

SECURING THE SPACE FOR POLITICAL TRANSITION:  
THE EVOLUTION OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN BURUNDI

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## **Curriculum Vitae**

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### **EXPERIENCE SUMMARY**

Elizabeth McClintock is a Founder and Managing Partner with CMPartners, LLC. Ms. McClintock has over 20 years of experience developing curriculum, designing training, and implementing programs in negotiation, mediation, and communication skills, conflict management, and leadership development worldwide. Ms. McClintock's work is focused in conflict and post-conflict environments, with both public and private sector organizations. In particular, Ms. McClintock has worked in Burundi for the past 17 years, supervised projects in Timor-Leste and Liberia, and managed a multi-year, multi-country capacity building program for the World Health Organization. Specific expertise includes:

- Leadership capacity building;
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- Curriculum development for literate, semi-literate and illiterate adult audiences; &
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### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**CMPartners, Cambridge, MA (July 2003-present).** Program development, process advice, consulting, curriculum development and training in negotiation and communication skills, conflict management, and leadership capacity building. Recent work includes:

- **Lead facilitator** of a **6-month capacity building program** for implementing partners responsible for managing the **social reintegration of ex-combatants** as part of Burundi's World Bank funded DDR program conducted in partnership with the *Burundi Leadership Training Program (2012; 2014)*;
- **Country team leader** and substantive expert for an evaluation of USAID CMM's P2P reconciliation approach in Burundi, with Social Impact (2013);
- **Co-facilitator and curriculum designer** of training programs conducted at country, regional, and headquarters level for the **World Health Organization (CMG & CMP: 1996-2015)**.

- **Lead program designer** and facilitator for a series of collaborative **capacity-building projects targeted at Liberian government officials** and managed by WWICS (2006-2011).
- **Co-facilitator and curriculum designer** of a two-year USAID-funded **training-of-teachers program to develop a conflict resolution course for Burundian high schools**, in partnership with the Burundian Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and the Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP). Curriculum included context-specific case studies and simulations. (2009-2010).
- **Project Manager** for the World Bank-funded “**Leadership and Communication Capacity for National Renewal**” program, Timor-Leste. Curriculum developed for this program was based on best practice generated from previously implemented programs in Burundi, Liberia, & Nepal. (2007-2009).
- **Lead Facilitator and program designer, BLTP**, including the design of a program to promote organizational learning within the **Burundian National Defense Forces** (2003-2008).

**Conflict Management Group (CMG), Cambridge, MA (2001-2003). Director of Programs.** Responsible for managing all program staff, the development of new programs, the creation of teams for the design and delivery of CMG programs, and working with the Executive Director in the design and implementation of CMG's strategic plan. Designed, managed, and implemented program activities for CMG's work with the World Health Organization, the Central Africa Project, and the Israeli-Palestinian Negotiating Partners Program, in addition to other projects.

**Conflict Management Group (CMG), Cambridge, MA (1994-2001). Program Manager.** Responsible for developing, coordinating, and implementing training and consulting programs in a wide range of project areas including intercultural negotiations, race relations, and preventive diplomacy. Projects included negotiation skills training for government officials in partnership with the World Health Organization and the Organization of African Unity; training in negotiation and joint problem-solving skills for marginalized youth in Rwanda and Burundian community organizations; served as a member of CMG's mediation team on a number of multi-party disputes.

**Peace Corps Morocco (1988-1992). Volunteer.**

- *Teacher*, École Normale Supérieure, Rabat, Morocco (1991-92). Designed and implemented an English-language curriculum for science professors.
- *Volunteer Leader*, Rabat, Morocco (1990-91). Supervised forty volunteers in the education field and served as their liaison to the Peace Corps administration. Made site visits, classroom observations, and conducted annual performance reviews in collaboration with the volunteers' Moroccan supervisors.
- *Teacher*, Institut de Technologie Appliquée (ITA), Khemisset, Morocco (1988-1990). Designed and implemented an English-language curriculum for 250 students in a technological institute. Developed a prototype for a national curriculum for the ITA.
- Designed and implemented a youth basketball program for sixty participants.

## UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Adjunct Professor, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C. (2015).** Co-teach the graduate level course, *International Dispute Settlement Methods*. Responsibilities include co-development of course syllabus, preparing and delivering lectures, assisting students with assignments and papers, student performance evaluation, and grading.

**Instructor, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, MA (2010).** As a GIFT Fellow, co-taught a graduate level course, *Conflict Resolution Theory*. Responsibilities included co-development of course syllabus, preparing and delivering lectures, and assisting students with assignments and papers.

**Teaching Assistant, The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, MA (2010).** Assisted in the preparation of lectures, conducted negotiation exercises, co-facilitated section meetings and assisted in the grading of student performance and papers for a graduate level course, *The Processes of International Negotiations*.

**Teaching Assistant, Tufts University, Medford, MA (1993-94).** Assisted in the preparation of lectures, conducted classes, administered and graded examinations for two upper level undergraduate courses in ancient Islamic history and the history of the modern Middle East.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Fairman, D., Chigas, D., McClintock E., and Drager, N., (2012). *Negotiating Public Health in a Globalized World: Global Health Diplomacy in Action*, Springer Briefs in Public Health, Dordrecht: Springer.
- McClintock, Elizabeth and Térence Nahimana. (2008). “Managing the Tension between Inclusionary and Exclusionary Processes: Building Peace in Burundi” in *International Negotiation* Vol 13 No 1. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers and Johns Hopkins University.
- Chigas, Fairman, McClintock and Najam. (2007). “Negotiating Across Boundaries: Promoting Health in a Globalized World” in *Trade and Health: Seeking Common Ground*. Heymann, Drager and Blouin eds. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.
- Sommers, Marc and Elizabeth McClintock. (2003). “On Hidden Ground” in *Imagine Coexistence: Restoring Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*. Chayes, Antonia, and Minow, Martha, eds. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

## EDUCATION & HONORS

**Ph.D. Candidate** - The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 2016 (anticipated).

Dissertation title: *Securing the Space for Political Transition: The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Burundi*

Fields of study: International Negotiation and Conflict Resolution and Human Security.

Grants and Fellowships:

- Ph.D. Exchange Fellow at l’Institute d’Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po), Paris (2012-2013)
- Dean’s Award Recipient, Summer Research Grant, The Fletcher School (2012)
- Next Generation Research Grant Recipient, Program on Negotiation, Harvard Law School (2012)
- Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research, Syracuse University (June 2011).
- Graduate Institute For Teaching Fellow (2010-2011).

**Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy** – The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, 1994.

Masters Thesis: *Prospects for Peace in the Sudan: The Creation of a National Identity.*

Fields of Study: International Negotiation and Conflict Resolution and Southwest Asian Studies.

- Elected Class Speaker.

**Artium Baccalaureus** (Government) – Dartmouth College, 1986.

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## PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Executive Director and Chair, Board of Directors, The Bridgeway Group (Cambridge, MA): 2008-present

Member, National Peace Corps Association: 1992-present

Member, Alliance for Peacebuilding: 2010-present

Member, International Studies Association: 2009-present

## **Abstract**

This dissertation addresses the question, why, after forty years of military dictatorship, has the Burundian Army remained in its barracks and off the political stage despite facing conditions that mirror historical events and which, in an earlier time, would have prompted the military's swift and violent intervention in politics. Traditional civil-military relations scholarship suggests that once civilian supremacy has been established over the military, the military should then withdraw from politics. However, the scholarship does not offer a sufficient explanation of how the process of establishing civilian supremacy occurs. This study tests the hypothesis that in order to understand how civilian supremacy in civil-military relations is achieved, these relations must be examined over time and in the context of a country's *political culture* – in other words, the ideology, formal and informal rules that inform a people's shared understanding (conscious and unconscious) of how politics should function and which give meaning to and ultimately guide their actions. This study examines the case of Burundi's military, developed from primary and secondary sources. Identifying the three principal threads of Burundi's political culture – the sources of regime legitimacy, the management of political conflict, and the role of clientelism and the state – the study uses these threads to trace Burundi's civil-military relations from the pre-colonial era through 2014 in order to explain the shift in the army's behavior since 2003. This study finds that, taken alone, civil-military relations theory cannot adequately predict the military's behavior. Instead, this dissertation finds that only by first understanding how political culture influences and shapes concepts such as what makes a government "legitimate" or an army

“professional” will the civil-military relations scholarship have relevance. Second, this study finds that civil-military relations theories have greater explanatory value when they are combined. Specifically, norm inculcation is both supported and furthered by professionalization; a drop in internal support for military intervention occurs alongside the increasing legitimacy of government. The findings in this research study offer important insights into how a path toward civilian supremacy is initiated and can be sustained, potentially informing security sector reform efforts in other post-conflict contexts.

## **Dedication**

For my mother  
*JoEtta McClintock*

In memory of Howard Wolpe  
You are greatly missed

*and*

In honor of and with admiration for the resilience of all Barundi



## **Acknowledgements**

This dissertation is grounded in the excellent work of generations of Burundi scholars who have come before me. I have tried to accurately and faithfully reflect their insights and contributions. However, should there be errors in translation, interpretation, or understanding of the context, they are my own and I accept full responsibility for any inaccuracies.

As with any endeavor of this magnitude, success would not be possible without the love, support, advice, guidance, and enthusiasm of friends, professors, colleagues, and family members. I would like to begin by thanking my Burundian friends and colleagues, in particular my dear friends Fabien Nsengimana, the incomparable BLTP team (Pélagie, Gilbert, Freddy, Reverien, Octavie, Justine, Eddie), Joseph Nindorera, Joseph Bigiramwami, the CBLP/Ikibiri Coalition members, those who made my life in Burundi possible (Leonidas, Emmanuel, Laurent, Egide, Dieudonné, Herman, and Fiston); my “Burundi ex-pat friends” for a lifetime: Leanne Bayer, Tracy, Adrien and Kira, Steve McDonald, Marc Sommers, Howard Wolpe, Tina Robiolle, Ricardo Perez Nuckel, Georgina Yates; and the officers in the FDN, many of whom were first colleagues and are now friends, in particular Sylvestre, Aloys, and Leonidas.

The genesis of this project was a conversation (or two) that happened in the paillet in my backyard in Rohero with Peter Uvin, my friend, colleague, and mentor. You have kindly accompanied me every step of the way and without you, this truly would not have come to fruition. Eileen Babbitt and Toni Chayes, you have guided, cajoled, and offered feedback during the critical moments. Leila Fawaz and Jes Salacuse, you never gave up on the idea that I could do a Ph.D. Stef Vandeginste, who read early drafts and allowed me to talk through my ideas with an expert. Thank you all. Meenakshi Chakraverti, thank you for your gentle and unwavering encouragement. Special thanks to Ellen McDonald, Mariesmith Michaud and the staff at Ginn, Eric Bastin and the staff at Belgium's Royal Military Academy Library, and the staff at the Archives of Belgium's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Elke, Marina, Courtney, Nancy, Nick, Dave, Jean Louis, Irina, Nichola and other denizens of the Fares Ph.D. Center your humor and support have pulled me through some challenging days.

Finally, I could not have done any of this without the love and support of my family; thank you Mom, Jim, Becca, Madi, Beth, Dave, Toni, Katherine, Matthew, Julia, Susan, T'Lark, Anne, Catherine, Mimi, Preeti, Matt, Ackshay, Peter, and my extended family, Tom, Jan, Eric, Anna, Stacy, Dan, Jim, Anna H-T, Olga, Matt, Caroline, Sallyann and Carole. I am truly grateful to you all. I have acknowledged here only a few of the people who have made this journey possible for me. If you do not find your name here, please know that it is inscribed on my heart and, to the best of my ability, your wisdom is contained within these pages.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **A. Motivation for this Study**

In 1998, I traveled to Burundi for the first time. I had been asked by a Canadian development organization to design and facilitate a series of workshops to build the capacity of a range of civil society organizations in negotiation, communication and conflict resolution skills. The program was intended to complement other local and international efforts aimed at building a constituency for peace, in the midst of Burundi's ongoing civil war. At the time, I knew little about Burundi; my understanding of the region and its politics was heavily influenced by reports of the horrific genocide in Rwanda and the (gravely mistaken) perception that somehow Burundi and Rwanda had almost the same history, due to their shared colonial heritage and the fact that their ethnic make-up was ostensibly the same – approximately 85% Hutu; 14% Tutsi; and 1% Twa.<sup>1</sup>

During my initial weeks in Burundi, the civil war raged on, although largely conducted outside the cocoon that the army had created to insulate Bujumbura from the rest of the country. Indeed, to my uninformed eye, the city center was a bastion of calm,

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<sup>1</sup> These same statistics have been cited as describing the ethnic make-up of Burundi for over 50 years. The statistics are virtually impossible to verify as no official census has been taken since independence. The statistics that are used result from a census undertaken by the Belgian colonial government in 1956 (Ngaruko and Nkurunziza 2000). In addition, children of mixed marriages are identified by their father's ethnicity and, since independence, the Ganwa have slowly disappeared as a category of Burundians (gradually being subsumed into the Tutsi "ethnicity," as the monarchy becomes a distant memory), making it difficult to accurately determine the percentages of Hutu and Tutsi among Burundians, were it even politically possible to do so (Chrétien 2006).

marred only by the vague yet menacing threat that emanated from the voices of the soldiers and youth who sang as they marched early each morning through the streets that surrounded my hotel.

It was only with each return visit to Burundi over the subsequent years that I came to fully appreciate the surreal façade that the Burundian military regime had brutally manufactured for visitors to the capital (and for its predominantly Tutsi residents): how central parts of the city had been violently, ethnically cleansed, the marauding Tutsi youth gangs aided and abetted by the Tutsi-led military; how the roads abruptly disappeared on the periphery of the capital, their terminus blocked and guarded, suggesting that the countryside was uncivilized, dangerous and, most of all, inaccessible; and how the earnest and well-meaning members of civil society with whom I worked were overwhelmingly Tutsi, and who, even as they hoped to contribute to bringing peace to their communities, could not seem to fully acknowledge their role in the exclusionary system that had governed the lives of Burundians for almost forty years, ultimately resulting in civil war.

After ten years of civil war, the international community finally succeeded in stewarding the parties toward an end to the conflict. On August 28, 2000 the *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi* was concluded.<sup>2</sup> In addition to signing on to a host of provisions to rectify past wrongs, the Tutsi-led military government agreed to a security sector reform process and a transitional government in which power

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<sup>2</sup> The Agreement is popularly referred to as the *Arusha Accords* and hereinafter shall be referred to as such in this dissertation.

would be handed over to a Hutu civilian president midway through a three-year transition process. Having continued to work in Burundi and the region since that first visit in 1998, I was one of the many skeptics who did not believe that the military would give up power when the time came in April 2003. The Burundi Armed Forces (known by their French acronym, FAB) were omnipresent, infiltrating every aspect of Burundi's political and economic life. It did not seem possible that they would so easily accept a negotiated settlement to the long civil war and depart quietly from the political scene. When the moment arrived on April 30, 2003, President Pierre Buyoya did step aside and Vice-President Domitien Ndayizeye took over, although few believed that the FAB would defy 40 years of history and respect the tenets of the *Arusha Accords*. Yet, in the face of great doubt and deep fear, the FAB did observe the Arusha Agreement, allowing the post-conflict process to move forward and beginning Burundi's long journey toward peace.

## **B. A Brief Context**

The Republic of Burundi is a tiny, landlocked country in Central Africa, wedged between the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to its west, Tanzania on its southern and eastern borders, and Rwanda to the north (see map in Appendix 2). The country has a surface area of 27,830 square kilometers (slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Maryland) and sits on the eastern shores of Lake Tanganyika. Its borders have remained largely unchanged since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century when the monarch, Ntare Rushatsi, consolidated his kingdom. Burundi was an independent monarchy until Germany forced a treaty on the monarch Mwami Mwezi Gisabo (ca. 1852-1908) in 1903, relinquishing

Burundi's sovereignty. Burundi became a Belgian mandate at the end of World War I, granted by the League of Nations when Germany's territories were divided amongst the allies. It remained a Belgian protectorate until 1962, when it was finally granted independence by the United Nations General Assembly on July 1, 1962.

Burundi has a population of approximately 10,742,000, making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world with 388.47 inhabitants per square kilometer.<sup>3</sup> Given that over 85% of Burundians are subsistence farmers, land has always been a coveted resource and has only grown in value – and as a source of conflict – as population density has increased. Burundi's economy is predominantly agricultural, with agriculture accounting for over 40% of GDP and coffee and tea exports comprising over 90% of foreign exchange earnings. Forty-two percent of Burundi's national income comes from foreign aid (CIA World Fact Book 2015). Over half of Burundi's population lives below the poverty line. In 2014, Burundi was identified as the hungriest country in the world, with almost 75% of the country's population considered as undernourished.<sup>4</sup>

Tragically, these dire figures are juxtaposed against a backdrop of stunningly beautiful countryside, almost perfect temperatures, and a rich soil in which virtually anything will grow. More importantly, these figures do not capture the incredibly resilient, hard-working, generous, and thoughtful nature of Burundians. In the face of both natural and manmade disasters and conflicts, Burundians have survived and

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<sup>3</sup> Figures based on 2015 projections made by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Data accessed at <http://statisticstimes.com/population/countries-by-population-density.php> on September 6, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Data accessed at <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-worlds-10-hungriest-countries/> on September 7, 2015.

continue to seek ways to thrive. Their challenges are enormous, matched only by the people's refusal to succumb to despair.

As will be described in this dissertation, after 1962 the ethnic minority Hima Tutsi rose to power and between 1965 and 2003 they dictated the political, economic, and social lives of Burundians. Controlled by this small group of Tutsi, the army played a critical role in securing privileges for the minority and violently repressed the majority Hutu (and moderate or non-Hima Tutsi), who sought equitable access to power and the resources of the state. With one brief exception in 1993, political transition was characterized by coups d'état, resulting in four military republics with a succession of army officers serving as head of state. Military officers were appointed as government ministers, governors, and local level officials. A military council superseded the authority of each government. Those within this small circle, and particularly those entering the army, benefited from privileged access to education and to economic opportunity. The concentration of power within a small minority had a profound impact on Burundi's political culture, ultimately resulting in a shift from a monarchical system distinguished by clans and regional centers of power to a more centralized, militarized, and exclusionary society.

The structural and physical violence required to maintain this system ultimately provoked the civil war, unleashed when Burundi's first democratically elected President was assassinated in 1993. By most estimates, over 300,000 people died in the twelve-year civil war and hundreds of thousands became refugees in neighboring countries or were



internally displaced.<sup>5</sup> However, these figures do not reflect the full scale of Burundi's tragedy. Supported by an increasingly repressive military between 1965 and 1993 when the civil war began, the Tutsi-dominated government was primarily responsible for the deaths of at least 300,000, predominantly Hutu, Burundians and implemented policies of structural violence and exclusion that resulted in the exodus of over 650,000 people, again mostly Hutu, who sought refuge abroad during that same period.<sup>6</sup> The most significant of these events was the 1972 'selective genocide,' in which at least 150,000 people died and over 500,000 fled the country.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, when Buyoya handed power to Ndayizeye in 2003, few observers of Burundian politics were confident that the FAB would remain on the sidelines, as little in their past indicated a willingness to surrender power and privilege. On the contrary, the Tutsi-led FAB had repeatedly demonstrated that it would go to extreme lengths to maintain its dominance and protect the minority Tutsi from what it perceived as an existential threat.

While the transition government was established immediately, the fighting did not subside until several years later: after the November 2003 *Global Ceasefire Agreement* (GCA) was signed between the transitional government and the most powerful rebel

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<sup>5</sup> "Burundi Under Siege", ICG Report, 28 April 1998. See also, [CIA World Factbook](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/by.html> Accessed 14 March 2013.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics vary widely. In the 1972 selective genocide alone it is estimated that between 150,000 and 300,000 Burundian Hutu died and almost 500,000 fled the country. In addition, each of the massacres in 1965, 1969, 1971, 1988, and 1991 are thought to have claimed thousands to tens of thousands of lives and generated tens of thousands of refugees. See Lemarchand 1970 and 1996, Reyntjens 1995, Ntibantunganya 1999, and Niyonzima 2004.

<sup>7</sup> The term 'selective genocide' was coined by Rene Lemarchand (1996) to describe the 1972 massacres of Hutu in Burundi.

group, the CNDD-FDD; after the first elections were organized in 2005; and following the full implementation in 2009 of the government's 2006 *Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement* (CCA) with the last remaining rebel group, the PALIPEHUTU-FNL. When the security sector reform process began in earnest in early 2004, many of the most powerful Tutsi commanding officers – those leaders directly responsible for the conception and execution of the government's repressive policies for the previous twenty years – were still in key positions of power within the army. And there many would remain for most of the next ten years -- in their barracks and staying out of politics, just as the *Arusha Accords* mandated.

### **C. The Puzzle**

Throughout most of its post-independence history, Burundi's Hima Tutsi elite was unable to consolidate power and govern effectively without relying on the coercive power of the military to enforce the regime's policies. At the slightest provocation, the army intervened and controlled the political space – until the decade following the 2003 transition. Several events of the past eleven years mirrored crises faced by earlier governments; crises that would have historically prompted the army to re-exert its power.<sup>8</sup> Yet, when the PALIPEHUTU-FNL attacked Bujumbura in 2005 and again in

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<sup>8</sup> For example, the attempted coup d'état by the gendarmerie in 1965, government paralysis in 1966, political in-fighting in 1969, the Hutu-led uprising in 1972, communal violence in 1988, and the election of President Ndadaye in 1993 all provoked extreme and violent reactions from the army, each resulting in a reconsolidation of military rule.

2008;<sup>9</sup> or when the government virtually came to a halt due to parliamentary paralysis throughout 2007 as the economy foundered; or when the opposition protested the outcome of the 2010 elections, the army did not intervene.<sup>10</sup> This behavior contradicts over 40 years of history in which the military violently hijacked the political space. Why, between 2003 and 2014, did the Burundian Army refrain from entering the political arena with which they are so familiar? Has their behavior actually changed? If so, what explains this shift?

## **D. Avenues of Inquiry**

### **1. CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS THEORY**

In trying to understand the behavior of the Burundian Army, it is logical to look first to the scholarship of civil-military relations theorists. Civil-military relations scholars have generated a vast literature describing why civilian supremacy over the military is a critical aspect of a democratic state. This literature, largely based on the Western democratic experience, offers a range of theories about the conditions under

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<sup>9</sup> PALIPEHUTU-FNL was one of the first Hutu rebel movements founded in Burundi. “The original Palipehutu group was founded in 1980 when the TABARA movement changed its name. The TABARA group was in exile in Tanzania, as a consequence of the exodus of many Hutu politicians in the wake of the massive government repression and massacres of 1972. The Palipehutu propagated for the initiation of an armed struggle against the Tutsi-dominated government of Burundi so as to achieve proportional distribution of political and administrative power between Hutus and Tutsis.” Uppsala Conflict Data Program, [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdata/gpcountry.php?id=26&regionSelect=2-Southern\\_Africa#](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdata/gpcountry.php?id=26&regionSelect=2-Southern_Africa#) accessed 25 March 2013. The movement was unabashedly pro-Hutu and remained outside the peace process until its leader, Agathon Rwasa, finally renounced armed conflict and agreed to demobilization in April 2009, implementing the ceasefire agreement signed with the government in 2006. The movement was then transformed into a political party when it changed its name to simply FNL, in accordance with national legislation outlawing political parties explicitly affiliated or promoting one ethnicity.

<sup>10</sup> Even in the face of anti-government protestors in the streets in April 2015 - and under great pressure from the civilian population - the army did not intervene to ‘right the ship.’

which a military might choose to intervene in politics, predominantly through a coup d'état. What the literature does not provide is a theory that adequately describes the conditions under which civilian supremacy in civil-military relations is ultimately achieved, thus motivating the military to remain in its barracks.

A significant portion of the civil-military relations literature dealing with the developing world focuses on the phenomenon of the coup d'état and the subsequent period of military rule. Decalo (1990), Finer (1962), Huntington (1968), Nordlinger (1977), Perlmutter (1981), Stepan (1973), and Welch (1970), among others, all offer extensive analyses of the circumstances under which the military will intervene, often violently, in politics. Some of these analyses suggest that the conditions that exist *inside* the institution of the military provide the most likely explanations for the military's intervention in politics.

These civil-military relations theories tend to fall into three broad categories – norm-based, structural, and rational choice theories. Based on this literature, I developed nine hypotheses to explain the behavior of the Burundian military today.

The two norm-based hypotheses include i) increasing regime legitimacy lowers likelihood of military intervention (Finer 1962, Stepan 1973, Nordlinger 1977, Koonings and Kruijt 2002); and ii) the inculcation of a norm of civilian supremacy within the officer corps (Finer 1962, Welch and Smith 1974, Welch 1976).

There are four structural hypotheses that explain whether or not a military will intervene in politics, which include i) professionalization of the military (Huntington 1957, Hutchful 1997) – although the positive causal link between professionalization and civilian supremacy is contested by scholars, as will be explained in more detail in Chapter Two (Finer 1962, Luckham 1971, Nordlinger 1977, and Stepan 1971); ii) the decreased saliency of ethnicity as a motivating factor for intervention (Nordlinger 1977); iii) the role of the international community – which has been cited as being a factor for both increased military intervention (Stepan 2001, Valenzuela 1985, Welch and Smith 1974) and as a source of pressure on militaries to respect the changing global norm in favor of democracy (Huntington 1968, 1995, Acharya 2004, Farrell 1998, and Finnemore and Sikkink 1998); and iv) a lack of sufficient support inside the military to sustain the momentum for intervention (Decalo 1990, Enloe 1980, Welch 1970, Welch and Smith 1974).

Finally, from the rational choice category of civil-military relations theory I generated three hypotheses: i) there is no threat to the key interests of the military posed by the civilian government and as a result there is no impetus to intervene (Decalo 1990, Finer 1962, Nordlinger 1977; ii) the soldiers achieved what they wanted and thus have no reason to continue to remain at the helm (Finer 1985, Welch 1987); and iii) there is no invitation by civilians for the army to intervene in politics and so the military chooses to stay on the sidelines (Welch and Smith 1974, Welch 1970).

In order to test these hypotheses, I developed a series of questions to ask my Burundian interlocutors about how and why the behavior of the military might have changed over the past decade.<sup>11</sup> To my surprise, almost to a person each interviewee strongly recommended that I look outside the institution of the military and further back than Burundi's immediate past to better understand the actions of the Army. Indeed, each interviewee said that the key to the military's behavior today lies in Burundi's history. As one General underscored, "If you are going to talk about the evolution of the army, then you must talk about its birth, and the years since independence in 1962, not simply the last twenty years of its existence" (Interview conducted August 10, 2012).

This advice is supported by the civil-military relations literature. In fact, in his 1968 book, Political Order in Changing Societies, Samuel Huntington rejects outright the premise that military intervention in politics can best be explained by factors endogenous to the military. Huntington discounts explanations that ascribe intervention motives to the social and organizational characteristics of the military, saying,

The effort to answer the question, 'What characteristics of the military establishment of a new nation facilitate its involvement in domestic politics?' is misdirected because the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political and reflect not the social and organizational characteristics of the military establishment but the political and institutional structure of the society (1968, 194).<sup>12</sup>

Building on Huntington's observation, this dissertation firmly situates the analysis of the Burundian Army's behavior in the larger socio-political and historical context of Burundi.

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<sup>11</sup> My interviewees included Burundian academics, military officers, politicians, and civil society leaders.

<sup>12</sup> Amos Perlmutter (1981) advocates a similar view.

## 2. UNDERSTANDING BURUNDI'S CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL CULTURE

Comprehending the historical and socio-political environments in which civil-military relations have evolved in Burundi requires a working definition of the concept of political culture and a deep understanding of Burundi's history. Explained in greater detail in Chapter Two, I thus reoriented my research using the lens of political culture (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, Chabal and Daloz 2006, Chilton 1988, Elazar 1994, Laitin 1995), developing a working definition of political culture that I could use to examine the arc of Burundi's history. The definition of political culture that I developed and will use in this dissertation is the following: political culture comprises the values, ideology, formal and informal rules that inform a people's shared understanding (conscious and unconscious) of how politics should function and which give meaning to and ultimately guide their actions.

Following the review of the literature on political culture, it was then necessary to revisit Burundi's past, developing an in-depth, within case comparison of different eras of Burundi's history (Chrétien 2006, Gahama 1983, Laely 1997, Lemarchand 1964, 1970, 1996, Manirakiza 1990, Newbury 2009, A. Nsanze 2003, Ntibantunganya 1999, Reyntjens 1989, 1992, 1995, Uvin 2009, among others). Using the aforementioned definition of political culture, I analyzed the Burundi case and identified three principal

threads of Burundi's political culture. As detailed in Chapter Two, these threads are the sources of regime legitimacy, the management of political conflict, and clientelism and the State (see glossary for a definition of clientelism). I then trace these threads through seven eras of Burundi's history to determine if and how Burundi's political culture has changed over time and to better understand its impact on Burundi's civil-military relations.

My research produced two important findings. First, just as Huntington exhorts, an understanding of civil-military relations requires an understanding of the larger socio-political context within which those relations exist. In other words, what constitutes appropriate relations between civilian and military institutions in Burundi cannot be analyzed in the abstract; these relations must be examined in light of the meaning Burundians themselves give to them, especially as relates to notions of power and political change – their conception of political culture.

Second, given how the threads of political culture change over time, no one category of civil-military relations theory (and indeed, no single theory) can adequately predict the military's behavior. Instead, the theories have explanatory value when they are combined. So, for example, norm inculcation is both supported and furthered by professionalization; a drop in internal support for military intervention occurs alongside the increasing legitimacy of government. Using the analysis of Burundian history (from the foundation of the kingdom through 2014), we will see which theories have predictive capacity and which do not; and we can better appreciate how those theories with



predictive capacity mutually reinforce one another, helping us to better understand the behavior of the Burundian military today.

### **E. A Note on Ethnicity**

Before continuing, it is important to note two things about Burundi and its inhabitants, as they directly impact this analysis of Burundi's political culture. First, throughout their histories Burundi and Rwanda have often been considered 'twin' countries, particularly during the colonial and post-colonial eras. This 'twinning' is due principally to two factors. First, Rwanda and Burundi were administered as one territory under the Belgian authorities – Ruanda-Urundi – and while the monarchies in each country were structured differently, colonial policy was the same. Thus, subsequent analyses of the histories of the two countries tend to conflate geographic proximity and a shared colonial master with a common socio-political structure. However the two socio-political structures were (and remain) quite different. In contrast to Rwanda's centralized Tutsi-led monarchy, in pre-colonial times Burundi's socio-political landscape was characterized by relative regional autonomy and a near-constant process of negotiation between the *Mwami* (the King) and the heads of Burundi's powerful clans.

Second, because the demographic make-up of both Burundi and Rwanda are similar it is assumed that the relationships between these groups in each country are

governed by the same criteria.<sup>13</sup> Again, this characterization is grossly inaccurate and throughout their respective histories, the impact of ethnicity has manifested itself very differently in each country. Thus, given its importance in Burundian political life, it is helpful to elaborate on the role of ethnicity in Burundi.

In colonial and post-colonial Burundi, the ethnicities of Tutsi and Hutu have been accorded particular meaning. These definitions have contributed to crystallizing socio-political conflict in Burundi, becoming shorthand for oppressor-oppressed, victim-perpetrator, depending on one's historical perspective. However, these ethnic identities, now largely seen as immutable, were in very recent history, social categories that helped to structure Burundian society but did not necessarily relegate a person to that category for his or her lifetime. As we shall see, the rigid classification imposed by the colonial powers and exploited by subsequent Burundian politicians served (and continues to serve) specific political aims, rather than being a fixed historical or anthropological fact. That these identities are now perceived to be 'age-old' does not mean that they are genetic. In Jean-Pierre Chrétien's words, "It is necessary to pay attention to the conception the societies themselves have of their different components. This conception is fundamentally tied to a social imagination and to political practice, and every imaginable interaction between them – but not heredity" (Chretien 2006, 77).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> As Rene Lemarchand comments, "In the crucible of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, other ethnic categories have simply disappeared...more intriguing is the case of the princely elites, or *ganwa*, who not only were the real power holders in the traditional society but also were generally perceived as a distinct ethnic category, not identified with either Hutu or Tutsi. By 1972 they had become virtually assimilated into the Tutsi frame of reference" (Lemarchand, 1996, 15).

<sup>14</sup> Chabal and Daloz capture this dynamic saying, "Indeed, what should be understood by the invention of ethnicity is not that such affiliations did not exist prior to colonial rule but simply that they were reconstructed during that period according to the vagaries of the interaction between colonial rule and African accommodation. What matters historically, then, is not so much the colonial roots of today's ethnic

Newbury offers some additional, important distinctions between Rwanda and Burundi in terms of ethnic identities. He posits that regional identities were more enduring in Burundi than in Rwanda and contributed to fragmentation within each of the three main groups.<sup>15</sup> As Newbury describes,

[A]mong Tutsi, for example, there were at least four clear internal distinctions, which were often more salient than their categorical opposition to Hutu. The Baganwa were the princes of blood, descendants of the Mwamis, up to four generations. They were often said to be of no other category – that is, they were distinct from Tutsi. Yet, although many saw the origin of the dynasty (and hence of the Ganwa) as Hutu, socially and politically the Baganwa were clearly associated with the Tutsi, and when demoted from an aristocratic classification, the Baganwa were accepted as of “Tutsi” status. Hima too was a category with ambiguous claims to Tutsi status. While clearly classified as part of the general social class of Tutsi, Hima were seen as culturally distinct; they were often assumed to be cattle herders and regionally associated with the eastern regions, the areas with better grazing. (In fact, in more recent times Hima has served as a particularly powerful political identity.) Finally, the term “Tutsi Banyaruguru” technically referred to all Tutsi other than those in special groups, but when the term “Banyaruguru” was used, it usually referred to a special class of powerful Tutsi, distinct from common Tutsi. (In addition, region and class conveyed powerful social distinctions among Tutsi, sometimes overriding the cohesion of ethnic affiliation alone)” (2009, 300-301).<sup>16,17</sup>

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groups but the deeper processes by which their sedimentation took place, from pre-colonial times to the present, so that, for example, it is more important to understand how the present-day ethnicity of Hutu or Kikuyu evolved over time than it is to demonstrate that these groups were ‘created’ during the colonial period. The fact that some ethnic groups were more creatively invented during colonial rule than others does not in and of itself make them any more or less genuine, or legitimate, than others” (1999, 57).

<sup>15</sup> Chrétien underscores the role that clans have played in Burundi’s history, noting that clan identities were once far more significant than ethnicity. He states that, “groups known since the nineteenth century as clans are the oldest structures of society to go beyond the limits of family enclosures and limited lineages; they combine kinship, exogamy, shared symbols, and rules of solidarity. They have remained at the heart of social life” (2006, 88). He emphasizes, “These identities also transcend so-called ethnic cleavages. Some clans in Burundi include Bahutu and Batutsi or one of these two groups and Batwa. This pertains respectively to 10 percent, 50 percent, and 90 percent of the clans in each of these three categories” (2006, 90).

<sup>16</sup> Despite (or because of) historically being considered of ‘undesirable’ families, all three of Burundi’s military dictators came from a predominantly Hima Tutsi clan and indeed, were related to one another.

<sup>17</sup> According to Joseph Gahama, two conditions needed to be fulfilled if one were to be considered a “*muganwa*” (a prince): one had to be a prince of royal blood, directly descendent from the current *Mwami* and one had to have a territory to administer. In addition, contrary to the habit of the Belgians at the time, a man who was a chief and administered a territory was *not* necessarily a *muganwa*. Not all chiefs were *baganwa*, as they did not all have direct lineage to the *Mwami* (1983, 23-28).

Newbury also underscores important distinctions among Hutu that went beyond regional particularities or clan (of which many also existed, just as for the Tutsi). Two major distinctions are important: 1) Hutu were the ritualists – each having distinct roles and identities (healers, royal tomb guards, court diviners, etc) and 2) *abashingantahe* – judges/mediators at the community level, who were commonly Hutu (2009, 301).<sup>18</sup> Thus, in the pre-colonial Burundi kingdom, not all Tutsi were powerful nor were they all cattle herders and not all Hutu were subservient to Tutsi and indeed many Hutu clans were as or more powerful than some Tutsi clans depending on their relationship to the *Mwami*.

To complicate matters, in Kirundi, the term Hutu not only refers to a category of people, it also refers to a relationship between a patron and his client. As Chrétien describes, “Even the denomination Muhutu was ambiguous because, in a clientage relationship, it indicated the dependent, even if he was a Mututsi” (2006, 82).<sup>19</sup> In fact, according to Chrétien, in the eastern parts of Burundi, along Lake Tanganyika where there were almost no Tutsi, the population did not identify themselves as Hutu but rather by clan or local place name, belying the very existence of different ethnicities (2006, 82). Marc Manirakiza confirms the utilization of this term in the context of clientage when describing what might transpire upon the purchase of a new cow:

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<sup>18</sup> The *ubushingantahe* governed social relationships within each community and acted as judges or mediators as the situation required. Zénon Nicayenzi, a Burundian historian offers a similar account of the history of this key Burundian institution. When describing Burundians, he chooses to outline distinct roles and responsibilities for ‘social categories’ of people (Hutu, Tutsi and Twa), rather than making reference to ethnicity (Presentation, 14 August 2012). Marc Manirakiza corroborates this understanding of the repartition of roles and responsibilities in his 1990 work, *La fin de la monarchie burundaise (1962-1966)*.

<sup>19</sup> Generally, Muhutu and Matutsi are terms that refer to an individual Hutu or individual Tutsi respectively. However, in this context the term Mahutu is describing a specific relationship, as Chretien explains.

Returning home with the [new] cow, [a man] might then give the cow to someone else [to guard] (kubitsa). The latter person was then called “umuhutu Wanaka” (the ‘Hutu’ of the first man), even if he was a Tutsi. The ‘Hutu,’ who profited from the milk and the manure of the cow (used as fertilizer), would then have to help the owner of the cow by working his land or offering him a beer. In this case, I don’t think we can speak of ‘domination’ [of one by the other]. Certain colonizers mistook for servitude, a simple exchange of services (1990, 23).

In short, the ethnic categories really had no meaning for or application to a homogeneous group – indeed, the categories referred to a broad swath of people, a diverse and heterogeneous population, and which had different meanings depending on your class, occupation, descent, personal characteristics, patron-client relationship, etc. And those characteristics combined in various ways, putting some in one category and others in a different category (despite their apparent ethnic similarities or differences).<sup>20</sup> As will be described in this dissertation, it was only later in Burundi’s history that ethnicity carried a more specific and destructive meaning.

## **F. Methods**

### 1. CASE SELECTION

This dissertation seeks to explain the behavior of the Burundian military today; behavior which seemingly contradicts forty years of military dominance of the political

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<sup>20</sup> Uvin (2009) similarly describes the history of pre-colonial Burundi. Overlaid on to the hierarchy *Ganwa-Tutsi-Hutu-Twa* was a network of clans and different lineages (to which both Hutu and Tutsi belonged) whose power and influence fluctuated depending on their closeness to the court. Hutu clan chiefs existed as did Hutu members of the Royal administration. As Uvin underscores, social borders were much more rigid after the advent of colonization, than they had been before (2009, 7-8).

arena. The study focuses on the Burundian military for several reasons. First, Burundi is representative of a number of African governments that have suffered from military intervention in the post-colonial era. Its experience is what Van Evera calls “prototypical,” in that the case shares “average or typical background conditions” with other nations in which the military has intervened multiple times (1997, 84). Between mid-1965 and the end of 1968 the military seized control in at least 13 African nations, including in Burundi, whose first successful post-independence coup d’état occurred on November 28, 1966 (Welch 1970, 2). And while the incidence of successful coups d’état worldwide has significantly declined since the end of the Cold War in 1989, sixty-five percent of the coups d’état since that time have occurred in sub-Saharan Africa. Of those 21 coups d’état, one was in Burundi.<sup>21</sup> The military is clearly no stranger to politics in Burundi, as elsewhere in Africa.

Second, the Burundi case has been well-documented, particularly the civil war period and the subsequent peace and security sector reform processes. The result is a case that is “sufficiently data-rich to permit process tracing,” which serves as one of Van Evera’s key criterion when selecting a case on the dependent variable (1997, 47). I have thus been able to do a within case analysis, tracing seven eras of Burundi’s history to determine how Burundi’s political culture has impacted the Burundian military over time.

Third, I was able to access several key actors within and outside of the Burundian military for the purposes of this research. I spent almost ten years working on aspects of

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<sup>21</sup> Center for Systemic Peace, Coups List: 1946-2010, INSCR Data Page.  
<http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm>. Accessed September 21, 2011

the security sector reform process in Burundi. This work enhanced my understanding of the challenges faced by those involved in civil-military relations in general and exposed me to the challenges specific to the Burundian military. The relationships developed during my years of work in Burundi provided me with access to policy-makers and leaders charged with taking the decisions that have led to the intervention (or non-intervention) of the military in politics since independence and greatly facilitated my ability to do this research.

## 2. DATA COLLECTION

This dissertation draws on the historical scholarship of the colonial and immediate post-independence periods in Burundi, as well as on more recent research that is grounded in the experience of Burundians themselves – produced by both Burundian and foreign authors. In order to fully understand the historical evolution of civil-military relations in Burundi and to effectively establish causality through the process tracing method, I worked first from an analysis of secondary literature, including but not limited to historical texts describing the pre-colonial monarchy and its functioning, Burundi under Belgian colonial control, and the literature devoted to the post-independence era. During my fellowship in France, I was able to access the vast resources at the French National Library, where I found many French language texts that are extremely difficult to access elsewhere in the world.

I complemented this review of the secondary literature with a review of primary sources, such as newspaper articles; policies and regulations developed by the Belgian colonial government, especially with regard to the role and functioning of the army; the laws, constitutional framework, policies and regulations developed since independence; public statements by key figures in both the military and the government regarding the need for and justification of intervention by the military, and more recently, policies and laws governing civil-military relations since the signing and implementation of the 2000 *Arusha Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement*. This research was facilitated by access to documents made available by the Belgian Royal Military Academy in Brussels and to personal letters, policy memoranda, official correspondence, and ministerial documents accessed at the archives of Belgium's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the time of this research access to some of these documents was limited; particularly the historical documents from the Belgian colonial period, as many of them were still under a 50-year moratorium imposed by the Belgian government.

I accompanied my review of primary and secondary sources with selected interviews of both civilian and military stakeholders and officials involved in the development, implementation, and/or evaluation of the policies, regulations, and provisions of the various peace agreements related the army and its reform. I used non-probability, purposive (snowball) sampling to choose my interview subjects (Robson 2002). I used a semi-structured, in-depth interview process to determine the key actors' opinions about civil-military relations in general and their assessment of particular decisions and historical events. The interviews were conducted during three separate trips



to Burundi: August 2012, January 2013, and February 2014. I conducted all of the interviews myself, in either French or English. I also conducted five follow-up interviews. I conducted three focus groups in order to complement my sample with perspectives of youth (focus group participants ranged in age from 15-26 years). One of these focus groups was conducted in Kirundi and I used a translator. I first prepared the Kirundi translator in both the substantive content and the process methodology used, before asking him to translate for me.

Where I specifically refer to an interview in this study, I identify the interviewee as either civilian or military and if military, by his/her rank. I also include the date of the interview. All interviews were conducted in Bujumbura, unless otherwise indicated in the dissertation. No other identifying information is included for the purposes of maintaining the confidentiality and security of the respondents, unless otherwise approved by the interviewee. All interview and document translations undertaken for this study are my own and any errors or omissions are my responsibility.

### 3. CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL BIASES

Robson (2002) cites three main challenges that can potentially threaten the validity of qualitative studies: description, interpretation, and theory. In the first instance, my recollection of what I have seen and heard in the course of this research project may suffer from some inaccuracies. To address this challenge, I recorded interviews wherever possible, obtained original copies or took photos of documents where permissible, and

took copious notes in all cases. I have also attempted to triangulate my data, comparing interview findings with historical research, comparing interview data on the same topics across interviewees, and purposefully seeking out differing viewpoints on the same topic, whether in the literature or in the selection of interview candidates.

A second challenge is providing a valid interpretation of the data collected (in this case, I am referring here to “the interpretation of the meaning and perspective” of interviewees (Robson 2002, 171)). To ensure that I remained faithful to the meaning provided by participants, I asked follow up questions during interviews to test my understanding and asked the same question in more than one way if I sensed any misunderstanding between me and the interviewee.

This challenge can be exacerbated by both respondent and researcher biases. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), respondent bias can range from withholding information to providing only the information that the respondent thinks the researcher wants to hear. To deal with respondent bias, I used data triangulation, meaning I used more than one source of data collection (documents, interviews, observation). I also checked back with several of my interviewees to test my understanding of the data they provided – in at least five cases, this happened six months after the first interview, decreasing the risk of respondent bias.

Researcher bias was also a challenge I had to deal with, given my long history of work in Burundi and the many close relationships I have to key actors, particularly those

in the military and those involved in the security sector reform process. To more effectively manage this bias, I consistently confirmed both what I was learning and the conclusions I was drawing with two Burundian peers – one Hutu and one Tutsi – in addition to periodically consulting several long-time Burundi observers and non-Burundian scholars. These colleagues suggested additional interview subjects, guided me to additional literature, and tested my preconceptions about the nature and success of the security sector reform process. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, it was the interaction with several of my original interview subjects that caused me to re-evaluate my theoretical framework and to reorient my research project to look at civil-military relations through the lens of political culture.

A final challenge is failing to consider alternative explanations of the phenomenon being studied. The main strategy I used to deal with this was to develop different ways to explain the data, what Robson (2002) calls “negative case analysis.” For example, an initial version of my theory was that the behavior of the Burundian military changed as a result of the efforts of a norm entrepreneur. After interviewing several officers, it became clear that while the role of the norm entrepreneur was important, it could not explain the lack of change earlier on in the norm evolution process. Following an extensive review of the literature, it became apparent that the timeframe in which I had assumed change could happen was too short – several interviewees corroborated this interpretation of the literature. I then revised the theory another time, as described above, in order to account for both the longer timeframe and the idea that the norm evolution process does not happen in a vacuum and must be explored in the context of a shift in the

overall political culture. In applying the method of negative case analysis, I did my utmost to both counter researcher bias and to ensure that my theoretical framework now accounts for the data gathered.

#### 4. REPRESENTATIVENESS AND GENERALIZABILITY

The data presented in this research project do not attempt to represent all perspectives on the topic of Burundian civil-military relations in general or on the issue of security sector reform in Burundi in particular. In my interview sample, I attempted to include military officers and civilian actors; government officials as well as non-governmental leaders; women and men; Hutu and Tutsi; current members of the FDN and demobilized combatants; ex-FAB/ex-PMPA and new recruits. Yet, the interview sample was limited, designed to complement the historical research conducted for the study. As a result, while several key perspectives were captured, this analysis does not rule out the possibility of different or even completely contradictory views on the topics under discussion in this dissertation.

As regards generalizability, the findings in this dissertation are most relevant for those in Burundi working on security sector reform specifically and on the issue of civil-military relations more generally. At the same time, some of the key characteristics of the Burundi case are shared by other post-conflict countries, most importantly the need to conceive of the operational aspects of SSR – integration of former fighting forces into a

single army, the need for a robust norm inculcation process to accompany professionalization, and the ever-present threat of a politicized military as a new government seeks to establish its legitimacy – through the prism of the country’s political culture in order for those efforts to have traction. Therefore, some of the results of this research may have applicability in other countries, particularly in Central Africa.

## **G. Outline of Dissertation**

Chapter Two provides the literature review and the dissertation’s theoretical framework. Chapters Three through Nine each deal with a specific period in Burundi’s history, beginning with the pre-colonial monarchy and ending with post-transition phase through 2014. Throughout these chapters, I chronologically trace the three threads of Burundi’s political culture to demonstrate that civil-military relations scholarship is not sufficient to explain my puzzle, in the absence of an understanding of that political culture. I end the dissertation with an explanation of how Burundi’s political culture shapes the different civil-military relations theories, underscoring what has changed (or remained constant) across time, all of which contributes to our understanding of why the military has remained in its barracks.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **A. Defining Political Culture**

In their book, Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective, Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle lay out a theoretical framework that succinctly describes the relationship between three “nested levels of institutional analysis:” political traditions, political regimes, and political institutions (1997, 37). This framework, articulated by Bratton and van de Walle to explain political regime transition, contributes an important element to our understanding of the behavior of the Burundian military: the necessity of analyzing the institution in its historical, not simply its present, context. As they note when introducing their politico-institutional approach, “A country’s political prospects derive directly from its own inherited practices” (1997, 41).<sup>22</sup>

At the heart of their analysis, Bratton and van de Walle define political “traditions” as “long-standing cultural legacies that over time come to suffuse political institutions and societal attitudes and thus achieve an autonomous capacity to influence

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<sup>22</sup> Yet, as Kathleen Thelen points out, it is critical to not think of path dependence (or ‘inherited practices’) as “one fork in the road, and after that, the path only narrows” (1999, 385). Because, as she describes, politics are not the same as technology – choices are rarely mechanical in politics. Indeed, she goes on to say, “politics is characterized by disagreement over goals and disparities in power, and in fact institutions often reinforce power disparities (Hall 1986, Knight 1992, Riker 1980: 444-45). However, the losers do not necessarily disappear, and their adaptation can mean something very different from embracing and reproducing the institution, as in the technology model. For those who are disadvantaged by the prevailing institutions, adapting may mean biding their time until conditions shift, or it may mean working within the existing framework in pursuit of goals different from – even subversive to – those of the institution’s designers” (1999, 385-386).

political outcomes” (1997, 37). This ‘autonomous capacity to influence political outcomes’ corresponds to the definition of political culture that I use in this dissertation – the values, ideology, formal and informal rules that inform a people’s shared understanding of how politics should function and which give meaning to and ultimately guide their actions. This definition also draws from Daniel Elazar, who describes political culture as a “framework” for “individual and group political behavior – in terms of the political thoughts, attitudes, assumptions, and values of individual and groups,” whose “influence lies in its power ...to provide subliminal direction for political action in particular political systems” (1994, 3).

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2008) reinforce this argument suggesting that the longevity of institutions is inextricably linked to how *de jure* and *de facto* political and economic power are allocated within a society.<sup>23</sup> In their definition,

*de jure* political power refers to power that originates from the political institutions in society. Political institutions, similar to economic institutions, determine the constraints on and the incentives of the key actors, but this time in the political sphere....A group of individuals, even if they are not allocated power by political institutions [or if that power has been recently taken away], may [still] possess political power; for example, they can revolt, use arms, hire mercenaries, co-opt the military, or undertake protests in order to impose their wishes on society. This type of *de facto* political power originates from both the ability of the group in question to solve its collective action problem and from the economic resources available to the group (which determines their capacity to use force against other groups) (2008, 6-7, emphasis in the original).

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<sup>23</sup> In a 2006 article, Acemoglu and Robinson offer a succinct distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* political power, “While the former is the type of political power allocated by political institutions (such as constitutions or electoral systems), the latter emerges from the ability to engage in collective action, or use brute force or other channels such as lobbying or bribery” (2006, 326).

In other words, the socio-political and economic context within which those institutions exist influences their power and longevity. Institutional reform can fail if efforts are not made to also address issues of economic and political power distribution. In their words, “Reform comes with pitfalls because either de facto or de jure power may persist, even if other things change” (2008, 7). Issues of political and economic power distribution touch at the very core of political regimes and indeed, political cultures. Thus, effecting long-term change within one very powerful institution such as the military is virtually impossible without a change in the deeper political culture that drives the regime.

Buttressing the argument that understanding political transitions requires the benefit of the long-term view, Chabal and Daloz (1999) offer an important perspective on the evolving political culture in African states. The authors do not claim to present a single theory of political development that might apply to every country on the (extremely diverse) African continent. Rather, they present a framework for analysis to explain the political crises in Africa, focusing on both the past and the present – incorporating both change and continuity in their analysis. In their words, “To speak of transitions is to understand continuities in their historicity. To study causalities is to make sense of the movement of societies over time. An historical approach, then, is one which attempts to explain events in contemporary Africa within the long span which connects the present to the pre-colonial past” (1999, xviii).



Yet since Gabriel Almond's introduction of the term 'political culture' into the political science lexicon in 1956, the concept has both inspired and divided political scientists. On the one hand, political culture is seen as a powerful idea, which promises "to solve in a scientific, cross-culturally valid way the micro-macro problem: the classic problem of specifying how people affect their political system, and vice-versa" (Chilton 1988, 419). For other scholars, the concept lacks "clearly conceptualized variables" and its predictive qualities are wanting (Laitin 1995, 168). Thus, the theoretical purchase of political culture seems difficult to establish.

Chabal and Daloz (2006) stand apart from this debate, arguing that focusing on political culture is too narrow and, instead, scholars must integrate a more broadly cultural approach in their comparative study of politics. Without understanding the meaning that polities ascribe to concepts, processes, and relationships – meaning found through the integration of a cultural approach to comparative politics – scholars will be unable "to disentangle the relevant webs of significance that impinge on political action" (2006, 27). Citing their earlier book, *Africa Works* (1999), the authors emphasize, "Our work on Africa has shown how a cultural approach makes it possible to understand the extent to which the exercise of power, south of the Sahara, is predicated on a personalized concept of politics" (2006, 29).

Offering a sharp critique of current approaches to integrating culture in the field of comparative politics, Chabal and Daloz (2006) claim that these approaches are generally either too superficial to be useful or too focused on a normative concept of

values. Indeed, according to the authors, the way in which values are conceived of and used in the field of comparative politics is problematic for at least three reasons. First, there is no consensus amongst scholars in the field as to what constitutes a value – thus making it difficult to compare across cultures. Second, and more importantly, the conceptualization of values, as with many concepts in comparative politics, is rooted in the Western democratic tradition. As Chabal and Daloz underscore, “Thus the very universal claim of the concepts used in comparative politics, although derived from the historically and culturally specific context of the advanced West, imposes on the discipline a methodology that may not promote the understanding of the deeper political processes at work in many non-Western societies” (2006, 13). Finally, the authors advocate that it is more analytically useful to examine the *meaning* given to concepts such as ‘values’, rather than attempt to determine “the extent to which such ‘values’ have been internalized, inculcated, or forced upon various segments of society” (2006, 87).<sup>24</sup>

The authors go on to dismiss the concept of political culture as unhelpful from an analytical perspective. This critique seems to be premised on two major concerns: First, according to Chabal and Daloz, the term political culture always carries a normative connotation, implying that it describes a polity’s achievement of certain democratic norms. Second, Chabal and Daloz state that, “The very assumption that there is an analytically separate domain of politics is...eminently ethnocentric” (2006, 61). They

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<sup>24</sup> Chabal and Daloz offer a helpful image for understanding the importance of culture, saying “To use a modern metaphor, culture is here conceptualized as ‘software’, which provides codes, rules and instructions. ...Human beings inherit cultural codes from birth, which remain relevant throughout their lifetime. They are passed on to their descendants. Without them man would be confined to the realm of instincts and senses. A semiotic approach makes it possible to decipher these codes, or ‘webs of meaning’” (2006, 86).

claim that the concept is too limiting, insisting that in many societies, it is virtually impossible to separate out the notion of a ‘political’ culture from the “rest of society’s cultural codes” (2006, 89). They go on to say,

Consequently comparativists who examine non-Western societies are unlikely to be able to identify a discrete *political* culture variable, operational in an area of human existence distinct from, say, the *economic* or *religious*. Such a behaviouralist approach, therefore, is guilty of neglecting all relevant anthropological knowledge about the relationships between cultural codes and social action, which shed useful light on the exercise of power (2006, 89).<sup>25</sup>

Coupled with their rejection of the concept of values as a variable worthy of comparison in the study of comparative politics, the case against political culture as a useful analytical lens seems damning.

While I agree with Chabal and Daloz’s premise that any approach that claims to elucidate an understanding of political regime change must integrate culture, I do not accept that a discussion of the concept of political culture always implies that some Western notion of a democratic regime is the desired end state of that political culture. The authors themselves acknowledge that in integrating a cultural approach, the analyst will gain three key *political* perspectives: 1) a better understanding of how local actors perceive the notion of power and how it is exercised; 2) a deeper appreciation of the significance of political change in a given society; and 3) insight into “how political forms of ‘exchange’ like legitimacy, accountability or representation actually take place” (2006, 30). In my view, all of these concepts contribute to creating the “cultural legacies”

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Schatzberg reinforces this notion stating, “To understand the full range of political thought in [middle Africa], we must examine the diverse means by which people voice political ideas indirectly. In other words, political thought in middle Africa must be redefined to include the works of novelists, dramatists, poets, musicians, journalists, theologians, philosophers, and social scientists, as well as proverbs, fables, and oral literature” (2001, 3).

that “suffuse political institutions and societal attitudes,” as emphasized by Bratton and van de Walle (1997, 37).<sup>26</sup>

Acknowledging the risks of bias underscored by Chabal and Daloz, I am using a definition of political culture to explain political regime change in Burundi that focuses on those aspects of Burundi’s culture that have the most relevance in that political context. To reiterate, political culture, as it is defined in this dissertation, means the values, ideology, formal and informal rules that inform a people’s shared understanding (conscious and unconscious) of how politics should function and which give meaning to and ultimately guide their actions. In using this definition, I hope to have, in the words of Chabal and Daloz, paid “attention to the deep local systems of meaning” (2006, 91). This focus is critical to my analysis because in order to explain the behavior of the Burundian military, we must move beyond the scholarship of civil-military relations theorists. The story of Burundi’s Force de Défense Nationale (FDN) can only be fully understood by tracing the evolution of Burundi’s institutions across time, within the context of a political culture that resulted in the military becoming one of the key institutions of each regime, ultimately dominating the government...until now.

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to note that Chabal and Daloz (1999) strongly disagree with Bratton and van de Walle’s conclusions about the prospects for democratic consolidation in Africa. In their view, Bratton and van de Walle base their analysis on a fallacy – that the concept of individual citizens and their independent agency in a political system – saying, “The notion of citizen is very precisely one which we would take to be Western (or Eurocentric) in that it implies a degree of individual differentiation within society which is almost nowhere to be found in Africa” (Chabal and Daloz 1999, 157).

## **B. Tracing the Threads of Burundi's Political Culture**

The FDN did not emerge whole cloth from the ashes of the civil war. The institution's origins, history, and evolution within the context of Burundi's political culture have significantly impacted the role that the FDN plays in Burundi today. However, in order to operationalize the concept of political culture, it is necessary to identify trends or threads that can be traced throughout Burundi's history. After an extensive review of the literature on Burundi (Chrétien 2006, Gahama 1983, Laely 1997, Lemarchand 1964, 1970, 1996, Manirakiza 1990, Newbury 2009, A. Nsanze 2003, Ntibantunganya 1999, Reyntjens 1989, 1992, 1995, Uvin 2009, among others), I identified the three principal threads of Burundi's political culture that seem to most effectively contribute to our understanding of the behavior of the military.

Taken from Chabal and Daloz (2006), this approach considers *meaning* a primary factor in the study of the central question of comparative political analysis: understanding politics. In emphasizing the need to situate such an analysis in a longer historical timeframe, Chabal and Daloz state, "What matters is not so much to recognize differences within a given epoch as to identify both the age and the factors which bring about a shift in the way in which culture affects politics" (2006, 157). Thus, I have traced these threads throughout the arc of seven eras in Burundi's history in an attempt to explain such shifts. Defined in more detail below, these threads are the sources of regime legitimacy, the management of political conflict, and clientelism and the State.

## 1. SOURCES OF REGIME LEGITIMACY

In his book, The Theory of Social and Economic Organization, Max Weber (1947) describes three types of legitimate authority: legal authority (based on the observance of mutually agreed to rules and laws by members of a group); traditional authority (based on “traditionally transmitted rules” to an individual(s) enjoying traditional status (1947, 341)); and charismatic authority (based on “magical powers” endowed to an individual, making him or her superhuman or “of divine origin” (1947, 359)). As this dissertation will demonstrate, early in Burundi’s history, the sources of the regime’s legitimacy were found in all three types of authority. As time went on these sources shifted, changing the nature of the regime’s legitimacy, moving away from its spiritual and traditional foundations and towards a legal and political basis. Yet this shift does not imply that we can interpret the behavior of the key institutions of the current regime solely through the contemporary lens of ‘political legitimacy’. It is important to conceptually and temporally expand our investigation of Burundi’s political culture, beyond this Western notion and incorporate a more broadly cultural understanding of legitimacy.

Corroborating this perspective, Chabal and Daloz caution against the wholesale application of Western concepts of political theory when explaining the concept of political legitimacy as it pertains to states in Africa. Indeed, the authors emphasize that, “The difficulty we have in understanding politics in Africa stems partly from our poor grasp of the very question of legitimacy” (1999, 53). In their view, much of what

constitutes ‘politics’ in Africa is activity that is found outside the common Western definitions of the political realm. As they underscore, “The vision of politics [in Africa]...projects with varying degrees of intensity into other realms of human existence: social, economic, religious, cultural, etc.” (1999, 52).

In his study of political legitimacy in Africa, Michael Schatzberg reinforces this view, describing what he calls the “moral matrix of legitimate governance” (2001, 1). Moral matrices are the cultural models and metaphors that inform how we interpret and give meaning to the world around us. As Schatzberg goes on to specify,

The moral matrix of legitimate governance is simply an implicit cultural and cognitive template encompassing the sum of tacit understanding of how key political concepts, such as power, are intuitively and implicitly defined; of what constitutes the parameters of the political kingdom; and of how individuals comprehend the forces of political causality (2001, 35).

This moral matrix informs the perceptions of the populace as to the legitimacy of a given political regime or institution. For example, in Burundi prior to the arrival of the colonizers, the monarch’s legitimacy was based in part on his spiritual role as intermediary between the population and their God, *Imana* (charismatic legitimacy, in Weber’s terminology). A whole set of institutions existed to define and support this spiritual role. After colonization, the monarchy lost much of its spiritual power and as a result, the sources of its legitimacy changed, along with the institutions that accorded that legitimacy. Understanding this moral matrix – what imbues an institution with legitimacy and how that institution in turn accords legitimacy to the holders of political power – is critical to our analysis of Burundi’s military.

## 2. THE MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT

The second thread of Burundi's political culture that I uncovered in the historical literature, which has specifically impacted the evolution of the Burundian military, is the management of political conflict. In speaking of the management of political conflict, I am referring here to how the successive regimes have chosen to resolve conflicts of interest between individuals and groups within the state – in particular, conflicts over access to resources and power. Has the management process been solely the purview of actors at the center of the state? Which institutions support those actors in their management of these conflicts, what are the means they use to do it, and what are the values that underlie the justification of the means used?

As in any state, Burundian regimes have availed themselves of a range of structural and legal methods for managing conflict; ranging, for example, from alliance-building among clans to reliance on local wise men to the establishment of formal constitutions. Initially, negotiation figured prominently as a strategy for managing political differences. However, as time went on, two other tactics emerged as critical to each successive Burundian administration: the implementation of overtly exclusionary policies and the use of violence. This evolution is detailed in Chapter 4, 124-128, Chapter 5, 162-166 and again in Chapter 6.

As a tool, exclusion appears first during the Belgian colonial administration. As will be discussed in the body of this dissertation, in stating that exclusion was first used



as a tool of the Belgian administration I do not mean to imply that there were no social categories or hierarchies present in Burundian society prior to the arrival of the colonizers. There were barriers between groups. However, these barriers were rarely impenetrable and the multiplicity of social groupings, which overlay one another, meant that negotiation rather than exclusion was the primary means of managing social and political conflict.

Negotiation was not the preferred mechanism of the Belgian colonizers. In order to manage the protectorate – a role that the Belgians did not embrace with alacrity after World War I – the Belgian government relied on several flawed assumptions about the nature of Burundi's monarchy to rigidify existing social classifications and to exclude portions of the population from access to certain resources. While simplifying Belgium's governance structures and their management of immediate political differences, this exclusionary approach set the stage for future conflicts, which continue to resonate in present-day Burundian politics (see pp. 118-122, 126-127). Most importantly, the Belgium's exclusionary policies gave new salience to ethnicity, which later became a tool for inciting and justifying violence.

The use of violence as method of managing political conflict has had equally far-reaching consequences. As for most other states, violence has been used as a tool by successive regimes throughout Burundi's history. Ultimately, extreme violence was justified as a means of protecting Tutsi from an existential threat presented by Hutu. Yet the threat itself was largely born of the violence used to preemptively thwart it. And

while the existential threat has been the most frequently cited reason over time for recourse to violence in Burundi, it has also become clear that violence has been used to buttress the system put in place through exclusion and to protect power and privilege. Thus, prior to 2004, each time the Hutu attempted to redress perceived wrongs and to demand their rights, they were met with intense violence. Charles King describes this phenomenon, saying, “In times of social upheaval, the ability to wrap one’s own ambitions in the mantle of justified violence may be the only thing that separates perpetrators from victims” (2004, 431).

The examination of the role of violence in Burundi (and elsewhere) too often stops with such a description of its instrumental role – a tool for achieving specific interests in a situation of conflict – instead of delving deeper into the *meaning* of violence in Burundi’s specific cultural and historical context. Coronil and Skurski (1991) emphasize the need to examine violence “in its concreteness”. They go on to say, “[Too] little attention is paid to its specific manifestations, to the way its effects are inseparably related to the means through which it is exerted, and to the meanings that inform its deployment and interpretation” (1991, 289). An understanding of this role of violence in Burundi – and the role of the military as the primary instrument of that violence – must thus be rooted in an understanding of the relationship between the vision and the goals of the regime perpetrating the violence and the meaning given to that violence by both its victims and its ‘beneficiaries.’

Violence has both shaped Burundi's political culture and has been a product of that culture. It has literally become part of the political discourse, virtually accepted as one means of managing political conflict that might otherwise be dealt with through, for example, negotiation among political parties or by the application of specific laws or constitutional provisions. As Coronil and Skurski describe, "Violence is wielded and resisted in the idiom of a society's distinctive history. When it becomes a force in contending efforts to affirm or restructure a given vision of order, it simultaneously disorders and reorders established understandings and arrangements" (1991, 289).

Violence has become politically legitimate in Burundi, or in Michael Schatzberg's terms, it is "politically thinkable" (2001, 37). Importantly, Schatzberg does not equate the concept of "thinkability" with a normative preference. He emphasizes,

Questions of normative desirability, of morality and immorality, need to be considered on an axis separate from one dealing with questions of thinkability and legitimacy. Unfortunately, therefore, in all societies some normatively reprehensible actions and ideas are quite thinkable politically (2001, 32).

### 3. CLIENTELISM AND THE STATE

The third thread of political culture that I identified in the literature on Burundi is a particular aspect of the role of the state in Burundi – the maintenance and support of a system of clientelism as the principal means of managing the resources of the state. In their analysis of politics in Africa, Chabal and Daloz (1999) conclude that there is no

relationship between the Western, Weberian definition of a state and what currently exists in the vast majority of countries on the continent of Africa. They assert that,

There may well appear to be a relative institutionalization of the main state structures but such bodies are largely devoid of authority. In Western Europe the Hobbesian notion of the state led to the progressive development of relatively autonomous centres of power, invested with sole political legitimacy. In Black Africa, however, such legitimacy is firmly embedded in the patrimonial practices of patrons and their networks (1999, 16).

As is evident in their description, the heart of the state in Africa is the clientelist system – and the role of the state is to sustain it. To be clear, Chabal and Daloz emphasize that they are not judging this system. On the contrary, as the subtitle of their book implies – *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* – they are merely describing reality in an attempt to encourage scholars to take Africa on its own terms; to acknowledge that, “there are in Africa well-recognized norms of political practice which do not conform to those we find elsewhere, [and thus] it becomes imperative to predicate our analysis on an interpretative framework which makes sense of those norms” (1999, 155). As Chabal and Daloz underscore, clientelism is not normatively ‘bad’, it is simply a system by which resources are allocated and must be analyzed if we are to better understand the role of the state in contemporary Africa.

Thomas Laely’s work on Burundi reinforces Chabal and Daloz’s perspective that clientelism is a critical part of the exercise of power in African states. As Laely explains,

As regards the determination of relationships between governors and governed, [another] striking point is that these were shaped according to a ‘model’ of personal bonds of dependency from which was also borrowed the political language and vocabulary. For example, the *bugabire* agreement was particularly important as the most common way to lease a cow (sometimes even a hoe) in exchange for services in the form of labour, political support,

loyalty, or military service. In addition to the cow or hoe, the 'client' received protection from his 'patron', who therefore should be as high-ranking as possible. By means of such asymmetrical, vertical forms of personal dependence, sizeable networks of patrons and clients could come into existence. This strongly personalised form of dependence provided the basic concept of political relations and served as a model for the reproduction of state domination (1997, 703).

Echoing our discussion of violence, the clientelist system is similarly embedded in the language of Burundi's political culture.

As will be described in Chapter Three, from Burundi's earliest recorded history, the clientelist system has bound together the various socio-economic classes. Yet, as Laely (1997) underscores, these relationships have not been merely economic. The multifaceted structure of clientelism has facilitated the regime's control of people and territory. Subsequent chapters then outline how, over time, this system has evolved, ultimately integrating more modern institutions such as the military and political parties as the main conduits of dependence and domination. van Binsbergen and his colleagues describe these mechanisms as follows,

When studying these bureaucratic mechanisms of state penetration, the lowest echelon of civil servants forms an interesting sociological category; their social background, processes of recruitment, attitudes, aspirations, problems of communication, income, power bases, networks of patronage, etc. deserve the closest attention. The relations between (lower) civil servants and their clients (peasants and the urban poor, and citizens in general) are influenced by the relations between such civil servants and their superiors within the state bureaucracy... All this makes...for the potential of the state bureaucracy to generate networks of exchange and patronage (often ethnically, regionally or religiously based), which are far from envisaged in official policy declarations, yet come to form major vehicles of state penetration (van Binsbergen et al. 1986, 375-376).

As will become clear in Chapters Six and Seven, the Burundian military regime expertly exploited the single party and the civil service to penetrate down to the hillsides.

Having operationalized the concept of political culture in the context of Burundi, we will now turn to a review of the relevant civil-military relations literature. This review first explores the definition of civil-military relations and then examines specific civil-military relations theories.

### **C. Civil Military Relations Theory**

Civil-military relations theory tends to focus on why a military might intervene in the political governance of the state – or going further, why the military might take over the state to establish a military regime. There is much less written about the counterfactual case; why the military *does not* intervene in politics. Derived from both the coup literature specifically and the scholarship on civil-military relations more generally, I have identified three broad categories of civil-military relations theory that offer potential explanations for why the military might accept a smaller political role for itself and refrain from intervening in politics: norm-based, structural, and rational choice explanations. Following a more general discussion of civil-military relations, I will explore each category in turn.

## 1. DEFINING CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

The term ‘civil-military relations’ refers to the relationship between the civilian government of a state and its military.<sup>27</sup> Yet, there is no single theory of civil-military relations nor is there agreement on how ‘optimal’ civilian control of the military is achieved.

Samuel Huntington describes the concept this way; “the principal focus of civil-military relations is the relation of the officer corps to the state” (1957, 3). Considered one of the founders of civil-military relations theory, Huntington posits that civilians should dictate military policy but the military must be free to determine what military operations are required to secure policy objectives. From this perspective, the military serves as a professional, apolitical force, loyal to the administration of the day – separate from but protective of the democratic values embodied and promoted by the state.

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<sup>27</sup> According to Welch and Smith, the term ‘civil-military relations’ describes the relationship between the civilian authority and the armed forces in a given polity (1974, Ch. 1). Feaver describes civil-military relations this way: “The civil-military problematique is a simple paradox: The very institution created to protect the polity is given sufficient power to become a threat to the polity. This derives from the agency inherent in civilization. We form communities precisely because we cannot provide for all our needs and therefore must depend on other people or institutions to do our bidding. Civilization involves delegation, assigning decision making from the individual to the collective (in the form of a leader or leaders) and consigning the societal protection function from the leader to specialists or institutions responsible for violence” (Feaver 1999, 214). Felipe Agüero describes the attainment of civilian supremacy as follows, “Civilian supremacy is reached through a process consisting, first, of the removal of the military from powerful positions outside the defense area and, second, of the appointment and acknowledgement of civilian political superiors in the defense and military areas. Civilian supremacy is finally attained when the military does not interfere with the ability of a civilian, democratically elected government to conduct general policy, and actually accepts it as a prerogative of this government to define the goals and general organization of national defense, to formulate and conduct defense policy, and to monitor the implementation of military policy. In short, the military withdraws from policy areas not related to defense, civilian officials gain authority in all policy areas, including defense. Obviously, as the very definition of the boundaries between strictly military and nonmilitary areas is controversial, the assertion of civilian supremacy entails the acceptance of spheres of competence as defined by legitimate civilian authorities, and which in practice involve a reduction, but by no means an elimination, of the military’s sphere of autonomous action” (1995, 126).

Huntington (1957, 1995) later elaborates a theory of civil-military relations based on “objective civilian control” (Huntington’s term) and which incorporates four key elements: assuring a high level of military professionalism; subordination of the military to legitimate civilian political leaders; granting military professionals the autonomy to manage their profession; all of which should result in the minimization of military intervention in politics and of political intervention in the military (1995, 9-17). As Huntington explains it, the concept of objective civilian control is rooted in a particular form of governance – a democracy – where robust civilian institutions exist to adequately control the military and its potential excess.<sup>28</sup> It also presupposes, Huntington explains elsewhere, that the military has “emerge[d] as a distinct class of specialists in the management of violence” (1957, 85).

Morris Janowitz (1971) offers a different theory of civil-military relations, based on the “civilianization” of the U.S. military after World War II. Because of the mass recruitment required to sustain the U.S. war effort during the Second World War, the composition of the U.S. armed forces began to more closely reflect the make-up and values of the society that they were meant to protect than they had in the past. According to Janowitz, this phenomenon resulted from “the interpenetration of the civilian and the military [which was] required as more and more of the resources of the nation-state

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<sup>28</sup> Thomas Bruneau (2013) advocates that civil-military relations must move beyond a focus only on civilian control. In his view, theories of civil-military relations must also include operational effectiveness and efficiency in the use of resources (2013, 23). While probably appropriate for a thorough evaluation of civil-military relations in the U.S., the issue of civilian control remains the issue in states in transition. It is critical for the government to have a monopoly over the legitimate means of force and for that governmental power to be a civilian government, if the state is going to move beyond military dictatorship. Thus, the continued focus by civil-military relations scholars on the issue of control particularly in non-western states is an appropriate one.



[were] used in preparing for and making war” (1971, viii-ix).<sup>29</sup> No longer could the military be considered an entirely distinct, monolithic entity (in terms of socio-economic, racial, and political perspectives), separate from the rest of society. Instead, from the post-World War II era forward, the military would begin to more closely reflect the dynamics that exist within civilian organizations and amongst civilian leadership as the boundaries between the two spheres became more porous.

This civilianization process has had two important impacts, according to Janowitz. First, it has reinforced the military’s perception that they are part of a larger, national enterprise. As Janowitz explains, “The military think of themselves as civil servants in national service, and that is an essential ingredient of civil control” (1971, li). He goes on to emphasize, “A volunteer armed force will be much less likely to think of itself as mercenary if military service is seen as part of a broader system of community and national service, itself based on voluntary participation” (1971, li). Thus, it is the very process of civilianization that will ensure more effective civilian control of the military.

A second important impact of this phenomenon is that it has rendered the military a pressure group, much like other interest groups that lobby the civilian government for resources. Yet while this process has allowed the civilian leadership to exercise control over the military through, for example, Congressional control of the military budget and

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<sup>29</sup> Janowitz originally published his study, *The Professional Soldier*, in 1960. In his revised edition (1971), he expands upon the concept of civilianization in light of the impact that the Vietnam War had on the perceptions of both civilians and soldiers alike in the United States about the role of the U.S. military in the world. Both editions are cited in this dissertation.

the Executive Branch's influence over high-level military strategy, it has also heightened the military's political role. As Janowitz's explains, "But as a pressure group the military establishment is not a voluntary association, acting on the organs of government; on the contrary, it is an organ of government, seeking to develop new techniques for intervening in domestic politics" (1971, 369). Thus, unlike Huntington, Janowitz acknowledges an explicitly political role for the military.

More recent scholars also acknowledge a military's political role. Koonings and Kruijt suggest three possible scenarios for militaries in the future:

'Withering away' of military involvement and the emergence of democratic control of politics; 'institutionalized modification,' where there is a "preservation of the political role of the military, either openly... or more hidden..."; and finally 'perversion and corruption,' in which "the armed forces embark upon a destructive course while reluctant to yield real power despite strong pressures (internally or externally) to do so" (2002, 31-32).

According to the authors, all three scenarios are currently being played out on the African continent and unfortunately the third scenario seems to be gaining prevalence. Decalo (1998) is equally pessimistic, suggesting that military leaders have simply learned the 'new rules of the game' without changing the way they behave.

The early scholarship of Janowitz and Huntington established the baseline to which most subsequent civil-military relations theorists have responded.<sup>30</sup> However, there is a cultural bias embedded in both Huntington's and Janowitz's definitions.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Brooks (2008), Burk (2002), Diamond and Plattner (1996), Kohn (1997), and Perlmutter (1981).

<sup>31</sup> Subsequent work by many other scholars also tends to focus on Western, democratic models of civil military relations. Take, for example, the work of Peter Feaver. While recognizing two strands of civil-

Indeed, in his description of civil-military relations, Janowitz recognizes that these relations, as they are understood in the United States, exist in a context in which political controls are “distinctively American” (1960, iv). Huntington acknowledges that if there is a shift from interstate to intrastate conflict that may encourage different patterns of civil-military relations in the ‘underdeveloped nations’ (1962, Chapter 1).<sup>32</sup> While Janowitz and Huntington seem to recognize the limits of their theories, many subsequent scholars tend to use them as the point of departure, without adequately elucidating how these biases might influence our understanding of civil-military relations in non-Western states. Indeed, while the subjects of these scholars may be located in non-Western countries, the paradigm remains resolutely Western in its reliance on certain democratic norms as the only basis for analysis.

An exception to this trend, Claude Welch offers a different understanding of civil-military relations, underscoring the fact that these relations are rarely fixed. Welch describes civilian control in terms of the nature of the relationships between those who govern and the military and he places those relationships on a political continuum.

Civilian control...is more a *set of relationships* than an *individual* event....The heart of civilian control occurs within the corridors of government, far removed from the usual ambit of scholars....The nature and extent of civilian control reflect shifting balances between the strengths of civilian political institutions on one side, and the political strengths of military institutions on the other. Civilian control is a matter of degree. All armed forces participate in politics in various fashions. They cannot be precluded from the political arena, given their organizational identity, autonomy, and

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military relations theory – the first sociological and led by Morris Janowitz and the second an “an institutionally oriented examination of post-colonial civil-military relations in developing countries, a project dominated by political scientists ... and focused largely on the problems of coups...,” he limits his own study to Western democracies (Feaver 1999, 212-213).

<sup>32</sup> Eric Nordlinger (1977) confesses suffering the same limitations, acknowledging that his theories apply only to countries that have developed a middle class.

functional specialization. Any military has an impact on its political system... (1976, 1-2 *emphasis in the original*).

Welch goes on to describe a continuum of military involvement in politics from what he calls ‘military influence’ (essentially civilian control) through ‘military participation’ to ‘military control with partners’ and finally to ‘military control without partners’ (essentially a military dictatorship). In Welch’s view, “Military control of politics has been far more characteristic of developing countries than has military influence in politics” (1976, 3). What that ‘participation’ and ‘control’ look like in any given country, however, will vary. For the purposes of this study, Welch’s definition of civil-military relations, which reflects change over time, is far more useful than a static description of “objective civilian control.” Indeed, in order to understand the behavior of the Burundian military today, it is necessary to understand how the relationships between civilian political institutions and the military have changed over time; and to acknowledge that a certain degree of influence is always present.

Elsewhere, Welch (1987) suggests that the very vocabulary that we use to describe the role of the military belies our Western bias. For example, the literature often refers to military ‘intervention’ in politics, as if it is possible for the military to play no role at all in the political realm. Instead, according to Welch, we need to acknowledge that “armed forces are regular, recognized participants in the political process of most countries in the world” (1987, 4).

In seeking a non-Western lens through which to interpret civil-military relations, Welch is joined by a group of scholars who anchor their analyses in the realities of the post-colonial context since the mid-twentieth century, where a political military is assumed as a given. While these scholars acknowledge the theories of Huntington, Finer, and Janowitz, they also underscore the limited wholesale application of such theories to non-Western countries. For example, R.J. May and V. Selochan posit that,

In Asia and the Pacific armed forces have played a role in both democratising and anti-democratic transitions, and though, as elsewhere, their tendency as rulers has been towards authoritarianism, patterns of civil-military relations and degrees of authoritarianism/democracy in governance have varied widely. Any attempt at understanding this variety must begin with an appreciation of the particular historical and cultural circumstances under which military involvement in politics has developed in different countries (1998, 14).

Explaining why it is important to include the institution of the military when defining key elements of a regime (in this case, a democracy), Felipe Agüero offers the following perspective,

Armed forces, which hold the monopoly of a society's coercive power, form the core of the state's security apparatus and, as a major bureaucracy, constitute a substantial part of the state's administration. It would thus be untenable for a working procedural definition of democracy not to explicitly include the military as subject to the policies formulated by elected individuals holding the highest state offices. Our definition of civilian supremacy highlights the critical position of the military in facilitating or hindering movement toward a situation where the standards of procedural democracy are met (1995, 127).

When thinking about the historical role that Burundi's military has played in regime change in that country, Agüero's focus on how a state's most coercive institution can help or hinder progress towards civilian supremacy begs the question; in order to influence the military's role, is it enough to simply change policies as they relate to the

military? Burundi's experience with failed democracy in 1993 seems to belie that contention. As is explained in Chapters 7 and 8 of this dissertation, while the military certainly cannot be left out of the process of regime change, the larger political and social context within which that process takes place seems to be a more important determinant of lasting behavioral change within the institution, than specific policies targeting the armed forces.

## 2. THREE CATEGORIES OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS THEORIES

### a. Norm-based Explanations

As underscored above, the civil-military relations theory offers a range of explanations as to why a military might intervene in politics. Our task is to understand why a military may choose *not* to intervene to replace a civilian government. Two of the most persuasive reasons are norm-based explanations: the primacy of the principle of civilian supremacy and the increasing legitimacy of the civilian government. Each of these explanations is examined below.

#### *i. The Primacy of the Principle of Civilian Supremacy*

In trying to understand why a military might not intervene in politics, especially after a long history in which it has regularly and violently dominated the political space,

some scholars underscore a ‘lack of motive.’ According to these scholars, this lack of motivation is the direct result of a set of values held by military officers and which inform their perceptions about the role of the military vis-à-vis the civilian government. Finer, for example, outlines three sets of factors that might prevent intervention – professionalism (although, as we will see later in this chapter, this concept is much debated); the principle of civil supremacy; and internal fears within the corps that politicization might reduce their fighting capacity and competence or, even worse, result in civil war. In Finer’s view, the second factor is the most important, and he underscores that, “To inhibit such a desire [to intervene,] the military must ... have absorbed the principle of the supremacy of the civil power” (1962, 28).<sup>33</sup>

Other scholars also deem the inculcation of the principle of civilian supremacy to be the most important factor preventing military intervention in politics. Welch and Smith contend that, “civilian control is not a matter of levels of social and economic development, nor of maximizing the professionalism of the military, nor even of a distribution of political power overwhelming favorable to civilian groups. Civilian control exists if the officer corps has internalized the value of civilian supremacy as part of its ethical make-up” (1974, 6).

While the importance of the principle of civilian supremacy is made clear, few scholars explain the conditions under which this objective might be achieved, offering

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<sup>33</sup> Finer goes on to say, “Thus certain forces may inhibit the military desire to intervene. Professionalism may work that way, though it sometimes actually drives the military into intervention rather than inhibits it; fear for the fighting capacity of the armed forces, or of a civil war tearing them in two, or even for their future as a force of any kind may also turn the military’s thoughts from intervention. The most important factor however is the armed forces’ acceptance of the principle of civil supremacy” (1962, 32).

only mechanistic prescriptions. For example, Claude Welch underscores five means that have been utilized to achieve civilian supremacy including: constitutional constraints; ascriptive factors (meaning, for example, that the armed forces reflect the dominant political ideology); party controls (as in the dominant Communist parties of the former Soviet Union or the People's Republic of China); geographic and historical factors; and role definition, limiting the sphere of responsibility and increasing the professionalism of the military (1976, Chapter 1).

Yet *how* the process of the inculcation of what might be described as a “norm” of civilian supremacy in the minds of the soldiers takes place is not generally addressed in this scholarship; only the fact that it must happen. My research has revealed that in the case of Burundi, it is this process of norm inculcation that has been one critical – although not sufficient – element for explaining the behavior of the Burundian Army today (see pp. 251-259; 289-292; Chapter 10).

- *Social Norms*

In order to better understand this process of norm inculcation, I have looked to the scholarship on the evolution of social norms. Understanding this process is critical not only to the specific case of inculcating the importance of civilian supremacy in the military but because social norms lie at the heart of a political culture. They are the unspoken values that govern political behavior; or as Jeffrey Checkel defines them,



norms are “shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by a collectivity of actors” (1999, 83).

The development of norms is the subject of much debate amongst scholars. Norms are characterized as being part of a highly structured social context (Finnemore 1996a) and as being associated with or attached to membership in a certain category (Fearon 1997). Some scholars posit that norms have a life cycle that can be traced (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) and that there are processes that can support the evolution of norms throughout that life cycle (Axelrod 1986). Norms are influenced by global professional cultures (Farrell 1998) and different institutions can block or support the promotion of norms, depending on how the norms further the goals and reinforce the identity of said institution (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). In addition, several scholars describe a process by which local and international norms “talk” to each other, ultimately influencing each other and resulting in adaptations of both local and international values (Acharya 2004).

But what is a ‘norm’? In his research, H. Peyton Young defines norms as follows; “Social norms are rules of behavior that govern interactions with others. They are the unwritten codes and informal understandings that define what we expect of other people and what they expect of us...They are the building blocks of social order” (2014, 3). In his research, Young has identified the existence of a “positive feedback loop between social and individual behaviors” as critical to the evolution of social norms within a society (2014, 8). In general, this dynamic does not require top down intervention and

indeed occurs “through a process of trial and error, experimentation and adaptation. [Norms] illustrate how social order is constructed through interactions of individuals rather than by design” (2014, 5).

Thus, norms do not simply appear. As John S. Coleman explains, certain ‘social-structural’ conditions must exist for a norm to emerge. “[A] norm is a property of a social system, not of an actor within it...the concept of a norm, existing at a macrosocial level and governing the behavior of individuals at the microsocial level, provides a convenient device for explaining individual behavior, taking the system as a given” (1990, 241). As a result, norms do not exist in a vacuum. Robert Axelrod explains that, “A norm exists in a given social setting to the extent that individuals usually act in a certain way and are often punished when seen not to be acting in this way” (1986, 1097). More importantly for this analysis, Axelrod goes on to say,

This definition makes the existence of a norm a matter of degree, rather than an all or nothing proposition, which allows one to speak of the growth or decay of a norm. According to this definition, the extent to which a given type of action is a norm depends on just how often the action is taken and just how often someone is punished for not taking it (1986, 1097).

Coleman underscores that because the norm is not the property of a specific person or actor, that implies that a consensus has been achieved within the social system that the “right to control the action is held not by the actor but by others” (1990, 243). When this is true, a norm concerning a specific action exists.

When the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process was initiated in Burundi in 2004, as part of the implementation of the Arusha Accords, it was not clear that the ‘social-

structural' conditions existed for a norm of civilian supremacy to emerge in the Army. While international donors and NGOs alike had great faith that their investments in SSR would pay off, Burundi's history mitigated against the rapid establishment of a new set of norms for the military (see pp. 289-292).

However, Young underscores that norm evolution can be strongly influenced by a norm entrepreneur, depending on the historical context. His research demonstrates that,

When people interact in small close-knit groups, such as villages, local religious communities, and small professional organizations, a single individual may be able to steer the evolutionary process toward a new norm within a fairly short period of time. This is particularly true if the individual is in a position to set a public example, such as a religious leader or village elder. Such 'norm entrepreneurs' stand to enhance their status if the new norm is beneficial to the community. It should be noted, however, that being prominent is often a liability because such individuals have a lot to lose should their efforts fail; norm entrepreneurship is a risky undertaking for the well-connected. For this reason, politicians, religious leaders, and village elders may be among the least willing to induce norm shifts even though they are the ones most capable of doing it (2014, 12).

As explained in Chapter Seven, Pierre Buyoya attempted to play this entrepreneurial role during his first tenure as President (1987-1993). At that time, he tried to recast Burundi's exclusionary social structures and to introduce a new norm of social inclusion by rewriting the constitution and reforming key political institutions. Yet, as Guglielmino and his colleagues underscore, exclusion could be characterized as 'highly conservative;' meaning that the norm is so deeply embedded in the community that it is virtually impervious to innovation or change (Guglielmino et al 1995, 7585). Thus, Buyoya could not initiate change on his own. It would have had to have been a much broader cultural shift for inclusion to take root.

Where Buyoya failed was in what Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) would describe at the process of norm acceptance, or the process of ‘contestation’ within his most important constituencies – the Tutsi extremists, the army, and arguably, amongst Hutu extremists as well. This process of contestation is critical, as it has implications for our understanding of the ways in which a “logic of appropriateness” relates to norms. In other words, the old norm defines what behavior is appropriate and the new norm is trying to displace that definition with a new one. In the process of contesting the definition or framing, ‘inappropriate’ behavior might initially be necessary to force a reframing of the issue (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). Buyoya could not persuade these key groups to accept the new norm.

Buyoya later claimed that the Army actively participated in the popular debates that preceded the development of the 1992 constitution and “a training campaign was organized to ensure that members of the armed forces would understand their place and their role in the democratic framework” (Buyoya 1995). Yet, this ostensible reform of the FAB failed, clearly demonstrated by their subsequent role in the assassination of Burundi’s first democratically elected President, widely acknowledged as one of the main triggers of the civil war. Hence, despite his protestations, the evidence belies Buyoya’s claims that norm acceptance was achieved within the army during his first regime.

Nonetheless, although he failed, Buyoya planted the seeds for a later transformation of the military. As explained in Chapters 8 and 9, after 2004 the

Burundian Army seems to have accepted “their place and their role in the democratic framework,” (Buyoya 1995), begging the question, what has changed? And this change seems to be reflected at the highest levels in the army. As one (ex-FAB) FDN General expressed to me,

An army must, first and foremost, be democratic. What does this mean? The army must behave within regulatory limits and these limits are dictated by the powers in place; powers that emerge from a democratic process. It is not for the army to return once again and say ‘no, no, no, we refuse that and we are putting in a new system’. The army must be democratic. The election urns gave their verdict. The army must bow to the will of the people (Interview conducted August 10, 2012).

Expressing this perspective would have been unthinkable ten years earlier.<sup>34</sup> Something changed between 1993 and 2004 to create a more fertile ground for the inculcation of new norms that would govern the Army. As evidenced by the earlier reform attempts, it would not be enough to simply offer training on the importance of civilian supremacy to achieve a modification in the Burundian Army’s behavior. The context within which that training was offered had to have been transformed before such a norm could take root – or in Coleman’s (1990) words, the norm had to exist at the “macrosocial level” for change to endure.

H. P. Young (2014) characterizes the context within which the process of norm change happens as a combination of “persistence” and “tipping.” Deeply ingrained norms

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<sup>34</sup> Some scholars are skeptical that many non-western states have achieved the goal of inculcating a norm of civilian supremacy or will do so anytime in the near future. According to Jakkie Cilliers, “Few states in southern Africa have “mature” military forces or an indigenous professional military culture that accepts the supremacy of civilian and parliamentary authority over the military. Developing a military culture that can coexist with civilian supremacy and representative government is a task that should focus the minds of both Africans and their friends...”(1996, 85).

(such as norms that support persistent inequality between social classes) “respond very sluggishly to changes in external conditions that alter the benefits and costs of adhering to the norm” and thus persist for long periods of time (Young 2014, 9). Yet when consensus for change has been achieved in the system, then the shift can be quite fast. As Young describes,

Once a crucial threshold is crossed and a sufficient number of people have made the change, positive feedback reinforces the new way of doing things and the transition is completed rapidly...These two effects – persistence and tipping – create a characteristic signature in the historical evolution of norms: there are long periods of no change punctuated by occasional bursts of activity in which an old norm is rapidly displaced by a new one (2014, 9-10).

In Burundi, only when the tipping point had been reached would true behavior change become apparent in the military (see pp. 254-255; 306 for an explanation of this tipping point).

*ii. Increasing Legitimacy of the Civilian Government*

A second norm-based explanation that emerges from the literature on the role of the military in politics is related to the perceived legitimacy of the civilian government accorded by the civilian population. According to several scholars, the loss of legitimacy of the civilian government and resulting political chaos often prompts military officers to take charge. As Nordlinger puts it, “performance failures regularly produce or indicate a loss of governmental legitimacy in the eyes of the politically aware *civilian* population...” thus strengthening the resolve of the military to intervene (1977, 86

*emphasis in the original*). This is especially true in countries that possess what Finer (1962) calls “low or minimal political culture.”

According to Finer, the nature or ‘level’ of intervention of a military in politics depends on the country’s political culture. He presents a continuum of political culture ranging from high to low levels of intervention. Where political culture is high, the level of the military’s involvement in politics is one of “influence”. The second level is “pressure” or “blackmail”; the third level of military intervention is displacement, in which the military puts civilians in power who are more palatable to them; and the fourth level is “supplantment” (e.g. a military coup and subsequent dictatorship). As the political culture varies along this continuum – high to low – so will the level of intervention (1962, Chapters 7-9).

Finer defines ‘political culture’ differently from either Chabal and Daloz (2006) or Bratton and van de Walle (1997). In Finer’s definition, a country’s political culture is described in relation to a western notion of democracy. Thus a ‘high’ political culture implies civilian control of the military in a western style democracy (1962). This definition lacks explanatory value, as it takes into account neither the more complex drivers of coups d’état (described below) nor what Bratton and van de Walle would call the “cultural legacies that over time come to suffuse political institutions and societal attitudes and thus achieve an autonomous capacity to influence political outcomes” (1997, 37). In other words, in Finer’s definition, ‘political culture’ is an external value imposed on the military behavior being evaluated, not the meaning given to the socio-

political context within which that behavior happens – which is the definition of political culture used in this dissertation.

While rarely offered as the single most important factor in motivating a coup d'état, the importance of the legitimacy of the civilian government figures prominently in many analyses, especially when coupled with the perception that the political chaos poses a 'threat to the nation'. Militaries often see themselves as uniquely positioned to protect the interests of the nation (as opposed to a specific government). In addition, the hierarchical structure of and the relatively conservative values inculcated in the military do not dispose it to tolerate the 'hurly burly' of competitive politics.<sup>35</sup> When this disposition is combined with a government that is perceived to lose credibility with the population as political chaos increases, the pump is primed for intervention by the armed forces.

Finer (1962), Stepan (1973), Nordlinger (1977), and Koonings and Kruijt (2002) all offer theories on how the strength and the legitimacy of the civilian government vary inversely with the propensity of the military to intervene. In particular, these authors cite the military's self-referential role as 'saviors of the nation' as one of the reasons that they will intervene in situations where the civilian government has lost its legitimacy in the eyes of the population. However, as Finer notes, in drawing a distinction between 'the nation' and 'the government', the military treads dangerous ground as "they begin to invent their own private notion of the national interest, and from this it is only a skip to

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<sup>35</sup> Finer (1962), Nordlinger (1977), and Welch (1970) all address this hypothesis.



the constrained substitution of this view for that of the civilian government...” (1962, 26).<sup>36</sup>

Conversely, as the government’s legitimacy increases, then military intervention becomes more costly and less likely. The legitimacy of the Burundian civilian government emerged as one of the key deterrents to intervention cited in the interviews I conducted for this study (see discussion in Chapter 10). In Finer’s words, “the greater the ‘public attachment to civilian institutions’ the less opportunity and the less likelihood of success will the military enjoy [when attempting to intervene]” (1962, 84). Yet, as Adam Przeworski cautions, this transition is not a given,

The struggle for democracy always takes place on two fronts: against the authoritarian regime for democracy and against one’s allies for the best place under democracy. Thus, even if they sometimes coincide temporally, it is useful to focus separately on the two different aspects of democratization: extrication from the authoritarian regime and the constitution of a democratic one. The relative importance of extrication and constitution depends on the place within the authoritarian regime of those political forces that control the apparatus of repression, most often the armed forces. Wherever the military remains cohesive in defense of the regime, elements of extrication dominate the process of transition (1991, 67).

Thus, the increasing legitimacy of a civilian government does not guarantee a smooth transition. The shift from military rule to civilian governance is a delicate one, requiring that attention be paid both to the process of extrication and to the constitution of the eventual civilian-led regime.

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<sup>36</sup> As Finer states, “*all* the opportunities [of military intervention] of this kind arise through some weakening of the public support for the government, and thereby its increased dependence on the military” (1962, 84 *emphasis in the original*). Samuel Huntington (1968) also underscores that a military intervention and subsequent praetorian rule always occur when the civilian political institutions are weak. Welch and Smith (1974) offer a similar hypothesis.

b. Structural Explanations

While norm-based theories offer a partial explanation for why a military may not intervene in politics, the explanation is incomplete. As explained in Chapters 7, 8 and 9, such a shift could not have happened without being accompanied by significant structural changes to the Army and to other key institutions of the regime. The civil-military relations literature offers four structural explanations that further our understanding: the importance of professionalization of the corps; the decreased salience of ethnicity; the lack of support for intervention within the military; and the role of the international community.

i. *'Professionalization' of the Military*

Professionalism implies specialization, training, a certain amount of autonomy, and the budgets to support the mission of the corps. Alfred Stepan provides a concise definition of professionalism, stating that a 'professional' military has

Relatively universalistic procedures for the recruitment and promotion of officers, highly structured military schooling programs that prepare officers for passage to the next stage of their careers, highly articulate and well-disseminated military doctrines and well-programmed military-unit training cycles, all coordinated by [a] general staff [system] (2001, 24).

Samuel Huntington made this idea of military professionalism the cornerstone of his theory on civil-military relations. Huntington outlines his concept as follows; "Objective civilian control achieves this reduction [of military power] by

professionalizing the military, by rendering them politically sterile and neutral... A highly professional officer corps stands ready to carry out the wishes of any civilian group which secures legitimate authority within the state” (1957, 84). In order to ensure that the military does not become a tool of any one group of civilians, Huntington advocates for the “distribution of political power between military and civilian groups which is most conducive to the emergence of professional attitudes and behavior among the members of the officer corps...Objective civilian control achieves its end by militarizing the military, making them the tool of the state” (1957, 83).<sup>37</sup>

Huntington’s theory is supported by the research of more recent scholars such as Eboe Hutchful (1997), who suggests that the role and mission of new militaries in Africa can be enhanced by this concept of professionalism. In his view, professionalism can actually help to promote the strength of the military and improve its relationship with civilian oversight bodies. As Hutchful underscores, professionals can better represent the interests of the corps (1997, 12).

There are, however, several critics of Huntington’s theory of professionalism as the principal means of achieving civilian control. In particular, Alfred Stepan (1971) has demonstrated that the ‘professionalization’ of the military can have the opposite effect predicted by Huntington. Instead of becoming less involved in politics, military officers

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<sup>37</sup> Elsewhere, Huntington elaborates on the role of professionalism, asserting that an increase in the professionalism of the military will in fact lead, eventually, to the achievement of civilian oversight. “The one prime essential for any system of civilian control is the minimizing of military power. Objective civilian control achieves this reduction by professionalizing the military [and by] confining it to a restricted sphere and rendering it politically sterile and neutral on all issues outside that sphere” ((Huntington, 1957: 84; Huntington, 1956: 381), as quoted in Alfred Stepan (2001, 25).

have become *more* politicized as a result of becoming more professional. This is especially true in cases where the threat to the state is perceived to be an internal one, rather than coming from a foreign enemy.

Stepan's analysis is largely based on the experience of Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and other Latin American countries, where military involvement in politics was the norm throughout much of the last century. According to Stepan (2001), professionalization is not an apolitical process and does not occur in a vacuum. Indeed, the process is inextricably linked to how a military has defined its mission. If the military's mission is defined in terms of managing an *internal* threat (rather than an external threat as postulated by Huntington), then its professionalization becomes focused on political as well as military-specific issues because by their very nature, internal security problems imply a threat to the legitimacy of the government. This then leads to politicization of the force and role expansion beyond the traditional boundaries of military activity. Stepan labeled this phenomenon, 'new professionalism,' describing its dangers as follows,

Since 1961, United States military policy towards Latin American has been to encourage the Latin American militaries to assume as their primary role counterinsurgency programs, civic-action, and nation-building tasks. This policy has often been defended in the name of helping to create a professional army, and by implication, an apolitical force in the nation. However, ...technical and professional specialization of the military in conjunction with doctrines and ideologies of internal security will tend to lead toward military role expansion and 'managerialism' in the political sphere (2001, 27).

Joining Stepan, Finer (1962), Luckham (1971), Cawthra and Luckham (2003), and Nordlinger (1977) have all posited a positive relationship between the increasing expertise of the military and the likelihood of military intervention in politics, casting

doubt on Huntington's thesis of a uniformly positive causal link between professionalism and civilian control. As Nordlinger states, "Civilian governments that threaten the military's autonomy or exclusiveness regularly generate powerful interventionist motives. It is the actions or inactions of the civilian incumbents, rather than the level of professionalism, that determine whether such motives do or do not appear" (1977, 49).

Thomas C. Bruneau takes the critique of Huntington further, saying that the focus on Huntington's theory as a point of departure in the study of civil-military relations has "impeded development of the field" of civil-military relations (2013, 15). Bruneau goes on to make the more serious contention that Huntington's approach is "based on a tautology." To make his point, Bruneau quotes Bengt Abrahamsson (1972), who states, "Professional officers never intervene, because if they do, they are not true professionals" (2013, 16). This tautology makes Huntington's theory impossible to disprove.

Yet, while professionalism of the military may not necessarily lead directly to respect for civilian authority, many argue it is a key intervening variable in that process. As Finnemore and Sikkink emphasize, "Professional training does more than simply transfer technical knowledge; it actively socializes people to value certain things above others" (1998, 905). Current Burundian Army officers acknowledge this link between the role of professionalization and the inculcation of norms. As one Colonel stated (in response to the question, "How can the FDN ensure that each soldier integrates the norm of civilian supremacy?"), "The training must be continuous to create the reflex; so that the respect of the norms becomes a reflex. And if someone goes around those norms

[meaning, does not respect them], then he is viewed as someone who is marginalized” (Interview conducted August 10, 2012).<sup>38</sup>

Professionalization is certainly at the heart of Burundi’s SSR process (see pp. 288-299). Both the *Arusha Accords* and the subsequent GCA include specific provisions for ensuring the National Defense Forces (FDN) are integrated at all levels (with no more than 50% of any single ethnic group represented); apolitical; professional; observe internationally recognized human rights norms; and serve and protect all Burundian citizens (Nindorera and Powell, 2006). Indeed, the *Arusha Accords* outline the nature of the professionalization training in the text (see pp. 297, FN 218).

However, as described above, Stepan (1971, 1973, 2001) demonstrates that professionalization is not sufficient to keep the military out of politics. Indeed, it may have the opposite effect of pushing the military into politics. Therefore, as described in Chapters 8 and 9 (‘ongoing security sector reform’), professionalism offers us an important but insufficient explanation for the behavior of the Burundian military today.

*ii. Decreased Salience of Ethnic Cleavage*

Directly related to the issue of professionalization described above is the importance of ethnic and other communal divisions in explaining how and why the

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<sup>38</sup> This perspective echoes Young (2014), who underscores the negative consequences of not observing an accepted social norm, such as social pressure, which is sustained through threat of ostracism, loss of status, and social punishment.

military might intervene at the request of or to protect some segment of the population.<sup>39</sup> As an institution, the military is not separate from the rest of society. It is a political microcosm of the society at large – often reflecting attempts to limit or expand political participation.<sup>40</sup> As outlined above, this relationship can result in an invitation to the military to intervene in politics. In a communally divided state, this invitation is of a specific nature, overlaying the power politics between groups with an ethnic veneer. As Nordlinger states, “Communal conflicts may consequently pull or push the soldiers into the political arena...”(1977, 42).

If communal divides have become less salient, as has recently been asserted by many of Burundi’s political leaders, then the incentive for intervention by the military to protect their particular group recedes.<sup>41</sup> As Howard Wolpe reported in 2011, “the Tutsi-Hutu political divide has virtually been eliminated from the national political discourse – an amazing development, given the decades of inter-communal massacres and bitter political conflict that Burundi has experienced – and the integrated Burundian army command has remained a professional and cohesive military force...” (2011, 62). While

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<sup>39</sup> Moussa Okanla describes how practices of recruitment dating to the colonial era can have enduring impacts on the politicization of the army. “Thus centuries of westernization led to the development, among the Mina and the Ewe of a contemptuous constituent imagination toward the animist populations of the North. When the latter wanted to enter the colonial administration, they had no alternative but to become soldiers – a career that was, moreover, scorned by the populations of the South. That is the origin of the disproportionate representation of northern populations in the Togolese Army” (“Ethnicity and Democratization in West Africa: The Role of the Army” a paper presented at a conference *Democratization in Africa: The Role of the Military* hosted by the African American Institute, Cotonou, Benin, 1995, 25).

<sup>40</sup> Several scholars underscore the impact (both positive and negative) that the larger socio-political dynamics can have on the military. For example, Nordlinger notes that, “even in communally divided societies [the military officer corps] is no more factionalized than is the civilian political elite” (1977, 42). Welch and Smith suggest that conflicts arising from ethnic or class cleavage and which threaten the status or power of the dominant group can increase the likelihood of military intervention, particularly when the military officers are members of the dominant group (1974, 26).

<sup>41</sup> Donald Horowitz (1985) discusses at length what he calls the “compositional strategies” that might be put into place in order to ‘coup-proof’ an army. Cynthia Enloe (1980) also offers a cogent analysis of the impact of military recruitment policies on ethnic conflict.

recent events such as the May 2015 attempted coup have caused observers to question the cohesiveness of the military, the fact that virtually no references were made to ethnicity distinguished this event from Burundi's past political crises. The trigger for intervention that ethnic conflict once provided has slowly begun to disappear.<sup>42</sup>

*iii. No Sufficient Internal Support for Intervention*

The issue of ethnicity in the broader socio-political context is linked to a third structural explanation, as its salience can have an impact on internal support for intervention. Decalo (1990), Enloe (1980), and Welch (1970) Welch and Smith (1974) all offer analyses of how internal military structures and politics can inspire military intervention in politics. Here again, analyses tend to focus on factors *promoting* intervention. Specifically, intervention is more likely if a) the military is divided; b) one faction perceives the government to be hostile to its interests; and c) that faction of the divided military has enough internal support to exercise a coup. Burundi's first three coups d'état might be described as fitting this pattern, as disgruntled officers felt that the regime was a threat to their interests and sought to gain access to more power and privilege (for themselves and their faction). However, these were largely palace coups, as the minority Hima Tutsi remained firmly in charge each time power was usurped.

There has been a significant shift in the structural constraints governing Burundi's institutions since the most recent coup d'état in 1996. In particular, the legal framework

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<sup>42</sup> Indeed, it is interesting to note that the 2015 attempted coup was not driven by ethnic motivations – both the small group of officers who initiated the attempt and the much larger group who put down the coup were ethnically mixed.



within which the military exists has created both opportunities for a new role for the military and imposed significant limitations on their ability to act outside of their new mandate, which has made building internal support for military intervention extremely difficult. This process began with the end of the war, when most of the parties to the conflict signed the internationally mediated *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement* in 2000. It continued through the deployment of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) in 2003, the newly-created African Union's first conflict transformation mission undertaken under Article 4 of the AU's Constitutive Act (Jeng 2010).

As will be explained in detail in Chapter 8, the framework provided by the *Arusha Accords* and ultimately the 2005 constitution have subsequently guided the military's reform process, with widely recognized success. However, some scholars are doubtful of the longevity of the legal frameworks established in Burundi because, while the power-sharing premise on which they were founded continues to have relevance and they have succeeded in ending the war and de-ethnicizing politics, the larger goals of state-building and rule of law are still elusive. This is largely due to the fact that several of the documents that underpin the legal framework governing the military – and all other government institutions – are now being challenged by those who did not participate at Arusha (Vandeginste 2006, 2009).

Nonetheless, the multi-ethnic, more varied socio-political character of the armed forces now largely mirrors the wider society. Thus, the current composition of the Army – a result of the very specific ethnic and regional quotas that are mandated by the *Arusha*

*Accords* – prevents the coalescence of interests within the corps that might produced the unanimity necessary for a coup d'état. As one civilian observer noted, “Today the Army is not unanimous. There is no momentum for a coup” (Interview conducted August 3, 2012).

Thus, as noted above, data from my interviews in Burundi suggests that one of the key tenets of the *Arusha Accords* – ensuring ethnic and regional balance in the military – is contributing to stability and discouraging support for any kind of military intervention (see a more thorough analysis of this dynamic in Chapters 8 and 9). Events in Burundi in the Spring 2015 bolster the contention that there is not sufficient support within the FDN for a military intervention; where, despite protests against the current government and widespread questions about its legitimacy, the army has largely remained united in its decision to forego entry into the political crisis.

#### *iv. International Pressure*

Any exploration of the reasons for military intervention – or non-intervention – cannot neglect the role of international factors. This role is the fourth structural explanation we will explore. Most civil-military relations scholars underscore the importance of considering a range of external elements that might promote or discourage military intervention in politics. These factors range from the influence of neighboring countries to the role of training and support from other nations.<sup>43</sup> Welch and Smith posit

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<sup>43</sup> Hutchful (1997) and Welch (1970) acknowledge both positive and negative roles of regional influences; the possibility of ‘contagion’ when coups occur in neighboring countries and the chance of positive

that the prospects of domestic military intervention rise “to the extent that external military assistance facilitates role expansion and greater autonomy for the armed forces” (1974, 18).

Stepan (2001) too, sees a link between the policies of the international community toward militaries in the developing world and the increasingly political behavior of those militaries (i.e. supporting counterinsurgency operations, and other internal security tasks).<sup>44</sup> Valenzuela captures the potential impact of external factors most eloquently:

The literature assumes by definition that the basic explanatory variables, the military and the domestic political process, are located within the confines of national societies. Such formulation leaves little room for a conception of the political process which gives considerable importance to the role of outside elements. It downplays the potential impact of foreign influences on the military institutions in terms of training, materials support and, more importantly, the development of alternative goals and strategies which define political action (1985, 141).<sup>45</sup>

Huntington, however, discounts the link between external aid and military intervention in politics, emphasizing instead the potential impact of changing global norms on the behavior of the armed forces (1968, 193). Elsewhere, he explicitly underscores the likely positive role of international normative pressure, referring to the broad diffusion and acceptance of the norms of military professionalism and civilian control by militaries in newly democratizing nations as a key to improving civil-military relations (Huntington 1995). The importance of the international context and the norms

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pressure for reduced military involvement resulting from the influence of regional powers such as Tanzania or South Africa in the case of the Great Lakes region.

<sup>44</sup> Stepan specifically cites U.S. policy towards Latin America (2001, 27).

<sup>45</sup> Robin Luckham (1971) also emphasizes the importance and impact of the larger value system that is shared with soldiers from the developing world who are trained by and interact with military personnel from the developed world.

promoted by international actors in shaping the behavior of militaries is echoed in the work of authors such as Acharya (2004), Farrell (1998), and Finnemore and Sikkink (1998).<sup>46</sup>

Koonings and Kruijt, maintain that international pressure, particularly in the form of the spread of democratic norms, has forced militaries worldwide to reconsider intervening (or remaining) in political office. Koonings and Kruijt conclude that,

In the post-Cold War period, international developments have in fact reinforced the linkage between democracy and sovereignty to the extent that democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights have become new conditionalities that may even prompt outside military intervention...As a result, democracy is now looming much larger over actual or potential forms of military political intervention than in the past (2002, 28).

As international norms have evolved and the global context has changed, the international community has been more willing to more actively engage with and pressure authoritarian governments and military regimes to participate in democratization processes. This has led to an increase of the domestic costs of political intervention by militaries, causing them to pull back from politics and remain on the sidelines.<sup>47</sup>

In Burundi, the success of the international community in influencing the Army is uneven. Early in Burundi's history as an independent state, the international community had neither the interest nor sufficient leverage to substantially impact the Army's actions.

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<sup>46</sup> Although Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) point out that many international norms began as domestic ones (e.g. women's suffrage). The local context serves to filter international norms, producing variants in terms of interpretation and compliance.

<sup>47</sup> Welch underplays the role of external factors in the decision-making processes of military officers who hold political power. In his view, "Long-term disengagement [of the military from politics] through policy adaptation may be encouraged but is not the sole result of efforts by persons, groups or governments outside the particular country..." (1987, 24).

Until 2000, even as the impetus for international engagement in the domestic affairs of nations increased, results of that engagement in Burundi remained mixed at best.

The Arusha peace process represented a significant shift in this relationship. Under the auspices of the Tanzanian and South African-led mediation process, the Burundians were forced to confront their troubled history and construct new institutions that might prevent a return to conflict. The security sector was the key focus of these institutional reforms. While sustained changes in the Army's behavior are closely related to the evolution of Burundi's political culture, the success of the reforms mandated by the internationally-led mediation process constitute a critical part of the explanation for the behavior of the Burundian military today, as is described in Chapters 8 and 9.<sup>48</sup>

c. Rational Choice Explanations

The rational choice explanations comprise the final category of civil-military relations theory. Three principal explanations emerge from an examination of the literature that have relevance for this study: no threat to key interests; there is no invitation to intervene by actors outside the military; and finally, the soldiers achieved what they wanted and no longer need to remain in the political arena.

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<sup>48</sup> Although as mentioned earlier in this chapter, support for the *Arusha Accords* is not uniform amongst Burundi's leaders, attributed to the fact that the process and its ensuing institutions was largely externally driven (Vandeginste 2006).

*i. No Threat to Key Interests*

All civil-military scholars acknowledge the distinctive nature of a military's mission and the role that it plays in the larger society. Securing territory was an early responsibility of armed forces, which evolved into an even more specialized force tasked with defending the nation from external threat. To accomplish its mission, the military is endowed with resources (financial, human, and material), decision-making authority, and often, the corps is granted special privileges as an acknowledgement for their unique role in society. Scholars posit that when any of these interests is threatened or interfered with, the military may be motivated to intervene to protect them.

In the literature, the term 'interests' covers a wide range of needs and concerns, organizational as well as individual; all of which can motivate an army to take the political stage. Organizational interests include issues such as retention of authority over recruitment and promotion policies, battle strategy and tactics, the development and allocation of budget, etc., (Enloe 1980, Finer 1962, Huntington 1958, 1995, Stepan 1971, Welch 1970). Scholars also cite individual, more parochial, interests such as consistent and adequate remuneration, access to credit, health care, and other privileges specially reserved for the military, as well as assurances that the reputation of the corps will be honored and upheld by non-military actors (Decalo 1990, Nordlinger 1977, Welch 1970).

S.E. Finer captures the organizational motivations as follows, "The military is jealous of its corporate status and privileges. Anxiety to preserve its autonomy provides

one of the most widespread and powerful of the motives for intervention” (1962, 47). Thus, the reasons for intervention are as diverse as the interests that are deemed to be threatened – i.e. ranging from access to specific economic opportunities for military officers, as in the case of Burundian officers in the 1980s (explained in more detail in Chapter 7), to decision-making authority over military budgets.

Nordlinger offers a set of more ominous consequences should civilians interfere with the military’s interests,

Civilian impingements upon the military’s autonomy and exclusiveness generate powerful interventionist motives because they do far more than detract from the professional pride and self-image of the officer corps. When civilians interfere with military matters they usually have an adverse effect upon the career interests of many officers, lower the competence of the officer corps, detract from military effectiveness, warp the hierarchical command structure, hurt morale, and threaten the unity of the officer corps (1977, 49).

Here, Nordlinger echoes Huntington’s admonition that civilians should not impinge upon distinctly military responsibilities, such as determining what military operations are required to secure policy objectives – even as those objectives might be set by politicians (1957). As explained in Chapter 9, in Burundi what constitutes ‘impingement’ has changed throughout its history. At one time, any issue even remotely associated with the military was off-limits to civilians. Now, matters such as decisions about military budgets and questions about how recruitment policies conform to the constitutional are all subject to civilian oversight.

Some authors go further, underscoring that it is not only the threat to the corporate interests of the military that might inspire intervention, but far more mundane and

individual needs. According to Decalo, any examination of coups d'état that takes into account only systemic deficiencies, "grossly lacks in explanatory value...[and] is simplistic, ethnocentric, and empirically erroneous" (1990, 4). He goes on to say,

Motives will vary from coup to coup...in fluid (dynamic) "open-ended" contexts, parochial concerns have greater scope to erupt as coup bids...Indeed, one would be tempted to rephrase Huntington's dictat to read 'purely military considerations and motivations – corporate, parochial and personal – are always present, to different degrees in every coup d'état; their unfettered expression is abetted by the multitude of structural and political weaknesses of African states' (Decalo 1990, 13).

Burundi's first three coups d'état buttress this theory, as unhappy officers revolted in order to gain access to more privileges. However, these coups did not reflect a change in the overall regime or its operation.

Finer suggests that, "Successful abdication [of their power by military governors] required that the personal, corporate and ideological interests of the military be protected" (1985, 30). Yet he goes on to underscore that this abdication will only happen if the civilian government has demonstrated both their legitimacy and their effective control over the country, presenting a conundrum for civilian leaders. It is not clear from Finer's theory how that control is to be established, nor to whom legitimacy must be demonstrated.

In interviews and conversations conducted during the research for this dissertation, both civilians and FDN officers reinforced these same themes, citing the negative consequences should any of the interests of the corps be threatened – or as one civilian interviewee exclaimed, "If the government doesn't take care of [the soldiers],



they will take care of themselves!” (Interview conducted August 3, 2012). In another example, a Colonel in the FDN commented that in order to ensure discipline in the corps, “[it was necessary] to ensure the respect of the dignity of the soldier by [paying] an adequate salary; this would eliminate temptations and reinforce discipline” (Interview conducted August 21, 2012).<sup>49</sup> As both my interlocutors and the aforementioned scholars have underscored, the military will be more likely to remain in the barracks if they feel secure in their privilege, their interests having been met.

*ii. No Invitation to Intervene*

Traditional civil-military relations literature offers another rational choice theory to explain what motivates military intervention: when civilians invite the military into politics. Welch and Smith (1974) theorize that those military officers who have close ties to civilian groups opposed to the government will be more likely to intervene in politics.<sup>50</sup> Elsewhere, Welch reminds us that politicians have insisted that the military enter politics in order to stabilize chaotic situations (1970, 23). These scholars underscore that if this factor is absent, then the military should be more amenable to remaining in the barracks.

Several Burundians that I interviewed reinforced this perspective, stating that none of the coups d'état that had been executed in Burundi's past had been undertaken

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<sup>49</sup> Given the dire state of Burundi's economy, steady pay is considered a privilege in this context.

<sup>50</sup> This view is supported by Amos Perlmutter and Valerie Plave Bennett (1980) in their book *The Political Influence of the Military: A Comparative Reader*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press.

exclusively by the military. Hutu and Tutsi interviewees alike acknowledged that each successful coup had a civilian component to it (see for example a discussion of the 1966 coup d'état in Chapter 5 and the lengthy discussion of the 1993 failed coup in Chapter 8). However, Burundi differs from the scholars cited above in that it was the minority already in power who would call upon the Army to reinforce their position of dominance, rather than an opposition group seeking to overturn the government. Indeed, as explained above, until 2015 both the attempted and the successful coups d'état were, with the exception of 1993, 'palace coups' in which members of the minority Hima Tutsi would (attempt to or succeed in) seize power from other members of their same family in order to reset a perceived imbalance of privilege among them and to more forcefully respond to the alleged existential threat constantly posed by the majority Hutu.

*iii. The Military Achieved What They Wanted*

The final rational choice explanation can be described as the military getting what it wanted and subsequently withdrawing from the political stage. Several scholars have made an effort to identify the point(s) at which this happens.<sup>51</sup> Finer offers a set of 'preconditions for abdication,' which can help us to identify that moment of withdrawal. These preconditions include, 1) the rest of the military officer corps agrees that retreat is

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<sup>51</sup> Although the literature addressing disengagement is less robust than the literature describing the 'whys and wherefores' of the coup d'état, Claude Welch Jr. (1987), Peter Lyon (1985), and Samuel Finer (1985) all discuss the decision of militaries to disengage from the political sphere. See for example Lyon, Peter (1985) "Back to the Barracks" in *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 7 No. 1 (Jan 1985), pp. 9-15. The entire issue of the January 1985 edition of the *Third World Quarterly* is devoted to the question of military disengagement from politics.

necessary and advisable; 2) the individual and corporate interests of the military have been protected; and 3) there are “politically viable civilian organisations” to which power can be handed over (1985, 26-29). Welch offers a similar analysis of the incentives that will promote long-term military disengagement from politics, adding economic growth and the development of “narrowly defined “professional” roles for the armed forces” to Finer’s list (1987, 25).

Tellingly, both authors acknowledge the difficulty in measuring the ‘success’ of the military coup or intervention (particularly because motives for intervention tend to be varied and messy) and hence the challenge of identifying the point at which withdrawal will happen. Adam Przeworski offers an additional complication when describing how transition from authoritarian to democratic regimes might occur, quoting José Murilo de Carvalho, “the problem in many countries with a long tradition of military intervention is the absence of institutional models through which civilian control over the military can be exercised” (1991, 76-77). Without an understanding of or faith in mechanisms of civilian control, military leaders may be reluctant to relinquish power, whether or not they have achieved what they wanted through intervention.

In Burundi, determining the answer to the question of whether or not the military achieved what it wanted is complicated by the fact that the current military is composed of two different factions, with two different sets of motivations. A Burundian civilian involved in the SSR process characterized the situation this way,

[For the ex-FAB] the fact that there was a rebellion on national territory was intolerable. For me, that even explains some of the excesses of the war. To

have a rebellion was shameful. To negotiate [with rebels] was shameful for the military. The entire war was shameful. All of this has a lot of symbolism for the [ex-FAB] Burundian Army. At the same time, for the rebels, they are very proud of the results [of the war and negotiations]. Therefore, there is a counter-balancing – some people have come from “very high” and others from “very low” [positions of status] and that is a big change [for the new army] in my view (Interview conducted August 3, 2012).

These differing perceptions influence how the members of the military evaluate the success of the negotiations and the subsequent reform efforts. Did they get what they wanted? As explained in Chapter 10, in Burundi it depends on whom you talk to.

#### **D. The Impact of Political Culture on Civil-Military Relations**

This brief survey has outlined some of the major themes of both political culture and civil-military relations. As we have seen, much of the civil-military relations scholarship is devoted to understanding when and why militaries will intervene in politics and what impact that intervention might have on civil-military relations. While this literature furthers our understanding of the Burundi case, it is not sufficient to explain the FDN’s current behavior. A gap remains, particularly with regard to how the path towards civilian supremacy over the military was initiated and has been maintained. It is only by tracing the evolution of civil-military relations in the context of Burundi’s political culture that we can understand the behavior of the military today.

To do this, I have operationalized the concept of political culture, identifying three key threads of Burundi’s political culture from the literature, again: sources of

regime legitimacy, the management of political conflict, and the role of clientelism in the state. These threads have manifested elements of both continuity and change. For example, some sources of regime legitimacy have replaced others, bringing new institutions and meanings to the fore, while often maintaining certain forms and behaviors; the role of violence has evolved, changing the nature of politics; the clientelist system has remained remarkably durable, even while the actors involved have changed radically. Because political culture changes very slowly, some of the elements of change and continuity have been present simultaneously – one element waxing, while the other wanes – whereas some elements ultimately disappear.

It is within these threads that the civil-military relations theories have resonance. This dissertation will demonstrate that no one category (and indeed, no single theory) can adequately predict the Burundian Army's behavior. The theories have explanatory value only when they are combined and when they are examined through the lens of political culture. As Chabal and Daloz describe, "culture changes *tectonically* – meaning that the process is marked by three characteristics: it is perceived to us to be subterranean, unpredictable and to proceed in unequal quantum jumps" (2006, 154, *emphasis in the original*). Importantly, as the authors point out, cultures don't change progressively or even in a unidirectional manner. Culture change in Burundi reflects this same pattern and the narrative of this process provides us with an important window into how culture has shaped Burundi's political institutions and in particular, the military. I now begin this analysis, using the theoretical framework laid out above.

## **Chapter Three: Understanding the Origins of Burundi's Political Culture (ca. 1700-1908)**

### **A. Introduction**

In order to comprehend the socio-political context within which the Burundian military currently operates, we must first understand its origins. How have Burundians conceived of power and how has that definition changed? What processes and institutions are legitimate and how is that legitimacy accorded? Are those the same processes and institutions of their forefathers? If not, why not? Or as Chabal and Daloz (2006) might ask, what are the rules and codes that are most relevant to Burundians and allow them to assign meaning to the world around them today and how have those changed over time?

To answer these questions, we must begin at the beginning, establishing a baseline definition of Burundi's political culture and its key elements. Having identified the main threads, we can then trace them throughout the subsequent eras of Burundi's history, analyzing how they have influenced the behavior of the military over time and using that information to better understand the behavior of the Burundian military today. This chapter thus examines Burundi's early history in order to ascertain that baseline and to clearly articulate the threads of political culture that will then be followed throughout the rest of the dissertation.

## **B. Burundi's Early History**

[Historian's] intense focus on the two major kingdoms [of Rwanda and Burundi] (and on the internal dynastic sources associated with them) has led [them] to assume that culture was fixed and politics was the only evolving factor. They have often failed to look at the history of these states as fundamental to the formation of ethnic identities, of social relations, and of differential economic activity. In short, they have failed to conceptualize state power as one of the causes of social differentiation, not the product of unchanging social differences (Newbury 2009, 284-285).

Most of Burundi's pre-colonial history was never recorded. And when it was documented, it was generally by Europeans who did not fully understand or appreciate the existing political and social dynamics and structures. Thus, the Europeans provided their own, often erroneous, interpretations of the relationships that governed economic, political and social life in the kingdom. Burundian culture is rooted in an oral tradition. This tradition provides the greatest detail on the reign of the founder of the monarchy, Ntare Rushatsi (ca. 1700-ca. 1750), and the reigns of the two kings that dominate the nineteenth century and usher in the era of colonialism, Ntare Rugamba, (ca. 1796-ca.1852) and Mwezi Gisabo (ca. 1852-1908).<sup>52</sup> Although incomplete, the history is rich and provides important clues to the political culture that has continued to influence successive Burundian regimes for over a century.

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<sup>52</sup> The origins of the Burundian monarchy are disputed. Both Newbury (2009) and Chrétien (2006) describe the competing stories of Burundi dynastic history. Newbury goes so far as to say that, "the figure of Ntare Rushatsi himself may well be a composite image of a process that spanned a much longer period [than the early 18<sup>th</sup> century]" (2009, 306). Chrétien's research in particular lends significant weight to the hypothesis that the Nkomo cycle – in which the origins of Ntare Rushatsi are said to be Hutu – is the best-documented and the most deeply rooted in Burundian culture (as cited in Newbury 2009, 305).

The territory that the Republic of Burundi now comprises was a collection of smaller kingdoms throughout much of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>53</sup> A man named Ntare Rushatsi entered Burundi from Buha in the south (from what is now Tanzania) and unified a number of these fragmented territories into a single kingdom in the late seventeenth century (Newbury 2009, 304-305). Ntare Rushatsi succeeded in both consolidating territory and founding the Burundian monarchy, incorporating the traditions, sacred sites, and rituals of the conquered territories into the monarchical legend.<sup>54</sup> Thus, as Newbury describes, the new kingdom was not the result of outside pressures, “Rather, it was forged through a synthesis of many local cultural fields into a single ritual space, through shared responsibilities in the celebration of *umuganuro*, the annual First Fruits ceremony, which remained critical to kingship in Burundi” (2009, 308).

Little is known about the kings who immediately succeeded Ntare Rushatsi. Much more has been written about Ntare Rugamba (ca. 1796-ca. 1852) and Mwezi Gisabo (ca. 1852-1908). In particular, Ntare Rugamba is remembered for having doubled the area of the kingdom. More importantly for this study, there are three legacies of these early monarchical reigns which shaped Burundi's early political culture: the role of the kingdom's key institutions as sources of its legitimacy; the regime's methods of

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<sup>53</sup> See Jan Vansina (1972) for a more complete description of the monarchy and its traditions in *La Légende du Passé: Traditions Orales du Burundi*, Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, Archives d'anthropologie, No. 16; and Emile Mworoha (1977), *Peuples et rois de l'Afrique des lacs*, Dakar-Abidjan: Les nouvelles éditions africaines.

<sup>54</sup> See also Vansina for an excellent description of Burundi's cyclical history. According to Vansina, the King and royal history repeat themselves, “Each dynastic name carries an ideal character and in each of the four generations, these ideal types of kings return. Ntare is the founder, the conqueror of the Kingdom; Mwezi resists revolts during a long reign; Mutáaga is handsome like the day, young, full of valor and unlucky; Mwambutsa is the ‘Ferryman of the River’, the dull predecessor destined to prepare the way of the new Ntare” (1972, 10).



managing political conflict; and the system of clientelism in the lives of Burundians. The threads of this political culture continue to impact Burundi's regime and its institutions today.

## **C. Pre-colonial Political Culture**

### **1. DIVERSE SOURCES OF REGIME LEGITIMACY**

The first legacy from Ntare Rugumba's era that marks Burundi's pre-colonial political culture is the number and character of the institutions on which the regime based its legitimacy. In pre-colonial Burundi, the monarchy's survival was contingent upon the institutions that covered all aspects of political, economic and social life. This broad foundation of support was especially important because the *Mwami* (king) did not monopolize control of the means of violence within his kingdom. Three institutions played especially significant roles in legitimizing the regime: the *Mwami*; the *ubushingantahe*; and clientelism.

#### **a. Sources of Legitimacy: The Mystical *Mwami***

Chrétien underscores that, from the inception of the monarchy, the *Mwami* needed both to broaden his political base (to ensure that he was not beholden only to his clan) and to exploit socio-cultural factors that demonstrated his universal legitimacy. According to Chrétien, "To succeed in this political revolution, a strong mental support

was necessary, one that could only have been religious” (2006, 120). Indeed, Chrétien remarks that, rather than conquest, the myths describing the foundation of the kingdom painted the *Mwami* as a man with mystical powers, “[Powers] that allow him to unite several clan groups around him, notably those who later will occupy the . . . ritual functions” (2006, 119).

The *Mwami*'s power – like the power of most kings in the region during this period – rested on elements that assured his subjects' religious veneration and enhanced his ability to mobilize a fighting force, which reinforced the solidarity of the alliances and family lineages, which undergirded the political system.<sup>55</sup> These mystical powers reflect the meaning that Burundians ascribed to the *Mwami*; a critical component of Burundi's early political culture as their world almost literally revolved around this semi-deity. The two elements of religious veneration and the mobilization of force will be addressed in turn.

*i. Religious veneration*

Religious veneration was most apparent in the major rituals of the kingship. Specific examples of these rituals highlight this process of legitimization: the designation of the heir; the emergence of the new *Mwami* as father of the country; and the annual renewal of kingship.

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<sup>55</sup> Both Newbury (2009) and Chrétien (2006) describe the pillars of the Burundian monarchy in great detail.

First, the choice of the *Mwami*'s heir was not a foregone conclusion, such as the choice of the first-born son. Instead, as in many of the kingdoms in the Great Lakes region, the decision as to who would be the heir was a result of consultation among the family members (the Queen Mother, brothers, uncles, etc.) and with important religious leaders from key clans (Ndayishinguje 1977, 14). The heir was raised separately from his father's court, under the supervision of the Queen Mother and the tutelage of various relatives and ritualists (Chrétien 2006, 123). As a result, the *Mwami* had little direct influence over the choice of the heir or his heir's education. The wide consultation process ensured that the future *Mwami* would be linked to and have the support of major clans (whose chiefs would facilitate the *Mwami*'s veneration by the population), as well as the blessing of the powerful religious community.

Second, when the *Mwami* died, the heir then emerged, participating in an initiation process that Chrétien describes as a series of ceremonies, "organized as a journey from one sacred site to another, and each led by a particular dignitary of the sacred" (2006, 124).<sup>56</sup> As this journey progressed, the new *Mwami* gained strength, or in Chrétien words, "He appear[ed] not as a god or as a priest...but as an intermediary slowly infused with the force that lived in his father – a force that [was] managed by the ritualists and clans endowed with these responsibilities . . . he [became] the 'father' of the country" (2006, 125). Uvin reinforces this image of the *Mwami* as father, remarking that, "The king was neither Hutu nor Tutsi – he embodied the nation" (2009, 7).

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<sup>56</sup> Pascal Ndayishigunje offers an eloquent description of this transition, saying, "In Burundi, one never said, 'the king is dead', but that 'he ceded' the drum, *yatanze*" (1977, 14).

Though the religious leaders held great sway over this process, they did not supplant the *Mwami*. The new king's journey concluded with a ceremony in which the sacred drums were played to mark the establishment of the new kingdom. The drum was a particularly potent symbol of legitimacy because, as Chrétien underscores, "Only the king and his religious dignitaries [could] make it 'speak'" (2006, 125).<sup>57</sup> He goes on to say that, "Enthronement therefore [put] into play a dialectic whereby the kingmakers – the priests and clan dignitaries – are stripped of their power by the one to whom they have just given the dynastic drum" (2006, 125). Both the drama that characterized the process and the roles carefully played by each participant during the conduct of the rituals marking the inauguration of the new *Mwami* were critical to authenticating the regime.

A third way in which religious veneration was accorded to the *Mwami* was the annual renewal of the kingship. While the kingship was sacred, the *Mwami* was not considered divine. His power had to be regularly reauthorized by the court ritualists during the conduct of the First Fruits ceremony, or *umuganuro* (Newbury 2009, 318). Chrétien effectively captures the importance of and wide support for the ceremony, saying, "This preliterate national holiday each year reactivated the *Mwami*'s strength in the presence of delegations from every region. It demonstrated the support of a network of ritualists, whose sacred woods formed the country's borders and who notably belonged to the major...Hutu clans" (2006, 129). As this process of renewal demonstrated, the *Mwami* could not depend on one group or region; he needed approbation from the entire kingdom to retain his legitimacy.

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<sup>57</sup> According to Ndayishinguje, the royal heir was referred to as the "Candidate to the Drum" (1977, 15).

Thus, the political power and legitimacy of the *Mwami* was inextricably linked to a broad range of religious institutions. As Newbury explains, “the association of Ntare [Rushatsi] with Kiranga in the [spiritual] traditions [was] therefore clearly an attempt to assert court authority over what was potentially an autonomous religious field...” in the founder’s quest to consolidate the newly conquered political space (2009, 310).<sup>58</sup> Without the meaning that the population accorded these institutions, the *Mwami* could not have survived.

*ii. Ability to mobilize force*

The second element from which the *Mwami* derived his power was through his ability to mobilize a fighting force to defend the kingdom. This capacity did not depend on the number of permanent troops the *Mwami* kept under his command (although the *Mwami* did have a permanent royal guard, composed of young men from throughout the kingdom), or his power to impose his will by force. Rather, it was the *Mwami*’s ability to mobilize troops when needed that determined his power.

This distinction is a critical one. The nature of the early Burundian state, a patchwork of regions each of which enjoyed varying levels of autonomy, required that the *Mwami* develop alliances. The *Mwami*’s reputation was directly linked to the strength of those alliances. Even if he was a great warrior, the *Mwami* had to have fighters to lead.

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<sup>58</sup> Kiranga was a spirit figure linked to a number of different belief systems across the Great Lakes of Africa in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As Newbury explains, “Defined by an elaborate series of initiation rituals, this new religious community transcended separate family ritual practices and combined many independent spirits and mediums into a coherent religious family, backed by traditions explaining the relationships among diverse...spirits (Newbury 2009, 309-310).

It was the *Mwami*'s ability to persuade clan chiefs to fight to defend the kingdom, and in particular, to protect the kingdom's sacred sites, that lent his reign both internal and external legitimacy. In order to cultivate this power, the *Mwami* exploited the clientelist system.

As will be elaborated upon later in this chapter, the clientelist system in Burundi comprised an extensive web of relationships and networks throughout the kingdom. Indeed, far from being an entity removed from its subjects, as Thomas Laely explains, "the monarchy was based on a finely elaborated ideology, and its rites were well known to the rural population" (1997, 702). The *Mwami* was the center of gravity for the clientelist system, yet it could not function without the population.<sup>59</sup>

This patron-client relationship undergirded the *Mwami*'s alliances with the clans, including periodic negotiations for troops. It is important to underscore that the pre-colonial clientelist system was not simply a process of currying favor with someone more powerful for purely selfish motives. Rather, it was a system in which the currency of personal relationships at each level of the hierarchy allowed participants in the system to fulfill certain obligations to those above and below them (protection, 'taxes', adjudication of disputes) and these mutual obligations guaranteed the system's legitimacy.

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<sup>59</sup> Laely goes on to describe the intricate nature of the system saying, "The socio-political position and the respective rights of all descent groups were defined by their often specialised duties and functions for the royal court, the *Mwami*, or the aristocracy. Furthermore, there were the clientelistic structures of subordination with respect to cattle and land, vertical patron-client dependencies that functioned as important social cement. All these status differences could vary over time, and indeed did" (1997, 700).

The web of patron-client relationships that characterized the kingdom meant that the provision of troops was part of a larger system of mutual obligations. Clan chiefs were responsible for mobilizing troops, as well as charged with other duties such as collecting 'taxes' to support religious veneration (i.e. food collected to support a specific ceremony (such as *umuganuro*), artisanal products to provision a special occasion (such as a wedding of a prince), or jugs of beer for the daily sustenance of the *Mwami* and his entourage). For his part, the *Mwami* rewarded both individuals and clans for their exploits in battle; offering positions in the royal court, territory, or favorable marriages to those who distinguished themselves in battle.

Thus, the provision of warriors was not a one-way obligation from clan chief to monarch. The *Mwami's* capacity to respond effectively to threats to the kingdom was tied to his ability to provide for the clans. Their concomitant level of respect for the *Mwami's* right to requisition the warriors allowed him to face the threat. Success on the battlefield contributed to the *Mwami's* legitimacy, while simultaneously securing the clans' position vis-à-vis their relationship to the court. As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the reciprocal nature of this relationship provided yet another institutional foundation for the monarchy.

b. Sources of Legitimacy: The *Ubushingantahe*<sup>60</sup>

The kingdom's socio-political system had deep and broad roots, reaching down to the peasants who lived on the hillsides and spread out to alternate sources of power, including the clans, ritualists, religious leaders, and *ubushingantahe*. It was the *ubushingantahe* – an institution unique to Burundi amongst the kingdoms of the Great Lakes of Africa – that provided the regime with another critical source of legitimacy in this system.

According to Joseph Bigirumwamwi, *ubushingantahe* is “a social institution through which society manages functional conflicts that arise in its midst” (Ntahombaye et al eds. 1999, 68). The conflicts were varied and could be civil as well as criminal; ranging from land disputes to family disagreements to accusations of theft. The men who were part of this institution were chosen by their local communities, on the basis of their integrity, dignity, moral authority, maturity, sense of justice, and truthfulness. As Chrétien describes, after having been vetted by their communities, “[the *bashingantahe*] were appointed during a great festival, and they judged in the *Mwami*'s name. However, their decisions were autonomously made after a public hearing of the opposing parties and collection of testimony” (2006, 176).

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<sup>60</sup> *Ubushingantahe* refers to the institution, *Bashingantahe* is the plural, meaning wise men and *mushingantahe* is the singular, wise man. Chrétien translates *bashingantahe* as “those who plant the staff of arbitration” (2006, 176). For an in-depth discussion of the institution, see Ntahombaye (1999). See the glossary in Appendix 1 for further explanation of terms in Kirundi.



This autonomy in decision-making at the local level was an important part of the regime legitimation process. The *bashingantahe* retained their leadership at the local level (and by extension, a certain amount of power), while assuring that respect for the *Mwami* penetrated the lowest echelons of society. In Chrétien's words, "These men on the hills were essential to gaining popular support for the royal institutions" (2006, 176). Thus the *bashingantahe* served as brokers of one of the most fundamental alliances at the heart of the monarchy.<sup>61</sup>

The *ubushingantahe* institution, while predominantly composed of Hutu, included both Hutu and Tutsi depending on the community, and its existence meant that conflict was generally managed on the hillsides, offering Burundians almost immediate access to justice. In addition, the *bashingantahe* ensured that the *Mwami* was present in the minds of Burundians, even at the lowest level of society. The *Mwami* could be appealed to if a case warranted (e.g., a major land dispute between clans) and in principle every Burundian had the right to plead his case before the *Mwami*. The *Mwami* was the last jurisdiction; the highest court in the land. Marc Manirakiza describes the *Mwami*'s role as follows, "One day a week, [the *Mwami*] had the habit of receiving in private audience Burundians of all ages, from all walks of life, who came to him to present their complaints" (1990, 26). While it was rare that this happened, the perception of the *Mwami*

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<sup>61</sup> Laely offers an additional characterization of the *ubushingantahe*, "In the literature on Burundi the emphasis has almost always been on relationships that were vertical and asymmetrical. Yet others existed that were horizontal and symmetrical as well, and these should not be overlooked. They were of considerable influence and frequently so vigorous that we can speak of 'local communities' despite the pronounced mode of dispersed settlements. This helps to explain the existence of a differentiated structure of authority and local leadership (which was not identical with the elders of restricted lineages); namely, the *bushingantahe* (sic)..." (1997, 706).

as capable of managing these multiple layers of alliances within the web of relationships that was the pre-colonial Burundian state was a cornerstone of his legitimacy.

c. Sources of Legitimacy: Clientelism

A third institution that provided the regime with legitimacy was the clientelist system. As described earlier in this chapter, this structure was the means by which the *Mwami* was able to mobilize troops and maintain his power. However, the system's reach was far more extensive, binding together the entire kingdom through patron-client networks that both extended deeply into the rural communities and expanded broadly across the web of *Ganwa* (princes), clan chiefs, ritualists, and *bashingantahe* (Laely 1997). The clientelist system is so critical to Burundi's enduring political culture that it will be dealt with in a separate section in this chapter (see page 100).

Thus the first thread of political culture to emerge from a review of the historical literature on Burundi is the importance of diverse sources of regime legitimacy. In pre-colonial Burundi, these sources included the mystical nature of the *Mwami*, the role of the *ubushingantahe* and the clientelist system. The second thread revealed in the literature is the management of political conflict and it is to that topic which we now turn.

## 2. THE MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT

The regions conquered by Ntare Rugamba (ca. 1796-ca. 1852) were administered in several different, geographically significant ways as the kingdom evolved. As strong alliances were key, negotiation as a means of (re)structuring political space became part of Burundi's political culture from the monarchy's inception.<sup>62</sup> Thus, each strategy was designed to reinforce the *Mwami's* ability to manage political conflict, maintain his power, and thwart potential rivals (Chrétien 2006).

In some areas, the local chiefs were retained. This was especially true in the further-flung regions of the kingdom, as the *Mwami* depended upon these chiefs to mobilize support from the local population, who might not know him or appreciate his power. In other cases, the *Mwami* installed families that were closely allied to him in the newly conquered territories. Offering territory and power provided a way for the *Mwami* to reward service rendered to the monarch, as well as to bolster alliances through a system of patronage. Finally, the *Mwami's* sons (the *Ganwa* or princes) were given responsibility for lands that directly bordered the *Mwami's* holdings, since men of the king's direct lineage were generally considered to provide more reliable protection than allied but unrelated (or distantly related) families (Chrétien 2006, 163).

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<sup>62</sup> Zénon Nicayenzi, a Burundian historian, reinforces this perspective, describing the relative independence of the clans and the *ubushingantahe* from the *Mwami* as an important part of Burundi's political history (Presentation, August 14, 2012).

This system was not static. As described above, the Burundian *Mwami* mobilized troops from the various chiefs across the Kingdom only when necessary, unlike Rwanda, where the monarch maintained a standing central army (Vansina 1972, 6). Because these were sometimes fiercely autonomous regions, the *Mwami*'s control of the periphery of his territory could be tenuous. For this reason, the *Mwami*'s relationships forged with family members and other allies became critical to his success.

The *Mwami* was no less vulnerable closer to the center of his territory, particularly because of the number of pretenders to his throne. This vulnerability was due primarily to two factors. First, the monarch was polygamous. The *Mwami* Gisabo (ca. 1852-1908), for example, was said to have had at least a dozen wives (Chrétien 2006, 169). This resulted in a large number of *Ganwa*, each of whom was a potential successor to the *Mwami*.

Second, Burundi's monarchical tradition was cyclical – each cycle lasting four reigns. Once a cycle ended, the royal princes were demoted and new royalty (descendants more directly related to the current monarch) took their place. This meant that land holdings were not necessarily permanent and could change according to the wishes of the current *Mwami*. The system was constantly producing potential new heirs and thus, renewed conflict. Chrétien describes the system as follows, “the Baganwa furnished the majority of provincial chiefs, but the more distant their family relationship with the king,

the farther away they were placed, to the point of being repressed and “demoted” after several generations” (2006, 172).<sup>63</sup>

While these dynamics increased the possibility for conflict, there were clear advantages of the system. In particular, Chrétien notes that, “geographic marginalization and strategically opposing generations neutralized the threat to royal power” (2006, 164).<sup>64</sup> In order to manage this potential political conflict, the *Mwami* played the chiefs off one another, shifting favor and largess as his needs dictated.

Yet Burundi was not anarchic, despite the struggles between the Kingdom’s central court (controlled by the *Mwami*), the *Ganwa*, and the clan chiefs, as each jockeyed for power. According to Newbury, these were essentially political conflicts and they took place within the framework created and manipulated by the monarch. Newbury explains that,

Baganwa often fought over recognized positions, including that of kingship itself – and the control of royal rituals. Without standing army organizations, conflict in Burundi was short-lived, often lasting only a few days; the court itself frequently mediated between competing Baganwa, and ritual and religious authorities often asserted a common set of cultural values in mediating or restraining competitors. In other words, kingship in Burundi was in many cases not strong enough to suppress political conflict; nonetheless,

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<sup>63</sup> It is important to remember that generations were sometimes quite short in Burundi. For example, the three reigns between Ntare Rushatsi and Ntare Rugamba lasted less than 50 years in total, providing ample opportunity for multiple generations of *Baganwa* to share the same political space.

<sup>64</sup> The sometimes arbitrary nature of this system reinforced the patron-client networks, which served to ensure the survival of Burundians at all levels of society. As Thomas Laely describes, “The structures of government and administration of the pre-colonial monarchy were not determined by permanently given territorial units; they were dependent on personal relationships of the moment, and were shaped according to the pattern of patron-client dealings. This resulted in what might be described as multi-layered, overlapping pyramids of people being dependent on each other. But despite the absence of a rigid hierarchy according to a single continuous, prevailing principle, all the political leaders of minor rank who drew their legitimacy from a clearly separated central power were conscious that their own authority was only delegated” (1997, 704).

the monarchy was often central to political struggle in Burundi and influential in the forms those struggles assumed (2009, 313).

Thus, the practice of consultation in all religious matters coupled with the inability to impose his will by force reinforced negotiation as the *Mwami's* primary conflict management strategy.

The *Mwami* was supported in his management of political conflict by the *ubushingantahe*. Thomas Laely underscores the institution's importance to the monarchy, despite its relative independence saying,

Although [the *ubushangantahe*] system of conflict regulation, which was primarily sustained from below, showed many hallmarks of a 'counter-power' – or more accurately, a 'counter-authority' – to the structure of political administration, it was firmly integrated into the monarchical system of domination. It settled important juridical and political matters at the level of the neighbourhood, and provided a certain corrective to local administrative authorities, who were nominated from above and often came from outside the hill communities (1997, 706).

More importantly for Burundi's political culture, it was from the ranks of the *bashingantahe* that the population's representatives to the court were chosen and it was these men that the chiefs and even the king chose to be their permanent advisors (Chrétien 2006, 176). The *bashingantahe* served as the link between the court and the population and the values they embodied informed the management of political and social conflict from the pinnacle of Burundi's regime to its base, reinforcing the regime's power and legitimacy.

### 3. CLIENTELISM AND THE ROLE OF THE 'STATE'

A final enduring thread of Burundi's political culture that emerged in pre-colonial Burundi was the clientelist system. The pre-colonial Burundian regime did not provide the services associated with modern states – access to education, infrastructure, or even regular protection.<sup>65</sup> Instead, as underscored in the previous section, the kingdom functioned through the clientelist system – an interlocking web of hierarchical relationships with the *Mwami* at its summit. The population provisioned the *Mwami*, who in turn maintained order in the system. Throughout all levels of society, Burundians understood and participated in this system to ensure their survival and stability.

Michael Schatzberg (2001) writes about the need to understand a political culture's 'moral matrix' for clues as to how political legitimacy is accorded in that culture. This matrix is reflected in the political language used in a specific country or context.<sup>66</sup> Laely offers an eloquent description of how clientelism functioned in Burundi, echoing Schatzberg's emphasis on the importance of language as reflecting a culture's moral matrix:

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<sup>65</sup> Joel Migdal provides a useful definition of a 'state', which captures both a state's aspirations and the actions it actually undertakes in pursuit of those aspirations: "The state is a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by (1) *the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounded by that territory*, and (2) *the actual practices of its multiple parts*" (2001, 15-16, *italics in the original*). The interplay of these two factors in shaping the pre-colonial Burundian state resulted in a set of general rules that governed relationships, yet were adapted and personalized depending on the needs of the moment.

<sup>66</sup> Schatzberg offers the example of father and family to illustrate the moral matrix, going on to explain that, "The imagery and language of father and family are widespread in Africa because they strike a resonant and deeply embedded cultural chord. They form part of a culturally valid and largely implicit comprehension of the limits of political legitimacy based on a complex and largely unarticulated moral matrix of legitimate governance derived from an idealised vision of patterns of authority and behaviour within the family" (1993, 451).

The relationship as seen and established from above was called *kuguba*, a verb with a double meaning . . . 'to give' and 'to command/control'. Whenever the relationship was successfully formalised it became operational not only in the specific context of, say, the agreed cattle lease called *bugabire*, but also in a broad political sense known as *amasabo*. It assumed the meaning of patronage, which was normally formalised by a gift (a cow or even a territorial command) from the superior to the petitioner. Besides protection and shelter, *amasabo* was defined as unconditional loyalty and dependence. In Burundian society, which was structured in a strongly vertical fashion, this was not a negative but a positive value; such bonds of dependence could provide the means of upward social mobility (1997, 703-704).

The gift (*gusaba*) could take many forms: physical labor, agricultural products, cows, artisanal goods, soldiers, or tools, etc., if made by the client to the patron. And in return, the patron might grant shelter or more formal political protection (*amasabo*). The varied meaning given to these words provides us with clues as to the system's importance and its legitimacy in the eyes of all who participated in it.

An important aspect of this system was the need for intercessors. It was not possible to successfully access someone in power without an intermediary, as Laely explains,

For most people, access to their rulers was usually possible only in an indirect and mediated way. There was a highly differentiated system of varying go-betweens and intercessors, usually court officials or servants, aristocratic domain managers, or other courtiers and favourites of the desired person – in short, those with the right of unmediated access. These 'specialists' had to be utilised if one wanted to make any request or to offer or receive a gift (1997, 702-703).

As we will see in subsequent chapters, this differentiated system is one of the most enduring facets of clientelism in Burundi and a network of intermediaries facilitated both access to and the exercise of political influence at the highest levels. Indeed, if



someone were *not* to use the network that might raise suspicion about their motives and threaten their future ambitions. The reciprocal nature of the relationships and their interwoven, multi-layered character reflected an unarticulated reality of how Burundian political culture functioned: One might fulfill their role and responsibilities correctly, however it was frequently whom they knew and how they accessed that patron that would secure their future, not simply merit and hard work.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, the patron-client relationship – clientelism – undergirded the structure of the kingdom. This web of relationships allowed the ‘state’ to penetrate society and to exercise control in ways not otherwise possible because the *Mwami* could not dominate by force or by claims to having sole access to divine power.<sup>68</sup>

#### **D. The Key Threads of Burundi's Pre-Colonial Political Culture**

As explored above, three key threads of political culture emerge from an examination of Burundi's pre-colonial history. First, a diverse number of institutions gave the regime its legitimacy; ranging from religious rituals to alliances forged with different clans, from the relationship with the *ubushingantahe* to control of the clientelist

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<sup>67</sup> Laely captures this dynamic in pre-colonial Burundi with the following example, “Because all political relationships were so highly personalised, being and staying anonymous was a challenge to the rulers. For this reason a special expression existed for ‘the ones who do not show up to authorities’, namely *inyegezi*. The fact that it was seen as a moral obligation for everyone to approach the rulers, perceived as protecting patrons and benefactors – *muganwa* is the term for prince, ‘the one who is approached’ – meant that those who did not do so spontaneously were stigmatised as rebels” (1997, 705).

<sup>68</sup> While his sacred role was critical to his legitimacy, the *Mwami's* power was not ‘god-given’. Newbury underscores that while the kingship was a “sacral” one, it was “not a divine kingship; the king was in no way a god” (2009, 319).

structure. This secured the *Mwami's* role as the spiritual and corporal leader of Burundi and it gave the *Mwami* the tools to confront challenges to the throne.

Second, the *Mwami* privileged negotiation as his main strategy of managing political conflict. The lack of a standing army and the need to delegate some power to his sons and to other powerful clan chiefs meant that the *Mwami* engaged in a perpetual negotiation process to balance competing political interests across the kingdom and to maintain relative peace among his subjects.

Finally, the institution of clientelism provided the financial, social and political infrastructure on which the kingdom was built. The horizontal and vertical webs of relationships exemplified the mutual obligations at all levels of society, reinforcing the dynamics of dependence and domination. The meaning accorded to these institutions and processes by the population constitutes the origin of Burundi's political culture. The threads illustrate how the continuity of the system was maintained and explain the *Mwami's* ability to lead.

Yet, as time went on, certain aspects of the threads of Burundi's political culture were not to endure. Between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several endogenous and exogenous factors were to precipitate an end to this way of life and along with it, bring about a change in Burundi's underlying political culture, causing certain elements to wane and others to assert themselves in very different, often violent ways.

Several factors presaged this process. First, the kingdom was buffeted by severe internal political conflict, which the *Mwami* was increasingly unable to manage. This was in part due to the second factor, attacks from foreigners (both Africans and Europeans), which allowed rivals to the *Mwami* to strengthen their alliances in opposition to him. The incursions by foreigners also introduced new weapons and new ideas, both of which adversely impacted the *Mwami's* ability to manage political conflict. Third, the region suffered several ecological and epidemiological calamities, including the arrival of small pox (introduced by foreigners), which decimated parts of the population. Another disease killed many cattle, up to 90% in some places, upending the financial basis of the clientelist system. These calamities completely changed how wealth was managed and caused the court to expropriate most of the remaining cattle for itself. This too, negatively impacted the *Mwami's* legitimacy, as it transformed the system of clientelism that was critical to the functioning of the state (Newbury 2009, 336-337).<sup>69</sup>

As will be detailed in the next chapter, it was into this tumultuous context that European colonizers arrived: first the Germans, followed by the Belgians. Not only was

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<sup>69</sup> Laely's description of the role of cattle in the clientelist system is informative. He states that, "The agro-pastoral society was characterised by two uncommon traits: cultivators and cattle-holders lived in the same territory and were marked by a strong cultural homogeneity. There was a great population density and hardly any nomads. The fact that every production unit owned some land, and could be agricultural as well as pastoral, had the following remarkable implication: each could reproduce itself without rearing cattle. Livestock could thus serve another end: the creation of bonds of dependence which regulated access to political power. The aristocracy knew that clientelism enabled direct vertical linkages to be established with any group. Whereas cultivation was of great importance for the process of production, the 'circulation of cattle' provided the primary basis for social and political relationships" (1997, 702). Thus, once the majority of cattle were retained in the hands of only the *Mwami*, that robbed the system of its currency, effectively crippling it.

the monarchy out-gunned, in its weakened state it could not withstand the social and political changes introduced by the colonizers.

## **Chapter Four: The Legacies of Colonialism (1908-1962)**

### **A. Introduction**

Colonialism would fundamentally change the structures within which Burundian society functioned, ultimately shifting key aspects of Burundi's political culture. While the colonizers would generally rule by proxy through the *Mwami*, they introduced new rules, changing the incentives in the system and they used different, more violent methods of establishing their power. As will be demonstrated in this chapter, each thread of political culture was impacted by the arrival of the colonial powers and eventually the legitimacy of Burundi's monarchical system and its approach to the management of political and social conflict were fatally compromised.

The sources of regime legitimacy changed, with the Belgians ultimately becoming the point of reference for legitimation, rather than the vast array of institutions present in the previous era. Force began to displace negotiation as the preferred tool of conflict management at all levels of society. And the interlocking web of relationships on which the *Mwami* had previously relied to help him to manage socio-political relations throughout the kingdom was torn apart. Over time, as the Belgians strengthened their power through the consolidation of the kingdom's administrative units, it was the Ganwa who retained the privilege of leadership, followed by the Tutsi, with the Hutu ultimately losing most of their traditional sources of power, introducing a more rigid hierarchy in

social relations than had existed in the past. The clientelist system remained relatively intact; however the presence of the colonizers altered the amount and allocation of available resources in the system, introducing small but perceptible changes to the structure.

This confluence of events had a distinct impact on Burundi's political culture and by extension on the political contests that immediately preceded and followed independence in 1962. Indeed, as we shall see, the way in which the Belgians manipulated the political landscape set the stage for the increased salience of ethnicity in Burundian life and ultimately the introduction of exclusion and violence rather than negotiation as tools to manage political conflict.

Burundi's period of colonization falls into two distinct phases: the first fifty years in which both Germany and Belgium ruled by proxy through the *Mwami* with no real thought paid to the wellbeing or advancement of the population; and a second phase lasting only 10 years, in which Belgium was forced by the international community to prepare its colonies for independence. Unfortunately for Burundi, the policies undertaken during the first fifty years of colonialism had far more negative and far-reaching consequences for institutional and regime legitimacy and the management of political conflict than the remedial efforts undertaken during the final ten years of colonization. Indeed, rather than creating conditions for success, Belgium contributed to setting the stage for on-going conflict in Burundi.

## **B. The First 50 Years of Colonization**

As with much of the “unclaimed” territory in Africa at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Burundi and Rwanda were “allocated” to one of the European powers during the conference of Berlin in 1885 and became German protectorates. However, these European machinations happened a world away from the reality facing Burundians in the middle of the African continent. A significant European presence was only felt in the Great Lakes region of Africa when British explorers and German missionaries penetrated the forests of Congo and the hills of Rwanda and Burundi on the eve of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chrétien remarks that the kingdoms remained largely unknown until 1890 when explorers traveled to the region to confirm what had been “claimed” thousands of miles away on maps that did not necessarily correspond to reality (2006, 217).<sup>70</sup>

Burundi posed a riddle for these first Europeans who came into contact with kingdom. Unlike Rwanda, Burundi was not particularly centralized and internal strife, disease, and the effects of ecological disaster made the Kingdom look virtually anarchic to outsiders. In fact, Europeans doubted the existence of the *Mwami* for many years due to the strong currents of regional autonomy (Newbury 2009, 313). However, as described in the previous chapter, the *Mwami* played a critical role in uniting and managing the

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<sup>70</sup> W.M. Roger Louis (1963) states, “Ruanda-Urundi was insignificant in the negotiations [between Germany, Belgium and Britain] of 1884-5, but of paramount importance in 1890. In 1884-5 diplomats discussed lines on vague and inaccurate maps as King Leopold delimited his Congo State. Whether one line was better than another no one could tell. In ignorance of the geography of the region, the diplomats took their boundaries geometrically from the heavens...In 1890, however, Ruanda-Urundi (along with the international waters of Lake Tanganyika) was viewed as the link connecting British possessions in the north and south of Africa” (xv). Thus, Ruanda-Urundi became the center of an international controversy between empires for the control of Central Africa.

religious, political and social aspiration of his subjects and the monarchy was rooted in the resulting spiritual and political legitimacy accorded to the king. Until the early twentieth century, the *Mwami* Mwezi Gisabo (ca. 1852-1908) succeeded in fighting off foreign invaders—including slave traders from the coastal regions--and maintaining the delicate balance between regional chiefs, religious leaders, and the Baganwa. This was not to last, and as Jean Ziegler recounts, “the men who finally shook the power of [Mwezi Gisabo] were the Whites...German colonizers [who], for the first time [caused] the Burundian armies to bow down before the invader” (1971, 37-38).

Successful where Arab slave traders from the coasts of present-day Kenya and Tanzania had failed, German missionaries and soldiers were the first to set up a more permanent presence in the Burundian kingdom. The motivation of these explorers was three-fold: first, to claim territory for the ever-expanding European empires; second, to convert the population to Christianity, fighting the spread of Islam and espousing an anti-slavery message; and third, to take away lucrative trade routes from the Arab-Swahili networks.

White Catholic Fathers led the process of founding outposts in Burundi for Germany. These Catholic missionaries were in a competition with Protestants for the souls of Africans. As Chrétien notes, “The White Fathers and the [British] Protestant preachers arrived more or less simultaneously, in the late 1870s – in other words, twenty years before the colonial partition – on the shores of Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika” (2006, 207). However, they did not definitively penetrate Burundi until 1898. The



Europeans came from the East, moving through northeast Burundi establishing posts at Muyaga, then Mugeru and finally in Bujumbura in 1902 (2006, 213). Despite their best efforts, the conversion of Africans to Catholicism was very slow at first because, as Chrétien describes, “for years, the missionary enclosures were perceived as foreign, even strange, by the societies in which they were found. Not until the 1930s did the missions play a central role in reconstituting politics and society [in Burundi]” (2006, 214).

Initially, the Germans did not interfere in the running of the country. However, this began to change as clashes on Congo’s eastern border between the Belgians and the Germans multiplied and Germany sought to more actively assert its control over its territories in Africa. The contestation between European powers occurred simultaneously with increasingly serious internal challenges to Mwezi Gisabo’s rule. Taking advantage of the *Mwami*’s weakness in the face of these resurgent threats to his throne, the Germans forced an agreement on him in 1903. The *Mwami* traded Burundian sovereignty for Germany’s formal recognition of the king and German support in consolidating the power of the central court throughout Burundi (Ziegler 1971, 38).

After Germany’s defeat in World War I, the Allies divided Germany’s African colonies amongst them. Despite protest from Belgium that they should be granted the territories of East Africa, the more powerful British could not be persuaded to give up German East Africa, having defeated the Germans there during the war. The British saw the territory as the critical link connecting their possessions in the north and south of the continent. Thus, upon conclusion of the Milner-Orts Convention on May 30, 1919, the

territories of Ruanda and Urundi were awarded to Belgium.<sup>71</sup> It was not until August 7, 1919 that the Mandates Commission approved the agreement and Ruanda-Urundi became a ‘League of Nations Class B Mandate of Belgium’ in accordance with the statutes of the newly-founded League of Nations.<sup>72</sup>

The Belgian Parliament formally accepted the Mandate by the law of 20 October 1924 (Louis 1963, 254 FN 7). Louis describes this final settlement as follows,

Belgium’s acquisition of Ruanda-Urundi is surely one of the great ironies in the history of Africa. For her statesmen did not want it. They intended to use Ruanda-Urundi as a pawn to gain the southern bank and mouth of the Congo river, which they considered as indispensable for the security of their colony. This plan failed because of what the Belgians and British regarded as Portuguese intractability and because of British refusal to pay an additional indemnity, a Belgian condition of negotiation. Belgium was left with Ruanda-Urundi (1963, 255).

This inauspicious transition and the far greater importance of the neighboring Belgian Congo (in both size and resources) would guarantee that Ruanda-Urundi remained virtually an afterthought of the Belgian government throughout their rule over the territory.

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<sup>71</sup> Louis (1963) gives an excellent account of the byzantine negotiations between the British and the Belgians, which ultimately resulted in the Orts-Milner Convention of 1919.

<sup>72</sup> Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant, section pertaining to Ruanda-Urundi: “Other peoples, especially those of Central Africa, are at such a stage that the Mandatory must be responsible for the administration of the territory under conditions which will guarantee freedom of conscience and religion, subject only to the maintenance of public order and morals, the prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic and the liquor traffic, and the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defence (*sic*) of territory, and will also secure equal opportunities for the trade and commerce of other Members of the League” (Yale Law School Avalon Project, [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/leagcov.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp), accessed 19 February 2013). Elsewhere, the date of the League of Nations decision is cited as 31 August 1923. See for example, J.W. Salacuse (1969, 512 FN 2).

### **C. Changing the Regime; Transforming Political Culture**

The ascendant dominance of the colonial power presaged three major changes for the regime in Burundi. First, when the Germans' declared their support of the king at the time of the 1903 agreement, the *Mwami* Mwezi Gisabo gained access to power that far outweighed that of his rivals. He used that power to extend his administrative reach across the kingdom. This centralization process would continue throughout Belgian rule, albeit with a growing shift in power from the monarchy to the colonizer.

Second, in the earlier incarnations of the kingship, the *Mwami's* power was tightly bound to the spiritual and cultural legitimacy bestowed by a range of local institutions. The arrival of the colonial powers brought new institutions to the fore and Belgians' policy of indirect rule would lead to a redefinition of *Mwami's* power and how it was exercised. Over time, the *Mwami* would abandon the traditional sources of authority and for the next six decades, the regime's legitimacy would increasingly be based on external references and the elite's relationship to the colonial power. Coupled with the centralization of the kingdom, this process narrowed the *Mwami's* powerbase and contributed to bringing exclusion and rigidity to the system that had not existed in the past.

Third, as resistance to these changes manifested itself in the kingdom, both the monarch and the colonizer increasingly made recourse to more coercive means to rule the country. Physical and structural violence increased, bringing rigidity to the ruling

structures, creating an impenetrable divide between ruler and ruled, and giving a growing and different salience to ethnic categories that had not existed in the past. These interlocking changes had a significant impact on Burundi's evolving political culture and are addressed in more detail below.

## 1. SHIFTING SOURCES OF REGIME LEGITIMACY

### a. Centralization of the kingdom

Ironically, rather than diminishing the power of the court, the arrival of the Europeans succeeded in helping the *Mwami* to extend his reach. The monarch took advantage of the Europeans to consolidate his power and to defeat rivals. Because the *Mwami's* control increased as a result of assistance from the colonizer rather than through the traditional means of negotiation, local leaders lost their customary path of influence to the *Mwami*, which then resulted in a significant loss of authority in their own communities. This may have been advantageous for the elite but it had a long-term negative impact on the local population, whose power and more importantly whose social mobility were concurrently diminished. Newbury explains that,

For both kingdoms [of Rwanda and Burundi], the European presence was transmitted through the reinforcement of the local power of the state elites and in the quite dramatic expansion of court rule to new areas, formerly only informally under dynastic control, if at all: during the first twenty years of European rule both states roughly doubled the areas under their effective administration. And with this shift in power came new demands on the local populations incorporated within these expanding state structures and with fewer alternatives open to them (Newbury 2009, 337-338).

The monarchy achieved two goals in this process: administrative standardization across the kingdom, which included bureaucratic-administrative penetration, as well as the establishment of the kingdom's territory in a way that left the *Mwami's* power (relatively) undisputed. In the border regions, the court replaced local chiefs with administrators appointed by the *Mwami* (and later, the colonial power), greatly reducing the independent power previously enjoyed by the chiefs in these regions (Newbury 2009, 338). However, any independence enjoyed by the monarchy did not last long, as events soon prompted the Germans to assert more direct control over the kingdom.

According to Roger Louis (1963), the shift in how the territory was administered (from indirect to quasi-direct rule) was due in part to the political chaos and infighting amongst the powerful Baganwa, which occurred after the death of *Mwami* Mwezi Gisabo in 1908. His successor, the young *Mwami* Mutaga, had little legitimacy in outlying regions, exercising almost no control over vast amounts of territory and his regent battled with other *Ganwa* clan chiefs for power. This turmoil rendered the territory virtually ungovernable for a short period.

The lack of coherence in German colonial administration policy also contributed to the chaos. This confusion was illustrated by differences between the Governor (based in Dar-es-Salaam) and the Residents (of whom there were 5 in the period of just 4 years and all of whom were based in Bujumbura). As Louis explains, “[The governor] Rechenberg wanted to support as far as possible the *Mwami*, giving independence only to a limited number of chiefs. The Residents, however, had little sympathy for the royal

family; they tried to ‘divide and rule’, ‘to play one chief off against the other’” (1963, 133). Louis concludes that the severely weakened institution of the monarchy allowed the great chiefs to establish themselves as independent powerbrokers, splintering the monarchy’s power at the close of the German era.

What Louis fails to recognize is that it was in fact the German support of the monarchy at the beginning of the twentieth century that facilitated *Mwami* Gisabo’s consolidation of his personal authority and the chaos following his death was a reflection of a more customary struggle for power amongst Burundi’s *Ganwa* and clan chiefs, a reassertion of traditional succession politics. It was into this system that the Germans, and the Belgians after them, injected a new source of influence, changing the dynamics between Burundian leaders and orienting them towards external sources of power, irreversibly shifting the sources of the regime’s legitimacy, a topic to which we will return below.

Like the Germans before them, the Belgians initially implemented a policy of indirect rule after taking over in 1919, using the *Mwami* and the traditional institutions as proxies for Belgian rule. Then, in mid-1925, the Belgian authorities changed course, deciding to exercise more direct control over the territory. On August 21, 1925 the Belgians passed a new law outlining how the territory was to be governed, accompanied by a set of far-reaching administrative reforms (Gahama 1983). The territory of Ruanda-Urundi was completely integrated into the Belgian Congo and although the monarchs

remained in power in their respective kingdoms, the traditional institutions were systematically replaced by the colonial administration.<sup>73</sup>

In 1930, the *Mwami* Mwambutsa Bangiricenge IV reached adulthood, taking on his full responsibilities as king. Enthroned at age 3, after the death of his father, *Mwami* Mutaga, Mwambutsa's rule initially had been managed by regents.<sup>74</sup> Even after his inauguration, Mwambutsa was never able to assume complete power. Given his young age and the omnipresence of the Belgians, the *Mwami* Mwambutsa simply came under the supervision of the Belgian Resident when he achieved adulthood (Gahama 1983, 98-101).

Internal contests for authority, supported by the Belgians, posed a constant threat to the young *Mwami* and to his ability to consolidate his own power. In particular, this period was to mark the high point of Ganwa power, as the two main Ganwa families, the *Bezi* (descendents of *Mwami* Mwezi Gisabo) and the *Batare* (descendents of Ntare Rugamba) profited from the Belgian administrative reforms, occupying the majority of chieftainships (78% at one point), consolidating their power, and excluding other traditional Hutu and Tutsi clan leaders and chiefs (Gahama, 1983, 103). While the other Tutsi leaders eventually regained their status, assisted by the Belgian tendency to lump Tutsi and *Ganwa* together in the same social category, the Hutu clan leaders never

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<sup>73</sup> As Salacuse describes, "By the Law of August 21, 1925, the Belgian Parliament established the fundamental principles concerning the government of Ruanda-Urundi. The Law provided that the Territory was to be "united administratively" with the Belgian Congo and was to form a vice government-general of that colony; however, it specifically stated that Ruanda-Urundi was to have a "distinct legal personality" (*personnalité juridique*) and its own budget. As a result, in the years which followed, Ruanda-Urundi developed a separate judicial system and a separate body of law, although...much of its legislation is similar or identical to that of Congo" (Salacuse 1969, 512-513).

<sup>74</sup> Mwami Mutaga reigned for just seven years (1908-1915).

recovered from the usurpation of their power (this will be explained in more detail below).

The arrival of the colonizers thus provided the monarchy with the opportunity to centralize the kingdom in a way that had previously been quite challenging for the *Mwami*. The implications of this transition to centralization were to have echoes into Burundi's future. The forcible imposition of an administrative structure throughout the territory profoundly changed the process of negotiation that had characterized power relations between Burundi's various clans and *Ganwa* families. Whereas previously a more open process, involving many actors with access to different sources of power (clan chiefs, religious leaders, *bashingantahe*, etc.), from this point forward, power began to be consolidated in the hands of a few, at the top of the hierarchy.

As discussed below, local leaders, in particular, were divested of their broader political influence, unless they succeeded in allying with a colonial administrator. As captured by Adrien Ntabona, "The traditional authorities [became] 'the agents of the colony', they acted on behalf of the white man and only reported to him" (Ntahombaye et al eds. 1999, 51). This resulted in a state that penetrated deep into Burundi's hills but had little capacity to serve the needs of its citizens because the appointed administrators answered to the colonial authority, not to the *Mwami* and even less so to the populations that they ostensibly were sent to administer (Uvin 2009, 8).



b. The emergence of new institutions

Over time, contestation for this centralized power increased among the elite Burundians. This weakened the *Mwami* and undermined key institutions within the monarchy that regulated social relations. In particular, the institution of the *ubushangantahe* began to lose its relevance. Local wise men were no longer recruited to serve the court as advisors, severing a traditional link between the rural population and the king and diluting the institution's power at the local level. This dealt an especially significant blow to the *Mwami's* legitimacy, as the *bashingantahe* had served as the *Mwami's* conduits to the population, symbolically transmitting the *Mwami's* spiritual power and in return conveying the population's concerns to the court.

In another blow to the *ubushangantahe*, the central government began to give increasing power to the court appointed administrators, laying the ground for conflict with local leaders. Chiefs were appointed based on their relationship to the colonial authority, rather than with the *Mwami* or based on family or clan affiliations. The newly appointed chiefs were charged with collecting taxes at the local level, giving them additional authority. As the chiefs' power increased, that of the *bashingantahe* diminished and with it their authority to manage local conflicts. In particular, the administrator could overturn decisions or interfere in their implementation, resulting in the *bashingantahe* losing the power to effectively enforce decisions among members of the community. This resulted in the undermining of their authority – and by extension, the *Mwami's* – because the *bashingantahe* were no longer recognized as rendering

decisions in the *Mwami's* name. As their authority, was directly contravened by the new source of power – the colonizer and its agents – this further negatively impacted the *Mwami's* legitimacy.

More importantly for modern Burundian social relations, the German and Belgian approaches to extending the power of the central court succeeded in bringing rigidity to the hierarchy that had not existed in the past and enhanced the capacity of the *Mwami's* officials to impose policy from above (Newbury 2009, 315). This gave increasing power to the administrators implementing policy. These administrators were increasingly *Ganwa* and within the *Ganwa*, members of the *Bezi* and *Batare* clans, further narrowing the socio-political space available to other Hutu and Tutsi clan leaders and traditional chiefs.

This competition for authority at the local level had two important impacts. First, corruption began to seep into the system, with invested and appointed leaders alike asking for 'payment' in advance of rendering judgment on or dealing with an issue (traditionally, payment would have been offered *after* the decision was made or service rendered). Second, without universal recognition of and respect for a *mushingantahe's* role at the local level, conflict resolution became more about who one knew and allied with, rather than a relatively independent process designed to address social conflict. This perverted the clientelist system as well, as is discussed below.

Religious institutions such as the keepers of the *tambour* (the sacred drum), those who looked after the sacred forests, and the ritualists who managed the funeral rites or the First Fruits celebration also lost their power and legitimacy with the arrival of the colonizers. While the White Catholic Fathers had made few inroads before 1930, after the centralization process and the advent of administrative reforms, the infrastructure of the state was used to support missionary activities, helping them to spread. As the power of the Catholic Church grew, the monarchy slowly lost its claim on the spiritual allegiance of Burundians. Catholicism began to supplant the traditional religion, *Kiranga*, and the penetration of the missionaries deep into rural Burundi significantly reshaped the religious and educational experience of all Burundians (Newbury 2009; Gahama 1983).

In addition, the parallel hierarchy established by the Catholic Church reinforced the rigidity of the social system and contributed to the displacement of authority from local to foreign institutions. The Church became increasingly responsible for the education of Burundians, using violence to punish such ‘crimes’ as speaking Kirundi in the classroom (rather than French) or the public veneration of *Kiranga*. By deeming primary school to be sufficient for the Burundians’ needs, the Church effectively cut off future opportunities for the vast majority of the country’s population. Martin Ewans eloquently captures the Belgian educational policy, echoing a popular Belgian slogan at the time, ‘pas d’élites, pas d’ennuis’, which can be translated as ‘no elites, no problems’. He goes on to say, “Much more time was devoted to manual labour, principally tending Mission land, than to what was pejoratively termed ‘book-learning’” (2002, 241).

Despite these changes, the role of the *Mwami* continued to retain its cultural significance and he was still venerated by the rural population. This was due primarily to three inter-related factors. First, life for the average rural Burundian changed little when the colonizers arrived because they ruled by proxy. Second, as remains largely true today, the far-flung nature of Burundian households (located not in villages but rather perched individually on steep hillsides near their fields) meant that the new institutions brought by the colonizer (the Catholic Church in particular) took a long time to penetrate society. Third and perhaps more importantly, the activities of the court remained the purview of a remote elite, whose political machinations had little relevance to the daily lives of rural Burundians. Thus, the *Mwami* remained the main spiritual point of reference for those rural Burundians, retaining his legitimacy in rural areas for many years longer than he succeeded in doing in the capital.

Over time, however, there was a remarkable shift in the institutions that provided legitimacy to the regime. As Newbury notes, “the state gained precedence over society: one of the most important internal effects of German policies in Burundi [and those of the Belgians who succeeded them] was to move power away from the ritualistic community, whose members often served as representatives of local integrity and whose authority implicitly set limits on state power” (2009, 315). The absence of legitimate institutions playing this latter role – setting limits on the exercise of state power – would eventually lead to a society marked by violence and, as we shall see, inexorably change Burundi’s political culture.

Interestingly, the traditional sources of the *Mwami's* legitimacy would not just be undermined by the new administrative structures introduced by the Europeans. The colonizer (and its Burundian allies) would attempt to rewrite the very history of the monarchy in order to provide a different foundation for its legitimacy. Attributed to the British explorer John Hanning Speke, the Hamitic Hypothesis purports that Tutsi migrated to the Great Lakes region from Ethiopia (thus the origin of “hamitic”) and conquered the Hutu, a Bantu race who had earlier settled in the Great Lakes.<sup>75</sup> The narrative invented a story of a rigid hierarchy that implied that the Tutsi had a ‘right’ to rule the Hutu (and the Twa), eliminating the process of negotiation that lay at the heart of choosing an heir to the *Mwami*, and doing away with the roles played by the Queen Mother, ritualists, and clan leaders in the succession process.

The reasons for the reshaping of the genesis tradition were three-fold, according to Newbury. First, the colonizers wanted to integrate the Burundian traditions into the larger Hamitic Hypothesis, to fit with the “racialized ‘migration and conquest’ model of kingship favored by the early colonial power holders” (2009, 306). Second, by combining their histories, the colonizer were able to link the Rwandan and Burundian kingdoms which then served as the foundation for a unified administration of the territory Ruanda-Urundi, simplifying their bureaucracy. Third, by validating this story, the colonizers nurtured the loyalty of the northern Burundian chiefs, “bolstering their regional claims to greater status within the colonial construct” (Newbury 2009, 306).

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<sup>75</sup> Both Jean-Pierre Chrétien (1981, 2006) and David Newbury (2009) offer comprehensive explanations of the emergence of the Hamitic Hypothesis, its impact on scholarship and perceptions of ethnicity, and detail how and why the archeological, anthropological and geographic data do not support such a hypothesis.

The narrative literally gave power to segments of Burundian society that had not previously enjoyed such unchallenged influence. As an example, Pierre Baranyanka (from the *Batare* branch of the royal family) rose to become one of the chiefs whose power rivaled that of the *Mwami*. From the north of Burundi, he worked to exploit ties with the Belgian Resident administrator for his own benefit. Significantly, he assisted the colonial power in recasting the dynastic narrative, promoting this version of Burundi's monarchical history in order to control the origins of a dynasty in which his family would consequently play a more important role and to give himself more legitimacy in the eyes of the Belgians.<sup>76</sup>

As is well-documented by Chrétien (2006) and Newbury (2009), this Hamitic Hypothesis is false. Yet, by emphasizing this particular story, the Belgians justified their restructuring of Burundian society and simplified the administration of the two kingdoms, which now formed the single territory of Ruanda-Urundi, tying formerly distinct entities together under a common myth (Newbury 2009). Thus, the identities of Tutsi and Hutu were first perverted and then calcified through the promotion of a specific history to serve the interests of the colonial power and the emergent Burundian political class.

One final point about sources of legitimacy is important to underscore at this stage. As the *Mwami* and the institutions traditionally associated with the regime began to lose their authority, a new source of power emerged – the colonizer. Rather than seek

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<sup>76</sup> Baranyanka's rise to power under the Belgians is well-documented by Joseph Gahama (1983, 86). This perspective is also supported by Nsanze's history (2003, 18). Vansina also makes reference to Baranyanka's desire to 'create a history without internal contradictions' (1972, 12). As is explained in Chapter Five, Baranyanka and his sons would eventually play major roles in the struggle for political power in the period immediately prior to and during Burundi's transition to independence.

approbation from the population, the *Mwami*, his entourage, and the two principal *Ganwa* families – the *Bezi* and the *Batare* – began to compete for legitimacy with the *colonial* government. Thus, the ties that had formerly bound the *Mwami* to his own people were broken and replaced by increasingly narrow links to the colonial administration.

## 2. MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICT: VIOLENCE AND THE SALIENCE OF ETHNICITY

As the sources of the regime’s legitimacy began to change over time, so too did its management of political conflict. The legacy of the 1925 reforms was far-reaching, introducing a level of physical and structural violence not before seen in Burundi. The reforms undermined the traditional system of managing social conflict, delegitimizing the monarchy, the traditional leaders, and the clan system, without providing a viable replacement.<sup>77</sup> Lacking legitimacy, the administration had to increasingly make recourse to force in order to implement its policies (Lemarchand 1996). Violence began to be used – and perceived – as an acceptable tool of social control. Nor was this tool simply the purview of the Belgian administrators, as powerful Burundian clan leaders also resorted to violence to reinforce their own authority. This began a process of changing what Schatzberg (2001) would call the “thinkability” of violence, shifting Burundi’s political culture away from negotiation and toward violence.

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<sup>77</sup> Historian Zenon Nicayenzi describes that throughout this period, “The monarchy was not abolished, but neither was it sovereign. ‘A Belgian Mwami’ reigned. The colonizer assured security through the territorial administrator using the Congolese ‘Force publique’. The Force was comprised of approximately 1200 soldiers who were meant to protect the entire territory of Burundi” (Presentation by Zénon Nicayenze, August 14, 2012).

Between 1926-1933, the divide between Ganwa, Tutsi and Hutu was formalized, social stratification became more rigid, and “ethnicity” began to be associated with social inequality (Lemarchand 1996). In other words, access to the few educational, professional, and political opportunities that existed was governed by the “ethnicity” to which a Burundian now ascribed. From this time forward, the socio-political-economic hierarchy descended from the *Baganwa* to the *Batutsi* and then to the *Bahutu*.<sup>78</sup> As Lemarchand underscores, the lower down one was in this hierarchy, the fewer opportunities one had for advancement. Perhaps more importantly, what wealth and power someone farther down the hierarchy might have were systematically taken away by the policies of the colonial power and its proxy chiefs (Lemarchand 1996, 14-15).

Marc Manirakiza underscores the implications of this ethnicization, quoting Jean Stengers from the Royal Belgian Academy bulletin of 1988,

We therefore were present for a double phenomenon of *ethnicization* perpetrated by the colonizer: a psychological *ethnicization* rendering those who were divided more sensitive to their differences, not only real but those which were exaggerated or imagined, and an administrative *ethnicization* under the auspices of the Belgian Administration which gave power to the Tutsi or, in all cases (because in Burundi there is the special case of the Baganwa, the great aristocratic families of which there is no equivalent in Rwanda) completely robbing the Hutu [of their power]. It is impossible to not see in this, in both Burundi and Rwanda, the roots of the ethnic tensions that followed (1990, 31).

However, Manirakiza and Stengers lay too much blame at the feet of the Belgians. While it is true that the Belgians introduced into the system a rigidity that had not existed before and their policies impoverished those at the bottom of the pyramid,

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<sup>78</sup> The *Batwa* have generally been considered below and separate from this hierarchy. While social mobility historically was possible between the other categories, the *Batwa*, until very recently, have not been accorded the possibility of social mobility.



they did not create the categories of Hutu or Tutsi. The system had been stratified long before the arrival of the colonizers; they simply took advantage of divisions that already existed and calcified them. Laely captures this dynamic saying,

In order to understand ethnicity in Burundi we need to focus on the origins of the social groupings called Baganwa, Batutsi, Bahutu, and Batwa. When historians emphasise that pre-colonial Africa did not consist of isolated ‘tribes’ standing in the landscape like erratic blocks, and that the defining characteristics were rather mobility, overlapping networks, and multiple group membership, this does not mean that it was European régimes and/or even anthropologists who ‘invented’ ethnic groups. Attempts to influence the merging and fractionalisation of societies at various levels were a proved means of domination before the advent of colonialism. Indeed, for those who wish to speak of an ‘invention’, the monarchic régime would be held responsible, although such a perspective is too mechanistic, teleological, and voluntaristic. But important features of Burundi’s ethnic structures go back to this era, and help to explain recent formations, coalitions, fusions, and fissions of social and political life (1997, 698).

Nonetheless, the administrative reforms robbed many individuals of their power, along with their dignity and social mobility. A bias was introduced into the system against Hutu, as the wealth of *Ganwa* and Tutsi increased, along with their access to education and employment opportunities. Built on and supported by the infrastructure provided by the Catholic Church, this system was to have significant implications after independence, as the number of educated Burundians available to fill important administrative and ultimately military posts was quite small, and often limited to the small number of *Ganwa* and the minority Tutsi. As Chrétien describes,

Schools were the main vector in the reformulation of the Hutu-Tutsi cleavage. Right up to independence, instruction remained practically confined to primary school. The reluctance of the Belgian regime to educate elites “prematurely” was well known...Recruitment statistics at [Astrida, an institution to train medical, veterinary, agronomic and administrative assistants,] speak volumes: Rwandan Tutsi were three to four times more numerous than Hutu until 1958; for Burundians students, the same statistics apply beginning in 1948 (2006, 285-286).

The total number of chiefs was reduced from 133 to 35 between 1929-1945 in order to streamline Belgium's exercise of power. The number of Hutu chiefs went from 27 to 0 (Gahama 1983, 104). Many other Hutu authorities (including sub-chiefs) were also dismissed during this period (Nsanze 2003). In addition, the colonial administration introduced a system of punishment for every manner of violation of the Belgian colonial edicts. These punishments were exacted upon the chiefs themselves, however it was the population who suffered, as the chiefs simply replicated the tyrannical behavior of the Belgian authorities and extracted the fines from those under their authority. As described by Gahama, the result of the system was to diminish the legitimacy of the chiefs even as the colonizer increasingly depended upon them to maintain order (1983, 127).

Violence thus came to replace more traditional negotiation and dialogue processes as the primary means of managing socio-political conflict, its use and ferocity escalating over time. Coupled with ever increasing levels of impunity, violence has continued to plague Burundi's history and even today complicates the country's post-war reconciliation processes.

### 3. CLIENTELISM AND THE STATE

The first phase of Burundi's colonial history also provoked changes in the clientelist system that undergirded the state, although these changes were far less

remarkable than those impacting the two other threads of Burundi's political culture – the sources of regime legitimacy and the management of political conflict.

While the clientelist system had always contained hierarchical elements, it could also be described as a web that extended out as well as up. The system was perceived to have positive benefits both in the rendering (or receiving) of a service in the immediate and, perhaps more importantly, for the pursuit of social mobility over the longer term (Laely 1997). Once the colonial administration was overlaid onto the monarchical structure, the system became more rigid and much less beneficial to those at the bottom if they did not occupy the appropriate ethnic category. No longer did the system facilitate social mobility in the way it had in its previous incarnation. Instead, the system mirrored the overall society, reinforcing the inflexible ethnic categorization that had been imposed on it.

In addition, in many cases the colonizer – or those who had the capacity to cultivate a relationship with an increasingly limited number of more powerful Burundian patrons associated with the colonizer – now mediated large parts of the clientelist system. Admittedly, for the rural Burundian, this situation had less of an impact on his day-to-day life, as he would generally seek a patron who was close to him (both in terms of geographic as well as socio-economic distance). And he would continue to seek protection, assistance, a loan, etc., much as he would have done under the previous regime. Nonetheless, with the introduction of the colonizer, the nature and the currency of the clientelist system began to change. The structure began to include the bureaucratic

and administrative networks dominated by the colonizer and increasingly, access to those networks was determined by ethnicity. The transformation of the system contributed to a greater degree of structural violence and increasing polarization amongst the population.

#### **D. The transition to independence**

After World War Two, the newly created United Nations reaffirmed that the territory of Ruanda-Urundi should remain under the domain of the Belgian government as a UN Trust Territory, with the intention that Belgium should lead it to independence.<sup>79</sup> The UN Trusteeship Agreement was approved by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 1946 and finally approved by Belgian law on April 25, 1949 (Salacuse 1969, 512 FN 3). The final years of Belgium's colonization of Burundi would have a significant impact on both the capacity of the constitutional monarchy that took over the reins of power upon independence, and more critically for this study, on the development of Burundi's new army. As will be explained in the final pages of this chapter, the heritage of the departing colonizer was one of increasing violence and exclusion, which had direct implications for the composition and the mission of the military for decades to come.

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<sup>79</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/chapter12.shtml> accessed November 2, 2013.

## 1. TRUSTEESHIP

Initially, very little changed in the lives of Burundians after the transition to Trusteeship status. The Belgians continued to rule through the hollowed out institution of the monarchy and pursued policies that succeeded only in crystallizing ethnic categories and limiting the opportunities of Burundians to engage in the broader debate about independence. Although Belgium had promised the UN Trusteeship Council that they would develop an education system designed to reduce illiteracy and enhance the skill set of the population under their trust, Duarte recounts that,

The Belgian government would pay little attention to developing an educated class capable of political or economic leadership. Guided by a paternalistic attitude toward Ruanda-Urundi, and expecting to retain control over the trusteeship throughout the twentieth century, the government only slowly introduced educational reforms (1995, 276).

In 1952, in response to the imperatives imposed by the UN, Belgium finally began to prepare Burundians for democracy through the organization of elections for council members who would ultimately be responsible for the political reorganization of the country. These elections took place in 1953, 1956, 1960, and finally in 1961. However, these elections were not envisioned as steps towards immediate independence. As Ntibantunganya describes, no one in the Belgian government seemed prepared to manage the independence fever that swept its territories, “[Even] the most progressive of the colonial world, for example Professor Van Bilsen [a well-known Belgian scholar of

Africa], did not envisage the eventual independence of Congo and Ruanda-Urundi until 1985!” (1999, 43).<sup>80</sup>

Nsanze (2003) notes that these electoral processes were not fully democratic because the electors were not well educated and did not understand the implications of the electoral process. Instead, they responded to the elections as if they were in a feudal system (i.e. electing chiefs, *Ganwa*, etc.) because that was the only system they knew and understood. The levels of violence that accompanied these early elections also had a chilling effect on any, more independence-oriented aspirations, leading the population to vote for the status quo (Nsanze 2003).

Among those seeking office, there were few Hutu. This was due to policies undertaken by both colonial powers to privilege *Ganwa*, and later the Tutsi. When education was formally introduced in Burundi, there were not enough secondary schools to accommodate all who completed primary school and choices for those spots often depended on local chiefs and/or local political relationships – which were now dominated almost exclusively by *Ganwa* and Tutsi leaders. Thus, education was a filter by which Hutu were excluded from later roles.

Nonetheless, as will be outlined below, Hutu did make gains in each subsequent election, finally winning parity with their Tutsi colleagues in 1961 (Nsanze 2003, 22).<sup>81</sup>

Lemarchand describes the changing ethnic dynamics in Burundi as follows,

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<sup>80</sup>According to Rene Lemarchand (1964, 154), Van Bilsen later admitted that the 30 year scenario was excessive; he had chosen that date so as not be seen as a radical by his fellow Belgians who were unprepared for the eventual independence of their territories.

In contrast with what happened in Rwanda, where the major point of tension lay in the opposition between Hutu and Tutsi, in Burundi the ethnic struggle tended to coexist with, and cut across, a social conflict between a privileged oligarchy – represented by the king and his relatives – and a newly-emergent elite of mixed origins whose grievances against the regime expressed their sense of revolt in the face of a socio-political order which denied them the opportunities for social, economic and political advancement to which they considered themselves entitled (1970, 290).

During the last half of the 1950s, the UN became more vocal in its demands that Belgium actively begin to prepare Congo and Ruanda-Urundi for independence. The pressure from the UN Trusteeship Council coincided with an increase in nationalist fervor amongst the Burundian elite and an increasing discontent amongst the general population with the abuses perpetrated by chiefs and colonial administrators alike. This combination of factors propelled Burundi toward independence.

Another important shift occurred in the late 1950s, greatly influencing Burundi's political landscape: Belgium performed an about-face, transferring its support from its former Tutsi allies to the emerging Hutu nationalists. While this shift was more pronounced in Rwanda than in Burundi, its implications were nonetheless critical to Burundi's political future. As characterized by Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, the transformation of the Belgian policy was "an elegant and morally defensible way to channel [and to manage] to the extent possible, the independence current" (1999, 42). Through their support of the oppressed Hutu, the Belgian administration and the Catholic Church joined a global movement to liberate 'downtrodden' Africans.

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<sup>81</sup> See also Lemarchand's comments on the impact of education and party affiliation on the choice of civil servants in the 1960s (1996, 66).

## 2. AN INTRODUCTION TO MULTI-PARTY POLITICS

As part of the democratization process in the late 1950s, the Burundian elite initiated the transition to party politics. However, these parties often simply reflected the fissures already present in Burundian society: *Batare-Bezi*; Monarchist-anti-Monarchist; Pro- or Anti-Belgium; and to some degree Hutu-Tutsi, although this split only became more pronounced after the death of Prince Louis Rwagasore, *Mwami* Mwambutsa's son and heir (see below). Despite the emergence of some twenty political parties in the lead up to the 1960 communal elections, there were only four who had any real power: UPRONA, PDC, the PP and the PDR (Ntibantunganya 1999, 45-46).

### a. Union pour le progrès national (UPRONA)

In 1957, Léopold Bihumugani (known as Biha) and several other Bezi Chiefs founded the *Union for national progress* (UPRONA). In a move that reflected the declining fortunes of the *Ganwa* elite, Biha would later leave the party to found another one because of UPRONA's progressive leanings. This was typical of many of the older chiefs, who were more interested in maintaining their privileges via the establishment of a political party than in achieving a truly democratic state. Prince Louis Rwagasore served as the principal advisor to the party. He could not lead the party because, according to Belgian colonial regulations, his status as a royal precluded that role.

This restriction did not adversely impact the Prince's political ambitions. Indeed, despite their best efforts to the contrary, the Belgians inadvertently assisted in the



political rise of the Prince. The Belgian colonial authority accused Rwagasore and the party of being Communist and found his activities to be troublesome. Lemarchand explains the Belgian's irritation as follows: "Among [the] young 'upstarts', few enjoyed less sympathy from the trust authorities than Rwagasore. His uncompromising commitment to 'immediate independence' earned him the perennial hatred of the administration; and at one point he and his party were openly accused of Communist proclivities" (Lemarchand 1970, 329). Rather than diminishing his attractiveness as a candidate, this only succeeded in enhancing his status with the masses, who welcomed his more populist approach (Lemarchand 1970, 329).

b. Parti démocrate chrétien (PDC)

In 1958, by Jean Ntindereza and Joseph Birori sons of Prince Baranyanka, the *Batare* Prince, principal rival to the Mwami, and a key confidant of the Belgian colonists established the *Democratic Christian Party* (PDC). Another vehicle for family and clan political aspirations, the party was founded with the help of the Belgians and was meant to serve as a counterweight to UPRONA (Nsanze 2003).<sup>82</sup> Lemarchand succinctly describes the Belgian role:

The decisive role played by the Belgian administration in lending its full support to the PDC against the UPRONA is freely conceded by Jean-Paul Harroy in his autobiographical account of his final years in office as the last vice governor-general of Rwanda and Burundi....Harroy brought the full panoply of resources available to the Residency – campaign funds, vehicles, stencil machines, and "technical advice" – into the hands of the PDC while at the same time using his authority to impose crippling restrictions on UPRONA candidates (Lemarchand 1996, 52).

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<sup>82</sup> See also Lemarchand, 1996, 51-53.

c. Parti de peuple (PP) and the Parti démocratique rurale (PDR)

In 1959, several prominent Hutu founded the *People's Party* (PP) in Bujumbura. In addition to the PDC, the PP was evidence of a strong Belgian presence in Burundian electoral politics prior to independence. It was an outspoken, pro-Hutu party and supported by several key Belgian authorities and wealthy settlers. A fourth party, the *Rural Democratic Party* (PDR), was established by another *Bezi* prince and after the 1960 elections, never amounted to anything more than a vehicle for its founders (Lemarchand 1996).

The communal elections of 1960 gave the Belgians hope that their strategy of shifting their support towards more pro-Belgian (PDC) and pro-Hutu (PP) parties might successfully channel the calls for independence towards a longer-term, more gentle transition process. Promoting what Joseph Ntindereza called an approach of “progressive economic and political emancipation,” the Front Commun (a loose alliance of pro-Belgium parties) swept the communal elections (as quoted in Lemarchand 1970, 335).

However, this victory was short-lived. The 1960 elections left the UN dissatisfied, especially given what they perceived as active Belgian repression of political parties leading to a lack of broad-based participation in the electoral process. In order to establish the institutions that would lead Burundi to independence, the UN demanded that the elections be organized anew. The Belgians readily agreed, anticipating a victory that

echoed their 1960 success. On September 18, 1961, Burundians went to the polls and voted for UPRONA in massive numbers: they dominated the legislative elections, taking 58 of the 64 seats and Prince Louis Rwagasore was named Prime Minister.

UPRONA's victory was due in large part to the identity of its candidate. Prince Rwagasore embodied several important characteristics for a broad swath of the Burundian people. His nationalism and progressive approach were attractive to the elite in a time of modernization, change, and desire for independence. His relationship to the monarchy as the son of the *Mwami* allowed the rural Burundi to revere and protect the monarchy while achieving that independence. UPRONA would restore the monarchy to its rightful stature and ensure the democratization of the nation's institutions (Lemarchand 1970, 339-340). In the words of Jean Ghislan,

The legislative elections of September 18 constituted a severe setback for the *ganwa*, to the profit of monarchical authority, and of the Hutu and Tutsi évolués. In this sense, these elections marked at one and the same time the victory of tradition, the victory of the people and the routing of feudal elements" (as quoted in Lemarchand 1970, 340).

Due to his blend of royal blood and progressive ideas, Rwagasore was uniquely positioned to lead that process of change. It did not hurt that the Prince had close ties to the Hutu and that he married a Hutu woman (only doing so, some said uncharitably, to reinforce ties with the Hutu). UPRONA, with Rwagasore at the helm, was poised to steward Burundi to independence.

Then, disaster struck. On October 13, 1961 Prince Rwagasore was assassinated. As Reyntjens so eloquently states, "His death was to prove a crucial event in the

subsequent history of Burundi; the absence of his unifying influence was to lead to the division of UPRONA and to the emergence of open conflict between Hutu and Tutsi” (Reyntjens, 1995, 7). Rwagasore’s death launched a decade-long political battle amongst the elite that proved to be bloody and deadly for many (mostly Hutu) leaders.<sup>83</sup>

As Lemarchand (1970) and Nsanze (2003) document, the period after Rwagasore’s death was characterized by an acceleration of the ‘ethnicization’ of politics. Political parties began to more strongly be identified with either Hutu or Tutsi. While this process started slowly, it was hastened by events in neighboring Rwanda where the Hutu revolution of 1959 resulted in ongoing violence, the deaths of thousands of Tutsi, and the creation of many refugees who sought refuge across the border in Burundi. This inspired fear and extremism among Burundi’s Tutsi and Tutsi discourse was increasingly dominated by talk of the “péril Hutu” (“Hutu threat”).

In addition, this period was marked by increasing threats to Hutu political leaders. Targeted killings began in January 1962, prior to independence, when members of the militant youth wing of UPRONA, the Jeunesse Nationaliste Rwagasore (JNR) killed two labor leaders, the President of the Syndicats chrétiens, and the national secretary of the PP, Jean Nduwabike (Lemarchand 1996, 62).<sup>84</sup> Threats against the lives of other Hutu

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<sup>83</sup> However, violence did not immediately break-out upon Rwagasore’s death. On the contrary, unlike future political assassinations, the aftermath of Rwagasore’s death was eerily calm. “No official local public order system existed at this time (that had been undone by the Belgians). However, the *Bashingantahe* still existed and it prevented much violence and disorder, after Rwagasore’s assassination. The Mwami asked that no one seek vengeance and no one did” (Interview with Burundian Professor, August 21, 2012).

<sup>84</sup> The JNR was birthed as the Union Culturelle de la Jeunesse Africaine du Burundi (UCJAB) by two university students in Lubumbashi, Congo. “If the language of the UCJAB was from the very beginning the language of nationalism, its organizational links with UPRONA did not materialize until much later. At

members of political parties such as the PP and UPP contributed to the steadily worsening political dynamics in the country.

Despite the shock caused by Rwagasore's death and the increasing political violence, Burundi limped towards independence. On 1 July 1962, after a vote at the United Nations General Assembly to grant Burundi and Rwanda their independence, Belgium revoked its trusteeship and granted independence to its remaining territories. Ironically, Reyntjens remarks, "The monarchy emerged as the only source of legitimacy to which both Hutu and Tutsi could relate in any meaningful fashion" (1995, 7). Unfortunately, that monarchy was a hollow shell of its former self.

## **E. The Legacies of Colonial Rule**

The era of colonialism engendered a significant shift in the Burundian regime and, more importantly, it impacted the key threads of Burundi's political culture. While the *Mwami* remained at the pinnacle of the Burundian hierarchy – and indeed increased his personal clout – his power would instead be based on externally supported institutions, rather than on the spiritual and political authority granted by the *Barundi*. Varied political institutions, negotiation, and the spiritual centrality of the *Mwami* no longer characterized the regime. By the end of the colonial period, administrative

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first, the statutes of the organization made no reference to specific political groups but merely stated its willingness to be 'in the service of political parties and milieux, in one capacity or another, in order to coordinate, educate and civilize their action.' Only after the legislative elections of 1961 did the organization change its name to JNR...and cast its lot with UPRONA" (Lemarchand, 1970: 348).

centralization, violence, and the focus on external sources of legitimacy introduced social rigidity and exclusion into the political culture.

The increasing structural and physical violence was made manifest through the regime's institutions: the Catholic Church; restricted access to education; impermeable social categorization exemplified by identity cards; and the often violent imposition of the Belgian administrative structure overlaid onto the monarchical system. This led to violence becoming an acceptable means of managing social and political conflict.

In addition to these changes, there were elements of continuity in Burundi's political culture, which, rather than being replaced, were simply built upon by both the Germans and the Belgians. Specifically, the low capacity state persisted and as if to compensate for this, the clientelist system became more entrenched.

The colonial period thus resulted in some significant shifts in Burundi's regime and ultimately in its political culture. As Burundi approached independence, it was saddled with the legacies of a hollowed out monarchy – which had come to depend on external sources of legitimacy, increasing levels of violence, and the rising salience of ethnicity. Yet, Burundi's future was not pre-determined at independence. As will be described in the next chapter the turbulence that characterized the independence period revealed some opportunities for a true transition to a more participatory and inclusive state.

## **Chapter Five: Turbulence and Transition (1962-1966)**

### **A. Introduction**

The initial years of Burundi's independence were characterized by both turbulence and transition. Competing currents vied for dominance in the time between 1962 and 1966: the possibility of a more representative government; increasing violence and the ethnicization of politics; and the growing fragility of the monarchy. This turbulence was such that the tide of Burundi's political culture could have moved in several different directions. The disorder was manifested in the attempts by several different groups to assert their political power including: Hutu and Tutsi extremists, whose currency was violence; monarchists who attempted to revive the *ancien regime*; and centrists using negotiation as their preferred process to control the political space.

This period was marked by profound change in Burundi's regime and its institutions. In particular, what changed were the sources of the regime's legitimacy and the nature of its dominant institutions. These shifts were best demonstrated by contestation over the rules governing how power was allocated within the regime. Would a representative regime that included multi-party politics prevail? Was the *Mwami* strong enough to effectively manage political conflict in the context of a constitutional monarchy? Which institutions would provide legitimacy to the regime? The struggle to answer these questions would define the Burundian political landscape until 1965.

An initial, important change was the introduction of representative democracy into the lives of Burundians. In principle, the 1962 constitution and the promotion of electoral politics were meant to provide the new basis for the regime's post-colonial legitimacy. Ntibantunganya elegantly captures the population's expectations of the new system saying,

The king, who reigned without governing, not least was the Head of State of Burundi and the embodiment of national unity. He was, or rather was meant to be, the Father of the Nation...He should have been the link between all components of the nation, meaning, the unifying factor of the many diverse elements of the nation, whose sustainability he was meant to assure (1999, 72).

Unfortunately, the veneer of *de jure* power imparted by these new institutions quickly crumbled as the *Mwami* consolidated *de facto* (and ultimately *de jure*) power into his own hands, elevating a completely different set of institutions – in particular, the military – as he pursued a somewhat haphazard path toward absolute power.

Several threads of Burundi's political culture continued to grow in significance after the colonial period. Critically, violence remained as the dominant means of resolving political conflict and in fact grew more prevalent at all levels of society. Equally significant, though the players changed, the locus of power was characterized by an increasingly rigid hierarchy and was concentrated in the hands of a few, eventually extinguishing the promise of a more inclusive state.



## **B. The Historical Antecedents of the Burundian Military**

In order to understand the military's emergence as *the* critical institution in Burundi in the post-independence era, it is important at this stage to outline its historical antecedents. The Burundian military was the product of competing political interests struggling for power in the period immediately preceding and following independence. Tensions between Hutu and Tutsi; intra-Tutsi competition; and the struggle for regional dominance came to define the pre and post-independence political space. In this context, both the *Mwami* and the Belgian colonial power actively sought to play the groups off one another, achieving short-term political gains while exacerbating long-term cleavages. As will be explained below, the military was both the instrument for accomplishing these short-term political goals and the product of these ultimately deadly ethnic divisions.

### 1. THE CREATION OF STANDING ARMY

Two important factors contributed to the unique evolution of the Burundian military. First, as explained in Chapter Three, unlike Rwanda, the Burundian monarchy did not have a history of a standing army. The *Mwami* called for troops when the need arose and chiefs would then require that each family in their clan provide the warriors. Once the military campaign ended, the warriors returned home. While the system worked

well for many decades, the training and institution building that might have reinforced the early establishment of a modern, central, standing army were absent in Burundi.<sup>85</sup>

As a result, Burundi was not endowed with a robust military force upon independence. Instead, the Belgian Congo's Public Force (*la Force Publique* or FP) assured security in the territory of Ruanda-Urundi during Belgium rule. The FP included no Burundian soldiers.<sup>86</sup> In the years leading up to their departure, the Belgians began to undertake minimal preparations for the establishment of a military in Burundi. However, independence arrived too quickly to allow for adequate planning and training of the Burundians who were to take over power.

In fact, the Belgian colonizers had a much longer timeline in mind for the transition of their territories to independence. They were not prepared to rapidly invest their subjects with the skills, education, and training that would have facilitated the development of the indigenous institutions necessary to support the transition and ultimately an independent state.<sup>87</sup> As Ewans describes,

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<sup>85</sup> Each family and clan acted relatively independently of the *Mwami*, except when these kinds of demands were made: be that requests for warriors, forced labor, *umuganuro* festival, contributions to the *Mwami* of food and goods, etc. This independent nature still informs and complicates Burundians' relationship to the central power (Presentation by Burundian historian Zénon Nicayenzi, August 14, 2012). Uvin (2009) makes a similar observation when describing the historic relationship of Burundians to their central government.

<sup>86</sup> According to documents obtained at the Belgian Royal Military Academy (April 15, 2013) and Article 4 of the Belgian Law of 21 August 1925, indigenous Rwandans and Burundians were allowed only to participate in local policing efforts and they were explicitly not to be recruited into the *Force Publique* (Bulletin Officiel des Lois et Arrêtes royaux de Belgique, 443).

<sup>87</sup> As Salacuse (1969) underscores, "It was not until a few years before independence that Belgium took steps to endow the Territory with representative law-making institutions" (515-516). This action was taken under pressure from the United Nations and occurred very late in the process of preparing for independence. Salacuse goes on to say, "Legislative and executive power remained firmly in the hands of the Belgian Government and its local administrators until 1959. In that year, Belgium announced a policy

Along with the Portuguese, ...the Belgians ignored the ‘wind of change’ developing elsewhere in Africa and, indeed, congratulated themselves on the docility of ‘their’ Africans, whom they assumed would remain content almost indefinitely with their paternalistic style of rule, perhaps in some form of Belgian/Congolese ‘community’. As late as 1955, a study undertaken by a Belgian academic caused consternation even by suggestion that thirty years might be a reasonable period over which a gradual political emancipation might take place (2002, 242).

This environment impacted the evolution of all of Burundi’s institutions and had an especially significant impact on the security services.

A second factor that retarded the development of Burundi’s military was the restrictive mandate process imposed by the League of Nations. When the League of Nations confirmed Belgium’s mandate in August 1923, it stipulated that the Mandatory must ensure “the prevention of the establishment of fortifications or military and naval bases and of military training of the natives for other than police purposes and the defense of territory... “. <sup>88</sup> The objective of this provision was to ensure that the mandates would conform to the larger vision of the League of Nations: the promotion of international cooperation and the maintenance of international peace and stability. Thus, even had the Belgians wanted to prepare Burundians to take responsibility for their security much earlier, they were largely prevented from doing so by the parameters of the League of Nations mandate until after the Second World War. And as we shall see, even when given the opportunity to integrate Burundians into the security forces, the Belgians were slow to act.

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of developing representative institutions in Ruanda-Urundi, and of granting them a progressive measure of autonomy” (517-518).

<sup>88</sup> See FN 73 for the text of Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant.

At the beginning of their mandate, the Belgians allowed the monarchy to keep the peace at the local level. However, as the Belgians began to extend their reach into the administrative structures and everyday lives of Burundians, their role in keeping the peace also expanded. The Belgians relied on a contingent of the Congolese *Force Publique* to secure the territory's borders and they had a small number of Belgian gendarmes stationed in Bujumbura.<sup>89</sup>

After World War Two, the newly created United Nations reaffirmed that the territory of Ruanda-Urundi should remain under the tutelage of the Belgian government as a UN Trust territory, with the intention that Belgium should lead it to independence. The Belgians were allowed to establish military bases and encouraged to transition responsibility for local security to the trustee. Although they now had the opportunity to prepare the Burundians for their future as an independent people, the Belgians instead reinforced the system in which either the *Force Publique* or Belgian Army troops and gendarmes managed all aspects of security.

Unlike other colonial powers, it was not until the mid-1950s that the Belgians slowly began to embrace the necessity of preparing the peoples of Congo and of Ruanda-Urundi for autonomy. Even then, it was only under pressure from a number of directions

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<sup>89</sup> Yale University's Genocide Studies Program describes the origins of the Force Publique as follows: "[Belgian King] Leopold... also established the Force Publique (FP) to campaign against the Arab slave trade in the Upper Congo, protect his economic interests, and suppress uprisings within the CFS, which were common. The FP's officer corps comprised only whites—Belgian regular soldiers and mercenaries from other countries.[1] On arriving in the CFS, these officers recruited men from Zanzibar and West Africa, and eventually from the Congo itself.[3] In addition, Leopold had been actually encouraging the slave trade among Arabs in the Upper Congo in return for slaves to fill the ranks of the FP.[3,5] During the 1890s, the FP's primary role was to exploit the natives as *corvée* laborers to promote the rubber trade[1,2,3]" [http://www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial/belgian\\_congo/](http://www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial/belgian_congo/) Accessed 14 July 2014.

such as the UN, international labor movements, and their own subjects. This was neither a well-conceived nor a smooth transition. As Martin Ewan explains,

At a more fundamental level, however, the Belgian colonial regime had not been merely paternalistic, but positively racist in its refusal, over practically its whole term, to allow Africans even to begin to progress towards the point where they would be able to run a coherent state. There were no Africans in the senior judiciary and not a single African army officer, while in the senior administrative ranks, out of a total of nearly 5,000, the numbers of Africans barely ran into double figures. Even as Independence approached, the Belgian administration, from the Governor-General downwards, continued to work in its customary authoritarian mold, and did nothing whatever to prepare the Congolese leadership for the responsibilities they were about to assume. There were thus no experienced political leaders, no educated citizenry, no indigenous administrators, no professional, commercial or military elite, no established middle class with a stake in the stability and well-being of the country (2002, 244).

Only a few voices within the Belgian colonial administration seemed to acknowledge the need to prepare the Burundians and Rwandans for their future and, in particular, to foresee the formation of some kind of local security force. Archival documents from the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicate that Belgium did not anticipate granting Rwanda and Burundi independence so soon after the Congolese had achieved theirs. Indeed, as will be outlined below, as late as May 1960, the Belgian government was making plans for the establishment of a territorial guard to serve in Ruanda-Urundi, a sign of their lack of preparation for eventual independence of their territories.<sup>90</sup>

Irrespective of their plans, the Belgians were forced to reassess their approach to independence for Ruanda-Urundi when the Congolese pushed for their own

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<sup>90</sup> Correspondence between Mr. Jean-Paul Harroy, Belgian's Resident General in Bujumbura and the Belgian Minister of the Belgian Congo and of Ruanda-Urundi in Brussels, May 21, 1960. Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives. Accessed April 16, 2013.

independence between 1959 and 1960. In light of events in neighboring Congo, the Belgians decided on three separate actions, undertaken largely simultaneously, to secure their remaining territories: changing the composition of the *Force Publique*; creating a Territorial Guard in Ruanda-Urundi; and allowing the recruitment of Africans into the Royal Military Academy in Belgium.

First, in 1959 the Belgians sent thirty-five Burundians to Kivu in neighboring Belgian Congo for several months, to train them for service in the *Force Publique* – an institution previously off-limits to the indigenous population of Ruanda-Urundi. This decision was apparently soon regretted. According to Augustin Nsanze, upon their return to Burundi, the thirty-five soldiers were disarmed by the Belgians, sent back to their homes, and kept under surveillance: “The Belgian colonial administration found that they had acquired some bad habits and suffered from deplorable influences at the time of Congolese independence” (2003, 25) – the reference to ‘bad habits’ and ‘deplorable influences’ presumably an allusion to the independence fever that was sweeping the Belgian Congo at the time. Their actions seem to demonstrate the ambivalence that the Belgians felt regarding the granting of responsibility for security of its territories to the ‘natives’.

In any case, the decision to integrate the *Force Publique* was quickly overtaken by events. Four days after the independence of Congo June 30, 1960, Congolese soldiers revolted in Congo. This had repercussions in Ruanda-Urundi, as the *Force Publique* was

almost immediately disbanded across all of Belgium's territories. According to historian Zenon Nicayenzi,

The *Force Publique* soldiers were sent home [from Burundi] between July 9 and 11, 1960. For two years, Burundi was without its own defense force. Belgian troops replaced the Congolese but as they came from Kamina, a military base in southeast Congo, they did not know the country [of Burundi], they did not know what they were doing. No police, *per se*, were a part of this force so, as in the past, the Mwami and the Bashingantahe assumed responsibility for public order within communities.<sup>91</sup>

Second, having secured the permission of the UN, the Belgians set out to create a Territorial Guard in Ruanda-Urundi. In May 1960 the Resident General in Bujumbura, Jean-Paul Harroy, requested funds from the Minister of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi to support a force of 1300 men.<sup>92</sup> This request became more strident at the end of July that same year, with the departure of the *Force Publique*. "It has become quite urgent to settle the problems presented by the dismissal of the troops of the *Force Publique*" Harroy wrote again to the Minister on July 30, 1960.<sup>93</sup> This letter prompted the visit to Bujumbura in August 1960 of Major J. Loos, the military advisor to the Minister, who oversaw the development of a plan to staff and equip the new Territorial Guard.

Here too, however, the Belgians found themselves having to run to catch up to swiftly moving events. The Hutu uprising in neighboring Rwanda in 1959, coupled with Congo's independence in 1960, forced Belgium to cobble together a force in the midst of a drawdown of Belgian troops and a transition to autonomy for Ruanda-Urundi. In

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<sup>91</sup> Z non Nicayenzi, conference presentation, August 14, 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Letter from Jean Paul Harroy to the Minister of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi dated May 21, 1960. Accessed at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, April 16, 2013.

<sup>93</sup> Letter from JP Harroy to the Minister dated July 30, 1960. Accessed at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, April 17, 2013

Burundi, the Belgian Major Verwayen became the Commander in Chief of what would soon be referred to as the National Army of Burundi and was given responsibility for defending the territory of Burundi. A small contingent of Belgian gendarmes was given responsibility for internal security, supported by locals. In none of these security forces did Africans serve as commissioned or non-commissioned officers.<sup>94</sup>

The original National Army of Burundi was composed of 30 European officers, many of whom had formerly served in the *Force Publique*, and 300 Burundians, none of whom had military training. The officer candidates, of whom twelve were *Barundi*, had, on average, only a fourth grade education (Vanderborght, 1972).<sup>95</sup> Throughout 1961 the Belgians raced to create the infrastructure to support the education and training of the Burundian troops: establishing an officer training school at the recently vacated Belgian Paratrooper base in Bururi, and eventually founding a school for non-commissioned officers at Bogogwe.<sup>96</sup>

In early 1962, the Belgian authorities promulgated legislative ordinance *08/32 de 21 février 1962* concerning the establishment of the Burundian Army:

Article 1: Without prejudice to the disposition of the [Belgian] Metropolitan Force troops or the Administrative Police Corps, order and defense of the territory of Burundi is assured by the detachment of the Territorial Guard of Ruanda-Urundi stationed in Burundi; this detachment assumes the name of the National Army of Burundi.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Notes from the personal file of Major Loos, accessed at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archives, April 17, 2013.

<sup>95</sup> The ethnicity of these troops is not known.

<sup>96</sup> Notes from the personal file of Major Loos, accessed at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, April 17, 2013. The archives do not specify the ethnic composition of the officers who were recruited to attend the schools.

<sup>97</sup> As cited in *Officiers burundais* (1994, 4).



This was followed by the creation of a gendarmerie in May 1962.<sup>98</sup> Several Rwandans were integrated into the force and according to Rene Lemarchand, these Rwandan elements numbered approximately 80 Hutu (1970, 356). The ethnicity of the troops would come to have increasing salience in the years immediately following independence.

The third decision taken by the Belgian government during this same period left an equally important imprint on the future Burundian military. In 1960, Belgium began to recruit Africans into the Royal Military Academy in Brussels for the first time in its history.<sup>99</sup> Again, it would be the military advisor to the Minister of the Belgian Congo and of the Ruanda-Urundi territory, Major J. Loos, who recognized the need to prepare African officers with a legitimate military education to take up the reins of the soon-to-be independent state. Major Loos would oversee the development and execution of the plan the eventually brought the first African soldiers to the RMA in April 1960.<sup>100</sup> Three Burundians were included in that initial group, two Tutsi and one Hutu, and they would become Burundi's first official officer candidates – and the *only* candidates to have

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<sup>98</sup> The choice of creating a gendarmerie rather than a civilian police force is most likely related to antecedents in the territory. The original mission of the *Force Publique* in Belgium's colony and territories was "to assure the occupation and defense of the territory, to maintain peace and public order, to prevent infractions, oversee and assure the execution of laws, decrees, ordinances, and regulations, especially those related to the police and general security." This militarized security mission foreshadowed the composition of Burundi's future security services. As keeping the peace at the local level was the responsibility of the *Bashingantahe*, it is not surprising that the Belgians invested no resources in reinforcing this institution. Documents accessed at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, April 16, 2013.

<sup>99</sup> While the RMA had trained forces from other, non-European countries in the past, it had never hosted sub-Saharan Africans. Initially, this would prove to be a daunting cultural challenge for both hosts and cadets. Personal communication with librarian at the Royal Military Academy of Belgium, April 15, 2013.

<sup>100</sup> In a communication dated February 18, 1960, Major Loos emphasized to the Minister of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi that admitting Africans into the Royal Military Academy would serve two important goals: 1) it would accelerate the Africanization of the Force Publique (as the Territorial Guard would only be created six months later); and 2) it would ensure that soldiers from their former territories would study in Belgium, rather than in a foreign military institution. The Minister approved the plan that same day. Communication accessed at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives, April 16, 2013.

received formal military training upon Burundi's independence. Among them was Michel Micombero, the man would eventually become Burundi's first military dictator.

After the vote at the United Nations General Assembly to grant Burundi and Rwanda their independence, Belgium revoked its trusteeship and granted its territories their independence on July 1, 1962. The *Mwami* appointed Zénon Nicayenzi as the first Secretary of State for Defense. "After independence, the *Mwami* established the army (*sic*). At the age of 27, I became the first Secretary of State for Defense".<sup>101</sup> However, the Chief of Staff of the Army did not change and Major Verwayen continued to lead Burundi's armed forces, supported by a cadre of approximately thirty-five Belgian officers (Vanderborght, 1972).<sup>102</sup> At this time, Michel Micombero was recalled from Belgium, where he had been sent in 1960 with the two other Burundian officer candidates to be Burundians first candidates at Belgium's Royal Military Academy (RMA). Micombero would never return to the Academy to complete his studies.<sup>103</sup>

Thus, at independence, Burundi was endowed with a military hastily constructed by Belgium and in which most of its soldiers had little education and almost no training. This force was established in a tumultuous period of transition for Burundi, in which the power at the center was crumbling and competition between different political groups was becoming increasingly violent and ethnicized. This power vacuum made establishing

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<sup>101</sup> Presentation by Zénon Nicayenzi, August 14, 2012.

<sup>102</sup> Records consulted at the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium corroborate this data.

<sup>103</sup> According to official records obtained at the Royal Military Academy of Belgium, Micombero returned home with the two other Burundian officers. However, the other two officers would return soon after to complete their studies. There is no record of Micombero returning to the RMA. Accessed April 15, 2013.

civilian supremacy over the military extremely difficult and set the stage for military intervention in politics.

## 2. THE POLITICIZATION OF THE MILITARY

The decision to leave Major Verwayen and his officers at the head of Burundi's armed forces after independence marks a key point in the evolution of the military. The bifurcation of the leadership within the institution between technical (Belgian) and political (Burundian) roles created the conditions which allowed the up-and-coming Burundian officers to focus on the military as a political instrument, rather than occupy themselves solely with the reinforcement of the technical and professional capacity of the troops. These conditions likely planted the seeds of the military's politicization, setting the course for the later coup d'état and subsequent military dictatorships.

Six months after independence, the army's composition did not augur well for Burundi's future. The army numbered approximately 500 soldiers – a small, relatively weak force, especially as it had been created from scratch with inexperienced officers and soldiers. Two-thirds of the African officers were Tutsi (12 of 18) and the overwhelming majority of foot soldiers were Hutu (Nsanze 2003, 25). The high command of the army included only Belgian officers, who were charged with building the capacity of the young army and protecting the territorial integrity of the state.

Lemarchand claims that the army was less likely to be politicized during this era, given that “its exposure to civilian influences was minimal” (1970, 356). However he seems to immediately contradict himself, underscoring the clear link between the army and the dominant political party, UPRONA.

[T]he involvement of [the army] officers in the ferment of party politics was made all the more difficult by governmental controls on their activities. Moreover, in the months following independence, the Burundi National Army was systematically purged of its ‘subversive’ elements (for the most part of PDC obedience) by Zénon Nicayenzi, then in charge of the armed forces. Nicayenzi personally told this writer how the trusteeship authorities had tried to politicise (*sic*) the army, through ‘selective’ recruitment and indoctrination – a fact which other sources seem to confirm – and how he subsequently weeded out every single non-member of UPRONA from the officers corps (which of course, did not imply the elimination of Hutu officers)” (1970, 356).

Although UPRONA was one of many political parties born at independence, it was by far the largest and most well-known, given its association with the royal family. As the eventual ‘sole party’, UPRONA would later be turned into one of the main tools that the Hima Tutsi cabal used to control political power at all levels of Burundian society, as the party penetrated deep into Burundi’s hills and the division between state and party became increasingly blurred. As underscored in Chapter Two of this dissertation, van Binsbergen et al properly capture the critical role played by post-colonial institutions in achieving state penetration, through what they call “channels and processes of mobilization at the grassroots level” (1986, 381). Thus, the close identification of the army officers with the state’s principal ideological tool contributed to cementing the politicization of the institution of the military.

Lemarchand suggests that the gendarmerie ('Africanized' a year after independence) risked being more politicized than the army because the very nature of its mandate brought the gendarmes closer to the majority of the population, with whom most of the gendarme shared the same ethnicity – Hutu (1970, 356). Yet, army officers were also part of the society, allowing them ample opportunity to become politicized. Thus, rather than ethnicity *per se*, it was the structural conditions under which the two institutions were formed – bifurcated responsibilities between *Barundi* and Belgian officers, little civilian oversight, a lack of a clear military doctrine, and discriminatory recruitment practices – which contributed to their politicization.

The new army's composition reflected structural constraints earlier imposed by the colonial power and reinforced by the monarchy, as outlined in more detail in the preceding Chapter. Discriminatory educational policies instituted under Belgian rule meant that proportionally fewer Hutu than Tutsi were eligible for the limited number of officer candidate positions upon independence. Administrative reforms undertaken during the colonial period divested many powerful Hutu of their responsibilities, limiting their ability to promote talented young Hutu in the new government institutions. Powerful *Ganwa* and Tutsi families vied for control and influence in the unstable post-colonial environment, resulting in a situation in which *Mwami* Mwambutsa Bangiricenge IV became a part of the political machinations, instead of remaining above them in his traditional role as the ultimate arbiter of social and political conflict.

Despite these challenges, Secretary of State for Defense Nicayenzi “publicly vaunted the indissoluble union of Hutu and Tutsi, ‘intimately linked to each other...and free of the obstacles which in Rwanda separate the two groups’” (Lemarchand 1970, 343). He was soon to be proven wrong. The post-independence tensions created an unstable political environment in which the armed forces were both actors in the nation’s political future and guarantors of the new nation’s integrity, a situation that they were woefully unprepared to manage.

### **C. Shifting Sources of Regime Legitimacy**

#### 1. A NEWLY ASCENDANT *MWAMI*?

During this period of transition the army had not yet emerged as the dominant institution. With independence had come the promulgation of a constitution and the establishment of the new institutions such as the parliament and political parties, which were meant to confer legitimacy on the new system. These new institutions were only the purview of the elite, and within the confines of those elite circles both Hutu and Tutsi alike participated in their inauguration, giving them additional – albeit limited – legitimacy across the social and political landscape.

At the grassroots level, these transitions were a distant reality. *Barundi* still identified most closely with the institution of the monarchy and with the *Mwami* as their ruler, especially given that a weak state and lack of modernization slowed the pace of

change in the hinterlands. Thus, while the new institutions represented the possibility of the emergence of a new political culture in Burundi, without strong leadership by the regime and without deeper roots in the rural areas, that possibility would be short-lived.

Initially, it seemed that the *Mwami* might be able to provide this leadership. Upon independence, a large number of actors vied for space on the political stage. Parts of the former system existed – the *Ganwa* controlled the networks and relationships with the *Mwami*; the state, while penetrating deep into society, was weak and potentially could be reformed – yet no single actor or institution was dominant enough to monopolize the process of change. As the ‘rules’ of the new ‘game’ were still being negotiated, there was a distinct chance that a more equitable and potentially less violent culture would prevail.

However, the institution of the monarchy was but a shell of its former self. While the mystique of the *Mwami* still had purchase in rural areas, the political incentives had changed amongst the elite. No longer was it the relationship to the *Mwami*’s networks or to the colonial administration that determined one’s ability to access political power, rather it was the ability to manipulate the process of electoral politics. Ostensibly, legitimacy was granted by the vote, and while the *Mwami* had a role, it was as a constitutional monarch, with power devolved to the elected representatives. Thus, in some ways, the *Mwami*’s role was to have reverted to its previous incarnation as a mediating influence amongst the political elite. And had the *Mwami* and the institution of the monarchy been strong enough, they might have been able to more effectively manage

the inevitable political conflicts that emerged in the wake of independence. Unfortunately, he failed.

## 2. POLITICAL PARTIES: THE EMERGENT SOURCE OF REGIME LEGITIMACY?

Although the institution of the monarchy was weak, there was the possibility that new institutions might emerge to provide the regime with legitimacy. In particular, the advent of political parties and electoral politics seemed to pave a promising path forward. Yet the Burundian elite struggled to shed their attachment to the previous structures; rather than embrace new ideas and institutions, political parties largely became the vehicle for that same elite to reinforce exclusion and to retain their power.

Two examples are illustrative of the rapid disintegration of the institutions that had traditionally supported the monarchical regime and the rising prominence of political parties as potential replacements for those sources of legitimacy. First was the impact of the newly defined (electoral) political competition on the *Ganwa* class. Following Prince Rwagasore's assassination in October 1961, the Belgian authorities arrested and convicted seven men for the crime, among them four *Batare* princes. The triggerman, a Greek named Kagorgis, was sentenced to death by a firing squad and the others sentenced to life in prison. Given that *Batare* princes were rivals for the throne, by imprisoning these four *Batare* princes, the Belgian government was signaling their support for the *Mwami* and their abandonment of both a traditional *Ganwa* ally and the new political grouping represented by the *Batare* princes. This was a sharp reversal in



policy, as until independence, they had actively supported the *Batare* clan. This weakened the *Ganwa*, foreshadowing their eventual disappearance from Burundi's political stage.

A second example underscores the rise of political parties and illustrates the *Mwami*'s waning influence, as he proved unable to effectively manage tensions between these newly emergent political groupings in parliament. As the contest for power became defined in ethnic terms, so too did the political parties. In the summer of 1962, two parliamentary groups emerged in Bujumbura. These two groups came to be known as the *Casablanca* group and the *Monrovia* group.<sup>104</sup> *Casablanca* was comprised of mostly Tutsi hardliners and led by André Muhirwa (a *Ganwa* prince), who would ultimately help to orchestrate the 1966 coup d'état led by Michel Micombero. *Monrovia* was made up of mostly Hutu, accompanied by a few moderate Tutsi.

These groups greatly influenced Bujumbura's political elites and contributed to reinforcing an environment in which political parties served particularist interests rather than espousing ideologies or vision. Marc Manirakiza details the formation of the two groups as follows,

During a parliamentary session, the deputy Augustin Ntamagara compared the divisions in the Burundian political world to those that tore apart independent Africa during that era: the *Monrovia* group and the *Casablanca* group. These two blocks affiliated themselves with political and economic theories that

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<sup>104</sup> Lemarchand describes the two groups as follows: "Before 1962 drew to a close, the Hutu parliamentary group, representing roughly half of the membership of the National Assembly, became known as the *Monrovia* Group; the other half, representing the Tutsi faction, called itself *Casablanca*. Although the terms – borrowed from the language of inter-African alignments of the 1960s – are suggestive of different shades of pro- or anti-Western sentiment, they served merely as convenient metaphors for Hutu (*Monrovia*) and Tutsi (*Casablanca*)" (1996, 65).

were not always clear. The Monrovia group represented the moderates and more “pro-West”; those from the Casablanca group were identified as the more progressive countries with socialist tendencies. Transposed onto the Burundian landscape, these divisions were purely subjective and artificial (1990, 43).

Manirakiza claims that initially these divisions were not ethnic but political. He suggests that it was only after the assassination of Hutu Prime Minister Ngendandumwe that the Hutu-Tutsi rivalry began to dominate Burundian politics. However, events prior to Ngendandumwe’s death belie this point and serve as a sign that the increasing tensions between Hutu and Tutsi were not attenuated by the achievement of independence.

In September 1962, the leadership crisis at the center of UPRONA resulting from Prince Rwagasore’s death gathered steam when Paul Mirerekano (a Hutu, one of the founders of UPRONA, and long-time supporter of Rwagasore), contested the claim of André Muhirwa to the presidency of the party. Mirerekano called a meeting of UPRONA followers at the stadium in Bujumbura asking that the party faithful approve his presidency. Mirerekano made an impassioned speech, underscoring the apparent racism of the current government. The gendarmes, at that time a predominantly Hutu force led by Belgian gendarme officers, were called in to arrest him. Instead of seizing Mirerekano, approximately 60 gendarmes rallied to his cause, protecting him from arrest. The army was then called, in anticipation of wider protests but ultimately was not required to intervene as the meeting dispersed. The cleavages laid bare in this incident presaged the ethnic divisions that were to dominate the Burundian security forces for decades to come.

As these two examples illustrate, despite the promise that independence heralded, the shift away from the sources of regime legitimacy dominated by the colonial power was not immediately accompanied by the emergence of new institutions that resonated with the wider population. As the elite continued their struggle for power in the capital through the new institution of electoral politics, the rural population held onto the fading symbolism of the *Mwami*. In neither case did the institutions offer much hope for the future and indeed, only served to underscore the growing gap between Hutu and Tutsi and between urban and rural *Barundi*.

#### **D. The (Mis)management of Political Conflict**

In the tumultuous post-independence period, the power vacuum at the center of Burundi's political life led to an important shift in how political conflict was managed. The *Mwami* proved incapable of effectively dealing with the competing claims of the new aspirants to power and as a result, he rapidly lost influence with the political elite. In addition, he spent increasing amounts of time outside of Burundi, far away from the political intrigues. In an ominous sign of what was to come, during his frequent absences the *Mwami* willingly conferred power on the newly created army, headed by Captain Michel Micombero. This ambitious military officer stood ready to fill the void created by the *Mwami's* abdication of responsibilities, using increasingly coercive and violent strategies to manage conflict.

In his attempts to reassert power, the *Mwami* employed three strategies that ultimately had a critical impact on Burundi's political culture. First, he reinforced violence as a means of dealing with political conflict. Second, rather than use the new institutions of political parties to build bridges across the chasm increasingly dividing Burundi's competing groups, he allowed ethnicity to dominate the political discourse. Finally, in his quest to consolidate his fragile authority, the *Mwami* abandoned the constitutional monarchy, ultimately empowering the very institutions that destroyed him. Each strategy is detailed in turn.

#### 1. VIOLENCE AS A STRATEGY TO MANAGE POLITICAL CONFLICT

The *Mwami* himself set the tone for how political conflict would be managed immediately after independence. In September 1962, the courts of the newly independent Burundi overturned the sentences of those convicted of assassinating Prince Rwagasore and five of the six men were sentenced to death by hanging. Rather than risk the rise of a competing political force, the *Mwami* chose to physically eliminate them. The decision to overturn the original sentences and to put the *Batаре* princes to death reinforced the use of violence as a primary means of dealing with political conflict. With this choice of violence over dialogue and open electoral competition, the regime made a perceptible shift away from the promise of a more inclusive state and strengthened the forces of exclusion.

In addition, the deaths of these prominent *Batware* princes presaged a change in Burundian politics. No longer would the *Ganwa* exist as a political force. Indeed, they would soon disappear, becoming integrated into the Tutsi category. Chrétien describes their fate as follows, “The princely Baganwa group in Burundi was assimilated to the Batutsi, and the word *muganwa* came to mean “chief”...[In] the two countries [of Rwanda and Burundi], noble qualities were attributed to an entire “race” – what was later called, after independence, the Tutsi ethnic group” (2006, 285).<sup>105</sup> The Tutsi came to dominate Burundi’s political and economic future, transforming the regime and its institutions. As this key institutional pillar of the monarchy literally began to fade away, the foundations of the regime and its influence were further undermined.

## 2. THE INCREASING SALIENCE OF ETHNICITY

As discussed above, the ethnic divisions aggravated by the policies of the colonial power continued to grow after independence. However, this was not entirely due to the *Mwami*’s inability to manage internal political dynamics. Between 1959 and 1965, sub-regional tensions served to exacerbate domestic political divisions and crystallize the ethnic cleavage. Neighboring Rwanda’s social revolution resulted in the deaths of thousands of Tutsi and tens of thousands fled to Burundi. Lemarchand posits that at least

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<sup>105</sup> As explained in the previous chapter, this process of assimilation permitted the Belgian administration to rationalize their approach to ruling the kingdoms of Rwanda and Burundi, creating two distinct ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi, relieving them of the need to respond to the political nuances inherent in the traditional system – or to recognize the differences between Rwanda and Burundi. While the ghost of this princely class survived through independence (and indeed, there is still a group of Burundians who refer to themselves as *Ganwa* today), the ethnicization of politics in post-independence Burundi resulted in the *Ganwa* joining the Tutsi “ethnicity” in order to protect themselves, their power and their wealth. By the time of the 1966 overthrow of the monarchy and the founding of the Republic, the *Ganwa* had virtually ceased to exist, either as a political force or as a powerful social class.

50,000 Tutsi refugees made their way to Burundi by early 1965, fleeing the violence in Rwanda (1970, 384). These events informed official reactions and eventually government policy in Burundi, as fear amongst Tutsi grew and Hutu looked to Rwanda as an example of their own possible future. In particular, this regional dynamic would have had an important role to play in the evolution of the army, if not initially in its composition then on the attitudes and behaviors of its Tutsi officers.<sup>106</sup>

In the face of competing political tensions and waning legitimacy, the *Mwami* Mwambutsa IV attempted to consolidate his own position and keep the peace by balancing the ethnic and political composition of the four governments that came to power between 1963 and 1965. As a result, these governments were almost evenly balanced between Hutu and Tutsi (Reyntjens 1995, 7). However, this political maneuvering did not succeed, as the superficial changes did not address the deeper problems of the uneven allocation of power and the competing visions of Burundi's

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<sup>106</sup> Lemarchand (1970) describes the relationship between Burundi and Rwanda in great detail. Between 1963 and 1966 relations between the neighbors were very tense because of accusations by Rwanda that Burundi had provided succor Rwandan Tutsi rebels, the Inyenzi, or 'cockroaches' (so named because they operated at night). These fighters had allegedly taken refuge in Burundi, which had then allowed them to launch attacks on Rwanda from Burundian soil. The Burundian government strenuously denied this accusation. It was later documented that indeed, bands of Tutsi rebels did find assistance in Burundi, their presence supported by more extremist Tutsi as a guarantee against the "Hutu peril." One group of Inyenzi fought with the rebels in Eastern Congo, using Burundi as their rear base. They later settled in Bubanza, after being pushed out of the Kivus. This particular band was only disarmed in 1967, when Micombero realized that they were potentially more destabilizing than helpful to his government (1970, 388 FN). In fact, according to Lemarchand, the army – unlike the more extreme Tutsi politicians – viewed most of the refugees and the militias in particular with suspicion. Their meddling in Burundi's political affairs and the latter's potential to "substitute themselves for the army became a major source of anxiety to Burundi officers, Hutu and Tutsi" (1970: 389 FN). According to the *Officiers burundais* (1994), there were a number of Rwandan soldiers in the Burundian army, at least early on in Micombero's reign. For example, the authors document that at least thirty-eight Rwandan junior officers and soldiers received "l'Ordre du Mérite patriotique" from President Micombero for their service to Burundi in 1971 (*Officiers burundais*, 1994, Annex 3, 118-119). Given the era, one can only assume that these soldiers were Tutsi. During this same time period (August 1964), relations with Congo-Kinshasa were also broken off as Burundi was accused of supplying Mai-Mai rebels with arms and supplies. For an additional source of information about the activities of Rwandan rebels see <http://www.editions-sources-du-nil.com/article-32000290.html> (accessed 14 February 2013).

future. Fueled by Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda, ethnic tensions only continued to worsen during this period.

The rising ethnic tension was well-illustrated by the competing claims of deputies in the national assembly. Some called for the purge of “Rwandan” (read Hutu) elements from the gendarmerie because they posed a threat to the security of the state. Other deputies demanded that the same logic should apply to the Tutsi refugees who had crossed the border from Rwanda, insisting that they be forced to return to their home (Lemarchand 1970, 357).

In June 1963, Parliament recommended that the *Mwami* name Pierre Ngendandumwe as Burundi’s first Hutu Prime Minister. Commanding great respect from his peers, Ngendandumwe led the government for 11 months. However, fearing a loss of power and influence to the Hutu, several *Ganwa* and Tutsi politicians pressured the *Mwami* to divest three Hutu ministers of their portfolios in May 1964. The *Mwami* demanded that the Prime Minister Ngendandumwe countersign his “act of revocation” (which was required by the Constitution). The Prime Minister refused and the *Mwami* dissolved the government. Recognizing the dangers of increased political chaos, the *Mwami* turned to Ngendandumwe and invited him to form a new government. However, Ngendandumwe rejected the *Mwami*’s request, not wishing to be part of the monarch’s political intrigues, nor what he perceived as increasingly ethnicized politics.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Boniface Kiraranganya (1985) offers a detailed description of the political chaos that reigned during the last months of the *Mwami* Mwambutsa’s presence in Bujumbura.

Throughout 1964-1965 the political infighting continued as the *Mwami* attempted to exert control over the various factions. Albin Nyamoya, a Tutsi, was named Prime Minister. However, his 7-month tenure was marred by an uptick in violence and exemplified the shift away from dialogue. Indeed, violence and intimidation became the preferred tools of dealing with political rivals and terror reigned in Bujumbura, particularly for Hutu leaders (Kiraranganya 1985, 61). Many Hutu were arrested and tortured and to the dismay of most moderates, the *Mwami* did not intervene, only heightening the sense of chaos and instability.

Finally, bowing to both internal and external pressure (the diplomatic community in Bujumbura expressed apprehension that Nyamoya government was too pro-Chinese), the *Mwami* withdrew his support from Nyamoya and appointed Ngendandumwe again and asked him to form a government on January 8, 1965. Ngendandumwe agreed; within a week he was assassinated.

Ngendandumwe's death would mark another important – and ominous – turning point in Burundi's post-colonial ethnic relations. Frequently cited in the same breath as Prince Rwagasore's assassination, it is considered an important source of the ethnicized political conflict between Burundi's Hutu and Tutsi. It also underscored the use of violence as a political tool and the abandonment of negotiation as a means of managing political conflict.



### 3. THE DISINTEGRATION OF CONSTITUTIONALISM AND THE CONCURRENT RISE OF THE MILITARY

Ironically, the third conflict management strategy employed the *Mwami* was intended to consolidate his rapidly waning power and influence. What he did not appreciate was how drastically the context had changed: the traditional institutions that had bestowed the monarchy with legitimacy were no longer relevant (particularly at the center, although the *ubushingantahe* still had relevance at the local level) and the new(er) institutions that replaced them were often in direct competition with that power, such as the Catholic Church or the political parties. To address this, the *Mwami* sought to construct a new based of power through the development of an institutional legal framework that privileged his position. His strategy failed and indeed, paved the way for military dictatorship.

#### a. The Destruction of Burundi's New Institutions

Between the signing of the first Burundian constitution in 1962 and mid-1965 the *Mwami* consolidated his control of the key levers of power of the state. To do so, he reorganized the political landscape to privilege those who he felt served his interests and undermined the institutions that challenged his power, including divesting Parliament of its authority. As part of this process, the *Mwami* issued a series of royal decrees that allowed him to exert direct control over the army and gendarmerie, the ministry of

information, the civil service, and the legislature (through his appointment of his Private Secretary as Prime Minister).

As a first step in this process, in 1963 the *Mwami* issued a decree, converting the army and the gendarmerie into ‘secretariats of state’ and bringing them under his sole control (Lemarchand 1996, 67).<sup>108</sup> The *Mwami* appointed Antoine Serukwavu, a Hutu, as head of the gendarmerie and nominated Michel Micombero as the Secretary of State of the National Army.<sup>109</sup> The smaller gendarmerie was not seen as a threat to the monarch and thus was one institution that could be used to give Hutu some kind of role in the administration. As a result, the leadership of the gendarmerie came to be dominated by Hutu. The two decrees were eventually rubber stamped by the National Assembly. In doing so, the Assembly revoked any and all control that it would have had over the army, leaving the *Mwami* as the only “civilian” to have authority over the military.

At this time, Lemarchand reports that “Captain Micombero made a strong [ultimately ineffectual] plea before the National Assembly to incorporate the gendarmerie into the army: ‘Otherwise the army and the gendarmerie will constitute two antagonistic forces, pitted against each other.’”<sup>110</sup> Interestingly, Micombero’s request underscores the

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<sup>108</sup> See also *Officiers burundais* (1994).

<sup>109</sup> This process is described by Lemarchand (1970, 1996), however he does not ascribe such a nefarious motive to the *Mwami* and instead he posits that the weak leader was initially trying to arbitrate the political conflicts that had by this time spawned ethnic violence and his strategy was to bring everything under his own control. This was to have implications for the future, as it set the stage for Micombero to gut the powers of the gendarmerie in 1965 – after the revolt of Hutu officers – and bring the entire institution under the control of the army. And according to Nsanze (2003) and Kiraranganya (1985), Micombero was married to one of the *Mwami*’s nieces and hence the political marriage allowed him access to positions that ultimately facilitated his coup.

<sup>110</sup> *Assemblée Nationale, Session du 14 mai au 1<sup>er</sup> septembre 1963, p. 100* as quoted in Lemarchand (1970, 357). Lemarchand goes on to say “But even if Micomberos’s suggestion had been put into practice, the

challenges of establishing true civilian oversight of the military. There are several reasons why it would have been dangerous to heed Micombero's request. First and foremost, it would have made the armed forces so powerful that no other institution could contest that power. Second, it seems to illustrate a plan by Micombero's to entirely remove civilian oversight of the military. Finally, coupled with the waning authority of the *Mwami*, combining the two institutions would have laid an earlier path towards military dictatorship, as there would have been no entity whose legitimacy outweighed their power. Ultimately, Micombero's request was rejected. However in only two short years, the security services would be consolidated under a single command, satisfying Micombero's desires.

In another step designed to reorganize the political system to consolidate his power, the *Mwami* restructured his administration after the 1965 elections. During those elections, Hutu candidates won a majority in the parliamentary elections. This victory caused much disquiet among extremist Tutsi and in September of that same year, they convinced the *Mwami* that he must prevent a similar victory in the future. The *Mwami* thus issued an decree which structurally changed local government, reducing the number of communes from 181 to 78, and dictated that from then on, the mayors would no longer be elected but would be appointed by and responsible to the crown.<sup>111</sup> This decree had a major impact on the Hutu parliamentarians. As Lemarchand states, "Not only did the substance of the decree deprive the Hutu of a chance to consolidate their position at the

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army could not have remained neutral for very long. Given the political sympathies of certain gendarmerie officers, this move could have produced precisely the reverse of what had been intended. In any event, so rapid was the deterioration of the political climate during the intervening years, that whatever degree of 'neutrality' the army may have claimed in 1962 had almost completely vanished by 1965" (1970, 357).

<sup>111</sup> Nsanze (2003, 127), Lemarchand (1970, 414).

local level...but the Mwami's method confirmed what many Hutu already suspected – that parliament was to become a rubber stamp” (Lemarchand 1970, 414).

Deepening the crisis, on September 13, 1965, the Mwami refused to take the recommendation of the newly elected Parliament and appoint Gervais Nyangoma – a Hutu – as Prime Minister. Instead, he appointed his Private Secretary, a *Ganwa* named Léopold Bihumugani, and asked him to form a government. This decision was to have fateful consequences for Burundi's nascent democratic institutions.

b. The Reinforcement of the Military

Coupled with the gutting of the civilian institutions, the *Mwami* took several steps to consolidate the power of the military – although his original intent was to solidify his own position. The *Mwami* created the equivalent of a shadow cabinet, nominating his own “civil and military houses” – reinforcing the fractionation of responsibilities within the security services. The military members included “2 [Belgian] ordinance officers, Alex Chandelle and Van Hoolandt and 2 aides de camps, Alphonse Busigo and Saint-Simon” (Mukuri 2011, 282). The role of the Belgian soldiers at the head of Burundi's military apparatus would later become a bone of contention in the Burundi-Belgian relationship and would eventually lead to the expulsion of Belgian observers from Burundi at precisely the time when the FAB's exclusionary practices became deadly (Weinstein 1976).

In February 1964, the *Mwami* went further, issuing a royal decree that gave responsibility for organizing the army to the newly created Secretary of State for Defense, rather than leaving that responsibility in civilian (albeit his own) hands. The decree also outlined the division of powers between the gendarmerie and the army and, significantly, under what conditions the authority of the head of the army would supersede that of the head of the gendarmerie (for example, during times of war or when both were called into address a local public order problem).

These powers were amplified in January 1965, when Micombero presented the *Mwami* with a decree for his signature, effectively giving the army further control of the gendarmerie – *Arrêté royal 0001/614 du 23 janvier 1965* states that “The military authorities are responsible for operations when both the Gendarmerie and the National Army are called to intervene in events that risk seriously compromising public order or in situations of serious or widespread problems” (Officiers burundais 1994). The vague nature of the decree gave the Tutsi-led military the power to command the smaller Hutu-led gendarmerie under almost any circumstances. In addition to the changes that the *Mwami* had made to the political and administrative structures of the state (divesting many Hutu of their roles and responsibilities), these decrees greatly diminished any remaining sources of leverage that Hutu had available to them to effect change.

Two months later, the *Mwami* signed two additional royal decrees. In the first, the *Mwami* brought the departments of justice and intelligence under his direct control – *Arrêté royal no. 001/651 du 7 mars 1965* – thus consolidating his control over virtually

all the key levers of power. In his address to the people of Burundi in July 1965, the *Mwami* defended his decisions in this way,

The army, gendarmerie and information should be free from political interference to stay only at the service of the Nation. Indeed, it is extremely dangerous that the army and the police might depend on a ministry beholden to a political party, [able] to oppress another [political group]; in the same way, [the Department of] information cannot allow the words and misleading information [to circulate] as we have had in the past. Therefore, to ensure the strict neutrality of these departments vital to the maintenance of law and order, security, peace and serenity... I have brought them and Justice in State Secretariats under my sole authority for an indefinite period. It is inconceivable that this could be resolved any differently, because I am supreme commander of the armed forces and Justice (As quoted in *Officiers burundais* 1994, 17).

In the second decree, the *Mwami* authorized Micombero to call for a general mobilization of the army, demanding that those on leave return to their base and those who may have left active service in the two preceding years to return to service.<sup>112</sup> At this time, only 10 of the 37 officers in the Burundian Army were Hutu. In signing *Arrêté royal no. 001/648 du 6 mars 1965*, the *Mwami* reinforced the fractious climate between Hutu and Tutsi and helped to create the conditions in which a small minority of Tutsi military officers monopolized the means of violence.

In bringing all of these institutions under his direct control rather than leaving them under the purview of the government, the *Mwami* abrogated the 1962 constitution. Perhaps most importantly for the Army, this meant that, going forward, the legal framework that governed the military was the royal decree, not laws passed by

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<sup>112</sup> *Arrêté royal no. 001/648 du 6 mars 1965* reads as follows, “Article 1 – Those soldiers on indefinite leave are recalled under arms for an indefinite period; Article 2 - Soldiers who left active service in 1963 and 1964 are covered by this Order” (Bulletin Officiel du Burundi, as cited in *Officiers burundais* 1994, Annex 2).

Parliament. Thus, in what some authors have called a ‘coup,’ the *Mwami* abandoned the constitutional monarchy and reestablished an absolute monarchy (Officiers burundais 1994).

As is evident in his 1965 speech, the *Mwami* attempted to demonstrate his neutrality and reaffirm his position above the fray of partisan politics. In reality, the *Mwami* had become a tool of the principal political actors and no longer commanded the respect, nor the loyalty of the elite. Had the *Mwami* decided to engage the political process and actively manage the negotiations between the elite factions, as was his traditional role, he might have left a more positive legacy in Burundi.

These events reflect the incredibly slow pace of change that characterizes political cultures (Chabal and Daloz 2006). The traditional mode of personalized governance and increasingly centralized power structures continued to dominate the thinking and action of the elite in post-colonial Burundi. Thus, while new ideas and institutions were contested in the post-independence political space, their relevance to the deeper threads of Burundi’s political culture was not strong enough to allow them to take root and to grow. As we have seen, the sources of regime legitimacy would shift once again, as the brief experiment with multiparty politics and nascent democratic institutions gave way to the rise of the military as the arbiter of power. In the end, the *Mwami*’s actions reinforced the centralized, authoritarian regime, promoted violence and exclusion as a means of managing conflict, and paved the way for military dictatorship.

## **E. The Origins of Military Dictatorship**

The increasing inter-communal violence, coupled with the royal decrees that further reduced their power and influence, incited some Hutu leaders to attempt to take over the government by force. In October 1965, officers in the Hutu-dominated gendarmerie, led by the Secretary of State for the Gendarmerie Antoine Serukwavu, attempted a coup d'état. While the coup attempt was quickly put down and the Mwami survived, several hundred Tutsi peasants were massacred when rural Hutu joined the coup attempt. Mukuri reports that the insurrection was accompanied by massacres of Tutsi by their Hutu neighbors in Bukeye and Busangana communes in the province of Muramvya (Mukuri, 2011).<sup>113</sup> Reyntjens (1995) also describes how some rural Hutu supported the rebellion perpetrated by the officers in the gendarmerie.<sup>114</sup>

The involvement of rural Burundians in the 1965 coup attempt suggests that very early on, the Hutu-Tutsi distinction had purchase outside the circles of power—contrary to what is often recounted. While the rural population had little involvement in the political machinations of the elite, they did self-identify as Hutu or Tutsi, as explained earlier in this dissertation, and thus they were directly impacted by the progressively more discriminatory policies of the monarchy and the colonial powers and the increasing violence with which they were enforced, heightening the salience of these ethnic identities over time. This lends credence to the hypothesis that Burundi's ethnicized

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<sup>113</sup> Nsanze also states that approximately 500 Tutsi peasants were killed during this uprising (2003, 128).

<sup>114</sup> This report is supported by official Belgian documents, reporting on uprisings of Hutu in Muramvya at the time of the attempted coup d'état. Documents accessed at the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, April 15, 2013.



political culture was not created, whole cloth, from the ashes of the deaths of Rwagasore and Ngendundumwe, but had roots reaching back to the at least the colonial and even pre-colonial eras.

Immediately following the attempted coup, the *Mwami* fled to neighboring Congo. Captain Micombero declared a state of emergency and imposed a military regime, which included the establishment of a War Council. This state of emergency would not be fully lifted until three years later, on July 1, 1968.

Upon his return to Burundi in late October 1965, the *Mwami* Mwambutsa quickly passed several royal decrees, which further consolidated the military's control. The *Mwami* granted himself the right to suspend the civil courts and substitute them with military tribunals; everyone residing in the provinces where the military regime was in effect and who were accused of a violation of criminal law would be subject to military jurisdiction without exception (which included all Burundi's provinces at the time); all judgments would be carried out within 10 days (for soldiers the judgment was to be carried out immediately); and there was no right of appeal to decisions of the War Council (Officiers burundais 1994).

The draconian nature of the royal decrees set the stage for the government's response to the uprising, which was immediate and far-reaching. Largely orchestrated by André Muhirwa – the Ganwa who had vied with Paul Mirerekano for the leadership of UPRONA – the response focused on the systematic targeting of Hutu elites, including

politicians, labor leaders, and military officers.<sup>115</sup> On October 21, 1965, the 34 Hutu gendarmerie officers and soldiers accused of plotting the coup d'état were put to death.<sup>116</sup> Despite the fact that the coup had been controlled within days, over the next two months, thousands of Hutu were killed, including all Hutu members of parliament and former Prime Minister, Joseph Bamina (Niyonzima 2004).<sup>117</sup> Some scholars estimate that 50% of all Hutu functionaries and 70% of all Hutu soldiers perished (Nsanze 2003, 131).

In particular, those who had participated in or supported the *Parti de Peuple* in the previous election were targeted by the violence (Nsanze 2003, 131). With no trace of irony, Marc Manirakiza recounts the aftermath of the coup as follows,

After the events of October 1965, the government proceeded with a slight reshuffling to replace the missing Hutu ministers. Parliament and the Senate, which had lost at least half of their workforce could no longer function. The King and the Prime Minister were absent; the country was virtually ruled by the Deputy Prime Minister Sylvère Ngowenubusa, Captain Micombero and Ministers Masumbuko and Katikati (1990, 78).

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<sup>115</sup> See Reyntjens (1995), *Officiers burundais* (1994), and Mukuri (2011).

<sup>116</sup> This statistic comes from Mukuri (2011). Lemarchand (1996) has slightly different ones: 38 army officers; 9 gendarmerie; 86 death sentences handed down by the military tribunals. He writes, "Under the guidance of Tharcisse Ntavyibuha, the governor of Muramvya and a Hima known for harboring little sympathy for Hutu, groups of Tutsi soldiers and jeunesses set about the grim task of restoring "peace and order"... An estimated five thousand Hutu civilians lost their lives at the hands of local civilian defense groups organized under the supervision of the army and the governor" (Lemarchand, 1996, 72).

<sup>117</sup> Howard Tolley (1994) writes that the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), reacting to the alarm raised by the International Confederation of Trade Unions, sent an observer to Burundi in late 1965 to confirm reports of a massacre of Hutu leaders. Reuters had also apparently reported that all Hutu members of Parliament had been killed, based on an account provided by a traveler passing through Nairobi at the end of that same year. The observer sent by the ICJ, Swiss professor Philippe Graven, was initially ignored by the government and his subsequent requests to the minister of justice for documentation on the executions were refused. In a press release, "the ICJ identified nine parliamentary, union, political party, and cabinet leaders who had been executed". Graven also reported that at least 1000 detainees were awaiting execution. The validity of the ICJ report was reinforced in two additional ways, according to Tolley: first, by ILO documents corroborating Graven's observations; and second, by the visit of the Burundian Ambassador and the Crown Prince to the ICJ Secretariat in mid-1966 to apologize for Graven's treatment while he had been in Bujumbura (Tolley, 1994, 117-118 and 311 FNs 13 and 14).

Events in Burundi did not go completely unnoticed by the international community. According to Eggers (2006), the ILO filed a complaint against government of Burundi with the UN Commission on Human Rights in March 1966, charging that the government had perpetrated mass executions of political and labor leaders following the October 1965 coup attempt. According to Howard Tolley, this was apparently the first complaint ever lodged against a government as a UN agenda item (1994, 311 FN 14). Despite this attention, the Burundian government did not seem to suffer any repercussions from the international community.

The reprisals following the attempted coup foreshadowed the scale of violence that was to plague Burundi's history for the next forty years. As characterized by Nsanze (2003), "The October 1965 Coup d'état and the extermination of elite Hutu demonstrated the evil reaction of the former feudal power, which felt it had to contain the rise of the Hutu, which it feared [were going to undertake a] revolution *à la rwandaise*" (2003, 22). Perhaps more tragically, it also marked a shift in the nature of that violence, with innocent civilians, mostly peasants, increasingly becoming the targets of the army's repression.

According the Lemarchand, 1965 also marked a moment when a small Tutsi faction began to transform the army into "a reliable instrument of coercion" (1996, 86). Of the 1200 enlisted men in the army at the beginning of 1965, approximately 1000 were

Hutu. Hundreds of them lost their lives in a purge of the army following the coup attempt, killed by their commanding officers.<sup>118</sup> Lemarchand goes on to say,

Although the full story has yet to be pieced together, the events of October 1965 carried momentous consequences. The mutineers took a huge gamble and lost – but the losses involved far more than the extermination of thousands of Hutu after the aborted coup. Also lost was an opportunity for the Hutu leadership to share in the exercise of power. After the extensive purges of the army and gendarmerie and the physical elimination of every Hutu leader of any standing, power became the exclusive monopoly of Tutsi elements (Lemarchand 1996, 71).

In the introduction to his book, Augustin Nsanze underscores this critical turning point, remarking that until 1965, the Army was not seen as a force that could challenge the institutions of the country (2003, 7). After 1965, the security services became the tools to promote and protect the entrenched interests of a tiny group of those Tutsi in power, rather than as institutions of the state that was meant to serve all Burundians. Indeed, as power became concentrated in the hands of a few, the perception of the existential threat was actually heightened, rather than attenuated, creating a vicious cycle. Going forward, each time the Hutu would demand their rightful place at the table, feeling threatened, the Tutsi elite would react with yet more violence and exclusionary practices, prompting further calls by Hutu to access the levers of power. And so the downward spiral continued.

On November 2, 1965, the *Mwami* Mwambutsa IV left for Brussels on one of his frequent trips, conferring upon Micombero full authority to “maintain order” in his absence. The *Mwami* Mwambutsa would never return to Burundi. On November 4, 1965,

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<sup>118</sup> See also Raphaël Ntibazonkiza (1996) for a further description of the process of ‘purification’ of the army.

Captain Micombero suspended the functions of all ministers, effectively making himself a dictator.<sup>119</sup>

## **F. The End of the Monarchy**

In February 1966, Prince Charles Ndizeye returned to Burundi from Switzerland, designated by his father, *Mwami* Mwambutsa IV, as the Crown Prince. In his first message to the nation, the Prince underscored the tragic events of 1965 - the killing of Tutsi by their Hutu neighbors in Muramvya and Bubanza. However, the young prince made no mention of the attempted coup d'état, the killing of Hutu leaders, or the fraught relationship between different political factions and ethnic groups. This contrasted starkly with earlier leaders, Ngendandumwe, Bamina and others, who all regularly evoked the need for reconciliation between ethnicities in their public discourse.<sup>120</sup> The explicitly ethnic character of the Prince's discourse was a strong indication of how exclusion was becoming more entrenched in Burundi's political culture, evoking a regime in which Hutu fears and concerns were not simply unaddressed, they were not even a topic that merited the attention of Burundi's leaders.

On July 8, 1966, Prince Charles Ndizeye suspended the constitution, revoked the government and assumed all the powers and functions of the Head of State. Day-to-day affairs were placed in the hands of a few Secretaries of State (justice, planning, gendarmerie) and were presided over by the Secretary of State for Defense, Michel

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<sup>119</sup> *Décision No. 130/156 du 04 novembre 1965*, (As quoted in *Officiers burundais* 1994, 28).

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Mukuri (2011, 287-289 and 291).

Micombero. This palace coup had a significant impact on the population's perceptions of the monarchy, further undermining its legitimacy. A living *Mwami* was never replaced. Rather, only after the *Mwami's* death did the identity of the new *Mwami* emerge, after negotiations between the *Ganwa*, the Queen Mother, and the ritualists of the royal court (Ntibantunganya 1999, 83). The Prince's coup was a death blow to the traditional institution of the monarchy and further contributed to the political instability plaguing Burundi.

Prince Ndizeye was crowned as *Mwami* Ntare V at the beginning of September 1966. Ntibantunganya makes an interesting observation about this coronation. According to him, traditionally Hima Tutsi were not permitted to get physically close to events as important and significant as a coronation due to their low status. Thus, Micombero's presence at the 1966 coronation of Ntare V was an aberration. As Ntibantunganya explains,

On September 8, 1966, Ndizeye was enthroned. Among the distinguished guests, there was a man who [somewhat] menacingly observed the scene. It was the Captain Micombero, whose presence Ndizeye's ancestors certainly would not have understood. They say, in fact, that Bahima were never to have approached the site of a *Mwami's* enthronement.... On September 8, 1966, a taboo was broken; the powerful Burundian monarchy became, in the course of a few days, a shadow of itself (1999, 84).

According to Lemarchand (1996), the militarization of the government began at this time. I would argue that this groundwork for this process had been laid under *Mwami* Mwambutsa IV; although, *Mwami* Ntare V's new government did mark the first time in Burundi's history that military officers occupied official cabinet posts formerly reserved for civilians. The *Mwami* asked Captain Micombero to form the government and he

promptly designated himself as Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of the Civil Service. Four other military officers occupied key posts in the new government: the Ministry of Postal Services and Telecommunications; the Ministry of Security; the Ministry of Public Works; and the Coordinator of the Armed Forces and the General Administrator of Safety and Immigration and Chargé of Information for the Armed Forces.

Later that same year, Albert Shibura would replace Belgian Major Verwaeyen as commander of the armed forces, effectively ending direct Belgian involvement in the Burundian military.<sup>121</sup> More importantly, the new government reflected the dominance of the extremist Tutsi, including representatives of the JRR (one of whom, Prime Niyongabo, was responsible for inciting the January 1962 killings of four Hutu political leaders) and the national union of Burundian students, UNEBA, which was also viewed as home for extreme Tutsi views.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Albert Shibura was a Hima Tutsi from Matana, Bururi. According to Nsanze, he did his secondary school studies in Burundi and then Rwanda. The events of 1959 in Rwanda – where the Hutu-led revolution massacred thousands of Tutsi – are said to have scarred him. He advocated for the integration of Rwandan Tutsi refugees in Burundi, including in the army. He was Micombero's right-hand man during his rise and throughout his tenure as President (Nsanze, 2003, 128, FN 168). Shibura was married to André Muhirwa's daughter, thus reinforcing the family ties that continued to dominate Burundi's leadership (Weinstein, 1976, 195). A statement made by Shibura, quoted in Nsanze captures some of the roots of his extremism, "For the recent history of Burundi was a logical consequence of the disruption of equilibrium in Rwanda. The genocides of Rwanda continue to project their shadow on our country. For the organizers of the killings, that which happened in Rwanda must necessarily happen here. The same causes must produce the same effects... One thing is certain: there was no Muhutu revolution Rwanda. There were simply massacres organized by the administration" (As quoted in Nsanze 2003,108). According to Nsanze, this kind of thinking served to justify the extremist Tutsi plan to eliminate all Hutu.

<sup>122</sup> The JRR (Jeunesses Révolutionnaires Rwagasore) were the successors to the Jeunesse Nationaliste Rwagasore (JNR), UPRONA's original youth, wing whose members were responsible for many of the deaths of prominent Hutu in the years surrounding independence.

Hoping to consolidate his newly found power early in his reign, the young *Mwami* attempted to revoke Micombero's status as Prime Minister via a radio broadcast in October 1966. In a testament to the *Mwami's* complete lack of influence, the military guard "politely" prevented him from even accessing the grounds of Radio Burundi (Ntibantunganya 1999, 85). Two weeks later, the *Mwami* endeavored to assert his power in another way, designating UPRONA as the sole political party in Burundi by royal decree (*Arrêté-loi 001/34 du 23 novembre 1966*).<sup>123</sup> However, he had neither the political acumen nor the political network to effectively exploit the party structure. Thus, this move did not achieve the *Mwami's* goals, although it would lay the groundwork for UPRONA to later emerge as a key institution in the Hima Tutsi capture of the state.

The new *Mwami* was not destined to remain long on his throne. A little over six weeks into his reign, a small group of men orchestrated the overthrow of Ntare V when the latter was in Kinshasa, attending the celebration of Mobutu's first anniversary as leader of Congo. The coup leaders included three military officers, Captain Michel Micombero, Commander Sylvère Soto, and Major Albert Shibura. Jean Ntiruhwama and Arthémon Simbananiye and André Muhirwa were the main civilian orchestrators. With the exception of Muhirwa, a *Ganwa*, all were Tutsi and at least three were Hima (Ntibantunganya 1999, 87).<sup>124</sup>

The coup d'état was bloodless and Micombero proclaimed the founding of the First Republic of Burundi. Micombero's first acts were to have far-reaching impacts on

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<sup>123</sup> According to Augustin Nsanze, this act, in addition to the earlier suspension of the constitution, effectively ended any chance for democracy in Burundi until the elections in 1993 (2003, 147).

<sup>124</sup> See also Weinstein (1976, 194-195).



the emergent regime's institutions. He abolished the national assembly; he created a National Revolutionary Council comprised entirely of military officers and which oversaw all government operations; and finally, he installed military governors in the majority of Burundi's provinces, immediately cementing the militarization of the government. As Reyntjens remarks, the coup d'état marked the beginning of 30 years of Tutsi Hima domination of government and the military (2000, 7).

The hope that the post-colonial regime would nurture the implantation of a more equitable and inclusive set of institutions after the transition to independence had evaporated by the end of 1965. The political culture that undergirded the *Mwami's* approach to governance was now too deeply rooted in exclusion and violence for the weak monarchy to overcome even had he or his son wanted to do so. In the face of political conflict, the *Mwami* empowered those institutions that he felt would secure his own position and which, ironically, contained the seeds of his own destruction – the military and an ethnicized political system. Ultimately, the regime and its institutions came to be dominated by and the purview of the military and in particular, a small group of Tutsi Hima extremists. Their imprimatur would shape Burundi's political space for the next forty years.

## **Chapter Six: Structural Violence and Exclusion (1966-1987)**

### **A. Introduction**

Paradoxically, the 1966 coup d'état was notable both for its rupture with the past, as well as the continuity that it represented in the nature of regime change in Burundi. On the one hand, never before had power been seized and exercised exclusively by an entity outside of the monarchical tradition and lineage. Not only had the institution of the *Mwami* been repudiated, Hima Tutsi had captured the state – a group formerly excluded from the circles of power – and, with the exception of clientelism, they ruled through a completely new set of institutions: the military and the one party system. Rather than garner their legitimacy from the wide array of political networks and spiritual relationships that had buttressed Burundi's regimes in earlier times, these institutions grounded their authority in the force of the army and in the façade of national unity.

On the other hand, just as the choice of the *Mwami* had been determined by a small group of privileged Burundi, the successive military coups d'état – remarkable for their lack of bloodshed – replicated an astonishingly similar pattern of regime change. Those eligible to ascend to power would come from a small group, linked by close family ties. And while the façade of the population's approbation for the new leader was critical, rather than spiritual veneration, consent was given via the vehicle of the one party system. Just as many of Burundi's past regime transitions transpired without recourse to

widespread violence, the successive coups were relatively conflict-free. Indeed, the very absence of conflict at the time of transition rendered the coup d'état an acceptable means of regime change, an important contributor to the constancy of Burundi's military governments.

Another important illustration of continuity in Burundi's political culture was the persistence of and widespread engagement in the clientelist system. The tenacity of the clientelism is due to at least two factors. First, as described in earlier chapters, the system served an important function in pre-colonial and colonial Burundi; knitting together the social fabric through a network of patrons and clients; protectors and protected. The far-flung, independent character of Burundi's rural population necessitated the presence of interlocutors to maintain a connection to the court (later, the central government) to assure protection and access to resources. This was especially important in a context where the demands of the regime were increasingly filtered through the prism of a rigid hierarchy dominated by ethnicity. Second, the nature of Burundi's weak state meant that one function of the regime was to capture the resources of the state and use them for patronage. The clientelist system thus effectively allowed the regime to use those resources to penetrate deep into Burundi's hillsides, establishing both the regime's control and ensuring the population's reliance the web of relationships mediated by the regime.

As cited earlier, Reyntjens underscores that the removal of the monarchy eliminated the institution that had played a critical role in governing relations among

*Barundi* (2000). Others support this view, claiming that because many of the Hutu were the “pillars of the monarchy” (having played significant roles in the pre-colonial court, as well as in the institution of the *ubushingantahe*) their removal not only undermined the monarchy, it served to eliminate any rivals to the Tutsi seeking power (Officers burundais, 1994). Perhaps more importantly, the transition to a military regime destroyed the last vestiges of a system that had allowed for the participation of multiple voices in the regime. From this point forward, the fact of Hima Tutsi dominance was no longer in question.

## **B. The First Republic: Sources of Regime Legitimacy**

Over time, the policies of the First Republic (and its successors) explicitly excluded Hutu from positions of power, fostered deadly divisions amongst Tutsi – specifically between the *Banyaruguru* and the Hima Tutsi, and facilitated the capture of the state by a small group of ethnic Hima Tutsi. This process would only happen with time, the result of a systematic campaign of structural violence designed to keep out and/or physically eliminate from the government – and in particular, from the armed forces – those Hutu and Tutsi by whom the rulers felt threatened. In implementing these new policies, the regime succeeded in further embedding exclusion and violence as hallmarks of Burundi’s political culture.

Three institutions were key to their success: the army; UPRONA, the sole political party; and the civil service.

## 1. THE ARMY

The dominance of the army was achieved in three ways. First, Micombero continued with the militarization of government, begun under *Mwami Ntare V*. A military council oversaw all of the government functions, military governors were installed in most provinces, and Micombero concurrently occupied the posts of Prime Minister, Secretary of Defense, and Head of the National Revolutionary Council (NRC).<sup>125</sup> The army was no longer simply one of the several institutions of government. Along with the other security services, the army became the primary institution through which state power was exercised and particularist interests were defended. As Lemarchand so eloquently states, “The predominance of the army was made clear by the extent of military penetration of the central and provincial administration and the growing subservience of the government to the armed forces” (1996, 80). And as Micombero served as head of the NRC, Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Head of UPRONA, there was, in Lemarchand’s words, “little doubt as to the extent of his authority” (1996, 79).

The continued ‘ethnicization’ of the army was the next step. According to Jeremy Greenland, during this period the army introduced new recruitment policies, which included “a most bizarre ‘girth by height’ requirement ... as a patent pretext for excluding unwanted Hutu recruits from the army” (as quoted in Lemarchand 1996, 86-

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<sup>125</sup> Lemarchand describes the 1967 National Revolutionary Council as consisting of 17 officers: 12 Tutsi, three Hutu, one Ganwa, and one Swahili. Among the Tutsi, three were Hima. And of the 17, eight were from Bururi (including two Hutu) (1996, 80).

87). Exclusion from the armed forces (and, in fact, most other civil service positions) was not limited to Hutu; Tutsi who were not from Bururi also had less access to key posts.<sup>126</sup>

Through a simultaneous process of promotion of Hima Tutsi (particularly through education and employment opportunities) and the physical elimination of rivals, the Bururi Tutsi created an army that was entirely unrepresentative of Burundi as a whole.

Two quotes from Ntibazonkiza (1996) capture this process very eloquently:

The new ruling group was young (25 to 35 years of average age in 1966) ... To compose the officer corps of the army, Micombero recruited solely from the following cadres: executives of the former JNR, senior administration officials and members of the FTB [the Federation of Burundian Workers], not to mention UNEBA alumni [the national student union]. In addition to ethnic constraints, access to this leadership group heavily favored those who graduated from certain schools: Astrida Scholars Group (Rwanda) or the University of Leuven (Belgium) for administrative careers; School of Saint-Cyr (France) and ERM (Royal Military School of Brussels) for military careers. Other criteria also played a vital role in this [recruitment] process: family relations, personal friendships, clan and regional relationships... (1996, 63).

Ntibazonkiza goes on to say,

Of all the conflicts between Tutsi at the time, it is the third [clan relations] that was critical, because in fact clan and regional affiliations actually concealed the ambitions and egos of a particular group, those from Bururi. This 3<sup>rd</sup> criterion of [recruitment] therefore appears to be important, because it seems to be designed to prevent any attempt to establish an objective alliance between moderate Tutsi Republicans (= the Banyaruguru) and intellectuals Hutu survivors, or between the Tutsi monarchists and Hutu masses. From 1971 onward, power was held only by a tiny minority Tutsi, and became something of a family affair and [including] its [extended] relations. Moreover, the ruling power [now] appeared to the people as domination, not as a relationship, let alone as a service (1996, 67).

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<sup>126</sup> In describing the process of recruitment into the army, Augustin Nsanze underscores how men from the province of Bururi were favored (if each of the other six provinces at the time furnished 80 candidates, Bururi was allowed 120). More significantly, one of the key conditions for admission into the military academy (l'Institut supérieur des cadres militaires – ISCAM) was to have a 'sponsor' among the higher grade officers. As time went on, fewer and fewer Hutu, as well as Tutsi from other provinces, could fulfill that criteria and hence were eliminated from consideration for posts in the military (2003, 174-176).

Finally, Micombero consolidated the power of the military regime by passing several additional laws. First, Micombero integrated the Gendarmerie into the Army by edict: “*Décret-loi no. 1/35 du 7 mars 1967*”. In September of that same year, Micombero issued another edict addressing the organization of the armed forces. That edict – *Décret-loi no. 1/95 du 29 septembre 1967* – created the Armed Forces of Burundi (known by their French acronym, FAB). According to Article 2 of the law, the army’s mission was as to assure the defense of Burundi’s territorial integrity, to maintain and restore public order and the execution of laws. As one set of authors has noted, when reading the laws “one remarks that the Armed Forces assume, all at once, the roles of the Army, the Gendarmerie, the Police and Intelligence” (Officiers burundais 1994, 34-35). Both *de facto* and *de jure* power now rested in the hands of the military dictatorship. From this point forward, “Burundi would experience only one year of a ‘normal’ [non-military] regime” until 1993 (Officiers burundais 1994, 35).<sup>127</sup>

## 2. UPRONA – THE ‘PARTI UNIQUE’

The key institution of Hima Tutsi power was the party, Union for National Progress (UPRONA). Capitalizing on *Mwami Ntare V*’s 1966 decree, Micombero mandated that UPRONA remain the only legally recognized political party. Ntibantunganya underscores the importance of the ‘parti unique’ (the ‘sole party’) in underpinning the triumvirate and ultimately in consolidating Tutsi hegemony,

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<sup>127</sup> That same year, two other edicts were issued that reinforced the military’s power: The first brought Safety and Immigration under the Ministry of Defense and the second was to name a military officer as head of that department (Officiers burundais 1994, 34).

Five days before the proclamation of the republic, UPRONA had been declared the “one and only national political party” permitted in Burundi, through which, the founding law specified, “the people will freely exercise their sovereignty”. As a consequence, “all national decisions would first be submitted to the party’s governing committee”! UPRONA thus became the source of everything. All associations having a political character were dissolved, only [UPRONA] could “exercise control of political movements and unions” (1999, 96).

At the head of the party was Jean Ntiruhwama, one of those responsible for the coup d’état and the foundation of the first republic.

The strength of UPRONA was reinforced through the militarization of its youth wing, the Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore (JRR). In February 1967, Micombero brought all of Burundi’s youth organizations together under the umbrella of the JRR. This organization then became a training ground for the army. Reyntjens describes the JRR as “a sort of para-military movement, politically radical and ethnically Tutsi” (1989, 6). Led by André Yanda, the JRR was to play a significant role in the government’s ongoing repression of Hutu, serving as one of the main tools of violence in the interior of the country, particularly in 1972.

The strategy of combining the party and military force was not uncommon in other regimes in Africa during the same era. The focus on a single party was meant to counter the impacts of the disunity that often arose within the dominant party following independence. When people did not get on board with the single party idea, force was used. This led to the increasing importance of military force in maintaining the system and to the decreasing influence of politics as means of resolving conflict within system



(Welch 1970). This phenomenon was especially true in Burundi, where membership in UPRONA became one (if not the only) way to acquire any kind of power – at any level of society.

The importance of UPRONA to the regime manifested itself in two other ways. First, the single party state allowed the government to penetrate far into the rural areas, using the party as the vehicle for this penetration. This process was typical of many emerging African states, as described by van Binsbergen et al,

Whereas the origin and the early development of such bodies [as political parties, women's movements, trade unions, religious organizations] was often situated outside the (colonial) state, and whereas they were initially often directed against the state, the post-colonial situation offers a varied picture of the ways in which such organizations tend to become caught up in the modern state. In extreme cases, they have (often under reference to their role in the Independence struggle) become fully incorporated in the post-colonial state, as happened to dominant political parties in many African countries – to the extent that the distinction between state and party has become ideologically blurred, with party membership turning into a major form of state penetration (1986, 381-382).

However, this penetration did not herald greater benefits for most Burundians. Instead, the party was the principal means for the State to exercise its authority over the population. As Peter Uvin characterizes it, “Local state and party institutions were not institutions of citizenship but of control, and, for those who managed to become part of them, of individual advancement” (2009, 74).

The second critical role that the party played was in the further modification of the clientelist system that had dominated Burundian social and political relationships at all levels of society for generations. Just as the arrival of the colonizer had adapted the

(admittedly often exploitive) network of relationships which existed between powerful and less powerful *Barundi*, the advent of the First Republic and the reliance on the one party State transformed the clientelist system even further. As economic and political power became concentrated in the hands of a small group of Tutsi, membership in UPRONA became an additional criterion for gaining access to the clientelist system in general and to the favor of the more powerful in particular.

The problems with this version of the clientelist system were not related to its inherent corruption. On the contrary, as Chabal and Daloz explain,

For those at the bottom end of society, like lowly civil servants, the sale of the limited amount of power they possess is virtually their only means of survival. Higher up, extortion is one of the major avenues of enrichment; it facilitates social advancement and the upholding of one's position. As we have seen, it enables the political elites to fulfil (*sic*) their duties, to meet the expectations of their clients and, hence, to enhance their status. Provided the beneficiaries of graft do not hoard too much of what they accumulate by means of the exploitation of the resources made available to them through their position, and provided they redistribute along lines that are judged to be socially desirable, their behavior is deemed acceptable. Corruption is not, therefore, a matter of a few 'rotten apples' or of a venal 'class', even less an 'evil' to be eradicated by means of vigorous 'ethical' campaigns. On the contrary, it is a habitual part of everyday life, an expected element of every social transaction (1999, 99).

Burundians were well versed in the clientelist system and, as has been described earlier, viewed it as critical to their survival. What changed again after 1966 were the rules that governed the system. While the structure outwardly resembled the traditional system – where the *Mwami* ostensibly had held ultimate power in clientelist relationships – the presence of UPRONIST apparatchiks added another layer to clientelism; much as the arrival of the colonizer into the system had done. While small, local power holders

continued to gain small advantages by becoming both patrons and clients (e.g. through access to or proffering of aid, credit, land, etc.), most of these relationships were now mediated through the party. The ruling Hima Tutsi cabal had access to many of these clientelist relationships by virtue of their control of the party and thus had the opportunity to insert itself into virtually every transaction. The consequences of this transformation were far-reaching; less economically advantageous for rural, mostly Hutu, Burundians and quite lucrative for the elite, mostly Hima Tutsi.

### 3. THE CIVIL SERVICE

The third institution that was key to the regime's strategy of control was the civil service. As in the army, social and family networks were used as criteria for access to and promotion within the civil service and beyond. Coupled with the structure provided by UPRONA, this facilitated the Hima Tutsi's capture of most aspects of social, political and economic life in Burundi. As van Binsbergen et al. (1986) underscore in their research, even the lowest level civil servant had access to networks of patronage; in Burundi these could be used to facilitate UPRONA's penetration down to the hillside.

The power of the civil service was furthered in two additional ways: discrimination in the education system and control of economic opportunities. Manipulation of the education system to benefit a few was not the brainchild of the First Republic. Indeed, as described in Chapter Four, efforts to stratify the social system by curtailing certain groups' access to education were introduced during the colonial era.

The Hima Tutsi cabal built upon that structure, further limiting Hutu (and non-Hima and non-Bururi based Tutsi) access to secondary school, thus effectively cutting off future opportunities for positions in the civil service. As Anna Obura discovered in her comprehensive study of education in Burundi,

The tactic chosen for limiting Hutu presence in schools was ethnic filtering, disguised, almost invisible, but effective, up until the 1990s. Hutu students were eliminated at the end of each cycle: at entry to junior secondary school, to senior secondary school and to the university (Cochet, 1996: 75; Reychler et al., 1999: 94-95). The result was severe social group imbalance in terms of qualifications and meeting the entrance requirements of higher institutions of education, as well as the minimum qualifications needed for the higher echelons of the judiciary, the army and the civil service in general (Reychler et al., 1999: 79) (2008, 63).

Educational inequity compounded the generalized discrimination against Hutu, which in turn resulted in a further reduction of their actual and future material wealth. Obura underscores, “In developing countries where there is palpable poverty, access to education becomes a highly prized resource because it opens the door to employment, wealth acquisition and power, especially in countries with relatively low school enrolments, as was the case in Burundi after independence” (2008, 60). Because most levers of economic power were operated through parastatal institutions, responsibility for which was granted by the government, lack of participation in the civil service severely inhibited economic opportunity for most Hutu and non-elite Tutsi. The three institutions of the Army, UPRONA and the civil service would thus undergird the regime and reinforce the threads of an exclusionary political culture promoted by the military dictatorship.

## C. Violence as Management of Political Conflict

### 1. INTRA-TUTSI RIVALRIES

Throughout the end of 1967 and most of 1968 intra-Tutsi tensions became acute. The struggle for dominance by the Hima Tutsi faction was the focus of attention of Micombero and his entourage. As Lemarchand describes it, in the eyes of the Bururi faction, the identification of those from Muramvya with the recently deposed *Mwami* threw suspicion on their motives for seeking power. The result of this power struggle was the ascendance of the ‘Bururi lobby’ and the beginning of their ‘ethnoregional hegemony’ (Lemarchand 1996, 83-84).<sup>128</sup>

The consequences of this intra-Tutsi battle were serious for many Tutsi, especially those in the Muramvya faction. More ominously, they brought Hutu-Tutsi tensions to a new pitch, ultimately setting the stage for a wave of genocidal violence in Burundi, in which hundreds of thousands of Hutu and tens of thousands of Tutsi would lose their lives.

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<sup>128</sup> Lemarchand describes the tensions this way, “Two principal lines of cleavage emerged: one based on the long-standing sociocultural division between Hima and Banyaruguru, the other on regional identifications, with the province of Muramvya in the north-central region and Bururi in the south providing the geographical frames of reference for distinguishing between the supporters of Micombero (Bururi) and his opponents (Muramvya). That there is substantial overlap between the two is made abundantly clear by the Hima origins of some of the key players in the Bururi faction, including Micombero. Nonetheless, not every Hima is from Bururi. Nor are the Banyaruguru to be found exclusively in Muramvya” (Lemarchand, 1996, 81). In his earlier work, Lemarchand goes into great detail on the intra-Tutsi tensions in the immediate aftermath of Micombero’s coup d’état. According to Lemarchand, several civilian Tutsi leaders were far more extreme in their views of revolution than Micombero and his fellow army officers. This group felt that Micombero was undermining the revolution and simply recreating the dynamics that existed during the monarchy. For more detail, see Lemarchand’s chapter, “The Army at the Helm” in his work, *Rwanda and Burundi* (1970, 436-466).

One of the main ways in which the Bururi lobby succeeded in marginalizing the Muramvya faction (and assuring their own role as the sole protectors of the Tutsi) was to revive the grave dangers of the ‘Hutu Peril’ – a revolt of the majority Hutu against the Tutsi with the same results as neighboring Rwanda: death or exile for the Tutsi. The Muramvya faction was accused of being pro-monarchist and too accommodating of Hutu interests. According to the Bururi lobby, they, and their Hutu co-conspirators, needed to be stopped.<sup>129</sup>

However, the domination of the Hima Tutsi was not a *fait accompli*. As mentioned above, this process took time and Hutu and rival Tutsi were not eliminated in one fell swoop. For example, in Micombero’s National Revolutionary Council there were three Hutu officers, one of whom, Martin Ndayahoze, remained very high up in the administration, serving as Minister of Information until his execution in 1972. His story is instructive and demonstrates that into the early 1970s there were prominent Hutu voices continuing to advocate for their rights and foreshadowing the tragedy to come.

According to several authors, Ndayahoze voiced his concerns to Micombero about the impacts of extremism and exclusion as early as June 1967.<sup>130</sup> His language was strong and his tone was adamant. He insisted that, “all of the governing bodies of the

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<sup>129</sup> Lemarchand (1996), Ntibantunganya (1999), and Nsanze (2003) all describe the origins and impacts of the “Hutu Peril” in greater detail and the ‘Hutu Peril’ is described in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

<sup>130</sup> Nsanze (2003), Ntibantunganya (1999), Melchior Mbonimpa (1993) all describe Ndayahoze’s correspondence with Micombero.

country were dominated by swimmers in troubled waters” (as quoted in Ntibantunganya 1999, 89). He went on to say that,

The current poisoned situation proved the existence of Hutu/Tutsi racism within our walls. On the Hutu side, there are theorists of true democracy. These [Hutu] recognize that the entire administrative structure, even to the very lowest ranks, is Tutsi, and they condemn the conscious or unconscious nepotism that results in this monopoly. In addition to these offenses, they rebel against the tyranny and injustice facilitated by the overwhelming ethnic homogeneity of the State administration. Faced with the Tutsi principle of self-defense, the Hutu find that the Tutsi have invented the “Hutu Peril” and the [existential] “struggle for survival” to create opportunities for torture and to prolong or perpetuate their domination (as quoted in Ntibantunganya 1999, 89).

Ndayahoze’s perspective was supported by other religious and civilian leaders who participated in a cultural reflection group at the time and who contributed to the content of the reports to Micombero. Although Ndayahoze continued to sound the alarm in those reports through 1970, his warnings fell on deaf ears.<sup>131</sup>

## 2. SUCCESSIVE WAVES OF EXTREME VIOLENCE

### a. 1969 and its aftermath

In this climate of interethnic tension, the FAB continued to build its strength as a fighting force and credible purveyor of violence. It also continued to pursue recruitment policies that highlighted its intentions to build an army with a monoethnic officer corps. Military cooperation with Belgium was reinforced with the inauguration in March 1969

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<sup>131</sup> Weinstein claims that Ndayahoze, in his role as Minister of Information, organized three radio editorials on this same topic in December 1968 (1976, 23).

of the Armed Forces base, built with Belgian funds and the signature of a military and foreign aid agreement with France in April 1970. However, these relationships were also fraught with tension, as the international community found itself caught up in Burundi's increasingly exclusionary domestic policies.

In July 1968, seven Belgian officers and one enlisted man who had been serving as technical assistants to the Burundian army were sent back to Belgium. The reasons for their departure were murky and they left under a "cloud of suspicion", ostensibly for fomenting dissent amongst the Hutu troops they were instructing. Warren Weinstein goes further, speculating that because

Belgian military aid was highly structural, ... Burundi oppose[d] what it [felt was] a "parallel administration." In part, the expulsion [was] to rid Burundi of Belgian control over the army's recruitment policies, to blame Belgian officers for a[n earlier] July 3 explosion at a munitions depot, and to stop rumors that it was done by political opposition (1976, 21).

Suspiciously, this expulsion was immediately followed in August 1968 by the recall of three Hutu officers in attendance at the Royal Military Academy in Belgium. Upon their return, the government immediately placed the three officers under house arrest. Eventually, the three officers were permitted to take up their new posts in different parts of the country, although no official explanation was offered for their arrest.<sup>132</sup>

The intentions of the Tutsi-led government to purify the army became painfully clear in 1969. First, as Weinstein reports, "Tutsi prevent[ed] Hutu cadet-candidates from

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<sup>132</sup> Capitan Bazayuwundi was sent to Ngozi as the second in command of the military camp there; Captain Katariho was sent to Bururi; and Commander Karorero was assigned to the Etat Major in Bujumbura, charged with managing logistics (Niyonzima 2004, 51).



taking qualifying examination [in June 1969] despite [the] approval of presiding Belgian selection committee” (1976, 26). This meant that, in addition to the return of three promising Hutu officer candidates from Belgium, no other Hutu officer candidates would replace them.

In mid-September 1969, government officials announced that a Hutu-led coup d'état had been planned for the night of September 16-17. The three officers recently returned from Belgium were accused of being at the heart of the plot. Following these unsubstantiated allegations, some thirty Hutu leaders were arrested, including two of the three officers. The third was arrested one month later (Niyonzima, 2004).

In all, approximately 100 arrests were made, including most Hutu political personalities who were in Micombero's government at the time and virtually all high-ranking Hutu army officers. Between 20-26 people were charged with threatening the security of the state and sentenced to death. They were executed December 22, 1969. Others scholars claim that a much larger number were imprisoned and killed in December 1969. One thing that is clear, if they did not perish in 1969, they died in the subsequent genocidal violence perpetrated by Micombero's government in 1972 (Niyonzima 2004, 52).

In a move that echoed the earlier expulsion of Belgian soldiers, Burundi then requested that the Belgian Ambassador Hennequiau be recalled because of suspected Belgian involvement in planning the alleged coup d'état. Although Belgium was later

exonerated from the charge, the move seemed to reflect a desire on the part of the Burundian government to rid itself of any observers who might be in a position to comment on the increasingly monoethnic character of both the government and the army (Weinstein 1976, 28).

The intra-Tutsi relationship was not immune from the government's targeted attacks. Amid continuing the wave of violence and terror, charges of conspiracy were brought against seven well-known Banyaruguru Tutsi and *Ganwa* from Muramvya in July 1971. Much like the coup allegations of 1969, there was little credible evidence to support the claims made by the government. Niyonzima describes the 1971 arrests of Banyaruguru and *Ganwa* leaders as 'muzzling' of the Tutsi opposition, which permitted the consolidation of regional politics in Burundi (2004, 64).<sup>133</sup>

The intra-Tutsi rivalries were not limited to the Hima-Banyaruguru split. Within his own camp, Micombero was forced to constantly balance competing factions, revealing the fragility of a regime built on such narrow, personalized interests. In the aftermath of the alleged coup attempt, Micombero decided to further consolidate his power, reorganizing his cabinet and bringing the leadership of UPRONA directly under

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<sup>133</sup> Additionally, Lemarchand notes that the Tutsi prosecutors were extremely uncomfortable with the excessive behavior of the government, particularly in terms of the severe sentences handed down. In one case, the Prosecutor General, Gabriel Mpozagara, forbade the use of torture. He was summarily dismissed and torture was permitted as a means of extracting confessions. In a second example, the public prosecutor, Léonard Nduwayo, "resigned after requesting that the case be dismissed. He was immediately arrested" (1996, 88). As the investigation widened, others were arrested. On January 14, 1972, the military tribunal handed down nine death sentences and seven life sentences. However, the sentences were commuted several weeks later, as the government bowed to national and international pressure to grant clemency to the accused. Several of the accused were subsequently released (Lemarchand 1996, 87-88).

his control as General Secretary. Finally, in a move that seems to have contradicted his claims of the strength and stability of the regime, President Micombero reinstated a military council, establishing the Supreme Council of the Republic just prior to the end of 1971.<sup>134,135</sup> As events unfolded the following year, the regime's need to rely on violence rather than popular support to achieve its goals became horrifically clear.

b. The 'Selective Genocide' of 1972 - *Ikiza*<sup>136</sup>

The events of 1972 mark the nadir in Hutu-Tutsi relations in Burundi and illustrate a human rights tragedy of ghastly proportions. Some claim that the violent repression of 1972 was merely a reaction to a Hutu-led rebellion, which had resulted in the massacres of thousands of Tutsi in the south of Burundi.<sup>137</sup> While those grisly massacres certainly served as a trigger, the preceding paragraphs outline the systematic nature of the Tutsi-led government's targeting and elimination of Hutu leaders – both military and civilian – and the ruthless way in which they were prepared to consolidate their power. The 'selective genocide' of 1972 was not a departure from this strategy.

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<sup>134</sup> There is some debate as to whether or not Hutu officers were part of this Military Council. According to Eggers (2006, xxix) and Niyonzima, (2003, 66), the CSR was composed entirely of Tutsi officers. However, Nsanze claims that of the 27 officers, three were Hutu. If they were indeed members of the CSR, those Hutu officers would soon lose their lives in the events of 1972 (Nsanze 2003, 184-185).

<sup>135</sup> The council's responsibilities were, at the same time, frighteningly vague and far-reaching. As Nsanze (2003) describes, perhaps the most telling responsibilities included, "suggesting solutions to situations which put in danger the unity, peace and progress of Burundians," "maintain discipline in all the functions of the State" and "verifying that the principles that inspired the revolution were respected in the [content of] laws and regulations and in their application." In Nsanze's words, "the nomination of Supreme Council of the Republic marked a decisive step in the consolidation of military power, and especially in the radicalization of the ethnic character [of this power]" (2003, 185).

<sup>136</sup> "Selective Genocide" is the term coined by René Lemarchand to describe the targeted extermination of all virtually all educated Hutu in Burundi by the Tutsi army in 1972 in response to an uprising in the south of Burundi. Burundians refer to this as *Ikiza* or 'the cataclysm'. (See Lemarchand 1996 for more detail.)

<sup>137</sup> See, for example, Pierre Buyoya (1998).

Rather, as history demonstrates, it was a purposeful next step along the path to strengthening Tutsi rule, further embedding violence and exclusion in Burundi's political culture.

In March and April 1972, several events occurred in quick succession that belied the government's claim that their actions were provoked by the Hutu rebellion. First, in March, the *Mwami* Ntare V returned to Burundi from Uganda where he had been in exile. Upon his arrival in Bujumbura, the *Mwami* was immediately transported to Gitega (in the interior of the country) and placed under house arrest. Second, President Micombero inexplicably dismissed his cabinet and the entire staff of UPRONA the morning of April 29, 1972. Simultaneously, high-level Tutsi officials were meeting in Rumonge, in the south of Burundi, to discuss potential trouble brewing there and to distribute arms to Tutsi peasants. Present at that meeting were André Yanda, Albert Shibura, Thomas Ndabemeye, and Bernard Bizindavyi – four of Micombero's closest advisors and architects of the 1966 coup d'état (Niyonzima 2004, 61).

The evening of April 29, the Hutu uprising began in the south of the country, in the lakeside towns of Nyanza-Lac and Rumonge. Célius Mpasha, a Hutu student, formerly at the University of Burundi, and his comrades (two other students and a former deputy from Rumonge) are thought to have led the uprising. According to some reports, Mulelist Congolese rebels from across the border supported the Hutu perpetrators.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> *Mulelist* refers to followers of Pierre Mulele, who organized a rebellion in Zaire (Congo) in the mid-1960s. Lemarchand disputes this relationship. He maintains that the few Congolese rebels who may have been involved were most probably followers of Gaston Soumialot, who was organizing a rebellion in Eastern Zaire (Congo) at the time (Lemarchand, 1996, 90-91).

Reports of the strength of the rebellion are conflicting, as are those of Mpasha's precise role in the events of April 29, 1972. However, it is well-documented that several thousand Tutsi and any Hutu that resisted the revolt died during those premeditated attacks (Kiraranganiya 1985, 77).

Lending credence to the claim that a full-fledged rebellion had broken out, a small band of Hutu attempted to take over the National Radio in Bujumbura and a small number of rebels led a revolt near Gitega.<sup>139</sup> At the same time of this latter attack, the *Mwami* Ntare V was killed. Some claim that the *Mwami* was inadvertently killed when the Hutu rebels attempted to liberate him. Others report that Albert Shibura himself shot the ex-*Mwami*. According to the latter sources, after having survived the attacks in Rumonge, Shibura traveled immediately to Gitega to eliminate the potential threat posed by the former king (the regime feared that he would become a rallying figure for the monarchist Tutsi and alienated Hutu).<sup>140</sup>

Facing rebellion, President Micombero immediately called the army to respond. He replaced all of Burundi's provincial governors with military officers and sent large numbers of troops to the south. Over the course of approximately two weeks, the FAB succeeded in reasserting control over the country. In total, over 80,000 people were killed in the Army's retaliatory campaign (overwhelmingly Hutu peasants), predominantly in the coastal areas where the first rebellion had broken out (Ntibantunganya, 1999, 110).

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<sup>139</sup> Cables authored by US Deputy Chief of Mission, Michael Hoyt, May 1972, as quoted in Lemarchand (1996, Chapter 5). Jeremy Greenland disputes the claim that Hutu rebels led an uprising in Gitega. His states that "the 'attacks', claimed by the government to have occurred in Gitega, were merely a pretext for executing ex-king Ntare who was held under house arrest there..." (1980, 100).

<sup>140</sup> Weinstein and Schrire, (1976, 30), as quoted in Lemarchand, (1996, 91).

However, the violence did not stop there. For the next several months, the Army reprisals continued, ably and ferociously assisted by the JRR. These acts of retaliation implicated Tutsi at all levels of society in the identification and physical elimination of the Hutu.<sup>141</sup> Radio broadcasts encouraged the population to “hunt down the python in the grass” (Greenland, 1980, 100). Lemarchand states “What followed [the rebellion] was not so much a repression as a hideous slaughter of Hutu populations” (1996, 97). All Hutu who were known or who were assumed to have an education were hunted down and killed – this included anyone who wore glasses – in order to instill such fear that current and future generations of Hutu would never rise up again to contest Tutsi hegemony.

As late as August 18, 1972, in a top secret telegram sent to Henry Kissinger, White House officials stated that “Burundi tribal slaughter goes on: the extermination of Hutu males with any semblance of an education seems to be continuing in Burundi. Hopes that UN efforts to establish a humanitarian presence in Burundi would influence the Tutsi government to stop the repression have not yet materialized.”<sup>142</sup> The architects

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<sup>141</sup> US State department documents indicate that the government reprisals were excessive and specifically targeted at Hutu. In a Department of State Memorandum to President Nixon, the situation was described as follows: “What actually happened – Elements of the majority Hutu ethnic group plotted to overthrow the minority Tutsi regime. The Hutus struck in various localities on April 29, killing several thousand Tutsis. The Tutsi army with superior firepower quickly mastered the Hutu dissidents. A wave of reprisals followed, resulting in the deaths of more than 100,000 Hutus, and approximately 60,000 Hutu refugees in neighboring Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania.” *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976 Volume E–5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969–1972, Document 225: Memorandum From the Executive Secretary of the Department of State (Eliot) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Washington, September 24, 1972.*

<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve05p1/d225> Accessed 24 February 2013.

<sup>142</sup> *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976 Volume E–5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969–1972, Document 221: Telegram 27189 From the White House to the Embassy in Japan, Washington, August 18, 1972, 1430Z.* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve05p1/d221>) Accessed, 24 February 2013. A study of State Department archives reveals that President Nixon reported being horrified by the violence and instructed the State Department to generate some

of the repression were the same small group of extremist Tutsi who had orchestrated the 1965, 1969 and 1971 eliminations of Hutu and Banyaruguru Tutsi: Arthémon Simbananiye and Albert Shibura, supported by André Yanda, Thomas Ndabemeye and Bernard Bizindavyi (Niyonzima 2004, 61).<sup>143</sup>

At the conclusion of the government's ruthless and far-reaching campaign of violence, between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand Hutu were killed – targeted because of their ethnicity, their level of education, and the perceived threat that they posed to the minority Hima Tutsi – and hundreds of thousands fled the country.<sup>144</sup> Tens of thousands of Tutsi also lost their lives, either at the hands of the Hutu rebellion or killed by the Army and members of the JRR for standing in the way of government reprisals.<sup>145</sup>

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response on the part of allies and African governments. In the end, US interests in Zaire trumped the horror of the violence in Burundi, and an official US presence was maintained in Bujumbura and no official condemnation of the violence was issued. This was in part due to the fact that Belgium totally withdrew its military support and the US was concerned that Burundi would completely step over into the Communist/anti-Western camp, making it difficult to keep tabs on Eastern Congo. President Nixon went so far as to refer to the killing as a 'genocide' of Hutu and insisted that US displeasure and horror at the events be well-publicized – although this did not amount to much. See White House correspondence (between President Nixon and the NSC and between him and the DOS) on the Burundi genocide and subsequent US posture towards Burundi in the aftermath of the violence. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969–1976, Volume E–5, Part 1, Documents on Sub-Saharan Africa, 1969–1972 Burundi: Document List* (<http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1969-76ve05p1/ch3>) Accessed February 24, 2013. According to an interview with Michael Hoyt, Nixon also wanted to make sure that the US had done everything it could have in the lead up to the 1972 elections so that he would not be embarrassed during the presidential campaign for potentially having ignored the slaughter in Africa (Hoyt, Michael P.E. Interviewed by Ray Sadler, January 30, 1995). The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, © 1998 ADST.

<sup>143</sup> According to Kiraranganiya, it was Simbananiye “who planned and supervised the 1972 genocide (1985,89).

<sup>144</sup> Nsanze claims that approximately 300,000 people died in the massacres of 1972-73, meaning 7% of the entire population and 13% of all male Hutu (2003, 233).

<sup>145</sup> In an ominous foreshadowing of France's alleged involvement in Rwanda's 1994 genocide, France was accused of providing ammunition to the FAB to kill Hutu during the 1972 repression. France denied this charge and their military cooperation with Burundi continued (Weinstein, 1976, 41, 47). Jeremy Greenland also reports that the French provided helicopters to ferry Burundian FAB soldiers during the 1972 government reprisals, allowing the soldiers to mow down Hutu peasants from the sky (as cited in Reyntjens

In addition to the deep collective social trauma wrought on Burundi, the ‘selective genocide’ had three critical impacts. First, it permitted the Hima Tutsi to brutally consolidate their immediate control of all levels of Burundian society, particularly within the army.<sup>146</sup> After 1972, the army essentially mirrored the composition of just one of Burundi’s eight provinces. Virtually 100% of the officers and a large percentage of the soldiers were Tutsi from Bururi and of these, the majority were Hima Tutsi. As Lemarchand recounts, former State Department official Michael Hoyt bore witness to the tragedy’s aftermath,

No sector of society was left untouched, least of all the army. Hoyt described the extent of the purges in the army: “The death toll in the army resulting from execution of Hutu has risen. Recent Belgian estimates point to more than 500. About 150 Hutu were executed on night of May 22. Forty-one on night of May 27. Definition of Hutu has altered however. Now one grandparent is enough to result in classifying soldiers as Hutu. Using this standard, some 100 Hutu were believed to be alive in the army on May 23” (as quoted in Lemarchand, 1996, 99).

Second, the government succeeded not only in eliminating the current generation of Hutu leaders, they made sure that the emergence of any future Hutu leaders would be a painfully long and slow process. The actual violence perpetrated by the FAB and the JRR instilled such fear in the population that they literally withdrew from some of the government’s formal administrative and social systems. This perspective is reinforced by

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1989, 8). Reyntjens goes so far as to say, “Wishing to supplant Belgium in Central Africa, the French have always kept total silence regarding the events that took place in Burundi [in 1972]” (1989, 8).

<sup>146</sup> Military cooperation with Belgium was greatly reduced after 1972, at least in terms of Belgium’s willingness to host Burundian officer candidates at the RMA in Brussels. Of those who were already in Belgium at the time of the 1972 genocide, the Tutsi candidates stayed and finished their studies, among them, Pierre Buyoya. However, no additional candidates were accepted and thus there were no Burundian graduates of the RMA between 1975 and 2009. In addition, those Hutu who were at the RMA in 1972 went into exile following the events of that year. (Documents obtained at the Royal Military Academy, April 2013.) See *Officiers burundais* (1994) for additional information.



Greenland in his 1980 report on Western Education in Burundi, which includes examples of his first-hand experience of the 1972 genocide and its aftermath as a schoolteacher in Kibimba. One particularly devastating impact that he describes is Hutu self-discrimination, as children and parents alike actively curtailed their participation in school activities, and indeed, chose not to attend school at all, in order to keep a lower profile and to mitigate the possibility of being caught up in the ‘next’ wave of ethnic violence (1980, 103).<sup>147</sup>

Thus, in Burundi, as elsewhere in the world, violence had (and continues to have) a significant role in how politics and society are structured. As Coronil and Skurski explain, “The immediacy and apparent naturalness of moments of collective violence may conceal their intentionality and socially constructed significance” (1991, 289). While violence enables access to power in an under-resourced country like Burundi, violence is also the means by which relations between members of society are shaped, it structures the space within which society operates, and it constrains possible futures (Coronil and Skurski 1991).

Ultimately, structural violence and exclusion became the norm (Reyntjens, 1989).<sup>148</sup> This norm permitted Tutsi to consolidate their immediate hold on power and,

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<sup>147</sup> Lemarchand similarly describes the intentions of the regime saying, “they aimed not only to decapitate a potential counterelite but to spread terror throughout the entire Hutu community and thus create an enduring sense of fear and submission among the living and the unborn – in short, to teach a lesson that would be remembered by generations to come” (1996, 102).

<sup>148</sup> See also Thibon (2004) for some description of the genocidal nature of the violence and the impact of the genocide and the structure of the Tutsi dominated state on the economic fortunes of Burundi. In his study of Burundian refugees in Tanzania, Marc Sommers (2001) eloquently captures the intergenerational transfer of fear instilled in Hutu after the 1972 *Ikiza*. In describing his research, Sommers says, “I also learned the ethnic genocide that the refugees had fled...created shock waves that the descendants of

perhaps more importantly, to reinforce their position and wealth for several generations to come. As Lemarchand underscores, not only did the Tutsi benefit financially from taking over the victims' property, "participation in violence thus became a key ingredient of class formation. To an even greater extent than before, what was left of Hutu society was systematically excluded from the army, the civil service, and the university" (1996, 103).

Third and perhaps most tragically, not only was violence as a method of governance now firmly embedded in Burundi's political culture – Burundians themselves had become the tools of that violence: establishing the average citizen's participation in extreme violence as politically legitimate and creating an almost insurmountable chasm between Hutu and Tutsi. The repercussions of the *ikiza* would directly impact generations of Burundians, ultimately resulting in civil war. Many of its scars have yet to heal.

Thus, in Michael Schatzberg's terms, one of the most profound impacts of extreme violence on Burundi and Burundians is that it became politically legitimate. He describes political legitimacy "as that which is politically thinkable", emphasizing that when, "using the terms "thinkable" and "unthinkable" I am being literal: Can we, do we, think these thoughts?" (2001, 32). After 1972, extreme violence with the active participation of its citizens was entirely 'thinkable' in Burundi.

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genocide survivors continued to feel. All the refugees shared a penetrating fear of their Tutsi adversaries (2001, 6).

## **D. Regime Continuity: The 2<sup>nd</sup> Republic of Jean Baptiste Bagaza**

The genocidal violence of 1972 highlighted the fragility and internal dissension that plagued the regime. President Micombero could neither manage nor escape these ongoing tensions. He was ousted in a bloodless coup d'état led by Colonel Jean Baptiste Bagaza on November 1, 1976, amid accusations of corruption and heavy drinking (allegedly to the extent that he was unable to function). This coup, far from ushering in change, served only to reinforce the existing political culture – a phenomenon, as Claude Welch points out, not atypical of African military regimes in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>149</sup>

Sylvestre Ntibantunganya (1999) claims that very few people knew of Colonel Bagaza when he decided to join in the plot to overthrow Micombero. Bagaza had only returned from Belgium in 1971, having attended the Royal Military Academy and the prestigious Ecole Inter-armes d'Arlon. Since his return, he had served the FAB Chief of Staff, Thomas Ndabemeye, and in Ntibantunganya's words "led an extremely discreet life" (1999, 138). Indeed, Ntibantunganya, one of the few surviving educated Hutu elite, had never even heard of Bagaza until the day of the coup d'état (Ntibantunganya 1999, 138).

The palace revolution had three goals, according to Reyntjens: "End the tensions that had shaken the country; put an end to the threat [of internal dissension] to Tutsi-Hima hegemony; [and] reinforce the power of the army, which had been weakened" in

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<sup>149</sup> For more on military regime transition, see Claude E. Welch, Jr. (1987).

the later years of the Micombero regime (1989, 13). Ntibazonkiza describes the coup as a means to remove from power one of the key factions of Micombero's entourage, Arthémon Simbananiye and his colleagues, who had been part of Micombero's inner circle and were the principal architects of many of pogroms against the Hutu throughout Micombero's reign (Ntibazonkiza 1996, 91).<sup>150</sup> Nsanze echoes this claim, underscoring how the personal interests of a small group of elites from just three communes in the province of Bururi governed the lives of millions of people (2003, 251-252).<sup>151</sup>

Bagaza ostensibly focused on the institutionalization of government. In Lemarchand's words, "institutional coherence and organization did in fact become the hallmarks of the Second Republic – but to control rather than to integrate, to solidify and rationalize Tutsi hegemony rather than to mitigate its constraints" (1996, 107). In his autobiography, Pierre Buyoya underscores that Bagaza attempted to deal with the ethnic problem through development – building roads, health clinics, primary schools. But Bagaza did nothing to integrate the Hutu themselves into positions of power or respond to their requests for greater political participation. Indeed, utilizing the terms "Hutu" and "Tutsi" became illegal during Bagaza's reign, as ethnicity was officially denied and the

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<sup>150</sup>As Reyntjens explains it, the circle of Tutsi Hima power had become increasingly small, resulting in conflict between the two communes in Bururi of Matana and Rutovu. "In effect, if since 1971 the Tutsi Hima of the south had monopolized power, after 1974 this group would split again: Artémon Simbananiye, backed as minister in 1974, embodied the interests of Matana, while the group from Rutovu embodied those of the President. The younger officers, better trained than Micombero, perceived this division as a considerable threat to Tutsi power. In addition, the President's lifestyle [including] suffering from alcoholism, finally led the [younger] officers to intervene" (1989, 11-12).

<sup>151</sup>Nsanze goes on to quote Jacques Van der Linden who in 1977 described the regime as follows: "the kingdom of Burundi has finally become an oligarchy republic in which a single party without any pretention of representing the people holds the façade of power, while the army, whose role, and this is unique in Africa in a civilian regime, is constitutionalised (*sic*), and the sole master of the game, as demonstrated by recent events" (2003, 178).

emphasis was placed on ‘development for all Burundi’ (Buyoya 2011, 37).<sup>152</sup> Thibon reinforces this view, stating

Officially denying the fact of ethnicity, the government opted for development, which, according to the leaders, should have eliminated any existing tensions. But the investments permitted by the positive financial situation did not have the expected impact. The increase in state services benefited only the elite Tutsi, those who monopolized management positions, while the social impacts of the development plans were slow in manifesting themselves (2004, 358).

Bagaza reconstituted the Supreme Revolutionary Council and placed himself as its head. Unsurprisingly, all 30 members of the Council were Tutsi military officers and approximately half were from Bururi. His new cabinet included 20 members, of whom five were Tutsi military officers and four were Hutu civilians. He appointed new provincial governors, all of whom were military officers (Ntibazonkiza 1996, 92).<sup>153</sup>

While the inclusion of Hutu in the regimes ruling institutions might seem contradictory at this point in Burundi’s history, it was inevitable. First, while the regime succeeded in exterminating most of the Hutu elite during Micombero’s reign, Burundi’s overwhelming majority of Hutu meant that the regime would not be able to erase all Hutu and particularly not future generations of a Hutu elite. Instead, the regime’s approach was to continue to inspire fear and docility among the population. Bagaza employed a deliberate strategy of violence, using the Army to crush the first hint of resistance from Hutu or non-compliant Tutsi. This physical violence was later complemented by UPRONA, whose far-reaching and omnipresent tentacles both determined access to jobs

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<sup>152</sup> See also Ntibazonkiza (1996, 92).

<sup>153</sup> See also Nsanze (2003, 194) and Reyntjens (1989, 13-14).

(through membership in the party) and ensured obedience to the government (through the fear that all activities were constantly being watched and reported on).

Clientelism was critical to this second strategy. All Burundians continued to use the clientelist system and its entwined relationship with the ruling party meant that the regime could control to a large degree how patronage was offered, to whom, and for what purpose. In addition, because the party cadre dominated the administrative posts down to the hillside level, they could more easily infiltrate or keep tabs on activities at the local level, including those relationships of patronage.

Coronil and Skurski describe this approach as follows, “In the crisis of meaning that violence conceives, the territoriality of nations and the corporeality of people become privileged mediums for reorganizing the body politic and for forcibly controlling the movement of person and ideas within the nation’s material and cultural space” (1991, 290). By combining both the threat of and actual physical violence with structural violence, the regime succeeded not only in orchestrating the access of most *Burundi* to the (limited) resources of the state but in crushing the very idea that they had a right to those opportunities and resources in the first place. In addition, violence was reinforced as the regime’s primary means of managing political conflict, further embedding it in Burundi’s political culture.

Second, the façade of ‘unity’ was an important part of the regime’s search for legitimacy. Indeed, upon taking power, Bagaza acknowledged the divisions between

Hutu and Tutsi. In his first speech, “The Declarations of the Fundamental Objectives of the November 1<sup>st</sup> Movement,” (named for the day that he took power) Bagaza raised hopes among Burundi that the ethnic problems might actually be addressed. As Reyntjens describes, “Featuring a bold demarche to explicitly raise the issue of national unity, this statement held great promise. It recognized the "serious problem of ethnic division" and recalled the "dark years" of 1965, 1969 and in particular, 1972” (1989, 14).

Unfortunately, while raising the hopes of Hutu, the speech also raised the fears of the more extreme Tutsi factions, who quickly reacted by staging an attempted coup in July 1977. Bagaza retreated from his initial remarks, adopting the regime’s increasingly common refrain that ethnicity was not a problem in Burundi and, indeed, that it had been manufactured by the imperialist colonizer to better control their subjects. This approach served Bagaza’s needs by pacifying his critics and it served the interests of the larger Tutsi community, as no one could then question the policies of the government on ethnic grounds, effectively “camouflaging the ethnic character of the regime” (Darbon 1982, as quoted in Reyntjens 1989, 15). Thus, structural violence was preserved and Hutu continued to serve the very institutions designed to exclude them.

Soon after taking power, Bagaza abolished the role of Prime Minister and decreed himself President and head of government. Citing the failures of the party, Bagaza dissolved UPRONA and gave the mandate for its rejuvenation to the Supreme Revolutionary Council. The first congress of the restructured UPRONA was held in

December 1979, heralding the return of the party as one of the regime's key instruments of control. Lemarchand states,

The First National Congress of the Uprona in December 1979 signaled its resurrection as an all-embracing, strongly structured instrument of political mobilization. Although the supremacy of the party over the state was now officially enshrined in the UPRONA Charter, the new dispensation in no way diminished the party's preeminent role as the vehicle of Tutsi interests. If anything, the supremacy of the party meant the supremacy of Tutsi over Hutu, and no amount of rhetoric could conceal the fact that its directing organs at both the national and provincial levels were almost entirely under the thumb of Tutsi elements (1996, 108).

Reyntjens captures the institutional source of the regime's power quite succinctly, saying, "As in 1966 when Micombero had taken power, in 1976 it was an alliance between the army, the youth, and the workers who would take the initiative to "combat any deviation" from the ideals of the Party" (1989, 14).

In 1981, Bagaza introduced a new constitution that was subsequently approved by national referendum. The constitution provided for a national assembly, universal adult suffrage, and elections for parliamentarians. According to several scholars, the constitution was a vast improvement on the 1974 version.<sup>154</sup> While the dictatorship was still in place, "the 1981 Constitution was characterized by a return to a more orthodox constitutionalism" in the words of Filip Reyntjens, with the hope, it is implied, that the new constitution might be a harbinger of real change (1989, 22-23). In 1982, legislative elections were organized, according to the dictates of the new constitution. And in 1984, Bagaza orchestrated a presidential election in which he was the only candidate. Elected by direct suffrage, Bagaza declared himself the legitimate leader of Burundi's one-party

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<sup>154</sup> See André Durieux (1982) as cited in Nsanze (2003, 197).



state. Unfortunately for Burundians, these constitutional changes were superficial and had no significant impact on the regime nor on Burundi's political culture.

Bagaza's regime was marked by two important sets of events, both of which contributed to a deterioration in the government's human rights record. First, as part of his strategy to control all aspects of Burundian life, Bagaza targeted religious denominations, accusing them of fomenting dissent and encouraging criticism of the regime (Ntibantunganya 1999, 144-145). In Lemarchand's words,

The restructuring of state-society relations meant the extension of party activities to the countryside and the removal of all obstacles in the way of an effective political mobilization of the rural masses. Because of its prominent role in the organization of educational and welfare activities on the hills, the church was immediately targeted as the most serious of such obstacles (1996, 112).

Not only did Bagaza crack down on local clergy, he incurred the wrath of international partners by expelling both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries from Burundi for their "subversive activities" (Ntibantunganya 1999, 145).<sup>155</sup>

The second major set of events that was to impact both Bagaza's regime and the future of Burundi was the rise of several clandestine Hutu political movements. Some of these were born from the remnants of Hutu refugee resistance movements in Rwanda, such as FRODEBU (The Front of the Democrats of Burundi), born in 1983 and which traces its origins to earlier Hutu opposition groups. Others such as PALIPEHUTU (Party

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<sup>155</sup> See also Eggers (2006, xxxi). Filip Reyntjens notes that the conflict with the Church (both Catholic and Protestant) began even before Bagaza. Indeed, it seems that the international aid efforts targeted at Hutu after 1972 were interpreted by the government as 'aiding and abetting the rebels' and hence there were efforts to rein in their activities as early as 1973. In particular, Reyntjens cites the Swedish Pentecostal church as being forbidden from further work in Burundi after assisting Hutu fleeing the country (1989, 8).

for the Liberation of the Hutu People) emerged from the Hutu refugee camps in Tanzania (Lemarchand, 1996, 142-147). These movements inspired both violent and peaceful resistance on the part of their members and served to highlight the rapidly waning ‘legitimacy’ of Bagaza’s regime, especially amongst the Tutsi, as the regime proved to be incapable of snuffing out these latent expressions of Hutu dissent.

The conflict between the State and the church (which began to negatively impact as many Tutsi as Hutu, given the strong religiosity of Burundians) caused more vocal protest, the increasingly visible activities of the Hutu resistance, a poor economy, and mounting corruption exposed the fragility of Bagaza’s regime. Major Pierre Buyoya brought down the Second Republic in a bloodless palace coup on September 3, 1987, when President Bagaza was in Canada on an official visit.

### **E. The Heritage of Successive Military Dictatorships**

At its inception, the Third Republic did not appear to herald any significant change from the two military dictatorships that preceded it. Major Buyoya immediately reinstated military rule with the establishment of the Military Committee for National Salvation (CMSN) and he suspended the constitution. Buyoya gave himself the titles of President and Head of the CMSN, leaving no doubt as to the primacy of the military in Burundi’s political life. Underscoring the importance of UPRONA to the regime’s survival, Buyoya also pledged to “restore the UPRONA party to its role of designing,

developing, orienting, enlivening and controlling the country's political life...".<sup>156</sup>  
Regime continuity, rather than change, remained the order of the day.

Indeed, the advent of the Third Republic revealed the remarkable resilience of certain threads of Burundi's political culture. Nurtured during colonialism and left to thrive during the transition period, exclusion and violence continued to characterize that political culture. The regime's policies of structural violence only served to reinforce the growing salience of ethnicity as a political identity. And while increasingly linked to the ruling party, the clientelist system flourished, demonstrating the longevity of this culturally significant institution.

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, in order to achieve their dominance, the Hima Tutsi cabal exploited the conditions that were created by Burundi's political culture. The army was the principal tool of this process. This had three important impacts on the army. First, the army was created in the context of a political culture in which both the increasing ethnicization of political identities and exclusion as a tool for managing political conflict emerged as salient threads. Unsurprisingly given this context, the FAB defined its mission in terms of the internal threat represented by the Hutu from the very beginning of its existence. This led to specific decisions to limit entry into the officer corps to Tutsi and more generally, to role expansion (beyond a strictly military mandate) and politicization of the institution; what Stepan (1973) in a slightly later era would refer

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<sup>156</sup> President Pierre Buyoya's first New Year's address, as reported in *Le Renouveau*, January 3-4, 1988, Edition No. 2476.

to as the dangers of the “new professionalism.” The weakened monarchy and its growing lack of legitimacy in the eyes of the elite only hastened the army’s entry into politics.

Second, as the main orchestrator of violence, the army became the most feared institution in the nation. Within its dominant reference group – other Tutsi – it also became the most revered institution in Burundi. These dynamics represented two sides of the same coin. Extreme violence was justified because of the perception of the existential threat from Hutu faced by the minority Tutsi. In turn, the army was rewarded for protecting its group and even widely feted, cementing their perception that they alone could ensure Burundi’s future.

The larger Tutsi population contributed to endowing the army with this meaning in the context of Burundi’s political culture. After 1972, it young Tutsi women sang songs praising the military and all the Tutsi artists glorified the army. These were the voices that were heard because they had access to the space and the resources granted by the government to further their craft. Tutsi girls were encouraged to find a young FAB officer for a husband and young Tutsi men were actively encouraged to join the military (Interview with Burundian Professor, August 3, 2012). These dynamics strengthened the FAB’s belief that they were saviors of the nation and reinforced the continued politicization of the corps.

Finally, the institution of the army became inextricably entwined with the ruling party UPRONA and by extension, the clientelist system. In the past, the *Mwami* had

occupied the central role in the web of patronage – indeed, many of Burundi’s early institutional sources of legitimacy served to support this role. After 1966, the army high command played this role. As one of my interlocutors expressed, “no one ever made a move without first consulting the major or colonel they had cultivated in the FAB; they were at the center of everything” (Interview with Burundian Professor, August 3, 2012). Ultimately, however, this relationship would divide even the small cadre of Hima that controlled the FAB. As officers sought to enrich themselves via the patronage networks provided by UPRONA, their personal interests soon came to outweigh those of the institution, as the succession of palace coups demonstrated.

As has also been demonstrated however, the successive military regimes represented a significant rupture with aspects of Burundi’s political culture. Perhaps most importantly, the regimes’ leaders had not created the institutions that would accord them widespread legitimacy, unlike the monarchy during most of the pre-colonial and colonial eras. Indeed, the military regimes were the result of an illegal usurpation of power and while their policies succeeded in reinforcing and in fact shaping some of the key threads of Burundi’s political culture (in particular, violence and exclusion as the means of managing political conflict), their lack of legitimacy would ultimately bring about their downfall. Buttressed by only a few institutions – in this instance, the monoethnic Army, UPRONA, and the civil service, all undergirded by a discriminatory education system – the fragile regime would soon crumble under its own weight.

## **Chapter Seven: A Tale of Two Regimes (1987-1993)**

### **A. Introduction**

The inauguration of the Third Republic reflected the remarkable ‘stickiness’ of Burundi’s political culture. At its core, the political culture continued to be characterized by personalization, exclusion, and violence. The institutions through which this political culture was manifested had not changed: power continued to be exercised from the narrow foundation of the monoethnic Army and the one party state, supported by the deeply entrenched clientelist system, whose control lay in the hands of elite Hima Tutsi. Moreover, the regime was distinguished by its lack of widespread legitimacy, an enduring feature of Burundi’s governments since *Mwami* Ntare V’s palace coup in 1966.

Pierre Buyoya’s tenure would herald a different era for Burundi. Between 1988 and 1993 the regime undertook significant reforms, inspired both by the changing international context and greater engagement of the international community and by Buyoya himself, who seemed to acknowledge the need to broaden political participation and revisit the composition of the regime’s institutions. As we shall see, President Buyoya made great strides in reconstructing this institutional architecture, yet his efforts ultimately failed to bring about lasting change. In particular, the dissonance created by these efforts would spark strong resistance in the Army (and extreme Tutsi and Hutu circles) and the ensuing conflict would have deadly results.

## **B. The Third Republic: An Inauspicious Beginning**

Major Pierre Buyoya was sworn in as President of the Republic of Burundi on October 2, 1987. Despite proclamations to the contrary, the investiture of the Third Republic did not foreshadow any real change in the Burundian political system. Buyoya repackaged the well-worn slogans of national unity and development, underscored his principal role as President of the Military Committee on National Salvation, and reiterated the importance of the Army and UPRONA as the pillars of nation. During his first months in power, Buyoya even brought back several faces from Micombero's regime, including the architect of the 1972 selective genocide, Arthémon Simbananiye. Many Hutu were arrested during this period and violence was rekindled in secondary schools throughout the country (Ntibazonkiza 1996, 117).

Sylvestre Ntibantunganya eloquently captures the disappointed hopes of many Burundian Hutu in September 1987,

Major Buyoya was no different than Bagaza! The supreme organ that he installed at the head of the government remained monoethnic. We could have anticipated that because there was not one Hutu officer in the ranks of the FAB. But what we could not understand was that Buyoya maintained the same ethnic proportions and the same posts for the Bahutu in his government. There was nothing except the traditional "Four Bahutu" in the same positions that his predecessor had placed them. And as to the question of national unity, Buyoya considered it as "resolved since 1976"! From then on, we could only consider the man of September 3, 1987 as a new actor in the same play of palace revolutions that we'd witnessed since 1966 (1999, 188-189).

President Buyoya's first cabinet certainly resembled that of his predecessor – the 20-member government was dominated by Tutsi and included four military officers – and his discourse was uninspiring. Yet, the journey down this more predictable path was accompanied by moves that seemed to offer some hope that the Third Republic might be different than the previous military regimes. As ostensible gestures of reconciliation, Buyoya released hundreds of Hutu political prisoners and quickly began to repair relationships with the Church and the wider ecumenical community.

Despite their tepid nature, these policies had two, contradictory consequences: heightening fears and raising expectations – replicating a pattern that occurred when Bagaza made a similar demarche over ten years earlier. As Lemarchand describes, “while raising the anxieties of Tutsi hard-liners, these early signals nurtured Hutu hopes for a further acceleration of the move toward liberalization” (1996, 119). These consequences would collide, resulting in increased conflict and intolerance, as the demands by Hutu for greater participation in public and political life grew louder and Tutsi extremists' fears sky-rocketed, along with their violent reactions to perceived Hutu usurpation of Tutsi privileges.

#### 1. VIOLENCE, AS USUAL

In August 1988, these tensions would reach a boiling point in two neighboring communes in the north of Burundi: Ntega commune in the province of Kirundo and Marangara commune in the province of Ngozi. There were several factors that



contributed to the violence – from the regional political context to discriminatory national policy to localized grievances. As Lemarchand states, it was no accident that these two communes “reaped the bitterest harvest of ethnic violence” (1996, 120).

The communes’ location, at the edge of the Kanyaru River that serves as Burundi’s border with Rwanda, informed the residents’ experience with ethnic violence; both historically, as thousands of Tutsi refugees sought safety in this area of Burundi after Rwanda’s 1959 revolution – and again in 1988, as Hutu exiled from Burundi found fertile ground for their anti-regime activities just across the river in Rwanda (Lemarchand, 1996). Coupled with ongoing discriminatory policies that limited Hutu access to the social infrastructure and resources of the state (the northern communes of Burundi have been notoriously underserved by the State), the stage was set for conflict.

Reinforcing this volatile climate, fear dominated interactions with local officials in the period preceding the explosion of violence. This fear was heightened to a fever pitch by rumor and the inflammatory rhetoric of Marangara’s communal administrator who threatened to bring down the wrath of the government on those Hutu whom he felt were holding illegal meetings. In response, Hutu peasants began to organize themselves into units for self-defense, feeling unjustly targeted by the government. Adding fuel to the fire, the gendarmerie presence in Marangara was sharply increased during this same period and several Hutu were arrested, instilling yet more fear, as the memories of 1972 came flooding back.

The tensions reached a breaking point when, on August 14, a wealthy local Tutsi merchant suspected of identifying local Hutu homes to army soldiers, was attacked by an angry Hutu mob. Shooting first, he killed six people. His actions unleashed the vengeance of the Hutu. Lemarchand reports that “After killing him and his family and setting fire to his house, bands of Hutu armed with clubs, spears, machetes, and bows and arrows fanned out through the commune and then through the hills of Gisitwe and Mwendo in the north, burning Tutsi homes and killing the occupants” (1996, 125).<sup>157</sup>

Hundreds of Tutsi were subsequently slaughtered. The army, replicating the indiscriminant force it had used in the past, mounted a widespread campaign of reprisal.<sup>158</sup> By some reports, over 15,000 Hutu were killed and over 60,000 fled to Rwanda.<sup>159</sup> Ntibazonkiza recounts that “the repression was generalized and blind: a systematic massacre of Hutu men, women, children and elderly; in brief, they shot at anything that moved!” (1996, 121). Despite the superficial gestures of reconciliation offered by Buyoya on the occasion of his coup d’état, the Third Republic seemed destined to follow in the repressive footsteps of its predecessors.

The violence starkly illustrated three important and interrelated realities to the new regime. First, Burundian Hutu were not content with the status quo. Despite

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<sup>157</sup> Lemarchand cites several studies by well-reputed international human rights organizations conducted after the massacres, which corroborate his view that the violence was spontaneous in nature (1996, Chpt 7).

<sup>158</sup> According to some, the army’s action was a preemptive strike, in anticipation of planned attacks by the PALIPEHUTU in the north of the country. Raphael Ntibazonkiza cites several examples of actions undertaken in the weeks just prior to the Ntega-Marangara massacres that contributed to raising Hutu fears. He states that, “military exercises, exceptional by their size, were organized by the 4<sup>th</sup> battalion of Ngozi...arrests of Hutu began in July and continued into the beginning of August;...lists of Hutu to be eliminated were circulated...” (1996, 119).

<sup>159</sup> Some estimates go as high as 5000 Tutsi and 20,000 Hutu killed (Nsanze 2003, 265). See also Lemarchand (1996), Ntibazonkiza (1996), and Eggers (2006).

enduring generations of extreme violence, they were still prepared to protest, even violently, what they perceived as injustices perpetrated by the regime. Second, the very nature of this protest underscored the failure of the military regimes' policies of intimidation and fear. Instead of creating docile Hutu, the policies succeeded in heightening the very threat that they were designed to address. Third, the violence laid bare the precarious nature of the regime: its survival was unsustainable without inflicting massive violence on its own people, an increasingly untenable course of action for the military regime.

## 2. PRESSURE FOR REGIME CHANGE

The pressure for regime change came from two different directions: the international community and an increasingly vocal domestic Hutu constituency. Each of these sources of pressure contributed to transforming President Buyoya's vision for Burundi's future and the policies that he undertook to achieve that vision.

### a. Increasing International Engagement

The massive scale of killing in 1988 prompted a wide and immediate outcry. Unlike previous decades, the regime was quickly subjected to international condemnation for the indiscriminate use of force and the substantial number of deaths. The international community, including the governments of Belgium, Canada, and the United States, as well as the World Bank, the European Parliament and assorted international human rights

organizations, all expressed their horror, demanding that the regime undertake significant changes to its policies (Lemarchand 1996).<sup>160</sup>

On the defensive, President Buyoya refused to acknowledge that the regime had erred, staunchly defending the Army and laying the blame for the violence on the activity of the PALIPEHUTU rebels. In the weeks immediately following the massacres, he only seemed to further antagonize the international community. He was chastised for under-reporting the number of deaths, for refusing to allow humanitarian organizations access to the population, and for refusing to agree to an international inquiry about the events (Lemarchand 1996).<sup>161</sup>

Eventually, however, Buyoya's tone changed. In October 1988, Buyoya initiated an institutional reform process that purported to address some of Burundi's most entrenched issues and seemed designed to placate the international community. The reforms explicitly acknowledged the deep divisions between Hutu and Tutsi and set the stage for a multi-party process that was intended to lead to democracy.

The regime's response was likely influenced by several interlocking factors: in particular, sensitivity to the greater engagement of the international community on human rights issues; the advent of real-time reporting on world events, which brought Burundi and its horrors into living rooms across the West; and most importantly, increased pressure from domestic actors insisting on change within the regime.

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<sup>160</sup> Lemarchand goes on to describe the US response at length, describing how US government attitudes changed between 1972 and 1988, resulting in deeper US engagement in Central Africa (1996, 129-130).

<sup>161</sup> "Burundi: Nouvelle vague de répression?" *Le Monde*, October 20, 1988, accessed September 23, 2014.

By 1988, there was an important shift by Western countries towards supporting the emergence of democratic regimes in Africa and elsewhere. The focus on democracy brought with it an emphasis on human rights, buttressed in the United States by the passage of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act by the US Congress in 1986. African nations like Burundi became the target of US efforts to hold African leaders responsible for their dismal human rights records and as a result, there was heightened attention on activities in those countries.<sup>162</sup>

In addition, the 24-hour global news cycle, the relative ease of travel, and improvements in technology meant that news from countries as remote as Burundi began to reach a wider public. Thus, unlike 1972, when the Burundian army unleashed its response to the violence in Ntega and Marangara communes in 1988, the news of the large-scale killing reached Western countries quickly and condemnation was swift. Western news media devoted an unprecedented number of stories to the massacres, the army's response, and Buyoya's subsequent plans for reform.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> As Robert Pear reported in *The New York Times*, the Congressional Black Caucus felt strongly that African countries needed to be held to universal human rights standards and thus pushed for the passage of a bill that would explicitly link US foreign aid to respect for human rights. "The newly assertive mood regarding human rights in Africa [in the US Congress] is in no small measure a result of efforts by black members of Congress. Having denounced South African apartheid, many Congressmen say they want to hold Mr. Mobutu and other black African leaders to an equally strict standard of human rights" ("The World: Congress Gives African Leaders the Human Rights Test", *The New York Times*, July 2, 1989, accessed September 23, 2014). The countries that were the targets of the Congressional Black Caucus efforts included Zaire, Burundi, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan.

<sup>163</sup> For example, in the twelve months leading up to the August massacres, there were only 20 stories that touched on Burundi in any way in *The New York Times* (including several stories about AIDS and the 1987 Coup d'état by Pierre Buyoya) and only 13 Burundi-related stories were reported in *Le Monde* (France). After the massacres, *The New York Times* had 30 reports within the first 4.5 months, almost all of them dealing exclusively with the violence in northern Burundi. The number of stories dealing with any topic related to Burundi dropped to 3 between August 1989 and July 1990. Reporting in *Le Monde* followed a

In a sign that the regime seemed to recognize the traction that the events had gained internationally, President Buyoya immediately dispatched his Foreign Minister, Cyprien Mbonimpa, to Europe to explain what had happened in Ntega-Marangara. Admittedly, the regime did not apologize for its actions and indeed, when describing the purpose of his visit, the Foreign Minister gave a depressingly vague report to the Burundian press, saying

You know, after the dramatic events that our country has suffered, the government of Burundi judged it necessary to inform first Burundians, and then the international community. As you know, these events provoked enormous emotion abroad. I was thus charged by the Head of State to go and explain to our friends [governments], to international organizations who are located in those countries [Switzerland, Belgium, France, and Germany], what happened in Burundi, what the government did, and also to deny certain allegations that have circulated in the press (*Le Renouveau*, No. 2681, 7 September 1988).

The regime also used the platform afforded at the United Nations General Assembly later that Fall to explain its position and to plead for assistance for the victims of the violence.<sup>164</sup> Despite the high levels of government obfuscation, this kind of international engagement was unusual for Burundi's military regime.

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similar pattern, with 27 stories devoted to Burundi in the 4 months after the massacres, dropping to only 1 story between August 1, 1989 and August 1, 1990.

<sup>164</sup> "Burundi: Les affrontements ethniques Le gouvernement refuse toute enquête internationale mais... sollicite une aide financière" *Le Monde* August 30, 1988. Accessed September 30, 2014. Lemarchand reported later that this aid went exclusively to Tutsi and not Hutu victims (1996). In addition, *Le Monde* reported that the Burundian government accused the Belgians of "collecting relief for Hutu victims as a pretext for aiding subversive Hutu elements" ("Burundi: Nouvelles accusations contre l'armée", September 3, 1988, accessed September 30, 2014). See also the provisional verbatim record of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly in which the Burundian Foreign Minister describes the situation in Burundi. In particular, the Foreign Minister states, "we welcome the wise advice of friends, but we deny anyone the right to settle Burundi's affairs except those mainly concerned – that is, the people of Burundi. We do not believe in the effectiveness of solutions imposed from outside, whatever the size of the group of countries and the organizations from which they emanate. It should be clear to all that advocate sanctions or pressure of any kind against the Government of Burundi that their initiatives go

Although it is difficult to establish a causal chain between international outcry and the regime's behavior, there is certainly anecdotal evidence to support the thesis that exogenous pressure contributed to changing the regime's perceptions of its interests vis-à-vis the international community. Ultimately, the dual dynamics of condemnation for the violence and human rights abuses and the support for Buyoya's proposed policies to deal with the causes of the violence would contribute pressure on the regime to move forward with the reforms.<sup>165</sup>

b. Increasing Domestic Engagement

Perhaps the most important factor impacting the receptivity of Burundi's Third Republic to calls for change may have been the increasing activism of a domestic Hutu constituency pushing for significant changes in Burundi's social, political, and economic landscape. In the years since 1972, the Hutu intellectual community had begun to reconstitute itself and its voice was becoming louder and more insistent. As the tantalizing whispers of democracy reached Burundian refugees in Belgium, Canada, Tanzania and Zaire, so did these echoes influence those living in (and those returning to) Burundi. The Ntega-Marangara massacres triggered a forceful reaction from this constituency, spurring the Burundian Hutu to speak out.

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against the policy of national reconciliation advocated by our President, Major Pierre Buyoya, and his Government (A/43/PV.25, October 12, 1988, 62-63).

<sup>165</sup> International approbation for Buyoya's proposed changes can be seen in the international reporting (see *Le Monde*, [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1989/06/07/burundi-huit-mois-apres-les-massacres-ethniques-hutus-et-tutsis-s-efforcent-de-revivre-ensemble-pour-chasser-la-malediction\\_4140728\\_1819218.html#ig47cHczDIF4qCVc.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1989/06/07/burundi-huit-mois-apres-les-massacres-ethniques-hutus-et-tutsis-s-efforcent-de-revivre-ensemble-pour-chasser-la-malediction_4140728_1819218.html#ig47cHczDIF4qCVc.99) Accessed December 1, 2015).

One especially tangible manifestation of their protest resulted in an open letter to the President of the Republic signed by 27 Hutu intellectuals and published on August 22, 1988. The letter's signatories decried the massacres in Ntega and Marangara and demanded change. According to Ntibanzonkiza, "the authors of this 'open letter' demanded the end of the massacres, the establishment of a government of national unity, the end to discrimination in the schools, [and] the opening of a national debate on the ethnic question in Burundi" (1996, 123).

Not surprisingly, the military regime reacted strongly (and, predictably, quite negatively) to this public opposition to their policies: imprisoning some of the signatories; firing others from their jobs; and generally threatening those who dared to speak out (Ntibanzonkiza 1996). Nonetheless, while the signatories suffered mightily from the regime's subsequent repression, their message seems to have been received. Coupled with attention from the international community, the efforts of these Hutu intellectuals appear to have added further pressure on the regime to initiate reforms. In subsequent months, the Buyoya regime would begin to undertake some of the most significant changes seen in Burundi since 1965; changes that would ultimately lead to democratic elections in 1993.

### **C. Redefining the Regime's Sources of Legitimacy**

Buyoya's reforms were designed to address three key issues: 1) relations between



Tutsi and Hutu; 2) discriminatory practices in government, including access to civil service positions (at all levels) and with regard to the distribution of resources of the state (i.e. educational opportunities); and 3), reform of the political system, through the adoption of multiparty democracy in Burundi (Reyntjens 1995).

As a first step in the institutional reform process, President Buyoya asked the Military Committee for the Salvation of the Nation to consider which measures might best be undertaken to address the relational issues between Hutu and Tutsi. In late September 1988, the Military Committee recommended that a commission to study the question of national unity be established (*Le Renouveau*, No. 2700, September 30, 1988). The Commission on National Unity was comprised of 12 Hutu and 12 Tutsi. Charged with studying the “ethnic question”, the Commission was to propose solutions to Burundi’s ‘problems’ in a report to the President the following spring (Ntibazonkiza 1996, 130). The work of the Commission was to be complemented by meetings held by the High Committees of UPRONA, intended to promote reflection on “the problem of national unity” (*Le Renouveau*, No. 2700, September 30, 1988).

Second, Buyoya put in place a government of national unity. The cabinet was evenly divided between Hutu and Tutsi and he named Adrien Sibomana, a Hutu, as his Prime Minister. In addition, Buyoya began to more transparently integrate positions in the civil service, actively recruiting Hutu and initiating several educational reforms, resulting in Hutu having increased access to secondary school (and over time, places at university).

Third, the President launched a process to revise the country's constitution, which would eventually lead to the legalization of multiparty politics and ultimately, national elections. Each of these efforts to redefine the regime's key institutions is discussed in more detail below.

#### 1. RELATIONS BETWEEN TUTSI AND HUTU – THE CHARTER OF NATIONAL UNITY

In May 1989, the Commission on National Unity published its report. The greatly anticipated document was bound to disappoint. As Lemarchand frames it “For some hard-core Tutsi supremacists, it [was] likely to be seen as a sell-out; for a number of politically conscious Hutu its shortcomings [were] painfully obvious (especially when coming across statements such as ‘the truth is that there is no discrimination within the army’)...” (1989, 685). What distinguished the report, however, was that for the first time in Burundi's history, the question of ethnicity was publicly acknowledged by the regime as central to Burundi's conflict and many of the recommendations outlined in the report directly touched on the necessity for institutional reform.<sup>166</sup> Those at the lower levels of Burundi's administrative structure recognized this reality; it just took those at the pinnacle a longer time to appreciate the need for a more open discussion of ethnic cleavage.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> See Lemarchand (1989 and 1996) and Ndikumana (1998) for more detailed discussions of the report's significance.

<sup>167</sup> According to one Head of Sector (an administrative unit smaller than the commune), reality quickly overtook the desire for vengeance in northern Burundi after the 1988 massacres, “These people know they have to cohabitate,” he observed. “We must now help them to raise their problems and to talk about them,” he went on to say. Until then, the topic of Hutu and Tutsi had been taboo; there were not ethnicities in Burundi according to the official discourse. Finally the official slogan was changing. As reported in Le

Some scholars decry the report's timid proposals. Leonce Ndikumana (1998) claims that the report did not go nearly far enough in acknowledging the true causes of ethnic conflict in Burundi. In particular, he laments the government's refusal to recognize the impact of its own actions and its role in perpetrating violence. Ndikumana goes on to say that the Buyoya regime should have used the opportunity presented by the Commission to make a full inquiry into the violence of 1965, 1969, 1972, and 1988 and to bring perpetrators to justice (1998, 33-34).

While desirable, this demand was impracticable. The expectation that Buyoya would lead a full inquiry into Burundi's violent past reflects an inaccurate reading of two sets of dynamics. First, it does not take into account Buyoya's personal and career trajectories leading up to the events of 1988. Second, it does not acknowledge the critical role of extremist Tutsi in the regime.<sup>168</sup>

Buyoya's rise in the FAB came during a time of relative calm in Burundi and when, at least among Tutsi, the FAB was revered and respected (Uvin 2009). According to one knowledgeable Burundian, before 1972, to be a military officer was a career sought after by everyone – Hutu and Tutsi alike. The army was glorified in popular culture: the radio played songs extolling the virtues of soldiers; regular parades honoring

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Monde, June 7, 1989. [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1989/06/07/burundi-huit-mois-apres-les-massacres-ethniques-hutus-et-tutis-s-efforcent-de-revivre-ensemble-pour-chasser-la-malediction\\_4140728\\_1819218.html#Oq1mxAaozvSrPUmD.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1989/06/07/burundi-huit-mois-apres-les-massacres-ethniques-hutus-et-tutis-s-efforcent-de-revivre-ensemble-pour-chasser-la-malediction_4140728_1819218.html#Oq1mxAaozvSrPUmD.99). Accessed December 1, 2015.

<sup>168</sup> In his recounting of his own upbringing and career in the military, Buyoya describes leaving Burundi in 1967 to attend first the Royal Cadet School in Brussels and then the Royal Military Academy (RMA). He would not return to Burundi until 1975, after he completed his studies at the RMA (Buyoya 1998, 34-39).

the troops were held; the press daily devoted pages to coverage of the activities of the army. A career military officer in the FAB was well-respected, powerful, and reasonably well-off as compared to other civil servants and especially with respect to subsistence farmers, who constituted the vast majority of Burundi's population (Interview, August 3, 2012). The meaning accorded to the Army by its principal reference group – the Tutsi – reinforced the FAB officers perceptions that their mission was a noble one. This context would have had a major influence on Buyoya and his perceptions of the institution of the FAB as he embarked upon his career.<sup>169</sup>

In addition, Buyoya was largely absent from Burundi for two of the most catastrophic spasms of violence experienced in Burundi's history to date (1969 and 1972). While he was in the Army, he did not have an active leadership role in the perpetration of those violent events. These events may have been part of Burundi's history, but it is unclear if they were an integral part of Buyoya's personal past. The fact that Buyoya was one step removed from this violent period likely influenced the lens through which he viewed the problem to be addressed and its possible solutions. Given this lack of personal relationship with Burundi's previous episodes of extreme violence, it is not clear that Buyoya would have considered opening an inquiry into these events as critical to the Commission's success – and certainly not viewed an inquiry as necessary for the achievement of his own objectives.

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<sup>169</sup> In an interview with an ex-FAB Officer, the decision to join the military was described as follows, “My father was a foot soldier. My colleagues, my friends, we appreciated the entourage, given that we were surrounded by officers in my village. I am from Bururi. So we chose to go [join the military] in order to seek certain advantages [that accrued to officers]” (Interview with ex-FAB officer, August 13, 2012).

Second, and perhaps more importantly for Buyoya's own survival, launching a longitudinal study into regime-sponsored violence would have been a non-starter with Tutsi extremists, many of whom had held important positions in government and the army in previous regimes. Naming the Commission was already perceived as radical and it seems improbable that Buyoya could have found traction within the Tutsi ruling elite to widen the inquiry – or would have taken the risk to do so.

Once the Commission charged with studying the question of national unity published its report, symposia on national unity were organized throughout the country overseen by UPRONA apparatchiks. Despite the party's micromanagement of the process, the symposia ultimately resulted in a Charter on National Unity, adopted by referendum in February 1991. According to Reyntjens (1995), the FAB and the Bureau of State Security kept a relatively low profile throughout this process. While admittedly still omnipresent, the Army's relative lack of active intervention was a significant change from their previous behavior. Thus, as Reyntjens describes, allowing an environment that was more "favorable to debate and reflection" to emerge (1995, 9).

The Army's seeming willingness to play a less visible role in this process presaged a shift in the larger political culture, timidly introducing the notion that the active engagement of the military in political issues might no longer be appropriate.<sup>170</sup> Unfortunately, Buyoya avoided reforming the institution that presented the greatest

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<sup>170</sup> This perception was confirmed in an interview with a former government official – a Hutu – who insisted that Buyoya's National Unity initiative had a positive impact on the behavior of soldiers in the army. According to him, the Army behaved less aggressively towards ordinary citizens after the initiative was launched (Follow up interview, February 2015).

challenge to real change, leaving the FAB untouched (Reyntjens 1995, 9).<sup>171</sup> As a result, any shift in Burundi's political culture would not be smooth and initially would be violently contested. Ultimately, however, Buyoya's efforts to push institutional change planted the seeds for reform that would eventually bear fruit over a decade later.

## 2. GOVERNMENTAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

In addition to the efforts to national unity, Buyoya simultaneously undertook reforms of the civil service and of the electoral system. Reyntjens underscores the many areas of progress during this period, saying that,

[By] the end of 1990, half the ministers, a sizeable number of provincial governors and mayors, and even the secretary-general of UPRONA were Hutu. Furthermore, they were equally represented with Tutsi in all major state bodies of a political nature. A marked improvement also occurred in two of three key areas where discrimination against the Hutu had been highly visible in the past. The first is education, where the mostly fair conduct (*sic*) of national examinations since 1989 has resulted in a considerable increase in the number of Hutu having access to secondary and higher education. The second is the civil service, whose higher echelons in particular used to be a near monopoly of Tutsi. Here again, progress is clear: not only did recruitment procedures become more transparent, but the government took a number of voluntary measures aimed at recruiting Hutu into responsible positions, sometimes even at the expense of incumbent Tutsi (1995, 9).

It was also at this time that Burundi's civil society was born. Taking advantage of the relative liberalization of government policies, two human rights organizations in Bujumbura petitioned for and were granted official recognition by the regime.

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<sup>171</sup> When describing the challenges of military reform, Cynthia Enloe observes, "The ethnic composition of any military – or change in ethnic composition of any military – is more than a matter of 'representativeness'; it concerns the fundamental ordering of public authority structures in a polity" (Enloe 1980, 22). As they would soon demonstrate, Tutsi extremists had no interest in relinquishing their hold over Burundi's 'public authority structures'.

Pushing the process further, Buyoya authorized the formation of a constitutional commission in March 1991, building on the progress he'd made in reforming the government and civil service. In March 1992, Burundians approved the new constitution by a large margin. This was followed by the promulgation of a law authorizing political parties and the government recognized several formerly clandestine political parties, including the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU). Unlike several of the other Hutu movements, rather than seek change through armed conflict, FRODEBU's leaders sought change by democratic means. They "recommended the use of democratic methods, privileging popular sovereignty which must be expressed by the vote" (Ntibantunganya 1999, 179).

Interestingly, FRODEBU did not initially plan on participating in the Presidential contest, choosing to focus on parliamentary and communal level elections. Former UN Special Envoy, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, states that,

When Buyoya proposed to hold democratic elections, Frodebu's leadership told him that it would not oppose his presidential bid by presenting a challenger, because Frodebu was not ready to rule the country. However, Frodebu did say that it would contest the parliamentary elections, and that if it were to win, it expected Buyoya to appoint its leader as prime minister. Buyoya did not take up this goodwill offer, so Frodebu decided that it would in fact run its own candidate, the Frodebu leader Ndadaye, against Buyoya (2000, 34).

In light of Buyoya's reaction to FRODEBU's offer, Melchior Ndadaye was the natural choice as FRODEBU's Presidential hopeful, representing a strong, charismatic voice for the transformation of the political system.

Tragically, Buyoya seems to have greatly underestimated both Ndadaye's appeal to the general population and Burundians' desire for democracy. More poignantly, Buyoya seems not to have appreciated how his own reform efforts actually began to influence a shift in Burundi's political culture. As the broader population began to accord the new institutions with a certain amount of legitimacy, they would enthusiastically participate in the electoral process, believing in its promise of change. It was these very institutions that deprived Buyoya of the presidency, ultimately igniting widespread resistance and violence. Thus, Buyoya's decision not to accept Ndadaye's proposal would haunt Burundi for many years to come.

According to Reyntjens (1995), the advent of multiparty politics was particularly significant for Burundi, given the challenging environment that existed in the country at the time. Not since 1961 had truly free elections been organized in Burundi. There were pressures from elite Tutsi who did not want things to change and violence from extremist Hutu who wanted to completely upend the system rather than operate within it. Nonetheless, the Hutu candidates enthusiastically embraced the electoral process, although plagued by intimidation and in spite of the fact that UPRONA was the sole beneficiary of government-sponsored media and campaign resources.

Inevitably, due to Burundi's experience in the post-independence period and the salience of ethnicity in the current environment, the electoral process was "ethnicized." FRODEBU was perceived as the 'legal' defender of Hutu interests and UPRONA was



the dominant, long-standing protector of the wellbeing of elite Tutsi. Through the intimidation of Tutsi who joined FRODEBU, UPRONA activists reinforced the perception that the parties were ethnically based. The elections thus became a “two-party affair” and the composition of those parties underscored how political and ethnic identities had become virtually inseparable (Reyntjens 1995, 10).

#### **D. The Challenge of Changing How Political Conflict is Managed**

The superficial improvement in the climate between Hutu and Tutsi that resulted from the regime’s reforms masked increasing intra-Hutu and intra-Tutsi tension. Among Hutu, Buyoya’s initiatives were met with a great deal of skepticism, as they were viewed as avoiding the real issue of who held – and brutally exercised – power: the army. In particular, PALIPEHUTU refused to buy-in to the regime’s reconciliation process, preferring means other than the proposed democratic process to further their goals. Their continued violent attacks on army installations and Tutsi communities in several Burundian provinces were simply the most extreme form of disbelief that the regime was sincere about the reform process (Lemarchand 1996, Chapter 8).

Among Tutsi factions, the cleavages became most evident within the army. As reported in *Le Monde*:

While the opening offered by the reform process is important, one cannot forget the Military Committee for the Salvation of the Nation, composed exclusively of high-ranking military officers – all Tutsi – who still essential hold power. They are saying in Bujumbura that certain elements of the Army

see the policies of President Buyoya in a negative light and they won't hesitate to undertake a campaign to destabilize the regime (*Le Monde*, June 7, 1989).<sup>172</sup>

While Buyoya did not touch the army or attempt to restructure it during the institutional reform process, he did take steps that seemed to underscore his changing attitude towards the army's role. Specifically, he dissolved the Military Committee for National Salvation in December 1990. It is likely that this step, along with his insistence that the Army take a low profile during the countrywide symposia on national unity, contributed to provoking his dissenters. This discontent manifested itself in at least two coup attempts during this time period, one in 1989 and the second in 1992. Yet, as was seen in 1993 in the aftermath of Ndadaye's assassination, resistance to these changes was not uniform. As is explained in detail in Chapter 8, there were clearly some parts of the military that recognized the need for reform and others which refused to relinquish their grip on power.

In addition to these more superficial, but symbolically significant changes in the FAB's public face, a struggle seems to have developed between Buyoya and certain factions of the army (and extremist Tutsi civilians) over when and how the FAB might be used to counter the Hutu rebel groups. In November 1991, PALIPEHUTU allegedly attacked Tutsi peasants in Bujumbura, Cibitoke, and Bubanza provinces. Predictably, the army responded with excessive force, followed by its typical pattern of torture and extrajudicial killing of Hutu in the area (Lemarchand 1996, 155-157). The FAB was

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<sup>172</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1989/06/07/burundi-huit-mois-apres-les-massacres-ethniques-hutus-et-tutsis-s-efforcent-de-revivre-ensemble-pour-chasser-la-malediction\\_4140728\\_1819218.html#ig47cHczDIF4qCVc.99](http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/1989/06/07/burundi-huit-mois-apres-les-massacres-ethniques-hutus-et-tutsis-s-efforcent-de-revivre-ensemble-pour-chasser-la-malediction_4140728_1819218.html#ig47cHczDIF4qCVc.99). Accessed December 1, 2015.

reported to have killed up to 1000 people in retaliation for the attacks (Amnesty International, May 1992).<sup>173</sup> In the spring of 1992, immediately after Buyoya was named UPRONA's presidential candidate, a second wave of attacks occurred. However, this time, Buyoya seems to have restrained the army, as their reprisals were far less violent.

There are at least three possible reasons for this change in response. First, in the lead up to the elections, Buyoya was increasingly aware of the need to be seen as a candidate for all Burundians, not simply as the champion of Tutsi interests. As fault lines deepened between and within the respective Tutsi and Hutu communities, this universal appeal was becoming difficult to establish. Moreover, the March 1992 coup attempt was but one indication that the more extremist elements in the FAB were unhappy with the direction that the regime was going, highlighting for Buyoya that he could not necessarily rely on all Tutsi to support him at the polls. Reining in the regime's tool of oppression was a logical first step for Buyoya, as he revamped his image and prepared for elections.

Second, Ligue ITEKA, one of the human rights organizations founded the previous year, published a hard hitting report on the November 1991 attacks and the government reprisals, just at the moment the second wave of attacks occurred in the

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<sup>173</sup> An investigation into the violence conducted by Filip Reyntjens and Brigit Eler at the end of December 1991 concluded that up to 3000 people had been killed. The timing of the attacks – occurring precisely when President Buyoya was in Paris, preparing to meet with a representative of the PALIPEHUTU – also led the investigators to theorize that in fact it had been manipulated by extremists elements in the FAB, who did not want to see the reform process continue. As reported in *Le Soir* by Veronique Kiesel, “ONG: Burundi Les Troubles ont fait 3000 morts”, January 4, 1992 [http://archives.lesoir.be/ong-burundi-les-troubles-ont-fait-3.000-morts\\_t-19920104-Z04UPV.html?queryor=Burundi&firstHit=30&by=10&when=-2&begYear=1992&begMonth=01&begDay=01&endYear=1992&endMonth=06&endDay=30&sort=date desc&all=40&rub=TOUT&pos=38&all=40&nav=1](http://archives.lesoir.be/ong-burundi-les-troubles-ont-fait-3.000-morts_t-19920104-Z04UPV.html?queryor=Burundi&firstHit=30&by=10&when=-2&begYear=1992&begMonth=01&begDay=01&endYear=1992&endMonth=06&endDay=30&sort=date desc&all=40&rub=TOUT&pos=38&all=40&nav=1) Accessed October 1, 2014.

spring of 1992.<sup>174</sup> Amnesty International, among others, vocally supported Ligue ITEKA and its investigation.<sup>175</sup> While this kind of attention might have been ignored by previous regimes, Buyoya had signaled late the previous year that he both paid attention to and seemed to care about how his regime was viewed by the international community. In an article in *Le Soir*, Veronique Kiesel highlights the regime's purported commitment these kinds of reports, suggesting that by "inviting all observers to come to Burundi to investigate [the November 1991 violence], the authorities in Bujumbura are committed, in spite of the events, to follow the general reform of the country" (*Le Soir*, January 11, 1992).<sup>176</sup> Given the international attention that Burundi's multi-party process was attracting, it is possible that Buyoya wanted to demonstrate to the international community that the reform process was irreversible and that human rights considerations were taken seriously by the regime. In addition, because Buyoya's domestic position was far from secure, it is possible that part of his strategy was to establish international allies to reinforce his position with both Hutu and Tutsi moderates at home.

A third possible reason for Buyoya's change in behavior may have been the shifting role of the international community. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, by the

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<sup>174</sup> Ligue Iteka was created in 1991 at the initiative of a diverse group of professionals, including university professors, lawyers, religious leaders, etc. The association was officially approved on February 6, 1991 by *Ordinance N° 550/029*, thus becoming the first Burundian organization defending human rights to be legally recognized and operating in Burundi. Background taken from the Ligue ITEKA website, <http://www.ligue-iteka.bi/index.php/a-propos-de>, accessed October 1, 2014.

<sup>175</sup> This was followed in May 1992 by an equally urgent report from Amnesty International exhorting the Buyoya regime and the international community to investigate the military's responses to the late 1991 attacks, claiming that as many as 1000 people had died in the extrajudicial killings for which the military was responsible. The Buyoya government ridiculed the report and denied that any extrajudicial killing had taken place. (*Amnesty International Report*, "Burundi: Appeals for an inquiry into army and gendarmerie killings and other recent human rights violations" AFR 16/04/92 Amnesty International 28 May 1992).

<sup>176</sup> "Selon Bujumbura, les événements n'ont pas fait plus de 551 morts: la version de autorités burundaises" *Le Soir*, January 11, 1992 [http://archives.lesoir.be/selon-bujumbura-les-evenements-n-ont-pas-fait-plus-de-5\\_t-19920111-Z04VF9.html](http://archives.lesoir.be/selon-bujumbura-les-evenements-n-ont-pas-fait-plus-de-5_t-19920111-Z04VF9.html) Accessed October 1, 2014.

late 1980s, the changing nature of the global political environment seemed to have influenced Buyoya and may have impacted the incentive structure of Burundi's military regime. One way this environment directly influenced Buyoya was on the occasion of the French-Africa Summit in 1990. In what became known as the La Baule discourse (named after the town in which the summit was held), French President François Mitterrand announced that, from then on, French aid would be largely predicated on the recipient country's progress on a path towards democratization and liberalization.<sup>177</sup> In the words of Roland Dumas, France's Foreign Minister at the time, "The winds of liberty that blew in the East will one day inevitably blow in the direction of the South... There is no development without democracy; and there is no democracy without development."<sup>178</sup> Buyoya attended this summit and, given that France was one of Burundi's main international partners at the time, it is probable that the shift in the global normative environment did not go unnoticed by the military regime.<sup>179</sup>

The explicit message from France and other international partners was accompanied by increasingly dire economic conditions at the end of the 1980s, due to declining agricultural revenue and, in particular, the fall of coffee prices – Burundi's main source of foreign exchange. Coupled with increased international sensitivity to human rights violations, these factors proved to be powerful motivators for African regimes, including Burundi's, to change their ways.

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<sup>177</sup> As Alan Riding reported in *The New York Times*, "While pledging to stand by Africa during its current acute economic crisis, President François Mitterrand said today that French aid would in the future flow "more enthusiastically" to those countries that take steps toward democracy" ("France Ties Africa Aid to Democracy", *The New York Times*, June 22, 1990. Accessed September 11, 2014).

<sup>178</sup> <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r10-324/r10-3240.html>. Accessed March 30, 2013.

<sup>179</sup> Interview with Burundian Professor, August 2012. This perspective was confirmed in separate interviews with two ex-FAB military officers who served under Buyoya during the Third Republic (interviews conducted in August 2012).

Shifts in the behavior of the regime occurred at a time when the engagement of the international community increased, leading one to surmise that international pressure played a much larger role in the regime's calculus than it had in previous eras. However, it is important to underscore that it was Buyoya, rather than the entire military regime, who stewarded Burundi towards democracy. As explained earlier in this chapter, despite the Buyoya-led initiative, there was clear evidence that the FAB had not bought into the reform process. Nor, did it seem to have truly reassessed its own interests vis à vis the international community. Indeed, as would soon become clear, the FAB would continue to behave as it chose, irrespective of international censure.

### **E. Regime Change at Last? The Presidency of Melchior Ndadaye**

In light of the seemingly successful process of institutional reform, the moment appeared propitious for the emergence of a freely elected, civilian-led government and the inculcation of democratic norms. The elections mandated by the new constitution were held in late spring 1993 and on June 1, FRODEBU's Melchior Ndadaye became Burundi's first democratically elected president. Turnout was massive – 97.3% of registered voters participated in the election – one of the highest turnouts in an election in Africa during that time period (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 208). The elections were judged to be mostly free and fair and relatively absent of violence by both national and international observers. The success of FRODEBU in both the presidential and the parliamentary elections meant that after almost 30 years of unchallenged dominance,

UPRONA was unseated. As Reyntjens eloquently describes,

The former single party (*de jure* since 1966) comfortably survived three coups and several rounds of mass killings, of which the one in 1972 was of a genocidal nature, but it was almost blown away by the first democratic exercise since 1965. This simply confirms the fact that UPRONA had little or no popular support as a national party, being rather the instrument to legitimize and organize the monopolization of power in the hands of a Tutsi elite (1995, 11).

Ndadaye's election was an incredibly significant event for Burundi and Burundians. For the first time since independence, a new Burundian regime took power in the context of a system that was recognized as legitimate by the vast majority of Burundians. The institutions that structured the selection process – the new constitution, multiparty politics, and elections – allowed for the participation of all Burundi and were viewed as relatively transparent and fair, thus reinforcing their own legitimacy. This was a far cry from the model of the usurpation of power by force by a tiny elite that had dominated regime change in Burundi for decades.

Despite his widespread legitimacy, Ndadaye's success nonetheless came as a surprise to Buyoya, his entourage, many Burundians, and even many international observers. And though he had won at the polls, many Burundians did not dare hope that Ndadaye would actually be able to assume office. Indeed, Buyoya seemed to have made every effort to structure the system so that he himself would be seen as the harbinger of democracy and would prevail during the elections. As Bratton and van de Walle might characterize it, Buyoya tried to “change the rules of the political game so that they [would] work more consistently in [his] own favor” (1997, 42).

Buyoya seems to have gravely misjudged how hollow the promises of UPRONA rang in the ears of the majority of Burundians. The population was willing to take a risk in supporting Burundi's new institutions; institutions Buyoya himself had created. They did not feel compelled, however, to elect him to lead those institutions. As Reynjens charitably remarks, "The association of Buyoya with [the] symbols of past injustice, violence and oppression undoubtedly turned away many voters who might otherwise have recognized his qualities of leadership" (1995, 11). Ironically, Buyoya's loss at the polls was a testament to the resonance that the new institutions had amongst Burundi – indeed, signaling a potential shift in Burundi's political culture.

The dissatisfaction of Tutsi extremists with the results of the elections was immediately evident. Tutsi youth protested in the streets of Bujumbura and in early June the army attempted a coup d'état. A second coup was attempted in early July, although in neither case were these challenges supported by large numbers of soldiers. This ambiguity reflected the divisions amongst the soldiers and their doubts about the regime's transformation. Despite this uncertainty, Buyoya ceded power and Melchior Ndadaye was inaugurated on July 10, 1993.

Instead of being intimidated by the volatile situation, Ndadaye pressed forward with reforms. As was expected, he promoted many Hutu into the government, particularly the FRODEBU party faithful. The new President was also cognizant of the need to placate UPRONA members. Tutsi army officers received the top posts in both the Ministry of Defense and the State Secretariat for Internal Security. Sylvie Kinigi, a Tutsi



from URPONA, was named Prime Minister and one third of cabinet members were also Tutsi. Five ministers were from Bururi, thus taking into account the previously dominant regional interests. However, lower down in the government pyramid, many Hutu FRODEBU cadre were promoted – governors, chiefs of staff of army and gendarmerie, ambassadors, and the heads of other local administrative offices (Reyntjens 2000, 12).

Ndadaye's government accelerated recruitment of Hutu into ISCAM, the national military academy and into the National Police School (ENAPO). The government also promised to deal immediately with the massive influx of returnees, promising to return their land. Ould Abdallah describes some of these initial policy moves as “serious mistakes”, saying

Ndadaye had been elected on a platform of the rights of all refugees to return and to reclaim their lands, which the government had sold to soldiers after the 1972 killings and the refugee exodus. When Ndadaye's minister for refugees, Léonard Nyangoma, unwisely pressed publicly for a quick solution to the issue of land, those who now regarded themselves as the rightful owners began to threaten not only the returning refugees but also the government (2000, 35).

In addition to depriving the Tutsi elite of key positions, the new administration's desire to ‘reset’ the balance between Hutu and Tutsi, as well as take advantage of the skills of returning refugees – of whom there would be thousands – served only to stoke the fears of the Tutsi (Reyntjens 2000, Lemarchand 1996).<sup>180</sup> These rapid changes, while not fast enough for Hutu, were unprecedented for Tutsi. Not only did they perceive that Ndadaye

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<sup>180</sup> In addition to these issues, the economic interests of Tutsi were also threatened. As described in the report by the international commission of inquiry concerning the assassination of the President of Burundi (UN document S/1996/682, August 22, 1996), these economic interests played a key role in the unrest that led to Ndadaye's assassination, “Some contracts and concessions approved by the preceding Government were questioned, affecting powerful economic interests closely associated with the Tutsi elite and the Army” (S/1996/682, page 21).

was attempting to completely transform the world as they knew it, his continuation of the reforms was contrary to their perceptions of a legitimate regime. They would soon respond accordingly.

The institutional change that new regime promised would not be realized. Instead, Tutsi fears manifested themselves in the assassination of President Ndadaye on October 21, 1993. In Reyntjens' words, "This discontent was at the origins of the coup of 21 October 1993. In fact, this was just the most violent expression of the resistance to change, which had been visible since Buyoya embarked on his new policy at the end of 1988" (1995, 3). The hoped-for transformation of Burundi's political culture was a virtually impossible goal, given the context within which Ndadaye's administration had been elected.

## **F. The Challenge of Influencing Political Culture**

The resistance to Ndadaye's success and ultimately his assassination at what seemed to be a propitious moment for change in Burundi can best be understood using an analysis of Buyoya's attempts to introduce Burundi's political elite to a new and competing set of norms; norms vastly different than those under which they had operated in the recent past and which would have significantly influenced Burundi's political culture should they have been fully accepted. The reforms also represented a serious threat to the political and economic interests of that same Tutsi elite – without access to the state, the Tutsi would no longer control Burundi's most important resources,

impacting both their perceptions of their personal wellbeing and their access to the means by which the clientelist system functioned.

## 1. SEEDS OF RESISTANCE

As has been demonstrated in this dissertation, throughout its history, Burundi's political culture has been shaped by successive waves of extreme violence, policies of exclusion, and illegitimate usurpations of power. The military regimes came to embody these characteristics, eschewing broad political participation and privileging violence as the means of resolving political conflict; succeeding, "over time [in] help[ing] to create or reinforce those [political] traditions" (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 38).

The regime's institutions – the military, the one-party state, and the discriminatory education system, amongst others – served as vehicles for the replication of this dominant political culture. The result, as Thelen (1999) might describe, was a set of feedback loops that allowed some groups to maintain power and to actively marginalize others. Faced with the prospect of losing power, the elite Tutsi responded in a manner consistent with Burundi's political culture – with violence designed to maintain their historically exclusionary system.

The prospect of allowing Hutu participation in the institutions of the state also presented an important economic problem for the Tutsi elite. The clientelist system described in previous chapters continued to flourish in Burundi (although in an altered

form, as it was tightly linked to party membership in UPRONA and the provision of state services) and its most important rents accrued to those occupying positions in the civil service, particularly those involved in parastatal institutions such as the state-run Burundi Coffee Board. Elite Tutsi dominated these positions.

The agricultural sector, and in particular the coffee producing industry, offer an interesting window into how the clientelist system worked and why expanding participation in the institutions of the state was seen as so threatening by Tutsi. Throughout most of its post-independence history, the main source of the state's revenue has come from the agricultural sector in Burundi and its main source of foreign exchange came from the sale of coffee. Yet, the agricultural sector – dominated by Hutu – did not enjoy a commensurate benefit of investment by the state. In a study published by International Alert, it is reported that since the 1960s,

The Burundian state has always received most of its revenue from the agricultural sector but these have mainly benefited the state sector based in Bujumbura or have been invested in the unproductive industrial sector. From 1972 to 1992 farming received 20 to 30% of investments, while industry received 70-80%. During the same period agriculture provided 64% of the gross domestic product while the services sector provided 37.7% and the industrial sector 16.7%. This sector split is matched by a city/countryside divide. While 90% of the population lives in the countryside, during the 1980s total state funding for the rural sector amounted to 20%. In comparison, Bujumbura received 50% of total public investments and 90% of social expenditure (Kimonyo and Ntiranyibagira 2007, 11).

This pattern of unequal distribution of resources was repeated in the coffee sector, where the management structures benefited from investment at the expense of the coffee growers. The International Alert report authors contend that this was an explicit strategy, stating that, "Revenue gained from coffee sales took on a politically and economically

strategic importance because it could be used freely by the regime in power without attracting the attention of the international community or donors” (Kimonyo and Ntiranyibagira 2007, 11). This disparity was enhanced when the coffee sector was nationalized in the mid-1970s, giving the Tutsi-led regime direct access to the lion’s share of the resources generated by the sale of coffee. Unsurprisingly, given the composition of the regime, many of these beneficiaries were current or retired Army officers.

In the mid-1980s, as Burundi became more integrated into the world economy, the agricultural sector was targeted for reform and privatization as part of the World Bank’s structural adjustment program for Burundi. Given its importance, the coffee sector was a top priority. Yet privatization simply perpetuated the exclusion of Hutu, as Tutsi benefited from both the opportunities offered by privatization and the capital investment that accompanied the process. This not only impacted the legitimate businesses affected by privatization, it reinforced the Tutsi advantages within the clientelist system by concentrating even more resources available for patronage into the hands of the minority. The patterns of ownership of these important economic assets have remained virtually unchanged today, almost thirty years after the World Bank introduced their structural adjustment program (Kimonyo and Ntiranyibagira 2007).

Buyoya’s political reforms did not address the unbalanced (and unfair) nature of Burundi’s economic institutions. Indeed, Tutsi resistance was as tightly linked to their economic interests as to their security needs. Without that economic muscle, there were

insufficient resources available to help to sustain the political changes Buyoya had initiated.<sup>181</sup>

## 2. THE (FAILED) PROCESS OF CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS

The failure of Buyoya's reform effort is also an example of the challenges inherent in a process of norm evolution – which is a critical part of an evolving political culture. In his efforts to promote widespread institutional reform, Buyoya was not simply changing institutional structures; he was attempting to transform some of the norms that had become central to Burundi's political culture in the colonial and immediate post-colonial period – personalization, violence and exclusion. And while his efforts did not yield the hoped-for transformation to democracy in 1993, they did set the stage for later regime transition and ultimately contributed to an evolution of Burundi's political culture, which has been strongly evident in the Army since the end of the war (see Chapter Nine).

As discussed at length in Chapter Two, norms are not static, but rather evolve, influencing change in political culture as new norms supplant older ones. Finnemore and Sikkink's (1998) description of the life cycle (or evolution) of a norm offers us explanatory value for understanding Buyoya's approach. According to the authors, the norm life cycle is comprised of three phases: norm emergence; norm acceptance – via a

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<sup>181</sup> The most recent data regarding Burundi's coffee sector suggests that the management of Burundi's scarce economic resources remains a critical issue. Current coffee and tea exports constitute 90% of Burundi's foreign exchange earnings. According to the International Alert report, this is higher than in 2007, when the percentage was somewhere between 60-80% (2007, 6). Yet, because the sector has not been revitalized, this means that Burundi's foreign exchange is earned from an increasingly smaller harvest of coffee, amounting to very little in real dollars. Current coffee sector data accessed on June 30, 2015 at: <http://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/burundi/economy>

‘norm cascade’; and finally, norm internalization. All three phases are described below as they relate to Buyoya’s failed experience with institutional reform.

a. Norm Emergence

There are two key pieces of the norm emergence phase, both of which are critical to our analysis of Buyoya’s actions during the Third Republic: his role as a norm entrepreneur and the organizational platform from which he was able to act.

In the small circle of Burundian elite in the late 1980s, President Buyoya certainly possessed the characteristics of a norm entrepreneur – or as Cass Sunstein would define them, “people interested in changing social norms” (1996, 909). Buyoya was one of very few Burundian leaders at the time who could have taken up the reform process, especially given the international and domestic pressure that he faced. His extensive education outside of Burundi, his intimate relationship to and credibility with many of the army powerbrokers, and the leadership positions he occupied in advance of his first coup d’état, all informed his responses to crisis, his interaction with the international community, his choices about the nature of the reforms, and the processes he used to achieve them.<sup>182</sup>

Buyoya also had the necessary platform from which to act. As President in a one-party state that was effectively a military dictatorship, he was capable of pushing through reform processes that otherwise might have been more widely resisted. Using this

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<sup>182</sup> Buyoya expands on some of these influences in his book 1998 book Mission Possible.

platform, Buyoya framed the issues (national unity) and named the norm that should be promulgated (inclusion). According to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), the frame must resonate with the public so that it can successfully counter alternative framing or entrenched and embedded existing norms. Thus, Buyoya's framing of the reforms as a process of renewed and integrative national unity was a way to build both internal and external support. Significantly, he did not frame his effort as the "reform of institutions", which likely would have alienated the army and other extremists even earlier in the process.

In his article entitled 'Engineering National Unity' Reyntjens eloquently captures both Buyoya's role as a norm entrepreneur and the pains he took to effectively frame the issues. Reyntjens underscores the importance of the establishment of the new institutions and how those institutions were meant to facilitate changes in values and norms. Indeed, he describes Buyoya's efforts to promote national unity as almost 'religious'.

After the bloody events of August 1988, President Buyoya, understanding that the infernal cycle of violence had to be broken, undertook a new policy which imagined the integration of the Hutu into the power structure, from which they had been excluded until that time. Promoting an ideology – one might be tempted to call it a religion – of national unity, different steps led to the adoption by the referendum of 9 March 1992 of the constitution of the Third Republic: the formation of a government equally composed of Hutu and Tutsi, with a Hutu Prime Minister; the publication of a Charter of National Unity in April 1990, adopted by referendum in February 1991; the work of the constitutional commission, which rendered its report in August 1991. All this institutional activity was accompanied by the entry of a noticeable number of Hutu into all spheres of public life – even if it was sometimes symbolic (1992, 141).



b. Norm Acceptance

Buyoya was relatively successful in appropriately framing the necessity of change for the larger public. Where he failed was in assuring that all factions had accepted these changes; what Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) call the process of ‘contestation’ (see Chapter Two pp. 57). The new norm of inclusion vied with the old norm of exclusion, resulting in conflict. Indeed, Buyoya’s overtures to Hutu were perceived by many of the Tutsi elite as “inappropriate” and sparked resistance to and even violent contestation of the new set of norms that he was attempting to promote via his reforms.

What happened? Or rather, what did *not* happen in the context of Burundi’s political evolution such that the reforms promulgated by Buyoya were so fiercely contested? There are three parts to the explanation. First, while segments of the broader society may have begun to accept the promise of normative transformation that accompanied the reforms initiated by Buyoya five years earlier, those elements in society who had the most to lose had not. Young (2014) would describe this as a failure to reach a tipping point. Both Hutu and Tutsi stood to lose by a peaceful transition to majority rule. The Hutu lost the *raison d’être* for their violent, pro-Hutu platform and the Tutsi lost power, privilege and security for their future. Arguably, these elements were able to influence one, incredibly significant change – Ndadaye’s assassination – which had the effect of demonstrating to the rest of the population that the reforms had not made a difference after all. It was to be business as usual with the Tutsi-led Army quashing all possibilities for real change in the system.

Second, while Buyoya made great strides in reforming some of Burundi's institutions, as highlighted above, he never attempted to reform or even influence change within the security services or the justice sector.<sup>183</sup> During a conference presentation in 1995, Buyoya claimed that the army participated in the popular debates that preceded the constitution and "a training campaign was organized to ensure that members of the armed forces would understand their place and their role in the democratic framework". (Including the first of two AAI seminars, conducted in Feb 1993.) In other words, the Army was open to accepting democracy.

According to Buyoya, it was the extreme demonization of the army by Hutu political parties after the elections that contributed to ethnic crystallization and heightened tensions between the Tutsi dominated army and the newly elected Hutu government. In his view, the extreme and rapid nature of the reforms proposed frightened the Tutsi and contributed to deepening mistrust of Hutu political parties; upset the military with regards to their immediate career interests; gave Tutsi extremists extraordinary arguments with which to play on the fears of the "Hutu menace" (and was probably inflamed by events going on in Rwanda next door, where all their fears were being realized).

This reading of events belies the FAB's behavior early on in Buyoya's reform process and prior to the elections. As Reyntjens explains,

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<sup>183</sup> "The Role of the Army in Democratic Transition: The Case of Burundi" by Pierre Buyoya, Former Burundian President, as reported in the 1995 AAI Conference Report on *The Role of Military in Democratization*.

[T]he third and most sensitive area remained problematic. The armed forces and the security services, which during the successive crises since 1965 had become almost exclusively Tutsi, resisted change. Coup attempts in February 1989 and March 1992, and the way in which some army units behaved during the November 1991 disturbances in particular, showed that Buyoya's message of reconciliation had considerable difficulty in penetrating the military establishment (1995, 9).

For officers in the army, the democratic ideology was at odds with the privileged, authoritarian, militarized culture that they had created during the preceding 25 years. As described in Chapter 6, the leaders of the FAB had successfully inculcated the institution of the army with the norms of violence and exclusion.

The gap between the norms held by the extreme Tutsi elements, both in the military and civilian elite, and those held by more progressive elements in society was too great to bridge in the short time frame between Buyoya's ascendance to power and UPRONA's devastating loss in the 1993 elections.<sup>184</sup> The democratically elected, predominantly Hutu government challenged the dominant political culture and posed an existential threat to the Tutsi.

c. Norm Internalization

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the introduction of new institutions did not eliminate the existence of or the power retained by the old institutions (Acemoglu and

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<sup>184</sup> As one disaffected former officer recounted to me, "Before the announcement of the election, we told Buyoya [what to do] because we heard that URPONA was defeated. What did we say? It was at a meeting with the officers. I was in Gitega, in a meeting with the officers, [and] they said, "Tell Buyoya to do a coup." The Minister of Defense and the Chief of Staff went to tell Buyoya, "We will not accept the elections. We have to execute a coup." After, the Minister and the Chief of Staff, returned they told us, "We have been deceived by Buyoya...Buyoya said that he never cheated, he will not execute a coup!" We were [all] deceived by Buyoya" (Interview with ex-FAB officer, August 13, 2012).

Robinson 2008). Indeed, because the previous regimes had reinforced the power of the Army, and Buyoya had not addressed the reform of this institution during his own tenure, its relative power, vis-à-vis the new institutions (the constitution, electoral politics) had not changed.

Thus, Buyoya proposed changes to the system of allocation of *de jure* political power when he promulgated his constitutional reforms and introduced multiparty democracy. He may have erroneously thought he would be the beneficiary of this change (badly misreading his Tutsi compatriots and underestimating the disillusionment of Hutu); nonetheless, his goal was to reorder the allocation of power within the system. Unfortunately for Burundians, the changes in *de jure* power were not translated into changes in *de facto* power – which had been a Hutu concern all along. Indeed, divested of their *de jure* political power, the Tutsi extremists made use of their *de facto* economic and military power (reinforced over time through the discriminatory policies of the state and the clientelist system) to violently resist change in the system. Because the norm changes were not accepted, they were not internalized – not at this point in Burundi's history.

### 3. POLITICS AS USUAL

President Buyoya attempted to change the trajectory of Burundi's regime. In a way, he was also attempting to influence Burundi's political culture, albeit unconsciously. However, he neglected the two most powerful institutions that undergirded the extremist Tutsi domination of Burundi's political culture – the Army and

the clientelist system. Without addressing both the elite Hima Tutsi *de facto* hold on power and the fears that prompted them to use it, it was virtually impossible to successfully engage a meaningful institutional reform process. Without influencing those institutions that provided the regime with its (admittedly questionable) legitimacy, it was even less probable that the space necessary for a shift in Burundi's culture might open. As a result, the dominant characteristics of the autocratic military regime quickly reasserted themselves, leaving Burundians with little immediate hope for change.

## **Chapter Eight: A Return to Military Dictatorship? (1993-2005)**

### **A. Introduction**

President Ndadaye's death marked a critical juncture in Burundi's history. In crucial ways, the assassination was a violent rupture with Burundi's past. Since independence, never had one of Burundi's leaders been killed while holding power. As a result, the period between October 1993 and 2005 was one of uncertainty and changing power relations, inspiring a perceptible shift in Burundi's political culture, much like the period that followed Prince Rwagasore's assassination in 1961.

At the same time, the assassination reflected the enduring nature of key features of Burundi's political culture – violence and exclusion remained the dominant currency in the exercise of power and the management of political conflict. Economic influence was tied to the clientelist system and in particular, control of Burundi's few resources: the coffee sector and the coffers of the state. The continuity represented by these characteristics overshadowed political life in the immediate aftermath of Ndadaye's assassination, giving the impression that nothing had really changed after all.

Ultimately, however, the sources of the regime's legitimacy had been questioned and had begun to shift. The rules of the game were contested in ways that they had not been in the previous thirty years. Motivated in part by Buyoya's reform process and the

expectations that it set, a multiplicity of political actors sought to change the regime, leveraging violence, if necessary. Eventually, the dominance of the army began to wane and the emergence of different sources of authority and influence contributed to the reallocation of power. Specifically, negotiation would reemerge as an important thread in the management of political relations among the widening range powerbrokers in Burundi. These changes were marked by the failed coup d'état, the heightened involvement of the international community, the civil war and its negotiated settlement.

## **B. Rupture and Upheaval**

### **1. THE FAILED COUP D'ÉTAT**

After President Ndadaye's assassination, the army did not immediately succeed in recapturing the state. Indeed, the coup itself failed. As former USAID Director, Glen Slocum recounts in an interview with W. Haven North, "Within a few hours of Ndadaye's death, Burundi Radio announced the establishment of a new, multiparty government with a Hutu figurehead, but the reaction, both domestic and international, was so opposed that this newly announced government never sat" (Interview conducted November 1998). Rather than going through with the coup, the army retreated and FAB officers announced that the FRODEBU government had been restored.

The failure of the coup was due, in part, to the widespread ambivalence within the Tutsi-dominated FAB toward the newly elected government, thus making coordinated

action on the part of the army very difficult. As outlined in the previous chapter, these cracks had appeared earlier in the year, during the failed coup attempt of July 3. Gerard Prunier describes the situation as follows:

The general atmosphere of hope accompanying President Ndadaye's election had left a bitter taste in the mouth of the various extremist factions. The first to act were the Tutsi extremists in the Army. On 3 July, four days after the legislative polls, elements of the 2nd Commando Battalion from Muha Barracks tried to take power by force. The movement was led by Lt. Colonel Sylvestre Ningaba who had been an ADC to President Buyoya (*sic*). But it was quickly stopped by another officer, Major Isaie Nibizi, who managed to talk the men and the NCOs out of following their mutinous officers. The reaction in Army circles was ambiguous. Many officers criticized Ningaba not for attempting a coup but for doing so with little serious planning. Many in the officer corps seemed to be paying only lip-service to democratic principles in spite of the clear verdict of the polls. The feeling was clearly racist in tone: 'those people' (meaning Hutu) were described as not being capable of actually governing the country (1994, 20).

This ambivalence had not been resolved at the time of the President's assassination in October 1993. In fact the Army's abrupt reversal, claiming that the coup had been the work of a few malcontents and requesting that the legal government be restored, only served to highlight the competing tensions within the FAB.<sup>185</sup>

Did this reversal also illustrate a new relationship between the international community and the FAB? As discussed in Chapter 7, since Buyoya's rise to power in 1987, the international community's influence seemed to be far more evident in some of the regime's key decisions than it had been in the past.<sup>186</sup> While the army seems to have

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<sup>185</sup> "Troops in Burundi seek amnesty" *The New York Times*, October 24, 1993. <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/24/world/troops-in-burundi-seek-amnesty.html?emc=eta1> Accessed October 1, 2014. SRSO Ould-Abdallah affirms this perception of ambivalence, describing the coup attempt as one "staged by disaffected but poorly organized troops" (2000, 36).

<sup>186</sup> With the notable exception of January 1972, when the army regime bowed to international pressure and suspended the death sentences of several prominent Ganwa and Banyaruguru Tutsi, as described in Chapter Six of this dissertation.



been largely isolated from this kind of influence before 1987, during Buyoya's Third Republic, the regime seemed to have reevaluated its interests with respect to the international community. Perhaps the FAB's actions in 1993 might have reflected this changed relationship? At the very least, the international outcry after the attempted coup and Ndadaye's subsequent death seems to have influenced the FAB's immediate behavior.

Yet the increasing sensitivity of the regime to world opinion was incremental and uneven. Indeed, in the context of Burundi's political culture, international approbation did not seem to inform any of the FAB's decisions and thus international pressure had limited success. This was especially true after 1993, despite the FAB's initial retreat from the coup. As head of the military regime before the democratic transition, Buyoya had redefined the space within which the FAB could operate and thus, how they perceived their interests with respect to the international community. After Ndadaye's election, the military's perception of its interests changed. The very real threat posed by a Hutu majority government (in terms of loss of prestige and jobs, and reduced access to economic resources and other benefits), coupled with the existential fear of annihilation held by most Tutsi, outweighed any potential gains that might be garnered from cooperation with international partners. International influence on the FAB diminished accordingly. As history would demonstrate, any apparent positive reaction to international pressure on the part of the FAB was merely window dressing.

## 2. INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE ONGOING POLITICAL CRISIS

Almost immediately after Ndadaye's death, the United Nations moved to intervene in Burundi. The UN appointed Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah as Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) to Burundi, who arrived in Bujumbura on November 25, 1993 with a mandate to engage in preventive diplomacy. In his words, foremost on his agenda was "the prevention of an explosion of violence" (2000, 4).

At the heart of Ould-Abdallah's preventive diplomacy mandate was the stewardship of the negotiation process designed to restore Burundi's political institutions. These negotiations were fraught with problems, not the least of which were internal divisions among the FRODEBU leaders about who should lead the party and what strategy they should follow. Despite the SRSG's attempts to bridge the splits, over time they rendered FRODEBU incapable of effectively defending its own interests. The Tutsi opposition exploited these divisions and, through a protracted process, succeeded in making political gains that far outweighed their achievements at the 1993 polls. In his memoir, the SRSG captures this dynamic, saying:

The parties that made up the [Tutsi] opposition were generally more experienced and thus more competent politically [than FRODEBU]. They were, however, uninterested in cooperating with FRODEBU for the overall good of the country. They held FRODEBU in very low esteem, and frequently laughed at its leaders' inexperience. Although UPRONA was by far the biggest of the opposition parties (none of the other parties, it may be recalled, polled as much as 2 percent of the popular vote), UPRONA was very vulnerable to the demands of the much smaller and much more extreme Tutsi parties (2000, 43).

In addition to the political conflict, the assassination and the subsequent negotiation process were accompanied by massive violence. Thousands of Tutsi were massacred by their Hutu neighbors in revenge for Ndadaye's death, leading to fears of genocide. The FAB responded with excessive force during a campaign of 'pacification'. In all, at least 50,000 people are reported to have been killed in the weeks following the assassination. By the end of the year, hundreds of thousands would be internally displaced and over six hundred thousand people would seek refuge in neighboring countries (Ould-Abdallah 2000, 37).<sup>187</sup>

As the political talks continued, extreme Tutsi parties held the negotiations hostage to constant threats of violence in urban Bujumbura and succeeded in directly impacting the composition of the government (Reyntjens 2000, 15). Ultimately, the National Assembly was restored in December 1993, a new cabinet was formed and, in February 1994, a new president, Cyprien Ntuyamira, was appointed from the ranks of FRODEBU. Reyntjens deplored the composition of the new government saying, "the government formed on 11 February explicitly confirmed the ethnic biopolarization of the political system," where the opposition was made up entirely of Tutsi and the ruling party was represented almost exclusively by Hutu (2000, 15).

Worse, this process did nothing to address the underlying problem facing *Barundi*: the equitable allocation of power and resources to ensure that the vast majority

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<sup>187</sup> The US Department of State confirms the numbers of refugees and internally displaced peoples in their January 31, 1994 report, *Burundi Human Rights Practices, 1993*.  
[http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1993\\_hrp\\_report/93hrp\\_report\\_africa/Burundi.html](http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1993_hrp_report/93hrp_report_africa/Burundi.html) Accessed May 5, 2015.

of the population had access to the benefits of democracy and an effectively run state. The political infighting, poor leadership, and ongoing violence further contributed to the instability of the government and a general sense of chaos.

Despite the agreement on the new government, this was not to be the end of Burundi's political crisis. On April 6, 1994, President Ntjamira was killed along with Rwandan President Habyarimana, when their plane was shot down while on approach to the Kigali airport. To avert immediate violence in Burundi (a legitimate fear given that this was Burundi's second President in six months to be killed), SRSB Ould-Abdallah worked with the FRODEBU leadership and the FAB to ensure that the population received a single, consistent message about Ntjamira's death: he had not been targeted and his death was an accident. In addition, the SRSB aided the government in developing a strategy to encourage civilian governors and Army commanders to work together in their respective provinces to calm fears and mitigate violence (Ould-Abdallah 2000, 56-57).

Although the government, supported by the SRSB, was successful in preventing mass violence in the immediate aftermath of President Ntjamira's death, the Tutsi opposition again exploited the leadership vacuum by extracting further concessions from the ruling party during the renewed negotiations. When the new Convention of Government was finally signed in September 1994, the Tutsi opposition had succeeded in securing 45% of the government posts and a National Security Council was put into place – “designed as an instrument for regulating the country's political system” (Ould-

Abdallah 2000, 74-75). The National Assembly then elected Sylvestre Ntibantunganya as Burundi's third President in eighteen months.

The acrimonious process of elite bargaining in Bujumbura thus heralded a return to the pattern of former regimes, where Hutu and Tutsi elite struggled for power in the capital, while the army reasserted its role as the tool of oppression, and the rural population suffered the consequences. More tragically for the majority of Hutu, not only was "their" president killed and their legitimate victory at the polls rendered a hollow one, they were now saddled with a government that included the very perpetrators of violence against them (Reyntjens, 1995).

### 3. CONTINUITY? THE PHENOMENON OF THE "CREEPING COUP"

While courageous, SRSB Ould-Abdallah's efforts were ultimately unable to influence the course of events in Burundi and to prevent a full-scale war. This was largely due to the fact that, after the assassination, perceptions of the extremist elements on all sides had hardened. No longer feeling bound by the reform process initiated by former President Buyoya, hard-line Tutsi within and outside of the Army came to dominate the response to the deteriorating situation. A power-sharing agreement with FRODEBU that would reflect the gains made by the Hutu during the 1993 democratic elections was decidedly not in the Tutsi extremists' interest and thus intervention by external actors such as the SRSB to achieve such a goal was met with increasing resistance.

Reyntjens calls the assassination and the ensuing political negotiations “one of the ‘most successful failed coups’ in history” (1995, 16). He underscores four things that characterized this creeping coup: 1) attempts to destroy the legitimacy of FRODEBU; 2) the use of the constitutional court to paralyze government; 3) the unleashing of urban and rural violence to intimidate FRODEBU officials; and 4) the imposition of a de facto constitutional order which consolidated the achievements of the ‘coup’ (Reyntjens 1995, 13-20).<sup>188</sup> All four of these characteristics succeeded in reinforcing the position of the Tutsi-dominated FAB within the government and, more importantly, allowed the army to re-impose its version of the ‘rules of the game’. The democratic process was rejected and there was a return to violence and exclusion as the means of managing political conflict.

SRSG Ould-Abdallah disagrees strongly with the assessment that the political negotiations and the Convention of Government constituted a “creeping coup.” He contends that the powersharing arrangements reflected in the Convention of Government demonstrated a serious commitment on the part of the parties to seek consensus (2000, 73). In his memoir, he states that outsiders were too quick to push for a full restitution of the previous FRODEBU government, ignoring realities on the ground. He goes on to say that, “It may be noted that when the international community stopped supporting the convention and instead suggested or hinted to Frodebu that it should seize full control of the government, chaos ensued...” (2000, 76).

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<sup>188</sup> A 1996 report by Human Rights Watch goes so far as to say, “Through a combination of violence, intimidation, and political blockage, Tutsi-dominated factions re-appropriated the political control they had lost at the polls in June 1993” (*HRW World Report 1996 – Burundi*, 1 January 1996. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a8a30.html> Accessed May 5, 2015.

The SRSG's appraisal neglects two important realities. First, it assumes that the parties were interested in sharing power. However, as Stef Vandeginste describes, "In actual practice, there was, at that time, very little elite consensus among the signatories and very outspoken resistance to the power-sharing arrangement by increasingly extremist politicians on both sides" (2009, 70). Second, while the make up of institutions may have temporarily changed, the *raison d'être* underlying those institutions had not. The inability of the new regime to withstand the shock produced by the death of President Ndadaye clearly demonstrated that, while efforts had been made to reform political institutions, *de facto* power within the regime remained firmly in the hands of the Tutsi. In particular, the establishment of the National Security Council, with its far-reaching powers, undermined the new President and FRODEBU's legitimate gains at the polls and harkened back to earlier eras in which a Tutsi-dominated security council oversaw the activities of government.<sup>189</sup>

As became increasingly clear by the end of 1994, the tenacious threads of Burundi's political culture remained dominant, despite the initial promise of change. The authoritarian legacy of the monarchy, reinforced by colonialism, created a political tradition in which the rise of a strongman regime was almost inevitable. The subsequent dominance of the institution of the army buttressed what became a military regime. The institutional reforms introduced by Buyoya after 1988 were unable to take root in Burundi because the political culture militated against their incorporation. Exclusion and

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<sup>189</sup> Indeed, in the Convention of Government, no fewer than eight articles are devoted to the powers of the NSC, more than any other institution described in the Convention; only 6 discuss the role and powers of the President (Ould-Abdullah 2000).

the protection of Tutsi privileges remained integral to the structure of the regime, resulting in an infertile field for transition.

### **C. Civil War: Violently Challenging Regime Legitimacy**

Peter Uvin (2009) calls the period between 1994-1996 the “Years of Terror.” The country descended into chaos, as political infighting continued unabated. A 1996 Human Rights Watch Report details the ever-increasing levels of intimidation and violence,

The façade of a civilian democratic government was left in place, but elected officials were repeatedly held hostage by radical Tutsi leaders and youth gangs who used “dead city” demonstrations to attain their goals. In late December 1994, for example, FRODEBU officials were forced to replace the president of the National Assembly, and in February 1995 they were obliged to accept both a change in the prime minister and the inclusion of small Tutsi splinter parties in the cabinet after Tutsi youth gangs used grenades, arson, and attacks to interrupt all normal activity in the capital of Bujumbura (*HRW Report – Burundi*, January 1, 1996).

Splits among Hutu leaders widened as they argued about how to deal with the violence, exemplified by Leonard Nyangoma’s decision to abandon FRODEBU and take up arms against the government with the establishment of the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD) and its armed wing, the Forces for the Defense of Democracy (FDD). The National Forces of Liberation (FNL) – the armed wing of the Hutu rebel group PALIPEHUTU – also decided to reengage a strategy of violent resistance to the regime, as did other Hutu rebel groups, and attacks were launched from Zaire and Tanzania. These divisions resulted in a much-weakened President Ntibantunganya, who proved incapable of finding a solution to the political crisis. As



Hubert Cochet succinctly describes, “Stripped of much of his power and forced to contend with the army and the hardest elements of the opposition, the President of the Republic and the FRODEBU party lost some of their popular support in favor of the Hutu guerrillas, who chose violence to subdue the army (1996, 14).

The genocide in neighboring Rwanda contributed both to the economic burden of refugees and, more importantly, to the psychological burden of fear and existential threat. The death toll in Burundi continued to mount, as Burundian refugees who had fled across the border to Rwanda returned after April 6, 1994 to more violence in Burundi. Armed youth militia stepped up their attacks against civilians in urban areas and by early 1995 the city of Bujumbura was ethnically cleansed. The civil war had begun.

#### 1. REORDERING SOCIETY THROUGH VIOLENCE

The descent into civil war revealed the enduring nature of key aspects of Burundi’s political culture. Violence, exclusion, and ethnic polarization undergirded the system and quickly reasserted themselves as the dominant means of managing political conflict used by the regime and its institutions as the war progressed.

As described by both SRSO Ould-Abdallah and US Special Envoy Howard Wolpe in their respective accounts of their involvement in efforts to resolve Burundi’s political conflict, violence in Burundi is not simply a result of conflicting interests taken

to the extreme.<sup>190</sup> Violence is a well-honed tool, used to achieve specific political objectives. Wolpe describes one of the sources of this phenomenon as follows,

The pervasive political violence of the post independence period transformed the elite-driven conflict between the dominant Tutsi and the excluded Hutu into a mass phenomenon. Both Tutsi and Hutu internalized the deep fears and suspicions given voice by their ethnic compatriots within the Bujumbura-centered political class. This, in turn, made the political mobilization of ethnic identities all the easier, particularly given that virtually none of the killers – Tutsi or Hutu – were held accountable for the hundreds of thousands of violent deaths that occurred in the decades following independence. In effect, all Burundians came to see themselves as victims in search of justice (2011, 8).

Ultimately, all parties turned to violence to attain their goals; although the FAB wielded this tool particularly effectively and efficiently, given its long history as the state's main instrument of repression. Throughout the civil war, entire populations became complicit in the violence, as had been true during the selective genocide of 1972 – yet this time, many more Hutu civilians joined in the killing. Soldiers assisted in the training of Tutsi youth militia, particularly the notorious *Sans Echechs* (the Infallibles) and *Sans Defaits* (the Undefeated). These militias, along with the FRODEBU youth wing, JEDEBU, recruited from the ranks of high school and university students, as well as the unemployed. Hutu rebels attacked Tutsi civilians, targeting camps for the internally displaced, in addition to stepping up their assaults on military installations. The FAB regularly undertook military operations in both Bujumbura and the countryside to counter the growing infiltration of guerillas; and which, after each sortie, resulted in the deaths of hundreds, mostly Hutu, civilians (*ICG Burundi Report No. 1 1998, 2*).

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<sup>190</sup> In his memoire, Ould-Abdallah underscores how the “use of mass killings as a political instrument is typical in both Rwanda and Burundi” (2000, 96).

Yet, the violence exercised and experienced by Burundians as the civil war got underway seemed qualitatively different than that which they had lived before. As explained in the literature review of this dissertation, violence “simultaneously disorders and reorders established understandings and arrangements” (Coronil and Skurski 1991, 289). Unlike previous eras, the main purveyor of violence had changed – no longer was the army capable of repressing all challenges to its dominance such as in 1969, 1972, or 1988; nor could they fully control their proxy militias. The multiplicity of actors changed the nature of the violence, rendering it more widespread and seemingly more arbitrary. It also underscored the increasingly tenuous connection between the purveyors of violence and those who exercised political power. As the phenomenon of the ‘dead city’ exemplified, the messages conveyed by the violence now encompassed both a threat – ‘the government cannot (and will not) protect you’ and a statement – ‘it is we, the militia, who possess the power and the right to use that violence’.

Perhaps more importantly, society itself was again being reconstructed through violence. Just as in earlier decades, when extreme violence was recast as a legitimate exercise of power, violence ‘reordered’ Burundian society after 1993. These shifts were psychological, as much as physical. Tutsi feared losing access to guarantees of privilege and security. Hutu began exercising the ‘right of reprisal’. Echoing the former Rwandan regime’s media strategy of hate radio as a means of inciting violence, hate speech increased in Burundi and both sides produced tracts that called for preemptive attacks on the other. Coupled with increased access to some socio-economic spaces that previously had been off-limits, Hutu perceptions of their ability to influence the construction of

social relations began to change.<sup>191,192</sup> As a result, unlike the past when Hutu seemed incapable of responding to the extreme violence perpetrated against them, after President Ndadaye's assassination, large numbers of Hutu high school and university students joined the rebellion. This led to the amplification of violence as the primary tool used to effect social change.

## 2. DIPLOMATIC CACOPHONY

The violence influenced both the domestic political agenda and commanded the attention of the international community. In SRSO Ould-Abdallah's words,

The rising tide of violence in Burundi prompted an increase in the number of official and unofficial would-be mediators. These mediators, however, in turn exacerbated the situation, because their very presence encouraged the various Burundian factions to attract the mediators' attention by shows of strength. More demonstrations were organized, more property in Bujumbura was destroyed, more attacks were launched on isolated Tutsis and Hutus by rebel groups and by the army: all for the purpose of flexing muscles before a growing audience of international representatives (2000, 94).

In the shadow of Rwanda's genocide, it is not surprising that the conflict in Burundi would capture the international community's notice. However, this attention was "disorganized" in the words of Ould-Abdallah (2000, 89). It would also lead to Ould-

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<sup>191</sup> For example, despite the overwhelming majority of Hutu students, it was only in 1993, after decades of discrimination, that the number of Hutu students finally exceeded the number of Tutsi students in secondary school. U.S. State Department report, *Burundi Human Rights Practices, 1993* (January 31, 1994). [http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1993\\_hrp\\_report/93hrp\\_report\\_africa/Burundi.html](http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1993_hrp_report/93hrp_report_africa/Burundi.html) Accessed May 5, 2015.

<sup>192</sup> In another example of the reordering of social space, a Burundian Professor recounted that by 1993, Hutu were able to more freely contest participation in the UPRONA Central Committee. At a meeting of the National UPRONA Congress towards the end of Buyoya's first term, Hutu from Musinga are reported to have protested when the newly proposed Central Committee was composed entirely of Tutsi from Bururi. They demanded a more inclusive committee and the organizers agreed. Prior to this, "if you were unhappy, you were sidelined, your job taken or [you were] even put in prison... [After Buyoya's reforms], it was different" (Interview with Burundian Professor, August 3, 2012).

Abdallah's resignation, due in large part to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's insistence on appointing multiple Special Envoys to the region in order to respond to the crisis.<sup>193</sup> As Ould-Abdallah describes, "For my part, I feared that the appointment of yet another mediator would weaken the coherence of the ongoing preventive effort and present Burundi's extremists with another opportunity to manipulate and divide the international community" (2000, 90).<sup>194</sup> Differing with the Secretary General's approach, Ould-Abdallah resigned, leaving Burundi in October 1995.

Accompanying the diplomatic cacophony, calls began to mount for troops to be sent to Burundi. Former US Special Envoy Howard Wolpe describes the situation as follows:

Growing anxiety within the UN that Burundi could go the way of Rwanda led UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali, at the end of 1995, to call for the contingent creation of a UN peacekeeping force poised to move into Burundi as necessary to avert further mass violence or genocide. This initiative, however, was met with little enthusiasm by UN members: no major power was willing to assume the lead role for mounting such a force, potential troop contributors were scarce, and some feared that planning for such an intervention might trigger the very explosion the proposed intervention sought to avert. In the months and years that followed, when it came to Burundi, the UN was to give new meaning to the phrase "risk averse" – with the Security

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<sup>193</sup> Ould-Abdallah posits that the UN Secretary General's campaign for reelection heavily influenced his decision to appoint multiple envoys, in order to secure the uncontested support of all the African States for his reelection bid (2000, 90).

<sup>194</sup> Ould-Abdallah goes on to describe the chaotic nature of international involvement in Burundi as follows, "Nyerere's appointment in March [1996] meant that three major efforts were being made to bring peace to Burundi: the efforts by the United Nations ([Special Envoy Marc] Faguy), by [Former U.S. President Jimmy] Carter, and by Nyerere. Carter soon left the scene, as Richard Bogosian and Howard Wolpe from the U.S. State Department were heading official U.S. efforts in the region. But the number of envoys and mediators continued to multiply. The European Union designated Aldo Ajello as its special envoy for the region, and Belgium appointed its own special representative. Meanwhile, Kenya, South Africa, and the OAU each had their own special envoys for the same region. Sweden, too, had an envoy to Burundi... Two international NGOs, Search for Common Ground and International Alert, had well-experienced representatives in Burundi. Although the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio did not have an official representative stationed in Bujumbura, it had assigned permanent staff members to manage its involvement with Burundi, and it was in close contact with the leadership of the CNDD" (2000, 96-97).

Council and the UN Secretariat both reluctant to take the diplomatic lead or to be proactive in developing peacekeeping modalities (2011, 10).

The calls for international troops were picked up by domestic actors in Burundi, contributing to political tensions, as the Tutsi-led Army was patently against the idea of international intervention and the Hutu political elite felt that it would be their only salvation.

## **D. International Management of Political Conflict**

### 1. THE BEGINNING OF THE ARUSHA PROCESS

In March 1996, African leaders, supported by UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, asked Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere to act as mediator for the Burundi conflict. The choice of Nyerere was prescient, as Howard Wolpe writes,

A world statesman, a charismatic leader of Africa's anti-colonial struggle, a pan-Africanist who played a key role in the liberation movements of southern Africa, the first president of an independent Tanzania – Julius Nyerere was the George Washington, the Abraham Lincoln, and the FDR of Tanzania (and much of the African continent) all rolled into one (2011, 11).

Nyerere was knowledgeable about Burundi's political history and had a moral stature that rivaled that of Nelson Mandela (Wolpe 2011, 11).<sup>195</sup> It seemed Mwalimu was the perfect choice.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> As ICG points out in their first report on the Burundi crisis, "[Nyerere's] appointment was backed by the Burundian people with whom he had been working informally since 1993 and who were aware of his knowledge of the Burundi conflict" (*ICG Burundi Report No. 1*, April 27, 1998, 4).

Nyerere's appointment, however, proved to be problematic. Wolpe (2011) outlines the challenges that Nyerere faced when presenting himself as a neutral facilitator. The western border of Tanzania had become home to hundreds of thousands of Burundian Hutu refugees (many since 1972) and over time, the Tutsi would accuse Nyerere of not doing enough to prevent the Hutu rebellion from operating from his territory. The Tanzanians were also perceived as being more supportive of their Hutu brothers, sympathizing with their cause as oppressed peoples. Perhaps most importantly, the design of the peace process and the choice of the mediator had excluded Burundians. As Wolpe emphasizes, "The selection of the former Tanzanian president was fundamentally a decision not of Burundians (who were never formally invited to consider this question) but of the regional leaders" (2011, 11).

Despite Nyerere's appointment and the engagement of the international community, the peace process would not really gain traction until 1998. Three factors hardened positions of the various political actors (including the mediator) making progress virtually impossible in the intervening period: Buyoya's second coup d'état; the fraught relationship between Buyoya and Nyerere – made worse by the sanctions imposed on Burundi after the coup d'état; and the mutual demonization of the parties resulting from intensification of the civil war. These dynamics also confirmed the Army's perceptions that the Tutsi were under siege and reinforced their internal narrative that they were the sole saviors of the nation, further entrenching the FAB.

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<sup>196</sup> *Mwalimu* means teacher in Swahili and is an honorific title. Tanzanians affectionately referred to President Nyerere as *Mwalimu* in reference to his first profession as a teacher.

## 2. BUYOYA II

After the appointment of President Nyerere as the mediator, two meetings were held in Tanzania in an attempt to diffuse tensions between Burundi's conflicting parties. However, the parties could not even agree on who should attend the talks – UPRONA categorically refused the inclusion of the armed rebel groups – and the increasing violence inside Burundi only caused each side to become more intransigent (in the weeks leading up to the talks 18 members of parliament had been killed and massacres of civilians were on the rise).

Frustrated by the lack of progress, Nyerere then called for a summit of regional leaders at Arusha to determine next steps. At this summit, Ugandan President Museveni succeeded in securing a joint request for security assistance from Hutu President Ntibantunganya and Tutsi Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo. The international community warmly welcomed the initiative, although they were taken by surprise, as earlier discussions of an international security force had raised the ire of the FAB. Unfortunately, as Wolpe goes on to describe,

Almost immediately, the prime minister and president began feuding over what they and the regional leaders had agreed on. The more extreme elements of the Tutsi community, who found the prospect of a regional force threatening, reacted sharply and violently. The prime minister had apparently not adequately prepared the UPRONA hard-liners for the intervention, and had begun to retreat from the agreement he and the president had reached with regional leaders. Moreover, although Hutu leaders inside Burundi strongly supported the intervention, CNDD leader Leonard Nyangoma also opposed it, fearing that it would pressure the rebellion to disarm before its political demands had been met (2011, 12-13)



In addition, the agreement directly contravened Article 12 of the Convention on Government, which required National Security Council approval for the request for foreign troops – and given that the Tutsi dominated the body it is highly unlikely that such approval would have been granted. This political struggle pushed this situation to the breaking point.

Tensions finally boiled over in July 1996. President Ntibantunganya's unpopularity was made manifest on July 23, when he attended a funeral for 341 Tutsi who had been massacred in an IDP camp in Bungendana, Gitega. Violently assaulted and abused by rock throwing Tutsi youth upon his arrival at the funeral, the President fled to Bujumbura, seeking protection of the U.S. Ambassador. Seizing the opportunity, UPRONA declared its intention to withdraw from the Convention on Government, sending the country spiraling towards another political and institutional crisis. The Army leadership called for President Ntibantunganya to resume his duties but received no response.<sup>197</sup> In the face of this turmoil, "The army took to the streets and on 25 July 1996 at 16:00 declared Major Pierre Buyoya as the new President" (*ICG Burundi Report No. 1* 1998, 4).<sup>198,199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> In fact, he was to remain a guest of the U.S. Ambassador for almost a year (Ould-Abdallah 2000, 101).

<sup>198</sup> Some authors refer to Buyoya's resumption of power as the culmination of the "creeping coup." See, for example, Stef Vandeginste, "Transitional Justice for Burundi: A Long and Winding Road," a Workshop 10 Report, written for Crisis Management Initiative following a seminar organized in Nuremberg, June 25-27, 2007 entitled "Building a Future on Peace and Justice." <http://www.peace-justice-conference.info/download/WS10-Vandeginste%20report.pdf> Accessed June 17, 2015

<sup>199</sup> Buyoya describes the motivation behind his coup as follows, "The change that I was required to undertake in July 1996 was the result of the blockage of the system of the Convention [of Government]. The system had revealed the incapacity of the government to guarantee the security of the citizens [and] put a stop to the activities of the armed groups and militias...It was total anarchy, violence reigned. Every Burundian could be killed anywhere, anytime...Burundi had become a hell" (Buyoya 1998, 118). He goes

### 3. THE ABSENCE OF A WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIATOR

Reaction to the FAB's decision to retake power was swift. A second regional meeting was organized at Arusha on July 31, 1996 and six African leaders quickly condemned the coup and imposed economic sanctions.<sup>200</sup> This move was facilitated by the Organization of Africa Unity's (OAU) shift in policy during the 1990s regarding intervention in the affairs of other states and their increased willingness to criticize fellow leaders.<sup>201</sup> As reported by Inter Press Service, "the OAU "called upon (OAU) member states and the international community ...to prepare themselves to isolate completely any...regime which could take over leadership in Burundi through the use of force or any other pretext"" (*Inter Press Service*, July 31, 1996). Backed by the UN, the United States, Belgium, and other Western countries, the sanctions went into effect immediately.

Not all observers were surprised by the coup. Some were rather more taken aback by the international community's reaction to the coup. As former SRSG Ould-Abdallah writes,

Surprisingly, the regional powers and international community whose approach inadvertently helped to provoke the coup were caught off guard by the military takeover. This new development was not seen as just another episode in Burundi's volatile political life, but as something wholly

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on to say, "I did not have the right to hide. I could not permit myself to make a personal calculation, to think of the capital of international prestige that I was risking. My country was in a difficult situation and it had to survive. Thus, I committed in my soul and my conscience because it was my duty" (1998, 119-120).

<sup>200</sup> See the International Crisis Group Report, "Burundi Under Siege" for an in-depth analysis of the sanctions and their impacts (*ICG Burundi Report No. 1*, "Burundi Under Siege: Lift the Sanctions; Re-launch the Peace Process", April 27, 1998).

<sup>201</sup> See Paul D. Williams' article "From Non-Intervention to Non-Indifference: The Origins and Development of the African Union's Security Culture" for an excellent discussion of the evolving norms in the AU (*African Affairs* 106/423, 2007).

exceptional and scandalous, a challenge to Nyerere's moral and personal authority and to the regional leaders' political prestige (2000, 102).

In characterizing the international reaction in this way, Ould-Abdallah captures one of the dynamics that was to plague the Arusha process until Nyerere's death: Nyerere felt strongly that he was the best person to be leading the mediation process, yet his inability to develop a working relationship with Buyoya severely impacted his ability to influence Burundian Tutsi to come to the table (Wolpe 2011). The aftermath of the imposition of sanctions simply underscored the fractious relationship between President Nyerere and President Buyoya and was a key reason that all-party talks would not be convened until June 1998.

The sanctions did have a few immediate impacts. As described by the International Crisis Group, the sanctions led "within weeks to a lifting of the ban on political parties and the restoration of the country's Parliament" (*IGC Burundi Report No. 1*, i-ii). However, these were more cosmetic changes and did not achieve the main goals of the sanctions: pressuring Burundi to renounce the military junta, reinstall the FRODEBU-led government, and re-launch peace talks.

This limited effect was also due to the fact that the sanctions came to be closely identified with the mediator, Nyerere, clouding perceptions of his neutrality and thus compromising his ability to influence the regime to constructively engage in the peace process. As Howard Wolpe describes, "...when Nyerere took on the role of sanctions enforcer he simultaneously undermined his claim to be an unbiased facilitator and put

major strains on his relationship with Buyoya, his principal Tutsi interlocutor” (2011, 16). Wolpe goes on to underscore the internal impact of the sanctions on Buyoya, saying,

Nyerere unintentionally increased Buyoya’s political vulnerability. Buyoya’s critics within the Tutsi community, who viewed Buyoya as a traitor for his role in bringing about the 1993 elections, now charged that by agreeing to participate in a peace process facilitated by the very person responsible for the imposition of regional sanctions, the Burundian president was again selling the Tutsi community down the river. This political vulnerability in turn required Buyoya to harden his position at a number of critical stages, and spend an inordinate amount of time and energy in justifying his decision to remain within the Nyerere-led Arusha framework (2011, 16).

#### 4. DEMONIZATION AND THE INTENSIFICATION OF THE CIVIL WAR

The increasingly positional stance taken by Buyoya to satisfy his internal constituency was accompanied by great mistrust on the part of FRODEBU leaders that Buyoya was a credible leader of the Burundian peace process. Even after restoring parliament and unbanning political parties, Buyoya would not grant the parliament the power to control the budget (and thus, for example, they had no ability to determine what funds would be allocated to the Army) and parliament had no power to hold the FAB to account for the ongoing atrocities in the countryside. In addition, the Hutu opposition resented a government-led investigation of the Speaker of the Parliament, Leonce Ngendakumana for his alleged participation in the incitement of the killing of Tutsi after the death of President Ndadaye. Given the role of the army in the President’s assassination and the biased nature of the judiciary, the case was seen as part and parcel of the ongoing harassment and intimidation of legitimate Hutu political leaders.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> A US government human rights report published in 1994 reinforces the validity of this perception and underscores the structural violence that accompanied the widespread physical violence in Burundi, saying,

Unsurprisingly, sanctions made the plight of average Burundians much worse, reinforcing the intransigence of all parties, as each accused the other of responsibility for the conditions that exacerbated the war. Contributing to the stalemate, each party believed that they had far more to gain on the battlefield than at the negotiation table, resulting in a significant increase in violence. The growing crisis in neighboring Zaire also distracted international attention from Burundi, as all eyes were on Laurent Kabila as he advanced toward Kinshasa in the fall of 1996. Rather than create the conditions for negotiations, the domestic and regional contexts only reinforced the mutual demonization by Tutsi and Hutu political actors, deepening the crisis and stymieing international conflict management efforts.

## **E. Negotiating an End to Civil War**

### **1. A ROAD TO PEACE BEDEVILED BY CHALLENGES**

The journey to a negotiated settlement of the civil war was a challenging one. Internal division and disagreement on strategy plagued all of the main parties. This was further complicated by the Nyerere's decision not to allow the armed wings of the rebel groups to be present at the table, prompting splits within the two main rebel groups.

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“Under the Constitution, the judicial system is independent, but in practice, it is dominated by the Tutsi ethnic group...Most Burundians assume the courts still promote the interests of the dominant Tutsi minority. Generally, defendants are Hutu, while the judges and magistrates are, almost without exception Tutsi” (U.S. State Department report: *Burundi Human Rights Practices, 1993* January 31, 1994, 5). [http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1993\\_hrp\\_report/93hrp\\_report\\_africa/Burundi.html](http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1993_hrp_report/93hrp_report_africa/Burundi.html) Accessed May 5, 2015.

While this decision satisfied some – Nyangoma wanted to remain the main interlocutor for the Hutu-led CNDD and the extreme Tutsi did not want the ‘genocidaires’ included at the table – that meant that any agreement reached at the table had little purchase with the fighters on the front lines.<sup>203</sup> Given that the Hutu rebels were making significant gains on the battlefield, they had even less interest in a negotiated settlement.

Internally, Buyoya was faced with challenges posed by various Tutsi factions, including death threats from extreme Tutsi (led by former President Bagaza and his PARENA party). In an attempt to get a handle on the violence and striving to curb the power of the militias, he cracked down on their activities in the capital. Rather than inspire the confidence of Hutu opposition, Buyoya was accused of simply changing their uniforms, as he then greatly expanded recruitment into the army, imposing mandatory military service.<sup>204</sup> In addition, a temporary change in the balance of power in Zaire threw up an additional hurdle, when Laurent Kabila’s forces destroyed several Burundian rebel installations in eastern Zaire, causing them to lose their rear base. This change of fortunes encouraged hardliners in the FAB to push for prosecuting the war more aggressively, believing they had the upper hand. This in turn contributed to further

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<sup>203</sup> This decision to exclude the two armed rebel movements, the CNDD-FDD and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL, was to have repercussions that echoed throughout Burundi’s post-conflict transition. Because the two groups were not at the table in Arusha, both former rebel movements have subsequently questioned the relevance of that process. Their lack of participation in the original negotiation process to end the civil war threatens their buy-in today to the Arusha Accords and their acceptance of some of its key tenets – notably, the composition of the army and the allocation of key posts within it. This challenge will be addressed in Chapter 9.

<sup>204</sup> According to an ICG Report, “Since Buyoya took power in July 1996, the army has been given huge resources “to terminate” the war. Its numbers have passed from 17,000 to around 50,000 and big investments have been made in equipment. Over 50 percent of the national budget goes towards military expenditure, which has dramatic consequences in such a poor country. By taking back power and giving the military every means to carry out the war, Buyoya clearly wished to be in a powerful position and able to impose the conditions of the Tutsi minority and of the minority in power on his adversaries during future negotiations” (*ICG Central Africa Report No. 13*, 2000, 38).

tensions between them and Buyoya, as the President attempted to employ a battle strategy that ostensibly (somewhat) limited the killing of civilians.<sup>205</sup>

Another key challenge in the journey towards peace was the complexity of the process itself. No fewer than three efforts were underway simultaneously to restore a modicum of trust between the parties and bring them to the table. Howard Wolpe describes the process as follows,

Until his sudden death in late 1999, Nyerere was effectively in charge (though not always in control) of an exceedingly complex peace process that played itself out in three geographically separate but linked arenas. The first arena was Arusha, Tanzania, from which the Burundi peace process and ultimate accord drew its name, and which served as the principal venue for all-party informal consultations and formal negotiations. The second arena was Rome, which became the venue for secret bilateral talks between the Burundian government and the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), then the principal armed rebel group. The third arena was Burundi itself, in particular its capital city Bujumbura, wherein over time there was established a fragile but important internal partnership between the Union for National Progress (UPRONA) and the Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU), the dominant Tutsi and Hutu political parties, designed to calm the political turbulence and set the stage for the negotiation of a new power-sharing arrangement and both political and military reform (2011, 9).

Coordinating these three venues was complicated and missteps contributed to miscommunication between the principal facilitator and the parties; between the facilitator and the other facilitation teams; and between and among the parties themselves. All of which further increased mistrust. Even as the tide began to turn

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<sup>205</sup> The perspective that Buyoya was responsible for the Tutsi losing the war was reflected in an interview with a former FAB officer. Describing failure of the FAB to gain the upper hand during the conflict in 1997, he recounted that, “We [the FAB] were capable of destroying the rebellion in three months; in three to five months [maximum]. This rebellion, we were capable of erasing them from the entire country... When we would arrive at our goal [during a battle] and we wanted to destroy everyone, they [Buyoya’s senior officers] stopped us, before we completed our task. They told us “stop there; begin the process of pacification”. Every time. We were blocked. If you tried to get around those regulations, they’d put you in prison. They accused you of killing innocents. He tricked us with regards to the national defense policy” (Interview with former FAB officer, August 12, 2012).

towards the possibility of a negotiated end to the conflict in 1998, the parties resisted the mediator's entreaties to suspend hostilities during the negotiation process. For example, the Burundi government refused to consider themselves an "armed party to the conflict" which meant they would not be subject to the suspension of hostilities, as that only applied to 'armed groups'. In turn, the three armed rebel groups refused to suspend hostilities if the government did not (*ICG Burundi Report No. 2 1998, 4-5*). Coupled with the toxic relationship between Buyoya and Nyerere, there seemed little hope of movement in the negotiations.

## 2. NEW HOPE FOR THE PROCESS

In 1999, several things happened that changed the perceptions of the parties and seemed to breathe new life into the process. First, in January, the sanctions were lifted, somewhat ameliorating the lives of average Burundians and, in particular, providing Buyoya with some relief from the unrelenting criticism of Tutsi hardliners. These hardliners continued to accuse him of selling out to the rebels and the mediator – their evidence being that, despite all the government had done in response to requests from the mediator, sanctions had not been lifted earlier.

Second, the internal partnership between UPRONA and FRODEBU began to bear fruit.<sup>206</sup> This was largely catalyzed by the failure of the Rome talks after Buyoya leaked

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<sup>206</sup> The internal partnership was reinforced by an education effort lead by two members of the Burundian government, Eugene Nindorera, Minister for Human Rights, Institutional Reform and Parliamentary Relations and Térence Nahimana, a Deputy in the National Assembly. The two toured Burundi with the objective of educating the population about the Arusha process and building a constituency for peace



their existence in an effort to demonstrate to regional leaders that he was in fact attempting to work towards peace. Realizing that the external efforts were blocked and internal extremists were gaining ground, UPRONA and FRODEBU party leaders began to negotiate the internal conditions that would permit all parties to participate in the peace talks. McClintock and Nahimana describe the process as follows,

Coupled with an effort from President Buyoya to restore a working relationship with the National Assembly, political party leaders worked to mitigate the impact of extremists, both inside and outside of Burundi, both Hutu and Tutsi, and to promote dialogue and negotiation. In the end, the “internal partnership” was a necessary precursor to the Arusha Process as it helped to shape internal expectations and to recreate a modicum of trust between the region’s leaders and the government of Burundi (2008, 84-85).

Third, Nyerere and his team succeeded in rationalizing the approach to the wide range of parties, insisting that the nineteen parties regroup in order to facilitate negotiations. As a result, the parties coalesced into two blocs, the G7 (comprised of groups dominated by the Hutu), plus the National Assembly and the G10 (led by the Tutsi-dominated UPRONA), plus the government.<sup>207</sup> While this helped to move the dialogue forward, the lack of inclusion of the two main armed rebel groups (CNDD-FDD and PALIPEHUTU-FNL) meant that fighting continued apace on the ground.<sup>208</sup>

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amongst ordinary Burundians. Using a dialogue format, Nindorera and Nahimana solicited input from Burundian community members on four themes: the nature of the conflict; democracy and good governance; reform of the security sector; and development and repatriation of refugees. These four themes would ultimately become the basis for the Arusha Accords (McClintock and Nahimana 2008, 88).

<sup>207</sup> Interestingly, as the International Crisis Group reported, the government “had an extremely narrow political base. The president had no real base at the level of the political parties. His own party [was] divided and he [had] even been excluded from it. Officially, his supporters have no political voice” (*ICG Burundi Report No. 2* 1998, 12). This reality would render Buyoya’s position extremely fragile throughout the negotiation process.

<sup>208</sup> The Burundi government was frustrated by Nyerere’s stance with regard to the inclusion of the armed groups, precisely because a ceasefire could not be negotiated without them. This left Buyoya little leverage internally because he was unable to demonstrate to most Burundians that he was doing everything he could to end their suffering. On the other side, Leonard Nyangoma of the CNDD political wing threatened to walk out of negotiations if the armed factions were included. In response to this dilemma, Nyerere proposed that the armed groups join the negotiations but under different names. The idea was rejected, as

Fourth, in October 1999, President Nyerere died rather suddenly after a short battle with leukemia. This had two impacts. One, President Buyoya saw it as an opportunity to finally get a neutral facilitator and the Burundi government refused to return to the table until an acceptable mediator was appointed. Two, the appointment of Nelson Mandela as the new mediator brought renewed international attention to the necessity of resolving the Burundi civil war – an approach which included both carrots and sticks, a departure from the earlier strategy of isolating Burundi in order to influence the government’s behavior (*ICG Central Africa Report, No. 13 2000, 24*).

Finally, by the end of 1999, the facts on the ground had changed. No longer did either the rebels or the government have a clear advantage on the battlefield. A mutually hurting stalemate had been reached, sapping the resolve of the fighters and the rural population. More importantly, as the International Crisis Group reported in April 2000,

The great majority of Burundians, tired of the war and of their politicians, [did] not want to move backwards and lose what [had] been gained over 22 months of discussion in Arusha. As for the government, it [was] confronted with huge social and economic difficulties. It [was] losing more and more credibility and [was] strongly rejected by both Tutsi and Hutu public opinion (*ICG Central Africa Report No. 13 2000, i-ii*).<sup>209</sup>

All of this put pressure on the regime to find a way out of the conflict, particularly because the regime was increasingly viewed as being incapable of winning the war or even containing the violence.

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the dissident factions wanted to assert their right to represent the Hutu and thus wanted to control the names of the movements (McClintock and Nahimana 2008, 78).

<sup>209</sup> This situation was exacerbated by the government’s extremely controversial policy of forcing Hutu into regroupment camps to separate them from the rebels, further damaging Buyoya’s credibility (Wolpe 2011, 52).

### 3. A LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHANGING NORMS: THE ARUSHA ACCORDS

President Mandela rapidly took up his responsibilities as mediator and immediately set a tight deadline for the conclusion of the Arusha process. Mandela's facilitation style differed from Nyerere's and his approach was far more coercive. As noted elsewhere, "The mediation team would play the role of "solution generator" rather than "facilitator" of the process, especially where there were still strong differences between the parties" (McClintock and Nahimana 2008, 79). Building on the progress made by Nyerere and his team, within 8 months of his appointment Mandela succeeded in getting an agreement amongst the 19 parties at the table and, on August 28, 2000, the *Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi* was signed in the presence of the regional leaders and U.S. President Bill Clinton.

The *Arusha Accords* were designed to provide political solutions to the problems that divided Burundians and explicitly structured the allocation of power between Hutu and Tutsi. In Article 4, Chapter 1 of the Agreement, the parties explicitly acknowledged that, "With regard to the nature of the Burundi conflict, the Parties recognize that: (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" (*Arusha Accords* 2000, 17).

The importance of the *Arusha Accords* in facilitating a shift in the norms governing how Burundi's political conflicts are managed cannot be overstated. The Arusha process itself reestablished the negotiation as a key element in the management of those political conflicts. The presence of an internationally mediated process, led by an external mediator ensured the parties could participate on more or less equal footing. In addition, the parties actively took part in the design of the new institutions, lending the both the process and the ensuing institutions widespread legitimacy. The fact that these changes were achieved via negotiation and not through violence had important repercussions for Burundi's political culture.

These were critical differences from the Buyoya-led process of a decade earlier, when both the substance of the reforms and the way in which they were to be adopted were imposed on Burundi's political actors. At the same time, the work that President Buyoya attempted during his first regime was a crucial first step – without the earlier reforms such as the Charter of National Unity, the promulgation of the new constitution, and the more inclusive educational policies, the norms embodied in the *Arusha Accords* would have been planted in far less fertile ground.

Briefly, the *Arusha Accords* called for a new constitution to be drafted and adopted; implementation of reforms in the defense and security sectors, the judiciary, the National Assembly, Senate, government, and the civil administration – importantly, the Burundian Army was to be reformed and to be comprised of 50% Tutsi and 50% Hutu throughout the ranks; the adoption of an electoral law; the establishment of an

independent electoral commission to oversee elections; adoption of laws on local administration, political parties, and the press; the establishment of a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission; establishment of a land commission; and repatriation, resettlement, and reintegration of refugees and the internally displaced (*Arusha Accords* 2000).

With regard to the Army in particular, the *Arusha Accords* (and the subsequent GCA) gave clear guidelines for the structure of the new corps, as highlighted in Chapter Two. Specifically, the National Defense Forces (FDN) were to be integrated at all levels (with no more than 50% of any single ethnic group represented); apolitical; professional; observe internationally recognized human rights norms; and serve and protect all Burundian citizens (Nindorera and Powell, 2006).

Unfortunately, the *Arusha Accords* did not address three key issues that were integral to the conclusion of the war: a ceasefire between the government and the rebels; the modalities the reform of the security sector institutions; and the modalities of the transitional government, charged with leading Burundi to free and fair elections. Mandela quickly dealt with the third issue, pressuring the main parties to accept a three-year transition process from UPRONA (led by President Buyoya) to FRODEBU (led by Domitien Ndayizeye), where each would hold power for 18 months. At the end of that transition period, elections would be organized and neither Buyoya nor Ndayizeye would be allowed to present themselves as candidates.

The talks to bring the remaining rebel groups into a negotiated framework took much longer, especially as the rebels perceived the *Arusha Accords* as serving only the interests of the politicians in Bujumbura.<sup>210</sup> They felt that they could achieve more by leveraging their gains on the battlefield. Over the next twelve months, Mandela attempted to bring the remaining rebel groups into the peace process and worked to secure the funding for the implementation of the Accords. However, it was not until November 16, 2003 that the CNDD-FDD would sign the *Global Ceasefire Agreement* (GCA) with the transitional government.<sup>211</sup>

The delays in bringing the CNDD-FDD on board also meant that the negotiations over the modalities of the security sector reform process were pushed back, raising Tutsi fears that their fate would be left in the hands of the Hutu. Howard Wolpe captures this dynamic saying,

Contrary to what had been assumed at the time of the original agreement on the transitional leadership, neither the issue of the cease-fire nor that of security reform had yet been resolved. This meant that it would be a Hutu president who would have the responsibilities of negotiating with Hutu rebels these extremely sensitive subjects – to the considerable consternation of the Tutsi hard-liners and Tutsi army officers (2011, 59).

Thus, as Wolpe characterized it, the *Arusha Accords* resulted in “peace without peace” (2011, 57). It would be five more years before an end to most of the violence had been achieved and free and fair elections were held.

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<sup>210</sup> According to Adelin Hatungimana and his colleagues, the *Arusha Accords* did not include any specifics on the modalities of the proposed ceasefire, stating, “in place of Appendix 3 of the Arusha Agreement – relating to ceasefire agreements – a blank page is inserted, indicating that the technicalities of the ceasefires would be discussed subsequently...” (Hatungimana et al 2007, 22).

<sup>211</sup> The PALIPEHUTU-FNL would not implement their 2006 agreement with the government until 2009.

## **F. Transition from War to Peace**

### 1. THE TRANSITION PROCESS

The transition process officially began on November 1, 2001 with Buyoya installed as the head of the transition government. This decision was not a *fait accompli* – despite Buyoya’s position as head of Burundi’s government at the time the Accords were signed. According to one interviewee, Mandela was informed by the “top 10 of the Army” that if Buyoya was not allowed to remain in power as the first head of the transition government, “then Burundi will burn – it will be total war” (Interview conducted January 10, 2013). Mandela agreed to the FAB’s terms, deciding that if he took responsibility for allowing Buyoya to stay, he could later exercise his leverage as head of the mediation process to ensure that Buyoya would go when the first half of the transition expired.<sup>212</sup> In addition, as explained below, throughout the Arusha process, the FAB had begun to understand that being able to negotiate the terms of their future was far preferable than to having the solution imposed upon them. So while they pushed to extract last minute concessions from Mandela, these were last ditch efforts of an Army who perceived that the end to their dominance was near.

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<sup>212</sup> In recounting this personal conversation with Mandela, my interlocutor expressed his own conviction of the centrality of the army in determining the fate of the country – and not simply as a tool of UPRONA. On the contrary, the FAB (and specifically a few Tutsi officers at the top) controlled all decision-making power at this point in Burundi’s history. “Paradoxically, it is that which saved Burundi. The Army understood that it was necessary to negotiate the integration of the corps, to include Hutu officers; that from then on the composition of the Army would change. They had a think tank; they had done the studies and they understood [how the future would play out]” (Interview conducted January 10, 2013).

The first 18 months of the transition were marked by increased violence, as efforts to bring the CNDD-FDD and the PALIPEHUTU-FNL to the table foundered. For most living in Burundi at the time, the war had not ended, as their security was compromised daily and the death toll continued to mount.

As part of the transition, agreement was reached at a regional meeting on July 23, 2001 that South Africa would commit troops for a force to protect those returning from exile. That force would be transformed into an African Union peacekeeping mission in April 2003. The decision to introduce international troops stood in striking contrast to the context in 1996, when the request for an international intervention force was immediately followed by Buyoya's second coup d'état. Under pressure from the international community and unable to achieve the upper hand on the battlefield, the Tutsi-led FAB was compelled to comply with the agreement this time around.

President Buyoya left office as promised on April 30, 2003 and Domitien Ndayizeye took over as president.<sup>213</sup> As Wolpe underscored, one critical aspect of this transition that is often overlooked is the fact that Ndayizeye (a Hutu) would be a civilian President in charge of a Tutsi-led army that had been in power for almost 40 years. Willy Nindorera explains that, "One of the main questions that arose was whether a civilian president who is Hutu could exercise authority over the army, and in particular whether he could convince the army to agree to new concessions as part of an incomplete peace process, since negotiations with the CNDD-FDD were still underway" (2007, 33).

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<sup>213</sup> Writing in his book, *Mission Possible*, Buyoya promised, "When I have finished my task of restoring peace, then I will leave!" (1998, 158).



Nindorera goes on to elucidate the FAB's acceptance of the reform process and particularly, the need to submit to civilian authority. First, the high command of the FAB realized that they were the main beneficiaries of the *Arusha Accords*. Second, not only had the military failed on the battlefield; they now realized that the peace process had "an irreversible momentum" (2007, 34). To reject the process at this stage would have been professional (and likely actual) suicide. Third, the make-up of the army had changed during the war and by 2003 there was a large percentage of Hutu soldiers in the FAB rank and file and the officer corps was much more regionally diverse than in previous decades, when it had been almost exclusively Hima from Bururi (2007, 34). These factors contributed to creating the conditions necessary for the FAB to acquiesce to Ndayizeye's authority. Thus, despite the daunting obstacles – including the additional challenge of a PALIPEHUTU-FNL offensive launched two months later in June 2003 – Ndayizeye successfully stewarded the second half of the transition process.<sup>214</sup>

As part of the international community's ongoing support for the transitional government, the AU mission was re-hatted as a United Nations peacekeeping mission in June 2004. The international force stabilized the situation in Burundi, making it possible for the demobilization process to move forward and creating the conditions for the organization of free and fair elections, which were held between June and August 2005.

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<sup>214</sup> On October 15, 2004, an extension of the transition process by six months was approved at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Summit of the Great Lakes Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi to allow the parties to accomplish some key tasks of the transition, including the drafting of the new constitution, the organization of a popular referendum to approve the constitution, and the organization of elections (UN SG Second Report on the United Nations Operation in Burundi, S/204/902, November 15, 2004).

## 2. INITIATING SECURITY SECTOR REFORM

In November 2003, the CNDD-FDD signed the GCA with the Burundian transitional government, paving the way for the integration of the rebels into the institutions of the transition government – one of the most important of which was the army.<sup>215</sup> In the lead up to the signing of the GCA, the CNDD-FDD also faced pressure to negotiate, rather than continue to hope that their goals could be achieved by force. First, five of the other rebel groups had already laid down their arms and signed on to Arusha. Second, during the war, the CNDD-FDD had set up parallel administration structures throughout the country and through these structures, their constituents made it clear that they were tired of armed struggle (Nindorera 2012). In their view, it was time to organize the next step – preparation for the elections – and the Hutu were confident that their demographic advantage would once again lead them to victory. According to Nindorera, “in many localities, [the combatants] got ahead of the politicians by proceeding to a ceasefire before being instructed to do so” (2012, 21).

How this reform process was to take place was a source of much debate for both the FAB and the PMPA (the rebel movements - all seven of whom were to be included in

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<sup>215</sup> The *Global Ceasefire Agreement* is in fact a collection of five different agreements, negotiated over the period of one year. In addition to specifying how the reform of the security sector should be undertaken, the CNDD-FDD negotiators insisted on provisions that were explicitly political. Thus, unlike the other armed factions, the CNDD-FDD succeeded in negotiating its own deal. Most significantly, this deal included the allocation of certain positions both in and outside of the security forces and the status of the *Arusha Accords* as the framework for the GCA. While the preamble of the GCA underscores the importance of the Arusha Agreement, Article 2 explicitly states that the GCA takes precedence where interpretations might conflict stating “The Global Ceasefire Agreement is an integral part of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi. It revokes all earlier conflicting provisions of the Arusha Agreement in relation to the CNDD-FDD Movement” (Article 2, *Global Ceasefire Agreement*, signed November 16, 2003. Accessed June 30, 2015 at <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/peace/Bur%2020031116.pdf>).

the reform process, although the CNDD-FDD would have by far the most decision-making authority, based on their superior numbers and success on the battlefield).<sup>216</sup> The FAB insisted that it was simply a matter of integrating a few rebel soldiers into the corps. The rebels, on the other hand, wanted to entirely dismantle the army and demand that the FAB elements rejoin, just like everyone else. This latter idea was rejected outright, as the FAB argued that only a military defeat should trigger a complete overhaul of the army (Nindorera 2007).

In the end, the parties decided to integrate the existing army, based on specific criteria to ensure that the troops in all of the security services were evenly divided between Hutu and Tutsi, each rebel movement and the FAB had representation commensurate with their actual troop size, and the command posts were allocated according to the political power of each movement (although in reality, it was a combination of competence, ethnic quotas, and experience that actually determined where the initial commanders were placed).

In fact, efforts to rebuild relationships between the military organizations began before the GCA was signed. Recognizing the need for greater trust amongst those who would become the high command of the newly integrated army, FAB officers agreed to a training program with their PMPA counterparts to be organized in Kenya by the former US Special Envoy to Africa's Great Lakes Region, Howard Wolpe.<sup>217</sup> As several of the

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<sup>216</sup> The rebel movements, officially known as the Armed Political Parties and Movements, were referred to by their French acronym, PMPA.

<sup>217</sup> I participated in the design and co-facilitation of several relationship-building exercises with members of the high command of the PMPA and the FAB: Nairobi (2003), the Joint Ceasefire Commission (Jan

participants came directly from the battlefield, the training would turn out to be one of the first encounters that the officers experienced that required them to work together as members of a single structure – rather than look across the table at each other as belligerents. This program foreshadowed the level of commitment that both ex-FAB and ex-PMPA commanders would make to the security sector reform process; a commitment that ultimately resulted in a surprisingly cohesive and professional army fewer than ten years after the end of the civil war.

The start to the reform process was rocky. While the *Arusha Accords* outlined the broad parameters of the desired security sector reform, the details were left to be sorted out after the transition had begun.<sup>218</sup> In addition, Burundi had no process for developing that comprehensive reform package on which all parties could agree. Instead, each ministry took charge of its own reforms, resulting in a patchwork of plans funded by international partners (Nindorera 2007). Finally, the demobilization process proved to be quite challenging, as every group wanted to wait before demobilizing their best soldiers,

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2004), and the High Command of the Integrated Command Commission (May 2004). Assessment of the impact of these activities is based on reports from the participants themselves and evaluations conducted by the Burundi Leadership Training Program.

<sup>218</sup> The *Arusha Accords* mandate the training of the members of the FDN to achieve the status of a professional army, with specific provisions regarding what “professional” means contained in the following articles: The defense and security forces shall be trained at all levels to respect international humanitarian law and the supremacy of the Constitution (Protocol II, Chapter 1, Article 11, Paragraph 4 (c)); The defense and security forces shall teach and require their members to abide by the Constitution and the laws in force and by international conventions and agreements to which Burundi is a party (Protocol III, Chapter 2, Article 10, Paragraph 3), and, Neither the defense and security forces nor any of their members shall, in the performance of their duties favor in any manner the interests of a political party; or take part in political activities or demonstrations (Protocol III, Chapter 2, Article 10, Paragraphs 6 (c) and 6(e)).

just in case the transition was unsuccessful. This delayed the overall reform process by several months.<sup>219</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the Ministry of Defense and Veterans Affairs was much better placed to move its plans forward than was the Ministry of Public Security (who are in charge of the National Police). This was largely due to the fact that prior to the end of the war, Burundi had only a very small gendarmerie, numbering approximately 3000 and they had operated under the authority of the Ministry of Defense. At the end of the war, Burundi decided to create a Community Policing model, bringing the number of police to 20,000 (Nindorera 2007).<sup>220</sup> The Ministry of Public Security was new and had little existing infrastructure on which to build this modern police force. In addition, it was far more desirable for an ex-combatant to be integrated into the army than to be assigned to the police (from a status and prestige perspective, as well as from an economic standpoint). Thus, the most talented troops from both the ex-FAB and the ex-PMPA cadres migrated to the soon-to-be-created National Defense Force (FDN), leaving the police with a force of (mostly) young men who had very little education (the average police officer had at most a sixth grade education) and no experience in the community policing métier they were now being asked to take on.

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<sup>219</sup> In an effort to facilitate the demobilization process, the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) formed Joint Liaison Teams that included representatives the respective armed groups and UN observers. These teams monitored the pre-disarmament assembly areas to prevent continued recruiting of those intended to be demobilized. They were also tasked with assisting in the demobilization process (UN SG Second Report on the United Nations Operation in Burundi, S/204/902, November 15, 2004). To facilitate their work together, I designed and implemented training for the Joint Liaison Teams in communication and negotiation under the auspices of the Woodrow Wilson Center and the BLTP.

<sup>220</sup> Expanding the number of police and the number of army troops (the FDN numbered almost 50,000 at the beginning of the integration process) was also a way to absorb ex-combatants, especially during the very tense period in the lead-up to the 2005 elections. Policy makers feared that demobilizing troops too quickly might add to the general instability throughout the country.

The situation within the Army was far more positive. While the corps suffered from political rivalries amongst the new officers and struggled to recast the chain of command (to bypass ex-FAB and ex-PMPA loyalties), the high command benefited from the talent and experience of the ex-FAB and maturity of the rebel commanders. Because there was a wide gap in expertise, the Ministry of Defense and Veterans Affairs first focused on standardizing (or ‘harmonizing’) the training of the ex-FAB and ex-PMPA troops (Nindorera 2007). The training included courses on civil-military relations, international humanitarian law, human rights, conflict resolution, leadership, communication skills, respect for the rule of law, as well as basic military training and discipline. The aim of much of this training was to depoliticize the corps and to build a different image vis-à-vis the population. Facilitating this process was the army’s existing training infrastructure and the new army was able to avail itself of the military academy, the network of bases throughout Burundi, and the barracks, which provided much-needed living quarters. The Ministry of Public Security had none of these human or material resources when they started their own process and these lacunae manifested themselves in the poor quality of the police force.<sup>221</sup>

In addition to the training, the leadership of the Army began immediately to create the legal framework that would allow them to develop a clear defense policy, reform recruitment and promotion policies, determine roles and responsibilities within the

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<sup>221</sup> The Intelligence Services (SNR) have virtually been left out of the reform process and are currently part of the Office of the President (which is unconstitutional). According to an SSR expert interviewed, from the beginning, the SNR have “escaped” the oversight of legislative bodies and conduct their activities in near-secrecy (Interview conducted January 9, 2013).

command structure of the corps, and effectively develop and defend budgets before the Parliamentary oversight bodies. The Army accepted the reform of their legal framework as early as 2004 (and began to act on those reforms), although its Organic Law is still outdated and a proposed revision has yet to be submitted to Parliament.<sup>222</sup>

The early days of the reform of the army and the police were challenging ones. Many observers doubted that the newly integrated security forces would survive the first post-war elections without becoming completely politicized. Despite the ongoing conflict with the PALIPEHUTU-FNL, continuing human rights abuses by all sides, and the uncertainty about the future, the electoral process did go forward with remarkably little violence or intimidation of the population. Perhaps a new era for Burundi – and the Burundian Army – had finally begun.

## **G. The Threads of Burundi's Changing Political Culture**

The assassination of President Ndadaye and the subsequent civil war propelled a significant shift in Burundi's political culture. In the immediate aftermath of his death, extreme violence continued to prevail as the most visible (and destructive) tool for the management of political conflict. Yet, eventually, negotiation reemerged as a critical instrument in the exercise of political power. While the resolution to Burundi's civil conflict may have been shaped by violence, its end was achieved through negotiations: through the Arusha process; in the ceasefire negotiation process; and during the 'internal

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<sup>222</sup> Interview with SSR expert, January 9, 2013.

partnership.’ What explains this shift? There are two key explanations – one is normative and the other is structural.

#### 1. EVOLVING SOCIAL NORMS INFORMING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

During the Third Republic, President Buyoya attempted to introduce policies that he thought would inspire a change in one of the key social norms that governed Burundian society throughout three decades of military dictatorship: the norm of exclusion. Driven by the Tutsi community’s existential fear of annihilation by the majority Hutu, the development of this norm was facilitated by the capture of the state and its resources by a small minority of Tutsi immediately after independence, and who then proceeded to fashion the Army as their main instrument of violence in order to protect their grip on power. Through discriminatory practices in education, hiring; by using the single-party state dominated by Tutsi as the vehicle for patronage; and ultimately through the use of extreme violence as a means of instilling fear, the Hima Tutsi operated a regime based on exclusion.

As explained in Chapter Seven, Buyoya’s attempts to change the norm of exclusion failed. However, the ideas Buyoya introduced and the institutions he attempted to nurture did ultimately bear fruit.<sup>223</sup> As the principle of negotiation began to compete with and finally displace violence as the key political instrument for the allocation of power, the rules of the game began to change (although violence still exists as a more

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<sup>223</sup> Stef Vandeginste describes Buyoya’s earlier efforts, saying, “Initially, Buyoya’s process of political liberalisation [in 1988] amounted to a policy of political reconciliation and inclusiveness, but without democratisation” (2009, 66).



precise tool of coercion). Through negotiation, inclusion began to emerge as a norm critical to successful resolution of the conflict.

Of importance for this study is the way in which the norm of inclusion has (or has not) influenced change within the army. As has been discussed, this was an extremely long and rocky process. As underscored in Chapter Two of this dissertation, norms are slow to change, even when the costs and benefits of adhering to the old norm have changed. This is particularly true of “norms of cooperation and mutual trust (or lack thereof),” as well as norms that support enduring inequality between social classes (Young 2014, 9). Norms will change only when the individual determines that the costs of following the norm outweigh the benefits, or when “positive feedback [from the reference group] reinforces the new way of doing things” (Young 2014, 9). Only when the costs of continuing to adhere to the old norm of exclusion became unbearably high did the FAB accept the possibility of a new norm of inclusion.

As explained above, the norm of exclusion was born of the Tutsi community’s existential fear of annihilation by the Hutu. This norm became a guiding principle for the officers in the FAB because they saw themselves as the saviors of the nation. Only through exclusion could they create the conditions to achieve their mission. Thus, the institution was shaped to respond to the threat and perpetuate the norm. This resulted in a norm so deeply embedded in the community that it was virtually impossible to change (Guglielmino et al 1995, 7585). The monoethnic Burundian army, built on a hierarchical

foundation in which new recruits were regularly inculcated with the same cultural norms was the perfect setting for this model of norm perpetuation to flourish.

Yet, eventually the norms in the FAB did begin to change and in particular, a norm of inclusion began to supplant the norm of exclusion. There is a structural element to the explanation of why this happened, to which I will return below. However, there is a normative aspect to the explanation that is equally significant to our understanding of the behavior of the army today.

A crucial first step down the path of the inculcation of a new norm of inclusion was, perversely, Buyoya's decision to engage a second coup d'état. Buyoya seemed willing to risk both internal and international approbation when he acted. He was vilified and most of the region's leaders felt that the Tutsi-led FAB simply wanted to find a military solution to the conflict. Howard Wolpe reports that Nyerere was especially skeptical, quoting the mediator as saying "I don't believe that the Buyoya regime is a reformist regime," he said, "but a regime trying to establish lasting Tutsi authority" (2011, 14).

Yet, the coup brought back to power a pragmatic (if brutal) army officer who quickly saw the futility of prosecuting a war that could not be won and who, instead, was focused on negotiating an end to the conflict. Indeed, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, according to reports from one officer who served under Buyoya during this period, he would not permit the Army to launch a full-scale war against the population – which the

Army insisted was necessary to defeat the rebels.<sup>224</sup> Instead, Buyoya emphasized the need to include Hutu in an eventual solution and in his view, widespread killing of civilians would not facilitate that process. This tension was evidence that a normative battle was being waged within the Tutsi community, particularly within the Army, even as they were at war with the Hutu rebels.

Buyoya's decision to honor the transition agreement in April 2003 marked another key step in creating the conditions for a shift in the norms held so tightly by the FAB's officers. The importance of the transition of power from Buyoya to Ndayizeye cannot be overstated. Many observers did not believe that Buyoya would actually cede power peacefully for a second time (Wolpe 2011, 59). In leaving the presidency and agreeing not to run again, Buyoya was not only relinquishing power, he was sending a strong message to extremist Tutsi both in and outside of the army that the leader of Burundi's military regime accepted the conditions under which transition should happen – and that inclusion, powersharing and negotiation were the norms that were to govern the process going forward. As explained above, the high command of the FAB had also reached this conclusion, as they gained far more from participating in the implementation of the *Arusha Accords* than from trying to thwart them.

Buyoya's signal also inspired the confidence of CNDD-FDD rebels that the government intended to move forward with the implementation of the *Arusha Accords*.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> In my interview with an ex-FAB Captain, he expressed his disgust at Buyoya's 'strategy' (Bujumbura, August 13, 2012).

<sup>225</sup> This view was shared during personal communication between the author and members of the Integrated Command Commission (both ex-FAB and ex-CNDD-FDD rebel officers), May 2004.

Had Buyoya chosen to fight to remain in power – which was the predominant fear of those in Bujumbura in April 2003 – the gains made through the various ceasefire negotiations and the peace settlement would have been lost.

The structures put in place by the negotiation processes also contributed to changing perceptions about the norm of inclusion (and reinforced the norm of negotiation rather than violence as a means of achieving political goals). During the Arusha process and later, during the negotiations between the CNDD-FDD and the transitional government, the army and its reform was one of the main points of debate. At that time, negotiators discussed the appropriate role and composition of the new army, international experts offered models for institutional reform, and relationships between opposing sides were built.<sup>226</sup> All of this contributed to socializing the future commanders of the soon-to-be-created National Defense Forces (FDN) and, more importantly, generated the

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<sup>226</sup> Chayes and Chayes (1995) offer specific strategies for managing compliance with treaty obligations in their book, *The New Sovereignty*. While their work specifically addresses international treaties, entered into by sovereign states, their proposed strategies on ensuring compliance resonate in the context of the Burundi case. The authors propose four strategies, two of which have been especially relevant in ensuring the Burundian military's compliance with the *Arusha Accords*: capacity building and the use of persuasion. In the first instance, Chayes and Chayes suggest that technical assistance may be necessary to enable treaty signers to comply with the reporting and control requirements of their agreement; in other words, capacity building may be necessary to ensure implementation. Not only have the SSR programs been an example of this in the specific case of the Burundian military, the work undertaken by Howard Wolpe and his colleagues to build the communication and conflict management capacity of a wide swath of Burundian leaders also contributed to overall compliance with the Arusha Accords in the immediate aftermath of the war. Second, Chayes and Chayes suggest that, "the fundamental instrument for maintaining compliance with treaties at an acceptable level is an iterative process of discourse among the parties, the treaty organization, and the wider public" (1995, 25). The officers in the high command of Burundi's military have been in a perpetual dialogue since the integration process started. The Dutch-funded SSD program provides much of the framework within which this dialogue takes place. Officers also report that decisions concerning everything from recruitment policies to sending troops to AMISOM must occur regularly in order to ensure that both the spirit and the letter of the agreement are implemented. This dialogue now extends to the public, as outlined in Chapter 9 of this dissertation, which has had a significant impact on changing the meaning that the public accords to the army in the context of Burundi's broader political culture.

momentum necessary to reach what Young (2014) calls a ‘tipping point’, facilitating the emergence of new norms from seeds planted ten years earlier.<sup>227</sup>

Thus, as detailed in the previous section, when the reform process finally began in the army, three structural factors contributed to preventing mutiny in the ranks (of either the FAB or the rebels) and helped to achieve a norm cascade (Sunstein 1996): the peaceful transition of power from Buyoya to Ndayizeye in 2003; the buy-in of the top commanders of both the government army and the rebel troops, facilitated by relationship building exercises that occurred even before the GCA was signed; and, finally, a clear framework for institutional reform that included the divvying up of command positions within the new army, the harmonization of ranks between the rebel structure and the ex-FAB hierarchy, the initiation of training to ease the transition to the new command structure, the definition of and allocation of funds for (ex-)combatants, and the provision of the resources necessary to ensure the success of the entire reform process.

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<sup>227</sup> Interestingly, the norms would ultimately be shared much more strongly by the ex-FAB and ex-CNDD-FDD officers as time went on (as opposed to the members of the other rebel organizations). This was largely due to the time they spent together negotiating the future of the security services and the fact that the balance of power meant that they were the two most important protagonists at the time. The *IGC Africa Report No. 81* nicely captured this dynamic stating, “In conclusion, the Global Agreement is the point of reference for the ceasefire and the creation of the new defence (*sic*) and security forces. It clearly outlines the steps of the process and the composition of the new forces, and the creation of an integrated high command signals the quasi-immediate integration of the CNDD-FDD into the command. The agreement was negotiated directly by senior FAB and CNDD-FDD commanders, which helped create a balance. Neither belligerent appears to have lost out. Nevertheless, the CNDD-FDD emerges very much a winner, not in relation to the FAB, which is not directly threatened because they retain 60 percent of the command positions, but in relation to the other rebel movements not included in the distribution of posts” (July 2004, 4).

## 2. BURUNDI'S CHANGING INSTITUTIONS

As the norms that undergirded Burundi's political culture began to shift, so too did the regime and its attendant institutions begin to change. Indeed, the institutions were designed to facilitate the inculcation of the emergent norms of inclusion and negotiation, and to support the establishment of a more democratic regime. The principle of powersharing infused the development of all of the institutions, down to the details of the ethnic, gender, and political party quotas that were to be observed in each institution and the blocked electoral lists which, according to the *Arusha Accords* (and in keeping with evolving international norms), were to ensure an ethnically- and gender-balanced government. The very process of negotiating these new institutions prompted a change in the unwritten 'rules of the game' (of inter-ethnic and inter-party relations) and consensus-building, rather than force, was to prevail.

The principal ideational structures governing the new regime now included the *Arusha Accords* (August 2000), the *Global Ceasefire Agreement* (November 2003), and eventually, the new Constitution (March 2005). While the entire range of government institutions was targeted for reform (judiciary, parliament, executive branch, etc.), the main focus of both domestic and international efforts was the security sector, the army in particular. This transformation included a shift in the role of the army in the context of the regime. From then on, the army would become one of several institutions of government. It would no longer reign supreme as it had in the previous three and a half

decades, where it had both defined the parameters of governmental authority and enforced the rules.

### 3. RADICAL TRANSFORMATION?

The civil war and the ensuing peace process succeeded in creating the space for a shift in Burundi's political culture – a shift that had not been possible 10 years earlier. Tolerance for violence as the means of resolving conflict waned and negotiation and inclusion reemerged as principal threads of Burundi's political culture. The dominance of the Army as the arbiter of political power diminished. New institutions such as the *Arusha Accords*, the 2005 Constitution, and multi-party politics began to displace the single party state (UPRONA) and the exclusionary education and civil service structures.

These steps, undertaken within the context of both the domestic and the internationally brokered negotiation processes, set the country on a particular path and each step forward made the reforms increasingly difficult to undo. Each step was part of a process of creating momentum for the ultimate internalization of the norms that undergirded a new political culture. There may have been moments when acceptance of the new culture had to be “rebuilt,” but the weight of momentum forward was stronger than the forces pushing against change.

Thus, the path traced by the Barundi seems to represent a radical transformation in Burundi's political culture. However, certain institutions have not changed, among

them the clientelist system and the reliance on violence to achieve certain political goals. These have proved to be deeply embedded in the structure of Burundian life, difficult to influence, and have important implications for the ability of the Burundian National Defense Force to adhere to the newly inculcated norm of civilian supremacy. The sustainability of the path toward peace is still in question.



## **Chapter 9: Civilian Supremacy, at Last (2005-2014)**

### **A. Introduction**

The decade following the signature of the *Arusha Accords* and the subsequent ceasefire agreements has been a period of remarkable change in Burundi. This change has been reflected in perceptible shifts in two of the three threads of Burundi's political culture: the sources of regime legitimacy and the management of political conflict. No longer is the regime based on the narrow, exclusionary foundation of a monoethnic army, the single party state, and the clientelist system. As will be described below, the framework of the *Arusha Accords*, supported by the investment of the international community, and operationalized by Burundians, have resulted in the creation of a broad set of institutions that are imbued with new meaning and legitimacy. These include, for example, government bodies (parliament, the national land commission), civil society organizations dealing with issues ranging from corruption to reintegration of ex-combatants, an increasingly responsible independent media, and a gradually reforming security sector. In many ways, the regime is less discriminatory, less violent, and more inclusive.

The ways in which political conflict is managed have also begun to change. From Arusha forward, negotiation has again become an important method for dealing with socio-political differences and structures have been created to facilitate and reinforce this

shift. This approach is manifested through official government agencies such as the national ombudsman and the national land commission, where mediation is one of the principal tools to manage differing claims, as well as at the local level where the decrease in fear has resulted in a concurrent rise in a desire to settle conflicts more peacefully (Uvin 2009). While tensions exist between some of the institutions at the local level as to who has the authority to manage conflict (between, for example, locally elected official and the re-emergent *ubushingantahe*), there are even local NGOs helping those institutions to sort out roles and responsibilities within their communities.

Probably the most remarkable change in Burundi over the past ten years has been in relation to the Army. Once the guarantor and principal tool of an exclusionary regime, the army is now perceived as the model of the promise of Arusha. Internally, the institution has embraced the reform process with alacrity. While there have been some challenges, the FDN is seen by both Burundian and international observers as a hallmark of the success of SSR. More importantly, public perceptions of the Army have changed dramatically. It is no longer the representation of all that was wrong with Burundi – exclusion, fear, and extreme violence. Indeed, Burundi have imbued the institution with new meaning – inclusion, professionalism, and trustworthiness. As we shall see, while these changes inspire hope, it remains to be seen if the shifts in the broader political culture will be significant enough to support and sustain the army's transformation.

Sadly, the picture is not unconditionally rosy for Burundi. There are elements of the political culture that remain unchanged and their stickiness hinders the positive

progress made in the aforementioned areas. In particular, President Nkurunziza is adopting an approach to rule that is reminiscent of the *Mwami's* post-independence efforts to concentrate power in his own hands. He is attempting to divest some institutions, such as the judiciary, of their *de facto* (if not *de jure*) power to serve his own needs. And while the Army's legitimacy has increased, other parts of the security sector – specifically sections of the police and the intelligence services – do not enjoy the same reputation and are sometimes perceived to be illegitimate tools of a regime trying to impose its will by force, rather than through the legitimate institutions of the state.

In another very worrying trend, violence has recently begun to be used far more frequently as a tool of managing conflict. While the tendency to violence never completely disappeared after the end of the civil war, the population's tolerance for the use of violence decreased radically. As the regime has made moves to concentrate its power, violence has once again increased. And though the population does not actively abide this use of violence, its growing prevalence has impacted their perceptions of what is considered acceptable within the context of the broader political culture.

Finally, the clientelist system remains intact. It is no longer dominated by UPRONA, however the ruling CNDD-FDD has replicated and expanded upon the system established by the former single party. Because of the growing legitimacy of certain government institutions, Burundians now have an expectation that the state should provide them with certain services (e.g. a birth certificate or a land title), unfortunately,

those expectations often go unfulfilled (Uvin 2009). One's survival in Burundi is still closely tied to the ability to access and exploit the clientelist system.

The tenure of President Nkurunziza's administration is examined in more detail below. This chapter concludes our analysis of the evolution of Burundi's political culture and offers some clues as to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for Burundi's army in the context of that political culture.

## **B. The Administration of President Pierre Nkurunziza**

### **1. FROM REBEL LEADER TO PRESIDENT**

On August 19, 2005, Pierre Nkurunziza was elected President of the Republic of Burundi by Burundi's parliament, as per the newly approved 2005 Constitution. He was inaugurated on August 26, 2005. A Hutu and former head of the rebel group, the CNDD-FDD, Nkurunziza was young, energetic, and seemingly focused on moving the country beyond war and towards peace and development. He moved quickly to implement the provisions of the *Arusha Accords* pertaining to the composition of his new government, respecting both the ethnic and gender-based quotas. In addition, Nkurunziza almost immediately began a campaign to woo international donors to his tiny central African country; the donors, intent on sustaining the hard won peace, responded in kind.

Two characteristics have marked Nkurunziza's administration from the beginning, setting him apart from previous Burundian leaders. First, the President has been relentlessly focused on the rural population. Unlike any of his predecessors (including the monarch and the military regimes), Nkurunzia has eschewed the capital (and more importantly, most of the political elite who reside there) and prefers to spend time 'up-country,' among the population. Whether in the context of football matches, bicycle rides, tree planting campaigns, or prayer meetings, the President seems far more comfortable with Burundi's rural population than with its urban elite. And the population loves him for it.<sup>228</sup>

For the first time in Burundi's history, its leader seems not only to recognize the challenges faced by the large majority of Burundians (who are overwhelmingly rural and poor, with over 85% of the population surviving as subsistence farmers), he demonstrates what is perceived to be genuine empathy for their plight. Two of his first policy initiatives were targeted at the poor (free prenatal care for mothers and free health care for children up to 5 years old; and free primary school education for all Burundians) and the President's rhetoric constantly reinforces the theme of equal opportunity. This focus on the average Burundian adds to his legitimacy in the eyes of the population.

Peter Uvin's research (2009) explores this topic in great depth. During the several hundred interviews that he and his team conducted in Burundi in 2006, one of the important themes that emerged was about governance; how those in authority *should*

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<sup>228</sup> In 2011 a Gallup Poll of African electorates, President Nkurunziza received the highest approval rating from his electorate of any president in Africa (89%). <http://www.gallup.com/poll/154088/african-leaders-enjoy-strong-support.aspx> Accessed November 10, 2015.

behave. Their research revealed that rural Burundians define a leader as someone who listens, who tries to understand others and their problems (2009, Chapter 4). The values that interviewees advocated are those traditionally attributed to the institution of *ubushingantahe*; the social foundations “for the key principles of human rights – non-discrimination, dignity, equality of treatment, fairness and reliability” (Uvin 2009, 65). From the moment of his election in 2005, Nkurunziza began to actively espouse some of these values, qualities that had not been seen so explicitly manifested by the leader of the country for many decades and certainly not to the benefit of poor Burundians. Coupled with the widely held perception that President Nkurunziza brought peace to Burundi, this behavior has left most rural Burundians feeling that significant change has finally come to Burundi; indeed, that the political culture has begun to shift.<sup>229</sup>

The second characteristic of President Nkurunziza’s first administration that was unusual (and welcome) was a seeming openness to learning – from former enemies now integrated into government, as well as from the international community. Within a month of naming his first cabinet, the President authorized them to participate in a negotiation training and relationship-building program.<sup>230</sup> The President himself participated in parts

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<sup>229</sup> President Nkurunziza’s reputation as being ‘close to the people’ was forged long before he became President. Indeed, during the war, he was known as “umuhuza” or the ‘unifier,’ as he played a major role in calming tensions between different factions of the CNDD-FDD and in paving the way for negotiations. As Willy Nindorera reports, Nkurunziza “introduced new activities that were unconnected to fighting – such as prayer sessions, sports and sociocultural exchanges – to unite people from different regions... Once Nkurunziza had assumed control of the troops, he rarely travelled or left Burundian territory. His policy of remaining near the troops helped to create cohesion within the leadership and allowed it to pursue negotiations with great discipline – in contrast to most of the other political groups” (2012, 17). Nkurunziza continues to play this role today, both within the ruling party and in his more public persona, as the symbol of Burundi’s post-war communal reunification.

<sup>230</sup> I was one of the three facilitators of this training in September 2005. Thirty-two members of President Nkurunziza’s first cabinet participated in a five-day training program from September 26 – October 1, 2005 at the Hotel Source du Nil in Bujumbura.

of the program, openly acknowledging that he and his team had a lot to learn about running the government.

An anecdote from the training serves as an illustration of the President's apparent willingness to not set himself apart or above those with whom he worked; a quality that may have helped to initially allay the fears of exclusion among the cabinet members. As the training logistics were being finalized an issue arose with the layout of the main room. Where were the President and the two Vice Presidents to sit? Were they to participate in the training or simply observe? If they were to sit on a traditional dais, observing the training, then the facilitators would have their backs to them for much of the session – an unacceptable situation. If they were to participate, then they could not very well sit on the dais, as that would limit their ability to see the presentations or to interact with the facilitators and their fellow participants. This situation was made more comical by the level of effort that was devoted to positioning the Presidential 'throne' and the delay this caused to the start of the workshop.

In the end, when the President arrived he simply asked the facilitators where he should sit. When asked if he wanted to participate rather than observe, the President nodded affirmatively and, ignoring the dais, took his seat amongst the participants, much to the shock and consternation of both his handlers and his new cabinet members.

The President's actions set a constructive and completely new tone, both for the training and more importantly, for his relationship with his cabinet. For a brief time, the

members of the cabinet – Tutsi and Hutu alike, members of the ruling party and members of the opposition – seemed to respond in kind, privileging dialogue over debate, collaboration rather than competition. This anecdote symbolized an apparent shift in how power was to be exercised in the newly elected Burundian government. No longer would violence or exclusion rule the day. In those early days of the administration, it seemed that Burundi’s political culture had shifted dramatically – a “tectonic shift,” in the words of Chabal and Daloz (2006) – reflecting an uneven yet incredibly rapid change in the regime’s potential sources of legitimacy and how political conflict was to be managed.

## 2. CHANGE ...

The changes in the regime’s sources of legitimacy and, by extension, how its power is exercised, have been experienced in every sector of society; mandated by the *Arusha Accords*, facilitated by the investment of Burundi’s international partners, and operationalized by Burundians. President Nkurunziza’s administration has overseen (and sometimes actively hindered) major transformations such as the revitalization of Parliament, the establishment of several new important agencies, the flowering of civil society, and most importantly for this study, the reform of large segments of the security sector.



a. The Changing Role of Parliament

Admittedly, throughout Burundi's history, the Parliament has struggled to become more than simply a rubber stamp for the Executive branch of the regime. Success at the polls means the effective capture of the state and its resources, leaving opposition parties with little leverage within state institutions. This is especially true as the CNDD-FDD's wide popularity (quite genuine in the early days of the first administration) has consistently provided them with a simple majority in the National Assembly (although not always the two-thirds parliamentary majority to pass legislation). In addition, the lack of legislative experience and the propensity for in-fighting both among and between political parties (often encouraged by the leaders of the ruling party) has sometimes led to complete paralysis within the parliamentary institutions, particularly in the National Assembly. For example, in 2007, the National Assembly ceased functioning for most of the year when the leader of the CNDD-FDD, Hussein Radjabu, was expelled from the party and deputies loyal to him defected to the opposition.

Nonetheless, the deputies have made halting progress along a path of that offers the regime greater institutional diversity and legitimacy. The two houses of Parliament have demonstrated the seriousness with which their members take the running of government, occasionally finding the courage to stand up to the President and his inner circle in the face of their attempts to wrest power from the legitimately elected members of the legislative branch. In January 2013, the Parliament rejected the Organic Law meant to govern the police proposed by the President (a law required by the *Arusha Accords* but

which had not yet been promulgated) because it was incomplete, left the police extremely vulnerable to politicization, and included several unconstitutional provisions that left many areas of control in the hands of the Executive, rather than Parliament (Amnesty International 2015, 33).

In 2014, Parliament again resisted pressure from the President and blocked a proposed bill that would have changed the constitution by getting rid of the power-sharing arrangements laid out in the Arusha Accords.<sup>231</sup> Opposition members and civil society organizations have welcomed decisions such as these, as they contribute to perceptions that checks and balances are beginning to be established within Burundi's government and heighten the regime's overall legitimacy.

b. Protection of Rights

Another area whose expansion seems to suggest a shift in Burundi's political culture is the protection of Burundians' rights. Mandated by the *Arusha Accords* and nominally promoted by President Nkurunziza, the Parliament has approved the establishment of a range of institutions designed to deal with some of Burundi's most pressing problems: the National Independent Elections Commission (2005); the National Commission for Land and Property (2007); and the National Independent Human Rights Commission (2011). The appointment of a National Ombudsman was approved in 2010. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission, also called for in the Arusha agreement, was set

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<sup>231</sup> "Burundi Parliament Rejects Disputed Draft Constitution" *ReliefWeb*, March 21, 2014. <http://reliefweb.int/report/burundi/burundi-parliament-rejects-disputed-draft-constitution> Accessed November 10, 2015.

up at the end of 2014, although its composition and its objectives have been hotly debated.

The impact of these institutions on the creation of a more favorable rights environment in Burundi is uneven at best. The National Independent Elections Commission (CENI) has suffered from a deteriorating reputation with each successive election, as accusations of politicization have risen and its independence has been questioned. The National Ombudsman enjoys more credibility. The Ombudsman has a broad mandate, from resolving problems between Burundi and external actors, to addressing problems internal to Burundi's political parties, investigating rights violations by public servants, and overseeing the exercise of government responsibilities by official bodies. He has received a remarkably favorable rating in an analysis conducted by the Burundian media, where the Ombudsman's Office was named one of Burundi's Top 5 institutions, based on how successfully he has fulfilled his mandate.<sup>232</sup>

Similarly, the National Land Commission (CNTB) is credited with resolving many critical land disputes at the local and provincial levels. However, because a comprehensive approach to managing the land crisis has yet to be developed, this work remains insufficient in the face of widespread corruption, a lack of understanding of the rule of law, inadequate land registration rates, poor family planning, and a dearth of creative conflict management options (Keenan 2015). The National Independent Human Rights Commission has also retained a solid reputation as an independent body,

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<sup>232</sup> The Ombudsman was rated one of the Top 5 government institutions in 2014 by the Burundian media outlet AG News <http://burundi-agnews.org/sports-and-games/?p=16052> Accessed November 11, 2015.

continuing to investigate politically sensitive cases with relatively little undue influence from the ruling party or the government (Freedom House 2015).

c. Civil Society and the Media

Throughout its short history, civil society in Burundi has been the purview of the educated elite – and until recently, almost completely dominated by Tutsi. During the negotiations to end the war, many domestic and international observers decried the inclusion of civil society organizations (CSO) at the Arusha process, claiming that they were not truly representative of Burundi’s civil society but rather were “powerful Tutsi networks opportunistically trying to gain access to the negotiations” (McClintock and Nahimana 2011, 87). Despite this challenge, since the end of the war civil society has begun to slowly transform in Burundi and, with support and investment from the international community, credible CSOs have emerged. These organizations deal with a range of issues from fighting for the rights of ex-combatants (CEDAC) to acting as anti-corruption watchdogs (OLUCOME); from promoting more constructive ways to manage conflict (BLTP) to monitoring human rights and protecting prisoners (Ligue ITEKA and APRODH).

Some of the CSOs have become deeply involved in monitoring the activities of the security forces, including OLUCOME, which investigates corruption and economic embezzlement within the police and the army, and CENAP, which documents civilian interactions with and perceptions of the security services (*CIGI Security Sector Reform*

*Monitor* No. 3 August 2010). The socio-political space within which civil society organizations operate initially widened but has subsequently contracted over the past ten years, becoming quite restricted in the three years leading up to the 2015 elections. Nonetheless, activists continue to valiantly call the government to account, especially in the areas of impunity, rights violations, and corruption.

A similar trajectory has been traced by Burundi's media sector. Originally the mouthpiece of successive military regimes, the media too has made great strides, particularly in the professionalization and independence of journalists. Since 1995, when Search for Common Ground first established an office and radio studio in Burundi to support the processes of peace and reconciliation, Burundi's media landscape has greatly evolved. There is a range of outlets that cover the political spectrum and while some elite Burundians have access to the two main newspapers, the two television stations, and the internet-based news outlets, the radio remains virtually the sole source of information for the vast majority of Burundians.<sup>233</sup> While there continue to be charges that some journalists (or their parent media outlet) are ethnically or politically biased, in general, the quality of the investigative reporting has dramatically increased since the end of the war, offering Burundians more credible and diverse information and news.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Contrary to expectations and despite their generally low educational literacy rates, Burundians are very media literate. According to research by Marie-Soleil Frere (2015), Burundians know who financially supports which stations (and thus the perspective and content presented) and they consume many different sources of media each day – listening to different programs from widely different sources. As many of her interviewees reported, “we need to know what *they* are thinking!” (Research presented at the *Contemporary Burundian Studies Symposium*, October 16, 2015, Ghent, Belgium.)

<sup>234</sup> This situation has changed dramatically since May 2015 in the aftermath of the attempted coup d'état, when all independent radio stations were closed and subsequently destroyed to prevent them from returning on air. This has done more to raise fears in Burundi than almost any other single event, as at least 80% of Burundians depend on the radio as their sole source of news and information (excluding rumors and word of mouth).

d. Ongoing Security Sector Reform

Under President Nkurunziza's regime, the security sector reform process has pressed ahead. While the police remain politicized and the intelligence services are largely untouched by reform, the FDN has made great strides – both in the professionalization of the corps and in strengthening the legal framework that governs their activities. In particular, the recruitment policies now observed by the FDN have continued to change the face of the corps, both reassuring the population that the army reflects them in their diversity and contributing to dynamics within the military that are meant to lower the risks of internal support for a coup.<sup>235</sup>

The decision to participate in African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2007 has presented some challenges (especially as it introduces a disparity in pay that has the potential to destabilize the domestic situation when troops rotate home) but it is generally seen as a welcome opportunity for Burundian soldiers to hone their skills, learn from other, better-trained armies, build an essential esprit de corps, and increase their income albeit on a dangerous, largely thankless mission (Wilén 2015). A 2012 study by CENAP and CREDESS-Bdi documenting Burundian's perceptions of the FDN suggests

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<sup>235</sup> As the Organization of Central African Media (OMAC) reported in 2013, candidates for the military academy now come from across Burundi and there is a constitutional mandate that each of the 17 provinces must present 10 candidates for the new promotion (and the overall officer corps must remain balanced between Hutu and Tutsi); a legal remedy also enshrined in the *Arusha Accords* to prevent what happened earlier in Burundi's history, where a single ethnic group from one of Burundi's provinces dominated the armed forces. The fact that the media can talk openly about these issues is also an important indication of how the relationship between the military and civil society has evolved – the topic of the military is no longer taboo. OMAC *Actualité burundaise*, January 7, 2013.

that the Burundian population concurs with the contention that the FDN has become more professional, with over 77% favorably rating the discipline of the corps and an equally high percentage of 79% stating that they have confidence in the corps (CENAP/CREDESS-Bdi 2012, 68).

At home in Burundi, the SSR process has not only precipitated a commensurate strengthening of government oversight bodies, such as parliamentary committees, it has encouraged previously taboo discussions about issues as wide ranging as ethnicity, army budgets, and civilian participation in oversight processes (Ball 2014a). Based on her extensive research of the Dutch-funded Security Sector Development (SSD) program in Burundi, Nicole Ball underscores that, “Within the SSD program there is now acceptance of the importance of discussing security issues outside the restricted circle of uniformed service personnel. Security has become “everyone’s affair”” (Ball 2014a, 7).

### 3. AND CONTINUITY

However, Nkurunziza’s government has foundered on problems that confound more experienced leaders of wealthier countries; political infighting, corruption, grinding poverty, and seemingly endless negotiations with the opposition and with the last remaining rebel group to join the government, the PALIPEHUTU-FNL. Added to this, the relative inexperience of President Nkurunziza and many of the ruling party’s leaders has led to poor choices on how to deal with political dissent (imprisonment or the infiltration and splitting of opposition parties), allegations of massive human rights

violations (deny or ignore the charges), political stalemate (refuse to consult members of the coalition and impose the ruling party's program), and challenges to his leadership from within the party (divest those leaders of their responsibilities and/or imprison them).

Clientelism continues to provide the glue that undergirds the state, particularly in the absence of the effective delivery of services and in the face of growing corruption. Indeed, corruption seems to be an increasing threat to the stability of the government.<sup>236</sup> Ironically, the CNDD-FDD has replicated the system instituted by UPRONA, installing party cadre in every hillside and generally linking access to civil service positions with membership in the party. And much like UPRONA before them, the CNDD-FDD network is overlaid on the more traditional clientelist system, intertwining economic survival, the party, and the state.

These poor policy choices continue to haunt the President and over time, his credibility both amongst Burundians and with the international community has systematically eroded – although admittedly, the perceptions of rural Burundians have changed far more slowly than those of the Burundian elite or the international community, due in large part to the relative calm that prevailed in the country until mid-2015.

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<sup>236</sup> Transparency International ranks Burundi 159 out of 175 countries (with 1 being least corrupt), and according to their survey, almost 50% of Burundians surveyed feel that their public officials are corrupt/extremely corrupt; 69% feel the judiciary is corrupt/extremely corrupt; and 82% feel that the police are corrupt/extremely corrupt. This contrasts with the military whom only 5% of those surveyed felt they were corrupt/extremely corrupt. <http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/country/?country=burundi> Accessed November 11, 2015.



Despite these problems, Nkurunziza has survived. The country remains weak, maintaining an increasingly fragile stability. Amidst charges of fraud, Nkurunziza won the 2010 presidential elections and the CNDD-FDD swept of the majority of seats at all levels of government, largely because the opposition withdrew from the electoral process in protest of the suspected fraud. In 2015, the President replicated his 2010 electoral success, despite the alleged illegality of his eligibility to run for office, and he and the ruling party plan to retain power for at least the next 5 years.

Violence, intimidation, and human rights violations persist and poverty remains the single greatest challenge confronting the government. To date, the political solutions offered by the government have given little hope to the population for a better future. And yet, Burundi has not returned to war. With the exception of three challenges to the integrity of the army, the FDN has remained in its barracks and the civilian government has been left to sort out the problems without visible interference from the security sector.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> In 2006 and again 2009 there were rumors of an alleged coup d'état. However in 2006, the principal perpetrators were eventually exonerated and the affair was chalked up to political rivalries between the CNDD-FDD and the FRODEBU. In 2009, the Minister of Defense immediately contradicted the Chief of Staff's claims that a coup was being planned, characterizing the incident a problem of internal discipline. In both cases, the army maintained its neutrality and unity. In May 2015, elements of the FDN attempted a coup d'état. The coup was quickly put down by troops loyal to the government and the perpetrators have either fled the country or been arrested.

### **C. The Army's Current Role**

As I have illustrated, there are several factors that have contributed to this tenuous stability. Most certainly, the engagement and investment of the international community has made a difference; from providing extra budgetary support to funding key health programs and, perhaps most critically, to making significant, long-term investments in the security sector reform process. Equally important, the social context has changed and along with it, some of the norms that govern behavior. Burundians are tired of war. The years of conflict and violence have taken their toll. Along with fatigue, Burundians are demanding more of their leaders and no longer simply following the elites, as they once did. As one interviewee expressed,

The population used to look at the leaders and say, “you guys figure it out”. This attitude dates back to the monarchy and colonialism, [and is also due to] poverty and a lack of education. But as those things have changed, the population has begun to gain a greater voice and see a greater role for themselves in determining their future (Interview with Burundian Professor, August 13, 2012).

This shift is nowhere more striking than in the security sector. Amongst Tutsi and Hutu officers – ex-FAB and ex-rebel soldiers – the constant refrain now heard from them is, ‘while we still have a long way to go, we accept the principle that we are (and should be) governed by civilians’.<sup>238</sup> The ‘we’ here refers to both Hutu and Tutsi officers. The FDN’s reputation as a role model of a successful SSR program is something that is appreciated by all of the officers whom I interviewed and is something about which these

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<sup>238</sup> This perspective was shared in six separate interviews conducted by the author with members of the high command of the FDN in August 2012 and January 2013.

officers are very proud. This does not mean that the Army is no longer an important political actor – as Welch (1976) reminds us, the military will always play some role in politics, it is simply a matter of degree. What it means is that the Army perceives its role differently within the context of Burundi's evolving political culture and this is a key explanatory factor for the change in their behavior.

## **Chapter 10: Understanding the Behavior of the Burundian Military**

### **A. Introduction**

At the outset of this research project, I posited that an explanation of the behavior of the Burundian military arrived at using only the lens of civil-military relations theory would be incomplete. An understanding of civil-military relations requires an understanding of the larger socio-political context within which those relations exist. In other words, what constitutes appropriate relations between civilian and military institutions in Burundi cannot be analyzed in the abstract; these relations must be examined in light of the meaning Burundians themselves give to them, especially as relates to notions of power and political change – their conception of political culture.

To return to the definition of political culture that I am using in this dissertation: political culture encompasses the values, ideology, formal and informal rules that inform a people's shared understanding (conscious and unconscious) of how politics should function and which give meaning to and ultimately guide their actions. In my research, three principal threads of political culture emerged– the sources of regime legitimacy; the management of political conflict; and how the role of the state manifests itself in the lives of Burundians. Within each of these threads, the different explanations found in the civil-military relations literature buttress our understanding of what has changed (or remained

constant) across time and, in particular, enrich our explanation of the behavior of the Burundian military.

- A CONCISE REVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF BURUNDI'S POLITICAL CULTURE

Before offering my analysis of how the civil-military relations theories manifest themselves in the context of Burundi's political culture, I will briefly retrace the three threads that I uncovered in my research.

As described in Chapter Three, during the pre-colonial era, the monarchy's survival was contingent upon a broad range of institutions that covered all aspects of political, economic and social life. The most important of these were the *Mwami*; the *ubushingantahe*; and clientelism. This broad foundation of support was especially important because the *Mwami* did not monopolize control of the means of violence within his kingdom and thus negotiation was the principal means of structuring the political space. The final thread present in pre-colonial Burundi was the patronage system. The kingdom functioned through an interlocking web of hierarchical relationships with the *Mwami* at its summit. The population provisioned the *Mwami*, who in turn maintained order in the system.

In Chapter Four, I demonstrated how colonialism fundamentally changed the configuration of Burundian society and shifted key aspects of Burundi's political culture. While the colonizers generally ruled by proxy through the *Mwami*, they introduced new

rules, changing the incentives in the system and they used different, more violent methods of establishing their power. The sources of regime legitimacy changed, with the Belgians ultimately becoming the point of reference for legitimation, rather than the vast array of institutions that had existed in the previous era (although some of these were still relevant for rural Burundians). Force began to displace negotiation as the preferred tool of conflict management at all levels of society and the network of relationships on which the *Mwami* had previously relied to help him to manage socio-political relations throughout the kingdom was torn apart. The clientelist system remained intact, however the presence of the colonizers altered the amount and allocation of available resources in the system.

As explored in Chapter 5, the era of independence resulted in further alteration to the three threads of political culture. Marked by both turbulence and transition, Burundi's political culture could have moved in several different directions upon independence. While years following Burundi's independence offered great promise for the possibility of a more representative government, ultimately increasing violence and the ethnicization of politics influenced both the sources of the regime's legitimacy and the management of political conflict. The clientelist system was largely unchanged during this period.

The 1966 coup d'état marked the capture of the state by the minority Hima Tutsi and, with the exception of clientelism, they ruled through a completely new set of institutions: the military and the one party system. As outlined in Chapter Six, rather than garner their legitimacy from the wide array of political networks and spiritual

relationships that had buttressed Burundi's regimes in earlier times, these institutions grounded their authority in violence and exclusion, using the force of the army to retain power. The clientelist system was integral to the strategy of the successive military regimes, allowing it to use resources of the state to penetrate deep into Burundi's hillsides, establishing control and ensuring the population's reliance the web of relationships mediated by the regime.

In Chapter Seven, I explored how the inauguration of the Third Republic reflected the remarkable 'stickiness' of Burundi's political culture. At its core, the political culture continued to be characterized by personalization, exclusion, and violence. The institutions through which this political culture was manifested had not changed: power continued to be exercised from the narrow foundation of the monoethnic Army and the one party state, supported by the deeply entrenched clientelist system, whose control lay in the hands of elite Hima Tutsi. Yet, Pierre Buyoya's regime would be distinguished by an extensive reform process, which while ultimately unsuccessful in introducing a sustainable democracy, planted some of the seeds of regime change that flowered after the civil war.

Chapter Eight highlights the impact of President Ndadaye's assassination on the enduring features of Burundi's political culture – in particular, how violence and exclusion remained the dominant currency in the exercise of power and the management of political conflict. Economic influence continued to be tied to the clientelist system and in particular, control of Burundi's few resources: the coffee sector and the coffers of the

state. The continuity represented by these characteristics overshadowed political life in the immediate aftermath of Ndadaye's death, giving the impression that nothing had (or would ever) changed in Burundi.

However, the sources of the regime's legitimacy were violently contested in ways that they had not been in the previous thirty years resulting in a 13-year civil conflict. The negotiated settlement of the civil war resulted in the waning dominance of the army and the reallocation of power, which contributed to the emergence of different sources of regime legitimacy and influence. Specifically, negotiation would reemerge as an important thread in the management of political conflict among the widening range powerbrokers in Burundi. This process was greatly influenced by the role of the international community in helping to settle the civil conflict.

Finally, in Chapter Nine, I demonstrated that the regime is no longer based on the narrow, exclusionary foundation of a monoethnic army and the single party state (although the clientelist system remains remarkably constant). The legal and institutional framework created as a result of the Arusha Process (and subsequent agreements) has produced of a broad set of institutions that are imbued with new meaning and legitimacy by *Barundi*. Negotiation is again an important method for dealing with socio-political differences and structures have been created to facilitate and reinforce this shift.

Probably the most notable change in Burundi over the past ten years has been in the Army. Once the purveyor of violence in a minority-dominated regime, the army is



now perceived as the model of the promise of Arusha – both externally and internally. There have been striking changes in the public’s perceptions of the Army and Burundi have imbued the institution with new meaning – meaning that reflects the values and characteristics of inclusion, professionalism, and trustworthiness.

Unfortunately, despite this success, Burundi’s future is quite uncertain. The increasing use of violence has once again begun to seep into the Burundi psyche, raising fears that extreme violence will once again become “thinkable.” In addition, the regime’s sources of institutional legitimacy are on shaky ground, as little has been done to reform the other parts of the security sector or the judiciary and a more generalized crackdown on independent media and civil society has gathered steam (lumped in with the political opposition, these organizations are now seen to defy the President and the ruling party, making them a threat).

The clientelist system remains intact, dominated now by the ruling party, the CNDD-FDD. Despite promises to improve service delivery, government corruption has increased and thus the need for patronage remains high. As a result, Burundians remain vulnerable to the arbitrary use of violence and the capricious nature of a weak state.

## **B. Civil-Military Relations in the Context of Political Culture**

Keeping in mind this overview of the evolution of Burundi’s political culture, we will now turn our attention to the civil-military relations theories. As explained in depth

in Chapter Two, the civil-military relations theories tend to fall into three broad categories – norm-based, structural, and rational choice theories. As has been demonstrated in this dissertation, no one category (and indeed, no single theory) adequately predicts the military's behavior. Instead, the theories have explanatory value when they are combined. So, for example, norm inculcation is both supported and furthered by professionalization; a drop in support for military intervention occurs alongside the increasing legitimacy of government. Using the preceding analysis of Burundian history (from the foundation of the kingdom through 2014), we can see which theories have predictive capacity and which do not; and we can gain a better understanding of how those theories with predictive capacity mutually reinforce one another.

#### 1. SOURCES OF REGIME LEGITIMACY

As outlined at the end of Chapter Eight, the sources of the regime's legitimacy shifted dramatically after the signature on the *Arusha Accords* in 2000. Encouraged and supported by the international community, Burundi rebuilt their institutional architecture, allowing new institutions to come to the fore. In addition to the *Arusha Accords*, key elements include, among others, the 2003 *Global Ceasefire Agreement*, the 2005 constitution, the reintroduction of electoral politics and multi-party competition, the provision of a legal framework to govern civil society (including media) and their growing role as civilian oversight bodies, the formation of a national land commission (CNTB), the establishment of a national police force (rather than a gendarmerie), and the

reform of national tax authority. In the midst of these changes, the perception of the army's legitimacy as the principal political actor began to decline.

As underscored above, civil-military relations scholarship offers a partial explanation for this decline. As will be outlined below, it is a combination of theoretical approaches in the context of a changing political culture that gives civil-military relations theory its greatest analytical purchase and furthers our understanding of the behavior of the Burundian military over the course of the last decade.

a. Norm-based Civil-Military Relations Theories

There are two civil-military relations theories that most directly intersect with the first thread of political culture, 'sources of regime legitimacy', and which illustrate how the Army's role as one of the primary institutions associated with regime legitimacy in Burundi has been re-imagined. These are, unsurprisingly, a) increasing regime legitimacy with the general population lowers likelihood of military intervention (Finer (1962), Stepan (1973), Nordlinger (1977), and Koonings and Kruijt (2002)); and b) the inculcation of a norm of civilian supremacy in the military has changed the soldiers' perceptions as regards the appropriate role for and use of military force to resolve political conflict (Finer (1962), Welch and Smith (1974), Welch (1976)). The last decade of Burundi's history provides ample evidence of how these normative theories help to explain change in the Army.

*i. Increasing Regime Legitimacy*

As underscored above, the basis on which the regime in Burundi defines its legitimacy has been redefined since 2000. Many of the documents and institutions which underpin the regime would be quite familiar to any citizen in a Western-style democracy: a constitution, a legal framework to guide elections and multi-party politics, organizations and bodies charged with oversight of key government institutions and processes, etc. Yet, in 1993, similar institutions failed to accord the regime with sufficient legitimacy to prevent its upending by the Army. What has changed? There are at least two answers to this question.

First, the legal framework developed with the support provided by the international community (embodied in the *Arusha Accords* and the advent of Security Sector Reform) coupled with the impetus for change led by the Burundian political elite allowed for a critical structural transformation in the lives of Burundians. Addressed in more detail below with respect to the specific institution of the military, these structures created the container within which normative changes could be promoted. The wider impact of these changes was experienced by almost all Burundians as their day-to-day lives improved.

In his 2006 research, Peter Uvin effectively captures this dynamic. He underscores that it was not the Western institutions that Burundians cared about at the end of the war, emphasizing, “They care far more for security and minimal development

than for elections or human rights law” (2009, 78). Thus, the regime’s perceived ability to provide security was, according to Uvin, a “strong source of legitimacy for the current government and the president” (2009, 55). In this context, ‘security’ was not simply the absence of war, but also meant the absence of (or at least a drop in) criminality and a concurrent rise in opportunity, each of direct benefit to the average Burundian.

Second, this structural transformation – increased security – opened the space for a critical shift to occur after 2000. In the absence of widespread violence, Burundians could begin to give new meaning to the institutions that undergird the regime. Their expectations of government and its institutions began to change and to manifest themselves in how Burundians interacted with those institutions. I do not mean to imply that Burundians immediately began to endow their government with legitimacy it had not earned (they most certainly did not do that and continue to possess a deep mistrust of government and the political system). What I mean is that Burundians began to hope for a better future and to act on that hope; demanding more of their institutions (supported by a more independent CSOs and media actors) and engaging actively in debate about what is and is not legitimate behavior by those institutions. It is this shift in Burundi’s political culture that created the context within which reform of the security sector could take root.

As an example of this more open debate, average Burundians have begun to bring complaints against Burundi’s security institutions over the past several years. Both civil society watchdog organizations and the Army’s public relations office report that public

complaints about the police and army have increased since 2006 (Powell 2007).<sup>239</sup> While this can be seen in a negative light, it reveals a profound shift the relationship between the population and the army.

For almost 40 years, the average citizen had no right to bring a complaint against a soldier (and indeed, would have feared for his life had he done so). Complaints have increased not necessarily (or only) because the behavior of the security services is worse, but because abuses are now being reported. According to surveys conducted by a local NGO, CENAP, the population apparently now feels that a) they have a right to complain about bad behavior; b) they have recourse if they do choose to complain; and c) they have confidence that there is a chance that the violators will be punished (Powell 2007).

In a further example of changing role of the Army, especially in relation to the way in which it provides the civilian government with legitimacy, CENAP conducted another survey five years later, which was again designed to assess the population's attitudes towards the Army and the National Police. According to the data, the behavior of the FDN across Burundi was rated very positively by the population, particularly on measures such as lack of corruption, increased professionalism, and discipline

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<sup>239</sup> Interview with an FDN Colonel, August 10, 2012.

(CENAP/CREDESS-bdi 2012).<sup>240</sup> Where once the Army was the most feared institution in Burundi, it is now much more widely respected by Hutu and Tutsi alike.<sup>241</sup>

Finally, as referenced in Chapter Two, the legitimacy of the Burundian civilian government emerged as one of the key deterrents to intervention cited in the interviews I conducted for this study. Interestingly, the military officers I interviewed more frequently cited the existence of a legitimate government as preventing them from intervening in politics, than did the civilians interviewed. This was likely due to the military's (relatively new) training in the values of democracy and the importance of honoring the spirit of the constitution.<sup>242</sup> Nonetheless, only ten years ago, it would have been rare (almost unthinkable) to hear a Burundian Army Colonel circumscribe the military's actions as one of my interviewees did:

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<sup>240</sup> In addition, almost 90% of those surveyed reported that security in their locales was 'good' or 'very good' as compared to the previous 12 months, further buttressing the civilian government's legitimacy. According to the report, a total of over 2000 surveys were conducted with coverage in each of Burundi's provinces and in the capital. The surveys were complemented by individual interviews and focus group meetings (CENAP/CREDESS-bdi, 2012).

<sup>241</sup> As Marc Sommers discovered in his research on Burundian refugees in Tanzania, the FAB had long been seen as the center of power in Burundi; "The army is the government," many refugees would reiterate. And thus, the young, non-elite refugees that he interviewed "maintained that their return to Burundi would only take place once the army was no longer dominated by Tutsi soldiers but became a joint, integrated Hutu and Tutsi institution" (2001, 191). The flood of refugee returnees after the integration of the army began is a testament to this sentiment.

<sup>242</sup> One caveat on this topic: Burundian civilians whom I interviewed used a slightly different frame, suggesting that intervention by the military might be appropriate, if the government did not respect its constitutional mandate. Several Hutu and Tutsi civilian interviewees offered this viewpoint, leading me to wonder about the impact of Burundi's four bloodless coups d'état on their perceptions of legitimate methods of political transition. When discussing this topic, the same interviewees also expressed feelings of uncertainty about the civilian government and its ability to maintain control of the armed forces. I would not have been surprised if only Tutsi had expressed their support for a coup, as I expected that Tutsi were still unsettled by the fact that there no longer existed a monoethnic army to protect them from the perceived existential threat posed by Hutu. I was surprised that Hutu would express similar feelings. I suspect that the military officers I interviewed would not dare to use this framing – at least not explicitly – as it would imply that there was the possibility that intervention was a legitimate course of action; an attitude that the military is working very hard to purge from its ranks. Conversely, civilians have received very little structured exposure to or education about regime transition (democratic or otherwise) and this lack of education may contribute to their willingness to consider a coup d'état a legitimate means of transferring of power.

Therefore, we insist, [that young officers] take what we might call a civics course, to show them the role and the place of the army and the place of an officer in particular [in a civilian-led government]... This will help in inculcating respect for the government; to no longer believe that we are in an era where we can do anything we like [such as] to mount a coup d'état. We must show them that times have changed. Now, it is a democratic system and the only way to access power is to get it through the vote (Interview conducted August 21, 2012).

This sea change in attitudes vis-à-vis the security services is an excellent indicator of the mutually reinforcing dynamic of shifting norms and increasing legitimacy. This dynamic has two related but distinct impacts. First, as the army stays out of politics its *own* legitimacy grows – independent of the government as a whole. The army and the government are no longer seen as one and the same. Second, and rather paradoxically, the FDN's reputation reflects positively on the government, enhancing the government's own standing with the population almost by default. As a result, this reinforces the population's expectation that the army will no longer intervene in political matters that are not in its purview. This second phenomenon gives weight to the argument that as government legitimacy grows amongst the population, there is a concurrent drop in the motivation for unlawful intervention in politics by the Army (Finer 1962).

*ii. The Primacy of a Norm of Civilian Supremacy*

Perhaps a more telling indication that a shift in Burundi's political culture has inspired and encouraged the emergence of new sources of regime legitimacy is the successful inculcation of a norm of civilian supremacy in the Army. Unlike the failed efforts of the Buyoya I regime (1987-1993), the reforms undertaken as part of the Arusha



process took place in a context where the meaning ascribed to concepts such as ‘good governance’ or ‘civilian authority’ resonated at the macrosocial level in Burundi (Coleman 1990). The external environment both informed and supported the changes happening within the Army, resulting in a shared understanding of (and a tacit agreement to enforce) the new norm of civilian supremacy.

There is ample evidence in Burundi to support the hypothesis that officers in the FDN have begun to internalize the norm of civilian supremacy. Descriptions of the curriculum at the Institut Supérieur des Cadres Militaires (ISCAM, Burundi’s military academy) include courses on the rule of law, the supremacy of civilian institutions, and the role and importance of UN peacekeeping operations.<sup>243</sup> In a focus group session with ISCAM cadets, they spoke about the need to respect the civilian government, to be apolitical and to protect all Burundians (Focus group interview, January 16, 2013).

Perhaps a more illuminating demonstration of the growing acceptance of a norm of civilian supremacy was found in the Ministry of Defense’s “Open Door” program celebrating Burundi’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence in July 2012. Not only were the doors of the Ministry and the Army Command literally thrown open to the public, the FDN organized regional “Open Door” events at bases throughout the country so that the rural population might avail themselves of the same opportunity for dialogue with the Army (just like the elite in Bujumbura).

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<sup>243</sup> Curriculum overview provided by the Commander of ISCAM, January 16, 2013.

During these sessions, many of the presentations made by military officers dealt with the changed role of the Burundian army, highlighting the importance of accountability to civilian institutions (both governmental and non-governmental oversight bodies). In addition, the program in Bujumbura was notable for an impromptu public debate between two ex-FAB generals as to the culpability of the FAB in the death of President Ndadaye in 1993. Both the fact that the issue was raised and the level of support given to the general who expressed regret that the army had not done its part to defend the institutions of the State were a remarkable testimony to how far the army has come from its status as the untouchable protector of exclusively Tutsi interests.<sup>244</sup>

The desire to improve the image of Burundi abroad, specifically as part of the African Union Peacekeeping Force in Somalia (AMISOM), has provided the FDN leadership with the opportunity to reinforce the norms in the corps that will further that goal. Norms do not exist in a vacuum but are attached to ideas and institutions (Wendt and Barnett 1993). As Wendt and Barnett further underscore, “Dependence on the global military culture shapes Third World elites’ ideas about what constitutes a ‘modern’ army” (1993, 321). They go on to emphasize, “Legitimacy is in part garnered by being recognized in the state system and armies are often seen as symbolizing that ‘legitimacy’” (1993, 326). Burundian soldiers seek that legitimacy because they recognize its importance for Burundi’s standing on the global stage, as well as at home.

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<sup>244</sup> This exchange was mentioned in at least three separate, unrelated interviews – two with military officers and one with a civilian, who attended the Open Door program.

Equally important, is the inculcation of the same norm of civilian supremacy in the civilian institutions that are charged with oversight of the military and the police. Parliament is slowly but steadily beginning to take on a more active role. Encouraged and supported by the Dutch-funded SSD program, they are holding more committee meetings and more regularly calling the Minister of Defense to testify. Ironically, it is more often at these bodies – specifically, the Senate and Assembly committees responsible for reviewing budgets – that public criticism is targeted. The military is still too often considered a taboo subject and in the eyes of the public, the government officials who participate in those oversight bodies do not ask relevant questions or push back hard enough on those officers who come before them. “We must accept that the army is no longer a taboo [subject]...If the parliament is mandated by the citizen to plead the case of the citizen, then it has to know what is happening inside the army; what the needs are of the army and why the army doesn’t have things it might need” (Interview with FDN General, August 10, 2012).

Furthering the goal of inculcating civilians with this norm, a delegation of parliamentarians and journalists traveled from Burundi to Somalia in late 2012, with the objective of gaining a better understanding of the conditions under which the troops are serving and how their committee decisions impact the lives of the soldiers in the field. The visit was also organized in part to shine a spotlight on subjects that were previously off-limits to journalists and civilians, such as the number of casualties that the Burundi troops suffer. With this information, the Parliamentarians were expected to more aggressively question Ministry of Defense officials about budgets, health care, death

benefits, etc. The willingness of parliament to more vocally exercise its role in civilian oversight, especially in the face of not infrequent intimidation on the part of the police, is evidence that they too are beginning to internalize the norm of civilian supremacy.<sup>245</sup>

Words alone do not demonstrate the existence of a norm nor, more critically, the meaning that is ascribed to that norm by a society (Chabal and Daloz 2006). Although the changed public discourse, open acknowledgement of the necessity for civilian oversight of budgets and the larger defense strategy, feedback from the population on their relationship with the military, and the soldiers' behavior in the field all point to the steady, if perhaps incomplete, inculcation of a norm of civilian supremacy in the ranks of the FDN, that is insufficient.

More importantly, the existence of the norm reflects at a more fundamental level the fact that the broader political culture within which the military exists has given the institution new meaning. It is now one of many sources of the regime's legitimacy; ironically, one of the institutions most trusted by the entire Burundian population to protect them all equally. It is now perceived as an institution that is at service of the nation, rather than in command of it.

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<sup>245</sup> Separate interviews with two staff of the Dutch-funded SSD program, January 2013.

b. Structural Civil-Military Relations Explanations

The norm-based explanations of civil-military relations offer an important but incomplete reason for how the sources of regime legitimacy have changed in Burundi. Our understanding of the shift away from the dominant institutions of the army and pervasive one party state has been furthered by an analysis of the structural explanations of civil-military relations, in particular the decreased salience of ethnicity, the role of professionalization of the force, and the involvement of the international community.

*i. A brief recapitulation*

Throughout its history, Burundi flirted with multiparty politics, mostly without success. Just prior to and immediately after independence, the Belgian colonizers and the monarchy ostensibly supported the move toward a multiparty system. In the absence of effective leadership and widespread understanding of the purpose of political parties, the system degenerated into an increasingly violent battleground amongst elites, whose struggle for power endowed the inter-party conflicts with ominous ethnic overtones. In 1966, the multiparty system was replaced by a one party state by the soon-to-be-deposed *Mwami Ntare V*. Upon seizing power, the military dictator ensured that UPRONA served as a vehicle for maintaining the minority Tutsi hold on the resources of the state, rather than as a means of representing citizens' views to government. Military officers played a key role in the design and the functioning of UPRONA, successfully militarizing the

party and thus by extension, the structures and spaces within which politics were conducted.

In 1992, multiparty politics was again introduced in Burundi. This time around, several new institutions were introduced to support the goals of the regime (the Charter of National Unity, the new constitution, and a regulatory framework governing the political parties). Unfortunately, the main pillar of the regime, the FAB, was not prepared to relinquish power to these new institutions and successfully thwarted the aspirations of a (Hutu) majority of Burundians through a violent reclamation of power.

One of the reasons for this failure was the aborted transformation of the civil-military relationship within the regime. Not only did the cursory attempts at normative modification within the corps fall short, there was little effort to create the structures within the FAB that would have reinforced such normative changes. In addition, the role of the FAB within the socio-political context of Burundi had not changed at all. It remained the protector of minority interests (lauded by Tutsi for doing so), and willing to unleash extreme violence at the slightest provocation in order to achieve its aims.

Yet after the war ended and by the time the SSR process had begun, the situation had altered. What had changed? As explained in the previous section, a significant difference in the post-2003 context has been the promotion of a normative change within the Army – and the subsequent acknowledgement of that shift by the population. Yet these changes have not happened spontaneously; nor could they have been sustained on

their own. They are part of a series of structural transformations of the Army that have reinforced the inculcation of new norms and inspired a redefinition of the Army's role in the eyes of the population.

*ii. Decreased salience of ethnicity*

One of the most important structural changes to the Army that was agreed to by the parties at Arusha was the integration of Hutu into the officer ranks. This change was critical because the Army was so closely identified with the minority Tutsi. Had specific attention not been paid to the issue of ethnicity, the Army risked remaining vulnerable to inter-communal tensions (Nordlinger 1977).

When the SSR process was launched, the FAB officer corps was still resolutely Tutsi, notwithstanding the fact that during the course of the war the composition of the foot soldiers had begun to change, as was explained in the previous chapter. Despite this structural obstacle, the integration process began even before the signing of the GCA and ended up moving very quickly once the CNDD-FDD joined the government. The Forces Armées du Burundi (FAB) was renamed the Forces de Défense Nationale (FDN) and the rebels began to be integrated into all levels of the corps, but most importantly, at the officer level. In order to allay the fears of the minority Tutsi, the army was to be structured very carefully. Stef Vandeginste explains it this way,

The Protocol [of 8 October 2003] further specified through the Forces Technical Agreement of 2 November 2003, also provided for power-sharing in the command structures of the new defence and security forces: 60% government/40% CNDD-FDD in the new National Defence Force and 65%

government/35% CNDD-FDD in the national police and intelligence service. The remarkably smooth and successful integration (or, at the very least, coexistence) of the government forces and the rebel movement at all hierarchical levels was most probably the main stabilising factor for Burundi (2009, 79).

However, while this ethnic breakdown was not to remain permanent, the process of assuring that the security forces would eventually more accurately reflect the demographics of the Burundian population was to be taken very slowly. Vandeginste goes on to say,

[In] light of the earlier experience under President Ndadaye in 1993, the drafters of the Arusha Agreement were also aware of the fact that changes in the composition of the defence and security forces were to take place gradually and not abruptly. Therefore, in addition to the principle that long-standing political, ethnic, regional and gender imbalances must be redressed, it was also stressed that the “correction of the imbalances shall be approached progressively, in the spirit of reconciliation and trust in order to reassure all Burundians” (2009, 78).

A training program accompanied the integration process, designed to harmonize the training of the rebel and ex-FAB troops, bringing their skills and knowledge into alignment and standardizing the ranks across the former rebel and government commands. The international bi- and multi-lateral partners were deeply engaged in the process, bringing training, resources, materiel, and expertise to contribute to successful security sector reform.

The structural integration of the Army had at least two critical impacts. First, the way in which the integration process was handled reinforced a trend that had already



started to evolve in society at large – the decreasing salience of ethnicity.<sup>246</sup> While there are many examples illustrating how ethnicity was instrumentalized to facilitate violence throughout Burundi’s history; there are an equal number describing how Hutu and Tutsi protected one another: “Good will between Hutu and Tutsi populations was exhibited even during the war years, when families took in victims and survivors from opposite ethnic groups and supported them as their own. Anecdotal evidence of individual heroism in saving others abounds” (CFFR Situation Analysis 2013).

Eventually, this same trend began to emerge inside what had historically been the most feared and polarizing institution in government: the army. There was an explicit effort to rebuild trust and reestablish relationships through the organization of leadership training workshops amongst the officers charged with implementing the integration process – some of whom had even been classmates at the military academy prior to the beginning of the war. Each ex-FAB commanding officer was paired with an ex-PMPA officer as his deputy to facilitate transfer of knowledge and know-how and measures were undertaken to assign commanders to positions away from their former soldiers to attempt to ‘rewire’ the chain of command. Finally, Burundi’s participation in AMISOM has proven to be a godsend, as the troops fight a common enemy, rather than each other, building the solidarity necessary for a cohesive corps.

The second critical impact of the integration of the army has been on the perceptions of the population. Whereas the FAB had been seen as the protector of Tutsi

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<sup>246</sup> Peter Uvin (2009) and Willy Nindorera (2012) also address the issue of ethnicity and how the attitudes and perceptions of Burundians held of one another had begun to change before the war had come to an end.

interests (and of specific regional interests as well), the FDN's make-up now reflects Burundi as a whole. Recruitment regulations detail ethnic, gender, and regional quotas that have to be met and the national examination and induction process are more transparent than in the past. This has served to allay many of the fears of the population and, importantly, contributes to a shift in the meaning that the population ascribes to this particular institution of government. The FDN is considered a protector of all Burundians, regardless of ethnicity, leading the population to report having great confidence in the army and its ability to do its job (CENAP/CREDESS-Bdi 2012).

As underscored above, the relationship of the military to Burundi's political culture has evolved. The role that the FDN plays in Burundian society remains a powerful one but one that is less arbitrarily threatening and ironically, despite its stability as an occupation, relatively unattractive as a career path, especially as compared to a widespread desire among youth to become entrepreneurs and to run their own businesses. Young Burundians have become almost indifferent to the Army; surely a sign of its transformation in the context of Burundian culture.

### *iii. Professionalization*

Another explanatory factor cited by civil-military theorists, and one which contributes an important element to our understanding of the Burundi case, is the role of the professionalization of the corps in deterring intervention by the military in politics (Huntington 1957). While civil-military relations scholars agree on the merits of a

professional military, they are divided as to whether or not such professionalization will necessarily lead to civilian supremacy (Stepan 1971, Finer 1962, Luckham 1971, Cawthra and Luckham 2003, and Nordlinger 1977).

Indeed, the historical experience of Burundi demonstrates the critical role that professionalization has played in the FDN's transformation. It also speaks to the necessity of coupling the structures of professionalization with the normative changes inherent in a process of inculcating a corps with the norm of civilian supremacy (Stepan 1971). This combination of approaches serves to ensure a certain amount of autonomy for the military high command as they manage their recruitment, promotion, budgeting, internal doctrinal policy development, and training processes, while also refining their perspective of their own role as a source of institutional legitimacy for the regime. Not only does the military's role now have decreased political importance, the army is no longer the principal enforcer of the regime's policies. It is simply one of many institutions that give meaning to the term "government legitimacy."

Yet as this dissertation has demonstrated, even this 'coupling' is insufficient to ensure that the military will remain in its barracks and out of politics. The FAB was considered to be a reasonably well-trained corps of professional soldiers in 1993. And, according to former President Buyoya, they had also been trained in the importance of respecting the civilian authority (Buyoya 1995).

What had not changed in 1993 – and which was dramatically different after 2003 – was Burundi’s political culture. As explained in detail in Chapter Eight, exclusion, fear, and violence dominated the meaning Burundians, including officers in the Army, accorded to their institutions in 1993. As a result, the context within which the seeds of political change were planted proved to be infertile. As outlined above, after the end of the civil war, there has been a demonstrable change in the broader political culture that has facilitated the shift inside the army.

*iv. The Role of the International Community*

The implementation of the *Arusha Accords* has relied heavily on the international community. Investments in electoral processes, the new tax authority, the land commission, the development of political parties, training of parliamentarians, to say nothing of the security sector reform process in all its dimensions, have all contributed to the emergence of a diverse set of institutions that now undergird Burundi’s regime and which, in principle, have become the new (very diverse) sources of the regime’s legitimacy.

There is no doubt that this investment has yielded important results, particularly in the security sector, and specifically in the FDN. Interestingly, because of the international community’s structural support to the Army, Burundi’s military has now become part of a larger global military culture (just as Huntington predicted would happen (1968, 1995)). As described earlier, this has had an influence on the military’s

behavior. These successes are enumerated elsewhere in this dissertation (see Chapters Eight and Nine).

Yet some scholars would argue that this overtly “product” focused approach does Burundians (and most populations receiving international development aid) a disservice, as it “understands pretty much nothing of the dynamics of political change” (Uvin 2009, 79). Products, such as a demobilization program, often do not take into account the longer term processes necessary to facilitate reintegration of the demobilized into a community where half of his neighbors may fear him and the other half have never met him because they are recently repatriated. Products such as the provision of police uniforms and the construction of new training facilities won’t further the goals of a community policing program if the police officers have not understood and bought into the idea of being at the service of the public. Products like a renovated university campus do not offer job opportunities to recent university graduates who are now trained in skills for which Burundi has no market. Thus, even as the sources of regime legitimacy have diversified, the processes necessary to sustain those institutions may yet be lacking, in spite of the structural support provided by the international community.

The approach undertaken by the Dutch-funded SSD program in Burundi is a notable exception to this trend and helps to explain why the FDN’s reform process has achieved some remarkable success. Rather than focus on products, the Dutch program is focused on creating a true partnership between the donor and the national actors and ultimately handing off all responsibility to national actors. Indeed, as explained by Nicole

Ball, “National actors are significantly more involved in the design, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of SSR programmes, which is typically contracted out to external agents” (2014b, 7).

More importantly, the program is long-term (the initial MOU covers a period of eight years) and grounded in the realities of Burundi – its politics, resource constraints, and challenges (such as the battle against corruption). Ball goes on to say,

The SSD programme is guided by a shared vision between the two partners [the Dutch Government and the Burundi Government] and a set of loosely defined strategic objectives. The programme had no logframe, results framework or business case at the outset. Rather, it has adopted a highly flexible problem-solving approach, taking conditions on the ground as its starting point and building on them to progressively effect change (2014b, 7).

Such long-term, process-focused engagement is lacking in most internationally funded programming in post-war contexts, severely limiting its potential impact.

c. A Rational Choice?

i. *No Invitation to Intervene*

As has been outlined above, legitimacy of the current regime does not rest solely on the newly reformed institution of the Army. Indeed, as the sources of regime legitimacy have grown and diversified, the calls by civilian groups for the military to intervene if and when they have felt threatened have receded (Welch 1970). While there have been accusations by the government that certain groups have planned coups d'état –

for example, former President Ndayizeye was jailed in August 2006 for allegedly orchestrating an attempted coup d'état (he was subsequently acquitted in February 2007) – until 2015 there has been little evidence that the Army has responded to invitations from civilians to do so.

On the contrary, these kinds of accusations have been reported by some scholars to be the result of an internal struggle for power within the ruling party, not necessarily motivated by any real desire on the part of the military to take power by force (Wiafe-Amoako 2015). Thus, not only have the invitations to the military to intervene in politics on behalf of one group or another receded, it is not in the military's interest to respond to those invitations, as the costs for intervention have risen dramatically since the implementation of the *Arusha Accords*, GCA and the attendant SSR process began.

*ii. The Soldiers Achieved What They Wanted*

Another civil-military relations explanation that offers a partial reason for the military's retreat from politics and its willingness to acknowledge and respect different sources of regime legitimacy – *the soldiers got what they wanted*. According to scholars, soldiers should return to their barracks in the event that their goals are achieved (Finer 1985, Welch 1987). These goals can be quite varied (and difficult to measure) and might include the existence of a viable civilian government to replace the military regime and/or the assurances that military privilege and interests will be protected.<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> See pp. 75-76 in Chapter Two for a discussion of interests and how the term is used in this dissertation.

This explanation certainly has some analytical purchase in the case of Burundi; however, depending on which group you are asking (the ex-PMPA or the ex-FAB), very different reasons will be offered to explain their return to the barracks. In the case of the ex-rebels, they fought for ideological reasons and have now achieved access to the power from which they were long excluded. The integration of the military is a powerful symbolic representation of this success. For the ex-PMPA, there is no longer a reason to intervene in politics. Indeed, when speaking with ex-PMPA who are currently officers in the military, they will often state that they did not intend to stay in the military after the war because it was not their preferred career. Joining the rebellion was simply a means to an end; an end which has now been achieved.<sup>248</sup>

For the ex-FAB officers, “achieving what they wanted” has taken on a completely different meaning over time. They did not win the war and they no longer benefit from the exclusive privileges that the Army and the minority-dominated state once provided to them. Yet those who have stayed in the Army and participated in the integration process have come to view the success of the security sector reforms with extreme pride. From their perspective, this success is due in large part to their efforts to transform the Army; sharing their knowledge and mentoring the ex-rebel soldiers. The ex-FAB soldiers who are now officers in the FDN see themselves as being on the right side of a moral imperative for change. Their narrative is now one of success; not one of defeat. Perhaps they too have achieved what they wanted and their motivation for intervention has disappeared.

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<sup>248</sup> Admittedly, many of these same officers go on to confess to remaining in the military largely because of the prestige and the job security!



The narrative that is now heard from both ex-PMPA and ex-FAB officers is that there is no reason for the military to be involved in politics because the *Arusha Accords* and the subsequent SSR process have addressed the underlying political problems in Burundi. In the annals of Burundi's history, both factions will be able to say, "we accomplished what we fought for" and thus, they can successfully defend their decision to return to (and to stay in) the barracks.

*iii. No threat to key interests*

A final rational choice explanation posits that soldiers are less likely to intervene in politics if their interests are met and/or not threatened by the government in power. As detailed in Chapter Two, interests can be organizational, such as retention of authority over recruitment and promotion policies, battle strategy and tactics, the development and allocation of budget, etc., (Enloe 1980, Finer 1962, Huntington 1958, 1995, Stepan 1971, Welch 1970) and personal, consistent and adequate remuneration, access to credit, health care, and other privileges specially reserved for the military, as well as assurances that the reputation of the corps will be honored and upheld by non-military actors (Decalo 1990, Nordlinger 1977, Welch 1970).

Interestingly, the case of Burundi seems to suggest that this theory alone cannot predict intervention, because perceptions of interests are influenced by both norm-based and structural factors. Thus, if a norm of civilian supremacy is successfully inculcated in

the officer corps, they will be far less likely to use force to achieve their interests. Instead, they will be trained to plead their case before the institutions now responsible for granting them the authority and resources to meet their interests (e.g. parliament). In addition, the *Arusha Accords* themselves structure the Army's organizational interest set, so that the signature on the Accord can be used as evidence of buy-in to the roles and responsibilities granted to the military.

Finally, in keeping with Welch's (1970) contention that all militaries play some political role, however small, there is some evidence to suggest that the ex-FAB and the ex-PMPA officers are working together to ensure that the ex-FAB officers don't lose all of their benefits in the new FDN (e.g. preferable access to land, credit, housing) by negotiating with the ex-PMPA officers to both show them the ropes and to work together to make sure all of the officers can continue to benefit from their position in the Army (Wilén 2015). Even if they were to generate momentum to intervene, it is unlikely that the current corps would violently seek to protect those interests, if only because the regime has access to other security forces who can mitigate that threat.

## 2. MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT

### a. Violence as a Political Tool

The second thread of political culture that I have traced throughout this dissertation is the management of political conflict. Throughout Burundi's history, an

ever-increasing reliance on violence as the primary means of exercising political will has left an indelible imprint on Burundi's political culture. Indeed, violence is so deeply ingrained in the political culture that, despite the increasing diversity of sources of regime legitimacy and the removal of the Army as the principal tool of that violence, now an even wider array of formal and informal actors, inside and outside the security forces, employs violence to achieve their political aims. Sadly, violence remains one of the most enduring legacies of Burundi's political culture.

As illustrated in previous chapters, violence as political tool has a long history in Burundi. This history resembles that of most other countries in the world. The Weberian concept of the establishment of a state through the monopolization over the legitimate use of force within a territory presupposes violence and Burundi has not been an exception. The *Mwami* had the right to decide how the power of monarchy would be used and within that purview, how violence might be exercised to serve his ends. The colonizer exercised the same right and expanded its function, using violence for more than extracting resources and maintaining order; in 1959, 1960, 1961, and 1962 the Belgians employed violence very explicitly to restructure the space of political contestation. The first two military republics took this instrumentalism of violence several steps further, imbuing violence with specific meaning: the right to arbitrarily exercise power; the reinforcement of exclusion; the authority to secure privilege; and the justification of defense against existential threat.

Given the increasing role of violence in shaping successive Burundian regimes, it is not surprising that control of that violence could also be interpreted as controlling the narrative of Burundi's political history. In other words, the carefully constructed answers to questions such as "Why was the Army deployed?" "Who was killed?" "How many died?" allowed the regime to shape both internal and external understandings of relations between and among Burundians; downplaying threats to the regime (except when necessary to justify excessive violence), eliminating political opponents, and emphasizing 'national unity' when convenient. As Coronil and Skurski (1991) explain, in the absence of counter-narratives, a regime has the capacity to construct its own image and to silence alternative explanations of history. In the Burundi context, this political narrative was written by and imbued with violence and the FAB was its principal tool.

The norm-based explanations offered in the previous section help us to understand, in part, why the Army no longer plays a key role in the management of political conflict. There are two additional explanations that complement our analysis. The first is the reemergence of negotiation as a crucial aspect of the Burundi's political culture, particular as a political conflict management tool (see next section). The second is a structural explanation; the changes in Burundi's key institutions mandated by the *Arusha Accords* and implemented through SSR and other programs have effectively prevented the FDN from easily reclaiming the deadly role held by its predecessor and have prompted the regime to turn to other (often equally deadly) means of dealing with political difference (see pp. 365).

b. Reemergence of Negotiation

After the devastation of war, Burundians were exhausted and impoverished; they were no longer willing to participate in a conflict driven by fear of the other. As Uvin explains, Burundians had redefined their enemy; instead of pointing at someone from the other ethnic community, the enemy became the extremists on either side or even, simply, “politicians” (2009, 172). What inspired the change? Uvin goes on to say that part of the explanation might lie in their past, “Whether in the early 1960s, in the early 1990s, or now, the Burundian political system has always tried to revert to a compromised-based and ethnically inclusive system of political governance” (2009, 172). While in the past this system failed them, this time around, the internal and external political will seems to have succeeded in supporting the Burundian tradition of managing political conflict through negotiation.

Since before the end of the war and throughout Burundi’s most recent decade, examples of this thread of negotiation abound. Like their compatriots, after 10 years of civil war, even the CNDD-FDD combatants were ready for the armed struggle to end. As Willy Nindorera reports, “The conflict had claimed nearly 13,000 souls from the ranks of the CNDD-FDD alone. Everyone lost family, friends and comrades” (2012, 21). This led to a strong desire to seek a negotiated settlement to the conflict. Nindorera goes on to say, “In fact, there was no need to mobilize [the CNDD-FDD] constituency [in the countryside] on the question of negotiations, as Hutu partisans of the rebellion were already won over to the idea of a political solution to the conflict, and even the

belligerents were in favour of a negotiated settlement” (2012, 21). As underscored earlier, the rebels got what they wanted from war, so they left the battlefield and the more traditional means of managing political conflict through negotiation has begun to reassert itself.

In Burundian culture, negotiation is not limited to official peace processes. On the contrary, as has been discussed earlier in this dissertation, negotiation has historically been an important part of the management of conflict at all levels of society. For example, as land conflicts have become increasingly prevalent, due to over-population, insufficient land resources, ineffective (or nonexistent) land ownership rights, a lack of education to prepare young people for futures other than subsistence farming, and the lack of a comprehensive land tenure policy, there has been a concurrent rise in violence between those vying for the land. Historically, many of these conflicts were dealt with at the local level. Today, Burundians have returned to negotiation at both the national and local levels to confront the crises.

The National Commission on Land and Other Property (CNTB) offers mediation services to citizens for land and property disputes linked to the war. Local communities have also revived the traditional institution of the *ubushingantahe* to deal with land conflict (amongst other issues). While their decisions are not legally binding, the social pressure to comply with a decision of the *bashingantahe* can often be more powerful than the inconsistent application of the (much less tangible) rule of law.

The thread of negotiation is equally present in community efforts to reconcile in the aftermath of the war. Supported with resources and training by national and international NGOs, many communities have rebuilt what has been referred to as a “peace infrastructure.” Consisting of peace clubs or peace committees, this infrastructure exists in at least a third of Burundi’s provinces and allows for more effective, non-violent resolution of conflict between and among individuals and organizations.<sup>249</sup>

For those officers leading the FDN, negotiation has shaped their experience of the new command structure. Former President Buyoya and the international community may have forced the Arusha process on the ex-FAB command, but in the end, the officers recognized the benefits that would accrue to them if they participated in the negotiations. In the case of the ex-CNDD-FDD (and other ex-PMPA) officers, they might have achieved what they wanted in the war but to productively participate in the country’s future required negotiation – at the GCA, on the UN Mixed Liaison Teams, as part of the Ceasefire Commission, within the Integrated Command Commission, and even at the local level, on their home hillsides, as they reintegrated back into their communities. (Indeed, the FNL’s Agathon Rwaso learned the hard way that eschewing negotiations could have far-reaching and negative impacts for him and his movement. They became the targets of the FDN’s campaign of force to eliminate them and largely missed out on any dividends of peace that might have accrued to the population.)

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<sup>249</sup> More detail about community-led negotiation and conflict management efforts can be found in McClintock et al (2014) [Evaluative Learning Review: Field Study of USAID/Burundi Annual Program Statement People-to-People Reconciliation Grants](#) (USAID CMM and Social Impact).

The norm of negotiation as a principal tool of managing political conflict has reemerged and, with the support of the international community and local structures and institutions, the powersharing model has met with moderate success in Burundi for the first time since 1966.

c. A Structural Explanation: No Sufficient Internal Support for Intervention

One factor that civil-military relations theorists highlight when addressing the question of military intervention in politics is the lack of cohesiveness in the military. If it is fractured and one faction considers the civilian government to pose a threat to its interests, then that faction will intervene to overthrow the government (Decalo 1990, Enloe 1980, and Welch 1970, Welch and Smith 1974). This explanation assumes that there will be sufficient support within the army for that faction to carry through with the coup. As described in Chapter Eight, the *Arusha Accords* intentionally built in divisions within the corps (in the form of ethnic and regional quotas) precisely to prevent unlawful intervention in politics by the military. In the context of Burundi, the reasoning behind this approach is that if the army is composed of 50% Hutu and 50% Tutsi, the risk that either side will have the necessary momentum to execute a coup is greatly decreased, especially taking into consideration the probability that neither side would be unanimous in its desire to seize power.

In addition, the FDN has increasingly less contact with the population than in previous decades, tends to stay in its barracks, and benefits from both training and remuneration that serve as incentives for greater cohesion (Nindorera 2007). In concert



with the structural constraints on their behavior, the respect that soldiers at all levels of the FDN now purport to have for the legitimately elected government decreases the likelihood that they would be able to garner internal support for any kind of intervention.

Finally, in addition to an insufficient amount of internal support, what makes it even more unlikely that the Army will intervene in politics is that it is no longer the principal tool of political violence. Unfortunately, this does not mean that arbitrary and politically motivated violence has disappeared. That role has been ceded to the Police, the intelligence services (SNR), and informal militias. This shift is not lost on the population and they report having significantly poorer relations with the police and intelligence services and less respect for their competence (CENAP/CREDESS-Bdi 2012).

d. And Yet More Violence...

Thus, a strong countercurrent of violence still exists and vies with negotiation as the predominant means of dealing with opposing viewpoints. While the FDN (and a large portion of the population) seems to have largely accepted negotiation rather than force, the jury is still out on which approach will prevail in the management of Burundi's future political conflicts. This is especially true given that those institutions that are now the preferred purveyors of that violence (the National Police, the intelligence services, the government- and opposition-supported militias) seem to be governed by completely different norms than the FDN.

This diversification of sources and means of force presents Burundi with a new problem. In the past, the security services were relatively united, at least in terms of their composition and their response to an easily identifiable (if manufactured) threat. This is no longer true. Not only do the police and the military seem to have a different ethic, largely as a result of the training available to them, the differences in their training have resulted in vastly differing levels of readiness (Interview with SSD civilian staff member, January 9, 2013). The SNR is even more difficult to assess, as its numbers, mission, and training have largely been kept confidential and they are not yet active participants in the SSR process.

More troubling still, Burundi's National Police is considered to be more vulnerable to politicization than the FDN. This is due to three main reasons. First, less-well educated ex-PMPA soldiers dominate the lowest level of the Police (most of whom have no more than a sixth grade education) and retain strong ties to their former rebel commanders. The work done in the FDN to break these ties and rewire the chain of command was not replicated in the police. Second, the ministerial appointments for the Ministry of Public Security, which oversees the police, are thought to be much more politically motivated than those in the Ministry of Defense, as the position is used as a reward for service rendered to the ruling party. This resulted in at least 5 ministerial shake-ups in six years, reducing institutional continuity and rendering oversight tenuous at best. Finally, while community policing was the stated government policy at the beginning of the reform process, very little progress has been made in operationalizing

that policy. This has resulted in greater uncertainty about the mission of the police, low morale, and a concurrent absence of loyalty to the institution.<sup>250</sup>

The tensions between the branches of the security services have been accompanied by a significant uptick in violence since 2009. While the period following the 2005 elections was never completely calm, human rights organizations, national and international observers, and government watchdogs all deplored the increase in political violence in the months leading up to and following the 2010 elections (ICG Africa Report No. 192 2012). Some of this violence was targeted at the FNL and its supporters, as the ruling party began to sense a real threat from the second largest Hutu-dominated party in the lead-up to the 2010 elections. Reminiscent of earlier eras, the ruling party chose force and intimidation as the means of persuading people to abandon the FNL, rather than a national vision or political party platform.

However, it was not simply the electoral process that inspired the violence. Indeed, according to some reports, the violence grew much worse in 2011, as actors from across the political and social spectrum became both victims and perpetrators. As a 2012 Human Rights Watch report describes,

2011 was a dark year, marked by alarming patterns of political violence. Scores of people have been brutally killed in politically motivated attacks...The state security forces, intelligence services, members of the ruling party and members of opposition groups have all used violence to target real or perceived opponents. The victims have included member and former members of political parties; members of their families... demobilized rebel combatants; and men, women and children with no known political affiliation who simply found themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time (HRW 2012, 1).

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<sup>250</sup> Personal correspondence with a former civilian SSD staff member, September 22, 2015.

Violence continues to gain traction as a means for dealing with difference largely because of the system of impunity – which cannot be attributed only to the current administration and is, in fact, another depressingly enduring feature of Burundi’s political culture. Lack of political will coupled with an incredibly weak judiciary mean that these challenges will not be dealt with in the near future and they threaten to derail Burundi’s fragile peace.

### 3. THE CLIENTELIST SYSTEM

#### a. Clientelism and the State

The levels of international investment in Burundi in the post-Arusha environment were large – not just as compared to Burundi’s GDP but in terms of the international community’s commitment to assuring that the world had an example of a successful peace process and transition to democracy.<sup>251</sup> With the deployment of the United Nations Operations in Burundi (ONUB) in June 2004, the UN began a very active and multifaceted role in monitoring the implementation of the *Arusha Accords* and facilitating the transition process, which lasted over a decade. From the outset, ONUB’s mandate was enormous and included,

Contributing to the creation of the necessary security conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance, and facilitating the voluntary return of

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<sup>251</sup> International aid hovers at just over 50% of Burundi’s total budget (53.5 % in 2011). African Development Bank, <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Burundi%20Full%20PDF%20Country%20Note.pdf>, accessed November 10, 2015.

refugees and internally displaced persons [totaling over 600,000 people!], as well as contributing to the successful completion of the electoral process stipulated in the Arusha Agreement, by ensuring a secure environment for free, transparent and peaceful elections.<sup>252</sup>

This was only the beginning. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in Burundi's institutions since 2000 (in the form of everything from direct budgetary support to training for the police; from funding of conflict resolution NGOs to enhancing HIV AIDS education and treatment, to name only a few programs). A primary recipient of international support has been the Security Sector Reform program targeted at the FDN and the other security institutions.<sup>253</sup>

Yet, as underscored earlier, the international community's engagement in Burundi (and elsewhere) has largely been "product" focused (Uvin 2009). The relationship between these products and the fundamental mode of operation of the Burundian state has been, with some notable exceptions, tenuous at best. In other words, despite the success realized in the Army integration process and the very real shift in the population's perceptions of that institution, a large portion of the international community's investment has not addressed some of Burundi's most endemic problems: individual agency, poverty, and unequal access to resources. This is because the international community still understands very little about how the state in Burundi functions; or the meaning that Burundians accord the concept of the state.

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<sup>252</sup> The mandate of the United Nations Operations in Burundi. Accessed at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/onub/background.html> on October 3, 2015.

<sup>253</sup> In the 2011-2012 fiscal year alone over one third of the military's entire budget is covered by the EU's support for the troops that Burundi sends to Somali as part of AMISOM (Interview with FDN Colonel, January 16, 2013).

The state in Burundi remains fragile and weak. It is fragile due to the government's reflex to resort to violence in order to manage political conflict. This has had at least two consequences. First, the government's reliance on violence has begun to seriously erode its legitimacy and has produced rising tensions within the ruling party and between the ruling party and the opposition. Second, because these tensions undermine the government, it has begun to rely on a range of increasingly repressive tools (the Police, the SNR, militias) to 'manage' the tensions, as described in the preceding section. Yet the regime does not have complete control over these mechanisms, resulting in seemingly arbitrary violence, contributing to further fragility.

The state is weak because despite its long history of being omnipresent at all levels of society, the state has consistently delivered very little in the way of services to its citizens. As Thomas Laely describes, "During the 1990s the hypertrophic enlargement of the administrative apparatus of government has not been accompanied by even an approximately comparable expansion of basic state-provided 'public services'" (1997, 711). As result of this history, Burundians expect relatively little from the state and instead, continue to turn to a web of clientelist relationships to survive in a system dominated by often arbitrary and personalized power. This is echoed by Chabal and Daloz, who emphasize, "In most African countries, the state is no more than a décor, a pseudo-Western façade masking the realities of deeply personalized political relations" (1999, 16).

When describing the 1990s above, Laely was referring to President Buyoya's expansion of UPRONA into all corners of the nation. I would argue that the same phenomenon exists today. The ruling party dominates most local administrative structures, having been elected not because they are seen to be more effective managers of public resources but because they are perceived to have access to power and to scarce resources. To survive in Burundi, it is important to cultivate relationships with those who can facilitate the access to those resources. Uvin describes this system as follows,

Burundians protect themselves by nurturing relations, by compromising, by maintaining a poker face under all conditions. None of them necessarily believes these relations are lasting or profound – indeed, they all know that they cannot trust each other's word, that beer shared today does not exclude betrayal tomorrow. And so the system reinforces itself, particularly in circumstances of uncertainty. This is a practice both of great integration and division, of stability and radical change (2009, 167).

The programs and products provided by the international community are not designed to endure in this system. For the institutions to take root, to gain legitimacy, Burundi has to imbue them with meaning – institutional legitimacy must resonate throughout all aspects of "political" life. Kathleen Thelen captures this critical relationship between institutions and meaning saying, "rather than conceiving of institutions as "holding together" a particular pattern of politics...institutions emerge from and are sustained by features of the broader political and social context" (1999, 384).

b. Clientelism and the Army

As outlined in Chapters Seven and Eight, the Army in Burundi was not divorced from the clientelist system. Indeed, the troika of the Army, UPRONA, and the civil service undergirded the clientelist system in Burundi and most (if not all) FAB officers benefited from it. Given Burundi's limited industrialization and lack of abundant portable natural resources, these benefits tended to take the form of access to land and/or positions in government that might facilitate economic enrichment (i.e. management of a coffee washing station).

With the signature on the *Arusha Accords*, this system did not disappear. Instead, the system has become more complex and involved increasingly greater numbers of people. This is especially true in the military. There are simply more people who are interested in having access to an ever-shrinking pool of resources. As one focus group participant characterized it, the ex-FAB officers are doing more than mentoring, they are “showing the ex-PMPA colleagues the ropes; teaching them how to navigate the ‘system’” (Interview with FDN Focus Group, January 8, 2013). While my interlocutors were reluctant to spell out exactly what this meant, they did talk about the status of being an officer and the relatively secure livelihood that it represented, especially as an important means of support to their extended families. They are now in a better position to facilitate access to opportunity and to disperse resources to those in need, echoing what Laely refers to as the, “Bonds of dependence [that] could provide the means of upward social mobility” (1997, 704).



Another complicating factor, and one that has more far reaching impacts, is that the Army is no longer the main actor in the clientelist system. As the regime has shifted from a military dictatorship to a civilian-led government so too has the locus of power and along with it the resources that drive the clientelist system. Because the government is now Hutu-led, this also means that the majority, who were formerly excluded from the system, are now vying for those resources and power in order to establish their status as Big Men. As Chabal and Daloz describe,

Hence, the notion that politicians, bureaucrats or military chiefs should be the servants of the state simply does not make sense. Their political obligations are, first and foremost, to their kith and kin, their clients, their communities, their regions, or even to their religion. ...But to succeed as a 'Big Man' demands resources; and the more extensive the network, the greater the need for the means of distribution. The legitimacy of the African political elites, such as it is, derives from their ability to nourish the clientele on which their power rests. It is therefore imperative for them to exploit governmental resources for patrimonial purposes (1999, 15).

Thus, the Army's influence in the clientelist structure has changed. It remains to be seen if they will retain their current influence or if it will continue to diminish. On the one hand, circumstances might suggest that other groups or institutions will supplant them. On the other, given the FDN's very specific nature (a well-organized and now reasonably well-trained purveyor of force), it is likely that they will remain an important feature of Burundi's clientelist system. And given the system's role as the heart of what is considered the state in Burundi, that would seem to presuppose an ongoing political role for the military.

## **C. Conclusion**

Civil-military relations theory provides us with some important insights into the behavior of Burundi's military. However, as I have demonstrated in this dissertation, civil-military relations theory cannot fully explain why some of the changes in the FDN have been sustained nor why, despite the success of the security sector reform process, that the army still faces the threat of crumbling under the weight of political pressure. In order to understand these phenomena, we must understand Burundi's political culture: the values, ideology, formal and informal rules that inform a people's shared understanding (conscious and unconscious) of how politics should function and which give meaning to and ultimately guide their actions.

It is political culture that influences and shapes what makes a government "legitimate," an army "professional," or the political landscape fertile for international influence. Without an understanding of the meaning given by Burundians to the institutions that govern their lives, it is virtually impossible for actors (domestic or international) to influence real change, except on the margins. The reform of the Army is an example where real change has happened; and the reforms have had a commensurate impact on the lives of most Burundians. Indeed, the transformation has resonated throughout Burundi's political culture. But this success may be the exception. The Army is one institution among many; it is unlikely that its rebirth will be sufficient to inspire a shift in how the entire state functions, unless it is accompanied by a concurrent shift in the meaning that is ascribed to those other institutions within the state.

Chabal and Daloz remind us, “culture changes *tectonically*” – it is hidden, capricious, and can make dramatic shifts, even if those are not progressive or unidirectional (2006, 154, *emphasis in the original*). So while a Burundian might ask, ‘Why hasn’t the change we hoped for happened? After the war, we focused our energies on what we assumed was the most vexing problem and yet, we still have violence and impunity! What went wrong?’ The answer cannot hinge solely on the behavior of the army. Changes to the army are insufficient because it is not the only driver or exemplifier of political culture. At the same time, the FDN’s transformation is a remarkable example of what ‘might be,’ especially if our understanding of its path to success can be translated for other institutions that play an equally powerful role in the broader political culture.

## **Appendix 1: Glossary**

### *A note on language\**

In Kirundi, the same root word is preceded by class prefixes that vary the meaning of the word. For example ‘Bu’ signifies country or kingdom, ‘Ba’ the members of a group, and ‘Mu’ a single person of a group. Some of the common Kirundi terms used in this dissertation are listed below.

For simplicity and in line with common practice today, I will use the shortened version of Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, and Ganwa to refer to both a single person of that category (ethnicity) as well as to the group.

Mwami - King

Muhutu – a Hutu person

Mututsi – a Tutsi person

Bahutu – Hutu people

Baganwa – Royal princes

Batutsi – Tutsi people

Batwa – Twa people

Barundi – the inhabitants of Rundi or the Burundian people

Burundi – the country or the Rundi Kingdom

Kirundi – the language of Burundi

Ubushingantahe – the institution of wise men responsible for managing social conflict at the local level in Burundian communities

Bashingantahe – wise men

Mushingantahe – wise man

### *A note on dynasties*

Jan Vansina, Jean Pierre Chrétien and Rene Lemarchand follow a chronology that records just two full cycles of Burundian kings, dating back to 1675. Thus, Mwambutsa Bangiricenge would be identified as Mwambutsa II according to their calculation. However, other authors, such as J. Gahama and A. Nsanze refer to this era as the fourth

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\* These linguistic notes are adapted from Chrétien (2006).

cycle, thus their references to Mwambutsa IV. In this dissertation, I follow the Burundian authors and acknowledge four cycles of the monarchy.

Acronyms

*Many of the acronyms represent the French version of the term. In those cases, I have provided the English translation.*

APRODH	Association for the Protection of Human Rights and the Rights of Prisoners
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AU	African Union
BINUB	Integrated United Nations Office in Burundi
BLTP	Burundi Leadership Training Program
BNUB	Office of the United Nations in Burundi
CCA	Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement
CENAP	Conflict Alert and Prevention Center
CENI	National Independent Elections Commission
CNDD-FDD	National Council for the Defense of Democracy-Forces for the Defense of Democracy
CNTB	National Commission on Land and Other Property
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
FAB	Burundian Armed Forces
FDN	National Defense Force
FRODEBU	Front for Democracy in Burundi
GCA	Global Ceasefire Agreement
Ligue ITEKA	Burundian Human Rights League
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OLUCOME	Anti-Corruption and Economic Malpractice Observatory
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi
PALIPEHUTU-FNL	Party for the Liberation of Hutu People – National Forces for Liberation
PMPA	Armed Political Parties and Movements (former rebel groups)
SSD	Security Sector Development
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UPRONA	Union for National Progress

French vocabulary

Arrêté-loi – A decree confirmed by the law (a term originating with the Belgian colonizer)

Arrêté-royal – Royal decree (a term originating with the Belgian colonizer)

Clientelism – more than patronage, clientelism refers to the web of relationships that facilitate both the distribution of and access to power and resources within a society. A “big man” and his family are generally at the center of the clientelist web in African societies.



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