burundi, post-colonial rule (see figure #1 below).

**Figure #1: Comparative List of the founding fathers and their successors**

| Period/generation  | Rwanda  | Burundi   |
|--|---|---|
| Generation 1: Founding fathers and immediate successors          | <b>Ruganzu Ndori (1650-1675)</b><br>Mutara Semugeshi (1675-1690)<br>Kigeli Nyamuheshera (1690-1705)<br>Mibambwe Gisanura (1705-1735)<br>Yuhi Mazimpaka (1735-1766)<br>Karemera Rwaka (1766-1770)        | <b>Ntare Rushatsi (1670-1709)</b><br>Mwezi Ndagushimiye (1709-1739)<br>Mutaga Senyamwiza (1739-1775)<br>Mwambutsa Mbariza (1775-1795) |
| Generation 2: ‘Second founding fathers’ and immediate successors | <b>Cyirima Rujugira (1770-1786)</b><br>Kigeli Ndabarasa (1786-1796)<br>Mibambwe Sentabyo (1796-1801)<br>Yuhi Gahindiro (1801-1830)<br>Mutara Rwogera (1830-1867)<br><b>Kigeri Rwabugiri (1867-1895)</b> | <b>Ntare Rugamba (1795-1852)</b><br><b>Mwezi Gisabo (1852-1908)</b>   |
| Generation 3: Non-sovereign kings                                | Mibambwe Rutarindwa (1895-1896)<br>Yuhi Musinga (1897-1931)<br>Mutara Rudahigwa (1931-1959)<br>Kigeri Ndahindurwa (1959-1960)   | Mutaga Mbikije (1908-1915)<br>Mwambutsa Bangiricenge (1915-1966)<br>Ntare Ndizeye (July - November 1966)                              |

*Source: Adapted from Chrétien (2003), Kagame (1959), Newbury (2009), Rennie (1972) and Vansina (2004)*<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> To date, there is no agreed-upon chronology of the kings who reigned in Rwanda and Burundi before the early nineteenth century when chroniclers began to record historical facts in writing. Most of the dominant accounts take as their common point of departure the ‘official’ chronology of Rwanda as reconstructed and standardized by Alexis Kagame (1959). However, this is problematic because Kagame’s chronology does seldom conform to the canons of historical analysis. For instance, one critic observes that some features such as recurring dynastic cycles are rather assumed than empirically proven, and that, in many cases “names and events have been projected back into the distant past and accepted as part of antiquity because of the legitimacy that adheres to longevity.” (Newbury 2009, 259).

It is also worth noting, however, that the period before the arrival of European explorers (who were the first to record and date historical facts in a systematic and precise way) is a contested terrain.

The major points of controversy are “not over empirical evidence alone, but over deeper differences, relating to the concept of history and the techniques of reconstructing and understanding social process” (Newbury 2009, 262). All controversies aside, however, ample evidence suggests that the period between 1600 and 1900 saw Rwanda and Burundi develop into formidable kingdoms which were sophisticated enough to make the first European explorers identify them as “paradigmatic of the social organization in Africa's Great Lakes region” (Newbury 2001, 258). Certainly, we can only ignore at our own intellectual peril Newbury's caution against the tendency to project modern “dominance of state power in these two societies” and totally disregard ample historical evidence that suggests, *inter alia*, “a multitude of political units, ranging from centralized polities to small-scale kin-based units” (Newbury 2001, 258).

Nevertheless, as Newbury rightly observes, “amid such diversity, the emergence, development, and meaning of the two dominant state-structures of Rwanda and Burundi form the essential historical puzzle of this region” (Newbury 2001, 258). For him, the twin polities were puzzling in two main respects, namely, “because the[ir] histories deal with so many complex interlocking explanatory factors, and because in some cases precise explanations escape us even today” (Newbury 2001, 258). With this caution in mind, one must also recall that the colonial administrations, first German and then Belgian, were struck by the prominent parallel trajectories and structural similarities. As a result, neither colonial administration resisted the temptation to treat the two nations as one colony. The next section sums up recording historical facts surrounding the complex development of the two polities.

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Without pretending to reconstruct any rigorously chronology, the one I suggest is meant to help draw a big picture of the parallel trajectories in the evolution of the two countries.

## SECTION II

### **In the Beginning: The founding era**

Rwanda and Burundi belong to a group of kingships known as *ingoma* [drum] that blossomed in the African Great Lakes region between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Until then, the clan-based political organizations served as the standard model of governance. Debates about what triggered the quasi-simultaneous emergence of rival kingships in the vast region covering current Rwanda and Burundi as well as eastern Congo, southwestern Uganda, and northwestern Tanzania prove far too inconclusive to give us definitive answers. However, two interrelated factors seem most convincing. One is the occurrence of unprecedented and enduring catastrophes such as droughts, brush fires, bovine epidemics, and famines, which created what one historian refers to as an “atmosphere of an economic and demographic dead end and human calamity” (Chrétien 2003). The second factor, stemming from the first, involves the dramatic consequences associated with sudden and massive migrations of the populations in search of food, land, and pastures. For one, these massive displacements weakened and sometimes severed altogether the kinship and clan-based ties that once held families and small communities together.

As the migrant families found themselves dispersed in *terra incognita*, they had to build new ties and relationships within or against the host societies. In some cases, the newcomers were integrated and generally assimilated in the host societies; in other cases, when the newcomers were more powerful or better organized than the host societies, they could impose themselves as the new masters and thus force their hosts either to flee or surrender. In other cases still, the newcomers, endowed with special skills and powers— magic or military powers for instance—could win strategic positions within the host societies. In any case, the hitherto dominant clan-based social and political organization proved incapable of managing the new

complexities and conflicts due to ecological crises and human displacements. Thus emerged the system of kingship, locally known as *ingoma* [drum], which gradually became the standard model of governance in the vast region covering current central and east Africa.

### **Typology of the foundation of *ingoma* or kingship**

Origin stories about the founding fathers of the kingdoms in the African Great Lakes region share a common cliché: the future founder is a bastard or an orphan living in the court of a neighboring kingdom. Once his true identity is revealed to him, generally by diviners or ritualists, he embarks on a journey to found his own kingdom in the land of his fathers. Thus a new kingdom is born with a new dynastic drum. On his road to power, the founding father relies on guile and force, as well as on rituals and strategic alliances. At the heart of this new form of governance is, among other innovative attributes, “supreme power of one man, rules of dynastic transmission, religious references, and rule-based territorial control that had fiscal and military consequences and made recourse to jurisprudence” (Chrétien 2003, 95). How each king combines these instruments of power makes all the difference in the roads to and exercise of power. The rise of the kingships of Rwanda and Burundi need to be understood in this regional context (see Newbury 2011).

### **Two founding fathers: Ruganzu Ndori and Ntare Rushatsi**

The founding father of modern Rwanda is a young man named Ndori living with his aunt, a queen of the kingdom of Karagwe (now a territory in northwest Tanzania). Once a servant of his father reveals to him his identity, and explains how his father had been overthrown and killed by the king of Bushi (now a territory in South Kivu in the eastern Congo), the founding father vows to avenge his father. “On his return,” writes a prominent historian summarizing Rwandan traditions, “[Ndori] escapes the clutches of his enemies,[...] reaches Busigi where he instigates

miracles of fecundity that prove his kingship” (Vansina 2004,44). “By guile and by force,” adds Vansina (2004,44), “[Ndori] makes numerous conquests and the small kings who occupy central Rwanda fall like ‘the great trees’ under the axe of Ndori, the pioneer.” According to official traditions, Ndori—later called Ruganzu (literally “The Triumpher”)—is portrayed as a partisan warrior committed to avenging the death of his father and to restoring his kingdom. It is worth noting though that, instead of reclaiming his father’s crown symbolized by the dynastic drum *Rwoga*, Ndori establishes his own drum, *Karinga*, “a feat that in this region announces the birth of a new kingdom” (Vansina 2004,55).

The founder of Burundi is a young man called Cambarantama, the bastard of a small king Jabwe<sup>20</sup> and the future king of the powerful kingdom of Buha (now a territory in northeast Burundi). According to the tale, diviners come from Burundi one morning to reveal to him his royal origins and encourage him to use his royal magic powers to deliver Burundi from a monster that threatens to decimate all the inhabitants of his father’s land. Delivered from the monster, Burundi enjoys abundant rain and prosperity again. In recognition, so claim the traditions, the population unanimously proclaims Cambarantama alias Rushatsi their king; he then assumes the royal name Ntare, and establishes a new drum, *Karyenda*.

Once in power, the two leaders embark on a journey to legitimize their reigns using two common strategies: political alliances and rituals. For instance, according to oral traditions, Ndori is believed to have ‘engineered’ more than 12 political alliances throughout his road to power. His notable allies include the famous poetess Nyirarumaga from the Singa clan, who served as his adoptive queen mother. They also include a number of small kings and chiefs who put themselves under his protection, as well as prominent ritualists from powerful clans

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<sup>20</sup> Some traditions claim that Jabwe was the son of Nkabata and a grand-son to Rurenge, the patriarch of the Renge, a people believed to be the oldest ever to settle in the territory covering modern Rwanda and Burundi.

including Kono, Tsohe, and Tandura, who helped him legitimize his authority in the successive conquered territories. Like Ndori, Ntare allies himself with the ritualists from major clans, including the famous Bajiji and Banyakarama. He also allies himself with numerous small kings and chiefs as well as respectable figures such as Ngoma ya Sacega, the founder of the Bashingantahe institution, religious leader Kiranga, and the bouffon Samandari wa Mandaranga. As it was common in the region, both founding fathers also relied heavily on rituals or magico-religious practices. Common rituals in the region included the enthronement rituals, which involve proclaiming a new king by providing him with a royal name, a queen mother from specific lineages, a dynastic drum, a dynastic bull with its herd of cows, as well as other royal regalia such as a hammer, a hoe, a bow and arrows, or spears and knives. Above all, there are harvest-centered rituals, the most elaborated one and probably the most widespread in central and east Africa being the First Harvest Ceremonies called *Umuganura* or *muganuro* elsewhere (see particularly Newbury 1991, 200-226; and Newbury 2009, 229-251).

### **The rise of Two Governance Systems**

There is no question that the two founding fathers relied on a combination of political strategies ranging from guile and force to rituals and political alliances. Nevertheless, ample evidence suggests a strong correlation between each king's road to power and the anatomy of his government. The founder of Burundi, Ntare Rushatsi, rose to prominence as a providential savior who freed "his" people from the monster and other calamities including drought and famine. To maintain power, he gradually extended his influence over complex webs of power-holders including ritualists and small kings who surrendered to him some of their powers in exchange of protection, while retaining significant margins of maneuver in the territories under their control.

Contrariwise, the founder of modern Rwanda, King Ruganzu Ndori, came to power by force. To maintain power, he opted for a system of governance that in many ways echoes Tilly's model of state-building in Europe, revolving around four variables: (1) war making meant to eliminate or neutralize the king's rivals; (2) state making or the process of eliminating or neutralizing the king's rivals inside the territory under his control; (3) protection or the process of eliminating or neutralizing the enemies of the king's clients; and (4) extraction or the process of acquiring the means of carrying out the first three activities (Tilly 1975; Tilly 2000).

Seen from Tilly's perspective, a parallel reading of the two reigns shows Ruganzu's government as a perfect instance of concentration of powers, whereas Ntare's government looks like a paradigmatic example of confederation of autonomous powers. To begin with, both kings display exceptional bravery. However, they engage in different kinds of battles and had different types of enemies. Ruganzu wages war to avenge his father and thus re-conquer his lost kingdom; Ntare battles against a monster that threatens to decimate his people as a whole.

In terms of state-making, both kings rely heavily on political alliances and rituals to legitimize their regimes. However, while Ntare distinguishes himself by solidifying and extending his power from the south to central and north Burundi through political alliances with autonomous powers, Ndori appears to be more innovative by making the army "the very foundation of power in the kingdom" (Vansina 2004,60). Assessing the weight of the army in the social and political landscapes under Ndori, Vansina concludes that "[t]he deepest effect of this new military organization was the institutionalization of a glorification of militarism and martial violence that finally permeated the whole Nyiginya culture as the armies became the foundations of the administrative structure of the realm" (Vansina 2004,61).

In terms of clients' protection, available accounts suggest that Ntare proves right the maxim that "unity is strength." While available accounts of his military endeavors generally prove too fragmented and anachronistic<sup>21</sup>, the fact that he managed such a long reign in a region dominated by militarist regimes like Rwanda, Ankole, Buhinda and Bugesera suggest that the coalition of autonomous armies made his kingdom strong enough to defend itself and defend its allies against external invasion. By contrast, with an army comprising "from four to six times more well trained warriors than the armies of other chiefs" (Vansina 2004,47), Ndori's military organization was so innovative and unique that the vast majority of small kingdoms and chiefdoms either surrendered or sought his protection.

In terms of extraction, it is obvious that the court upkeep for both kings put a heavy burden on the surrounding communities. "Since it was mainly provisioned by the inhabitants in its neighborhood," writes one historian, "the court had to be located in a fertile district where the population density was sufficient to supply its needs" (Vansina 2004, 47). It is possible that the growth of each kingdom occurred due to the increased number of subjects and allies providing the court with gifts, labor, and tributes. However, Rwandan traditions suggest that Ndori's model of state-making was far more sophisticated and advanced. Along with the army, another distinctive pillar was an "unequal contract, called *ubuhake*" by which

The patron (shebujja) gives one or more head of cattle in usufruct to the client (umugaragu) but maintains the ultimate ownership of the cattle. He assures his client of his protection. In return the client must help his patron whenever and becomes his servant or umuhakwa. The relation was hereditary and only the patron could dissolve it by requiring not only that the client return the patron's cattle but that he also turn over all his own cattle as well. (Vansina 2004, 47).

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<sup>21</sup> Burundian traditions attribute to Ntare Rushatsi far more exceptional military skills and conquests, which actually belong to his future successor, Ntare Rugamba, who reigned a century later. See the discussion on Ntare Rugamba in the paragraphs below.

To be sure, like any social phenomenon, *ubuhake* did not develop overnight. However, ample evidence suggests that “[w]ith *ubuhake* Ndori erected the first pillar of his authority over the kingdom” (Vansina 2004, 47). In any case, it is obvious that compared to Rushatsi, whose legitimacy rested largely on popular belief that he delivered the country from evil monster, the two distinctive pillars of Ndori’s government—a strong army and the clientele contract of *ubuhake*—allowed him to wield complete control whereas Ntare Rushatsi had to win the support of his numerous and varied allies. Thus begun two divergent systems of governance in two neighboring polities, namely, the concentration of powers in Rwanda and the confederation of autonomous powers in Burundi.

### **In the footsteps of the founding fathers: The Era of Successors**

“To be reproduced in one’s children gladdens parents.”<sup>22</sup> This Rwandan saying was nowhere more meaningful than in the kingdoms of Rwanda and Burundi where the sacred sounds of the dynastic drums, Kalinga and Karyenda, dominated the morning air from the seventeenth century until their demise in the early 1960s. According to official traditions, Ndori perished on the battlefield in circa 1670, while Rushatsi died peacefully in his royal bed in circa 1709. In both cases, the available information about the immediate successors remained anecdotal until a century later when a second wave of “strong men,” the first since the founding era, shaped the political landscapes. In Rwanda, the next founding father was Cyirima Rujugira, who reigned sometimes between circa 1744 and 1768. “Despite the cluster of etiological narratives that focus on the figure of Ruganzu Ndori,” writes Newbury (2009), “it is the reign of Rujugira for which we first have data associated with modern kingship.” (Newbury 2009, 321).

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<sup>22</sup> Literally, “kwibyara bitera ababyeyi ineza.” This saying originated from the title of a masterpiece poem that royal poet Nyakayonga Ka Musare dedicated to King Mutara Rwohera and received in return 40 cattle heads. For a detailed commentary, see Vansina 2004, 127

Newbury identifies two core elements that characterized Rujugira's reign, "the development of the ideology of kingship in Rwanda," and "the strong centralization of military power in the hands of the Nyiginya dynasty" (Newbury 2009, 321-322). Thus, from Rujugira to the last powerful king of Rwanda a century later, Kigeri Rwabugiri, the kingdom was "transformed into a unified, centralized, and aggressive entity" (Vansina 2004,123).

To be sure, all the kings were neither as powerful as Rujugira, nor was the court immune from internecine rivalries and external threats. For instance, upon his death, Rujugira was succeeded peacefully by his son, Kigeri Ndabarasa. The latter had a successful career that included an "utter militarization" that saw the military machine grow to "about thirty armies with about twelve thousands combatants" (Vansina 2004, 123). However, Ndabarasa's death prompted a wave of wars for succession that ended in the triumph of the elites from three great families—the Nyiginya royal lineage and two powerful matrimonial lineages, Ega and Kono. The "big families" phenomenon –what Vansina (2004) labeled "triumph of the Big Families"—developed at the expense of the personal authority of the kings from Sentabyo (1792-1797) to Gahindiro (1797-1830) and Rwogera (1830-1867), all of who appeared to be nothing more than the puppets in the hands of the victorious factions. Paradoxically, though, civil wars and the resulting political upheavals reinforced rather than challenged the central court's excessive power. Insofar as "power was vested in those who commanded armies and no longer in those who controlled territorial domains," Vansina observes, "only succession, not secession, struggles would take place" (Vansina 2004,122). In other words, controlling the court—incarnated by the dynastic drum Kalinga—was the key. In fact, for whoever succeeded in controlling the court, "Centralization was achieved by the direct *ubuhake* relationships of the king and by the territorial dispersion of the recruits and of the lands given to the armies" (Vansina 2004, 123).

The development of Burundi is quite different. The new ‘founding father’ is Ntare Rugamba, a warrior king under whom “the size of the kingdom doubled, expanding to the north (with the collapse of Bugesera), to the Imbo regions north of Lake Tanganyika, and to the northeast (Bushubi)” (Newbury 2009, 306). Ntare Rugamba “profoundly transformed the kingdom” (Chrétien 2003, 162) in many respects. For one, he is credited with institutionalizing the princely “Ganwa system,” which entailed decentralizing power by placing his sons on the periphery of the kingship’s domains.<sup>23</sup> According to local traditions, this practice that one historian labeled “geographic marginalization” (Chrétien 2003, 162), served to neutralize the threat to royal power by keeping the princely pretenders at bay far from the heir’s central court. In the end, however, this politics proved counter-productive as it allowed the princes to amass enough resources to constitute their own centers of power with little regard for the central court. The endgame of Rugamba’s reign, as described by Newbury, is a telling case: “Ntare [Rugamba] relied on his sons as administrators, he was strong enough to set up his sons, but not strong enough to incorporate these regions fully within central control” (Newbury 2009, 310-311). Worse still, the geographic marginalization strategy did little to prevent Rugamba’s successor, Mwezi Gisabo, from “struggling against his older brothers to retain his claim to kingship” (Newbury 2009, 311). Thus started a “protracted conflict between different descent lines among the Baganwa [princes], opposing the Batare (the sons of Ntare [Rugamba]) to the Bezi (the sons of Mwezi [Gisabo])” (Newbury 2009, 311).

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<sup>23</sup> The notion of “kingship’s domain” refers here to the portions of land and pastures claimed by the king as his own properties called *icibare* (plural, *ivyibare*) and which were administered by royal favorites called *Bishikira*, literally, “those who have direct access [to the king].”

“On the eve of the colonial period,” concludes an authoritative expert,

Burundi was fragmented into four distinct spheres of influence: (1) the eastern region--approximately one-third of the country--was under the sway of Batare princes (i.e., the sons of Ndivyariye, Rwasha, and Birori); (2) the core area of the kingdom, in and around the royal capital of Muramvya, was under the direct control of Mwami Mwezi Gisabo; (3) forming a kind of buffer zone between this core area and the Batare-controlled east were the domains of Mwezi's sons, the Bezi princes (Ntarugera, Rugema, Sebudandi, and Nangongo) ; (4) covering an elongated strip of territory running on a north-south axis along Lake Tanganyika and the Rusizi River were various semi-independent chiefdoms under Hutu and or Tutsi control. (Lemarchand 1995, 77).

To sum up this section, the available evidence is too incomplete and too centered around a handful of “great” men to give us a full picture of “the social history of everyday life” in the tradition of Braudel. Nevertheless, a comparative reading of the “human impressions” recorded in the oral traditions between the founding era and the arrival of Europeans in the early 1900s reveals consistent trends of continuity in the ways each country cemented its system of government over time. In Rwanda, the government grew to become more “unified, centralized, and aggressive,” (Vansina 2004, 123) whereas in Burundi power became more decentralized when it was not fragmented.

## SECTION III

### **All along the way: Four Defining Moments**

From the colonial era onwards, the two kingdoms witnessed a number of major junctures which seemed poised to threaten, if not destroy altogether, the very foundations of the kingship norms and practices. Four such junctures worth examining are colonial domination, the struggle for independence, the rise of ethnocratic republics, and the democratization processes resulting in the civil wars that paved the way to the divergent rebel governance systems at issue in this dissertation. As detailed below however, neither period broke completely from the founding era.

#### **Colonial domination**

The devastating impact of colonial domination on the kingships of Rwanda and Burundi is nowhere better colorfully depicted than in Botte's (1985) account evocatively titled, *Rwanda and Burundi, 1889-1930: Chronology of a Slow Assassination*. The first to be slowly assassinated were the sacred rituals such as *umuganura*, religious practices, and powerful institutions such as military corporations. Slowly assassinated were also the pillars of social life such as kinship and lineage networks, which fell victim to the European "new logics of profit, money, instruction, technical expertise, and mobility—in short, new logics of individual advancement" (Chrétien 2003,351).

In Burundi, this process of slow assassination reached its apogee in 1930 when the most sacred annual First Harvest *umuganuro* festivals were "replaced by a seed blessing at Christmas" and "ritualists were baptized or expelled and disposed of their estates, and the cult objects were seized or hidden" (Chrétien 2003,270). One year later, the colonial administration in Rwanda went even further to oust and exile King Yuhi Musinga and enthrone his son, Mutara Rudahigwa,

in blatant violation of the basic sacred rituals of enthronement (Des Forges 2011; Mbonimana 1981; Nahimana 1987; Roomy 1992). To understand the profound existential injuries suffered by both kingdoms at the hand of colonial domination, one is reminded of the spiritual essence of kingship as succinctly described by Vansina (2004, 164):

The government of the king was above all spiritual. It guaranteed prosperity by its very existence and by the execution of rituals destined to ensure the fertility of the land, the fecundity of the cattle, and that of his subjects. He [the king] was aided in achieving this by specialized rituals. [...]. In any case, the ritual role of kingship was the keystone of that institution because it legitimized the authority of the king in the eyes of his subjects. Of fundamental importance in this context was the belief that the king owned a supernatural power, acquired during the rituals of accessions.

It followed that the loss of traditional legitimizing elements made the new ruling elites, who worked hand-in-hand with the colonial administration, look like nothing more than useful ‘décor.’ The resident of Burundi from 1920 to 1925, described well this colonial endeavor:

The agreement between the native king and the European authorities will lead... to this final result whereby the country will be left only with chiefs willing, or resigned, to march toward progress--and thus acceptable to the occupying power--all while maintaining legitimacy and thus being acceptable to the natives. [The native kings] are the familiar decor that permits us to act behind the scenes without alarming the people. (Ryckmans as quoted in Chrétien 2003, 267).

At this point, the break from the past seemed so irreversible that it may sound counterintuitive to imagine any logical correlation between traditional patterns of authority and the white man-imposed regimes. Beneath the appearances, however, empirical evidence suggests that the sweeping efforts to harmonize the colonial policies in the two kingdoms now under the same administrative banner called Rwanda-Urundi translated into two divergent political outcomes, namely, the “cohesion of oppression” (Newbury 1988) in Rwanda and fragmented centers of power in Burundi (Lemarchand 1970; Grahame 2001).

To begin with, it is worth recalling that when the Germans claimed Rwanda and Burundi by virtue of the 1885 Berlin Conference, the development of the two kingdoms had reached its apogee. Burundi was enjoying a relatively stable, but aging reign of an old man, Mwezi Gisabo, who had been in power since the 1850s (Botte 1985; Mworoha 1977; Mworoha 1987). Despite longstanding rivalries between his sons, collectively known as *Bezi*, and his brothers and their descendants, collectively known as *Batare*, the king was legitimate enough to refuse all contacts with the Europeans, known from then onwards as *Bazungu*. By contrast, Rwanda was then suffering from what Vansina boldly described as “the tragic paradox of increasing centralization... which sows anarchy as it unfolds” (Vansina 2004, 164). Thus for instance, during Rwabugiri’s long reign (1867-1885) “punctuated by successive waves of persecutions and executions from which no one was immune,” (Vansina 2004, 165) along with unprecedented military conquests of immense territories from east (Gisaka and Bugesera) to the west as far as the shores of Lake Kivu and Lake Edward, “the court comes to control what happens elsewhere more and more” (Vansina 2004, 164). However, Rwabugiri’s legitimate successor, Mibambwe Rutarindwa, was to be overthrown by a bloody coup --known as *Rucunshu* coup-- that killed the king and decimated the old aristocracy, save the lineage of Abakagara from the Bega clan and their *protégés*. It was during this blaze of violence that the Germans marched into Rwanda in 1897. It thus comes as no surprise that, unlike the Burundian sovereign who opposed the Germans (Gahama 2001), the new ruling elite in Rwanda welcomed them and relied on their support to legitimize its contested regime (Des Forges 2011). As a result, the Germans implemented a form of indirect rule that translated into two different strategies of occupation. In Rwanda, they reaffirmed King Yuhi Musinga as the unique local supreme leader or “sultan” and helped him conquer his enemies and rivals.

In Burundi, however, after the use of sheer force proved counter-productive (for the king's defiance won him popular support as a heroic symbol of resistance against external occupation), the Germans adopted the divide and conquer policy and co-opted a number of princes and chiefs who were eager to increase their autonomous powers at the expense of the central court. Betrayed by several powerful princes and peripheral chiefs, the king first went into hiding before resigning himself to collaboration. While the Germans finally recognized and legitimized the king as the supreme leader of Burundi following a 1903 protocol of collaboration, the time was not ripe for the Burundian court to monopolize the Bazungu magical power as did its Rwandan counterpart. Yet upon the death of the king in 1908, the struggle for succession pitted the new king, Mutaga Mbikije, against several aristocratic members, some of who had already reinforced their authority in the peripheral regions.

Thus, Musinga skillfully used the German presence to force his will upon the people as his ancestors had done through guile and sheer power. However, the stalemated struggle in Burundi ended in the assassination of King Gisabo in 1915 and the enthronement of a baby king, Mwambutsa, in the shadow of a divided regency council. This period coincided with the demise of the German administration and the subsequent Belgian rule at the wake of the First World War. Thus started a new chapter in the colonial history of the two kingdoms.

Initially the outbreak of the First World War and its outcomes were bad news for both kingships. The new masters, the Belgians, vowed to topple the two-kingdoms and impose what one historian termed "paternalistic, Christian neo-feudalism" (Chrétien 2003, 267). From 1920 onwards, however, "Minister Franck [in charge of Colonies] opted to maintain indirect rule in these countries, where political organizations was [even by colonial standards] 'strongly constructed'" (quoted in Prunier 1995, 26).

In practice, this policy, meant to be enforced equally in both kingdoms, yielded divergent outcomes and therefore forced the colonial authorities to adopt divergent corrective measures. In Burundi, the weakness of the court now in the hands of a sharply divided regency council, acting on behalf of 5-year old King Mwambutsa, allowed the colonial policies to be carried out without further interference. In Rwanda, however, King Musinga treated the demise of his German protectors as a personal defeat and thus resisted the new masters' policies. After a merciless stalemate punctuated by what one historian described as "intrigues of Shakespearean proportions" (Newbury in Des Forges 2011), the Belgians resolved in 1931 to oust Musinga along with the old aristocracy and to give power to a new generation of young aristocrats who were willing to reject 'pagan practices' and embrace the white men's civilization (Des Forges 2011; Mbonimana 1988). The demise of Musinga was the climax in a series of sweeping colonial administrative reforms known as "*Réformes Voisin*" after the name of the then governor of Rwanda-Urundi, Charles Voisin. These reforms, which were "progressively implemented between 1926 and 1931" (Prunier 1995,26), sought to establish a comprehensive and simplified system of government insofar as the system of indirect administration bequeathed by the Germans had proven inadequate to enforce some coercive measures and individual obligations. During the uncertain process of soul-searching, colonial authorities considered various options including the one of tearing down the longstanding ruling aristocracy globally referred to as "Tutsi" and replacing it with a new class of leaders from the populace then globally referred to as "Hutu."<sup>24</sup> Ironically, the decisive impetus to institutionalize the Tutsi domination would come from the same Catholic Church that had, paradoxically, 'emasculated' the Rwandan kingship by

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<sup>24</sup> For instance, Des Forges (2011) discusses many cases of Hutu figures who were considered viable alternatives to Musinga.

abolishing its legitimizing rituals and royal symbols. Mgr. Léon Classe, then Bishop of Rwanda, forcefully defended the case of exclusive Tutsi leadership, stating,

The greatest mistake this government could make would be to suppress the Mututsi caste. Such a revolution would lead the country directly to anarchy and to hateful anti-European communism. [...]. We will have no better, more active and more intelligent chiefs than the Batutsi. They are the ones best suited to understand progress and the ones the population likes the best. The government must work mainly with them. (Classe as quoted in Prunier 1995, 26).

That was easier said than done, though. For the so-called “Mututsi caste” was dominated –and indeed built around—a king whose incompatibility with the white man’s burden was a secret of Polichinelle. “The Belgians had never liked Musinga,” wrote Prunier. Nor had the Catholic Church. Prunier sums up well the Catholic Church’s case against Musinga:

[King Musinga] had fought alongside the Germans against [the Belgians], he was haughty and unruly, his mother [Kanjogera] was a pest, he was openly adulterous, bisexual and incestuous, he never converted to Christianity and he deviously tried to hijack the white man’s civilizing mission for his political benefit” (Prunier 1995,31).

How can one then reconcile a system embodied by such a non-repentant sinner with a Catholic civilizing mission? To resolve the puzzle, Mgr. Classe helped the colonial administration to work out a practical solution, i.e., demoting the recalcitrant king and his entourage and then turning the “Mututsi youth” into “an incomparable element of progress” (Class quoted in Prunier 1995,31).

Thus started in Rwanda the colonial endeavor of concentrating all the privileges associated with power, knowledge, and modern technologies in the hands of a tiny oligarchy at the expense of the masses of peasants now subject to severe and strictly enforced measures of exploitation including the much hated forced labor *uburetwa* (Des Forges 2011; Newbury 1988; and Rumiya 1992). Those associated with power became globally known as Tutsi and those doomed to suffer exploitation were collectively referred to as Hutu.

Like Rwanda, Burundi experienced the Voisin's reforms regime as well. Surprisingly, while Mgr. Classe's magic solution of using "the Mututsi caste" as the engine of colonial 'civilizing mission' found fertile ground in Burundi as well, the endeavor of concentrating all the powers in the hands of a single caste at the expense of peasant masses proved by and large unlikely. Two developments can explain this Burundian exception. First, one has to recall that in Rwanda, the court identified itself as the hub of a caste of aristocrats who had little in common with the peasant masses and thus reinforced the colonizers' racist theory of the aristocratic Tutsi as a race of invaders of Caucasian descent. By contrast, the Burundian court did not buy into these racial theories as the royal family continued to define and position itself as a noble caste—the Ganwa caste—bound to "unite" and "serve" the masses (interviews in Burundi, July 2011).

The second development is more complex, yet even more telling. In fact, strong evidence shows that a number of zealous princes and chiefs in Burundi embarked on an opportunistic journey of imitating their Rwandan counterparts. This process seemed promising for a while to the extent that Mgr. Julien Gorju would proudly refer to Burundi as the twin sister of the "Hamitic kingdom of Rwanda." This became evident especially between the 1930s and 1950s when the colonial administration evicted the quasi-totality of traditional chiefs at the benefit of a tiny group of educated princes and chiefs led by Pierre Baranyanka. This group presented themselves as Tutsi, in line with both the nineteenth century racial discourses and with Rwandan court's ideology of the Tutsi supremacy over the Hutu masses (Gahama 2001). It followed that, like their Rwandan counterpart, the so-called Burundian 'Tutsi elite' pursued an aggressive implementation of the unpopular colonial policies. Meanwhile, though, unlike his Rwandan counterpart, Musinga—whose resistance cost him the crown—King Mwambutsa in Burundi appeared too weak to threaten the colonial administration.

Moreover, Mwambutsa's weakness proved useful to the colonial powers that contented themselves to keep him as a legitimizing figure. As a result, the equally unpopular and exploitative colonial policies produced two divergent outcomes in the Rwanda-Urundi colony.

In Rwanda, by working hand in hand with the colonial administration, the zealous Tutsi elite condemned the central court through which they saw as synonymous with all the abuses of *igikoloni* [colonialism] from forced labor and excessive taxations to corporal punishments and forced migration. While only a tiny portion of the people who were later globally and, to some extent, abusively labeled "Tutsi" had power, many came to believe, that "the Batutsi were destined to reign" (Governor Pierre Ryckmans quoted in Lemarchand 1995,34). On the other hand, in Burundi, the abuses of power by the new elite appointed by the colonial administration at the expense of King Mwambutsa won the latter his fellow countrymen's sympathy and support.

More importantly still, by resisting the colonial 'divide-and-rule' game—even after the Belgians imposed mandatory identity cards upon which each citizen was described as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa—the neutral or at least ambiguous position of the court in Burundi helped to underplay the ethnic cleavages. To be sure, unlike dominant claims that ethnic cleavages date back to the colonial administration, one is reminded that, upon the arrival of Europeans, the gap between Hutu and Tutsi were far more pronounced in Rwanda than in Burundi. For instance, as early as 1903, a White Father observed,

In Burundi the Tutsi is not above the Hutu; the first has no authority over the second, unless such authority has been delegated to him. In everyday life they are on an equal footing." (as quoted in Prunier 1995, 26).

However, careful studies have shown that the process of institutionalizing the opposition between Tutsi and Hutu dates back to “Rujugira’s rule at the latest” (Vansina 2004, 135) before reaching its apogee under Rwabugiri (Newbury 1988). Vansina sums up the point, stating,

From the 1870s onward, the awareness of the division between Tutsi herders and Hutu farmers thus spread all over Rwanda following the spread of the practice of naming chiefs of the long grass and then of that of uburetwa with the rancor it caused. Rebellion began to ferment among the exploited. [...]. Tensions between Tutsi and Hutu also appeared in the south of the country during the fighting in Bwanamukari before 1890 and again in 1897-99, where the lineages of the high aristocracy opposed themselves to the “new men” of Rwabugiri, whom they decried as Hutu. In both cases the aristocrats sought revenge for what they chose to interpret as an insult to “Tutsi.” (Vansina 2004, 136).

This remarkable variation in the politics of social polarization would have serious implications on the nature and outcomes of the struggle for independence in both countries.

### **The struggle for independence**

On the eve of the decolonization movement in Africa, the colonial administration in Rwanda-Urundi was so blinded by the zeal and devotion of their local agency, the Tutsi elite, that it was unable to fathom the unpopularity of the latter in the eyes of the exploited masses: “If one asks Bahutu if they prefer to be ruled by commoners or by nobles,” wrote resident Morteihan, “there is no doubt in their response. Their preference goes to the Batutsi” (quoted in Prunier 1995, 26). No political reading could be more inaccurate and heavier in consequences than Morteihan’s.

On July 1, 1962, when Rwanda and Burundi officially recovered their independence from Belgium, not only had the vast majority of “Bahutu” been elected by their fellow “commoners,” but more importantly, few if any “nobles” who had zealously served the colonial administration were still in any position of power. Surprisingly, though, while the struggle for independence translated into open confrontation between the ‘Tutsi nobles’ and the ‘Hutu commoners,’ it was

carried out in Burundi through multiethnic fractious coalitions. It thus comes as no surprise that in Rwanda a counter-elite movement, the Parmehutu, used the Tutsi-Hutu cleavages as a rallying cry to amass enough support to delegitimize and later overthrow the kingship, the latter being portrayed as the incarnation of twin colonialism, i.e., Tutsi domination and colonial occupation. By contrast, the marginalization of King Mwambutsa provided his elder son, Rwagasore, the needed margins of maneuver to build a pluralistic coalition, the UPRONA, that succeeded in channeling the commoners' frustrations and aspirations in the face of the unbearable abuses of power by the discredited 'noble Tutsi elite' collaborators, effectively portrayed as the puppets of colonial occupation.

Divergent roles and outcomes of the involvement of the colonial administration in these struggles for independence are worth mentioning as well. Consider for instance the titles of the personal memoirs of two former prominent colonial officials, namely, Jean-Paul Harroy (1987)'s *Souvenirs d'un combattant d'une guerre perdue* and Guy Logiest (1988)'s *Un blanc dans la bagarre Tutsi-Hutu*. For Harroy (1987), his mission in Burundi was a "lost war," a reference to the defeat of his protégé, the PDC, who lost to Rwagasore's party, UPRONA, in the 1961 legislative elections. For Logiest (1988), however, the 1959 Hutu revolution and subsequent developments—the victory of his protégé, MDR-Parmehutu, in the 1960 local elections and the 1961 coup that ousted King Kigeli Ndahindurwa and abolished kingship—were considered a personal triumph. To understand the nature of these divergent outcomes, one must consider the relationships among local forces on the one hand and between local forces and external influences on the other. In fact, 'the cohesion of oppression' described above implied two distinct classes in colonial Rwanda, the class of oppressors led by the colonial administration and their *protégés*, the youth Tutsi elite, and the class of the oppressed who ended up becoming

synonymous with Hutu. However, working hand in hand seldom means that the colonial administration and their *protégés* had the same interests or goals. This became particularly evident in Rwanda where, as the Tutsi elite started asking for immediate and unconditional independence, “the colonial administrators felt betrayed by their erstwhile protégés” (Prunier 1995, 47) and thus switched their support in favor of the Hutu counter-elites. The latter were strategic enough to ask for a gradual, assisted recovery of independence (Nkundabagenzi 1962). While the same classes developed in Burundi as well, the ambiguous situation of the court filled the gaps between the ruling elite and the oppressed masses. As a result, the court served as a national symbol of resistance against colonial occupation.

In this context, the efforts of the Tutsi elite-dominated party in Rwanda, the UNAR, to regain control over the sources and means of power in the wake of the struggle for independence remind us of the monopolistic control that characterized the Rwandan court long before colonial domination. By the same token, the development of contending centers of power during colonial rule, as well as the fluid coalition of prominent princes like Louis Rwagasore and commoners like Paul Mirerekano, echo the fragmentation of the political landscapes that had marked the Burundi kingdom for centuries. More telling still is the fact that, while the new ruling force in Burundi, UPRONA, evolved through a situation described by one expert as “the anatomy of political decomposition,” (Lemarchand 1970,270), its Rwandan counterpart, the MDR-Parmehutu, took a ‘winner-takes-all’ approach by forcing the vanquished king and his supporters into exile and in turn silencing by guile and force more moderate forces such as APROSSOMA and RADER.

**From the ashes of kingship: Two faces of ethnocratic republic**

In both countries, the transition from kingship to republican regime was heavily influenced by the outcomes of the struggle for independence. The coming to power of Hutu counter-elites in Rwanda signaled the demise of the old-standing Tutsi-dominated kingship, which was officially abolished on January 28, 1961. The new leadership, an all-Hutu group of revolutionaries, was eager “to get rid of *Kalinga*, the sacred royal drum, because, being decorated with the testicles of vanquished Hutu princes, it could not be considered a symbol of national unity” (Gitera quoted in Prunier 1995, 47; see also Jaspers 2013, 250-255).

While there is little—if any—historical evidence to support this claim, it is worth noting that this was actually a retaliatory response to the unfortunate position of the king’s close aides who had declared in a 1958 open letter that, “since Kigwa, the ancestor of the Banyiginya dynasty, had reduced the Hutu by force, there could be no fraternity between Tutsi and Hutu” (quoted in Prunier 1995, 47). By contrast, kingship in Burundi managed to survive the wind of independence and to serve as a unifying force for a while. Since then, though the centers of power changed, especially after civilian governments were toppled and replaced by military regimes, Rwanda maintained a strong state regime while Burundi continued to experience several crises of legitimacy.

To be sure, neither trajectory was predetermined. In fact, judging from the initial conditions, the situation augured more stability in Burundi than in Rwanda. For instance, the 1961 elections that brought the UPRONA to power in Burundi were peaceful, fairly democratic and thus more legitimate than the elections won by the MDR-Parmehutu in Rwanda which were marred by violence and contestations (Lemarchand 1970; Newbury 1988). The two governments, however, would follow radically divergent trajectories.

In Burundi, after Rwagasore was assassinated two weeks after the election, the UPRONA “broke into several rival groups, many of which were carryovers from precolonial *ganwa* rivalries” (Eggers 2006, iii). These rivalries culminated in the assassination in 1965 of Ngendandumwe, a Hutu Premier seen by many as the equivalent of Rwagasore and the last bridge between Hutu and Tutsi. Following a Hutu attempt to seize power, a rival Tutsi military group seized the reins of power, replaced King Mwambutsa with his young son Charles Ndizeye, who assumed the royal name of Ntare and a few months later declared Burundi a republic.

From then onwards, a small group of hitherto obscure Tutsi from the Hima clan in the southern province of Bururi gradually placed the government and the army under its control amidst several waves of ethnic uprisings and repressions until the 1972 pogroms which, with more than 100,000 Hutu killed and some 300,000 forced into exile, decapitated the Hutu leadership. Thus began the era of a Tutsi republic in the hands of military officers from Bururi who, under the banner of UPRONA party, dominated the political landscapes of Burundi until the early 1990s.

In Rwanda, the first civilian government was formed on January 28, 1961 in the wake of what is known as “the Gitarama coup,” which overthrew the king and abolished the kingship altogether. After independence, as president Kayibanda felt heavy pressure to deliver on his promises of democratic values and republican ideals, his enemies offered him an opportunity to “embod[y] the ideal of Hutu solidarity just as the mwami once symbolized the ideal of Tutsi supremacy” (Lemarchand 1970,270). All began when a group of nostalgic Tutsi who had fled the Hutu revolution and its aftermath formed a guerrilla movement called “Inyenzi” and invaded Rwanda in December 1963. After beating back the invaders, the government “used the occasion to launch a massive wave of repression in which an estimated 10,000 Tutsi were slaughtered [... and] all the surviving Tutsi politicians still living in Rwanda were executed” (Prunier 1995, 56).

As a result, the MDR-Parmehutu became a de facto single party and, more importantly, ‘Tutsi peril’ and ‘Hutu solidarity’ became the twin weapon that Kayibanda used to legitimize his hold on power until the demise of his regime by a military coup led by his long-term Minister of Défense, General Juvenal Habyarimana. The latter went on to exercise a far more centralized and more authoritarian regime until the early 1990s (Guichaoua 2010; Uvin 1998; for a more nuanced view, see de Lame 2004 and Desrosiers & Thompson 2011).

In terms of governance, while the two republics were equally ethnocratic in nature, their leadership styles differed significantly. For instance, talking about Burundi under Micombero in 1970, Lemarchand observed that “the history of Burundi since independence is in a sense reducible to a protracted crisis of legitimacy” (Lemarchand 1970, 302). Manifestations of this lack of legitimacy include cyclic Hutu uprisings in the countryside in 1969, 1972, and 1988, all of which were followed by massive waves of repression like the 1972 pogroms, which reached genocidal proportions. At a time when Micombero struggled to legitimize his rule, his counterpart in Rwanda, Kayibanda, had already assumed the leadership style of the old kings. “Like the *mwami*,” Lemarchand observed talking about Kayibanda, “the president is inaccessible, inviolate and unaccountable. His inaccessibility enables him to avoid taking up overt positions on specific issues, and thus to create around his position and his policies an atmosphere of ambiguity which makes them immune from criticism” (Lemarchand 1970, 270-271).

The conditions under which the two republics’ founding presidents lost power added more weight to systematic variation in the margins of maneuver of their respective successors. In Burundi, Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza overthrew his cousin Michel Micombero in a 1976 bloodless coup, and another cousin from Bururi, Pierre Buyoya, overthrew Bagaza in 1987.

One consequence of these ‘palace coups’ was to leave unchanged the dominant institutions like the Party UPRONA and the army. In Rwanda by contrast, Kayibanda—whose powerbase was central Rwanda (Gitarama)—was overthrown by a military leader from the north (Gisenyi) who created an entirely new center of power around himself. The outcomes could not be more divergent.

Each of Burundi’s soft transitions did little more than multiply internal factions within the same Tutsi ruling elite from Bururi, while widening the gaps between the “Bururi Lobby” (Lemarchand 1995, 84). Contrariwise, by tailoring his own constitution and ruling party, the MRND, and creating a whole new system of clientship, Habyariamana assumed even more power than his predecessors.

Not least, the margins of maneuver for the two republics were quite different. In Rwanda the Hutu-dominated regime succeeded in marginalizing the Tutsi minority in the name of the ideology of “democracy,” understood as the rule of the majority—the phrase “majority rule” having been synonymous with “Hutu power” since the 1959 Hutu Revolution. It also succeeded in keeping the Hutu masses under control while silencing the dissidents in the name of imperative ethnic solidarity. By contrast, as the Tutsi-dominated regime found it harder to openly legitimize the concentration of power in the hands of the tiny military elite from Bururi, it sought to criminalize talking about ethnic and regional differences. However, these discourses of ‘ethnic denial’ and ‘national unity’ yielded meager results because they were at odds with daily life experiences. It thus comes as no surprise that, while a homogeneous centralized regime controlled the whole country in Rwanda from the capital Kigali to remote areas in the countryside through a complex system of hierarchical zealous clients, the central government’s control in Burundi remained limited to the capital Bujumbura and some major centers in the

countryside—the vast majority of remote areas being in the hands of local Hutu leaders. This was even true under Bagaza (1976-1987), the most authoritarian of all Burundian leaders, whose rare appearance in the countryside became proverbial and gave birth to a popular adage that “seeing the president is an antidote to eye disease” (interviews).

In this context, while the Hutu-centered regimes won Rwanda the donor’s sympathy and money as “a model of development in Africa, with good performance on most of the indicators of development” (Uvin 1998,1-2), the Tutsi-controlled regimes in Burundi were seen by the donor community with much more suspicion, if not contempt. Evidence to this includes several threats to cut aid, notably in 1972 under Micombero, 1986-87 under Bagaza and 1988 under Buyoya (Mukuri 2013).

### **Post-Cold War Democratization Processes**

Since independence, Rwanda and (to a lesser extent) Burundi were some of the most privileged recipients of donors’ economic, political, and military support. Foreign aid had proven indispensable, particularly in the 1980s, to cope with the emergence of multifaceted economic crises from drought and excessive rain to decline in soil fertility, agricultural production, and the coffee price crisis. However, foreign aid suddenly became a burden when, responding to the ‘New World Order’ borne out the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet empire, the donor community resolved to tie development aid to democratization efforts. Such a new agenda was particularly spelled out by French president François Mitterrand in his famous *La Baule speech* in June 1990.<sup>25</sup> Referring to the “East wind,” which was blowing in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Mitterrand stated that a “Southern wind” was also blowing in

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<sup>25</sup> The early comprehensive accounts of La Baule Speech in English Language include Alan Riding, “France Ties Africa Aid to Democracy,” *The New York Times*, June 22, 1990.

Africa and that state leaders had to respond to the populations' wishes and aspirations by a "democratic opening." (Mitterrand as quoted in Riding 1990).

While President Habyarimana in Rwanda managed to manipulate and control the democratization game until his assassination four years later, his Burundian counterpart, Pierre Buyoya, was forced out of office by a democratic process that, up until the last day of polls, he thought he controlled.

In Rwanda, all started when President Habyarimana announced in July 1990 a "political *aggiornamento*," vowing to opening up his regime to political pluralism *à la rwandaise* (ROR 1991, 7-10). Judging this move a bow to external pressures from democratization, change-seekers jumped at that opportunity. In many respect, Rwanda was indeed poised to embrace the kinds of "those rare moments of political electricity when, often for the first time in history, the hidden transcript is spoken directly and publicly in the teeth of power" (Scott 1990, xiii). Thus, in August 1990, a group of 33 intellectuals signed a manifesto that demanded immediate democratization (interview with two signatories, 2010). In September 1990, a group of jurists led by a senior General Prosecutor, Alphonse Marie Nkubito, formed the first human rights group in the country's history. Throughout the country, civil servants who were fed up with the regime sharpened their denunciations of the abuses of power through tracts and articles in church-owned newspapers such as *Kinyamateka* and *Dialogue*. The movement for change that blossomed in the summer of 1990 proved so damaging for the regime that the Tutsi exiles' organization, the RPF, judged the time ripe for invasion (Prunier 1995, 90). In fact, the RPF chose to invade on October 1, 1990 based on the assumption that "the Rwandese political system was on the verge of collapse and [that] any strong push from outside would complete the process" (Prunier 1995, 90).

Paradoxically, instead of making popular “anger” (Monga 1994) triumph over the state apparatus, the RPF invasion served as a rallying cry around which the regime built its war strategy in the name of ‘Hutu solidarity’ in the face of the allegedly eminent “Tutsi peril.” (ADL 1993; Des Forges 1999; Guichaoua 2010). As one leader of the opposition lamented, “each time there are some difficulties [in the democratic process] there is a flare-up of tribal violence instigated by the regime, and threats of civil war are used to justify the *status quo*” (Gatabazi quoted in Prunier 1995, 144). For a while, though, “moments of political electricity” became so intense that Habyarimana seemed poised to bow to the winds of change. Thus, on April 7, 1992, he formed the first pluralistic cabinet ever since independence, a cabinet led by a Prime Minister from the opposition and in which the presidential party, the MRND, held only 9 out of 20 positions.

The President tasked the government to negotiate peace with the RPF and, from then until August 1993 when the Arusha peace agreement was finally signed (cf. Chapter 4), the political opposition, along with a vibrant movement for change incarnated by civil society groups and independent media, dominated the landscape of Rwanda at the increasing expense of Habyarimana’s regime. Alas, on the very day that Rwanda was supposed to celebrate the second anniversary of the multiparty government, change-seekers were the first to fall victims to the final war between two extreme hardliners. On one hand, Habyarimana’s *akazu*<sup>26</sup> along with bands of Hutu militias were eager to wipe out the RPF’s alleged accomplices, including the Tutsi population as a whole. On the other hand, the RPF troops were more eager than ever to seize power by force.

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<sup>26</sup> Akazu, literally “small house,” is a phrase coined during the democratization process to name --and shame--the entourage of President Habyarimana. Musabyimana (2008) gives a comprehensive account of the use and abuse of this label.

In Burundi, the process of democratization unfolded differently. By the time of the *La Baule Conference*, President Pierre Buyoya was already busy figuring out a Grand Strategy to translate into action the pledge in the name of which he had seized power in September 1987: “to heal the ethnic strife.” (Buyoya 1998). The task was daunting, though: “When Buyoya took over,” notes one observer, “three-quarters of the cabinet and National Assembly, about two-thirds of all university students, 13 out of 15 provincial governors, all army officers, and 96 percent of all enlisted soldiers and police were Tutsi” (Eggers 2006, 21). To make the already bad situation worse, Buyoya’s good faith was tested when a struggle for influence between local elected Hutu leaders and Tutsi appointed cadres in two communes, Ntega and Marangara, both situated in north Burundi near the Rwandan borders, escalated into ethnic massacres. These massacres left hundreds of Tutsi massacred by bands of Hutu and thousands of Hutu slaughtered by the army in reprisals (Chrétien, Guichaoua, Le Jeune 1989). In response to the degrading situation, Buyoya reshuffled his administration in October 1988. He appointed a new cabinet led by a Hutu prime minister and comprising 12 Hutu members, and created a consultative Commission with 12 Hutu and 12 Tutsi members tasked to find the ways and means of restoring and maintaining national unity. In February 1991, a Charter of National Unity was adopted as the supreme law of the land. In line with the Charter, the government ratified a new constitution along with new laws that legalized and regulated the multiparty system. All along the way, Buyoya recast himself as the incarnation of the politics of moderation and a much-needed bridge between two extreme hard-liners: the conservative Tutsi and the radical Hutu. The former deemed political openness ‘a Tutsi suicide’. The latter, incarnated by the Palipehutu, dreamed of a Hutu revolution *à la rwandaise* as the only viable solution.

For a while, Buyoya's politics of 'ethnic parity' between Hutu and Tutsi, along with massive recruitment of influential Hutu figures to fill strategic positions in both the government and the UPRONA party, seemed to pay off. Only it did not. The issue was that Buyoya blinded himself to viable alternatives due to his own efforts to portray his regime as the only viable middle-ground in a highly polarized society divided along the ethnic and regional lines. The alternative emerged in a Hutu labor activist, Melchior Ndadaye, and his party, the FRODEBU. Upon its official establishment in 1992, the FRODEBU, which had been operating as an underground movement since the 1980s, was branded by the UPRONA as, to quote one official, a "new face of the Palipehutu." (phone interview, February 2013). Ironically, the Palipehutu was even quicker to brand the FRODEBU as, to quote one former Palipehutu activist who ended up joining the FRODEBU, "a desperate weapon of the UPRONA meant to destroy the Hutu solidarity." (interview, Bujumbura 2010). According to numerous sources, the virulent attacks from its rivals did not harm FRODEBU but boasted its broader appeal to both Hutu and Tutsi.

In a nutshell, being labeled pro-Palipehutu won the FRODEBU support and sympathy across the country in the traditionally Hutu strongholds where educated Hutu from Bujumbura, like Ndadaye and his colleagues, were once seen with suspicion at best. By the same token, being virulently attacked by the Palipehutu made the FRODEBU less threatening within the circles of progressist Tutsi who were fed up with the UPRONA. The result caught the world by surprise when, on June 1, 1993, Melchior Ndadaye won more than 60% of the popular vote and, perhaps most astonishing of all, the incumbent president Pierre Buyoya conceded the democratic defeat without incident. Thus was born a new center of power, one that reflected the will of the vast majority of the people for the first time since the 1961 elections.

This peaceful transition was so promising that one western observer described the case of Burundi as, not only “one of the most remarkable transitions to democracy yet seen in Africa,” but also “a model for all aspiring democracies” (quoted in Lemarchand 1995,xi). Alas, as if history was doomed to repeat itself, like Prime Minister-elect Prince Louis Rwagasore three decades before him, President-elect Ndadaye was to be assassinated shortly after forming a pluralistic government led by a Tutsi woman from the UPRONA party.

To sum up, the process of democratization seemed for a while poised to radically change the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi which, since independence, had been dominated by ethno-politics, monopartism, and military rule. In Rwanda, the emergence and development of a strong movement for change led by a coalition of Hutu and Tutsi elites prevailed for a while and seemed poised to become a viable alternative to the hitherto prevailing omnipotent one-strong man regime. In Burundi, the crisis of legitimacy that had characterized the Tutsi-controlled regime seemed to come to an end with the formation of a government headed by a democratically elected president. At the outset, however, the old patterns of governance, like chickens, came home to roost: the struggle for total control prevailed in Rwanda while political decomposition became the rule of the land in Burundi.

## SECTION IV

### **Endgame: From Civil War to Rebel Governance**

From independence until the 1980s, both Burundi and Rwanda experienced invasion attempts, military coups, and other forms of politically motivated waves of violence. However, neither country ever reached the level of real civil war opposing the government to “insurgents from the rural periphery or a neighboring state” (Young 2002, 534). In this regard, the rebel roads to power as amply discussed later in the dissertation (chapter 4) were unprecedented in many respects and, in many respects, were poised to signal a significant break from past patterns of governance.

All started on October 1, 1990, when the RPF, an armed rebellion composed mainly of Tutsi forced into exile in the 1960s, attacked Rwanda from Uganda (Musabyimana 2003, Nyakabwa 2002, Reed 1996, Watson 1991). After a short period of despair, chaos and bloody rivalries among the top officers, the rise of a new commander-in-chief, Paul Kagame, coincided with a new guerrilla tactic of ‘waging war while talking peace.’ (HRW 1992). Four years later, despite the signature of the Arusha Peace Agreement in August 1993 to end the conflict, a combination of dramatic war-related consequences, exacerbated by external pressures for political democratization and economic liberalization, contributed to the radicalization of the ruling elite and thus worsened the already precarious ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi. However, the worst was yet to come. The assassination of the then president on April 6, 1994 triggered the worst genocide since the Holocaust. As government-sponsored gangs of killers slaughtered the Tutsi, the RPF resumed war, seized power on July 4, 1994 and thus put an end to a 4-decade old Hutu domination.

Once in power, the RPF rapidly turned devastated Rwanda into an amazingly orderly country, militarily and politically speaking. The RPF went on to form a regional military coalition that invaded Zaire in 1996 and ousted dictator Mobutu in 1997 before embarking on a controversial process of controlling, first in total and then in part, the eastern part of Zaire—now the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In neighboring Burundi, an attempted military coup led by the then Tutsi-dominated army against a newly elected president and his Hutu-dominated government in October 1993 plunged the country into a bloody political conflict locally known as *amagume* in Kirundi and *crise* in French. Amidst this chaos, a Hutu rebel force, the CNDD, emerged in the summer of 1994 and instigated a deadly civil war that left more than 275,000 dead and several hundred thousands of refugees and IDPs. The CNDD eventually split into various rival factions among which its military wing, the CNDD-FDD, emerged in 2001 as the most powerful force. After defying local and international pressures to join the peace process, the CNDD-FDD finally forced the hitherto Tutsi-dominated army to negotiate a ‘golden exit.’ As the CNDD-FDD joined the transitional government in 2003, violence dramatically decreased—a trend which prevailed in the aftermath of the CNDD-FDD landslide victory of the 2005/6 electoral marathon.

Seen from a post-conflict perspective, both countries were poised to embrace significant departure from the longstanding political cultures. This was more so since the new ruling elite was overwhelmingly emerging from a hitherto politically marginalized social group (Tutsi exiles in Rwanda, marginalized Hutu in Burundi), with little if any experience with preexisting structures of power and legitimacy. Rendezvous with radical change seemed particularly evident in Rwanda where an insurgent movement with little support in the countryside dismantled the incumbent state apparatus and completely rebuilt a country devastated four years of civil war and

genocide. In fact, unlike Burundi where civil war paralyzed but did not destroy state institutions as such, in neighboring Rwanda, genocide literally destroyed the country to the extent that, to quote a keen observer, “Rwanda was not just a country full of skeletons, it was a skeleton of itself.” (Neuffer 2001, 127). Surprisingly though, a comparative look at post-conflict Rwanda and Burundi shows two divergent instances of post-conflict reconstruction. Rwanda emerged from genocide to earn accolades worldwide as “a remarkable success story, a showcase for post-conflict reconstruction, and the latest symbol of hope for the African continent.” (Straus and Waldorf, 2011, 6). On the contrary, Burundi emerged from civil war as a fragile state characterized by a weak and divided government mired in a state of stalemate and slow decline in both political and economic developments. (Uvin 2006, 20). The rebel roads that brought about these divergent post-conflict governance systems are examined in detail in chapter 4.

## Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to empirically documenting the roots and routes of variation in the political landscapes of two sister countries, Rwanda and Burundi. Upon a careful comparative analysis of the trajectories followed by the two countries from the seventeenth century onwards, empirical evidence drawn from reliable sources concurs to put in light four major findings:

- (i) Rwanda and Burundi emerged from the similar physical, social, and historical context;
- (ii) From the start, both countries have followed parallel trajectories, first as independent kingdoms in the early seventeenth century, then as colonies, and finally as independent republics led successively by civilian governments, military ethnocrats, and now victorious rebel groups;
- (iii) All along the way, both countries have experienced several crises along with dramatic changes and external influences;
- (iv) Against this shared background, however, strong evidence shows significant trends of continuity in the divergent systems of governance that won the two countries the epithet “false twins” (Braeckman, 2011; Guichaoua 1994; Lemarchand 1970): Strong-man centered centralization in Rwanda and political fragmentation in Burundi.

Before embarking on the endeavor of accounting for the factors underlying this seemingly unbroken chains of continuity in the divergent trajectories of two countries that have otherwise much in common, the next chapter steps back to scrutinize the nature and extent of similarities and differences in the roots and routes of rebel governance in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi.

## Chapter Four

### **Micro Comparative ANALYSIS: Variation in the Trajectories of RPF and CNDD-FDD**

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#### **Introduction**

This chapter begins with an overview of the particular circumstances within and against which the RPF and the CNDD-FDD emerged and evolved from the periphery as violent non-state actors to the center stage of power as state-builders. It then compares in a systematic way the general organizational strategies behind the two rebel roads to power. The roads to power as such are examined through two areas of strategic intervention: Value-setting (identity, agenda and *raison d'être* of the organization) and peace negotiations, with a focus on core similarities and dissimilarities in what is generally known as “The Arusha Peace Processes” for both Rwanda and Burundi. Regarding the exercise of power (what is also referred to in this dissertation as rebel governance, post-conflict governance, or rebel-led government), each rebel group’s core organizational strategy is examined through the lens of two areas of strategic intervention - namely, military integration and transitional justice. The overall purpose of the chapter is to draw a broader hallmark against which to determine whether the rebellions’ responses to different challenges --in this case the four strategic areas of intervention-- were ad-hoc choices made on a case-by-case basis as the dominant contingent and idiosyncratic arguments suggest, or whether there may be a more consistent, pre-established logic of doing things underlying most, if not all, of the individual strategies undertaken in different circumstances.



**Illustration #3: RPF Official Emblem**



**Illustration #4: CNDD-FDD Official Emblem**

## SECTION I

### **Rebellion in Context: A Brief History of the RPF and the CNDD-FDD**

The available data shows three main common denominators to the roads that took the current ruling forces, Rwanda's RPF and Burundi's CNDD-FDD, from rebellion to power. First, the two rebel roads were rooted in a deadly cyclical struggle over power and resources, a struggle that pits the two main social groups, the Hutu (85%) and the Tutsi (14%), against one another at the expense of the often marginalized Twa (<1%). Second, both roads took place in the complex context of unprecedented economic crises due in part to external influences, including the infamous structural adjustment programs and pressures for democratization in the late 1980s (Guichaoua 1995; Reyntjens 1994). The third common denominator is that, for the first time since independence, Rwanda and Burundi experienced dramatic changes that saw two marginalized rebel groups move from the periphery to the center stage of power and prevail over their respective longstanding ethnocratic regimes—Hutu in Rwanda and Tutsi in Burundi.

### **The RPF**

Kampala January 26, 1986. Yoweri Museveni and his NRA<sup>27</sup> delegation were busy negotiating an unlikely peaceful settlement with the Military Council of Uganda led by Tito Lutwa Okello in Nairobi, Kenya, when a guerrilla commando captured the presidential palace along with other key strategic positions in Kampala. “When Museveni got the word,” confides to me one of his former close aides, “he jubilantly told the audience: ‘Negotiations are over. Fred has just captured Kampala!’” Fred Rwigyema, then a 27 year-old Rwandan refugee, had fought as a teenager for the FRELIMO guerrilla in Mozambique and later joined Museveni’s NRA in 1981. “Between the day we captured Kampala and the day [January 29, 1986] Museveni was sworn in as president,” claims one member of the commando, “Uganda was in the hands of the Rwandan fighters and Rwigyema was acting as a true heard of state.” (Skype interview, November 2013). On the evening of his swearing-in ceremony, Museveni reportedly held a marathon closed-door meeting. Rwigyema was there. One former close aide to Rwigyema summed up the outcome:

Late in the night, Rwigyema met with a small number of Rwandan officers and civilians who had distinguished themselves throughout the NRA struggle. He looked calm, but at our surprise, he was less excited than we were. I thought this was a result of the precedent long and sleepless nights. However, as he spoke, I understood why he was so sad: “Guys, it’s over!” he told us. “Museveni has spoken. Uganda is for Baganda. I’m the only Rwandan son allowed to serve in the Ugandan Cabinet for a country we have sacrificed so much.” He went on to brief us on other important issues discussed in the meeting including the swearing-in ceremonies. He concluded, saying: “So you understand where we stand now: This is Uganda. Our motherland is Rwanda. As Mozambicans say, *La Lutta Continua*--the struggle is far from over.” (Interview with an RPF cadre, October 2013).

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<sup>27</sup> The National Resistance Army (NRA) was formed in 1981 from the ashes of Yoweri Museveni's Popular Resistance Army (PRA) and ex-president Yusuf Lule's group, the Uganda Freedom Fighters (UFF), which agreed to merge and wage a guerrilla war in the wake of the bitterly disputed 1980 general elections won by Milton Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC). By the time the NRA seized power in January 1986, about a quarter of its 16,000 combatants were of Rwandan origin, including two close friends whose divergent paths would shape radically the future of Rwanda and the Great Lakes region, namely, Fred Gisa Rwigyema and Paul Kagame.

By the time Museveni was sworn in on January 29, 1986 and formed a new cabinet led by Prime Minister Dr. Samson Kisekka, “Fred [Rwigyema] and his boys were already feeling betrayed by the outcomes of a struggle meant to make nationalism and ethnocentrism a thing of the past,” claims one informant. According to sources close to the RPF, Museveni’s initial plan was to appoint Rwigyema his minister of defense, but the latter is said to have preferred to serve in a lower position where, so goes the claim, he would have more margins of maneuver to disguise his plan to build his own army within the NRA - which he did shortly thereafter. As early as March 1986, Rwigyema began touching base with key players within the Rwandan Diaspora, especially the RANU, then-based in Nairobi. This dream eventually became a reality in December 1987 when key senior members of the RANU<sup>28</sup> resolved to join Rwigyema’s followers and form the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front). Two years later, when it became clear that Museveni’s efforts to help Rwigyema and Rwanda’s President Habyarimana reach a secret peaceful power-sharing agreement were doomed to fail, Rwigyema gave up his prestigious position as chief staff of the Ugandan army and devoted his time and prestige to devising a highly secretive invasion plan. Eventually, he succeeded in building a “guerrilla army in a way no revolutionary group ever had: within the national army of another country” (Kinzer 2008, 51). However, as the long-awaited invasion began making some of Rwigyema’s close aides to question his determination, “[a]t the end of 1989, several dozens of these hotheads staged their own mini-invasion of Rwanda” (Kinzer 2008, 55). The official invasion eventually became a reality when General Fred Rwigyema, then responsible for the military operations against the LRA in northern Uganda, assembled some two thousands soldiers and proceeded southward.

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<sup>28</sup> RANU stands for Rwanda Alliance for National Unity, a political movement established by Rwandan refugees in Nairobi in 1979. It is worth noting that RANU is little more than English version of UNAR (Union Nationale du Rwanda), the Tutsi-dominated monarchist party that lost power to and forced into exile by the MDR-Parmehutu in the early 1960s.

A reporter who interviewed several eyewitnesses sums up the unfolding invasion:

Beginning on September 30, trucks packed with soldiers began rolling into Ankole district in southwest Uganda. At outposts near the Rwandan border, they unloaded crates of recoilless rifles, machine guns, mortars, rocket launchers, and even several Soviet-made light automatic cannons, all of which they had taken from armories in Uganda. [...]. At ten 'clock on the morning of October 1 [1990], the first of two thousand inkotanyi, along with eight hundred civilian supporters who were to work as medics, scouts, and messengers, surged across a rude bridge into the Rwandan border town of Kagitumba. They quickly overran the lightly guarded customs post, took up positions along the border, and then began to push into Rwanda. (Kinzer 2008, 65).

Thus started the civil war now referred to in literature as the “October War” led by an armed group composed mainly of young Tutsi whose parents were forced into exile in the wake of the 1959 Hutu revolution. Despite the considerable amount of time and resources meant to make the invasion a success, the first move proved catastrophic as bloody rivalries among the top officers threatened to turn the RPF formidable troops into little more than “a band of hyenas.”<sup>29</sup> Rwigyema was assassinated on October 2, 1990, allegedly in a plot engineered by his two deputies, Major Peter Bayingana and Chris Bunyenyezi. The two commanders were in return to be executed by the new strong man, Paul Kagame, on October 23, 1990 (Ruzibiza 2005; several interviews). The rise of a new commander-in-chief, Paul Kagame, coincided with a new guerrilla tactic of ‘waging war while talking peace’ (HRW 1992; see also Guichaoua 2010; Ruzibiza 2005; several interviews).

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<sup>29</sup> In the words of one insider, “twari tugiye gupfa turi impehe,” literally, “we were then left to die as a band of hyenas.” The use of the metaphor of hyena by my interviewee was polysemic. On the one hand, it refers to a Rwandan word-game that compares military troops without a strong commander to a band of hyenas driven by selfishness with neither sense of labor division nor accountability. On the other hand, given the notion of ‘bloodshed’ associated with hyena in Rwandan tales, my interviewee’s message can be interpreted as referring to the bloody rivalries that decimated the RPF leadership in early October 1990.

Meanwhile, the incumbent government's contradictory responses to the invasion (political liberalization and peace talks on one hand, ethnic polarization and death squads on the other) contributed to the radicalization of the two belligerent parties at the expense of moderate forces on both sides and thus worsened the already precarious ethnic tensions between Hutu and Tutsi.<sup>30</sup> To make things worse, in the midst of the impasse following the signature of the Arusha Peace Agreement in August 1993, which proved impossible to implement, the assassination of President Habyarimana on April 6, 1994 triggered the worst genocide since the Holocaust. As government-sponsored gangs of killers began to slaughter first the alleged RPF accomplices and then the Tutsi people as a whole, the RPF resumed war, seized power on July 4, 1994, and put an end to a four-decade old Hutu domination. Once in power, the RPF rapidly turned devastated Rwanda into an amazingly orderly country, both militarily and politically. The RPF went on to form a regional military coalition that invaded Zaire in 1996 and ousted dictator Mobutu in 1997 before embarking on a controversial process of controlling, first in total and then in part, the eastern part of Zaire - now the Democratic Republic of Congo - through a strategy of proxy wars (Mamdani 2002; Stearns 2009; Pottier 2002; UN 2010).

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<sup>30</sup> Worth noting here is the fact that the government used the exact same policy as the RPF— waging war while talking peace.

### **The CNDD-FDD**

Bujumbura June 1, 1993. Following the approval of a new constitution meant to translate into action the agenda for unity, reconciliation, and democratic change in the name of which President Major Pierre Buyoya had seized power in a 1987 bloodless coup, Burundi holds its first multi-party elections ever for president. A Hutu candidate, Melchior Ndadaye of the FRODEBU won 65% of the vote against 35% for the incumbent President Pierre Buyoya (EISA 2010; Ntibantunganya 1999a). On June 29, Ndadaye's FRODEBU won a comfortable majority of 65 seats against 16 for UPRONA in the first democratic legislative elections since 1965. For millions of Burundians and international observers alike, these elections were a true watershed for the end of a military-based Tutsi hegemony.

However, while both Ndadaye and Buyoya seemed to share a sense of stubborn optimism about the prospects of democratic change, their top aides were defiant at best. A close aide to Ndadaye sums up the concern: "Between June 1 and the day of his inauguration [July 10], Ndadaye found himself under so fiery pressures from an increasingly angry entourage that, one day, he threatened to resign even before taking office!" (interview with a former FRODEBU cadre, July 2010). According to numerous accounts, 'the apple of discord' was, among other hot issues, the fate of the Tutsi army. For Ndadaye, things seemed simple. "Burundian People have spoken. Buyoya and his army have listened. Let democracy reign," he reportedly reminded his colleagues. Contra Ndadaye's unshakable optimism, "a gang of firebrand warriors," to quote one insider, raised the lingering question of "governing a country at the Tutsi army's gun point" (interview, Bujumbura, July 2010). "Let's be realistic," reportedly said one of the gang members challenging the president, "democracy can't defend itself."

According to numerous surviving FRODEBU cadres, their shared fear was to see the 1965 scenario unfold again before their eyes.<sup>31</sup> One of the short-term solutions they were putting forward was to call for a neutral peace-keeping force comprising troops from friendly African countries like Rwanda, Zaire, and Tanzania, and, in parallel, to set up and arm grassroots-based militias in every commune and province of the country. The mid-term solution was to weaken the Bururi establishment by, inter alia, promoting progressist Tutsi officers from other parts of the country<sup>32</sup> and recruiting as many Hutu young men as possible starting by those who were familiar with firearms. The debate became particularly heated in the aftermath of the July 3<sup>rd</sup> failed coup led by Buyoya's cabinet director along with several high-ranking officers<sup>33</sup>. For Ndadaye, the fact that a great many top officers distanced themselves from the putschists was a good sign that the vast majority of the army was willing to work hand in hand with him. "The idea of calling upon foreigners to come secure my presidency," Ndadaye is reported to have told his colleagues, "can only hurt the bridge of trust that Buyoya and I have agreed to build between our divided communities." (interviews, March 2014). Stubbornly loyal to his commitment to building "a new Burundi for all," upon taking the oath of office on July 10, 1993, Ndadaye appointed an UPRONA Tutsi Prime Minister, Sylvie Kinigi, and gave one third of the Cabinet posts along with two provincial governorships to UPRONA.

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<sup>31</sup> Reference is made here to the bloodshed of 1965 when a failed coup led by a Hutu officer, Antoine Serukwavu, resulted in the rise to power of a Tutsi wing led by Captain Michel Micombero who literally decapitated the Hutu military leadership and thus paved the way to a monolithic army composed of Hima officers from Bururi who ruled the country for the next four decades.

<sup>32</sup> According to several informants, Ndadaye translated this advice into action by appointing for instance Epitace Bayaganakandi, a Tutsi colonel from his home province of Muramvya, as Chief of the General Staff of the Gendarmerie.

<sup>33</sup> Those included Lt. Col. Sylvestre Ningaba, who had been "Chef de Cabinet" of President Buyoya, Major Bernard Busokoza (who briefly served as the 1st Vice-President of Burundi from October 13, 2013 to February 7, 2014), Major Jean Rumbete, Capt. René Bucumi, Capt. François-Xavier Nintunze and Commander Hilaire Ntakiyica.

Above all, much to his colleagues' dismay, he "left untouched the rocks of the Tutsi military hegemony embodied by Lt Colonel Jean Bikomagu [then Chief of the General Staff of the Army]," revealed one former close aide (interview, March 2014). His rule would be short; however, as he was assassinated on October 21, 1993 along with a half-dozen of his top aides by elements of the very army he had vowed to trust<sup>34</sup>. The UN Commission of Inquiry for Burundi sums up how Burundians got the word about and responded to the death of Ndadaye:

News of the coup and of the President's captivity were broadcasted by Radio Rwanda early in the morning of Thursday, 21 October [1993]. On the same day, through most of the country, trees were felled and bridges cut to bar the roads. In many places young and adult Tutsi males were gathered as hostages, as well as some UPRONA Hutus. In the evening, the killing of hostages began. Radio Rwanda announced the death of President Ndadaye. Jean Minani, Burundian Minister of Health, who was at that time in Kigali, addressed the Burundian people through the same station, exhorting them to resist the coup. On Friday and Saturday, [...], the killing of hostages went on and spread to the killing of entire Tutsi families, while the Army repressed the Hutus as it progressively unblocked the roads." (UNSC 1996, par. 97-98).

Meanwhile, whereas the surviving FRODEBU leaders went into hiding, the military formed a transitional body known as "Comité de gestion de la crise."<sup>35</sup> Among its first decisions, this self-proclaimed government "ordered military commanders in the provinces to replace and detain the Governors, placed the Gendarmerie again under Army command, and summoned political leaders and foreign diplomats to 'discuss ways to manage the crisis'" (UNSC1996, par. 96).

<sup>34</sup> Two important changes that Ndadaye introduced in the military are believed to have precipitated his assassination. One is that the "Gendarmerie" which was until then "under the same command as the Army and has the same ethnic composition, was put under separate command." The other one is that "changes were made in the requirements for admission to certain military and police training institutions, creating the fear in the Army that modifications would be made in the process of annual recruitment of soldiers, which was to take place in November, that might weaken or end Tutsi dominance." (USC, 1966).

<sup>35</sup> The Committee was headed by a Hutu parliament member from UPRONA, François Ngeze, who later claimed to have been abducted by the putschists and forced to present himself as President of a body of which he had no prior knowledge. Strongmen on the Committee included four Lt. Colonels, Jean Bikomagu, Pascal Simbanduku, Jean-Bosco Daradangwe, and Sylvestre Ningaba. The latter was until then in jail for his role in the July 3 failed coup.

Confronted with widespread Hutu uprising in the countryside on one hand, and international condemnations on the other, the Committee dissolved itself on October 23 and the army pledged loyalty to the surviving government that had been in hiding. “Following Bikomagu’s call for dialogue between the decapitated government and the army,” recalls one former FRODEBU cadre who was hiding at the French embassy, “we made it clear to our colleagues that, if there were any lesson to be learned from Ndadaye’s assassination, it was to reject Bikomagu’s Trojan horse.” (interview, May 2012). “Alas,” adds a CNDD-FDD officer who was then leading a ‘resistance campaign’ in the countryside, “as we were putting our lives on the line to preserve the legacy of Ndadaye, we learned that most of the people he had chosen to serve as ministers and party cadres were now betraying him by bowing to Bikomagu’s diktat.” (Interview, July 2010). Another cadre states, “When we met at the Hotel du Lac in the week following the putsch, we are informed that several thousands of brave patriots throughout the country had already answered the call to defend democracy.” (interview, May 2012). “The only thing they expect from you,” adds the same cadre recalling his takeaway from the meeting, “is that you leave Bujumbura and join them on the hills to help them uproot once for all the Tutsi domination.” Eventually, the proponents of compromise prevailed and a new president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was appointed in February 1994. Ntaryamira’s death in the doomed plane crash that killed president Habyarimana on April 6, 1994 paved the way for a new political stalemate marred with extreme violence especially in the capital city Bujumbura. Thanks to a UN-sponsored intense diplomatic action through tripartite negotiations between FRODEBU, UPRONA, and the army, a new pact entitled the "Convention de Gouvernement" was adopted on September 10, 1994 (Ould-Abdallah 1995; Ntibantunganya 2001).

A new FRODEBU leader, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, who had just served as minister of foreign affairs in Ndadaye's short-lived government, eventually used his diplomatic skills and assets to assume the presidency of a divided government.

For many, this negotiated settlement seemed for a while the right way to restore order in the country. However, a combination of factors made the prospects for a military solution more appealing to many Hutu. First, in the countryside (especially in the Hutu stronghold provinces like Muramvya, Kayanza, Karuzi, Ngozi and Cibitoke) where the army massacred thousands of Hutu to avenge the Tutsi slaughtered in the wake of Ndadaye's assassination, the surviving Tutsi abandoned their homes to live in displaced camps near military positions whereas the Hutu populations became more sympathetic to local vigilantes committed to the cause of 'resisting the coup' or 'defending democracy.' Second, the April-July 1994 genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda contributed to radicalize the hardliner Tutsi in Burundi who formed extremist youth militias with the tolerance when not the active participation of the army (UN Commission of Inquiry 2006).

In response to the Tutsi militias' acts of terror that drove almost all the Hutu population from the capital Bujumbura, two historical Hutu strongholds in the city, Kamenge and Kanyosha, became, in the words of one Hutu combatant, "the hubs of heroic acts of anti-military and anti-government popular resistance." (interview, Bujumbura, July 2010).

Above all, however, it was the precipitation of events in the neighboring Rwanda that opened a new chapter in the history of modern Burundi. All started when the RPF captured Kigali in July 1994 and forced into exile the Hutu government along with its army and militias. By mid-July 1994, a delegation from Burundi had already met secretly with the defeated Rwandan military leadership to agree upon a plan of invading Burundi whereas a small number

of Rwandan commandos were already in Burundi to train hundreds of Burundian young men (interview, May 2010). It was in this context that, a prominent proponent of the military solution, Leonard Nyangoma, left the FRODEBU government and launched a coalition known as the CNDD in Bukavu on September 14, 1994. From then on, the CNDD moved from its weak status as a marginal faction of hardliners at odds with the mainstream Hutu party, the FRODEBU, to become a viable alternative to both the FRODEBU and the Palipehutu.

Moreover, after the CNDD established itself as the only viable militia whose motto, *guhabuza demokarasi* [defense of democracy], resonated the most in the hearts and the minds of the vast majority of the Hutu populations in most parts of Burundi, it became a real threat to the military establishment which was then under the nominal control of the FRODEBU-led government. To meet the threat head on, the Tutsi-dominated army eventually encouraged former President Pierre Buyoya “to seize power and put the house in order” (Interview with a former Burundian high-ranking officer in 2010; see also Buyoya 1998).

Despite its increasing popularity in the countryside however, the CNDD suffered serious lack of cohesion. For instance, in 1996, several educated members of the rebellion were summarily executed and later, in the wake of the fall of Mobutu’s regime in 1997, efforts to form a unified front boosted by Rwandan ex-FARs and former Zairian troops along with other Hutu militias (notably Frolina and FNL-Palipehutu) yielded no tangible result. Eventually, these failed efforts resulted in the fall of Nyangoma along with several civilian cadres in favor of a military wing led by Jean Bosco Ndayikengurukiye. The group split again in 2001 and the military wing, the CNDD-FDD, emerged as the most powerful force.

Meanwhile, as the other major parties had already signed and started implementing the 2000 Arusha Peace Agreement, the CNDD-FDD renegotiated its way into the transitional government in 2003 and, thanks to the strong grassroots it had built throughout the armed struggle, went on to win a landslide electoral victory in 2005. From then on, it has dominated the political arena through a combination of strategies including a bi-ethnic (Hutu-Tutsi) military and power-sharing regime and provisional immunities. By this time however, this ruling force again experienced several waves of internal rivalries that fueled in-party fractures and thus weakened the party's leadership and, by extension, the party-driven domestic politics and foreign policy.

The most significant one occurred in February 2007 when, the hitherto all-powerful party chairperson, Hussein Radjabu, was deposed at a party congress and later arrested and sentenced to 13 years in prison. While the official charges against Radjabu included plotting an armed rebellion and insulting the president, several close aides to President Nkurunziza confided, "our only concern with Hussein [Radjabu] was that he considered himself the Kagame of Burundi." (Interview, Bujumbura 2010). With this background, the next section examines these divergent trajectories through the lens of four strategic areas of intervention.

## SECTION II

### **The Search for Patterns of Variation: Evidence from Four Areas of Strategic Intervention**

Are the divergent trajectories of the RPF and the CNDD-FDD a pure matter of ad-hoc contingent and idiosyncratic factors, or do they instead follow a coherent common-ground logic from which stem the rebellion's responses to various challenges in different settings at different levels? To empirically address this question, the search for possible patterns of variation is examined through the lens of four areas of strategic interventions: value-setting, peace negotiations, military integration, and transitional justice. The choice of these four areas of strategic intervention has several theoretical foundations, practical justifications, and policy implications revolving around an emerging paradigm in International Relations that can be referred to as the donor-driven state-building enterprise (Oecd 2008). In donor-dependent, conflict-affected societies like Rwanda and Burundi, this enterprise appears as a particular instance of the entanglements of domestic politics and international relations in many respects. First, while rebel groups are generally considered as negative forces in regard to international law and basic norms of international relations, experience shows that rebel groups vary significantly in their strategies to mobilize legitimacy and support from both domestic spheres and international arena. It is then essential to understand why some VNSAs are seen as more or less *fréquentable*<sup>36</sup> than others. This situation holds particularly true for the VSNAs under consideration here; the RPF was largely recognized locally and internationally as a 'legitimate' force while the CNDD-FDD was labeled a 'negative' force and generally faced contempt in international arena until it joined

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<sup>36</sup> *Fréquentable* is a French term referring to people you can team up with without any fear of ruining your own reputation and respectability.

the table of negations. Second, while it is generally in the interest of each country to decide when and how a conflict is worth being settled peacefully, recent experience shows growing external pressures to force peace negotiations on donor-dependent countries. Rwanda and Burundi are no exception. Third, once the conflict is settled (peacefully or not), donors are eager to impose on the post-conflict government a set of steps deemed necessary to reach lasting peace. A core component of this agenda, in which the donor community strives to bring about dramatic changes, includes security reforms with emphasis on military integration, that is, the formation of a national army comprising elements from the former warring parties. Another is transitional justice, which refers to a set of alternate mechanisms of justice by which post-conflict states try to reckon with the heinous crimes committed before and during the conflict.

According to dominant contingent and idiosyncratic arguments, the RPF and the CNDD-FDD, along with their respective led-governments, are supposed to have responded to the donor-driven agendas on a case-by-case basis, that is, depending on a number of varied factors including human, financial, and logistic resources as well as domestic leadership, and external influences. However, as detailed below, ample evidence suggests that, irrespective of the nature of the contingent factors and challenges at stake (notably peace negotiations, military integration, transitional justice) throughout their respective roads to power and exercise thereof, the two rebellions largely opted for radically divergent, but self-reinforcing strategies that resonated with the paramount values laid down in their names. The RPF emerged as a military unified front and grew coherent and increasingly centralized, championing the winner-takes-all mindset strategy. The CNDD-FDD emerged from within a loose coalition of warlords who had little in common and opted for compromise in dealing with both internal splits and external rivalries.

### **Value-setting: The case of names and other symbolic identifiers**

Each organization has a set of paramount values that serve as its *raison d'être*, or, to use Moore's words, "a claim about the way in which the world will be better through the operation of the organization" (Moore 2000, 89). The process of framing such claims is called value-setting. It consists of several components, key among them being the adoption of the names and other symbolic identifiers of the organization. In the context of the RPF and the CNDD-FDD, ample evidence suggests a strong correlation between the core 'values' enshrined in these rebel groups' names and symbols and the patterns of authority that they adopted throughout their respective roads to and exercise of power. The lessons learned from a careful and comparative analysis of the setting-value for both rebels groups can be briefly summarized in a simple empirical question: What is in the names?

In the summer of 2009, I serendipitously met a proud member of the RPF at one social event in Montreal, Canada. Explaining to me why, in his opinion, the RPF is justified to prefer 'sticks' over 'carrots' when it comes to internal politics and international relations, he blatantly asserted, "*izina ni ryo muntu. Na twe Inkotanyi ni uko.*" Literally, "the name exerts a great influence over its bearer. Our [RPF] Inkotanyi is no exception." In July 2010, during my fieldwork in Burundi, one of the CNDD officers who topped Leonard Nyangoma told me, "Nyangoma had become too much for us. He thought he was synonymous with the party. [...]. He was traveling abroad a lot, making contacts and taking unilateral decisions without keeping us informed. [...]. He forgot that we were a Council." Put together, the two accounts suggest that the rebels in each case were taking seriously the literal meaning of their names.

The endgame for both rebellions seems to confirm the proverbial maxim—that names exert a great influence on their bearers— as well. In fact, the RPF-Inkotanyi appeared as a strong "front"

led by indomitable warriors [Inkotanyi] whose extraordinary military exploits proved decisive throughout its road to power from Kampala to Kigali and then from Kigali to Kinshasa<sup>37</sup>. Similarly, the CNDD along with its numerous factions including the CNDD-FDD appeared to be a true “council” - a forum for consultation, committed to finding a common ground through negotiated arrangements among its members and internal factions as well as in its dealing with the tiers including its rivals and fierce enemies.

How should one make sense then of this empirical correlation between literal names and outcomes in a context where ruptures, volatility, and unpredictability were generally assumed to be the law of the land? As counterintuitive as it may sound, strong evidence shows that the correlation of this kind is both logical and necessary. It is logical because adopting names is one of the most important steps in the process of value-setting. It is necessary because, as the living embodiment of the overall “claim about the way in which the world will be better through the operation of the organization,” (Moore 2000, 89), names provide the organizations both the ideal goal they have to attain and the roadmap by which to reach the goal. A great many story behind each name concurring in validating this claim. For instance, while explaining how and why the members of RANU resolved to adopt a new name, an insider source confided:

After we had agreed upon the Eight Point Program<sup>38</sup>, we realized that the notion of “Alliance” was too soft and too passive to express our commitment to succeed where our predecessors had failed.[...].To do so, we unanimously resolved that the army should be

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<sup>37</sup> Those who found RPF in 1987 had played a decisive role in allowing President Museveni to seize power in Uganda in 1986. After seizing power in Rwanda in 1994, the RP invaded Zaire (now DRC) and, with support from Zaire’s neighboring countries and local militias, ousted dictator Mobutu in 1997 and controlled the military and economic landscape for a while.

<sup>38</sup> The original document adopted by the December 1987 Congress of RANU comprised the following points, 1) Restoration of unity among Rwandans; 2) Defending the sovereignty of the country and ensure the security of people and property; 3) Establishment of democratic leadership; 4) Promoting the economy based on the country’s natural resources; 5) Elimination of corruption, favoritism and embezzlement of national resources; 6) Promoting social welfare; 7) Eliminating all causes for fleeing the country and returning Rwandan refugees back into the country; 8) Promoting international relations based on mutual respect, cooperation and mutually beneficial economic exchange.

the cornerstone of our new endeavor. (Skype interview, September 2009).

According to other insider sources, the label “front” was forged to render in foreign languages (French and English) the idea of “Inkotanyi” [indomitable combatant], the initial proposal having been to rebaptize the group “RANU Inkotanyi.” “Inkotanyi” refers to the last powerful king of pre-colonial Rwanda, Kigeli Rwabugiri whose *nom de guerre* was “Inkotanyi-cyane,” literally, “the most appreciated of all indomitable combatants.” The label was thus adopted to serve as the ideal to which the RPF committed itself, or in one informant’s words, “to reclaim and revive the Rwanda of [king] Rwabugiri.” In short, the name “Rwandan Patriotic Front” was a commitment to reclaim and revive King Rwabugiri’s leadership ideals and military exploits. At the heart of this commitment was nostalgia of an idealized past: “When the Europeans arrived in Africa,” claims the RPF on its official website, “Rwanda had already existed for hundreds of years, with its own borders and recognized leadership that united its inhabitants. It was respected by the neighboring countries.” (RPF, online).

Regarding “CNDD-FDD,” this name has four main stories behind it. First, it was adopted during the Bukavu Congress in September 1994 as a means of accommodating different agendas and strategies of various Hutu militias for whom the only common denominator was “the will to resist the Tutsi military domination” (Interview, 2011). Second, the epithet “national” was meant to underscore the necessity of building a network that covers the whole territory, the initial situation being that the ‘Hutu struggle’ was only effective in some parts of the country. Third, the phrase ‘Defense of Democracy’ was a reference to the democratic process that had brought the first Hutu elect-president to power in June 1993. As a paramount goal, “defense of democracy”

implied then a commitment to revive an idealized recent past--the Burundi of Ndadaye<sup>39</sup>. Fourth, when the military wing of the CNDD resolved to break up with the civilian leadership in 2001, the initial proposal was to choose a new name; “Forces de Défense de la Démocratie” meant to assert the military identify of the group while renewing its commitment to the paramount goal, “defense of democracy.” However, as some members were worried to suffer from identity crisis, the compromise was to capitalize on the original name “CNDD” as well.

To sum up, the process of naming an organized group, at least in the case of both the RPF and the CNDD-FDD, is the first step toward the setting of a specific organizational culture without which an organized group can hardly survive. By organizational culture, I refer to what Hill and Jones call "the specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organization and that control the way they interact with each other and with stakeholders outside the organization" (Hill and Jones 2001, 429).

For the RPF, commitment to building a unified front devoted to reviving the idealized Rwanda of King Rwabugiri translated in the organizational culture of zero-sum control. For the CNDD-FDD, commitment to getting competing Hutu armed groups work together to restore the short-lived ‘democratic rule’ established by Ndadaye translated in the overall organizational culture of compromise. The remainder of the chapter examines the extent to which these respective overall organizational cultures translated into other areas of strategic interventions, starting with peace negotiations.

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<sup>39</sup> Worth noting here is that this is the same meaning of democracy as in Rwanda under Kayibanda and Habyarimana, namely, the rule of the Hutu majority over the Tutsi minority.



**Illustration #5: Arusha International Conference Centre.**

Most of the rounds of negotiations during both the Rwandan and Burundi Peace Processes were held in this gigantic building which now hosts the headquarters of the ICTR.

## **Peace Negotiations: Two roads to (and from) Arusha**

One common characteristic of rebel-driven conflicts is the propensity to “move back as well as forward along the conflict transformation cycle, [and] ‘jump’ stages or exhibit properties of several escalation or de-escalation stages simultaneously” (Dudouet 2009). This is particularly true for the negotiation processes—commonly known as “the Arusha Peace processes”—from which the RPF and the CNDD-FDD emerged as the key players in their respective societies. Though they share a name, the two “Arusha Peace Processes” differed radically. For instance, while the RPF entered the negotiation process as early as the seventeenth day after the outbreak of war and reached an agreement in less than three years (October 1990-August 1993), it took the CNDD-FDD almost nine years to commit itself to a peace agreement concluded by the vast majority of other Burundian political forces including its forbearer, the CNDD. Moreover, while reaching a peace agreement for the CNDD-FDD meant careful implementation, the RPF experienced a post-agreement renewed violence. As a result, the two rebellions, along with their respective post-conflict states, embarked on radically divergent trajectories. In one case, increasing polarization made it impossible to implement the peace agreement and, ultimately, following the assassination of the then-president on April 6, 1994, culminated in the worst state-led genocide since the Holocaust. Meanwhile, the RPF resumed war and seized power in July 1994. In the other case, the road from Arusha paved the way for *détente*, within which the CNDD-FDD joined the government in 2003, won the electoral marathon in 2005 and, in the spirit and letter of the Arusha peace Agreement(s), presided over a consociational government.

At first glance, a number of factors ranging from the war endgames and external influences can be invoked to explain why the Arusha peace processes failed Rwanda but succeeded in Burundi. Yet, it is puzzling to observe how, despite the complex contexts in which they evolved, the overall organizational strategies underlying the two peace processes seem consistent with those laid down in the literal meaning of the respective names of the two rebellions—the RPF as a strong movement led by indomitable warriors [Inkotanyi] committed to confrontational solutions, and the CNDD as a Coalition of heterogeneous factions committed to negotiated arrangements. Indeed, as detailed below, strong evidence shows two consistent divergent trends - continued fighting for the RPF and the inclination to compromise for the CNDD-FDD. To make this case, variation in the trajectories of the two ‘Arusha Peace Processes’ can be examined through a systematic comparison of the following five key features : point of entry; the logic of pairwise grouping; negotiation rationales; the nature of the deal; and, exit strategy and post-agreement endgame.

### **Point of entry**

How, why, and when do warring parties join the table of negotiations? At the center of this important question is the puzzle of ‘the point of entry’ in a negotiation process, a move that can result from either ‘ripeness’ or third-party interventions. The notion of *ripeness* presupposes that the parties feel ready and in need to negotiate, *negotiation* being understood as a process of communication by which two or more parties seek to advance their individual interests through joint action (Salacuse 2003). According to the classic theory of “*Getting to Yes*” (Fisher, Ury and Patton 1991), ripeness implies, among other prerequisites, a shared perception of the desirability

of an accord, sufficient compromise on both sides, and a mutually acceptable approach. However, experience shows that absence of some preconditions is not grounds for inaction. After all, since only parts of the conflict may be ripe for negotiation while parties may be ripe for halfway measures, ripeness is best conceived of as a dynamic phenomenon that can emerge, develop, or disappear at any time. In this regard, contra Fisher's good-will-centered ripeness, some analysts highlight a radical form of ripeness resulting from the virtue of war. The rationale is that "giving war a chance" (Luttwak 1999) allows the warring parties to "burn themselves out and establish preconditions for a lasting settlement" (Luttwak 1999, 35) through either total victory by one side or a "mutually hurting stalemate" (Zartman 2000) that obliges both parties to reach a compromise.

Regarding third-party intervention, the rationale holds that actors not involved directly in a conflict can serve as 'ripening agents' through various roles including coaching and advising the parties, directing the discussion to interests and options, and suggesting some impartial basis for resolving differences. To bring the warring parties to the negotiating table, third-parties can use 'sticks' (pressures), 'carrots' (incentives) or, more generally, a combination of both. While conventional wisdom suggests that third-party interventions are needed to help the warring parties work toward a negotiated settlement, some analysts caution that third-party "premature diplomatic activism" may have a high cost, the worst scenario occurring when the weaker party uses the ceasefire to strengthen its forces and thus perpetuate the state of war (Luttwak 1999, 35). Overall, while these theoretical insights speak to most of the Burundians' points of entry in negotiations, they fail to capture the Rwandan scenario. In fact, the Burundi scenario features a combination of external influences (both incentives and pressures) and inter-party ripeness resulting from the hurting stalemate for all the major parties.

Thus, numerous formal and informal talks meant to deal with the political crisis in Burundi took place at various levels and in different settings since the death of Ndadaye. Three major phases in the negotiation processes are worth highlighting here. The first phase took place between November 1993 and September 1994, involving two major parties, the UPRONA and the Tutsi-dominated army on one hand, and the FRODEBU-dominated government and parliament on the other. This process culminated into a power-sharing agreement (the “Agreement of Kigobe”) on the basis of which a bi-partisan transitional government led by a President from FRODEBU (Sylvestre Ntibantunganya) and a Prime Minister from UPRONA (Anatole Kanyenkiko) were sworn in on September 10, 1994. The formation of this bipartisanship coincided with the first major split within the Hutu side, as one group of FRODEBU cadres and activists led by Leonard Nyangoma resolved “not to bow to the military diktat” and thus established an armed group of their own - the CNDD.

The second phase was about the official talks between “all the parties of the Burundi Conflict” under Tanzanian good offices which started in Mwanza, Tanzania, in April 1996. Two months later, however, to quote a former Burundian top military officer, “judging unacceptable the complicity of Tanzania in strengthening solidarity between a Hutu-led government and several Hutu rebels at the expense of the Tutsi community,” the military establishment staged a coup that brought back President Pierre Buyoya to power. Finally, a combination of deteriorating security conditions in the country and regional and international pressures obliged both the new government and its challengers to resume the process of peace talks in 1998. This move paved the way for the *Declaration by the Participants in the Burundi Peace Negotiations involving all the Parties of the Burundi Conflict* signed in Arusha on June 21, 1998. Contrariwise, the fact that the Government of Rwanda and the RPF started to talk to each other from the outbreak of war challenges conventional wisdom about ripeness.

The first high-level meeting between the Government of Rwanda and the RPF was held at Mwanza, Tanzania, on October 17, 1990, shortly followed by two successive meetings held in Zaire, in Gbadolite on October 26, 1990 and in Goma on November 20, 1990. However, according to reliable sources close to both Habyirimana's intelligence services and the RPF, the very first step was taken by president Habyarimana himself upon getting word about the RPF invasion. "Upon his return from New York through Brussels," one source confided, "we urged Jenerari [Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana] to publicly denounce the Ugandan invasion and to take all the necessary measures to bring back the war where it had come from" (Interview in Paris, December 2010). "Surprisingly," adds the same source, "Jenerari dismissed that idea, arguing that Museveni had volunteered to host a *face-to-face meeting* between Rwanda and the invaders."

In short, while ripeness to negotiate resulted from a combination of various factors including the climate of deteriorating social and political conditions in the country as well as regional and external pressures, the idea of 'getting to the table of negotiations' seems to have been from the start an integral part of the war strategy for both of the belligerent Rwandan parties.

### **The Logic of Pairwise Grouping: Two-party vs. multi-party schemes**

Both the Rwandan and Burundian peace talks were done under the auspices of Tanzania. Both processes had also in common to involve at various stages parallel, sometimes competing, schemes of mediation and facilitation as well as various forms of assistance from international institutions (UN, African Union, Western donors) and individuals (Mobutu and Museveni for Rwanda, Nyerere and Mandela for Burundi). However, one fascinating and puzzling difference between the two Arusha Peace processes lies in their way of defining the negotiating parties. In the case of Rwanda, negotiations were framed in a two-party logic with the Government on one side and the

RPF on the other side. By contrast, negotiations in the case of Burundi were framed using a multi-party logic. These divergent dynamics manifest themselves in the final products, namely, the “Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front” and the “Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi.” As laid down in the respective preambles of the two agreements, the official parties to conflicts were as follows (Figure #2).

**Figure #2: Official Parties to peace negotiations in Rwanda and Burundi**

| Rwanda   | Burundi  |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Government of the Republic of Rwanda</li> <li>2. The Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Government of the Republic of Burundi</li> <li>2. The National Assembly</li> <li>3. The Alliance Burundo-Africaine pour le Salut (ABASA)</li> <li>4. The Alliance Nationale pour le Droit et le Développement (ANADDE)</li> <li>5. The Alliance des Vaillants (AV-INTWARI)</li> <li>6. The Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD)</li> <li>7. The Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi (FRODEBU)</li> <li>8. The Front pour la Libération Nationale (FROLINA)</li> <li>9. The Parti Socialiste et Panafricaniste (INKINZO)</li> <li>10. The Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu (PALIPEHUTU)</li> <li>11. The Parti pour le Redressement National (PARENA)</li> <li>12. The Parti Indépendant des Travailleurs (PIT)</li> <li>13. The Parti Libéral (PL)</li> <li>14. The Parti du Peuple (PP)</li> <li>15. The Parti pour la Réconciliation du Peuple (PRP)</li> <li>16. The Parti Social-démocrate (PSD)</li> <li>17. The Ralliement pour la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social (RADDES)</li> <li>18. The Rassemblement du Peuple Burundais (RPB)</li> <li>19. The Union pour le Progrès National (UPRONA).</li> </ol> |

As the figure above makes it clear, negotiations were held between two unitary and separate entities in Rwanda - the Government and the rebellion. By contrast, there were nineteen parties in Burundi that can be grouped into four main categories:

- 2 branches of the Government (the Executive Branch here referred to as “The Government of the Republic of Burundi” and the Legislative branch here referred to

as “The National Assembly;”

- 2 co-ruling parties, FRODEBU (which dominates the National Assembly) and UPRONA (which controls the Government);
- 12 Small political parties (ABASA; ANADDE; AV-Intwari; Inkinzo; PARENA; PIT; PL; PP; PRP; PSD; RADDES; and RPB);
- 3 armed groups (CNDD; FROLINA and FNL-Palipehutu).

This empirical variation begs better understanding of why, two peace processes held under the auspices of the same host mediator, Tanzania, and dealing with the identical challenge of power-sharing between the Hutu and Tutsi elites, adopted two radically approaches. At first glance and with regard to the rebellions under consideration, one can invoke the nature of each group as the obvious explanation. Thus, throughout the negotiation process, the RPF has remained a unified movement whereas the CNDD has split into three main rival wings, the last-born being the CNDD-FDD which served its ties with its forbearer, the CNDD, in 2001 and went on to negotiate its inclusion in the 2000 Arusha Peace Accord. What such an explanation fails to tell us however is why the government side managed to speak with one voice in the case of Rwanda but failed to do so in the case of Burundi. This variation is particularly puzzling because both countries were then under a bipolar government dominated by two rival forces--Buyoya’s UPRONA and the FRODEBU in Burundi, and Habyarimana’s MRND and the FDC [Forces Démocratiques pour le Changement] coalition comprising four opposition parties (MDR, PSD, PL and PDC) in Rwanda. To understand the logic underlying each of the two scenarios (two-party and multi-party bargaining), something needs to be said about the overall negotiation rationales in each case.

## Negotiation Rationales

Scholars and practitioners of negotiation put forth a variety of schemes, each with corresponding strategies and outcomes. Seen as a spectrum, the game of negotiation looks as compromise on one extreme and domination on the other. Negotiation as compromise implies that the negotiating parties start by struggling over how to divide a ‘fixed pie’ but end up arriving at an agreement through a series of concessions. On the contrary, domination implies a scenario where one party composes a deal and tries to impose it on the other party through various power plays and dirty tricks (Fisher, Ury and Patton 1991; Salacuse 2003). For the purpose of this dissertation, variation in the negotiation rationales that dominated the Rwandan and Burundian processes can be accounted for through the lens of two major paradigms that have dominated the development of negotiation theory since the 1960s, Bargaining and problem-solving (Hofman 1995). Seen from this perspective, strong evidence shows that the Rwandan parties followed the bargaining paradigm, which implies the pursuit of maximum gains by a party at the expense of others in a largely zero-sum competition. By contrast, the Burundian parties followed the paradigm of problem-solving in the tradition of Nigel Rapport. The latter implies a shared search for better, mutually-beneficial solutions to problems that satisfy the needs, identities, and interests of all parties through the use of greater flexibility in terms of concession rates, initiation of new proposals, and other soft behaviors. The Burundians’ shared problem-solving approach is particularly manifest in the preamble of the Protocol on the “Nature of the Burundi Conflict, Problems of genocide and exclusion and their Solutions” which states, *inter alia*, “We, the Parties, [...], having engaged in a lengthy, exhaustive, introspective and frank debate on the perceptions, root causes, practice and ideology of genocide, war crimes and other crimes against

humanity, [...], resolved to eradicate genocide and to reject all forms of division, discrimination and exclusion.” In the same spirit, the parties agreed upon one of the dispassionate, yet most comprehensive definitions of the Burundian problem, as laid down in Article 4: “(a) The conflict is fundamentally political, with extremely important ethnic dimensions; (b) It stems from a struggle by the political class to accede to and/or remain in power.” By contrast, the Rwandan parties did not bother to expose their ‘dirty’ issues in public because, as one former Rwandan official put it, “what they [the mediation team and other observers] didn’t get right is the fact that we were Rwandans--and Rwandans always wash their dirty sheets at home, never in public” (Interview, Ottawa, Canada, February 2010). In response to the question as to why the problem of ethnicity and other hot issues (including past cycles of political violence and injustices) had little if any room in the talks, an RPF official volunteered a more telling answer:

Our enemy [Habyarimana’s regime] was accusing us of defending the interests of the Tutsi at the expense of the Hutu’s. Thank God having prominent Hutu like Kanyarengwe, Bizimungu and Lizinde on our side helped us to get Habyarimana caught in his own ethnic trap. (Skype interview, May 2010).

The pursuit of maximum gains in a largely zero-sum competition through the dirty trick of, among others, masking the ethnic divide reached its ironic peak at Arusha in June 1993 when a prominent Tutsi, Landouald Ndasingwa, on behalf of the Hutu-dominated Government, and a notorious Hutu, Pasteur Bizimungu, on behalf of the Tutsi-controlled RPF, signed the Protocol of Agreement on the Repatriation of Refugees and the Resettlement of Displaced Persons. Reflecting on this irony, one European diplomat confided, “given the ethnic nature of the refugee question, we were fooled to think that the agreement [...] augured a new era for reconciliation until we were proved wrong by the genocide” (Interview with a European diplomat, Dar es Salaam, May 2012).

To be sure, the parties in both cases were eager to find the appropriate balance between the degree of flexibility necessary to reach agreement and the degree of firmness required to avoid being exploited by the other party. However, strong evidence shows that while Rwandan parties showed a willingness to make concessions and to reach deals remarkably fast, they did so in a way that allowed them to avoid commitments. By contrast, evidence shows that Burundian parties remained firm on fundamental interests and basic goals, while exhibiting flexibility regarding the means of negotiating a solution to the problem. It is thus apparent that the Rwandan parties' rigidity is congruent with paramount behaviors associated with the RPF such as cohesion, confrontation, and domination, whereas the Burundian parties' flexibility is congruent with paramount behaviors associated with the CNDD-FDD such as fragmentation, cooperation, and compromise. A close examination of the strategies used by the negotiating parties in each case to communicate and reach a deal underscore this view.

To begin with, variation between the two Arusha peace processes can be best described as paradigmatic examples of the theories of "learning conversation" on one hand and "dirty tricks" on the other. As theorized by Stone et al. (1999), "learning conversation" is the ultimate phase of a long process which departs from "difficult conversations" amidst conflicting perceptions, interpretations, and values before the parties find a way to share their feelings of fear, threat, and hope. According to this theory, moving from "difficult conversations" toward a "learning conversation" implies three defining intermediary steps, namely, the "what happened" conversation, the "feelings conversation," and the "identity conversation." (Stone et al. 1999, 3). A telling example of how Burundian parties moved along the three steps is illustrated by what one scholar who followed closely the process described as the puzzle of "perceptions on what

had gone wrong or what had led the Burundians down” (Mpangala 2004, 145). Specifically,

Underlying those perceptions was the basic issue that has been at the heart of the tricky problematic of ‘people’ versus ‘institutions’ or ‘things’. [...]. During the discussions and debates, one of the main bones of contention was that of whether the Burundians or the institutional arrangements put in place had let down democracy and good governance in Burundi. A specific reference was that of the political arena for the 1993 Presidential and National Assembly elections. For some, it was an unsuitable arena because it did not provide a level playing field. The uneven state of playing field was alleged to have led to an unfair game of competitive multiparty elections. This view, needless to say, was strongly opposed by the other participants. (Mpangala 2004, 146).

As Mpangala rightly points out, “[t]he basis of the polarization becomes evident when one looks at both nature of the arguments as well as the identity and history of the proponents” (Mpangala 2004, 146). Thus, while the Hutu-dominated parties, which later came to be known as the G7 group, were emphasizing ‘democracy’ as the paramount solution to state crisis, the Tutsi-dominated parties, which were later to form the G10 group, were perceiving ‘democracy’ as a means of institutionalizing “ the tyranny of the ethnic Hutu majority.” To overcome this challenge, the parties were given ample space in both formal and informal sessions not only to share their experiences about what happened to them, but more importantly, to share their feelings. Mpangala (2004, 149) sums up the strategy:

Before going into the detailed negotiations, there was a five-day General Debate on Democracy and good governance in a plenary session from 13 to 17 October 1998. The debate took the form of presentations during which a Representative from all the seventeen parties spoke. Former Presidents Col. Jean Baptiste Bagaza and Sylvestre Ntibantunganya also made their presentations.

In strategic terms, the meeting was organized in such a way that

During the debate, each participant presented what was perceived to be the meaning and content of democracy and good governance both as concepts as well as how they had been understood,

interpreted and implemented in Burundi. Their presentations were generally divided into three main parts. The first was on the meaning and interpretation of the concepts. This was followed by an analysis of factors which were considered to have undermined democracy and good governance in Burundi. The third part was on the proposals on how to make democracy and good governance fully operational and effectively functioning in Burundi. (Mpangala 2004, 148).

Similarly, long after the parties have reached a consensus on the issues of ‘democracy and good governance,’ the Tutsi parties called into question the very notion of a “Burundian people.”

In line with the 1992 Burundian Constitution, one provision of the Agreement draft held that the “Government of Burundi shall be based on the will of the Burundian people, shall be accountable to them and shall respect their fundamental rights and freedom” (quoted in Mpangala 2004, 176). However, after hot debates following the Tutsi parties’ contention that the article does not adequately emphasize the principle of diversity, this principle was reframed as follows, “Burundi shall be a sovereign independent nation, united but respecting the ethnic and religious diversity and recognizing the Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa who make up one nation of Burundi.” (Quoted in Mpangala 2004, 176).

In short, the Burundian experience fits well the process of “moving toward a learning conversation,” according to which parties start by striving to send persuasive messages before reaching, step by step, the point where each side understands what has happened from the other party’s point of view, explains their point of view, shares and understands feelings, and figures out a way to manage the problem moving forward (Stone et al. 1999). Rwandan parties offer a quite opposite scenario. “The shocking thing about Rwandans,” a Tanzanian diplomat revealed, “is hypocrisy” (Interview in Dar es Salaam, 2011). The diplomat went on to explain how, as he was working on pre-negotiation arrangements for the first meeting that was to be held at Mwanza in October 1990, he was shocked to realize that “the Tutsi-dominated RPF’s delegation

was led by a Hutu” while “the Hutu Government’s delegation included an impressive number of Tutsi” ( Interview in Dar es Salaam, March 2011). A former Rwandan official with knowledge of the Arusha process told me about an incident where one European diplomat embarrassed the RPF chief negotiator, Pasteur Bizimungu, saying, “I thought you are the head of Habyarimana’s delegation!”

As briefly discussed below, the questionable strategy of representation used by both the RPF and the Government of Rwanda is testament to the two parties’ mastering of the negotiation techniques commonly labeled “dirty tricks” (Fisher, Ury and Patton 1991), chief among them being “deliberate deception” (Fisher, Ury and Patton 1991). For instance, unlike Burundians who acknowledged the ‘ethnic’ dimension of their conflict and found a way to get rid of it, Rwandan parties were so eager to present a facade of ethnic harmony and to mask their true intentions and agendas that the mediation found its ‘good offices’ role almost irrelevant. A Tanzanian diplomat, who attended the first summit held at Mwanza in October 1990 confided,

Our first concern was, What if the two delegations refuse to talk to each other? Behold, Rwandans caught us off guard! The delegates started the session by embracing each other as old friends! [...]. By lunch time, almost every delegate had a ‘partner’ from the other side and, on a rather surprising one-on-one basis, all were whispering in their tribe tongue as if they had intimate secrets to share while keeping us in the dark! (interview, Dar es Salaam, May 2012).

The Tanzanian diplomat was hardly the only observer to be caught off guard by the apparent easiness with which Rwandan delegates talked to one another. Commenting on the spectacular progress made between September 1992 and January 1993 when three important protocols about the power-sharing arrangements were agreed upon, historian Prunier remarked, “Surprisingly, this had gone down quite smoothly; the RPF resigned itself to keeping a politically-diminished

Habyarimana as President” (Prunier 1995,52). For all observers, this move was meant to augur a new era of flexibility and compromise. However, on-the-ground facts for both parties proved this hope wrong. A member of the Rwandan delegation summarized well the situation:

At a time when progress in negotiations were considered by all friends of Rwanda as a giant step on the path to peace, extremists on both sides were busy preparing the worst. [...]. Upon our return [from Arusha], a wave of murderous slaughter engulfed my home region in mid-January [1993] and, as if the RPF were not happy to see order and peace restored, it resolved to break the ceasefire and plunged parts of the country into turmoil and desolation. (Interview in Brussels, December 2010).

When the RPF violated the ceasefire in February 1993, there was little hope that the Arusha talks would resume, especially judging from the extent of military mobilization on both sides. Surprisingly, after the RPF withdrew to its pre-February positions, both parties once again took a seat at the negotiating table and agreed upon extremely sensitive issues including refugee repatriation and military integration. Furthermore, they did so in such a short a timeframe that the vast majority of Rwandans seldom believed their ears when “on 14 June 1993 the Arusha delegation announced that the [Arusha Peace] agreement would be signed on the 19<sup>th</sup> in presence of the President [Habyarimana]” (Prunier 1995, 187, footnote 52). However, this announced deadline was not respected in part due to the fact that President Habyarimana was preoccupied with, at least according to his then outgoing Prime Minister, “find[ing] a trick that would enable [him]... [to] put together another pro-war cabinet and start the conflict again” (Nsengiyaremye quoted in Prunier 2007, 189). In fact, after President Habyarimana had succeeded in dividing the opposition, a new cabinet was sworn in on July 17, 1993 and two crucial protocols until then suspended—the *Protocol Agreement on the integration of Armed Forces of the two parties* and the *Protocol of Agreement on Miscellaneous Issues and Final Provisions*—were signed on

August 3, 1993. The following day, President Habyarimana and the chairman of the RPF signed a deal that was to ultimately collapse in a tragic way. While this fate caught many off guard, a careful examination of the nature of the deal suggests that the outcome was quite predictable.

### **The nature of the deal**

Many negotiation experts believe that the essence of a negotiated deal is the relationship, not the contract. For instance, Salacuse cautions that by focusing on the contractual aspects of the deal, negotiators can overlook the relationship. They do so at their own peril, however, since a long-term alliance founded on a contract alone may eventually collapse (Salacuse 2003).

To be sure, the Rwandan and Burundian Arusha peace processes were too complex to be simplified into straightforward clear-cut scenarios. Nevertheless, the divergent outcomes of the two processes are consistent with Salacuse's caution. In fact, evidence shows that the Rwandan parties opted for a "deal-contract" between two belligerents whereas the Burundian parties largely opted for a "deal-relationship" among and between various constituencies of the Burundian political landscapes. These divergent visions of "deal" are implicit in the names that the respective parties assigned to their deals, namely, the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front" on one hand, and the "Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi." In other words, one is a contractual deal between two parties and the other is a set of arrangements between several actors with the overall aim of securing peace and reconciliation for the country as a whole. These divergent "deals" differ in three main respects: justification, procedures, and implementation. In terms of justification, the Rwandan parties defined their negotiations as primarily a means to end the war between the two parties. This is clearly stated in Article 1 of the agreement: "The war between

the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front is hereby brought to an end.” By contrast, the Burundian parties conceived of their negotiations as a means to agree upon the “Nature of the conflict, problems of genocide and exclusion and their solutions.” In terms of procedures, the Rwandan parties adopted a piecemeal approach that consisted in negotiating, agreeing upon, and signing separate agreements on specific issues. In total, six separate agreements were signed between January 1991 and August 1993 that were to become an integral part of the final peace agreement. By contrast, the Burundian parties adopted a comprehensive approach which consisted of two steps, namely, the “Declaration by the Participants in the Burundi Peace Negotiations involving all the Parties of the Burundi Conflict signed at Arusha on 21 June 1998,” and the final agreement, which comprised five protocols.

**Figure # 3: Key issues underlying the protocols constitutive of the two Peace Agreements**

| Issue | Rwanda  | Burundi  |
|-------|---|--|
| I     | Ceasefire   | Nature of the conflict, problems of genocide and exclusion and their solutions |
| II    | Rule of Law   | Democracy and good governance  |
| III   | Integration of Armed Forces of both Parties                                 | Peace and security for all   |
| IV    | Repatriation of Rwandese refugees and the Resettlement of Displaced         | Reconstruction and development   |
| V     | Power-Sharing within the Framework of a Broad-Based Transitional Government | -  |
| VI    | Miscellaneous Issues and Final Provisions                                   | Guarantees on the implementation of the Agreement.                             |

As the figure above suggests, the Rwandan parties focused on concrete issues with immediate effects (ceasefire, integration of armed forces, repatriation of refugees, power-sharing, ) while the Burundian parties focused on, in the words of a former Burundian president, “laying the

ground for a common understanding of a painful past as a necessary step toward a safe future for all” (Interview, July 2012). Furthermore, both cases featured several implementation mechanisms and bodies, including international observers and peacekeepers. However, the Rwandan parties’ impatient optimism and rigid operational framework of implementation were at odds with the Burundian parties’ cautious planning and fluid calendar.

For instance, as laid down in Article 2 of the Rwandan Peace Agreement, “The Transitional Institutions [were to] be set up within thirty seven (37) days following the signing of the Peace Agreement.” Contra this normative rigidity, Article 13 of the Protocol II of the Burundian Agreement contended itself to state, “The transition period shall commence from the time that the conditions necessary for installing the transitional Government in accordance with the applicable instruments have been met.” By the same token, while the Burundian parties devoted a whole protocol to the mechanisms of implementation, the Rwandan parties contended themselves to state, “The Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front undertake to make every possible effort to ensure that the present Peace Agreement is respected and implemented.”

### **Peace agreement implementation and endgame**

Why did the Burundian parties manage to implement their Arusha peace agreement whereas their Rwandan counterparts failed to do so? With the benefit of hindsight, it is worth noting that neither scenario was a given. For instance, one can argue that the Burundi’s agreement seemed even riskier because, as Uvin and Bayer rightly observed, “most of those who had negotiated and signed in Arusha were unrepresentative nuisance parties without widespread support, often

merely promoting themselves.” (2013, 267). Surprisingly, “despite all this, the transition worked: paper became reality.” (Uvin and Bayer 2013, 267).

By contrast, the fact that two powerful parties in Rwanda, the RPF and the government, had agreed on a detailed, straightforward schedule to set up the transitional institutions was deemed sufficient guarantee of their shared good faith. Why then neither party felt bound by such an agreed-upon schedule? One can even take this reasoning further to argue that the Burundi’s agreement had less chance to hold than the Rwandan because the former is generally described as a consequence of external pressures (ICG 2000; Ntibantunganya 2001, Uvin and Bayer 2013, 263-67) whereas the Rwandan process went relatively smoothly--at least in the last 3 months leading to the signature.

To be sure, a number of contingent factors, some of which were beyond the concerned parties’ control, can be put forth to shed light on how things unfolded the way they did. All considered however, it is my contention that the endgame in each case is consistent with the dominant organizational strategy underlying the major parties, notably, compromise for Burundians and zero-sum control for Rwandans. I further argue that the search for compromise obliged the Burundian parties to adopt a flexible timetable of implementation, which proved later open enough to allow further renegotiations of some particularities without undermining the spirit and the letter of the initial agreement. Contrariwise, or so I contend, the Rwandan parties didn’t bother to agree on an unrealistic timetable of implementation because what mattered the most for each of them was to fool both the other party and the mediation while expecting to gaining the lion’s share of power by other means including guile, force or both.

### **Burundi Scenario**

Following the signature of the peace agreement on October 20, 2000, president Pierre Buyoya took the oath of office on October 31, 2001. The next day, a new constitution was promulgated and a transitional government was set up shortly after. It was agreed that Buyoya would preside over the first 18 months before handing power to his vice-president, Domitien Ndayizeye, who would lead the country until the outcomes of the post-transition democratic elections scheduled to take place by the end of 2004. However, as a Guardian sub-headline sums up the point, nothing was granted from the start: “Hutus and Tutsis to share power, but extremists threaten to fight on.” (The Guardian, October 31, 2001). The so-called “extremists” were the CNDD-FDD and the FLN-Palipehutu. However, while the two rebel groups had vowed to continue the armed struggle, they ended up endorsing the spirit and letter of the Arusha peace agreement at different stages and under quite different conditions.

The CNDD-FDD mastered the skillful game of waging war while talking peace, a move that caught the attention of --and indeed won support if not sympathy from-- the new mediator, Nelson Mandela who had replaced Julius Nyerere in 1999. Despite Buyoya regime’s vehement opposition against what one of his close aide described as “the pandora’s box that Mandela was handling to the peace spoilers” (interview, Bujumbura, March 2014), the CNDD-FDD renegotiated its share of the Arusha peace agreement under South African auspices. A first round of negotiations was concluded in October 2002 in Pretoria. The CNDD-FDD which then contended itself with one ministerial post was later to raise the bar during the next rounds of negotiations and thus reached a separate deal that positioned it as “most the powerful party in the transitional government” (Uvin and Bayer 2013, 267).

In addition to controlling important ministerial posts, the strength of the CNDD-FDD lied in the fact that it held some 40% of the total troops integrated in the new army and had used the wartime to establish grassroots armed brigades in all the corners of the country. Contrariwise, by choosing to ignore the momentum associated with the Arusha peace agreement, the FNL ended up angering both the Burundians and the international community, and when it finally resolved to lay down the guns and join the government in the wake of the 2005 elections, little was left to satisfy its appetite for power. Uvin and Bayer (2013, 267) sums up well the difference between the two historic Hutu armed groups:

The CNDD-FDD played the international mediation game best, knowing when to use violence and when to engage in talks. As a result, it gained by far the most in the transition period, and the expense of the FNL, which in the following years would find itself marginalized for having manipulated international support with far less skills.

While Uvin and Bayer (2013, 267) are right to emphasize the crucial role that the international community played in the endeavor of “hasten[ing] the transition from the old Tutsi dominance to a new system of power-sharing between Hutu and Tutsi,” the telling outcomes of the divergent strategies deployed by the CNDD-FDD and the FNL reveal something special about the weight of domestic conditions: At the very least, we can say that once all the conditions were met for the Arusha peace agreement to prevail as the only viable common ground for the political game in Burundi, only those political actors who were flexible enough to comply with its requirements could prevail. The CNDD-FDD was, the FNL was not.

To be sure, the impact of external factors beyond local actors’ control cannot be underestimated. Those include the international community’s commitment to avoid “a new Rwanda,” the regional economic sanctions that obliged the Tutsi military to join the table of negotiation, the serendipitous moves such as Mandela’s shift from Nyerere’s neglect of the

armed groups, let alone the South African “unusual step of providing personnel bodyguards from those rebel leaders who agreed to return to Burundi and engage in the political process” (Uvin and Bayer 2013, 267). However, one cannot stress enough the fact that the CNDD-FDD was precisely poised to gain the lion’s share of this otherwise “alarming slow, painful and costly” process-- to use Mandela’s words (as quoted in *The Guardian* October 31,2001)-- because the process was consistent with its overall organizational strategy: compromise as the required glue to hold together a loose coalition of fragmented forces.

More important still, the CNDD-FDD’s strategy paid off because it was shared by the vast majority of other actors in varied degrees and because the time was ripe for that strategy to prevail: “Toward the end of this period, the focus had shifted from the Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy that had dominated politics for decades, toward political competition for power between the leading Hutu parties in the run up to the elections.” (Uvin and Bayer 2013, 267). Oddly enough though, “the international community, situated as it was in the capital, was largely unaware of the local CNDD-FDD shadow administration.” (Uvin and Bayer 2013, 267). As I will show later in the dissertation, the core features underlying this kind of “shadow administration” skillfully mastered by the CNDD-FDD are deeply rooted in the Burundian society and their presence or absence is what can make all the difference under certain conditions in shaping the political outcomes. The scenario of Rwanda underscores this point from a quite different perspective that reveals another set of shadow features, which are equally deeply rooted in the Rwandan society, yet, subtle enough to escape from the international community’s awareness.

## **Rwanda Scenario**

The two parties had agreed upon a transitional period of twenty-two months. The central transitional institutions, notably, the Presidency, the National Assembly, the government and the Army High Command Council, were to be installed within thirty-seven days of the signing the peace accords; that is, no later than 11 September 1993. The transition was meant to culminate into national elections with universal suffrage, which were to be held no later than the end of 1995. To understand how and why this transition failed to materialize, a combination of four factors chronologically summarized below can be put forth: Delayed deployment of the peacekeeping mission; delayed deployment of the RPF's battalion in Kigali; the attempted coup that killed the first Hutu elect-president in neighboring Burundi; and, increasing radicalization in the domestic political landscapes. Put together however, and with the benefit of hindsight, the big picture of the failed implementation reveals that the endgame is consistent with the overall organizational strategy put forth by the parties throughout the negotiation process, namely, zero-sum oriented hard bargaining charted in the arms of tricks and deceit. While most of the complicating factors described below were beyond the parties' control, I argue that the deeply entrenched fears (to be deceived) and hopes (to gain the lion's share) shaped the way the key actors responded to external factors, and in doing so, narrowed significantly the prospects for getting the peace agreement implemented.

### ***UNAMIR Deployment***

Following the signature of the peace agreement in Arusha on August 4, 1993, a joint delegation representing both the government of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front was sent to New York to formally solicit the UN's assistance in implementing the agreement.

However, by the time the Security Council adopted the Resolution 872 of October 5, 1993 establishing the United Nations Mission to Rwanda (UNAMIR), the initial 37-day implementation deadline was 23 days past due. In the language of the Resolution 872 para. 2, the mission's mandate included to assist in ensuring the security of the capital city of Kigali; monitor the ceasefire agreement, including establishment of an expanded demilitarized zone and demobilization procedures; monitor the security situation during the final period of the transitional Government's mandate leading up to elections; assist with mine-clearance; and assist in the coordination of humanitarian assistance activities in conjunction with relief operations.

Urging “the parties to implement the Arusha Peace Agreement in good faith” (par. 11), the Security Council “request[ed] the Secretary-General to conclude expeditiously an agreement on the status of the operation, and all personnel engaged in the operation in Rwanda, to come into force as near as possible to the outset of the operation and no later than thirty days after the adoption of this resolution” (par. 12). Specifically, the Mission was established “for a period of six months subject to the proviso that it will be extended beyond the initial ninety days only upon a review by the Council based on a report from the Secretary-General as to whether or not substantive progress has been made toward the implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement” (par.13). However, both the efforts to meet respectively the 90 days deadline on January 5, 1994 and the six months deadline on April 6, 1994 tragically failed for the reasons detailed below.

***RPF battalion***

The Arusha peace agreement provided for deployment of a battalion of 600 RPF combatants to ensure the security of its officials who were to join the transitional state institutions. However, it was only on December 28, 1993 (more than 100 days past the initial 37-day deadline) that the UN Blue helmets escorted the so-called battalion from Mulindi (then RPF headquarters in Bumba near Ugandan borders) to Kigali. One key factors in this delay has to do with the deteriorating security conditions associated with the assassination of Ndadaye in Burundi.

***The October 1993 attempted coup in Burundi***

“In the early afternoon of October 21, 1993,” recalls a former aide to Premier Minister Designate, Faustin Twagiramungu, I was at the headquarters of the army to meet with a number of senior officers. Suddenly, a group of three or four junior officers stormed the meeting room, shouting: “Birangiye! Gusangira ubutegetsi n’abatutsi ntibishoboka! [It’s over. No way to share power with Tutsi!]” (interview, February 2014). These officers were referring to broadcast news from the RTLM about Ndadaye’s assassination--a story first dismissed by many listeners as “one of those RTLM incendiary rumors” (interview, February 204) before it was officially confirmed by a Burundian official, Jean Minani, who happened to be in Kigali at that time. The consequences of the events in Burundi reverberated in Rwanda for two main reasons. First, not only the Burundi Tutsi-dominated army were responsible for the attempted coup d’état, but even the top military officers “who said they opposed the coup, obeyed the orders of an illegitimate power, including orders to attack the presidential palace and to arrest members of the government, governors and other local government officials.” (HRW et al. 1994). The fact that a Tutsi-dominated army managed to kill a democratically elected Hutu president and tried to seize power by force reinforced suspicion about the idea of installing the RPF battalion at the heart

Kigali as a Trojan horse stratagem whose overall goal was to decapitate the Hutu leadership (several interviews). The RTLM echoed this sentiment as early as October 22, 1993: “You Hutus [of Rwanda], you must be on the look-out. You might meet the fate of the ones in Burundi” (RTLM broadcast of October 22, 1993 as quoted in Monasebian 2007, 310).

Secondly, in the hours and days following the coup, Ndadaye’s supporters in the interior of the country took steps to protect themselves, including barring roads, destroying bridges, organizing security patrols, and in many areas killing every Tutsi in sight (HRW et al. 1994; interviews). The spontaneity and furor by which laypeople managed to resist a military coup reinforced the view of some Hutu extremists that had the government not wasted money on fighting a classic war and instead armed the Hutu population to wipe out the RPF and its accomplices, the war would have come to a happy end long before. In this context, the hitherto marginalized extremist views and anti-power-sharing positions gained momentum: “For the anti-Tutsi propagandists,” observes Monasebian, “the assassination of the Burundian president offered just the kind of tragedy most helpful to their cause. It gave RTLM the chance to establish itself as the most violent voice in the campaign against Tutsi.” (Monasebian 2007, 311). French scholar Guichaoua (2010, 172) sums up the point:

The impact of the Burundian putsch and its resonance in Rwanda was decisive. The abrupt disruption of a democratic transition so highly regarded throughout the continent set the stage for a globalization of anti-Tutsi mistrust, almost justifying it in hindsight, in Rwanda no less than in Burundi, and at the same time boosted momentum for a populist self-defense. In this regard, the lesson of Burundi was clear: even if a broad mobilization of civil society (churches, NGOs, etc.) and unanimous disapproval from the international community factored to some extent in blocking restoration of the Tutsi military power, it was overwhelmingly the massive uprising of the “Hutu people” that forced the putschists to abdicate.

As detailed below, the political landscape could not be more polarized.

***Increasing political polarization***

By the time the Peace agreement was signed in Arusha, the political arena in Rwanda was dominated by three forces: The MRND-CDR coalition allied to President Habyarimana and his entourage generally referred to as *akazu*[small house]; the RPF; and 4 opposition parties (MDR, PSD, PL and PDC) constituting the Democratic Forces for Change (DFC). While both the ‘*mouvance présidentielle*’ and the RPF were relying first and foremost on their respective military powers, moderate forces and bipartisan Hutu-Tutsi networks had increasingly gained momentum in the countryside to the extent that a great many observers, local and international alike, hoped to see the FDC emerge as “a relatively autonomous political force ...to counterbalance the two military powers.” (Guichaoua 2010). However, in the wake of Ndadaye’s assassination, the political struggle in Rwanda “was no longer defined in terms of pro- or anti-Habyarimana, but instead as pro- or anti-RPF.” (Guichaoua 2010, 168). According to Guichaoua (2010), “animosity flared up again, a few weeks later when several leaders of the Burundian putsch found refuge in Kampala, in the strong embrace of Ugandan authorities.” Given the obvious political, military and diplomatic support that the RPF had received from Uganda, the fact that Uganda gave safe haven to Ndadaye’s alleged killers added weight to rumors that the attempted putsch in Burundi was nothing more than an “RPF pre-test” (several interviews with former Rwandan officials) of a grand plot devoted to overthrow the Hutu regime in Kigali. As one top leader of the FDC put it eloquently, “we found ourselves in a dilemma where speaking out against the Hutu dictatorship of the MRND became synonymous with advocating the anticipated Tutsi dictatorship of the RPF.” (interview, Brussels, February 2014). The ensuing radicalization unfolded in three self-reinforcing steps.

The first step coincided with the increasing mobilization of the militias Interahamwe. For instance, Guichaoua who documented this situation testified before the ICTR that “toward the beginning of 1994, in the northern prefectures (Ruhengeri, Gisenyi), the Hutu youth wings underwent military training dispensed by Rwandan army officers and were given weapons.” (communication to this author).

The second step was the rise of competing factions within the FDC coalition. All started in the evening of December 28, 1993 when a sizeable number of the FDC leaders and sympathizers stormed the newly established RPF battalion’s headquarters in Kigali to welcome its combatants and leaders. By then, there was a consensus to set up the transitional government on January 5, 1994. Meanwhile however, rumors that Prime minister-designate Faustin Twagiramungu along with key members in his soon-to-be-sworn-in cabinet were busy plotting with the RPF to overthrow President Habyarimana spread out to the extent that a growing number of anti-RPF figures within the FDC opted for switching their support from the FDC to form a loose coalition that would be later known as “the Hutu Power movement.” This move profoundly reversed the *rappports de force* as the FDC lost its weight as alternative third force at the benefit of the ‘*mouvance présidentielle*’. Boosted by this unexpected support, Habyarimana accelerated the process of installing the transitional government whereas the RPF and its allies worked hard to block it. Thus, on January 4, 1993, President Habyarimana along with Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana met all the interested parties and agreed on the final lists of the officials to be sworn-in the next day. Surprisingly, late in the same evening, the Prime Minister invoked the need for further discussions on the final list of PL appointee members of Parliament and asked the President to postpone the swearing-in ceremonies. (Guichaoua 2010; interviews).

Judging the objection inopportune, President Habyrimana went on to take the oath of office on January 5, 1993. However, he was obliged to postpone sine die the installation of both the Broad-based Transitional Government and the Transitional National Assembly because the RPF along with the FDC pro-RPF wings failed to attend the ceremonies. In the following days and despite increasing pressures from the donor community, President Habyarimana and Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana failed to resolve the problem of “the PL list” and thus, three times in a row, i.e. On January 8, 14 and 20, the oath-taking ceremonies for the members of the transitional government and the National Assembly repeatedly failed.

Amidst growing uncertainty and frustrations, the MRND party along with the “Hutu power” wings of the MDR and PL parties held a huge rally on January 16, 1994 in Kigali’s Nyamirambo Stadium. Thus was officially born the Hutu power movement which from then onwards re-energized the *mouvance* présidentielle. Alarmed by the deteriorating situation, the UNAMIR convened three meetings on February 7, 10 and 13 respectively to discuss the composition of the PL delegation. As the PL rival wings failed to agree on a joint list, the UNAMIR recommended to hold the ceremonies of installing the transitional institutions the next day of February 14, 1994 and to leave the PL seats vacant pending final resolution by competent tribunals. However, this recommendation described by a close aide to Prime Minister Twagiramungu as “the Booh-Booh -- Habyarimana Plot” (interview, February 2014), was outright rejected by the RPF and its allies. Finally, in response to the Security Council’s threat of February 17, 1994 to terminate UNAMIR’s mandate if the transitional institutions were not installed, a general agreement was reached on February 20, 1994 through a multilateral marathon of UNAMIR-facilitated negotiations and involving all the concerned parties (interview with a former Rwandan diplomat to New York, July 2013),.

It was then resolved that the ceremonies of installing the transition institutions would be held on February 22, 1994. Alas, the worst had yet to come the next day of February 21, 1994 when Felicien Gatabazi, an emblematic figure who had until then defied both the *mouvance* presidentielle and the RPF, was gunned down, a move that plunged the country into a political impasse that paved the way to the genocide.

Felicien Gatabazi, a former minister under Habyarimana in the 1980s and one of the founding fathers of the democratic opposition in the early 1990s, was the powerful General Secretary of the PSD. The PSD, was the only truly pluralistic force in the country with no little if any ethnic bias and which had so far managed to keep its full independence from both the Hutu power movement and the pro-RPF factions. He was assassinated in the evening of February 21 on his way back home from a high-level meeting held at Hotel Meridien between the FDC and the RPF regarding the ceremonies that were scheduled to take place the following day. While it is now common knowledge that Gatabazi was assassinated by an RPF commando (Guichaoua 2010, 188-191; Ruzibiza 2005) after his positions were deemed closer to the Hutu power side, a great many observers blamed then the *akazu*-sponsored death squads. It thus came as no surprise that in the morning of February 22, 1994, PSD militants in Butare lynched Martin Bucyana, President of CDR, to avenge Gatabazi. Nor was it surprising that the ceremonies of installing the transitional institutions were postponed again. To make bad things worse, Bucyana's death was followed by reprisals by MRND-CDR sponsored youth wings which left several hundreds of people, mostly Tutsi, dead in different parts of the country. Like in the period following Ndadaye's assassination, RTLM and other extremist medias including Kangura renewed increasingly extremist propaganda calling on the army and Hutu populations to rise up and save the 'Hutu republic'.

To break the deadlock, the UNAMIR intensified the contacts with all the concerned parties and, eventually, managed to get president Habyarimana and all the parties together first on February 25, and then on February 27 when a new date to set up the institutions was set. Meanwhile however, the RPF officials who were housed in Kigali to take the oath of office were summoned to meet with the RPF military commander, Paul Kagame, at his headquarters in Mulindi. On March 1, 1993, the UNAMIR chief, Jacques-Roger Booh-Booh, traveled to Mulindi to appeal to the RPF to return to Kigali, without success. In response to renewed diplomatic pressures, 5 tentative schedules to install the transition institutions were put forward (March 9, 18, 25, 26 and 28) but neither materialized for various reasons. Key among the pretexts put forward were twofold. First, the *mouvance présidentielle* refused to allow the post of Minister of Justice to go to a Tutsi PL member (Guichaoua 2010, 197-206). After this objection was turned down, the RPF called into question the agreement clause about allocating at least one seat to all the legally registered political parties, alleging that giving a seat to the Hutu extremist CDR was contrary to principles of peaceful power-sharing.

Meanwhile, reliable sources confirmed that military preparations on both sides were underway as if neither believed in the prospects of a peaceful transition. For instance, according Guichaoua (2010), the Minister of Defense and the *Préfet* of Kigali held several preparatory meetings on March 30 and 31 to organize the civil self-defense. Participants were demobilized soldiers and militiamen from the three communes of Kigali-Ville and the neighboring communes. By this time, intensive recruitments and trainings for ‘the final battle’ were under way as well in the territory under RPF control.

On April 5, 1994, the Security Council expressed "deep concern at the delay in the establishment of the broad-based transitional Government and the Transitional National Assembly" but ultimately voted to extend the mandate of UNAMIR to July 29, 1994 (UNSC Resolution 909). Finally, in line with the Resolution and in response to increasing pressures from the international community, a regional summit was held in Dar es Salaam on April 6 to break the deadlock once for all. According to a source close to Tanzanian mediation, President Habyarimana and the RPF agreed to set up the transitional institutions on April 9, 1994 and the heads of state of Tanzania and Uganda pledged to make sure that both parties would honor their commitments. This hopeful agreement was doomed to be short-lived however as the plane carrying president Habyarimana back to Kigali was fatally shot down.

In the hours and days following Habyarimana's death, the presidential guard along with Interahamwe militias launched a sweeping campaign of revenge, first decapitating the political opposition and then targeting Tutsi people in a systematic way throughout the country. An all-Hutu interim government installed on April 8 did nothing more than turning the anti-Tutsi violence into an openly state-sponsored genocide under the UNAMIR shameful watch. By the time the Security Council met on April 21 to examine the situation in Rwanda, the world's superpowers found nothing better to do than demanding a "ceasefire ... between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and an end to the violence engulfing the country." Worse still, it was resolved to reduce the size of UNAMIR and limit its mandate to three tasks: to mediate a ceasefire; to assist in the resumption of humanitarian relief operations; to monitor and report on developments in Rwanda, including on civilians who sought refuge with UNAMIR. " (Resolution 912). From then onwards, everyone understood that the fate of Rwanda would be decided, not at the table of negotiation, but on the battlefield.

As the RPF troops captured Kigali on July 4, 1994 and went on to establish a new government on July 17, 1994, the defeated MRND-CDR coalition was still strong enough to plunder the country and to force up to three million people into exile, hoping for the appropriate moment to settle the scores with the RPF.

In a nutshell, the failed implementation of the Rwandan Arusha peace agreement resulted from a combination of factors some of which were beyond the concerned parties' control, notably the UNAMIR delayed deployment and the attempted coup in Burundi. It is worth noting however that neither obstacle was insurmountable, had the parties be patient enough to discuss the implementation modalities in detail as did their Burundian counterparts, or had they bother to adopt a realistic timetable of implementation and a longer transition period. In light of the bargaining strategies of tricks and deceit along with the deliberate choice to frame the negotiation in the language of a two-party logic as described above, the endgame of the whole process appears consistent with the winner-takes-all mindset that had brought the two major warring parties to talk peace while waging war from the very first days of the conflict. The fact that both moderate forces and the international community believed for a while that an alternative force could emerge and prevail over the classic hard-die veterans of Rwandan political game underscores the idea of ripe moment for possible change under certain conditions. By the same token however, the fact that the alternative moderate forces failed to seize the opportunity and instead ended up falling apart speaks volume about the extreme difficulties of departing from deeply rooted 'ways of doing things' and prevail.

Considered from a comparative perspective, a parallel reading of the Rwandan and Burundian Arusha peace processes can help us understand better the extent to and the conditions under which outside influence is likely to shape the character of domestic structures.

For instance, Uvin and Bayer (2013) made a convincing case about how incorporating international paradigms such as “ democratic elections, safeguards for free press, judicial reform, a system of transitional justice, and good intentions about development, land reform and the like” help to shape the “character of Burundi’s state institutions” (265). However, the fact incorporating the similar paradigms in the provisions of the Rwandan agreement did little to shape the nature of the state suggests that the ripe conditions for institutional change vary from one context to another. The same argument holds for other contingent factors such as war which “signaled a dramatic loss of power by the central state” in post-conflict Burundi (Uvin and Bayer 2013, 266; see also Uvin 2009), but produced the opposite outcome in post-genocide Rwanda where the central state became even stronger than its predecessors (Guichaoua 2010; Reyntjens 2011; Straus and Waldorf 2010; Thompson 2013).

To sum up, the issues and trends discussed above suggest that each of the two peace processes can be conceived of as an uncertain journey involving conflicting but self-reinforcing dynamics amidst shifting circumstances, competing agendas, and both internal and external incentives to continue or settle the conflict. Specifically, there is no question that, like any party at the table of negotiation, both the Rwandan and Burundian parties tried to win each for itself the largest possible share of whatever ‘cake’ was being divided. Nor is there any doubt that, in each case, the parties found a number of issues to agree upon easily, notably when it came to enlarging the benefits available to them (e.g. increased foreign aid for post-conflict reconstruction). Nevertheless, while each of the factors implied in this complex process is crucial in its own right, a parallel reading of the two processes underscores the weight of initial steps in shaping the outcomes of subsequent moves and actions undertaken at different levels. In each case, it seems to me, the point of entry mattered the most. In Rwanda, the warring parties embraced from the

start the logic of waging war while talking peace. Throughout the negotiations, several strategies including dirty tricks and deception were used to fool both the opponents and the mediation while waiting for the right moment to knock down the enemy. As a result, while both sides paid lip services to the agreement signed in Arusha on August 4, 1993, neither was interested in having it implemented. Contrariwise, in Burundi, exhaustion (due to conflict-related hardship and external pressures) was the common factor that brought the parties to the table of negotiation and ultimately forced each of them to downsize its ambitions. “As it became clear that neither party was likely to have it all,” said a former FRODEBU chief negotiator, “all the parties felt compelled to find a workable way-out from the mayhem of violence” (interview, Bujumbura March 2014).

More important still, once the first comprehensive deal was reached in 2000, the Arusha Peace Agreement became so compelling that the non-signatory factions, notably the CNDD-FDD and the FN, felt obliged to embrace its spirit and letter in the subsequent negotiation phases. In the end, Arusha became for Burundi synonymous with a painful but sure path forward from ethnic violence. In contrast, it proved in Rwanda synonymous with the proverbial calm before the storm insofar as it signaled the descent into the worst genocidal violence since the Holocaust. Surprisingly, as if the prophecy hidden in the victorious rebellions’ historic names and other symbolic identifiers were bound to come true, the RPF turned out to be a true front led by ‘indomitable warriors’ committed to defeat the enemy and dominate the political scene, all while the CNDD-FDD emerged as a council committed to compromise and middle-ground solutions. In the process, the latter opted for the stomach to fight and the former for the inclination to compromise.

### **Military integration: Two Tales of Post-conflict Security Sector Reform**

Security sector reform is another area of strategic intervention where idiosyncratic and contingent arguments prevail when it comes to accounting for success and failure of different processes. For instance, conceiving of security sector reform as a set of “reform efforts directed at the institutions, processes, and forces that provide security and promote the rule of law,” a U.S. blueprint guidelines paper suggests that success and sustainability depend on a number of Grand Design-centered criteria including the following:

Establishment of relevant legal and policy frameworks; Improvement of civilian management, leadership, oversight, planning, and budgeting capacities; Enhancement of coordination and cooperation among security-related and civil institutions; and, Management of the legacies and sources of past or present conflict or insecurity. (US State Department et al. 2009, 1).

This view echoes the OECD’s Security Sector Reform (SSR) framework, which “requires strategic planning for improved policies, practices, and partnerships amongst all actors” (OECD 2004, 7). So does a USAID (2005) policy paper, which recommends a move from “a limited focus on improving law and order” to embrace “fundamental reforms” which “include structural changes in security policies, restructuring security sector organizations to improve their functioning, and ensuring that civilian authorities have the capacity to manage and oversee security organizations” (Usaid 2005,3). By the same token, the mainstream literature concurs in emphasizing the correlation between democratic governance and security sector reform (Ball 2002; Ball 2005; DFID 2000; Luckham 2003 and Nathan 2004).

As discussed below, however, the divergent paths to and outcomes of the security sector reforms in post-conflict Rwanda and Burundi seem significantly consistent with the rules of the game that preceded the reform, namely, the patterns of cohesion and monopoly in the case of the RPF and fragmentation and compromise in the case of the CNDD-FDD.

These major patterns of variation in this sector can be best examined through the lens of the analytical framework of “ethnic security dilemma” in light of the two rebel-led governments’ responses to the challenge of military integration. As summarized by Kalyvas,

A security dilemma is said to occur when the breakdown of order creates a situation in which individuals coordinating around focal points (primarily ethnic identities) resort to preemptive violence, or align with warmongering leaders who do so, because of security fears. (Kalyvas 2006, 61).

In this regard, Rwanda and Burundi appear as paradigmatic examples of what Posen (1993) has termed “The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict” scenario. In fact, following their independence in 1962, monopoly of the means of violence by a Hutu elite in Rwanda and a Tutsi elite in Burundi resulted in violent repression and forced into exile tens of thousands of Tutsi in Rwanda and hundreds of thousands of Hutu in Burundi. Since the security dilemma tends to make ordinary people throw their support behind warlords bent on violent conquest (Kalyvas, 2006). It thus comes as no surprise that the rebellions that took arms against the incumbent regimes were predominantly Tutsi in Rwanda and Hutu in Burundi. Despite this shared background, empirical evidence suggests two divergent security reform outcomes: a strong mono-ethnic security sector reform in Rwanda, and a fluid, ethnically balanced security reform in Burundi. Thus, reliable data suggests a significant difference in terms of the ethnic composition of the security sector services in the two countries.

Overall, the size of the security forces in Rwanda and Burundi respectively can be summarized as follows: Army (65,000 contra 27,000);<sup>40</sup> police (12,000 contra 16,000);

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<sup>40</sup> These estimates are close to official data in Burundi. For the case of Rwanda, the estimates are based on numerous, but concordant data, gathered from former high ranking military and intelligence officers, both Hutu and Tutsi.

intelligence services (30,000<sup>41</sup> contra 5,000). To be sure, the sensitive and contested nature of the above estimates begs caution. First, while it is possible to inquire about ethnic composition in Burundi, it is legally forbidden to do so in Rwanda. However, it is a secret of Polichinelle that nearly all the top military commanders in Rwanda-- the minister of defense, all the Chiefs General Staff of the army (Marines, Air Force and Navy), all of the four regional military divisions' commanders, all the battalions' commanders but a handful, are Tutsi. Second, the data regarding Burundi is close to official estimates. The sector of Intelligence Services prove a notable exception. The vast majority of my informants describe the intelligence sector as the least transparent and the most chaotically managed of all public institutions in Burundi.

This institution is of particular concern because there is a significant overlap between the intelligence services and the party-affiliated youth group, the infamous *Imbonerakure*, involved in so many key dirty jobs in the countryside. Bearing these cautions in mind, a parallel reading of these descriptions from an ethnic security dilemma perspective reveals the remarkable variation between Rwanda and Burundi is of great concern because post-conflict governments in both countries pledged to respect the spirit of their respective Arusha Peace Agreements. In the area of security sector reform, the 'Arusha' spirit was rooted in the notion of what one scholar recently termed "the role of multiethnic armies in post-conflict reconstruction," according to which, "where the political will is present, the multiethnic military can become a symbol of reconciliation and coexistence" (Gaub 2010,1). Applied to the two post-conflict contexts under consideration, evidence suggests that the political will is bended toward a multiethnic military in Burundi and a mono-ethnic military in Rwanda.

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<sup>41</sup> According to reliable evidence from both inside Rwanda and the diaspora, the heavy reliance on secret agents is due to the fact that a great many state service overlap with intelligence services

To begin with, from the start, the parties in both countries approached the issues of security sector reform in radically divergent ways, as evident in the language of their respective Protocols. In one case, the parties agreed upon “The Protocol of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front on the Integration of the Armed Forces of the Two Parties.” In the other case, the parties agreed upon a protocol carefully entitled “Peace and Security for All.” In terms of substance, the Rwandan protocol revolved around one important issue, namely, “Proportions and Distribution of Command Posts.” According to this agreement, the Government forces would contribute 60% of the forces and the RPF 40% of the forces for all levels apart from the posts of Command, where each party was to have a 50% representation for both the army and the police. According to a reliable source close to the negotiation process, this issue occupied up to 80% of the discussions, whereas the majority of other provisions of the protocol addressed technical issues generally said to have been “cut and pasted” from various military and police manuals (interview in Dar es Salaam, May 2011). In contrast, while the parties in Burundi arrived at similar proportions of representation, they clearly defined representation in terms of ethnic affiliation. More important, the Burundian parties spent considerable time discussing hot issues that the Rwandan parties had considered self-evident at best. Those include, in the language of the Burundian Peace Agreement, “Principles of peace and security for all” (Article 1); “Principles relating to the defence and security forces” (Article 10); “Composition of the defence and security forces” (Article 14); and “Balances within the defence and security forces” (Article 16).

Specifically, unlike Rwanda where two warring parties claimed to jointly embody the Rwandan society as a whole, the Burundian parties were cautious enough to define clearly the “criteria [to] be used to determine the imbalances in the Defense and security forces,” namely

political, ethnic, regional, and gender, as laid down in Article 16. By the same token, whereas the Rwandan parties adopted a fast-track approach—as if signing the agreement implied automatic implementation, the Burundian parties were modest enough to agree on the principle that “Correction of the imbalances in the defence and security forces [was to] be approached progressively in the spirit of reconciliation and trust in order to reassure all Burundians,” and that this correction “[was] to be achieved during the transition period through the integration into the current defence and security forces of the combatants of the political parties and movements and through the recruitment of other Burundian citizens”( Protocol I, art. 10).

In short, in both Rwanda and Burundi, the provisions on military integration were built on the rationale that the warring armed forces would come together and form a national army committed to the defense of the country as a whole. However, post-genocide Rwanda opted for a distributive logic of zero-sum competition whereas Burundi opted for an integrative logic of cooperation. Interestingly, while both countries went through dramatic changes and deep uncertainties between the peace agreement and the process of ‘security sector reform,’ strong evidence shows that the latter process followed a more predictable path—the-winner-take-all scenario for the RPF and the shared pie scenario for the CNDD-FDD.

To account for this variation, one can point to four core factors that influenced the way the scenario unfolded in post-conflict Rwanda and Burundi: Institutional setting; modus of integration, powerbase, and civil-military relations.

### **Institutional continuity versus institutional discontinuity**

Institutional setting refers to the general structural framework within which the “new” security forces were meant to operate. According to the two Arusha peace agreements, the new “entities” would be integrated into the pre-existing state structures unless otherwise specified in the

agreement. This implied, among other things, that physical infrastructures (headquarters, barracks, military courts, etc.) and symbolic identifiers (names, uniforms and insignia, etc.) would remain unaffected. However, unlike the CNDD-FDD, which sought to integrate its combatants into the existing national army structures, the RPF empowered its military wing, the Rwandan Patriotic Front or RPA, as the national army, and erased all the vestiges of the former army from uniforms and organizational structures to military codes and rank systems.

### **Modus of integration**

Seen from an integration perspective, the CNDD-FDD followed the model of *mixage*<sup>42</sup> according to which heterogeneous combatants come together to form a ‘national army.’

In the spirit of the Arusha agreement, all armed groups but one were integrated into the security forces alongside the former governmental army. By contrast, after seizing power in July 1994, the RPF integrated some elements from the defeated army—generally referred to as Ex-FAR or former Rwandan Armed Force—using the strategy of ‘co-optation,’ which involves utilizing individual members after stripping them of their former loyalty.

At first glance, the outcome of the war (a decisive FPR victory) and the massive involvement of the Hutu army in the genocide seem enough to explain why so few Hutu soldiers were integrated in new army. However, this argument is contradicted by the fate of Hutu officers who joined the RPF during or shortly after its rise to power. For instance, none of the three prominent Hutu officers—Colonel Lizinde, Biseruka and Muvunandinda—whom the RPA liberated from the Prison of Ruhengeri in 1991 and integrated in its high command is now in office. Muvunandinda was assassinated during the war; Lizinde was assassinated in exile in

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<sup>42</sup> *Mixage* of ‘Brassage’ (which has nothing to do with English word brassage referring to a fee or charge levied for the coining of money) is a term coined during the Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD) whose outcome is generally referred to as the Sun City Agreement signed on April 19 2002. As a result of the Inter-Congolese dialogue (ICD), the term was meant to account for the ‘melting pot’ nature of the endeavor of forming a national army composed of heterogeneous elements from various armed groups that have little if anything in common.

1996 after he resigned from his parliament's seat and fled to Kenya; Biseruka is now serving a long jail sentence for "insubordination and treason." By the same token, as early as April 8, 1994, a group of top officers led by then interim Chief of the General Staff of Army, Marcel Gatsinzi, distanced themselves from the hardline military establishment (generally associated with Colonel Theoneste Bagosora known in the media as "the genocide mastermind") and called for a joint action between the UN peace keepers, the RPA and the moderate Hutu forces to halt the carnage (Guichaoua 2010; interviews). After this initiative failed, most of these officers refused to follow the genocidal government in exile and, instead, in a solemn declaration known from then onwards as the "Kigeme Declaration," they made clear their shared conviction that "the Rwandan people shall triumph over extremisms of all kinds." They thus committed themselves to join the RPF in order "to contribute immediately to the establishment of a foundation of hope for national reconciliation, in particular, by combating injustice, ethnic and regional hatred and all other forms of intolerance and exclusion." (phone interview with one signatory of the Declaration, March 2011).

Meanwhile, a fair number of military officers resisted the state-led genocide and set up alternative forces to save Tutsi in their home provinces,<sup>43</sup> and others joined the RPF forces. While these officers along with some three thousands of their followers were eventually integrated in the army and appointed to prestigious positions, the vast majority of them ended up being assassinated, jailed or forced into exile (Frontline 2005, Guichaoua 2010). Ironically, a small number of Hutu officers serving now in the Rwandan army, including two generals, are former top leaders of the Hutu militia, FDLR, seen by Kigali as the eternal

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<sup>43</sup> The best known case is the initiative led by Colonel Emmanuel Bavugamenshi and Major Augustin Cyiza who used their body guards along with volunteer soldiers and gendarmes to save up to 8,000 people throughout their home province of Cyangugu in the southwest (Cruvellier et al. 2004).

incarnation of the genocide machine.<sup>44</sup> This ironic paradox by which the military officers who happened to be close to the genocide machine are more welcome within the RPF than those who unambiguously distanced themselves from it undermines the validity of genocide as a decisive factor to explain why, almost twenty years after its coming into power, the RPF-led government's army is predominantly Tutsi while ethnic parity remains the norm in neighboring Burundi. As discussed below, variation in the two integration models is particularly evident in the logic of the powerbase behind them.

### **Basis for integration: Social capital versus individual merit**

By “social capital,” I mean the added-value of social relations, or, as Hannifin put it so forcefully almost a century ago, “that in life which tends to make these tangible substances count for most in the daily lives of people, namely, goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social intercourse among a group of individuals and families who make up a social unit” (Hannifin 1916, 130-131; see also Putnam 2000). This notion is of great relevance in the case of Burundi where, as a military officer in charge of the process sums up,

Success of this process [of military integration] resulted from a combination of two inseparable factors. On the one hand, each party chose its own best combatants to be integrated and which, if things were to get worse, could defend the group's interests. On the other hand, the new structures allowed us to build new relations and friendship, which gave us more margins of maneuver over our own [former] entities. [...] This was particularly the case of the rebel officers who were eager to be seen not as former warlords, but as ‘true officers’ like me. (Interview in Bujumbura, July 2010).

In Rwanda, things were quite different. “Because we had belonged to an army now labeled *genocidaire*,” said a high-ranking officer in both former and new national army, “the only asset

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<sup>44</sup> Following the retirement of the former Minister of Defense Major General Gatsinzi Marcel last year, the top Hutu officer in the current army is Major General Paul Rwarakabije. In 2001, he deserted the FDLR of which he was a founder member and top military commander.

at our disposal was individual merit [...]. Invoking your past military experience or socializing with your old friends was seen as a sign of disloyalty to the RPA” (Interview in Brussels, 2010).

It thus comes as no surprise that, while loyalty to both former and new comrades-in-arms became the norm in Burundi, “the culture of mistrust and delation”—as one RPA officer told me—prevailed within the security forces in post-genocide Rwanda. This remarkable variation in the powerbase of the security agents in both countries would have a profound impact on civil-military relations.

### **Civil-military relations**

The paradigm of “civil-military relations” refers to “direct and indirect dealings that ordinary people and institutions have with the military” (Burk 2002, 7). Influential theorists from Sun Tzu and Carl von Clausewitz to Samuel Huntington (1957) concur in emphasizing “civil supremacy over the military.” At the heart of this paradigm is the assumption that, since the *raison d’être* of the military is to serve the society as a whole, civil control of the military should be the norm and military control of the state the exception. Nevertheless, a great many theorist agree that this principle applies only in stable democracies and has little relevance in many parts of the world where military control prevails as the norm (Burk 2002, 7). Interestingly, despite their shared experience as post-conflict states led by former armed groups, Burundi and Rwanda offer us two radically different scenarios—civil control of the military in the former and military domination in the latter. To be sure, reliable evidence shows that the military—especially a group known as “5G”<sup>45</sup>—has a great say in the Burundian political landscape. However, all observers agree that the military’s role in Burundian politics hardly

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<sup>45</sup> 5G stands for a group of powerful generals from the CNDD-FDD who are believed to weigh much in the administration led by President Pierre Nkurunziza. They include Adolphe Nshimirimana, Head of the Documentation Nationale [Intelligence Bureau], Godefroid Niyombare, Army Chief of Staff; Evariste Ndayishimiye, Alain-Guillaume Bunyoni, and Silas Ntigurirwa.

compares with the situation in Rwanda, where military omnipresence and omnipotence are so evident that one expert describes Rwanda as “an army with a state” (Reyntjens, 2011).

Civil-military relations in the two countries also vary in the way security forces interact with ordinary citizens. According to reliable evidence, security forces in Burundi are said to “socialize too much” with ordinary citizens, to the extent that a many observers think that this can partially explain the widespread corruption in Burundi (various interviews). By contrast, social relations between security forces and ordinary citizens in Rwanda are significantly limited. As a police officer in charge of “community policing” once told me in an effort to explain why he was not good at socializing, “socializing with civilians is the first step toward corruption. How can you control and discipline the wrongdoers who are used to sharing a beer with you?” (Skype interview, February 2013).

In summary, the processes of military integration in both countries were subjected to various factors, internal and external alike. Interestingly though, these processes not only remained significantly divergent, but their divergences also remained congruent with the general patterns of organizational strategies or “ways of doing things” for each rebellion, namely, obsession with control and monopoly for the RPF, and fragmentation and compromise for the CNDD-FDD. Before embarking on the intellectual endeavor of theorizing these enduring divergences, the next section uses a case study of transitional justice to examine whether variation in the two rebel-led governments’ responses to the demands of justice is an exception.

## **Transitional Justice: Two ways of reckoning with past wrongs**

The preceding paragraphs convey a consistent pattern in the systematically divergent strategies put forth by the RPF and the CNDD-FDD to deal with crucial issues from value setting to peace negotiations to military integration. Contrary to dominant contingent and idiosyncratic explanations, strong evidence shows that both rebellions, along with the governments led by them, opted for organizational strategies that did not violate the paramount value laid down in their respective names, zero-sum control for the RPF and compromise for the CNDD-FDD. This section shows that the ways the rebel-led governments took up the burden of “reckoning with past wrongs” (Crocker 1999) is no exception. To make this case, it pays first to discuss the basics of transitional justice before examining how it unfolded in the particular context of Rwanda and Burundi.

### **Transitional justice as discourse and practice**

Since the 1990s, the paradigm of *transitional justice* has emerged as a promising “array of processes designed to address past human rights violations following periods of political turmoil, state repression, or armed conflict” (Olsen, Payne and Reiter, 2010, 11). The starting point for our analysis rests upon the premise that

The universe of transitional justice can be broadly or narrowly defined. At its broadest, it involves anything that a society devises to deal with a legacy of conflict and/or widespread human rights violations, from changes in criminal codes to those in high school textbooks, from creation of memorials, museums and days of mourning, to police and court reform, to tackling the distributional inequities that underlie conflict. A narrow view can be criticized for ignoring root causes and privileging civil and political rights over economic, social and cultural rights, and by so doing marginalizing the needs of women and the poor. On the other hand, broadening the scope of what we mean by transitional justice to encompass the building of a just as well as peaceful society may make the effort so broad as to become meaningless. (Roht-Arriaza 2006, 1).

While transitional justice mechanisms are likely to vary from one context to another, over the last two decades scholars and practitioners have sought to come up with “not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ blueprint but rather a framework by which societies confronting past atrocities can decide—through cross-cultural and critical dialogue—what is most important to accomplish and the morally best ways to do so” (Crocker 1999, 43). To be effective, the framework should allow to

identify and clarify (1) the variety of ethical issues that emerge in reckoning with past wrongs, (2) widespread agreements about initial steps for resolving each issue, (3) leading options for more robust solutions of each issue, and (4) ways to weight or trade off the norms when they conflict. (Crocker 1999, 43)

To this end, Crocker outlines eight goals on which transitional justice mechanisms should focus, namely: truth; a public platform for victims; accountability and punishment; the rule of law; compensation to victims; institutional reform and long-term development; reconciliation; and public deliberation (Crocker 1999, 43). Nonetheless, whatever approach one chooses—broad or narrow—and whatever goals one sets, transitional justice is primarily a political matter. To underscore this reality, one is reminded of the words of theologian Niebuhr; “the sad duty of politics is to establish justice in a sinful world” (Niebuhr quoted in Quotationsbook.com, 2013).

### **Transition Justice in the context of Rwanda and Burundi**

Nowhere is the politically “sad duty” to establish justice more relevant than in post-genocide Rwanda and Burundi, where both the government forces and the rebels share responsibility for perpetrating heinous atrocities. For instance, a top Human Rights Watch official who visited Rwanda shortly after the RPF defeated the *genocidaires* gives a taste of such sad a duty:

Yes, the genocide was the big crime. But genocide victims weren’t the only Rwandan victims in 1994. The Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), the rebel group that went on to become the current Rwandan government under President Paul Kagame, also murdered some thirty thousand people. (Roth 2011, xxiii).

The same is true for Burundi where, according to another account by Human Rights Watch,

Thousands were killed in massacres by all factions, including [...] the 2002 massacre at Itaba of approximately 200 Hutu civilians by the Tutsi-dominated Burundian army; and the 1997 killing at Bugendana of over 300 Tutsi by the rebel National Council for the Défense of Democracy - Forces for the Défense of Democracy (Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie - Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie, CNDD-FDD). The groups responsible have acknowledged responsibility for these crimes. Massacres by the Burundian army also predate the civil war, including the killing of approximately 200,000 Hutu civilians in 1972 and another 20,000 in 1988. (HRW, 2009).

Against this backdrop, post-conflict governments in both countries were expected to carry out significant investigations and prosecutions for these crimes. As detailed below, the two countries adopted divergent methods of reckoning with past wrongs whose respective characteristics, outcomes and shortcomings are particularly striking in two main respects, the scope of justice and accountability for crimes.

### **Scope of Justice: Minimalist versus Maximalist Approaches**

One of the major difficulties in reckoning with past wrongs in the aftermath of violent conflict is the possibility that transitional justice cannot adequately address all the past wrongs. The dilemma is particularly vexing in contexts like Rwanda and Burundi—nations emerging from genocidal violence whose roots date back to colonial, if not pre-colonial times. To this end, establishing transitional justice comes down to answering three fundamental questions:

- 1) Which abuses can be addressed?
- 2) When might the abuses have taken place?
- 3) Who can be held accountable for the abuses committed?

In legal terminology, these questions hint at the four major jurisdictional limits, namely, jurisdiction *ratione materiae*, or matter-subject jurisdiction; jurisdiction *ratione temporis*, or temporal jurisdiction; jurisdiction *ratione loci*, or territorial jurisdiction; and *ratione personae*, or

the personal reach of the courts' jurisdiction. Jurisdiction *ratione materiae* is about "the jurisdiction over the nature of the case and the type of relief sought; the extent to which a court can rule on the conduct of persons or the status of things" (USLegal, 2013). Implicit in this definition is the notion that a court of law is legally tasked to deal with specific crimes. Jurisdiction *ratione temporis* "refers to the jurisdiction of a court of law over a proposed action in relation to the passage of time" (USLegal, 2013). Regarding jurisdiction *ratione personae*, this paradigm further narrows the scope of crimes under consideration by specifying the nature and extent of "criminal responsibilities as regard to modalities of participation in the commission of crimes" (Cassese 2004, 274).

In the case of post-genocide Rwanda, the scope of transitional justice is limited to "offences constituting the Crime of Genocide or Crimes against Humanity committed since October 1 1990" as laid down in, *inter alia*, article 1 of the "Organic Law No. 08/96 of August 30, 1996 on the Organization of Prosecutions for Offences constituting the Crime of Genocide or Crimes against Humanity committed since October 1 1990 Organic Law." (RoR, 1996). By contrast, the scope of transitional justice in the context of Burundi is broadly defined and covers a vast range of crimes spanning three decades. For instance, in the Arusha Peace Agreement, the parties recommended, among other resolutions, "to shed light on and establish the truth over the serious acts of violence committed during the cyclical conflicts which cast a tragic shadow over Burundi from independence [July 1, 1962) to the date of signature of the Agreement [August 28,2000]" (Protocol I, art.8, par. a). By the same token, the parties agreed upon a number of "political principles and measures" which include, among others, "Prevention, suppression and eradication of acts of genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity, as well as violations of human rights, including those which are gender-based" (Protocol I, art.8, par. a).

Regarding the *ratione personae*, the offenders fall in one of three categories: Category 1 comprises the masterminds known as “planners, organizers, inciters, supervisors, framers” of genocide and crime against humanity, “murders of renown” and those who committed the offense of rape and sexual torture. Category 2 comprises perpetrators, co-perpetrators or voluntary accomplices of homicides or serious attacks with the intent to cause the death of the victims; and, Category 3 comprises persons who committed offenses against property (Art. 1, Organic Law No. 08/96 of August 30, 1996). However, as laid down in one of the provisions of the Arusha Peace Agreement, *the ratione personae* in the case of Burundi is defined in a broader sense to encompass:

Some foreign countries, foreign organizations, political or otherwise, and certain foreign lobbies; National and foreign individuals and groups, as well as organizations, institutions, parties and movements, which conceived, abetted, condoned, encouraged, incited and practised divisions, violence and violent methods of access to and retention of power; political, administrative and religious leaders, as well as technical staff, who contributed to perpetrating the genocide;

Persons responsible for the violence perpetrated during the crises of 1965-1969 1972 1988 1991 and 1993 to date;

The members of the judicial system who have promoted and continue to promote impunity and partiality through corruption, intimidation and manipulation;

Those instruments of State power responsible for protecting the population, which failed in their mission, particularly those elements of the defence and security forces guilty of excesses and violence against the innocent population;

Those elements who practise genocide and their allies.

It seems that, with respect to various dimensions of scope of justice, the RPF-led government opted for a minimalist approach whereas the government led by the CNDD-FDD vowed to stick to a maximalist approach---though not fully implemented if implementable at all. As discussed below, each choice has serious implications in terms of accountability.

## Accountability

The concept of justice implies, among other goals, that the perpetrators of criminal acts are held accountable and punished. This notion stems from the perception of criminal act as “deviance [which] makes people more alert to the interests they share in common and draws attention to those values which constitute the ‘collective conscience’ of the community” (Erikson 1966, 4).

Durkheim underscores the role of deviant acts in cementing collective solidarity, stating:

Because they are found in all consciences, the infraction committed arouses in those who have evidence of it or who learn of its existence the same indignation. Everybody is attacked; consequently, everybody opposes the attack. Not only is the reaction general, but it is collective, which is not the same thing. It is not produced isolatedly in each one, but with a totality and a unity, nevertheless variable, according to the case. (Durkheim quoted in Vidmar 2011, 1).

Applied to transitional justice, this imperative calls for efforts to respond in a comprehensive and effective way to the legacies of past wrongs. Justice is said to be retributive when the focus is on judicial investigations of the alleged crimes and punishment of those found guilty beyond reasonable doubt. It is said to be restorative when the focus is on various forms of community-centered justice in which reconciliatory and/or reparative mechanisms tend to feature more prominently than retribution. In the case of Rwanda and Burundi, both countries’ official discourses highlight the necessity of combining the two approaches and achieving a balance “between vengeance and forgiveness” (Minow 1999). Nevertheless, at a time when Burundi has yet to forge a clear path through a tripartite (UN-Government-civil society) approach, Rwanda has successfully completed the daunting task of adjudicating nearly two million genocide-related criminal cases—a world record. The big picture for each case suggests two consistently divergent approaches to past abuses, namely, victor’s justice in Rwanda, and a toothless gamble for consensual justice in Burundi.

## Victor's justice in post-genocide Rwanda

The RPF-led government responded to the demands of justice in a variety of ways. However, strong evidence suggests three major phases through which these responses evolved from scant attention to trials and errors before paving the way for a top-down, “justice for some” (Fletcher 1995) if ethnically biased, victor's justice that coincided with President Kagame's rise to power .

### Phase I: Scant attention to justice

Throughout its road to Kigali and shortly after it defeated the *genocidaire* forces in July 1994, the RPF's dominant justice motto was: “kill the killers, save the innocents.”<sup>46</sup> After UN agencies, human rights groups, and some officials including the then Minister of Justice and the Minister of Internal Affairs started denouncing these “purification” killings. RPF soldiers abandoned summary executions to embark on a new campaign of massive arrests and detentions in all corners of the country. During this period, the available information suggests that the RPF had little interest in the justice sector. The dramatic shift in the leadership of the ministry of justice from independent technocrats (first a former magistrate and human rights activist, Alphonse-Marie Nkubito from July 1994 to August 1995, then an obscure lawyer, Martha Mukamurenzi, and later a law professor, Faustin Nteziryayo) to RPF loyalists (Jean de Dieu Mucyo, Edda Mukabagwiza, Tharcisse Karugarama, John Busingye) speaks volume about this point. The composition of other judiciary branches from the Supreme Court and intermediary courts to the Magistrate High Council followed the same trends. While the RPF's control over other strategic sectors was evident, the judiciary was relatively independent. Thus for instance on July 26, 1995

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<sup>46</sup> I personally heard more than one RPF soldier invoking this “norm” to justify targeted killings in a suburb of Kigali in August 1994. Other independent sources reported such killings. For instance, on September 23, 1994, in a report known as “Gersony Report” which was subsequently suppressed, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees concludes that the RPA killed between 25,000 and 45,000 persons in reprisal attacks between April and August 1, 1994 (quoted in Des Forges 1999).

, the Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the newly appointed Parliament's legislation of June 9, 1995 suspending the procedural rules relating to remand in custody.

### **Phase II: Trials and errors**

According to insider sources, the RPF leadership took interest in the justice sector in the wake of the creation of the ICTR in November 1994. The first response was to oppose the UN resolution establishing the international tribunal. The second step was the government's initiative to convene an "International Conference on Genocide, Impunity and Accountability" in Kigali from November 1 to November 5, 1995 (RoR 1995) in an effort to examine the appropriate ways and means to respond to the increasing demands for justice. One of the Conference's recommendations was to establish a solid legal framework that empowered the Rwandan judicial system to adjudicate the crime of genocide. As one expert observes however, "[the] task of legislating was arduous, as it was necessary to find a way forward while taking account of the magnitude of the crimes, the rights of the victims seeking justice and the process of national reconciliation" (de Beer 1997,19). Worse still, the 1996 official statistics suggested that more than 92,000 genocide suspects languished in detention, most without charge.

The next response came in the form of Specialized Chambers which were launched in December 1996<sup>47</sup> and culminated in the public executions of 22 genocide perpetrators on April 24, 1998. According to one local leading human rights group, the specialized chambers put on trial 9,721 genocide suspects between 1996 and 2002; 775 were sentenced to death penalty, 2,441 to life imprisonment, and 2,090 were found innocent (Liprodhor 2002).

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<sup>47</sup> I had the privilege to closely monitor and/or supervise monitoring of most the genocide trials during 1996-1999. For instance, I monitored the very first trial that took place in Kibungo on December 27, 1996, which lasted four hours, resulting in two death sentences. I was then working with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Office- Field Operation in Rwanda. I then served as Coordinator for a "Genocide Trials Monitoring" Project jointly set up by Human Rights Watch and the umbrella organization of Rwandan civil society groups (Cladho) during the period of 1997-1998. Later on, I was tasked by Liprodhor to put in place and lead the Center for Information and Documentation on Genocide Trials (CDIPG).

Amidst pessimistic prognostics that it would take more than a century to deal with the pending criminal cases given the terribly slow pace of prosecution, the government made it clear that an alternative was needed. This came in the form of Gacaca jurisdictions. While Gacaca emerged from national consultations initiated between May 1998 and June 1999 by President Pasteur Bizimungu, it was only after the new president, Paul Kagame, took office that the law establishing the Gacaca jurisdictions was officially promulgated in January 2001 (ROR 2001). This move coincided with an increasing attention given to the justice sector, which rose to prominence within the government's priorities as a cornerstone of the regime.

### **Phase III: Justice as a cornerstone of the RPF regime**

Until 2001, subject matter of justice was framed in an ambiguous language of “itsembabwoko n’itsembatsemba[literally, ethnic cleansing and massacres].” This phrase, officially translated as “genocide and crimes against humanity” was initially meant to account for the dual features of the crimes committed between April - July 1994, namely, the killings targeting Tutsi people as a group, the killings targeting the Hutu leaders of the opposition including Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and several other high-ranking officials. However, Kagame's presidency set in motion a set of policies and structures that some observers described as the RPF's tools of “instrumentalizing the genocide[...] to maintain its hold on power” (Des Forges quoted in Waldorf 2011, 49). This move translated into four major innovative strategies: (i) anti-genocide legislation; (ii) genocide-related neologism; and (iii) Gacaca jurisdictions, and, (iv) pressures for one-sided international justice.

#### ***Anti-genocide legislation***

The first step toward instrumentalizing genocide occurred with a 2001 law criminalizing “offenses of discrimination and sectarianism” (RoR 2011b). According to reliable sources close

to the RPF, this law was adopted in response to a move taken by former president Pasteur Bizimungu, who defied the RPF and founded a new political party after being forced into resignation and replaced by Paul Kagame in 2000.<sup>48</sup> “Because he was a Hutu,” suggests an RPF insider I interviewed in 2012, “there was fear that he would mobilize his fellow Hutu countrymen against Kagame.” It was indeed on the basis of this law that Bizimungu was later put on trial and sentenced to 15 years in jail. The letter and spirit of the 2001 law were later incorporated into the 2003 Constitution in the wake of the transition endgame marked by the 2003 presidential and legislative elections.

Specifically, Article 13 of the 2003 Constitution criminalizes “revisionism, negationism, and trivialization of genocide,” whereas Article 9 commits the government to “fighting the ideology of genocide and all its manifestations” (RoR 2003a). In the same year, Rwanda adopted a new genocide law that criminalizes “any person who will have publicly shown, by his or her words, writings, images, or by any other means, that he or she has negated the genocide committed, rudely minimized it or attempted to justify or approve its grounds” (RoR 2003b). Finally, in anticipation of the 2008-2010 electoral marathon, Rwanda adopted a new law making punishable the crime of “Genocide Ideology” (RoR 2008). While this legal arsenal was officially meant to deal with genocide, it actually served a wide range of political ends from silencing local and international critics to constraining political parties and punishing dissidents and opponents. For instance, on the eve of the 2003 elections, the only opposition party, MDR, was banned following an accusation that it promoted “divisionism” and “genocide ideology.” In response to widespread denunciations of the abuses that marred the elections, including “disappearances,

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<sup>48</sup> A former Parliament Speaker testifies, “My resignation was part of Kagame’s plan to have total control over state institutions, and to clear his way toward the presidency. Before my resignation, Kagame had ordered Chief Justice Jean Mustinzi and his deputies, Paul Ruyenzi and Paul Rutayisire, to resign; they were replaced by RPF loyalists. After my resignation, the prime minister and the president followed in the space of less than three months. Kagame took over the presidency.” (Sebarenzi 2011, 351).

arrests, threats, intimidation and co-option of human rights defenders,” (Frontline 2005), “the RPF-led government concocted a report through a Parliament commission. The report “not only leveled accusations of genocidal ideology against the usual targets (the sole independent human rights organization, LIPRODHOR, and the last independent newspaper, Umuseso), [...but] also named CARE, Trócaire, BBC, VOA, and a multitude of Christian churches as several the charges of and divisionism” (Frontline 2005). The cases that attracted the most attention included that of a prominent human rights activist and Rwanda genocide expert, the late Alison Des Forges, who was accused of becoming “a spokesperson for genocide ideology” in 1998 and declared persona non grata in Rwanda after she criticized the law on genocide ideology, calling it an abusive tool intended to punish any criticism of the RPF (Waldorf 2011).

### ***Gacaca jurisdictions***

Following the 2001-2002 pilot phase, which yielded meager results, and after a long pause during the 2003 presidential and legislative elections, the Gacaca law was amended and a new organic law was promulgated on June 19, 2004. The Gacaca jurisdictions began operating nationwide in January 2005. The process consisted of two major phases--investigation and trials. During the investigation phase (2005-2006), the Gacaca jurisdictions identified 761,000 genocide suspects (Reyntjens 2005). Once this step was reached, the process of trials went so quickly that, by December 2007 official statistics showed that 712,723 of more than 1.12 million cases had been completed (Radio 10, 2010). The vast majority of Gacaca jurisdictions concluded the trials in 2009, and the government officially closed them on June 18, 2012 with an impressive record of almost two million cases addressed (Radio10, 2010). In many ways, the Gacaca jurisdictions proved an extraordinarily innovative, cheap, and swift response to the burden of holding accountable thousands of genocide suspects.

For its admirers like Phil Clark, Gacaca appeared as a “rough road to justice and reconciliation” which, thanks to its genuine “engagement through popular participation,” fulfilled the promise of “mending hearts and minds” and thus put the Rwandan society on a painful, but sure path of “healing and forgiveness” (Clark 2010). Beneath the surface, however, such claims are seriously undermined by Gacaca’s failure to move beyond the victor’s paradigm. Given what one scholar describes as “the imposition of collective guilt on Hutu and the lack of official accountability for RPF war crimes,” (Waldorf 2011, 51) it is hard to counter widespread criticism that the RPF “hijacked the process [of transitional justice] and used it as just another tool of repression” (Habimana 2011, 355). This form of justice instrumentalization underscores a growing consensus among keen observers that Rwanda is moving from genocide to political vengeance.

As a Rwandan human rights activist and jurist observes,

Failure of the ruling elite to assume its share of responsibility has had a number of consequences. For one, it has left the whole judicial process grappling with issues of perception and legitimacy, raising questions about whether genocide suspects properly face the long arm of justice or are subject to political vengeance. It has also resulted in one of the worst types of post-conflict discrimination, leaving some victims to fend for themselves while allowing a selected group of perpetrators to walk free as heroes. (Habimana 2011, 355).

Echoing this assessment, another keen observer describes Gacaca as a textbook case of “the injustice of local justice” (Burnet 2008). Referring to “local perceptions of widespread injustice in the Gacaca process” in areas where community-based organizations had managed to re-establish or build new cross-ethnic relationships, Burnet observes that “Gacaca has not only deepened the cleavages between Hutu and Tutsi but also made some Tutsi genocide survivors increasingly mistrustful of the current government and of the RPF” (Burnet 2008, 188).

A former Speaker of the Rwandan Parliament, who prides himself on being “the first prominent Tutsi to flee the so-called Tutsi-dominated government,” (Sebarenzi 2011, 351) sums up:

“Rwanda is increasingly seen not as a nation emerging steadily out of the division of the past but as a country at risk of another cycle of violence” (Sebarenzi 2008, 351). To sum up this point, as I observed almost a decade ago underscoring Mamdani’s concern about RPF’s obsession to be constantly “on guard as to protect the spoils of war, to protect their hold on power and ensure their survival” (Mamdani 2001), the required minima conditions for “ truth-telling, zero-impunity and justice for all” are far from being met (Twagiramungu 2005, 91). The nature and extent of the RPF regime’s pressures for and against international justice underscores this point.

### **Pressures for One-sided International Justice**

Shocked by the magnitude of the 1994 genocide and embarrassed by its failure to stop the carnage, the international community vowed to help in rendering justice. As of March 2014, however, international justice has meant little more than bowing to the RPF’s warfare and thus reinforcing the one-sided, victor’s justice. Three instances of international jurisdiction illustrate this point. First, one needs to look at the records of the ICTR, a tribunal established on November 8, 1994 by Resolution 955 in order to try people responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international law in Rwanda, or by Rwandan citizens in nearby states, between January 1 and December 31, 1994 (UNSC 1994). Despite its enormous resources,<sup>49</sup> the tribunal’s results have been mixed at best. Its historic achievements include that of being the first international tribunal to find guilty and punish a perpetrator of genocide.

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<sup>49</sup> According to official statistics, “for biennium 2010-2011, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved initial appropriations for ICTR of \$245,295,800 gross (\$227,246,500 net) and authorized 693 posts for 2010 and 628 posts for 2011. 77 nationalities are represented at the Tribunal.” (ICTR 2013).

Moreover, the ICTR established precedent that rape can be a crime constitutive of genocide.<sup>50</sup>

In terms of trials, the tribunal has completed only 75 cases including 46 convictions, 17 pending appeals, and 12 acquittals. As part of its closing strategy, and in anticipation of the December 31, 2014 deadline, four pending cases were transferred to national courts (three in France and one in Rwanda as of June 2013) and indictment was withdrawn for two suspects. Meanwhile, two detainees had died before judgment and seven convicted perpetrators had been released after completing their sentence. While the crimes allegedly committed by RPF soldiers fall within the ICTR jurisdiction, the RPF-led government built enormous obstacles in the path to investigating and eventually prosecuting these crimes. The difficulties first started when Rwanda opposed the resolution establishing the ICTR, catching the international community off guard. While the ICTR “recognized the need to investigate the RPF cases” (Peskin 2011, 178) from the start, the first successive chief prosecutors—Goldstone and Louise Arbour—opted for “maintaining good relations” with Kigali. However, when a new chief prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, resolved to “pursue the RPF file with the most vigor” (Peskin 2011, 178), the RPF-led government first suspended its cooperation with the tribunal, then paralyzed the tribunal by blocking witnesses from traveling to Arusha, and finally managed to pressure the UN to sacrifice Del Ponte. “The high drama surrounding Del Pontes’ dismissal from the ICTR,” concludes Peskin, “showed the limits of prosecutorial independence and the obstacles to moving beyond victor’s justice” (Peskin 2011, 178). It thus came as no surprise that the new prosecutor, Hassan Jallow, bowed to pressures from Kigali and thus reinforced the prevailing image of the ICTR as an instance of “prosecution of the vanquished” (Cruvellier 2010).

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<sup>50</sup> In the case prosecuted against Jean-Paul Akayesu, the tribunal established, among other facts, that “the acts of rape and sexual violence, as other acts of serious bodily and mental harm committed against the Tutsi, reflected the determination to make Tutsi women suffer and to mutilate them even before killing them, the intent being to destroy the Tutsi group while inflicting acute suffering on its members in the process.” See *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu (Trial Judgment)*, ICTR-96-4-T, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), 2 September 1998

Second, one has to take into account the extent to which a number of western countries prosecuted genocide suspects in the West. As of March 2014, the number of people accused of genocide and put on trial by national jurisdictions amounted to eight in Belgium, one in Switzerland, two in the Netherlands, one in Canada, one in Norway, one in Sweden and one in France. What is generally overlooked however is the fact that, the basis for such trials along with several pending procedures is the mechanism known as “List of individuals involved in the genocide,” which has become increasingly controversial since its official launch in 1996. This mechanism is provided for by Organic Law of August 30, 1996 regulating the prosecution of those guilty of genocide. The law mandates, *inter alia*, the General Prosecutor to establish a list of the presumed perpetrators falling in category 1, which includes “anyone who acted in a position of authority from the national level down to the level of the cell in political parties, the army, religious organizations or the militia.” The first list of nearly 2,000 names published in November 1996 was overwhelmingly seen as “hastily assembled and often incomplete or incorrect” (HRW March 1999). A new list “corrected because of imprecision, repetition of names and deaths” (Africa News 15 July 1999 quoting officials) was published in 1999 with “nearly 800 names withdrawn from the old list and replaced by 900 new suspects” (United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services 1999). From then onwards, the list has been updated while increasingly losing credibility as it became apparent that the government used it to silence its fierce critics living in exile.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> A telling case is the fate of former Premier Pierre Celestin Rwigyema. When he fled the country in 2001, he was added to the list and later convicted of genocide by a Gacaca jurisdiction in absentia. Following a public apology to President Kagame during a “Rwanda Day” held in Chicago in 2010, Rwigyema was removed from the list, saw his judgment nullified, and eventually abandoned his US asylum to represent Rwanda in the East African Parliament.

Third, three notable attempts to hold RPF members accountable for their crimes illustrate the extent to which the weight of the RPF-led lobbying machine is poised to prevail over the international norms and efforts calling for the end of one-sided justice in post-genocide Rwanda.

The first case, and the one which drew the most attention, was the “Bruguière Report” (Bruguière 2006), an international arrest warrant issued by French judge, Jean-Louis Bruguière, for eight leading RPF members close to President Kagame in connection with the assassination of former President Habyarimana on April 6 1994. In response, Rwanda severed diplomatic ties with France in November 1996. Later on, the RPF-led government retaliated by producing on August 5, 2008 its own report—known as Mucyo Commission Report—which accused 33 current and former French officials of involvement in the 1994 genocide. Under pressures from both Kigali and powerful pro-RPF lobby groups in France, the French government re-negotiated the restoration of diplomatic relations and a new judge was appointed to reexamine the charges.

The second case took place in Spain on February 8, 2008 when a Spanish magistrate issued an indictment for 40 Rwandan military officers on charges of genocide and other heinous crimes committed in Rwanda and in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 1990 and 1998.<sup>52</sup> As of today, however, this indictment seems little more than a dead letter.

The third case began in the United States of America on April 30, 2010 when three attorneys led by Peter Erlinder filed a wrongful death lawsuit in an Oklahoma City federal court, alleging that Rwandan President Paul Kagame ordered the political assassinations that triggered the 1994 Rwanda Genocide. The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the widows of former Presidents Habyarimana of Rwanda and Ntaryamira of Burundi who both perished in the plane shot out of

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<sup>52</sup> An English version of the indictment is available at <http://www.rwandadocumentsproject.net/gsd/collect/comment/index/assoc/HASH4e91.dir/Espana-Audiencia%20nacional-English%20version.pdf>

the sky on April 6, 1994. At first glance, the case seemed flimsy, especially given the controversies surrounding Erlinder's arrest and subsequent release on bail in Rwanda. However, it took a serious turn that obliged Kigali to mobilize significant resources and political lobbyists. This came after the court declared a default judgment in favor of the plaintiffs, alleging that the defendants failed to answer the complaint within the time allowed. To appeal the judgment, Kagame called upon a prominent lawyer, Pierre Richard Prosper, who ironically once served as the US ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues from 2001 to 2005. Meanwhile, on August 29, 2011 the US State Department filed a report entitled "Suggestion of Immunity Submitted by the United States of America," which requested immunity for Rwandan President Paul Kagame. In response, the plaintiffs appealed to the US Supreme Court, filing their objections to the State Department's "Suggestion of Immunity on Behalf of Rwanda's President Kagame." In their objections, they "cited the State Department statement of interest of the United States of America, No. 1,104 CV 1360 (Feb. 14, 2011) (LMB), declaring that immunity is only applicable to 'official acts by a sitting government'" (Bay View National Black Paper, 2011). The Supreme Court finally rejected the plaintiffs' objections in March 2013.

In short, the RPF responded to the demand of justice in post-genocide Rwanda through various mechanisms ranging from summary executions, massive arrests and trials in ordinary courts and Gacaca jurisdictions to anti-genocide legal arsenal and international lobbies in an effort to legitimize and consolidate its monopolistic hold on power. Twenty years since the genocide, the various steps taken at domestic and international levels to reckon with the heinous crimes committed in Rwanda can be summarized in one phrase beautifully crafted by a former top justice official in Rwanda: "Untold story, unfinished business: Confronting the crimes of the Victors." (Gahima 2013, 158-186). Burundi offers a different, albeit more pessimistic, scenario.

## **Toothless Gamble for Consensual Justice in post-conflict Burundi**

As discussed above, the conflicting parties in Arusha agreed upon a maximalist approach to reckon with past wrongs committed since independence. However, evidence shows that, amidst conflicting interests and competing agendas, the government led by the CNDD-FDD opted for provisional immunities while negotiating a consensual, multiparty, and multilateral justice strategy, which is still slow in coming. To use a telling metaphor, accounting for past abuses in Burundi remains a terrain with so many “stones left unturned” (Vandeginste 2013). The overall picture shows that (i) the 2000 Arusha Peace Agreement defined and recommended an ambitious endeavor of justice for all; (ii) the transitional government (2002-2005) failed to agree on a coherent strategy to deal with the demands of justice; and, (iii) upon its coming into power in 2005, the CNDD-FDD first introduced the principle of “provisional immunities” for all and from then onwards has championed the politics of amnesia in the name of an ideal commonly known as “kurekurirana[mutual pardon].”

### ***Phase I: Arusha Peace Process***

Unlike Rwandan parties who deliberately avoided invoking past abuses during the negotiation process, the Burundian parties devoted considerable time to this issue. They recognized, among other things, “that acts of genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity have been perpetrated since independence against Tutsi and Hutu ethnic communities in Burundi” (Arusha-B, Protocol I, art. 3, par. 8). Aware of the divergent views and interpretations of these past abuses and keen to reckon with them in a comprehensive and reconciliatory way, three key mechanisms of transitional justice were recommended: (i) International Judicial Commission of Inquiry; (ii) National Truth and Reconciliation Commission; and (iii) UN-sponsored International Criminal Tribunal for Burundi.

As of June 2013, however, neither mechanism was operational, due to the obstacles and alternative measures explained below.

### **Phase II: The post-Arusha transitional government**

Following the Arusha Peace Agreement signed on August 28 2000, a new constitution was promulgated on November 1, 2001 and the first transitional government was formed on July 24, 2002. Aware of its internal divisions and fragility, the transition government contented itself with marking three symbolic steps in the endeavor of dealing with the demands of justice as defined in the Arusha Agreement provisions.

The first step, reached after exhausting debates, was the government's request of May 8, 2002 to the United Nations regarding the setup of an international judiciary inquiry commission. The second step occurred on September 22, 2003 with the implementation of law no. 01/004 on the prevention and repression of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The third step was the promulgation on December 27, 2004 of a law that set up of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Later on, however, all three steps proved toothless: A UN report played down the necessity of an international inquiry commission, the law on the setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission proved impossible to implement and the law on genocide remained a mere piece of paper. For instance, in response to several requests from successive transitional governments that led Burundi between 2000 and 2004, a UN assessment mission visited Burundi from May 16 to 24, 2004, to evaluate the possibility of responding to the demands of justice in line with the Arusha Agreement.

The resulting report, called the Kalomoh Report after the President of the Mission, Tuliameni Kalomoh, concluded that there was no need for an International Inquiry Commission:

The mission is, therefore, of the view that a comprehensive approach to the pursuit of truth and justice in Burundi is now necessary. Unlike the Arusha Agreement, which foresees parallel national and international tracks, the mission proposes to be a cooperative effort in which the international community lends it assistance and the Government of Burundi remains ultimately responsible for eradicating impunity and restoring the rule of law. (UNSC 2005).

Instead, the Commission recommended the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and an UN-sponsored Special Chamber within the Burundian judicial system. In light of this report, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1606 on June 25, 2005, which requested the Secretary-General begin negotiations on a truth commission and a special chamber within the country's court system.

### ***Phase III: The post-election era (2005-2014)***

There is no question that denied and delayed justice was a distinctive feature of—and indeed a major factor in—the bloody episodes of political violence that engulfed Burundi since independence. It came as no surprise that one of the cornerstones of the Arusha Peace Agreement was the negotiating parties' commitment to end the culture of impunity. Paradoxically, once the agreement was signed, some forms of impunity appeared as a prerequisite. This move was of a particular concern because the current ruling party championed it before and after coming into power. First, the CNDD-FDD agreed to join the transitional government only after the latter enacted a law on November 21, 2003 guaranteeing provisional immunities to political leaders returning from exile. Later on, after the CNDD-FDD won the 2005 elections, Burundi adopted a similar law to guarantee provisional immunity to members of the armed group FNL in exchange for a ceasefire. As of March 2014, Burundi was still under the provisional immunities regime.

A promising step toward ending the provisional immunities regime came in the form of a tripartite mechanism involving the UN, the government and the civil society. In fact, following the Kalomoh Report and subsequent resolutions, the government of Burundi and the United Nations agreed to set up a tripartite UN-Government-Civil Society Committee in charge of conducting national consultations on the establishment of appropriate transitional justice mechanisms in Burundi. An ad-hoc Framework Agreement was signed on November 2, 2007, and a tripartite six-member Commission was set up shortly thereafter. National consultations inside and outside Burundi took place between July 2009 and March 2010, and the final report was released on April 20, 2010 (CPT 2010). Key findings from the consultations can be summarized into three main points, (i) it established a comprehensive temporal scope of the abuses worth reckoning with; (ii) addressed the necessity of establishing a twin mechanism of accountability; and finally, (iii) recognized the need for a long-term, pluralistic, and multilateral process of reparation and reconciliation.

While the search for a viable and feasible strategy for meaningful justice in Burundi is a matter of hot controversy among the Burundian elite, especially between the Tutsi who portray themselves as “clean hands folks” and the former military establishment from Bururi, the official position of the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD, leaves little room for accountability. To cite just one example: At a time when a government delegation was negotiating with the UN the means and ways of responding to the demands of justice in Burundi, the CNDD-FDD issued a memorandum in May 2007 stating, *inter alia*, that “instead of giving priority to suppression through the mere judiciary process, mutual forgiveness is the best way to guarantee national reconciliation and sustainable peace” (interview with a CNDD-FDD cadre, March 2014).

To conclude this section on the two instances of transitional justice, a metaphorical picture drawn by a Burundian civil society leader and scholar is worth quoting at length:

Transitional justice in Burundi is like a bus, with eight million passengers, and several rotating drivers, going to the direction of truth, justice and reconciliation. The way is long and there are many hurdles including police check-points, slippery roads, traffic jams, etc. Among the passengers, some are ready to continue the journey and have put security belts, but others do not want the bus to reach the destination and are trying to disturb the driver, others want the bus to slow down. Among the rotating drivers, some are reluctant to reach the destination and so drive unwillingly. All this is happening when the time is limited. (Louis-Marie Nindorera, quoted in American Friends Service Committee, 2011, 13).

This image captures so well the problem of competing agendas and conflicting approaches surrounding the quest for a viable response to the pressing demands of justice in Burundi. Better still, the analogy sounds even more appropriate when one juxtaposes the Burundian journey to justice against the Rwandan one. While both journeys were subject to “many hurdles,” the major difference lies in the fact that, to use Nindorera’s images, the Rwandan bus has no room for the kind of troublemaker passengers or reluctant drivers who jeopardized the Burundian bus journey.

Here and again, there is no question that both rebel-led governments are keen to use and abuse the transitional justice to do what is best for the people in power. Nevertheless, one notes also that the two journeys toward justice seemed to follow two consistent and divergent authority patterns at work elsewhere, as shown in the above-mentioned cases, namely, monopolistic centralization in one case and negotiated arrangements in the other. In this respect, we can conclude that the rebel-led governments’ responses to the demands of justice in Rwanda and Burundi embody in many ways the two extreme poles of the failure to meet heads-on the vexing challenge of “transforming societies after political violence,” namely, the one of moving beyond

“the toxic past without covering it up or becoming mired in it.” (Hamber 2009). Note that the outcomes of these divergent responses to the demands of justice are not limited to the governments, however. For instance, while Rwandan voices have been heard all over the world calling for justice, little if anything has emerged from the Burundian Diaspora.

The magnitude of the 1994 Rwanda genocide can be invoked to concur with the importance of front-page news like this one from The New York Times, “By bringing civil lawsuits against Hutus suspected of involvement in the genocide, Alain and Dafroza Gauthier have challenged France’s longstanding protection of Rwandan fugitives,” (Martin-Chico, 2014). What the horrors of the Rwanda genocide alone do not, and indeed cannot explain, however, is the puzzle why thousands of Burundians living in the Diaspora and, who, like Dafroza Gauthier,<sup>53</sup> suffered enormously from the unspeakable horrors associated with the various cycles of genocidal violence in Burundi, have done little if anything to lobby their host countries like France or Belgium to hold the Burundian perpetrators accountable.

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<sup>53</sup> Dafroza Gauthier is a French woman of Rwandan origin who, along with his husband and several French activists, has devoted much of her life since 1994 to identifying, denouncing and bringing to justice the presumed perpetrators of the genocide living abroad.

## Conclusion

The respective roads that brought to power the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie-Forces de Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD) resulted from numerous, complex and sometimes contradictory views, decisions, and actions undertaken by various actors at different levels. Nevertheless, beneath the singularity and specificity of each input, strong evidence suggests recurrent patterns of behavior or ways of doing things. Thus, ample evidence reveals that the RPF emerged as a cohesive group with a clear agenda while the CNDD-FDD was born of numerous factions of a fragmented network. As Out of these initial conditions emerged two different types of leadership. The RPF grew increasingly centralized under the leadership of a strongman, Paul Kagame, whereas the CNDD - FDD emerged from a web of rival factions and in turn split into several factions. Moreover, remarkable differences in the outcomes of the two rebel roads to power concur in highlighting the consistent nature of the patterns of behavior at work. Under General Kagame's iron-fisted leadership, the RPF captured power by force and transformed genocide-haunted Rwanda into a strong, highly centralized state with a big voice in the international arena. Contrariwise, the CNDD-FDD came to power through a negotiated arrangement and, after winning legislative and presidential elections, presided over a weak and divided government with little visibility beyond national borders. These divergent trajectories became particularly evident during the peace negotiations as the RPF (as well as the Habyarimana regime) privileged hard bargaining strategies including threats and dirty tricks, whereas the CNDD and later the CNDD-FDD (as well as their rival parties) privileged problem-solving strategies ranging from "difficult conversations" to relation-building.

In this regard, while the exit strategies (polarization in one case and *détente* in the other) were not inevitable, one can assert that they were predictable. So were the strategies put forth by the two rebel groups once into power; strategies crafted to respond to the daunting tasks of post-conflict reconstruction, such as military integration and transitional justice. As I have shown, for the sake of cohesion and given its propensity for confrontation, the RPF-led government opted for quasi-monolithic army and victor's justice. By contrast, for the sake of compromise, the government led by the CNDD-FDD set up an ethnically balanced army and opted for "provisional immunities" for all the warring parties.

Put together, the empirical reality of dominant patterns of correlation in the ways the RPF and the CNDD-FDD along with their respective governments responded to various challenges from value-setting and peace negotiations to military integration and transitional justice begs a better explanation of where these patterns along with variation therein come from in the first place and why they evolve the way they do. Addressing this puzzle is the purpose of the next chapter that draws on the empirical correlation between macro and micro patterns to build a comprehensive theory of variation in the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi, past and present.

# Chapter Five

## ACCOUNTING FOR CONGRUENCE

### IN THE MICRO AND MACRO PATTERNS OF VARIATION

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#### Introduction

After documenting and describing core similarities and differences between Rwanda and Burundi at macro level (Chapter 3) and, at micro level, between the RPF and the CNDD-FDD (Chapter 4), I now turn to the research question at the heart of this dissertation: what explains variation in the rebel roads to and exercise of power in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi?

In light of the general conclusions drawn from the preceding chapters, my argument can be reframed as follows:

**Variation in the rebel governance systems in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi is an instance of micro *replicata* of longer timespans macro processes.**

This argument rests on three premises:

- i. Variation in political trajectories is more predictable than what contingent and idiosyncratic factors suggest. This predictability results from the search for congruence (i.e. coherence and stability within a system) by political entrepreneurs eager to make sense of and find their ways amidst the complexity and opacity of political gambles and zugzwangs.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Zugzwang is a term used in the Chess game to describe “a situation in which the obligation to make a move in one’s turn is a serious, often decisive, disadvantage.” (Oxford English Dictionary, online).

- ii. The search for congruence follows a path dependent logic according to which “particular courses of action, once introduced, can be almost impossible to reverse” (Pierson 2000, 251). Each of such courses of action comes with a new layer of congruence, which, in turn, reinforces the dynamics of “increasing returns processes.”
- iii. Since politics is contentious in nature, political trajectories and variation therein can be best conceived of as “a template that predisposes, but does not fully determine, particular results” (Bratton and Van de Walle quoted in Meierhenrich 2008, 45). In this regard, the value of a long-run perspective like the one I advocate in this dissertation lies in its promise, not to foretell the future of political trajectories, but rather to narrow the extent of choices available to individual and institutional actors and thus explain why some outcomes are more likely than others.

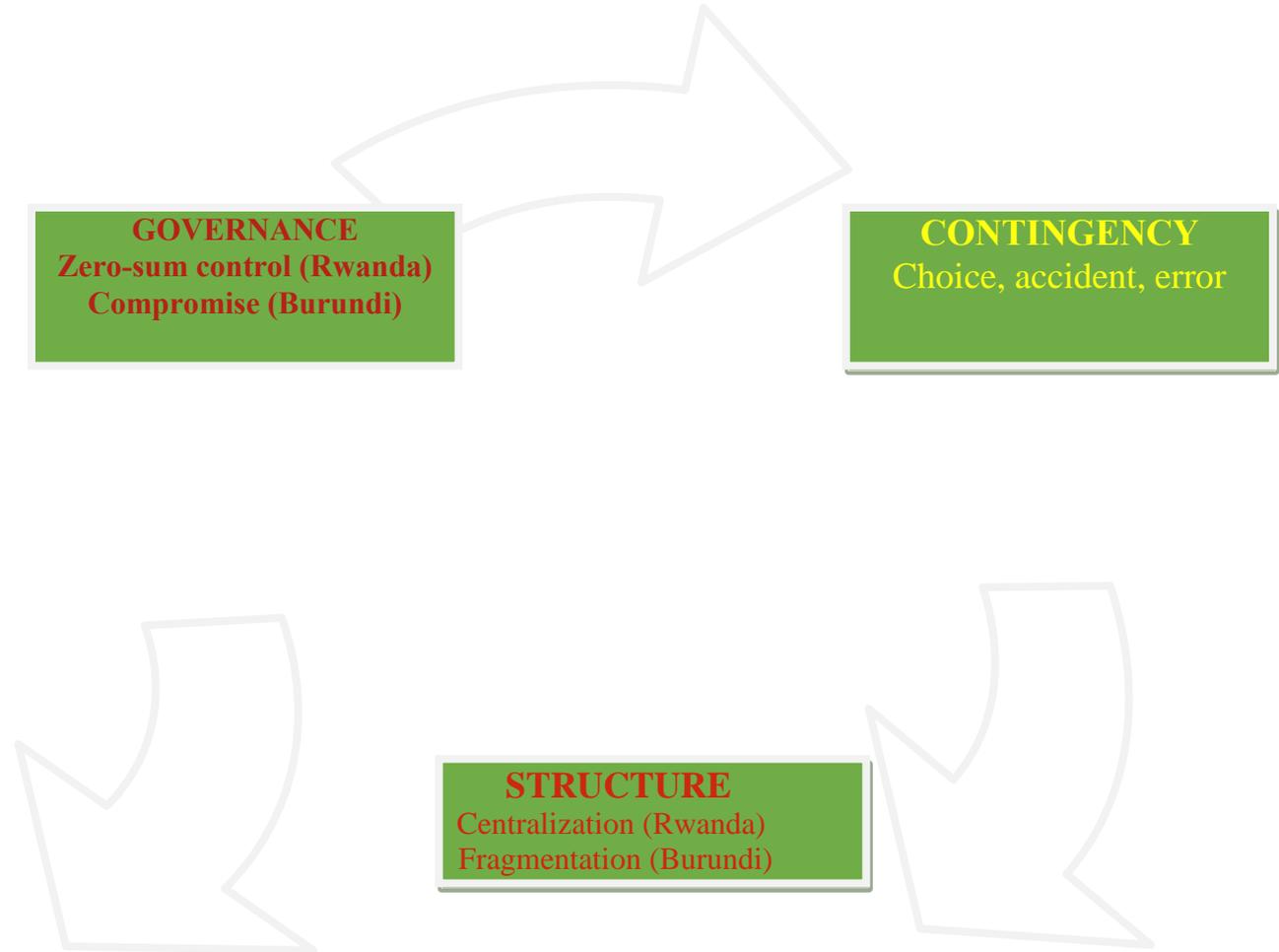
To explicit these propositions, the chapter begins with a discussion of the question of predictability in light of the patterns of enduring variation in the governance systems of Rwanda and Burundi. It then recapitulates the major ‘increasing returns processes’ through which these governance patterns emerged and developed over time. Finally, it sheds light on major factors that make political developments more complex, and therefore limit the margins of predictability.

## SECTION I

### **Toward a unified account of Variation: A Question of Predictability**

“Distribution of governmental authority,” wrote James Fessler a half-century ago, “is one of the oldest and most abiding problems of society. By our solutions of this distributive problem we determine whether the government will be stable or unstable; whether it will be a dictatorship.” (Fessler as quoted in Herbst 2000, 1). To be sure, one may be justified in saying that there are as many kinds of politics, or “distribution of governmental authority” as there are governments and leaders - to say nothing of followers and foes. However, one can also be justified in conceiving of politics as a “compound” in the tradition of Aristotle, within which we can distinguish “the simple elements or least parts of the whole... in order that we may see in what the different kinds of rule differ from one another, and whether any scientific result can be attained about each one of them” (Aristotle 1885, 12-13).

In this respect, empirical examination of ‘the different kinds of rule’ underlying the rebel roads to power and exercise thereof in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi shows two consistently divergent trends in power distribution: Monopolistic control under the iron-fist leadership of a strongman in one case, and compromise and power-sharing led by a fragmented leadership in the other. The two overall trends can be schematized as follows: (Figure # 4).

*Figure # 4: General Patterns of Governance in Rwanda and Burundi*

At the micro level, this empirical representation is consistent with the rebel trajectories as discussed in Chapter 4. Recall that the RPF emerged and evolved as a highly centralized and unified movement whereas the CNDD-FDD emerged as a faction from a fractured web of armed groups, and in its turn split into competing factions as well. While both rebellions mastered the art of ‘waging war while talking peace’, the RPF won a military victory and went on to build a strong-state regime through zero-sum control mechanisms including a quasi-monolithic army and pursuing victor’s justice.

The CNDD-FDD, on the other hand, got stuck in a stalemate that was followed by a peaceful settlement; once in power, it opted for consociational mechanisms, including bi-ethnic power-sharing in all civil and military institutions, and negotiated impunity (euphemistically known as ‘provisional immunities).

At first glance, one can argue that the correlation between the core features of the two groups (cohesion vs. fragmentation) and the endgame of their struggles (zero-sum control vs. power-sharing) is nothing more than a matter of the way the military game played itself out. Strong evidence suggests, however, that these features were more tenacious, and therefore more predictable, than currently acknowledged. To shed light on the causal mechanism underlying such tenaciousness in a theoretically sound and empirically grounded way, these divergent patterns can be best understood through the lens of “dimensions of influence relations” in the Eckstein and Gurr (1975). In fact, a systematic comparison shows that the two rebellions’ trajectories appear as telling instances of the extreme poles of the spectrum state-society considered from four dimensions of authority in the Eckstein -Gurr tradition—*also referred to as the E-G Scheme--*, namely, directiveness, compliance, participation, and responsiveness.

### **Directiveness**

*Directiveness* is that dimension or aspect of relations of influence that “refers to the extent to which activities in a social unit are subject to directives, rather than being left to the free discretion of members” (Eckstein and Gurr 1975, 54-55). In operational terms, directiveness is conceived of as a continuum between the two polar extremes of *regimented* (strongly directive) and *permissive (laissez faire)*. Judging from empirical evidence about the extent to which each rebellion has exercised power, it appears that the RPF leadership tends to privilege strong directiveness while its Burundian counterpart bends toward permissive directiveness. The same

trends are evident in the macro trajectories described in chapter 3, be under Ndori vs. Rushatsi, Rujugira vs. Rugamba, Rwabugiri vs. Gisabo, or more recently, Habyarimana vs. Buyoya and Kagame vs. Nkurunziza.

### **Compliance**

Compliance rests on the premise that there are a number of factors that can engender people's disposition to comply with the directives from above in a social unit, such as natural inclination, fear of sanction (cost-benefit calculations), or sense of legitimacy. Depending on the prevailing rationale in a social unit, Eckstein and Gurr (1975) identify a vast range of modes of compliance, ranging from submissiveness on one extreme to insubordination on the other. While compliance may vary from one context to another, the landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi -- from the founding fathers' era to current rebel-led regimes, via colonial administration and ethnocratic republics-- show strong evidence that Rwandans seem politically more submissive than Burundians (see chapter 2, sections 2&3, and Chapter 4, section 2).

### **Participation**

Participation refers to the extent to which members of a social unit are allowed to influence their leaders' processes of decision-making in terms of *direction*, *causality*, and *control* (Eckstein and Gurr 1975, 67). This notion rests on the premise that interactions between leaders and followers in any social unit do not simply amount to one-way relationships. While acts of participation in a social unit do not constitute a homogenous whole, it is possible to distinguish between members who tend to be passive followers of the directives from above and members who are eager to influence the directive activities of their leaders. In this regard, a key parameter that can allow us to account for variation between Rwandan and Burundian leadership styles is the notion of 'channels of participation'. According to the congruence logic, members tend to be active in a

social unity with open channels of participation, while passive followers tend to prevail in social units with closed channels. The empirical context of Rwanda and Burundi, past and present, confirms this hypothesis. In Burundi, alternative channels of participation (peripheral chiefdoms and autonomous principalities, political parties and intra-party fractions, civil society groups, and independent media) tend to flourish as a result of compromise and fragmented politics, while the ruling elite's monopolistic centralization in Rwanda leaves little, if any, margin of maneuver to any alternative forces.

### **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness, as a dimension of power relations, refers to the extent to which leaders are responsive and sensitive to their followers' demands and 'inputs.' Eckstein and Gurr (1975) distinguish two extreme poles of responsiveness, *autocracy* and *alterocracy*. Autocracy implies a form of leadership which seldom tolerates alternative options. Overall, autocrat leaders are eager to "define their own problems and issues, keep their own counsel, issue whatever directives they please, implementing them as they see fit, and ignore or block off 'feedback' except for information required to sanction noncompliance" (Eckstein and Gurr 1975,67). Alterocracy refers to a form of leadership where the leaders "act in all cases according to what they perceive to be the public opinion of social units, counting their own preferences no greater than others" (Eckstein and Gurr 1975,67). While pure forms of either extreme pole are not easy to find in the real world, it would be hardly an exaggeration to define typical Rwandan leaders such as Ruganzu, Rwabugiri, Habyarimana, and Kagame as autocrats who "perceive social units as collective extensions of themselves"(Eckstein and Gurr 1975, 67). Nor would it be irrelevant to consider typical Burundian leaders such as Ntare Rushatsi, Prince Louis Rwagasore, Pierre

Buyoya or Peter Nkurunziza as alterocrats who “see themselves as personal extensions of social units.” (Eckstein and Gurr 1975, 55).

Seen through the lens of the four dimensions described above, the game of distribution of authority can best be conceived of as a two-way path that goes back and forth between the leadership and the society as a whole. This view implies that autocratic leadership (like the one we see in Rwanda) is only possible where and when compliance is possible. Submissive compliance reinforces autocracy and thus limits the spaces for peoples’ participation in shaping the decision-making process. Contrariwise, in a situation where compliance is unlikely and the leaders have no means to enforce it, the prospects for alternative *power loci* increase, which in return expand the spaces for peoples’ participation. Insights from the divergent strategies put forth by the two rebellions in terms of peace negotiations and transitional justice speak volumes about the self-reinforcing and interdependent nature of these dimensions of authority that can be schematized as follows:

**Figure #5: Variation in the core dimensions of influence relations in Rwanda and Burundi**

| Dimension of influence relations | Rwanda/RPF | Burundi/CNDD-FDD |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| Directedness                     | Regimented | Permissive       |
| Participation (channels of)      | Close      | Open             |
| Responsiveness                   | Autocratic | Alterocratic     |
| Compliance                       | Submissive | Defiant          |

Thus, the Rwandan Arusha peace process followed the model of “closed channels of participation” which translated into a “two-party logic” (the RPF and the Government) at the expense of other social and political forces. It thus comes as no surprise that when neither party found it to be in its interest to implement the agreement and what both parties then referred to as *Rurangiza* [Final Solution] became inevitable, the other forces (notably political opposition, civil society groups and private sector) were left with no other options but to take sides and thus

surrender to one of the belligerents. By contrast, the Burundian negotiations followed the model of “open channels of participation”, which translated into the practice of multi-party logic that gave room not only to 17 political parties, but also to competing factions within the state apparatus (e.g. Parliament vs. Government).

The same is true for the rebel-led governments’ response to the demands of justice. In Rwanda, the RPF used a regimented directiveness approach to impose a victor’s justice and went on to implement tough policies including administrative reforms and legal mechanisms to ensure that the citizens comply with little resistance. By contrast, pressured to deliver in a country where it had neither total control over state machinery nor the required means to force its will on the society as a whole, the CNDD-FDD opted for the strategy of provisional immunities. To be sure, this disguised impunity shocked change-seekers both within and beyond Burundi, as well as some Hutu who were eager, in their own words, to “make the [former] Tutsi military pay.” (Interview, Gitega March 2014). However, strong evidence shows that it proved most welcome for all the powerful players, including (in addition to FDD own combatants) the former Tutsi army, the former ruling party UPRONA, and some cadres from the FRODEBU involved in the 1993 anti-Tutsi pogroms in the wake of President Ndadaye’s assassination. To account for the crucial factors that determine how likely leaders are to exercise power over their subordinates, the Eckstein-Gurr scheme puts forth another four variables: *coverage*, *latitude*, *supervision*, and *sanction*. Coverage refers to the degree to which authority is exercised throughout a given entity. Seen from a vertical perspective, coverage is said comprehensive when control is concentrated in the top extreme, and restricted when control lies mostly at the tail extreme. Latitude refers to “the number of ways in which members or sub-actors of social units can behave according to prevalent norms” (Eckstein and Gurr 1975, 55). It is said to be specific when it is bound by

particular stipulations regulating normative behavior; and it is said to be general when it tends to leave “room for discretion to subs[subordinates]” (Eckstein and Gurr 1975, 55). Supervision is about the extent of compliance or failures to comply. It runs from close (strong) to loose (weak). Regarding Sanction threshold, it is a parameter that examines the extent to which effects on behavior are judged and sanctions enforced. A strong sanction threshold is deemed *severe* and a weak one *lenient*. Broadly speaking, variation in the parameters of control in Rwanda and Burundi at both macro and micro levels can be schematized as follows:

**Figure # 6: Variation in the core parameters of control in Rwanda and Burundi**

| Parameters of Control | Rwanda/RPF    | Burundi/CNDD-FDD |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Coverage              | Comprehensive | Restricted       |
| Latitude              | Regimented    | Permissive       |
| Supervision           | Close         | Loose            |
| Sanction              | Severe        | Lenient          |

As with the earlier schematic, these four parameters are codependent and mutually reinforcing. For instance, in the case of extreme centralization, such as the court under Kigeli Rwabugiri or the RPF-led government under Paul Kagame, the central government’s ability to exercise effective control over the whole territory (coverage) explains why sweeping programs such as *ubuhake* (cattle-based clientship), *uburetwa* (forced labor), *umuganda* (community services) or *Gacaca* jurisdictions succeed. In fact, such success is contingent upon the government’s strong supervision, carried out through zealous agents and by imposing severe sanctions upon those who fail to comply. By contrast, in the context of fragmented power, like Burundi under Mwezi Gisabo or under the current CNDD-FDD-led government, internal divisions undermine the central government’s ability to control all the peripheries of power or to enforce in a systematic way its policies and sanctions. A perfect illustration of the logic of interdependence between directiveness and compliance is probably the divergent big pictures of civil society groups’

margins of maneuver in both countries. Thus, writing about the state of “life after violence” in current Burundi, an expert observes,

new institutions with the potential to facilitate change have come into being as a result of the war. The press has become diverse, courageous, often in touch with the countryside and the lives of ordinary people. More Ngos, foreign and national, work closely with the people and can create opportunities for local innovation. (Uvin 2009, 78).

About the same period, a human rights group drew a distinctly opposite picture of Rwanda:

General civil society is ... severely hampered by restrictive laws governing independent associations... Many of what used to be independent non-government organisations are now essentially government-organised non-government organizations (or GONGOs). [...] Those remaining independent organisations often, like the media, practice self-censorship in order to be able to continue working and receiving foreign funding. (CHRI 2009, 28).

Note that, while the claim that “war” can explain why vibrant civil society groups flourished in Burundi may sound meaningful, a comparative analysis begs a better explanation of why the same variable - “war” - produced a different outcome in Rwanda. The validity of such a claim runs into trouble particularly when one considers that the outcomes of war, as seen from the lens of “the channels of participation” for civil society groups, concur with the major trends drawn from both the macro and micro trajectories: (i) centralized control and the winner-takes-all mindset in Rwanda; and, (ii) political fragmentation and compromise in Burundi. What the variable “war” along with other contingent and idiosyncratic factors doesn’t tell us therefore is about where the rules of the game underlying the players’ choices and strategies come from in the first place, how they evolve over time, and why the rebels-turned-statesmen opted for perpetuating them even when they once claimed to bring about radical changes. The next section reconstructs the complex processes within which the current dominant patterns of governance in Rwanda and Burundi emerged and developed over time.

## SECTION II

### **The Roots & Routes of Variation: A Case for Increasing Returns Processes**

In light of the patterns of variation described above, a long-run approach that pays attention to deep roots and routes of certain patterns of political developments promises to deepen our understanding of some behavior generally assumed to be associated with contingent factors. For instance, at first glance, it sounds empirical valid to say that Burundians have become more defiant vis-a-vis the state as a result of war (Uvin 2009, 78) or that the RPF iron-fist policies along with the low profile attitude adopted by political forces and civil society groups inside the country can be associated with the genocide-related “horrors of power” (Roth 2009). By the same token, it sounds perfectly correct to consider the empirical reality of power monopoly in post-genocide Rwanda and power sharing in post-conflict Burundi as the respective products of military victory in one case and negotiated settlement in the other.

Such explanations become less convincing however when one looks at the big picture of variation in distribution of power in terms of leadership styles (directiveness and responsiveness) and peoples’ inputs (participation and compliance) as discussed above. What is missing therefore is due attention to the initial conditions that set in motion the enduring patterns. Digging deep into history with a view to shine light on the roots of such longstanding patterns is the purpose of this section. This endeavor stems from the premise that “[at] any point in institutional development, humans start with some pre-existing customs that influence new departures.” (Riker quoted in Meierhenrich 2008, 83).

In this regard, the enduring patterns of variation as we see them today in the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi can be best conceived of as instances of an “irreversible branching

process” (David 2000) within and against which historical junctures, along with choices, interactions, and outcomes associated with them, do (or do not) “establish certain directions of change and foreclose others in a way that shape development over long periods of time.” (Mahoney 2000, 504). At the heart of this reasoning is the idea of *increasing returns process*:

In an increasing returns process, the probability of further steps along the same path increases with each move down that path. This is because the relative benefits of the current activity compared with other possible options increase over time. To put it a different way, the costs of exit--of switching to some previously plausible alternatives (Pierson 2000, 253).

In empirical terms, the point of departure for variation in the dominant patterns of power distribution in the two countries dates back to the early seventeenth century when the founding fathers, Ruganzu Ndori in Rwanda and Ntare Rushatsi in Burundi, set in motion two systems of governance. As discussed below, empirical evidence suggests that:

- a) The legacies of the founding fathers proved legitimate enough to force the successors, including the most powerful ones like Ntare Rugamba (1796-1850) in Burundi or Cyirima Rujugira (1770-1780) and Kigeri Rwabugiri (1867-1895) in Rwanda, to reclaim them as a legitimizing factor;
- b) The legacies of the founding fathers proved not only the most fitting to the challenges of their times, but also the most adaptable to shifting dynamics;
- c) Reclaiming the founding fathers’ legacies proved a particularly powerful antidote to the crisis of legitimacy, particularly in times of turmoil and uncertainty;
- d) The process of reclaiming the past legacies had the unintended consequence of standardizing and idealizing them as a self-reinforcing common ground upon and against which each generation had to build its own legacy.

To make these findings explicit, the macro processes at stake can be broken into five main ‘increasing returns processes’, which contributed, at various degrees, to cementing the legacies of the founding fathers.

**Starting point: Founding fathers' legacies**

In Rwanda, Ruganzu Ndori paved the way for the regime of increasing centralization built upon, *inter alia*, utter militarization and the cattle-based clientship *ubuhake* in Rwanda. By contrast, Ntare Rushatsi set in motion a complex system of governance within which the king along with his entourage ruled as a unifier among numerous autonomous small kings and peripheral principalities. As discussed below, this founding epoch proved to be a true “turning point” as defined by Abbott, that is, a point “at which the interlocked networks of relation that preserve stability come unglued and the (normal) perpetual change of social life take over.” (Abbott 2001, 259). Specifically, in line with Abbott’s view that “a major turning point has the potential to open a system the way a key has the potential to open a lock,” (Abbott 2001, 259), it is my contention that the enduring influence of the respective reigns of the two founding fathers--or at least the multilayered agencies incarnated by them-- stems from the potential of the systems (set in motion by the two founders) to ‘preserve stability’ amidst ‘perpetual change of social life’. Five core ‘increasing returns processes’ summarized below explain how and why the successive regimes opted for keeping the foundational systems open rather than closing them.

**Increasing Returns Process #1: From Birth Context to the Eve of Colonization**

While the available data about the immediate successors is too fragmented, when it is not controversial, to be conclusive, abundant evidence from the reign of the second generation of strongmen generally considered as new founding fathers show consistent patterns of the initial founding fathers’ legacies from then onwards. Thus, Cyirima Rujugira (ca. 1770-1786) is credited for “the strong centralization of military power in the hands of the Nyiginya dynasty” (Newbury 2009, 321-322) whereas under Kigeri Rwabugiri (1867-1895) who reigned a century later, “the court comes to control what happens elsewhere more and more” (Vansina 2004, 164). By

contrast, the new strongman of Burundi, Ntare Rugamba (1795-1852), is best known for institutionalizing the princely “Ganwa system,” which entailed decentralizing power by placing his sons on the periphery of the kingship’s domains and thus, inadvertently, allowed them to amass enough resources to constitute their own centers of power with little regard for the central court. It thus comes as no surprise that, by the arrival of the first European explorers in the 1860s, Rwanda had already been “transformed into a unified, centralized, and aggressive entity” (Vansina 2004, 123). By contrast, “Burundi was fragmented into four distinct spheres of influence” (Lemarchand (1995, 77) with the king controlling only the central region around the court in Muramvya, the rest of the territories being under the sway of Batare princes, Bezi princes and semi-independent chiefdoms respectively.

To be sure, the personal authority of the king varied greatly from one reign to another. However, this internal variation did little to undermine the general patterns of power distribution. For the case of Rwanda for instance, evidence shows that whomever succeeded in controlling the court, “Centralization was achieved by the direct ubuhake relationships of the king and by the territorial dispersion of the recruits and of the lands given to the armies” (Vansina 2004, 123).

### **Increasing Returns Process #2: Colonial administration**

As discussed in Chapter 3, colonial administration can be conceived of as a “slow assassination” process that radically altered the social and political foundations of the two kingdoms. Surprisingly, despite numerous ruptures and dramatic changes experienced in both countries, little changed in the patterns of power distribution.

To begin with, the Germans implemented a form of indirect rule that translated into two different strategies of occupation. In Rwanda, they reaffirmed King Yuhi Musinga as the unique local supreme leader or “sultan” and helped him conquer his enemies and rivals. In Burundi,

however, after the use of sheer force proved counter-productive, the Germans adopted the divide and conquer policy and co-opted a number of princes and chiefs who were eager to increase their autonomous powers at the expense of the central court. After the Germans, the Belgians embraced Mgr. Classe's advice to use "the Mututsi caste"—seen as a race of invaders of Caucasian descent—as the engine of colonial 'civilizing mission'. It thus concentrated all the powers in the hands of small elite of aristocrats at the expense of both the old aristocracy including the king and the peasant masses. Contrariwise, the fragmented nature of leadership in Burundi defied the colonial endeavor of concentrating all the powers in the hands of a single caste at the expense of peasant masses. The endgames for colonial domination couldn't be more divergent.

### **Increasing Returns Process #3: Struggle for Independence**

In Rwanda, by working hand-in-hand with the colonial administration, the zealous Tutsi elite along with the central court they stood for became synonymous with all the abuses of the colonial administration from forced labor and excessive taxations to corporal punishments and forced migration. On the contrary, the abuses of power by tiny elite of princes and autonomous chiefs appointed by the colonial administration at the expense of the central court won King Mwambutsa sympathy and popular support as a symbol of resistance to foreign domination. As a result, the court became the engine of change in Burundi where the king's elder son, Prince Louis Rwagasore, formed a multi-ethnic party, the UPRONA, which went on to win the general elections and ultimately bring the country to independence.

Contrariwise, an openly monolithic party, the MDR-Parmehutu, took a "winner-takes-all" approach to force the vanquished king and his supporters into exile and ultimately exercised a strong hold on power after silencing by guile and force more moderate forces.

**Increasing Returns Process #4: From the Fall of Kinship to the Rise of Republicanism**

Both countries saw the demise of kingship and the rise of a republican regime in 1960 in Rwanda and 1966 in Burundi respectively. Empirically, the centers of power changed significantly in both countries, especially after civilian governments were toppled and replaced by ethnocratic and regionalist military regimes—Tutsi from Bururi in Burundi and Hutu from Bushiru in Rwanda.

At first glance, one can rightly argue that military coup was an Africa-wide phenomenon, wherein states were weak and armies usually the strongest institutions, and whoever controlled the army—often some minority ethnic group—suddenly found herself with lots of power<sup>55</sup>. What is remarkable about Rwanda and Burundi, however, is that their leadership styles continued to differ significantly. To begin with, as Lemarchand observed in the early 1970s, “the history of Burundi since independence is in a sense reducible to a protracted crisis of legitimacy” (Lemarchand 1970). Thus, at a time when President Micombero struggled to legitimize his rule, his counterpart in Rwanda, Kayibanda, had already assumed the leadership style of the old kings. “Like the mwami,” Lemarchand observed talking about Kayibanda, “the president is inaccessible, inviolate and unaccountable. His inaccessibility enables him to avoid taking up overt positions on specific issues, and thus to create around his position and his policies an atmosphere of ambiguity which makes them immune from criticism” (Lemarchand 1970, 270-271).

The conditions under which the two republics’ founding presidents lost power added more weight to systematic variation in the margins of maneuver of their respective successors. In Burundi, in 1976 Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza overthrew his cousin Micombero in a bloodless coup, and another cousin from Bururi, Pierre Buyoya, overthrew Bagaza in 1987. One

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<sup>55</sup> I thank Peter Uvin for having brought this point to my attention.

consequence of these palace coups was to leave unchanged dominant institutions like the Party UPRONA and the army. In Rwanda, Kayibanda—whose powerbase was central Rwanda (Gitarama)—was overthrown by a military leader from the north (Gisenyi) who created an entirely new center of power around himself. The outcomes could not be more divergent. Each of Burundi's soft transitions did little more than multiply internal factions within the same Tutsi ruling elite from Bururi, while widening the gaps between the 'Bururi lobby' and the rest of the country. Contrariwise, by tailoring his own constitution and ruling party, the MRND, and creating a whole new system of clientship, Habyariamana assumed even more power than his predecessors.

Not least, the margins of maneuver for the two republics were quite different. In Rwanda the Hutu-dominated regime succeeded in marginalizing the Tutsi minority in the name of the ideology of democracy, understood as the rule of the majority—the phrase majority rule having been synonymous with Hutu power since the 1959 Hutu Revolution. It also succeeded in keeping the Hutu masses under control while silencing the dissidents in the name of imperative ethnic solidarity. By contrast, as the Tutsi-dominated regime found it harder to openly legitimize the concentration of power in the hands of the tiny military elite from Bururi, it sought to criminalize talking about ethnic and regional differences. However, these discourses of ethnic denial and national unity yielded meager results because they were at odds with daily life experiences. It thus seems no surprise that, while a homogeneous centralized regime controlled the whole country in Rwanda from the capital Kigali to remote areas in the countryside through a complex system of hierarchical zealous clients, the central government's control in Burundi remained limited to the capital Bujumbura and some major centers in the countryside—the vast majority of remote areas being in the hands of local Hutu leaders. In this respect, one can better

explain why the RPF developed outside Rwanda and hardly took root inside the country until it captured power by force. By contrast, a number of Hutu armed groups, notably the CNDD-FDD, flourished inside Burundi and exercised control over a sizable territory under the watch of the Tutsi-dominated army.

### **Increasing Returns Process #5: From Rebellion to Rebel-led governments**

As discussed in chapter 4, the former rebellions and now ruling parties, the RPF and the CNDD-FDD, moved from the periphery to the center of power through complex dynamics and irreversible ruptures. Moreover, throughout their roads to power, they vowed to bring about radical changes--which they did in many respects.

In terms of power distribution however, it is puzzling to observe how little has changed. As a matter of fact, the RPF established a strong state, highly centralized, ostensibly military dominated, and excessively controlled by one strong man, Paul Kagame. Contrariwise, the CNDD-FDD established a pluralist, albeit fragile, ‘consociational’ model of power sharing. By the same token, while the CNDD-FDD has been confronted with major challengers from within its own ranks and from rival social and political forces including civil society and the opposition, the RPF has no domestic challengers, the majority of its dissents and opponents having been killed, jailed, recycled or forced into exile. By the same token, while both countries are heavily dependent on foreign aid, Rwanda has distinguished itself by “a clear and strong agenda which it ruthlessly pursued” (Uvin 2006,20) when the Burundian government, like “a ship lost at sea,” to quote a former cabinet member, has been struggling to agree upon, let alone to pursue, a coherent agenda (interview, July 2010).

Put together, dominant rebel patterns of governance in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi echo in many respects the leadership styles incarnated by the successive regimes from

the founding fathers to the post-independence self-proclaimed republican leaders. For one, the current leader of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, has proven himself a firebrand warrior very good at crashing his enemies, neutralizing his rivals, and concentrating all the means of power in his hands, as Ruganzu Ndori did four centuries before him. Contrariwise, like Ntare Rushatsi four centuries before him, the current head of state in Burundi, Peter Nkurunziza, has proven himself a master of the art of working hand in hand with his enemies and accommodating his rivals.

The outcomes of the last presidential elections held in 2010 in both countries offer us an important hallmark against which to gauge the differences between the two systems in many ways. For one, while the electoral contest in Burundi was conducted within the spirit of power-sharing among political and ethnic constituencies, the RPF obsession with total control over the process was a secret of Polichinelle. Thus, whereas the Tutsi-dominated UPRONA with its abysmal score of 6% of the total vote was allowed to keep prestigious positions including the ones of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-president and Minister of Defense in the name of national unity, a New York Times reporter concludes that “many Rwandans have learned to keep quiet” and not without good reasons: “a leading opposition figure and her American lawyer were arrested,” “other popular opposition candidates were denied a chance to run for the presidency,” an opposition leader was killed and found dead along a river, his head nearly severed.” (Gettleman and Kron 2010).

To be sure, strong evidence shows that both ruling parties used intimidations and fraudulent means to secure landslide electoral victories marred both electoral processes (HRW 2010a; HRW 2010b). Nevertheless, while several opposition parties in Burundi were left with some margins of maneuver, albeit increasingly restricted, that allowed twelve of them to form coalition, the Alliance of Democrats for Change (ADC-Ikibiri) in early June 2010, the multipartism game in

Rwanda is nothing more than a facade contest between the RPF and the satellite parties of its own making<sup>56</sup>. Note also that variation in the turnout in both elections (99% in Rwanda, 65% in Burundi) reveals telling variation in terms of control, compliance, and channels of participation. These few instances of variation in the political landscapes of post-conflict in Rwanda and Burundi point to significant trends of continuity between rebel governance and the dominant systems of governance that developed long before the rise of the current ruling parties.

In a nutshell, translated in the language of causal mechanism, the patterns of continuous variation in the ways distribution of authority tends to unfold in Rwanda and Burundi from the founding fathers four centuries ago to current rebel-led governments are consistent with the logic of path dependence according to which, “once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high.” (Levi (1997, 28). “There will be other choice points,” adds Levi, “but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice.” (Levi 1997, 28). To explain this phenomenon, Levi uses the metaphor of a tree, stating, “From the same trunk, there are many different branches and smaller branches. Although it is possible to turn around or to clamber from one to the other-and essential if the chosen branch dies-the branch on which a climber begins is the one she tends to follow.” (Levi 1997, 28).

This view concurs with Foucault’s theory of “economy of power relations” according to which, however antagonistic power relations may be, they are generally “rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted ‘above’ society as a supplementary structure” (Foucault 1982).

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<sup>56</sup> Thus, the only parties to be legally registered are the ones which supported president Kagame’s candidacy during the 2003 elections. On the eve of the 2010 elections, three main contenders were put in jail on the eve of the electoral contest: Victoria Ingabire from FDU, Deo Mushaidi from PDP and Bernard Ntaganda from PS-Imberakuri. President Kagame is believed to have picked his own rival, Dr. Ntawukuriryayo, whom he later appointed President of the Senate.

In other words, the enduring impact of the ‘initial conditions’ relies on, not only the rulers’ will and ability to master the game of dominant ‘economy of power relations’, but also the predispositions of the society as a whole to comply with the dominant rules of the game.

This argument is also consistent with two prominent economists’ findings that both economic institutions and political institutions “are collective choices” and that “the distribution of political power in society is the key determinant of their evolution.” (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008, 1)<sup>57</sup>. The two authors put forth two variables to explain the mechanism of persistence. One is power allocation according to which “political institutions allocate de jure political power, those who hold political power influence the evolution of political institutions, and they will generally opt to maintain the political institutions that give them political power.” (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008, 6). The other one is resources distribution according to which “when a particular group is rich relative to others, this will increase its de facto political power and enable it to push for economic and political institutions favorable to its interests, reproducing the initial disparity.” As a result, “[r]eform comes with pitfalls because either de facto or de jure power may persist even if other things change.” (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008, 6).

Empirically, the reality of increasing returns processes as it unfolds today proves the enduring validity of an insightful observation made four centuries ago by a prominent student of the complexity and opacity of politics in Rwanda and Burundi, stating,

No matter how deep the transformations to which it is subjected, no society can embark upon the creation of a new order in a total vacuum. Links which one thought had been severed once and for all are quietly re-established; in varying degrees, the tenaciousness of the past determines the shape of the future. (Lemarchand 1970, 495).

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<sup>57</sup> I thank Peter Uvin for having brought this reference to my attention.

To make sense of “the varying degrees” in which “the tenacious of the past determines the shape of the future,” a nuanced understanding of politics as a “murkier environment” (Pierson 2000, 258) is in order. This is particularly relevant because “the complexity of the goals of politics as well as the loose and diffuse links between actions and outcomes render politics inherently ambiguous.” (Pierson 2000, 258). To account for the implied ambiguities along with their implications, one has to take into account the weight of other factors of interest that compete to enhance or hinder the development of the increasing returns processes. To this end, this dissertation puts forth five instances where one may encounter this “murkier environment” - hereafter termed ‘sites of contention.’

## SECTION III

### **The Limits of Predictability: Five Sites of contention<sup>58</sup>**

For analytical purposes, by conceiving of and representing the reality of politics as a “murkier environment” within which numerous forces compete for greater influence, we can identify at least five major contentious pairs whose uncertain outcomes limit the margins of predictability. These are: Tradition & modernity; center & periphery; agency & structure; elites & multiple layered groupings; and, internal & external factors.

#### **Tradition & Modernity: The puzzle of boundaries**

As discussed above, the continuous patterns of power distribution - identified in the successive defining moments through which Rwanda and Burundi have evolved over the last four centuries - concur with a view of history as being not a list of events, but rather a complex mix of continuity and change dynamics, or to be more accurate, change-in-continuity dynamics. Seen from a sociological lens, the logic of change-in-continuity is consistent with the principle of “social inertia” according to which social groups resist change, usually due to habit, that is, “a more or less fixed way of thinking, willing, or feeling acquired through previous repetition of a mental experience” (Barker 2005,448). From an institutional standing point, the recurrent patterns of governance in shifting contexts can be also explained by Stinchcombe’s theory of “the liability of newnessness,” according to which “new organizations of a new form are more likely to fail than new organizations with an established form” (Barker 2005,448).

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<sup>58</sup> I use the phrase “contention” in its basic sense without engaging in the rigorous theories of contention in the tradition of Tarrow and his colleagues ( see Tarrow 2012; Tarrow and Aminzade, et al. 2011)

“As time passes,” so goes the argument, “structures stabilize and ties with environments become durable, causing death rates to fall for organizations with both common and innovative forms” (Barker 2005,448). In this regard, one can easily explain why successive kings, including the most powerful ones like Ntare Rugamba in Burundi or Rujugira and Rwabugiri in Rwanda, found it easier to perpetuate the founding fathers’ royal drums, Kalinga and Karyenda respectively, rather than create their own.

In some cases, it is possible to date the origins of a practice. For instance, it is now common knowledge that the cattle-based clientship *ubuhake* dates back to the reign of Ruganzu Ndori and the princely Ganwa system dates back to the reign of Ntare Rugamba. In many other cases, however, “traditional” values and practices allegedly passed down from generation to generation prove nothing more than myths meant to justify post-hoc actions or situations previously deemed unacceptable. The myth of “the premises of inequalities” (Marquet 1955) between Tutsi, Hutu and Twa is perhaps the most outrageous ‘appeal to tradition.’ The story goes that Kanyarwanda, the eponymous forefather of all Rwandans, sensed his death approaching, tested his three sons and, rewarded each according to his performance. As a result, he established Gatutsi as the ruler, Gahutu as the servant, and Gatwa as the cursed buffoon (Balibutsa 2000). As this myth suggests, much of the so-called “traditions” emerge from contested terrain.

Moreover, one must also bear in mind that the past is always complex and that what is passed down from generation to generation is just a portion of fragmented narratives on the basis of which succeeding generations adopt, adapt, or even re-invent altogether the “traditions” that suit best their pressing needs and interests. The point is well illustrated by the coming into being of the gacaca jurisdictions in post-genocide Rwanda. On the one hand, the gacaca jurisdictions were meant to revive a traditional mechanism of conflict resolution, Gacaca, to come to terms

with a modern conflict - the 1990-1994 genocidal violence. On the other hand, the institutional setting of these jurisdictions was designed in such a way that the state apparatus became the central player in a mechanism whose *raison d'être* was to provide people with an intimate, consent-based space to deal with social conflicts under the auspices of wise-men and, most importantly, without formal authorities' interference.

Above all, though, empirical reality raises questions about the boundaries between tradition and modernity, past and present, when appealing to tradition is a strategy meant to influence the present. In appealing to tradition, it may be noted that purposeful agents select only those aspects of "tradition" that serve their immediate interests. It thus follows that the weight of the present in the past becomes even more compelling. After all, we can only make sense of the past through the eyes and tools of the present. Thus, the lines between past and present, tradition and modernity, are so often blurred.

### **Agency & Structure: The egg-chicken dilemma**

To fully account for the process of perpetuating or manipulating the old ways of doing things, we must address another lingering question that echoes the egg-chicken dilemma: What matters the most—agency or structure? Agency refers to the capacity of individuals to choose the means and ways of shaping the course of events, while structure refers to "the recurrent patterned arrangements which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available" (Goodin quoted in Meierhenrich 2005, 8). In political life, the vexing dilemma comes down to circumscribing the role of individual leaders within and against their physical and temporal environment.

As the issues discussed above suggest, the weight of initial conditions and self-reinforcing structures seem to matter the most, whether from the birth conditions of the two kingdoms or current rebel governance via colonial rules and ethnocratic republics. For instance,

a prominent historian described the political culture that developed between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Rwanda as “the triumph of the law of the strongest and its train of troubles, insecurity, and clamor for revenge (Vansina 2004). At first glance, one is inclined to associate this outcome with the militaristic qualities of individual leaders like Ndori, Rujugira, Rwabugiri, and Kagame. As we have shown, however, all these leaders seized power by force in times of political turmoil and used martial violence to overcome powerful rivals.

In pre-colonial Burundi, the fragility of the central government can be attributed to moderate temperament of individual leaders like Ntare Rushatsi, who taught his rivals “the art of working together” or Ntare Rugamba and Mwezi Gisabo, who established their numerous sons as autonomous chiefs in the kingdom’s peripheries in an effort to defuse princely rivalries.

As I have shown, however, the leaders’ temperament corresponded to the prevailing conditions such as cross-clan interactions under Rushatsi and long reigns marked by intense princely rivalries under Rugamba and Gisabo. The same is true for Peter Nkurunziza, a true trust-builder whose moderation, diplomatic skills, and leadership styles seem a perfect match with the letter and spirit of the Arusha peace agreement. To no small extent, the same is true for Pierre Buyoya, the man whose military coups did more good than harm - first in 1987 when he put an end to Bagaza’s increasing repression and paved the way for a successful, albeit short-lived democratic change, and then in 1996, when he broke the deadlock between the then Hutu-dominated government and the Tutsi-controlled army, and paved the way for the Arusha peace agreement along with subsequent power-sharing mechanisms.

Longevity further supports the primacy of institutions over individuals. For instance, since the royal drums, Kalinga in Rwanda and Karyenda in Burundi, were established by the founding fathers, all the new kings — legitimate and usurper alike — felt more compelled to

perpetuate them rather than replace them. The same logic continued to prevail in post-independence Burundi where, even after the demise of the kingship in 1966, the UPRONA party founded by Prince Louis Rwagasore during the struggle for independence survived all the military coups from Micombero (1966-1976) to Bagaza (1976-1987) to Buyoya (1987-1993). However, empirical evidence shows that the longevity of institutions itself depends on many variables. For instance, while the UPRONA party managed to survive several waves of regime change from 1993 onwards, political defeat proved synonymous with institutional death for the Rwandan ruling parties since UNAR under King Ndahindurwa (1959-1961), MDR-Parmehutu under Kayibanda (1961-1973), and MRND under Habyarimana (1975-1994). How can one make sense of this variation?

Strong evidence shows that the survival of the UPRONA is congruent with the political culture of compromise, while the tragic fate shared by all the former ruling parties in Rwanda (UNAR, MDR-Parmehutu and MRND) is congruent with the culture of the winner-takes-all mindset. This remarkable variation in political cultures is also evident in how new regimes deal with other power symbols and instruments. For instance, while the RPF-led government in Rwanda was quick to replace all the old state symbols of power from the flag and the national anthem to street names and territorial boundaries, the government led by the CNDD-FDD proudly embraced the same national symbols inherited from the fathers of independence.

Nevertheless, even in Rwanda, where regime changes tend to bring about new institutions and symbols, the nature and extent of change vary from one individual leader to another. For instance, upon its coming into power in 1994, the RPF-led government was content to maintain the same republican symbols associated with the 1959 Hutu revolution, and only changed when Kagame assumed the presidency in 2000 and imposed his own flag, coat of arms, and anthem.

In more concrete terms, the contentious politics involving the interactions between individuals and institutions echoes Robert Goodin's theory of the three basic modes by which institutions emerge over time, namely, *accident*, *evolution*, and *intervention* (Goodin as quoted in Meierhenrich 2005,8). The accident mode implies that institutions are first and foremost "contingent outcomes," that is, they emerge "as a product of a spontaneous process of social interaction" (Goodin quoted in Meierhenrich 2005, 8). The rise of kingship in the Great Lakes region of Africa can be understood in this sense (see Chapter 3, Section 2). The evolution mode suggests that institutions are "the product of collective action" in which "some selection mechanisms, social and otherwise, are driving things" (Goodin quoted in Meierhenrich 2005, 9). The dynamics of "tenaciousness" and "change-in-continuity" discussed in the preceding sections speak well to this mode. Finally, in the case of intervention mode, institutions are conceived of as 'outcomes of design,' created by the deliberative interventions of purposive agents (e.g., the choice of rebellions' names and other symbolic identifiers as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 2). At the heart of the notion of design is the idea of leadership understood as that agency devoted to "creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen" (Genentech as quoted in Kouzes and Posner 2007). This notion implies, however, that design is only meaningful in a context where people are willing and able to accept the design and translate it into action. For instance, the rise and fall of the powerful institutions such as clan, kingship, clientship, or political parties ( cf. Chapter 3) cannot be otherwise conceivable beyond the historical conditions that made them possible. In this regard, a succession of events such as the fifteenth- eighteenth centuries ecology crisis, the nineteenth century colonial domination, the post-WWII decolonization movement or the post-Cold War democratization processes can be best conceived of as 'enabling environments' which allowed, if not obliged altogether, each

generation of new leaders to define their epochs through “the creation of an actionable form to promote valued outcomes in a particular context” (Bobrow and Dryzek 1987, 201).

The resulting interdependent agent-structure relations can be summed up in the words of a prominent student of institutional design:

The problem that groups face, the solutions they concoct, and the way that they implement those solutions are all subject to accident and error. But the accidents and errors are rarely purely stochastic; and even when they are, they nonetheless typically arise in the backwash of intentionality, through the oversights and miscalculations of purposive agents engaged in projects of their own. (Goodin as quoted in Meierhenrich 2005, 9).

On the one hand, then, is the uneven and self-reinforcing interdependence between “the backwash of intentionality” and the outcomes of “accident and error”, while on the other lie the evolving dynamics of “collective action”—implied in the evolution mode. It is precisely this inevitable opposition that makes the agency-structure continuum a site of contention *par excellence*. In this regard, while it is empirically legitimate to single out the merits of epochal rulers like Rugamba, Rwagasore, and Ndadaye in Burundi, or Rwabugiri, Kayibanda, and Kagame in Rwanda, the weight of the enabling structures such as birth conditions and legitimizing norms (taboo, esoteric code, constitutions, international law), practices (royal rituals, elections, diplomatic bodies), and symbols (royal drums, flags, anthems) cannot be underestimated.

### **Center & periphery: The puzzle of state-society relations**

The contentious agency-structure continuum hints at the puzzle of how competing purposeful agents shape the history of a society as a whole through deliberate actions and unintended consequences. A multi-layered analysis then suggests another level of contention. Beneath and beyond the mainstream center(s) of power, people have different ways and means of coping with

the structural conditions of their social environment at a local level. At the heart of this puzzle is the center-periphery continuum, which can be summarized into three competing dynamics.

First, the notion of center implies a small, more or less homogeneous sphere of influence, while the notion of periphery implies aggregate groups that have little in common but a unifying center. The history of the polities of Rwanda and Burundi, from their emergence as small entities that grew through a combination of peaceful incorporations and military conquests of different hills, chiefdoms, and kingdoms to reach their current boundaries, illustrates this point well.

Second, power distribution between the tiny center and the broad periphery follows the paradox of asymmetric powers where the small dominates the big. Ideally, as the state-centered theories want us to believe, the concentration of power in the hands of the fewer is meant to benefit the society as a whole, i.e., both the center and the periphery, lest everyone suffers from anarchy.

This is at least what conventional statism is all about:

Hereby it is manifest that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man. [...] In such condition there is no place for industry, because the fruit thereof is uncertain, and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. (Hobbes 1976, 409).

Despite hopes for peace however, the Leviathan state sometimes translates into a nightmare of violent exploitation when it is not a reign of terror altogether. Pre-colonial Rwanda, where “the high nobility increasingly exploited the bulk of its subjects, and its scorn for them manifested itself more and more in their humiliating treatment of the populace” (Vansina 2004,197), offers a

paradigmatic example of the Leviathan fallacy. So does post-independence Rwanda, where the authoritarian government and the donor community have concurred in “infantiliz[ing] poor people, depriving them of their self-respect and their creativity” (Uvin 1998, 81). Post-independence Burundi seldom did better, as the dual politics of regionalism and ethnicity widened both vertical and horizontal inequalities.

The third dimension lies in the paradox that the periphery is the source of legitimacy for the center. Counterintuitive as this may sound, even in the case of extremely vertical and authoritarian systems like the one experienced in Rwanda — both past and present — the longevity of the powers-that-be is contingent upon the willingness of the society as a whole to comply with, or at least not challenge, the dominant order. This is precisely the case because the more a regime is centralized, the more the peripheral counter-powers are undermined.

As a Rwandan proverb has it, “a divided family yields more opportunities for forced labor for the chief,” meaning that a strong family had the chance to stand together, speak with one voice and find a way to ease the burden of state demands, whereas each of the members from a divided family had to deal with the burden alone.

In this respect, the difference between “peripheral insurgents” and legitimate statesmen lies in the ability of the former to metamorphose themselves into the latter through complex processes of legitimization, which includes value-setting, warfare, peace talks, military integration, and transitional justice. As I have demonstrated in chapter four, for the sake of legitimacy, successful leaders conduct themselves in ways that resonate with the hearts and minds of the society as a whole. Does this prove correct the saying that “the people get the leaders they deserve?” Another site of contention, the elite-laypeople continuum, reveals more layers of complexity that make this conventional wisdom too ambivalent to be conclusive.

**Elites & multiple layered groupings: The social mobility dilemma**

Johan Galtung once wrote, “The center in the Center meets the center in the Periphery” (Galtung 1971, 81). Though this observation was meant to describe the converging interests of elites in reinforcing the inequalities between the First World and the Third World, it also seems relevant to account for the determinant role of elites in facilitating the central government’s control over the society as a whole. According to Galtung’s Center-Periphery model, “the center in the imperialist nation establishes a bridgehead in the center of the dominated nation by tying the two centers together by means of harmony of interest” (Galtung 1971, 81). In the context of Rwanda and Burundi, empirical reality shows that all the success of the successive powers-that-be—from the court and the colonial administration to post-independence republic and rebel-led government—is contingent on the ability to co-opt peripheral agents from multiple layered groupings (clans, neighborhoods, grassroots-based social or professional networks, military corporations, artists and diviners, etc.) and integrate them into the center of power. This strategy of co-optation takes different forms and varies from a leader to another. However, it encompasses in all cases the phenomenon of “social mobility,” that is, the degree to which, in a system of social hierarchy or stratification, individuals or groups climb the social ladder and join the upper class or vice-versa (see DiPatre 2000).

The founding era of the two kingdoms offers perfect instances of the mechanic of social mobility. In Burundi, an obscure adventurer named Cambarantama killed a wildcat and thus won admiration and respect from the people who proclaimed him their king. Upon assuming power, the king surrounded himself with heterogeneous elites comprising powerful ritualists, prominent clan leaders, and small kings. In Rwanda, an adventurer warrior named Ndori moved from Karagwe for unknown reasons and settled on a small hill in current central Rwanda from where,

by guile and force, he conquered the neighboring kingdoms and chiefdoms. In both kingdoms, access to the center of power required at least fulfilling one of four main conditions: royal blood; political alliance; social function; or individual merits. Royal blood predisposed the princes and princesses, along with their descendants, to occupy upper positions in the kingdom. Political alliances allowed the court to consolidate its powerbase by co-opting individuals from great families or by allying itself to influential figures in remote regions. Regarding social functions, the court was keen on reserving special treatment for clans and families of ritualists who were believed to incarnate magic powers.

Finally, individual merits were used to reward individuals especially those of modest origins with respected professions commonly referred to as *abanyamuhango*, literally, “the people of the customs.” Vansina sums up well the point, stating,

When full data were finally at hand around 1900 one counted among the “people of the customs” dynastic poets and experts in history, musicians for wind instruments, the ritualists of the drums, the ritualists of the Ryangombe cult, the makers of a powder guaranteeing a long life, the exorcists of calamities, the tanners, the magicians, the makers of charm for war, the artisans, the tribute collectors, the cooks and the wine stewards, the fur hunters, the zither players, those who named the cattle, and the diviners. (Vansina 2004, 80).

Under the colonial rule, education and administrative positions became major vehicles for social mobility. A combination of these colonial assets reached its apogee in the colonial school of Astrida (Rwanda), whose access was strictly limited to a small group of young men from the ruling elite that were trained to force the white man’s “progress agenda” on the population. As we have seen, this educated elite and the counter-elite trained in Catholic seminaries played a great role in both the struggle for independence and in post-independence politics in both countries. Specifically, the post-independence era flourished in that it offered new strategies for

elite consolidation, strategies that widened the gaps between illiterate rural masses and the tiny educated elite (Guichaoua 1989; Uvin 1998).

Generally, the co-opted elites were meant to serve the interests of the powers-that-be, generally at the expense of the masses. However, empirical reality reveals at least three notable exceptions. First, co-opting the elite comes with a high cost for the powers-that-be as the new men (and women) have their own agendas, interests, and backgrounds that need to be accommodated in the dominant system. For instance, by taking for a queen mother an illustrious woman from the Singa lineage and appointing powerful ritualists from various lineages, the founding father King Ruganzu found himself in a situation where his sheer military force was no longer enough to legitimize his reign. As a result, he recast himself as the legitimate heir of multi-secular royal lineage dating back to Gihanga, (literally, “The Founder”), even inspiring a royal cult known as “the fire of Gihanga.” Another telling example is that of post-genocide Rwanda, where the zeal to prove wrong the charges that the regime is predominantly Tutsi led the ruling elite to co-opt controversial Hutu figures, some of whom were accused of having participated in the genocide against Tutsis.<sup>59</sup>

Second, while the non-homogeneous nature of the elite generally helps the head of state, king or president alike, to have more margins of maneuvers over his collaborators, sometimes the rivalries between the elite become so intense and so dangerous that the resulting exposition engulfs the whole country and ends up weakening or destroying altogether the incumbent regime. This was particularly the case for the 1896 Rucunshu coup that literally wiped out the

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<sup>59</sup> The fate of a former RPF lawmaker, Elisée Bisengimana, is a case in point. Accused of genocide in 2000, the RPF stood by him and appointed him to prominent positions, first as lawmaker, then as provincial governor and even as a member of the RPF executive committee before his fall in 2008 when he was arrested, convicted of genocide and sentenced to 19 years of imprisonment.

nyiginyinya aristocracy at the hands of the victorious faction led by the Abakagara family from the Bega clan.

Third, numerous cases such as the 1959 Hutu Revolution in Rwanda, the 1993 democratic elections in Burundi, or the military coups and rebellions in both countries concur in underscoring the extent to which a counter-elite can mobilize the masses or at least a part of laypeople and thus create an alternative center of power.

In all these cases, the co-opted elite is presented with a dilemma to find a balance between serving their master and keeping ties with their local political bases, when they have one. On the one hand, by serving the master's interests at the expense of their original bases<sup>60</sup>, as did the educated Tutsi youth during colonial rule in Rwanda or some Hutu during the 1993-94 crisis in Burundi, the co-opted agents run the risk of suffering from future changes. On the other hand, by keeping strong ties with their bases, the co-opted agents risk being seen as disloyal to their masters, if not plotters against them. It is this situation of permanent insecurity that makes the elite-laypeople continuum an important site of contention, and calls into question the logic of homogeneity surrounding the trends of tenaciousness in the patterns of governance. External influences add another layer of complexity to this analysis.

### **Internal & external factors**

The issues discussed throughout this dissertation, from the physical and social setting to historical evolution and critical junctures, assume the existence of typical patterns and variations worth calling Rwandan and Burundian. However, empirical evidence shows the existence of longstanding tensions between local dynamics and external influences at all levels.

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<sup>60</sup> By 'original bases', we mean here dominant constituencies (region, ethnicity, political party,...) from which clients are coopted to join a ruling force, the latter being generally from a rival constituency.

To start with, oral traditions coincide to represent the founding fathers as adventurer outsiders who learned the art of politics in a foreign land (Ndori in Karagwe and Rushatsi in Buha) before applying these lessons in a new land that they claimed as belonging to their ancestors. Second, according to careful comparative studies, the two kingdoms share much of the core features of kingship covering the whole Rift Valley region--the very features that one scholar has summed up in an evocative, if contentious subtitle, “local loyalties, regional royalties” (Newbury 1991). Third, from the colonial era onwards, the increasing expansion of Western paradigms, ideas and institutions resulted in a new phenomenon that one African scholar has termed “espace metissée [hybrid space]” conceived of as “a new mixed cultural order” (Mudimbe 1997). This phenomenon elsewhere referred to as “the crucible of cultures” or institutional “dividuality” (Helle-Valle 2004) translated in the empirical context of Rwanda and Burundi in a set of truly hybrid institutions suspended in the web of contested meanings, contradictory logics and competing forces. Thus for instance, the post-independence political landscapes became radically ‘hybridized’ as the new ruling elites adopted the paradigm of “republic”, along with flags and anthems as symbols of state power, and resorted to written laws and elections to legitimize their claims to power, in total disregard of traditional forms and symbols of power such as the sacred drums and related esoteric codes, rituals and elders’ wisdom.

By the same token, the names of the former rebellions and now ruling parties in the two countries show us two extreme instances of the contentious politics of appealing to both internal and external factors. In Rwanda, the Rwandan Patriotic Front takes pride in committing itself to restoring the dignity of the ancient motherland, whence its nickname, Inkotanyi, derived from the last warrior king, Kigeli Rwabugiri. In Burundi, the Conseil pour la Défense de la Démocratie

takes pride in committing itself to defending a Western value, *democracy*, albeit in a ‘domesticated’ sense. Ironically, despite both rebellions’ claims to represent and work on behalf of the silent masses, their deliberate choice to frame their names in foreign languages (French and English) spoken by less than 10% of the population speaks volume about the gap between elites and masses. Here and again, Galtung’s insightful observation that “the Center in the Center meets the Center in the Periphery” cannot be more relevant than in the twin nations of Rwanda and Burundi, where, from colonial era onwards, the weight of external influences is so evident that, in laypeople’s discourses, no distinction is made between the aid system and state system—two entities seen as “two sides of the same coin” and therefore lumped together under the neologism *Leta* [from the French, *L’Etat*, ‘the state’] (Uvin 2009, 78).

Fourth, the weight of the international system has become even greater in the post-Cold War era with the international community’s renewed commitment to explicitly promote, and sometimes impose, democratic peace and other transformational processes generally and loosely lumped together under the paradigm of “post-conflict peacebuilding” (Boutros-Ghali 1992; Brahimi 2007) and its variants such as state-building (DFID 2006; OECD 2008) and “new post-conflict agenda” understood as “an agenda of using international aid (together with other tools of foreign policy, ideally) to promote peace and reconciliation in recipient countries.” (Uvin 2001). In Rwanda and Burundi specifically, this commitment has translated into multi-million and multi-stakeholder international programs ranging from transitional justice, constitutional design and legal reform, electoral processes and decentralization to civil society and private sector building initiatives (Kimonyo et al. 2004; Index Mundi, 2012). Paradoxically, strong evidence suggests that long-standing patterns of power distribution seem to have continued to exercise a significant influence within and against donor-driven pro-change interventions—and

this for two of the world's poorest countries, where international assistance represents more than 40% of the government budget (Index Mundi 2012).

To account for this paradox, one is reminded of Putnam's concept of "the logic of two-level games" according to which the most likely scenario in international relations is that "clever players will spot a move on one board that will trigger realignments on other boards, enabling them to achieve otherwise unattainable objectives." (Putnam 1988, 434). In this regard, Rwanda and Burundi stand poised as extreme variants of the logic of two-level games according to which the aid enterprise is more complicated and less asymmetrically top-down than generally assumed by the simplistic Manichean dichotomies such as north-south, donor-recipient, rich-poor, powerful-weak, etc. Thus for instance, Rwanda appears to be a casebook of the paradox of modern development aid because, despite its poverty and lack of significant geo-strategic assets, it has proven to have a stronger voice and more commanding visibility in the international arena than many other resource-rich African countries. To name just one example, post-genocide Rwanda is best known for its ability to reconcile "aid dependence and policy independence" (Zorbas 2011, 103) to the extent that, despite Rwanda being a 'donor darling', millions of dollars from the world's leading democracies - from USA and UK to Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries - did little besides reinforcing what is generally termed in Rwanda scholars' circles as "the undemocratic nature of transition in Rwanda" (Longman 2011, 25).

To address such a paradox, one has also to take seriously the paradigm of alternatives to power asymmetry; according to this, while no bargaining strategy can completely overcome differences in power, there are far much more opportunities - not only to protect the weaker party against a poor agreement, but also to help such parties make the most of their assets - than is generally assumed (Fisher and Ury 1983; Zartman and Rubin 2002).

Thus defined, the paradigm of “alternatives to power asymmetry” offers us a promising point of entry into the jungle of interactions between local ‘shared mental models’ (Denzau and North 1994) and the complexity of bilateral and multilateral aid processes within and against which the former rebel groups (along with their respective societies) have positioned themselves before, during and in the aftermath of their rise to power. While external influences cannot be underestimated, the ability of local actors to align their demands to external supplies - and thus forge a working congruence between the two parties - seems to make all the difference. In doing so, however, since local demands do seldom emerge in vacuum, individual and ad-hoc bargaining strategies are much more likely to yield more results when they are in tune with the basic tenets of domestic historical-structural contexts than not.

In this respect, I can now explain better why, on balance, the successive ruling elites in Rwanda from the colonial era onwards have received far more external sympathy, accolades, assistance and powerful lobbies than their Burundian counterparts. As the findings discussed throughout this dissertation suggest, the answer lies in the nature of the self-reinforcing governance systems. In Rwanda, cohesion among the ruling elite and the resulting centralization ensures that the government speaks with one voice, develops coherent policies and delivers on the promises and commitments in a timely and effective fashion.

To be sure, more recent empirical developments show an increasing number of “cracks in the governmental façade and resistance to centralization efforts”.<sup>61</sup> The on-going conflict now referred to in the Rwandan circles as the “Kagame-Kayumba feud” underscores the centralized nature of the Rwandan state: More Kagame is isolated as his close aides flee the country, more he concentrates all the powers in his hands with fewer rivals to challenge him.

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<sup>61</sup> I thank Jens Meierhenrich for drawing my attention to this point.

In contrast, prevalence of scattered powers in Burundi, along with the resulting fluid (if not divided) leadership makes it hard to speak with one voice, to develop coherent policies and ultimately to deliver on promises and commitments in a timely, let alone effective fashion. Note that it is beyond my pretension that Burundi is incapable of great initiatives. A case in point is a donor conference held in Geneva in October 2012 where donors responded to Burundi's call for aid with \$2 billion in aid commitments through 2015. Interestingly, "the total amount of pledges made ... surpassed Burundi's target of mobilizing up to \$1.1 billion for its 2012-15 development plan." (Mungcal 2012). Acknowledging the surprise, a Burundian official was quoted stating, "This [\$2 billion pledge] represents a doubling of our already optimistic expectations." (Mungcal 2012 quoting Pamphile Muderega, permanent secretary of the National Aid Coordination Committee). If anything, such statement is in line with typical Burundian low profile as opposed to Rwandan hegemonic ideology, now institutionalized in a self-reliance program known as Agaciro Development Fund<sup>62</sup>. This initiative, along with the coercive means by which the government implemented it, echoes a long list of domestic initiatives drawing on Rwandan cultural features such as Gacaca, military reeducation camps called *ingando*, community services *ubudehe* and *umuganda*, all of which have no equivalents in Burundi.

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<sup>62</sup> Agaciro is the Kinyarwanda word for dignity. Agaciro Development Fund was officially launched on August 23, 2012 as a solidarity fund to which the Government, Rwandans and friends of Rwanda are encouraged to contribute by donating their own money. Officially, the proceeds collected from donors are meant to be used to support key priority projects as identified in the country's ambitious development plan known as Vision 2020. However, one notes that the launching of this fund was a defiant response to the donor community's cutting off aid to Rwanda for its support to a proxy rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the M23.

### **SYNTHESIS: THE NEXUS OF PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE RECONSIDERED**

The complex dynamics discussed above hint at the idea of an uneasy relationship between past, present and future. To begin with, judging from the dramatic changes that both countries have gone through from colonial rule to rebel governance through genocidal violence, one can hardly resist concurring with novelist Hartley (1953)'s idea: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there."<sup>63</sup> Yet, the enduring divergent patterns of governance between Rwanda and Burundi - obsession with centralized control and political fragmentation respectively - call to mind Faulkner (1950)'s famous lines: "the past is never dead. It's not even past."<sup>64</sup> The idea of a past that's 'not even past' implies that the legacies of things past can hardly be erased in the subsequent moves from which each new generation plays its part and reclaims its share of history. In this regard, the weight of things past can be conceived of as an instance of 'structured contingency' according to which the initial "structures create incentives that shape individual choices and thereby collective outcomes" (Bates et al. as quoted Meierhenrich 2008, 46). Terry Karl beautifully sums up the point, stating,

Structured contingency does not argue that individual decisions made at particular points in time, or all observable political or economic phenomena, can be specifically and unambiguously linked to the presence of preexisting institutions. Instead it claims that historically created structures, while not determining which one of a limited set of alternatives decision-makers may choose, do in fact demarcate the types of problems that arise and do define alternative solutions, thereby restricting or enhancing the choices available. (Karl as quoted in Meierhenrich 2008, 46-47).

Specifically, because institutional structures do neither emerge in vacuum, nor develop overnight, the implied transaction cost of growth is more likely than not to "produce a situation

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<sup>63</sup> These words form the opening line of a 1953 novel, *The Go-Between*, by L. P. Hartley. The novel's plot revolves around an elderly man in his mid-sixties, Leo Colston, looking back on his childhood with nostalgia.

<sup>64</sup> These lines form the plot of the novel, *Requiem for a Nun*, by Nobel Prize writer, William Faulkner. The plot revolves around the life of a college student who later married and had a child, but then found herself obliged to deal with her violent, turbulent past.

in which one part of action becomes far more attractive or far less costly than another, and thus can define preferences by creating overwhelming incentives for decision-makers to choose (or to avoid) a specific set of policies.” (Coppedge as quoted in Meierhernich 2008, 46). From this derives the self-reinforcing development of increasing returns processes which constrain "new-comers to compromise with old regimes, both of persons and of institutions," (Eckstein 1997, 23), and thus “establish certain directions of change and foreclose others in a way that shape development over long periods of time.” (Mahoney 2000, 504). It is in this conceptual and methodological perspective that I have strived to document a reliable set of unifying trends behind the veil of complex processes, ambiguous dynamics and competing if not contradictory narratives surrounding the empirical reality of the divergent rebel roads to and exercise of power as experienced in contemporary Burundi and Rwanda. As I have made it clear throughout this dissertation, the evolution of these unifying trends was neither predetermined, nor linear: “past and present,” observes a prominent historian, “are linked by other fetters than the inevitable”” (Vansina 2004, 199). Considered from a *longue durée* perspective, however, the big picture of each evolution looks like a long arc of history<sup>65</sup> that bends toward a limited number of enduring patterns. In Rwanda, the long arc of history bends toward political centralization and the winner-takes-all mindset. In Burundi, the long arc of history bends toward political fragmentation and compromise. These enduring patterns, it seems to me, form “the unity of history” --in the Braudelian sense-- which in turn serves as one of the key complex and multilayered “shared mental models” (Denzau and North 1994) that concur in shaping the boundaries of the purposeful choices and actions of the successive waves of political entrepreneurs in response to shifting contexts and ever-changing challenges and opportunities.

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<sup>65</sup> I borrow this metaphor from the iconic words attributed to Martin Luther King, Jr., “The arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice.”

## Chapter Six

# GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

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At this moment in history, when we have the sense of a world dying and another coming to birth--and all of us are thus to be reckoned the twice-born--we must seize and size up the dying system to understand what is being born.

--Max Lerner (1962, 19).

From the initial design of this research project in the summer of 2008 to the ultimate phase of defending the dissertation, much has changed in the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi. Much has also changed in my understanding of the puzzle of political trajectories, along with the variation therein, as well as the methods of approaching that puzzle. In the process however, a painstaking journey through the dark jungle of these political landscapes, going back and forth between contending empirical data and theoretical reasoning, led me to a counter-intuitive conclusion that the patterns of change and continuity are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Ultimately, by paying due attention to and exploring in depth the generally overlooked intersection between change and continuity - or precisely the process that can be accurately termed *change-in-continuity* - I came to the conclusion that the current rebel-led governance systems in Rwanda and Burundi are strategically more coherent, institutionally more grounded and historically more longstanding than dominant explanations based on contingent and idiosyncratic factors suggest. The following lines sums up this empirical finding, recapitulating the argument and evidence, and then deriving theoretical and policy implications for the study of comparative politics from a long-run perspective.

### **A Theoretically informed Synthesis**

The respective roads that took two rebellions, Rwanda's RPF and Burundi's CNDD-FDD, from the periphery as violent non-states actors to the center of domestic legitimacy and international recognition vary in many respects. For one, the RPF emerged from within a foreign (Ugandan) army in 1987, invaded Rwanda in October 1990, grew stronger and highly centralized, and four years later, won a military victory and went on to establish a strong state regime with a big voice in international arena. The CNDD-FDD rose to prominence in 2001 as a powerful faction from a loose network of Hutu armed groups formed in the wake of the 1993 bloody collapse of the first democratic experience in post-independence Burundi. Following a ceasefire agreement, the CNDD-FDD embraced the Arusha peace agreement that had been signed by other Burundian parties in 2000 and then joined the transitional government in 2003. It went on to win a landslide electoral victory in 2005 and from then onwards has presided over a consociational government best known for its lack of cohesion and little visibility beyond the national borders.

To account for this variation, the dominant literature focuses on contingent and idiosyncratic factors such as the Rwanda genocide's uniqueness, military victory and massive external support for the RPF vs. negotiated arrangements and limited external support for the CNDD-FDD, or individual leadership like the one incarnated by internationally renowned Paul Kagame compared to his obscure Burundian counterpart Peter Nkurunziza. While such explanations are not baseless, they tend to overlook the fact that the current variations seem to be the continuation of much longer, deeper trends where the past looked very much like the present in many respects. For one, if it is true that compared to the CNDD-FDD, the RPF has a far more unified, more authoritarian and stronger leadership, it is also true that Rwanda's top leadership

was far better than Burundi's at monopolizing power and mobilizing international support long before the rise of these rebel movements.

To explain this kind of seemingly counter-intuitive continuity amidst dramatic changes and ruptures, this dissertation put forth an alternative argument revolving around the influence of pre-established norms and structures in molding the way new actors in the political arena choose to act—or react—in the present. Revisiting Eckstein's paradigm of 'the law of congruence' conceived of as one of "the fundamental conditions of stability for key social or political institutions" (Eckstein 1997,23), I have argued and tried to demonstrate that, throughout their roads to and exercise of power, the rebel leaders found themselves obliged to preserve pre-existing institutions and practices of governance in their respective societies. I have contended that they did so, not only in their individual efforts to minimize the risks of unpredictable moves and uncertainties (as instrumental-rational theorists may correctly suggest), but more importantly because they had been socialized into these norms and practices, and have had to internalize and to work within them to achieve success. This argument rests on four major theoretical tenets.

First, the argument rests on the logic of path dependence according to which "[at] any point in institutional development, humans start with some pre-existing customs that influence new departures." (Riker quoted in Meierhenrich 2008, 83). As I have demonstrated, the enduring pre-existing customs at the heart of the rebel roads to power under consideration in this dissertation date back to the initial choices made by the founding fathers in the early seventeenth century, notably, Ruganzu's militaristic and clientelist centralization in Rwanda and Rushatsi's confederalist model in Burundi. In line with the premise that "the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice" (Levi 1997, 28), the two founding fathers set in motion two radically, long arcs of history.

In Rwanda, past and present, the arc of history tends to bend toward the central government's propensity to control all the sources and instruments of power and thus force its iron-fist policies down the people's throats. In Burundi, past and present, the arc of history tends to bend toward the central government's inclination to find a sizable slice of land where conflicting factions can walk through together.

Second, the founding fathers' initial choices proved not only the most fitting to the challenges of their times, but also the most adaptable to shifting dynamics from precolonial and colonial eras to post-independence republicanism and rebel-led governments. In turn, the process of reclaiming old-aged norms and practices had the unintended consequence of standardizing and idealizing them as a self-reinforcing common ground upon and against which each generation had to build its own legacy. For the same reason, the self-reinforcing nature of dominant norms and practices predisposed specific categories of actors to be more suited than others to lead these processes, including the most unpredictable ones. In this regard, strong evidence suggests that the fate tended to favor firebrand warriors like Ndori, Rwabugiri, Kayibanda and Kagame in Rwanda, and compromise-seekers like Rushatsi, Rwagasore, Buyoya and Nkurunziza in Burundi.

Third, the implied influence of pre-existing institutional arrangements in determining the brand of leadership underscores the idea of a self-reinforcing two-way interplay between leadership and the society. This view which calls into question conventional wisdom about the so often exaggerated role of individual political entrepreneurs in shaping the course of history, is consistent with Foucault's paradigm of 'economy of power relations' according to which, however antagonistic power relations may be, they are generally "rooted deep in the social nexus, not reconstituted 'above' society as a supplementary structure" (Foucault 1982). In other

words, the tenaciousness of political systems depends on, not only the rulers' will and ability to master the game of dominant 'economy of power relations', but also the predispositions of the society as a whole to comply with the prevailing rules of the game. This argument is also in tune with two prominent economists' findings that both economic institutions and political institutions "are collective choices" and that "the distribution of political power in society is the key determinant of their evolution." (Acemoglu and Robinson 2008, 1).

Fourth, while the historically grounded economy power relations dating back to the founding fathers followed the pattern of increasing returns processes, their evolution was neither linear, nor deterministic. In this regard, the implied congruence between the rebel roads to power and the macro processes they emerged from should then be best conceived of as, not "a story of inevitability in which the past nearly predicts the future" (North quoted in Meierhenrich 2008, 46), but rather as "a structural parameter to choices" that shapes the nature and extent of the options available to both individual and institutional actors.

To sum up, my congruence argument along with the theoretical tenets underlying it is consistent with an empirical observation made by a prominent historian, stating,

There is no linear relationship between the historical past and the complex present. Contemporary events emerge from the conjunction of many factors of the past—some evident, some obscure. Together, in indeterminate ways, these mold the way people choose to act in the present. Nonetheless, in making sense of the present there are lessons to be learned from the careful study of history in a manner that is methodologically sound. By allowing us to see more clearly the cultural resources and deeper structures that influence how people choose to act, the study of history brings greater understanding of the logic of people's actions—even when we might be repelled by such actions in themselves. Only by understanding why people act as they do can we hope to address the underlying causes of current social processes. (Newbury 2011, xxvii).

This observation can be generalized across time and space beyond the empirical context of Rwanda and Burundi. In doing so however, it is worth keeping in mind that political trajectories are part of these social phenomena that are too contested, too multi-variant, and too context-dependent to be easily accounted for by any one-size-fits-all explanatory variable. Here and again, there is no intention to pretend that the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi have not significantly changed over the last four centuries. Nor is it my intention to minimize the prospects for meaningful, if not radical changes in the political culture of both countries in the years or decades ahead. Rather, I am arguing only that the dominant features underlying current governance systems in Rwanda and Burundi today, along with the remarkable differences between the two countries, are rooted deep in history and thus represent far older structural layers than what contingent and idiosyncratic factors embedded in the myopia of the present may suggest.

### **Policy Implications and Paths for Strategic Engagement**

In policy terms, the enduring law of congruence raises an important question: what can be done to get rid of harmful and counter-productive practices, sustain positive trends, and reverse the down-slides in fragile societies like Rwanda and Burundi? On the surface, this policy puzzle hints at a merciless struggle for change, pitting change-seekers against conservative forces keen to preserve the status quo. The 1990s donor-imposed process of democratization is a perfect illustration of a struggle where change and continuity were seen as incompatible and mutually exclusive. Beneath the surface, however, empirical reality shows that change and continuity “are fundamentally interdependent, contradictory but also mutually enabling” (Farjoun, 2010, 202). The passage from kingship to republicanism in Rwanda and Burundi illustrates this duality as well.

On one hand, the new regime came with fundamental changes in terms of ideological and institutional settings — the republican flag replaced the royal drum, ministers replaced ritualists, written laws replaced esoteric codes and rituals. On the other hand, because these new institutions and arrangements were not taking place in a vacuum, the old rules of the game, namely, fragmented politics in Burundi and increasing centralization in Rwanda hardly disappeared.

In this respect, bringing about positive change comes down first and foremost to conceiving of change and continuity as “two sides of the same coin” and thus to being “concerned about the management of both processes” (Schein, 2011,34). In this regard, this dissertation pleads for a more inclusive paradigm -- the one I term “change-in-continuity” - to account for the unified movement underlying the contending, ever-changing, yet self-reinforcing dynamics of social and political life.

To be sure, the empirical reality of unpredictable events, accidental outcomes, and unintended consequences cautions us against the limits of rational design, however informed and careful it may be. Nevertheless, because each society has a set of laws (of congruence) rooted deep in the social nexus, identifying such laws is the first step toward an informed guess about the most plausible outcomes. Moreover, since the laws of congruence and the political cultures underlying them are always subjected to the principle of “economy of power relations” - in the tradition of Foucault (1982) - transcending the reach of the powers-that-be, their self-reinforcing evolution leaves far more room for change, innovation, reform, and adaptation than it is generally assumed. After all, like in any culture, the strength of political culture lies not in its rigidity, but in its ability to adapt to changing dynamics and shifting contexts:

“Mr. Change,” proclaims a Rwandan proverb, “is Mrs. Context’s son.”<sup>66</sup> It seems then that promoting good practices and getting rid of the odd ones comes down, among other strategies, to the art of changing the rules in mid-game, and distributing power among actors in a way that is likely to determine the macro outcomes. To this end, a careful, context-sensitive and longer timespans-centered inquiry holds the promise to tell us “why societies move in particular directions and the consequences of such movements.” (Pierson 2000, 203). This being said however, as one scholar reminds us, “recognizing the existence of path dependence may not help policymakers much if they do not know how to identify it *ex ante*” (Williamson, here paraphrased by Pierson 2000, 2003). In other words, understanding the roots and routes of current dynamics is key to designing sound context-sensitive and well-informed policies.

### **A Truth about Politics as Congruence**

From the fall of the Roman Empire to American Revolution and from the Russian revolution to the fall of the Berlin Wall, modern history is full of telling cases where the course of history can radically and aptly change as a result of accident, purposeful agents’ actions, or unintended consequences. Are the political landscapes of Rwanda and Burundi any exception? I can seldom pretend so. In fact, a counter-factual perspective begs a number of provocative questions:

What could have been the endgames if either of the colonial powers had annexed Rwanda and Burundi and integrated them into a larger political entity such as the Belgian Congo or the British Tanganyika? What if the Belgian administration had toppled the ruling elites and promoted new centers of power as they attempted to in the 1920s? What if the FNL-Palipehutu had captured power in Burundi and imposed a Hutu republic *à la rwandaise*?

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<sup>66</sup> In Kinyarwanda: “Bihibindi ni uwa Nyirandihe.”

What if the moderate change-seekers had prevailed over both Habyarimana's *akazu* and the RPF in the 1990s?

The extinction of the once powerful kingdoms of Ankole, Karagwe and Buha also concurs in illustrating this reality. So does the rise of modern states like Tanzania and Uganda, which were born from the ashes of numerous kingdoms that had much in common with Rwanda and Burundi. In this regard, the shared colonial fate that set apart Rwanda and Burundi from their contemporary neighbors, which found themselves swallowed by giant structures of colonial making (Congo, Tanzania, Uganda), reminds us that the weight of serendipity and other forces beyond scientific predictability cannot be underestimated. In this respect, the enduring correlation in terms of governance patterns between the rebel roads to power and exercise thereof in contemporary Rwanda and Burundi and the macro processes they emerged from, should then be understood in a more nuanced, but theoretically sound and empirically valid manner. For sure, it is not a matter of sheer coincidence or accident. Nor is it “a story of inevitability in which the past nearly predicts the future” (North quoted in Meierhenrich 2008, 46). Instead, it is a ‘structural parameter to choices’ that shapes the nature and extent of the options available to concerned actors, both individuals and institutions. This is precisely the case because no political trajectory emerges in vacuum.

Moreover, while each leader has his own style, and despite the fact that each context adds distinctive colors and layers, proverbial wisdom reminds us that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” As I have argued and demonstrated throughout the dissertation, the causal mechanism that holds together the dominant patterns of authority in a country - i.e., the body politic as a whole - is the law of congruence.

In the context of Rwanda and Burundi, the prevailing law of congruence appears in the form of a long arc of history, which tends to bend toward centralization in the former and fragmented power in the latter. This being said, conceiving of politics as an instance of congruence comes down to recognizing the mathematical impossibility of accounting for all the details about past roots, current crossroads and future trajectories. Therefore in this case, as in many others, theoretical insights and policy implications associated with them are most valuable for providing the analytic lens through which to understand the evolution of specific social and political trajectories, rather than providing final answers in and of themselves. From this realization, much-needed is open-minded scholarship driven by scientific rigor and informed by intellectual humility in our endeavoring to “seize and size up the dying system to understand what is being born.” (Lerner 1962, 19). Indeed, laying down meaningful theoretical and methodological foundations for such an endeavor was precisely the purpose of this dissertation.

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