

RWANDAN ETHNIC CONFLICTS

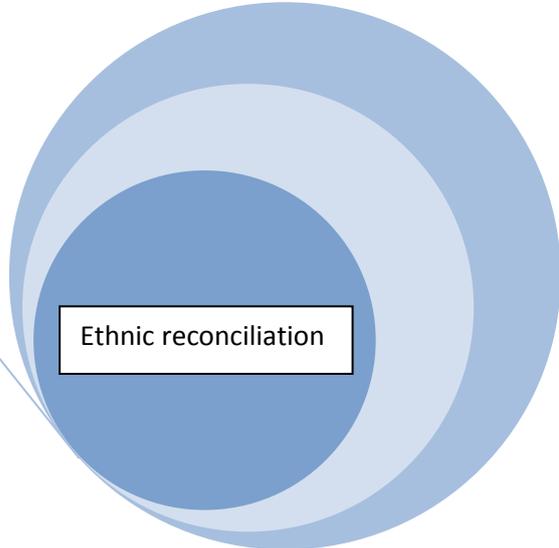
A HISTORICAL LOOK AT ROOT CAUSES

There can be no durable solution unless the root causes of the conflicts are addressed. This paper addresses the root causes of the Rwandan ethnic conflict from a historical point of view. This study is significant because it will contribute to the understanding of the real causes of the conflict in order to effectively find a durable solution.

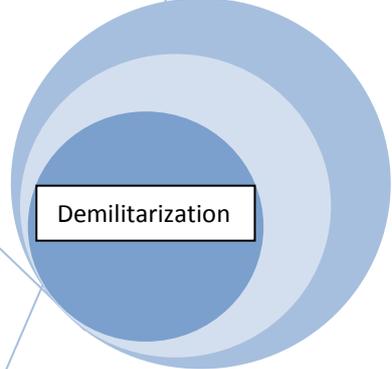
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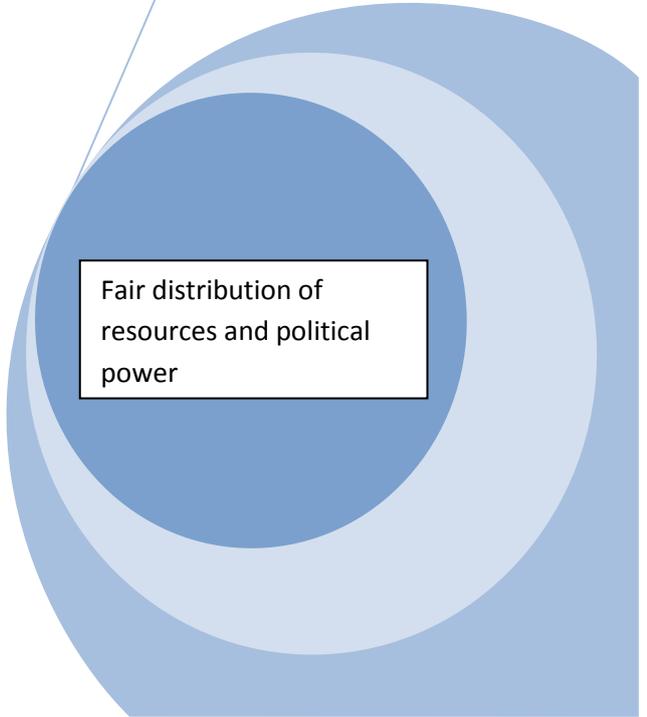
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Ethnic reconciliation



Demilitarization



Fair distribution of
resources and political
power

I. Introduction

In 1994 in Rwanda, approximately 800,000 men, women and children were brutally massacred within 100 days. It is estimated that in four months, 1.75 million people, or a quarter of the country's pre-war population, had either died or fled the country. The massacre escalated into a Genocide that started on April 7, 1994 resulting in the death of up to one million people. This horrifying event affected mainly agriculture, the main occupation of the population, as civil strife heightened in the middle of the growing season. NGOs estimated that the overall loss of harvesting during the period of the Genocide was as high as 60%.

Rwanda, commonly referred to as the land of a thousand hills, is populated by three ethnic groups – 84% Hutu, 15% Tutsi and 1% Twa. Historically, Hutus have been mainly agricultural laborers while the Tutsis were landowners. The Rwandan civil conflict can be traced back to the Belgian colonial rule of 1916-1962 which was characterized by poor or dissimilar divisions between the two principal ethnicities by the colonial administration.

Tutsis were favored in terms of education and employment over the Hutus who were neglected. Also, the Belgian administration introduced identity cards to distinguish one's ethnic origin. These acts unsurprisingly led to tensions between the Hutus and Tutsis. In 1959, civil war led to the overthrow of the then ruling Tutsi King, and the granting of independence three years later paved way for a Hutu-led government. Over the next several years, thousands of Tutsis were killed, and an estimated 150,000 fled to neighboring countries. The children of these exiles later formed the rebel group Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which was predominantly Tutsi. In 1990 RPF invaded Rwanda in the name of democracy, good governance and the right of refugees displaced from earlier violence to return to Rwanda. The war waged by RPF continued until 1994. In a bid to solve this conflict, the government and the RPF entered into Arusha Peace Accord (APA) in 1993.

II. The 1990 war

The effects of colonial rule were felt during the next few decades that followed the Independence. Hutu leaders were determined to retain power rather than repairing the psychological damage done by the colonizers. This strained 'ethnic' environment reached a

climax in October of 1990 when the RPF – a rebel army consisting largely of exiled Tutsis who had established themselves in Uganda – invaded Rwanda with the help of Ugandan government demanding a share of power, the right for the of Rwandan refugees to return home. This event marked the beginning of a three year civil war, and within days also signaled the start of regional mediation attempts in the form of summits to help reconcile the parties' differences. While this pre-negotiation phase proved unsuccessful in halting the war, and implement political changes, the summits were still important in laying the groundwork for the Arusha Accords – the topic which will not be discussed in this paper.

By the early 1990's Rwandan society had become characterized by ethnic and political tensions that were deeply ingrained into the psyche of the population. As Ami R. Mpungwe – the Tanzanian who would act as chief facilitator of the Arusha Accords – said regarding the nature of the Rwandan problems, “these conflicts are extremely tenacious because they revolve around the fundamentals of human life: land, safety, security, identity, recognition, esteem and unhindered opportunities for human development as a whole” (Lindsay Scorgie)

III. Root causes:

A. Rwanda's Political Systems Were Structured by the Ecosystem

Rwanda covers an area of 26'338 sq. kms, that is almost 2/3 the size of Switzerland. In spite of its limited size, it is characterized by a great variety of bioclimatic regions which have led to differential ethnic occupation in past history.

Central Rwanda, like other regions where agriculture is sustainable, was occupied by Hutu kingdoms, the most famous being those of the dynasties of *Ababanda* in Nduga, *Abenengwe* in parts of present day Butare and Gikongoro regions, and the *Abongera* in Bumbogo/Buliza. Over the years, sedentary agriculture led to savanization from an original forest environment, and created an important pastoral resource base in addition to agriculture resources. Under these conditions, pastoralism was more productive than in drier eastern woodland savanna.

In the east, there is a woodland savanna which is a western part of a similar but more extensive life zone in which hermitic pastoralist groups have traditionally carried out their activities. The Tutsi of Rwanda moved their herds westwards until they settled in Buganza around Lake Muhazi where the *nyiginya* dynasty that ruled over enlarged Rwanda until 1959

was founded. With this setting, there was a geographical specialization as far as use of natural resources was concerned. But with cattle overpopulation, some pastoralist groups moved peacefully westwards for more space for their herds. At each stage, the point of settlement was determined by availability of pasture resources. There was no comparable movement of Hutu farmers. It was taking place over shorter distances, because in their case migrants were keeping as short as possible the social distance from their group. With this colonizing pattern, there was a convergence of two different types of land resource use in the same ecological environment, and this had to be the socio-ecological background of ethnic relations in the last centuries.

The Rwandan socio-political system was thus built on a contradictory setting. Most of its Hutu and Tutsi populations, had to depend on the same land resources for their livelihood, thanks to territorial despecialization as far as agriculture or cattle productions are concerned. This contradiction, enhanced by an ideology emphasizing supremacy of pastoralism, shaped the political system that governed the country until 1959, and that still influences present day Rwandan politics. Contradictory demands over land resources use due to production despecialization had to be resolved not through social negotiations, but through skillful matching of ethno-professional and ethno-political specialization. Cattle herders in original tiny Rwanda in the east, organized under the rule of the *Nyiginya* dynasty, ceased to move westward by peaceful means. **They used war to increase the resource base for their herds,** and cattle to forge social and political ties, but not social harmony. (Gasana, LK.)

B. Skewed Natural and State Resources Control

Construction of Rwanda as a nation resulted from construction of Tutsi monopoly over control of natural resources and gradual reduction of Hutu access to them. Particularly in his book "Le Rwanda" *Emergence d'un Etat*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1993, F. Nahimana discussed factors that led to division of Rwanda between a pastoral or *umukenke* zone and an agricultural or *ubukonde* zone asserting that this division is merely political. (F. Nahimana p. 103) It was obviously not efficient for Tutsi monarchs to invest too much in the conquest and effective occupation of territories to create a monopoly of territory that did not have a high bovine production potential.

This monopoly was realized by an increasing rigor in cattle clientship system. At the beginning of contact of Tutsi pastoralist and Hutu peasants, this system started in the form of

a normal two-way exchange. But with increasing Tutsi political power in a process that will not be discussed here, cattle served as a factor in further consolidation of this power, as rents paid by clients kept increasing. As Tutsi cattle owners found that cattle clientship is a highly lucrative activity, they set up a similar system for agricultural land clientship to maximize exploitation of Hutu peasantry and of ordinary Tutsi.

Accumulation of land resources by Tutsi chiefs was made possible by increased militarization of the country. Local militia chiefs practiced cattle raids and land confiscations. Multiplication of exactions on Hutu and ordinary Tutsi increased the need for protection by powerful patrons. Under increasing population pressure, the peasantry had no other alternative but to accept heavy demands of land lords. With lack of access to personal land resources, clientship ties became a substitute resource, and an obligate path for survival of Hutu peasants. Therefore as time passed, the system became more oppressive for land clients and more lucrative for the Tutsi chiefs. There was a constant personal fear of having the *isambu* (farm) taken back by the *igikingi* owner. It is said that peasants who found the system unbearable attempted to escape central Rwanda and seek a haven in peripheral territories where *nyiginya* dynasty had limited or no influence. Thus natural resources, although abundant at that time, had become scarce because of this sequestration by chiefs, and of competition with cattle for space.

Both cattle and land clientship systems allowed Tutsi oligarchy to exercise total control of natural resources through hereditary rights. But when Kigeli IV Rwabugiri (1853-1895), the most famous *nyiginya* absolute monarch needed to reinforce his authority, he replaced many district chiefs who owed their positions to hereditary rights, by his designated officers. This generated a new rule of mobility of chiefs which was generalized, and allowed the monarch to take over important lands owned by chiefs and other Tutsi dignitaries, and allocate them to his allies, Tutsi and Hutu, and his concubines. Thus centralized political control of natural resources by the monarch through his administration was effective in central Rwanda and in other regions like eastern, north eastern and part of western Rwanda where his influence was strengthened. Natural resources which had been an end of Tutsi domination became, in addition, an instrument of this domination.

The 19th and 20th centuries saw a tremendous increase in population in spite of frequent and quasi regular depopulations by famines. Cattle populations also increased,

particularly in the premontane dry forest life zone. Degradation of natural resources was already a problem by the end of the 1800s.

By 1949, population had reached 1.900.000 inhabitants and cattle was estimated to 450.000 heads. There was a considerable land shortage resulting from abuse of *ibikingi* (*a new institution by which Tutsi chiefs became owners of private pasture lands*) rights. This shortage was described by Linden & Linden as follows: “ ... there was considerable land shortage in some provinces by the 1950s. The kingdom was only about 100,000 square miles and had to support a leisured class of some 2,000 chiefs and about 50,000 Tutsi who never tilled the soil. The high productivity of the land well manured by cattle, with bananas and a wide range of grains and leguminous crops, made land valuable, especially when large tracts served as pasture for the Tutsi herds.” (Linden, I. & Linden J.)

There was no parallel increase in *ibikingi* tenants, and the offer of clientship stagnated. There was therefore an increasing surplus of Hutu labor which could not find occupation under the prevailing clientship system of rigid land use. At the same time, there was an increasing inequality of access to natural resources within the Tutsi elite, as there were no more conquests of territories to expand the resources and spread Tutsi landlords. An elaborate social stratification steadily built up in the 1950s, and disgruntled Hutu and Tutsi elites started to voice their opinion against that which was chosen by the Germans and the Belgians, which has had a significant impact on ethnic relations, by assisting Tutsi to control the Hutu peasantry over the entire country.

The estimated threshold for cattle and land clientship system as it was practiced before the 1959 social revolution is a population of 2.000.000 inhabitants, and about 400.000 heads of cattle. This corresponds to 500.000 ha of agriculture land and 400.000 ha of pasture land. The total agro-pastoral area of 900.000 ha is all that Rwanda has got, if we exclude sloppy terrains that are unsuitable for durable agro-pastoral production. Above those figures, environmental destruction and acute social tensions are unavoidable. Therefore 1950 was a critical year to reform the system and prevent social violence of 1959, and may be the ethno-political conflict of the 1990s.

The situation became increasingly tense as land and cattle clientships underwent their

unprecedented crisis, having failed to adjust to new demographic and social realities. Under Belgian rule, the monarch did not enjoy any more control over means of State violence. He did not control the administration nor the Catholic Church which had become too vocal on the deteriorating situation of the common people. In addition Colonial authority had become unfriendly to the indigenous oligarchy that he headed. He was thus unable to use force to prevent the social explosion of 1959. The Hutu and Tutsi elites who advocated social and political changes had become quite popular with the Hutu peasantry and poor Tutsi who were too aware of the unwillingness of the monarchy to improve their access to natural resources.

The rallying cry of these elites became equal access to land resources and no discrimination in the administration and education. Thus natural resources sharing project became a key factor for the revolution to occur, and for the fundamental changes in power and resource relationships. This revolution marked the failure of a system of inequality in land resources appropriation, under conditions of a fast increasing population and a prevailing rural economy. (Harroy, J.P.)

C. Land Resource Vs State Resource based Power in the Republic Era

The 1959-1961 Social revolution resulted in a leveling down of the ruling Tutsi aristocracy as far as their land resources were concerned. These resources were redistributed geometrically among landless Hutu families. This opening of pastoral lands to cropping led to a tremendous increase in agricultural production that reached the peak by the early 1980s. In the prevailing egalitarian ideology of the 1960s, agriculture and livestock were encouraged to integrate in order to despecialize land and ethnic production. This was reflected in a new terminology, the farmer was called *umuhinzi-mworozi* in Kinyarwanda, and *agriculteur-éleveur* in French, to reflect the egalitarian ideology that strived to suppress inequality between the cow and the hoe.

In this process of land redistribution, the new Republic regime did not realize that what had been done was going to be the foundation of the agricultural crisis of the 1980s. The quasi geometrical redistribution of land among all Rwandan families was done in the inexistence of institutions that could help to set up an efficient use of land based resources for the benefit of all. The exception to this was the North West where the *ubukonde/ubugererwa* institution had not completely disappeared. Thus there was no institutional instrument to

regulate partitioning of landholdings for hereditary rights, sale of land property, and to discourage accumulation of land for mere prestige or speculation.

Before long, population growth increased land hunger and led to unhindered partitioning of landholdings or hereditary rights. A land market developed with a fast accumulation of land resources in the hands of those non-peasants who were close to power. This led to a scarcity of land resources for the new generations of rural families and to a gradual reconstruction of a complex social stratification. The country returned to inequality of access to land resources, a system that the 1959 Social revolution had sought to abolish. By the eighties, the peasantry that constituted more than 92% of the population was in acute competition for land resources with the tiny bourgeoisie comprising the administrative, military, technocratic, political and business elites.

This new stratification highlighting intra-ethnic differentiation as far as land and other resources are concerned, came in competition with and overtook the ethnic stratification that the revolution had tried to destroy. Failure to foresee the impending social explosion was due to the apparent prosperity of the 1970s. These were golden years for the economy of independent Rwanda. The effect of *ibikingi* redistribution of the 1960s was a tremendous increase in agricultural production. It was possible to cover adequately food needs of the population. Coffee exports on the 1973-1979 period were three times coffee exports on the 1966-1972 period. However, progress in production was achieved at the expense of the ecological capital. In mid-eighties, soil losses due to erosion removed from crop production an equivalent of 8.000 ha per annum representing loss of a capacity to carry a population of 50.000 men.

Also in 1970s, the system of accumulation of land resources by those in power and State administration developed, as State became the main instrument of accumulation under the Second Republic. Behind rewarding jobs, there was access to land, credit, and foreign exchange. Competition for land resources among people of unequal financial means led to alarming disparities, not only of landholding for different categories of families, but also in the use of their production potential.

It was estimated that 43% poorer families own only 15% of cultivated lands whose average size of land area per family varied from less than 0,25 ha to 0,75 ha. About 50% of rural families had to hire land to produce for their basic subsistence needs by the 1980s. On the other hand, 16% of land-rich families owned 43% of cultivated lands, with average area of more than 1 ha of land per family. These conditions meant that poor farmers have been squeezed in steep unproductive lands where soil is constantly removed by erosion. Almost all these farmers, like most other poor Rwandans, are Hutu believed by the outside world to have shared power, from their hostile lands, with the tiny Hutu elite of the national bourgeoisie.

This imbalance resulted into a situation in which half the population of Rwanda was unable to meet the minimum food energy requirements of 2100 cal per person per day, their effective food energy consumption having fallen below 1900 cal per person per day. Therefore, there was a structural famine whose roots were embedded in the inequitable and disorderly land tenure. In 1985, it is estimated that poor families spent 88% of their earnings to purchase food, and 98% of the poor were rural families. The skewed distribution of lands concentrating almost half of arable lands in the hands of wealthier people who did not need to use its full potential aggravated this situation. It contributed to the appalling rural unemployment of adults that was more than 30% at the end of the 1980s. By mid-1990, before the October 1990 war, it was already clear that as a result of this **inequitable land tenure** and high population pressure, the social explosion was a matter of only a few years.

In mid 1980s, the country was severely hit by deteriorating coffee prices on world market, and the diminishing of the amount of its external earnings. The exports value which was \$US 60 per capita per annum in the period 1976-1979 fell at \$US 13 in 1991. With decreasing external earnings, the capacity of the regime to redistribute State resources among its clients and to attract new ones suffered, and dissatisfied elites started to express opposition to the political system. Among these were influential Tutsi businessmen who were involved in joint venture enterprises with their Hutu counterparts in power, and who felt they were being parasited under the conditions of a declining economy and dwindling State revenues. This led to an intra-elite crisis better described by a French saying that *quand les choses vont mal, les loups se mangent entre eux*.

In comparison, the 1980s are very similar to the 1950s as years of systemic crisis. While in the 1950s there was a crisis of the unequal land resource appropriation, the 1980s were characterized by a crisis of egalitarian land allocation of the earlier years of the Republic era. But whereas there were unutilized land resource reserves in the 1950s, almost all drained arable lands were cultivated. Agricultural production reached a peak in early 1980s, while population continued to grow. The land scarcity resulted into overexploitation of smaller landholdings, and accelerated deterioration of crop production environment. By mid-1980s, there was a massive exodus of environmental refugees quitting hostile lands, particularly in Gikongoro and Kibuye prefectures, for Tanzania which repatriated them in 1990 as illegal immigrants.

These phenomena showed the weakness of a development model emphasizing a rural development based on activities requiring land, and, consequently, excluding landless social groups. At the end of the 1980, the three decades of rural development projects were a total failure as far as financial resources invested are concerned. Beneficiaries of agriculture development programmes have obviously been families having sufficient land to apply extension programmes.

Between 1985 and 1992, whereas the total population increased by 20%, the proportion of poor people grew by 70 %²¹. The poor peasantry and youth have not been captured by the dozens of rural development projects, except by occasional salaried employment.

Also, most rural development projects followed State logic and became pipelines of international finance to further develop the burgeoning national bourgeoisie, and to strengthen state power. Most of the resources were used on project infrastructure, vehicles, and other imports. The more resources a project had, the more the elites reaped, and the less target beneficiaries got. This is why in spite of a heavy financial investment per capita, rural development projects have failed to halt the trend to structural famine and to break the vicious circle of rural poverty. (Gasana, LK)

The lessening of family landholdings and subsistence orientation of rural economy did not constitute a possibility of decent life to the educated elite. With the undeveloped private economy sector, State employment acquired an increasing importance, not only for economic security but also for status and political influence. Therefore, State employment took over the

role played by cattle and *ibikingi* in pre-revolution Rwanda. It represented for the State employee a kind of real estate, because many things in life, more important than the salary, depended on it:

schooling for children, access to power, and not least, access to land resources. Losing one's position in the State service meant losing all that. This is why those in power used refusal of employment to dissidents and would-be dissidents, just as Tutsi monarchs used confiscation of *ibikingi* from their political enemies. Loss of employment for political reasons meant going back to the land in one's commune of origin. Tying down opponents in their home areas was used against supporters of the first Republic regime after the 1973 military coup as a means of preventing the spread of dissension or a mere exhibition of power.

Thereafter, this incited people to purchase as much land as they could, mostly from poor farmers, and to construct villas there, to prepare a good cushion for use if they had to fall off State employment. Having a land and a villa for State officials became a mark of status. These are some of the factors that explain how land resource ownership became skewed in favor of wealthier citizens.

Furthermore, the systemic crisis became instrumental to generate the ethnic problem, where the basic focus of war was power. This overshadowed society's fundamental problems of poverty and injustice suffered by weak social groups in general. The overwhelming majority of the poor were Hutu, and the majority of poor Hutu were women and youth, who had no links with power, and no land resources of their own. Although there was such an ethnic concentration of poverty in disfavor of Hutu, concentration of wealth was not at all ethnic.

D. Connection with the Military

In Rwanda, the tradition of use of State violence in the exercise of power has got deep roots in history. It is this violence that facilitated Tutsi political domination over Hutu masses. Dissension has always been fought by extermination and prevention has been done by maintaining terror against groups where disagreement that leads to discord can originate from. Silence of oppressed groups has always been the golden rule of coexistence with those in power. As this power has always been in the hands of one ethnicity, the militias were recruited from the same ethnicity. Militiamen were usually Tutsi, and Hutu could only belong to non combat units.

In the aftermath of the 1959 Social revolution, there was a return to pre-colonial model of setting up an ethnic army that excluded people belonging to the ethnic group that was ousted from power. This army was used as an instrument of the new executive to protect Republican institutions against attempts of former aristocrats to return to power. This remained defense mission ever since independence and the armed forces seemed to be unprepared for external defense mission until the RPF October 1990 invasion.

The war that started in October 1990 and ended dramatically in 1994 has shown clearly that armed forces constitute one of the most powerful structural problems that threaten unity of Rwanda and impede its socio-economic development. Instead of abiding to a positive national defense mission, they have demonstrated their capacity to exterminate rival groups that abound in a deeply segmented society. It is the military and militia organizations of both ethnicities, Hutu and Tutsi, which made possible the rapid genocide. This exacerbated the lethal fact, proven by post-revolution history, that armies in Rwanda has not demonstrated the ability to serve but against Rwandans. (Desouter, S. & Reyntjens)

To understand the evilness of armed forces institutions in Rwanda context, one needs to consider and reconsider the fundamental problem that exists among various human groups that make up the country's society. This problem is fear. There is inter-ethnic fear between Hutu and Tutsi, and intra-ethnic fear among Hutu of different regional groupings. Each group fears that if the other one gets more armed it will not only jump to power but exterminate the others as well. This fear leads to creation of mono-ethnic armies by those who get a chance to be in power.

This is however not the end of the real problem. They try to create conditions of no return to avoid the swing of power from one group to the other. This strategy is shared by both Hutu and Tutsi armed extremist groups, in the official and non-official armies, in both Rwanda and Burundi. It is no secret that Tutsi extremists in both countries aim at ethnic demographic parity with Tutsi supremacy in all the elites, and Hutu extremists aim at ethnic purity. This is why in these two countries, every ethnic clash is bloodier than the preceding one, and a vicious circle of violent hatred and vengeance is established. At each ethnic massacre, more devastating means are used, and there is more grief and pain accumulating at individual and group level. But also, each time there is more poverty, and with a population

explosion, there are more people to be killed in this ominous circle. This can again be explained by comparing the atrocities committed in 1959 and those of 1994. Given this trend, one would hope to never again see another conflict that would lead to mass killings.

Historically, Rwandan armed forces are doomed to protection of group interests against real or hypothetical threats of the rest of the population. This has made impossible the search of solutions to major society's problems by dialectical approaches. In 1973, a handful group of officers decided and managed to topple a legal government and to prepare the imposition of a new constitutional order. In 1994, following the assassination of President Juvenal Habyarimana, a military assisted coup put in place authorities who did nothing to stop the genocide, the worst genocide on the African continent. In July 1994, an army of Tutsi rebels of the Rwandese Patriotic Front set up a new ethnic hegemony based on a search of firm Tutsi supremacy in the military, state administrations and the economy.

With this military victory and the ensuing criminalization of administration and the judiciary, terror conditions within Rwanda are maintained to free land and other resources by keeping more than 2.000.000 in refuge. Tutsi as a group are thus able to restructure State and space to maximize their physical, economic, and political security, and to reconstitute supremacy in use of natural and state resources. There is therefore emergence of an *ethnie-Etat* which is by far less hospitable to the majority of Rwandans than the former *parti-Etat*, and of a sharp contradiction between it and the masses it is supposed to serve. The price for maximum security for one ethnic group is maximum tension for society at large and insecurity of individuals. The slogans of liberation war give way to realities of war of conquest. Spoils of war include not only real estate and equipment belonging to Hutu, but State as well. (Mundo Negro)

IV. Durable Peace – The Instruments

Drawing from the discussion above, it appears that ethnicity is an effect of underlying conflicts on hegemonic control of natural and state resources. Hegemonic control of power, first by Tutsi aristocracy until 1959, then by successive Hutu sub-regional groups until Tutsi military elite took over in 1994, has been the instrument of such natural and State resource control. Power control was criminalized to facilitate limitless accumulations of wealth by individuals within privileged groups and in exclusion of rival socio-ethnic groups. All this has been made possible by the use of military violence perpetrated by mono-ethnic armies. So far

Rwandans have not been able to work out consensual modalities of equitable access to resources and power.

The model of land resources redistribution of egalitarian deployed after the 1959 revolution led to the same inequality as the model of inegalitarian based on cattle and land clientship which led to that revolution. Inequalities in natural and State resources control have been, in respective epochs, the purpose and the instruments of power control by hegemonic groups, and factors of ethnic conflict. However, as an ethnic conflict produces germs for more violence in a socio-economic and political environment where pretexts abound, from symptom this spiraling ethnic conflict becomes a structural problem.

Therefore, efforts to reduce tension in Rwandan society must address first and foremost structures and institutions that lead to inequality of access to land and state resources, and what nourishes inter-ethnic fear. These comprise, as will describe below, reorganization of State institutions, demilitarization, and fast economic development. (Alfred Ndoricimpa)

A. Power sharing between State and the people

As already discussed above, it is evident that too much centralization of power has led to lethal bipolar conflicts with opportunistic exploitation of ethnicity. Recent events have clearly demonstrated that in order to avoid further mishandling of ethnicity by sub-groups competing for power, and destruction of society by ethnic bipolarization, a multi-polarity approach that takes into account all the major cleavages in society should be envisaged. Presently, these are regions and ethnicities within which other cleavages, existing and potential, such as socioeconomic status, gender, confession, are nested. In the long term, even the ethnic conflict may be considered as nested in the region factor, so that a solution for the region conflict may serve as a solution for ethnic and other social conflicts. In the past, when there were parliamentary elections, electoral frontiers were ethnic, gender, sub-regional, and even confessional.

B. Demilitarization as a condition of inter-ethnic confidence building

The prerequisite for reconciliation and national reconstruction of Rwanda has to be demilitarization as sufficiently argued by Gasana and Gasana and Nsengimana, “Le Rwanda doit se démilitariser pour réussir sa démocratisation et sa reconstruction”. The point

underlying their vision is that with ethnic armies, ethnicities that are excluded will always prepare resistance, in order to oppose or impose violence. Society will thus be maintained under explosive ethnic tension. There is no doubt that ethnicity is a reality, and so are memories of past inter-ethnic victimizations and revolving cycles of vengeance. It is equally a reality that ethnic violence is confounded in state violence, and both are embedded in ethnic armed forces.

All the above said, demilitarization cannot be achieved by Rwanda alone without the support and firm supports by neighboring countries and the international community. It is most important that armed extremists who lost power or those who won it be asked to dismantle their lethal structures, and allow interplay of political forces. There will, be no end to ethnic violence if non armed Rwandan democrats are excluded from contribution to the running of their country's affairs.

Currently, search of reconciliation is impeded by lack of a unified approach among Francophone and Anglophone superpowers that have manifested another type of ethnic bipolarization of their own, and seem to have chosen sides. In particular, the Anglophone superpowers are the ones that are failing to play the role of facilitators of dialogue by lending unhindered cooperation and helping to consolidate Tutsi power. It is under their biased indifference that the new ethno-military regime has set up an *ethnie-Etat*, with quasi mono-ethnic armed forces, administration, parliament, and economy.

C. Reduce socio-economic inequalities and combat poverty

Lasting solutions to the Rwandan ethno-political conflict will bear no durable results if they do not include programs of fast socio-economic development. It is with social development and economic growth that society will determine common national goals, and offer guaranties to every single individual against violence rooted in poverty and fear of a hungry neighbor. The state of law for the elites cannot co-exist with the state of misery for the rest of the population.

A continued economic insecurity will continue to lead to physical insecurity, particularly if affected groups see ethnicities, as determinants of an unjust order. Rwandan society cannot get rid of explosive ethnic tensions if its social groups continue to develop at different velocities. There is therefore an urgent need for the current Rwandan government to

use the Marshal plan that was put together for Rwanda by the international community to combat the appalling poverty that continue in rural Rwanda after the destruction of economic infrastructure as a result of the genocide, and the instauration of a social and economic apartheid against the excluded Hutu majority ethnicity since July 1994. There should be more support to efforts of reconciliation, and to expand the carrying capacity of an overpopulated Rwanda.

The role that economic development can play in national reconciliation should not be underestimated. New development projects can be conceived as opportunities to reunite Rwandans at a local level around solidarity actions promoting shared social goals. There is therefore a need to engineer a new type of schemes aiming at resolution of social conflict through a shared development. It is necessary to go forward from government's discourse on reconciliation to decentralized reconciliation through concrete community programs and engagement of youth.

V. Conclusion

The underlying factors of the ethnic conflict in Rwanda are basically related to inequality of access to natural resources that is inherent in a skewed control of power. In a country with a predominantly rural economy, and where over-population annihilates economic progress, the state constitutes for groups of elites in power, an instrument of accumulation of wealth and of suppression of rivals of a different ethnic group. Ethnicity in this case is therefore a symptom of unresolved problems of **ethnically skewed power control, inequitable access to natural resources, and appalling rural poverty**. Restoration of inter-ethnic confidence requires **total demilitarization** of the country in order to construct a State that is hospitable to all social groups. **Security for individual citizens** must be assured by new institutions that increase their political participation.

On the country level, decentralization models can respond to this preoccupation. But in the long run, their efficiency is limited by the inelasticity of natural resources base and an increasing population. **Fast social and economic development** and federation with neighboring states constitute therefore a more durable solution. More efforts towards real **reconciliation** are needed in order to guarantee a sustainable peace in Rwanda.

Sources

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