

**POLITICIZATION OF IDENTITIES, NEGOTIATIONS
AND TRANSITION IN A CONFLICT SOCIETY: THE
ETHICS OF A GENOCIDE-FREE BURUNDI**

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CHAPTER ONE

PREFACE

The past century has been marked by a large number of both inter and intra-state violence. Among the most brutal wars were the two world wars that led to the defeat of Germany, twice. Then came the post-colonial era, which too has been characterized by massive use of violence by the state against its own citizens with little regard for civilian lives. Following independence, the rapid rise of polarization within Burundi, coming at the behest of the colonial master, Belgium, led to animosity between people who, at an earlier age, lived together with not a hint on warlike behaviour. Burundi has been one of the countries that witnessed repeated episodes of brutality against its people.

Burundi suffered from violent bloodletting from its inception as an independent republic in 1961 from Belgium. In 1962, the murder of Rwagasore, the first post-colonial Prime Minister became the prelude for bouts of violence which became continual and interspersed between the periods, 1965, 1972, 1988, 1991 and 1993. These episodes of brutality resulted in the death of more than a million people and the subsequent destruction of what was the fabric of Burundi society. Compounding the country's problem was that another democratically elected leader Mr. Pierre Ngendandumwe, perished at the hands of assassins in 1965 barely three years following a similar exploit. Nowhere else in Africa has so much violence led to the death of so many people on so many occasions in so a tiny space such as in Burundi. In essence, not a single family was left untouched by the violence, (Lemarchand 1996: pxxv).

This thesis examines the root causes of the conflict in Burundi by focusing on the question of "nationalities" and "identities" and explores ways and means which were adopted to arrest the rising tensions in the country. The thesis goes on to assess whether the implementation of the latest peace agreement (Arusha

Peace Agreement) will be effective and give credence to the country's desire for lasting and sustainable peace.

Colonial manipulation of ethnicity in Burundi wreaked havoc in the post-colonial era as will be shown in the thesis. The wars that followed caused massive displacement of people from their communities to the safety of exile elsewhere. Such refugees possess the desire to go back to their erstwhile places of origin, (Elwert, 1999). They would do anything in their power to achieve this goal, even if it involves fighting their way back. Refugee communities are a best bet as sources or fertile recruiting grounds for insurgency anywhere in the world and Burundi falls within that category. Refugees possess valuable "seedbeds" for the cultivation of mercenary networks, guerilla fighters, weapon smugglers, illegal trade and any other thing they may deem fit to ensure their longevity and aspiration to return home.

Does Burundi stand a chance to have its problems solved so that the people can live and enjoy lasting peace? Can deep rooted structures of violence be transformed in such a way as to enable a successful and forward-looking progress that will encourage socio-economic welfare and political participation? Can a divided country like Burundi, beset with cultural differences, overcome the causes of war and obstacles to development and finally work for lasting peace?

This thesis is divided into six chapters. As noticed above, the Preface is the introductory chapter that sets the tone for the thesis.

Chapter Two will identify the various political role-players, discuss the topography, identify the elements of "culture," "identity" and "society" as a means of seeking to clarify why there are differences in the country. At the same time it will deal with the ethics of trust that are required to ensure that a polity becomes predictable and follows defined norms. This, of course, will be presented as

basic considerations for the thesis while a number of observations as well as brief summaries will be made at the end of individual chapters.

The thesis will also present the role that was played by the colonial masters in preparing the country for independence and continue until there was an inculcation of arrogance of a ruling tribal clan. The obstacle to development and exclusion in a crisis like that being experienced in Burundi leaves spheres open for causes of war, tyranny and violence. These will be shown to indicate that identities become crystallized and racial stereotypes promoted at the expense of others. The thesis will identify the lack of consolidation of the state as well as the patrimonial nature of the ruling clan as the central causes of the war and obstacles to peace.

Chapter Three relates to the fundamental question of “identity” and “culture” and how these affect nationalism. The author will further examine these concepts as they affect the issues of life in the divided society. In doing so the author will present the conceptual contributions from Chapter One also and discuss, among others, the role that colonialism played in dividing the Barundi society. The author refers to that role as “sowing the seeds of discord” by briefly interspersing the role of Germany and that of Belgium in dealing a crippling blow to the polity of Barundi. The thesis also takes into consideration that colonial rule was never representative but followed a pattern that is cited by Mamdani 1996 as “decentralized despotism.” The author will refer to this as the “mechanic of inducing an identity conflict crisis.” The thesis will go on and discuss the three main ethnic groups, the Hutus (majority), the Tutsis (the largest minority) and the Twa (marginalized community) and how they fit into the nomenclature of the Barundi society.

Of importance is that the thesis will deal with the role played by the departing colonial master in stoking up ethnic tensions not only in Burundi but also on a regional dimension (Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo included). It is

at this point that the thesis will signal the formation of political parties along ethnic lines. This is a fundamental consideration of this thesis because it signals a transition to the most difficult period that the country has to go through.

There was little development in Burundi. In essence, the war took a turn of being a war for access to resources. Development aid played a very little role although it was critical at times. However, colonial manipulations and neo-colonial tendencies satisfied the needs of a few rather than solving a perennial problem that was being experienced in the country. Human rights were being violated in the country, basic needs not met leading the state to lack not only legitimacy but also became impossible to infuse democratic conditions in tightly controlled clientelistic loyalties. Here the basis for doing business in the country became centralized within a given clan that was in power. As soon as financial resources dwindle, economic crisis sets in and collapse becomes inevitable leading to coups, (Migdal 1988: 223 – 225).

What can be done in crisis situations characterized by state failure, the destruction of social conditions or even the absence of the state's monopoly on the use of violence? This is where there is a need for intervention on the side of the international community, be it the African Union, and invited state to mediate (South Africa) even the United Nations Organization (UNO). The acceptance of mediation from protagonists is a signal that their war efforts had failed to solve the problems, hence the need to find a solution.

Chapter Four will deal with the role that was played not only by the late President of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and later passed to the legendary figure of Dr. Nelson Mandela, the former President of the Republic of South Africa, (Africa Confidential 22 October 1999). The latter also passed on this role to the then Deputy President of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Zuma who until then was relieved of the role and facilitation passed on to Mr. Charles Nqakula, the Minister of Safety and Security in South Africa, (Africa Confidential 22 March 2002).

The implementation of the peace agreement has been onerous with ceasefire agreement being violated by rival politico-military formations. Similarly, the integration of the various military formations was a challenge that needed to be managed carefully. In a sense, the defense force became bloated and so was the police force, (Interview with Mlungisi Mbalati – Special Assistant to the Facilitation, February 2007). This was also confirmed by Boshoff *et al* in their work dubbed A Case Study for Burundi: Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-Integration During the Transition in Burundi in Monograph Series, Tshwane (Pretoria), South Africa: Institute for Security Studies, 51. It is this monograph that turns the focus of what could possibly be done to arrest the downward spiral of the country into the proverbial “abyss.”

The acceptance by the political stake-holders of the terms and reference of the peace agreement is of crucial importance to the success of the peace process and it will be indicated that achievements have been realized in this regard. The delicate issue is how the protagonists will respect the central tenets of the document they signed and how will the state reintegrate those who had been exiled since the early 1960s.

The acceptance of the legal order by the politicians will, for example, directly influence the issue of legitimacy and subsequently pave the way for the acceptance of the legal order. This is a challenge that the country has to undertake and demonstrate that Barundi could commit themselves to democracy and the rule of law. The legitimation of the mostly authoritarian led system still remains brittle at present. However, it is important to note that the current system is more representative than what Burundi had had as governments since independence. Such attempts by Barundi to be accommodative of one another will be shown as a positive way of bringing about lasting peace in the country.

In Chapter Five the thesis will deal with the issue of solving the state crisis that has affected Burundi, stabilization programmes and identify characteristics of a political system. According to this approach, national issues whether they are ethnic or otherwise, cannot be solved through the barrel of a gun but through negotiation. Authoritarian systems all over the world reach their limits and only a combination of wisdom, compromise through negotiation brings about lasting peace. Only civic nationalism, meaning the rational reconciliation with a blend of democracy can be effective within a polity that is as divided as that of Burundi. In essence strengthening the ability to govern through progressive policy (for lack of a better word) helps to overcome structures of violence only if it is accompanied at the same time by courageous commitment of domestic political players supported by external players. The consolidation of state institutions and their control by the public (through constitutional means) is important in situations of fragile peace such as in Burundi.

Chapter Six will deal with considerations of ways and means on the best possible mechanisms which the country could employ to overcome its political biases. Political biases could be overcome by adoption of ethical considerations that could usher in a genocide-free Burundi. Such ethical considerations should be geared towards the minimization of and ultimate elimination of genocidal tendencies within the body politic of the country. Burundi had suffered a lot in their short history as an independent state.

Although it will be difficult to prescribe to Burundi what will be good for them, the suffering that had been endured so far would, possibly, allow for a degree of accommodation with one another in the effort of bringing about lasting peace in the country. To date, no population group had been able to eliminate the other. Similarly, there is a certainty that genocidal tendencies will meet strong condemnation by the international community including sanctions by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The importance of obtaining a genocide-free Burundi cannot be underplayed. It is the essence of the thesis. The issue is that can there be forgiveness for the atrocities that took place in Burundi? If so what should be done to achieve communication and not bloodletting between the two communities? The two communities fought bitter wars that went beyond brutality comprehension because of their insensitivities. Clearly it was the preservation of human life in Burundi that was the primary duty of the state that was missing. The state was Tutsi and needed to be Tutsi at the behest of the Tutsi only. The rule of the people by the people and for the people was something that was alien. For Tutsis, they believed that their survival depended on them preserving their being through such a state.

The thesis will make an assumption that to heal the gaping wounds that plagued the warring communities in Burundi, would need for some sort of reparations to be made. These could be obtained in kind or in financial compensation – which of course would go a long way in redressing and affirming all Burundi as citizens of a genocide-free Burundi.

CHAPTER TWO

2 Glossary Of Political Role-Players: Past And Present

The political parties mentioned below have been involved in the political processes of Burundi since the independence until at present. With the exception of a few break-away parties, other political parties seem to have disappeared from the scene.

- a. *Alliance Burundo Africaine pour le Salut (ABASA)*
- b. *Alliance Nationale pour le Droit et le Développement (ANADDE)*
- c. *Alliance des Vaillants (AV-INTWARI)*
- d. *Conseil National pour la Defense de la Démocratie (CNDD)*
- e. *Conseil National pour la Defense de la Démocratie- Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (CNDD-FDD)*
- f. *Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie (FDD)*
- g. *Forces Nationales de Libération (FNL)*
- h. *Forces Nationales de Libération-(Icanzo) dissident wing of (FNL)*
- i. *Forces de Libération Nationales (FALINA)*
- j. *Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi (FROBEDU)*
- k. *Front pour la Libération Nationale (FROLINA)*
- l. *Parti Socialiste et Panafricaniste (INKINZO)*
- m. *Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu (PALIPEHUTU)*
- n. *Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu-FNL (PALIPEHUTU-FNL)*
- o. *Parti pour le Redressement National (PARENA)*
- p. *Parti Indépendant des Travailleurs (PIT)*
- q. *Parti Libéral (PL)*
- r. *Parti du Peuple (PP)*
- s. *Parti pour la Réconciliation du Peuple (PRP)*
- t. *Parti Sicial-Démocrate (PSD)*
- u. *Ralliement pour la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social (RADDES)*

- v. *Rassemblement du Peuple Burundais (PRB)*
- w. *Union pour le Progrès National (UPRONA)*
- x. *Union pour la Libération Nationale (ULINA)*

Source: Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi: 28 August 2000; Africa Confidential: Burundi | browse by country.

i. At The Signing Ceremony As Witnesses

His Excellency, Dr. Nelson Mandela: former President of the Republic of South Africa. Facilitator*.

His Excellency, General Gnassingbé Eyadéma: Late President of the Republic of Togo and the then Chairperson of the Organization of African Unity.

His Excellency, Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni: President of the Republic of Uganda.

His Excellency, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi: President of the Republic of Kenya.

His Excellency, Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa: President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

His Excellency, Mr. Frederick J. T. Chiluba: President of the Republic of Zambia.

His Excellency, Major-General. Paul Kagame: President of the Republic of Rwanda.

His Excellency, Mr. Laurent Désiré Kabila: President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

His Excellency, Mr. Meles Zenawi: Prime Minister of the F. D. Republic of Ethiopia.

His Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan: Secretary-General of the United Nations.

His Excellency, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim: Secretary-General: Organization of African Unity.

His Excellency, Mr. Charles Josselin: Minister of Cooperation of the French Republic, representing the European Union.

His Excellency, Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali: Secretary-General of the International Organization of *la Francophonie*.

Mr. Joseph Wariyoba Butika: Executive Director of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation.

NB* Pres. Nelson Mandela took over the facilitation role of the talks following the death of President Julius Kambarage Nyerere of the United Republic of Tanzania. Following the accession to power of President Thabo Mbeki in South Africa, Nelson Mandela then passed on the role of Facilitator of the then Deputy President of South Africa, Mr. Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma. Zuma managed to get the parties to agree to a Transitional Government of National Unity. His political problems in South Africa resulted in Minister of Safety and Security, Mr. Charles Nqakula, assuming the role of Facilitator until at the time of writing.

ii. Signatory Parties

Name of Representative	Title and Party
Mr. Ambroise NIYONSABA	Minister for the Peace Process Government of Burundi
Hon. Léonce NGENDAKUMANA	Speaker of the National Assembly Government of Burundi
Amb. Téreance NSANZE	Chairman ABASA
Prof. Patrice NSABABAGANWA	Chairman ANADDE
Prof. André NKUNDIKIJE	Chairman AV-INTWARI
Mr. Leonard NYANGOMA	Chairman NCDD
Dr. Jean MINANI	Chairman FROBEDU
Mr. Joseph KARUMBA	Chairman FROLINA
Dr. Alphonse RUGAMBARARA	Chairman INKINZO
Dr. Étienne KARATASI	Chairman PALIPHUTU
HE. Jean-Baptiste BAGAZA	Chairman PARENA
Prof. Nicéphore NDIRUKUNDO	Chairman PIT
Mr. Gaëtan NIKOBAMYE	Chairman PL
Mr. Shadrack NIYONKURU	Chairman PP
Mr. Mathias HITIMANA	Chairman PRP
Mr. Godefroy HAKIZIMANA	Chairman PSD
Mr. Joseph NZEYIMANA	Chairman

	RADES
Mr. Balthazar BIGIRIMANA	Chairman RBP
Mr. L. BARARUNYERETSE	Chairman UPRONA

iii. Co-Signatories

His Excellency, Dr. Nelson Mandela - Facilitator : Republic of South Africa

His Excellency, Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni: President of the Republic of Uganda

His Excellency, Mr. Daniel Arap Moi: President of the Republic of Kenya

His Excellency, Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa: President of the United Republic of Tanzania

His Excellency. Mr. Mr Kofi Annan: Secretary-General of the United Nations

His Excellency, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim: Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity

His Excellency, Mr. Charles Josselin: Minister of Cooperation of the French Republic, representing the European Union

Mr. Joseph Wariyoba Butika: Executive Director of the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation.

source: Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi: 28 August 2000

2.1 Geography: An Overview

Present day Burundi is regarded as one of the smallest countries in Africa. Its total landmass and population is estimated at 27,834 square kilometers and 6 million people respectively. Burundi is thus regarded as one of the most densely populated countries in the world. The location of the country is in central Africa bordering nations such as Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. To the south-west, it is flanked by Lake Tanganyika, (Esterhuizen, 2001/2: 12).

The country has a hilly terrain, high plateaus with considerable altitude variations of 722 m to 2 760 m above sea-level. Forty percent of the country is arable, however only nine percent of the land is being utilized for food production. About a third of the country is used for pasture within the most fertile areas in the highlands. Rain is plentiful and it averages one hundred and two centimeters per year. The country is mountainous with slopes that are dense with a variety of indigenous trees. At the highest altitude there are wildlife animals, such as elephants, buffalo, baboons, antelopes and warthogs.

Animals roam around the country which does not have a nature reserve exposing these animals to poaching. Compounding the misery of the animals is that deforestation is taking place at an alarming rate because of farming and the encroachment of grazing lands. The possession of cattle symbolizes wealth, happiness and prosperity in the country. Cattle are seen as a symbol of power in the national culture and this is reflected in the typical Burundi greetings of *amashyo*. *Amashyo* is roughly translated as meaning “*may you have many cattle*”, (www.everyculture.com.2007).

Esterhuizen 2001/2 puts the population of the country at 6 million, while Africa Confidential mentions a population figure that is closer to 7, 05 million. Iain (2008), differs with the population figures mentioned above but is supported by

the United Nations Organization estimate that puts the population figure closer to 8, 173, 00 as at mid 2006. Despite the varying population figures mentioned above, the result is that Burundi has one of the highest population densities in Africa of 293,6 persons per square kilometer. The majority of the people are the Hutus who constitute about eighty five percent (85%) of the population. The Tutsi are the largest minority and constitute about fourteen percent (14%) of the population while the Twa are put at one percent (1%), (Salih *et al*, 2007: 31). There exists little or no information as to where the concentrations of major ethnic groups are situated. As mentioned above, there has also been little evidence of the gender demography in the country. This in itself confirms that there has never been a census of the people of Burundi according to various categories. Both Hutu and Tutsis are interspersed within the boundaries of the country and have been living like that since time immemorial. Since the bloodletting began earnestly in the early 1990s, little has been recorded of the small population of three thousand Europeans and two thousand south-Asians most of whom lived in the capital, Bujumbura.

The demographic composition of the country is said to be homogeneous for the reason that Burundi speak one language, Kirundi. However, the division of the people according to ethnicity is unconvincing as both Hutus and Tutsis speak Kirundi while the Twa community speaks Kirundi said to be of a different dialect. The other language that is spoken in the country is KiSwahili, a mixture of Arabic and Bantu languages. KiSwahili is the language of commerce and so is French which is widely spoken by the elites of the country.

The capital city, Bujumbura, is heavily populated and the most industrialized city. Its location is on the shore of Lake Tanganyika and also serves as the country's sole port. The colonial influence of the city is patently obvious. However, large parts of the capital have not been influenced by colonial architecture. The country's second city is Gitega. It is to the east of the capital city and is situated within the fertile highlands of the country. Here large amounts of coffee, banana

and tea plantations exist. Small industries are to be found in Gitega with the country's main coffee processing plant and brewery situated in the city, (Esterhuizen, 2001/2: 12).

Most houses of the country are built from sticks, grass and mud in a shape that is common in Africa: round and like a bee-hive. The roofing material is made of grass and leaves. These are made in the form of a hut. There are huts that are made of brick and mortar with roof that are made of tin. The houses have small courtyards and because of a lack of space, they are also dotted by a number of other huts.

The diet of Burundi consists mainly of carbohydrates. Vitamins and minerals are provided by fruits, vegetables and a combination of grains. Meat accounts for two percent or less of the average food intake, such as beans, corn, millets, sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes and peas. Cassava is hands washed, pounded into a pulp and cooked. Sorghum, millet and corn are ground and cooked into porridge. Fish is consumed mainly by Burundi living along Lake Tanganyika.

Burundi has one of the lowest gross national products (GNP) in the world. The economy is centrally controlled with major industries being under state control. The country is slowly moving towards some form of private ownership however the pace is slow. The main cash-crop, coffee, accounts for eighty percent (80%) of foreign revenue. This leaves the economy vulnerable to variations not only in weather but also to fluctuations in the international coffee market which the country has little control of. It exports (coffee, tea and cotton) mainly to the European Union and is a recipient of foreign aid from Belgium, France and Germany, the former colonial masters. There is also a severe trade imbalance as the country imports twice as much as it exports. All these factors, together with the civil war, have altered the economy, (Esterhuizen, 2001/2)

With the violence that has rocked the country and the resultant death of almost 250 000 and the displacement of 800 000 the economically active people were drastically reduced, further hampering economic development. In the 1990s before the commencement of violence, thirty six percent (36%) of the population lived below the poverty line within the country as a whole. However, the bulk of the poor, almost eighty five percent (85%) are mainly situated in the rural areas. Ninety percent (90%) of the population is actively engaged in subsistence farming while four percent is employed by government. One point five percent (1.5%) of the people are employed by industry and commerce with a similar number on the service sector. Cattle are commonly used as currency within the country's bartering trade system.

2.2 Culture, Identity and Society: An Elemental View

It is important that this thesis commences with an elemental view on the concepts of "culture" and "identity." These two concepts will be used in a broad sense to explain them to the reader. Similarly, these two concepts aim to contextualize the contiguity of ideas about race as seen by Barundi. Both "culture" and "identity" are broad and complex concepts but are also architects of the thinking of communities vis-à-vis the outside world. The same is obtaining in Burundi as these two concepts play a significant role in reflecting the shared beliefs and habits of communicating among Barundi.

The Oxford Dictionary refers to "culture" as "*the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively,*" (1995: 328). The concept "culture" is also derived from the Latin verb *colere*¹ which basically means to "*till one's land*". It is also said that "culture" is an expression of the basic

1. various meanings of culture are provided in the free encyclopedia, Wikipedia, (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture>

relationship between human beings within the groups they belong to. Similarly it is also seen as a “natural environment” from which human beings derive their sustenance. “Culture” then signifies basic ways in which different societies view their relations with nature. It should also be emphasized that there exists a relationship between cultural stereotypes which cause polarization between communities and the civil war that has been the source of misery in Burundi. As will be reflected below, “culture” and “identity” which are both linked to the structure of the population cause groups to contest for political power. The contest may assume various forms but more specific, for this thesis, the contest has been violent, ethnic based and a source of uncertainty.

Internationally there have been many discussions on the concept or the term “culture.” Such discussions have been conducted by a variety of scholars of different persuasions reaching various outcomes and conclusions. Although there has been no clear or unified theory on the concept of “culture”, there is a widely held view that “culture” is like a proverbial “elephant in the living room.” In an exact form, Samuel Huntington alludes to this by mentioning that *“the broadest level of cultural identity is that which distinguishes humans from other species but also defines the common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people”*, (1993: 24).

The pervasiveness of the concept of “culture” dates back to time immemorial. At present, “culture” still assumes prominence in the lives of many and shapes the thinking of almost all people in the world. In its broadest sense, “culture” commands immense power of persuasion within communities. “Culture” as a notion, assumes the role of shaping one’s set of belief patterns. It determines the values that one is socialized in and largely reflects shared habits of people around the world. “Culture” is like an omnipresent phenomenon in the lives of many people and it becomes a determinative instrument not only to individuals but also to nations. “Culture” cannot be wished away neither can it be ignored!

Samuel Huntington mentions that some old conflicts around the world had been influenced by cultural patterns thus rendering it a tool that provides powers of persuasion, (1993: 28).

With power of persuasion, leaders are capable of using “culture” to push for coercive action in pursuance of certain desired outcomes. In essence, “culture” can be used as a political tool. These strategies and goals are pursued, some scholars such as Barber 1996, agree with these assertions and mentions that *“there is a need for new ways of perceiving the world, for a new paradigm of social change. The nation state is primarily a way of imagining the world, and its institutions.”*

There is a link between culture and rationality. This link is perceived as “shared beliefs,” like when economists believe in a certain theory that influences, for example, economic development. Of course, there would be those who believe that such influences could be “imaginative inventions” but of importance to this thesis is the following: in social science it is understood that actors acquire the interest they pursue *through culture* (emphasis mine). Weingast shares this view, (1995: 449-64).

The issue here is that the matter under discussion is highly complex especially when actors vary all the time and new ones emerge and assume prominent roles. The new ones would learn from the old through their experiences that would help them deal with the future, no matter what shape and form that particular future would assume. In essence, the future is shaped by interests in the form of cultural expressions. Based on such an assertion, “culture” is then seen as being closely associated with “identity.” The latter itself refers to a set of beliefs and values held in common by groups of people reflected in their shared set of habits.

“Identity” just like “culture” is a problematic concept. More often than not, these two concepts are perceived by many scholars as belonging to the archaic. Many ancient cultures of Africa are said to be not receptive to ideas which are Western. However, it should be mentioned that other cultural traits from elsewhere had been accepted and practiced in Africa and Burundi alike. One such “cultural importation” is the idea of democratic tradition, (Von Mettenheim et al, 1998: 7). Although this assertion is questionable, it is important that the thesis mentions that democracy has been imported and applied in many countries in Latin America and across the entire continent, including Burundi.

When scholars put both “culture” and identity” to scrutiny they come to the same conclusion Hobsbawn *et al* who refers to both concepts as a set of beliefs and values that are held in high esteem by certain groups, (1983: 34). It is these sets of beliefs that are, more often than not, also subjected to various interpretations to the detriment of those imported traditions. There is a relational correlation between “culture” and “identity”. Thus for anyone belonging to such groups or units (cultural and identity) such a person must at all times reflect a belonging to and sharing of characteristics with a particular civilization or tradition. It is these latter two concepts that determine one’s boundaries.

These could be within or without borders, while at the same time these could transact such spheres to even include ethnic or racial allegiance that may cut across occupational or political affiliation. To further add complexity to the matter, it is easy to say that “culture” and “identity” may cut across other boundaries and assume associational relationships such as those enjoyed by trade union organizations and political organizations.

At the same time “culture” and “identity” can also be associated with other professional associations be they medical, scientific and academic to name but a few. These would usually defy the confines of national boundaries and would stretch from one continent to the other. The people who are transacting within

such associations are not drawn to such organizations because of racial reasons or simply by natural instincts. They transact within such associations with which they identify because of human association influenced, shaped and determined by evolution of communities, (*for a detailed account of "evolution" see Gish, 1983: 175-191*).

The most intriguing point that is being elucidated in this thesis is that "culture" and "identity" are primarily responsible for shaping the behaviour of human beings. "Culture" and "identity" also play a significant role in shaping human beings yearning to belong to a particular group. Such groups would become their "associational home." Of course, this would then make such associations instruments of power, (Posen, 1993: 87-110). At this point "culture" and "identity" play an important role even when identities are relatively stable within certain well established boundaries. With boundaries well established, power relations are defined by actors who respond to such cultural and identity factors, (Katzenstein, 1996: 2).

Among other issues "culture" and "identity" play a role in shaping the policy of prospective states on one hand and on the other would have a bearing on the security of the states thus affecting the behaviour of the people. Of course, it will be indicated in the thesis how this issue affects Burundi. It is essential to examine the decisions made by individuals and how they affect people who are stimulated to engage in conflict. "Culture" and "identity" go beyond stating the facts that different cultures have different beliefs. Furthermore, each society with its embedded beliefs would defend these belief patterns so that these should not be contradicted by others. It is these cultural beliefs that, from time to time, provide a repertoire of attitudes and responses based on habits that prevail in a particular country.

In newly independent states, "culture" remains an important tool in explaining how interests of political actors are formed. The latter would usually define the

interest of the independent state which will differ from those of the pre-colonial state and to an extent to those of the colonial state. Within these three sets of different states, (pre-colonial, colonial and independent states) transformational action is undertaken to impact on “culture.” But, of course, this does not mean that the physical make-up of the transforming or transformed state the local population will not change when attitudes are, (Abramson *et al*, 1995: 23).

Even in this narrow context mentioned above, political actors may employ important changes in “culture” when engaging in regular interaction with other international players with resultant changes internally. When these changes originate internally, cultural changes may affect a people and its leadership in the way in which they interact with the outside world, (Posen, 1993: 116). At times, whatever their origins, “culture” may have features that have become so deeply entrenched in ways individual personalities are formed, that talk of change is not very meaningful within a lifetime.

Significantly, within and without countries, culture(s) do unite and divide humanity. These inconsistencies are also another way of analyzing “culture.” There are widely held beliefs that “culture” can also retard progress that is required to bring positive changes. It possesses the wherewithal to limit what is achievable through economic and political means. Burundi and Ethiopia could be interesting case studies where archaic ways of socialization have largely retarded progress. As such, within the primordialist school of thought there is the view that “culture” is not a tool for change, but it does indicate where the deepest differences lie and thus where conflict is more likely to occur, (See Bloom, 1987: 1).

“Culture” and “identity” affect behaviour and the reaction that behaviour is likely to attract from others. There is a generalization that “culture” is perceived to be less receptive to democratic forms of government and may affect a group’s response to political trends within a country. This is a controversial

generalization that is ably countered by mentioning a direct opposite of what has been said. However, there is also the effect of “culture” and “identity” on conflict and cooperation. Cultural differences among different ethnic groups are said to either cause or exacerbate conflict, although some would say the opposite. For the purpose of this thesis, the interactions between and within various ethnic groups and their identification with their respective “culture(s)” and “identities” are at the heart of incompatible interest that had plunged Burundi into conflict.

2.3 Identities, Associations And Societies Within Burundi: A Prologue

As a prelude to the thesis it is important that a brief explanation of key Barundi identities, associational words and beliefs be put into perspective to ensure that these collectives are better understood by the reader. These sets of identities are associated with the culture and institutions of Barundi. These are:

Abagererwa *landless people but also known as **abashumba***

Barundi: *Barundi is a plural of the word **Murundi** translated as indicating a person of Burundi origin. The language they all speak is known as **Kirundi***

Banyamahanga: *These are people of **Hutu** origin who played the important role of keeping royal secrets. These people were chosen among Hutus class of **Bajiji**, **Bashubi**, **Bahanza** and **Bavumi**. These individuals also played the role of running administrative regions that had been identified by the king.*

Bashingantahe: *These people could be regarded as part of the then civil society because they played an important role in conflict resolution among Barundi. They were wise elders chosen among the community and were also managers of regulators*

of basic social life. They are adjudicators in disputes and widely believed to be the guardians of peace and justice.

Ganwa: *Is an identity given to people who were associated with the royal family made up of both Hutus and Tutsis. They were regarded as nobles and seen as a specialized feudal aristocracy! It should be emphasized that they are not a separate tribe but a collective of the two groups.*

Hutu: *Despite speaking the same language as their counterparts, the Tutsis, Hutus are said to be distinguishable by the physique rather than speaking a different language to their other counterparts in the country. Hutus make up the majority ethnic group of people. They were deemed to be farmers. They are also known as Bantu-Negroids!*

Ivyaribo *subchiefs who are nominated at grassroots level to representing the authority of the **banyamahanga***

Kubandwa: *an old tradition of normalization of matters that are deemed to have been borrowed from elsewhere and are socialized by the locals*

Mupfumu: *these people served as go-between with the King and his people.*

Mwami: *the holder of the highest office of the aristocrats was a Mwami or King. This individual was much revered in the country and seen as the conduit to communication with the God as seen by monotheists. In ancient times he would be the one who is seen as a provider to the people.*

- Tutsi:** *this group provided Burundi with almost all of their erstwhile kings. They were the aristocrats and constitute about 14 percent of the population. They were deemed to be cattle breeders and possessed the majority of the wealth of the country. They are said to be of Eurasian origin yet anthropologists have up until recently failed to establish such links.*
- Tutsi – Basyete:** *these are descendents of a Twa that was promoted to be a Tutsi in the 19th century which ended up being a chief and married into the royal family. His descendants became Tutsis known as the Basyete.*
- Tutsi-Hima:** *another Tutsi group*
- Twa:** *these people are looked down upon and barely tolerated as human beings. They constitute about 1 percent of the population. Despite them speaking the same language as other Barundi, historiographers regard them as the aboriginals of Burundi. They are deemed to be fishermen, hunters and potters and regarded as a tribe of dwarfs.*
- Umuganuro** *feast for the period associated with sowing seeds*
- Umuryango** *descendants of the same ancestor*
- Ubugabire** *a patron-client relationship in which population receives royal protection in exchange for tribute and land tenure.*

Sources: Compiled from Gahama 2002; Prunier 1994

2.4 The Ethics of Trust in the Body Politic of Burundi

The mechanisms of co-operation and compliance in divided societies are determined by the manner in which the institutional frameworks are designed. These institution frameworks come in the form of national constitutions that provide the *writ* that determines how states and communities alike, players should conduct themselves. Such institutional frameworks represent not only the will of the people but they are largely seen as a means by which the country could be judged. In essence, the institutional framework allows for communities and state players to be predictable. For the sake of simplicity, the “state” will be substituted by the “community” to put the thesis in its proper context.

The “predictability” of the communities mentioned above is nothing more than their ability, as a people, the right to elect a government of their choice, freedom of expression, freedom from discrimination and other rights entrenched in the constitution, (see Khosa *et al*, 2000: 39). For a community to be “predictable” this boils down to the manner in which that specific “community” designs its posture. This posture serves as a means with which the “community” is judged internationally.

With “predictability” comes “trust.” As such, many hold the position that “trust” cannot be presumed neither can it be taken for granted. However, it can be argued also that “trust” is part of a whole whose mechanics operate best when they are embedded in beneficial relationships both for reasons of how it (trust) is understood by the dominant cultural groups but also as a social virtue. The question is: can trust be presumed in the politics of divided societies such as Burundi? Generally, this can only be answered when there is an element of authority which is cohesive and morality acceptable within a given community.

In many communities, whether there is authority over others there will always be fear. “Fear” stems from the suspicions that are nursed by the ruled that the

rulers could misuse power and impose their will on them without consent. It is “fear” that forced many to seek associations that would shield them from the rulers. Lijpardt, 1977, agrees by broadly indicating that communities are suspicious that the group they had entrusted with power may not conduct themselves based on the mandate they had been given, as such a given group may insist on a “veto” aimed at curbing the excesses that could be associated with majoritarian systems of governance, (p40-45).

Politics is about being connected with and to the people being ruled. It is also about the ability of eliminating conflict among diverse people. In fact, it is impossible to completely eliminate conflict but rather minimize it to acceptable levels where the state could be able to enjoy connectedness to its people, (Wendt 1992: 395-420). This is the ideal situation. It should be mentioned too, that the opposite could prevail where a few individuals impose their will on the majority and deal harshly with those who would dare oppose them, (Diamond, 1992: 4).

Trust plays an important role in contemporary politics, including within the politics of Burundi. Developing this idea would entail borrowing from the writings of Antonia Chayes *et al*, in their book *The New Sovereignty*. In this book, the authors rightly argue for (sovereigns) to comply with international norms while at the same time protecting their interest (at home). With this view it is understood that in politics there are reasons for certain actions that are taken by individual state players thus there will be a propensity to comply with certain laid down norms. This also applies to those in power and equally to those who are in opposition. In general terms, state players are subject to limits that curtail their power even though they may not like this, (Chomsky, 2000: 5).

Trust provides an important and accurate understanding of the cooperation between groups that are in conflict. At least it also generates an understanding that there should be a bit of the context of the conflict, root causes,

consequences and the existence of it (conflict). This provides a sober reminder that a holistic approach to trust in a conflict society not only brings about a balance between universal norms associated with peace but also the rule of law, (Chomsky 2005: 5).

It is essential too to also mention that through the trust that is being mentioned above, states would have to display a certain *habit* that will make the state an agent of trust. Once this habitual character of trust is lost, it is very difficult to re-build. It is at this point that the populace begins to distrust those in power and conflict for power assumes a violent character. This was and still is the case in Burundi where the majority of the people do not trust their state to be an arbiter of practices associated with compliance with agreed to constitutional dispensations.

2.5 Pre-Colonial Burundi: An Overview

The evolution of modern day Burundi has been anchored on political development that took place five centuries ago and perpetuated until at present. During the 16th century the country's national systems were designed by the people and came to be dominated by heredity made up of absolute monarchs, princes and their followers. The monarchs and princes, like any normal authority, began to expand and consolidate their jurisdiction within the territory they ruled. In the process they created a nascent nation-state which defined its identity the way it deemed fit.

Though little has been recorded about the pre-colonial period, however, ancient history has it that during pre-colonial times, the people of Burundi were leading humble lives that were characterized by little socio-political tensions. Through storytelling too, the social make up of the people of the country played a significant role in understanding the ethnic identities of Burundians. From the perspective of sociology, one way to tie together these ethnic identities is a

broader theoretic context for understanding ethnic identities. These can be placed within the context of Weberian theory of “ethnic communities,” (Gerth, et al, 1948: 186-9).

Burundi is widely considered to be made up of ethnic group, the Barundi. The reason behind such consideration is that the people of Burundi share one national language, Kirundi. Kirundi is the universal language in the country and did not compete with any other language. Indeed, their oneness is also reinforced by the fact that they share one culture, one custom and similar traditional beliefs. As an important part of this thesis, it should be emphasized that *language* plays a crucial role in fashioning an ethnic group.

In broad terms, a Murundi’s identification with the broader community takes the form of identifying with unique characteristics of a larger group of people who not only share a particular language (Kirundi) but also the location and its surroundings. It is these cultural traits that determine what a Murundi is all about. Bayefsky.com 1992, confirms that as the language assumed centrality in the lives of people, it also enhances their shared understanding of one another as Barundi. In turn, their being is thus formulated and cemented with their relationship with the ethnic group.

As Barundi began the maintenance of close association with one another, this association brought about strong bonds of solidarity. It further says that they built strong bonds based on intermarriages and provide one another with mutual assistance in times of need. *Barundi* speak the same language that associated them with the country, (Bayefsky.com 1992). Besides their shared cultural tradition, with specific reference to the bond that associates them with one another, the question is: were these traits not pre-conditions for political pluralism in the country?

History often cites that the first inhabitants of the country were the baTwa. It is cited that during the 1000 AD the baTwa people moved from Congo Basin to Burundi, where they eked out a marginal existence. It is usually mentioned that migrants from Mali, the Central African Republic and Ethiopia combined were responsible for the movements of both Hutus and Tutsis into present day Burundi. Ironically, proponents of such theories have failed to provide conclusive evidence about their assertions. The only thing which they do is by mentioning that “oral tradition and archeological evidence” suggest that they indeed made some movements into Burundi from elsewhere, (Oketch *et al*, 1992: 91).

2.6 Background To Burundi’s Pre-Colonial Institutions

The complexity of defining the origins of the Barundi is repeated within the institutions that they used to form the foundation of the country. The universal feature of the then evolving political development suffered from lack of legitimacy. Societal relations and regime-type were structured on a multi-layered loose configuration of power-sharing between Hutus and Tutsis royalists, (Scherrer, 2002: 19). However, it is well known that the country was a kingdom that had been developed in the 17th century whose territorial boundary was properly defined.

Burundi was unusual among African societies because its boundaries were well defined and the nascent system was that of a monarchy with well defined rules. The head of the kingdom was the king who was then referred to in the local language, as the *Mwami*. To many Burundians, the *Mwami* was widely regarded as a source of *life and unity* of the nation. The Mwami had already developed a sense of territorial sovereignty. The *Mwami* was much revered in the country because he dispensed with patronage to all subjects. Much of what he dispensed was in the form of land to the landless or those who sought to relocate to other areas, (Prunier, 1994:3).

Similarly, he dispensed with cows and other material to his subjects and to those who deserved them. Of course, the patronage that was given to the people had an element of being associated with religion – it was seen as a service of the *Mwami* in the eyes of God. Clearly whether the association of the *Mwami* with religion was aimed at creating the aura of a supra-natural power representing God on earth or whether there was a degree of fear that was attached to the *Mwami* as a representative of God, (Prunier, 1994:4).

2.7 Other Support Structures of the Pre-Colonial System

Apart from the religious duties that were carried out by the *Mwami*, the other essential service that was rendered was that of the pre-colonial territorial administration. There is no precise date at which the kingdom's territorial administration was setup, but it is widely believed that it was during the 17th century. The *Mwami* had his own assistants in the form of the *Ganwas* widely drawn from both the Tutsi and Hutu groups, (Gann *et al*, 1977: 14-16).

These assistant's duties were carefully crafted to include among others the determination of royal lineage in the event of the passing away of a sitting *Mwami*. This would be a special role for these people because it was only them who better understood royal secrets and formed the core of the royal family. It should be emphasized in this thesis that at no stage did the *Ganwas* constitute a separate ethnic group neither had they been seen as such by Barundi themselves, (Cornwell *et al*, 1999: 1)

In many books that had been reviewed on the communal structure of Barundi, the *Ganwas* are excluded! The *Mwami* was at the head of this group and they were the immediate people who would be able to transmit to the pre-colonial community what the thinking of the king was on matters of importance to the country. This way of running the country also had a degree of delegation of authority because just below the *Ganwas* there were the sub-chiefs the

Banyamahanga. The latter group was also chosen among the most trusted Hutus sub-clans, of *Bajiji*, *Bashubi*, *Bahaza* and *Bavumi*. The latter groups ran administrative regions of the country. Among other duties they performed were religious ceremonies that were held in high regard by the *Mwami*, (Cornwell *et al*, 1999: 1)

The administrative interplay within the royal house entailed that most people could not be able to associate the Mwami with just one racial group neither could he be seen as favouring one over the other. The various roles that were played by both the chiefs and sub-chiefs were complementary and assisted the royal family in understanding the mood of the people at any given time in their lives. In effect, this system also allowed the Mwami to be aware of the basic social life of the Barundi. In the long run, the Mwami would be able to gauge the significance of certain developments within the country and be able to take both pro-active and reactive measures as the situation would allow.

2.8 The Influence of Europeans on the Pre-Colonial Institutions

When German explorer, Lord Bismarck, took it upon himself to organize a conference in which Africa was to be carved into various spheres of influence for the erstwhile European masters, Burundi, then known as Urundi, was designated as part of German sphere of interest, (Prunier, 1995: 2-3). A similar development applied to the neighboring territory of Ruanda which coincidentally has a similar social make-up with Burundi. Both territories were kingdoms that were administered from German East Africa. Despite being designated as spheres of German interest, it took the latter a considerable period of time before they could set up base in the territories. In 1896 the Germans set up base in Usumbura, which happens to be present day Bujumbura, the capital city.

From the outset, it is important to mention that Burundi was colonized by Germany until after the end of World War I. Then after the defeat of Germany, it

became a colony of Belgium. It was the advent of the Belgian colonial masters and missionary people in Burundi which brought about new thinking among the people. The Belgians made it a point that their writings about the country's people emphasized their differences by specifically mentioning the ethnic groups to which people belonged, (Cornwell *et al*, 1999: 1). People were no longer seen as Barundi but Hutus and Tutsis and of course, this was emulated by various commentators. In other words, the write-ups brought about a complete turn around in what was understood as the old Burundi to what was obtaining then.

With the insistence on ethnicity or mentioning that people were Hutu or Tutsi, the mindset of the Burundi people became different, not only about what was understood during pre-colonial times but also in terms of understanding the new Burundi that was then. It could be said that the colonial masters together with the missionaries entertained a fallacious notion that they were dealing with Barundi as a people who had no social stratification, (own emphasis).

In essence, the colonial masters wanted to deal with them in a manner that would suit their own way better understood as social engineering. Between them, they designed a hierarchy of classes that catered for tribes, races, social classes, ethnic groups, religious groups, caste-system and even genetic dimensions that were perceived to be indicating the distinctions that should be assigned to the people of Burundi, (Lemarchand, 1994: 4-6).

Among those propagating the Burundi racial stereotype was the clergyman, Bishop Julien Gorju, (1938: 7-12). This clergyman was part of the colonial and missionary machinery that came with various definitions of the term "race" as they understood in Burundi. This is indicated on the next page. Of course, most of the writings, whether well defined or not, were not carried out with the consent of the Barundi whose views mattered very little.

The Barundi began to be classified as racial groups with selected functions for each. With that policy, the stratigraphy of the Barundi into three racial groupings took effect. The indigenous people were haphazardly identified as Hutus, Tutsis and Twas, despite the fact that there had never been any recorded census in the country, let alone a survey to determine the nature of the people. In order to reinforce the stereotype, the Hutus were considered to constitute about 85% of the total population making up the majority of the population. The second largest group became the Tutsis who made up 14% of the population while the Twas made up the remainder of 1%, (Salih et al, 2007: 31).

The colonial masters brought about yet another layer of identification through religion and mentioned that the people were 67% Christian and the rest were associating themselves with traditional belief systems and animism. The 67% Christians were further sub-divided into sects and identified as 62% Roman Catholic, 10% Islam, and 5% Protestant, (Salih, et al 2007: 31). Not that there is something special with Islam, but it is important to notice that the element of Islam is a recent phenomenon while the ration of other religions had not changed since it was made known in the distant past.

Amongst the missionaries who came to settle in Burundi were some historiographers. The latter groups studied the Barundi too and reinforced the separate identities of the local people by mere appearance. Accordingly the missionaries described Hutus as stocky, having woolly hair and with flat noses, the Tutsis were described as giants with aristocratic appearances, while the Twas were said to be grotesque small creatures, (Gahama, 2002: 4). From the description above, it is evident that the colonial masters and their missionary counterparts were crafting a specific identity for each group and were in the business of engineering a new Burundi made up of these distinct groups which they have fashioned.

The above was typical of the divide and rule policy that was adopted by the Belgian administration. As such, special interest should be focused on the description of Tutsis as “aristocratic.” With the mere fact that Tutsis are regarded “aristocratic” it was quite clear that this would instill in them a tendency that they were superior to the other two groups and hence deserved better. This, of course, was tantamount to relegating the other two major groups, the Hutus and the Twa, to positions of lesser importance or being reclassified as second and third class citizens respectively.

As this categorization of the Barundi into ethnic or race different groupings took effect, more information came to be used to reinforce this newfound classification. According to the Hamitic mythology propagated by Speke the so-called Great Explorer in East Africa in 1863, the Tutsis as a group were placed on top of the community and as such were given more privileges than their counterparts. The Tutsi became the political hegemony by virtue of the new social topography that was described by Nash as *ethnocracy*, (1962, 286-288). As these kingdoms have a history of wars against their enemies, those characteristics were also transplanted to the Tutsis by being described as war-like and domineering, (Prunier, 1994: 3).

It is important to notice that this thesis has found no anthropological data and knowledge of links between both the kingdoms of Egypt and that of Ethiopia vis-à-vis that of Burundi, (Prunier, 1995:5). It is also important to notice that the relationship between Barundi and Ethiopians had only been mentioned in many books without any relationship with the broader Ethiopian tradition ranging not only from their strong adherence to the religion of Christian Orthodoxy but also their writing style in Ge’ez which is different from the widely used Latin in Burundi. A rhetorical question could be asked as to why the connections have been missed.

During that time too, the pastoral life could also be said to have been an influencing factor that determined Ethiopian roots, but the question could be posed as to whether there are cattle herders who were not pastoral in outlook in the African continent in general and Burundi in particular. As such the association of the Tutsis with Ethiopia could be said to be, at best, suspect. With regard to Egypt, the same applies to the Tutsi since they had never displayed any rudimentary knowledge of not only Arabic writings, practice of Coptic Christianity let alone the Islamic tendencies. As such, their association with the two erstwhile kingdoms is questionable.

The other stereotype that was created about the Tutsis was more biological. Tutsis were regarded as having natural beauty as made evident by their elegance and finesse. Moreover they were seen as intelligent and possessing leadership qualities that were better than their counterparts who were then seen differently. With regard to the Hutus, their biological distinction was crafted to look as opposite to those of their Tutsi counterparts.

To the Hutus, the stereotype suggested that they were lazy but nevertheless appeared to be happy farmers, (Simons, 1944: 4). To a layman this could be translated or interpreted as a contradiction in terms. The question is: is there a farmer who just appears happy, if yes how do you determine his/her happiness? They were also described as crafty and shy. For the Twa, the least considered group of Burundi, the stereotype was totally negative. This group was said to be animalistic in character because they were capable of displaying strong attachment and devotion. These were said to be characteristics that are associated with those of dogs than gratitude displayed by human beings, (Gahama, 2002: 4).

To a large degree, it is evident that the historiographers were battling to come up with distinct social stratification in Burundi. The identification of the Twa as displaying animalistic tendencies seems to have resulted in them being driven

from their homes to the hills where they are said to be currently irking out a living. In fact, they came to be known as the pygmies. Pygmies are described in the Oxford Dictionary as *very small person or animal or thing*. It goes on to say that pygmy is an “*insignificant person*”.

Concerning the relationship between the Tutsis and the Twa, the latter group was tolerated as “pariahs.” Based on the above, there is a clear distinction between the three groups as they were described by the colonialist and their missionary counterparts. Yet these people, despite these assumed distinctions spoke one language, developed a common “culture” and custom, the same spiritual beliefs (*Imana – God*) and belonged to the same political institutions that gave them the revered Mwamis of their time.

Of further interest too, about the three groups another layer of inequality was being built by Belgium. The Tutsis, who are a significant minority, were further elevated to higher levels. The Belgians elevated them to a higher level and subsequently made them lords of their Hutu compatriots. Within this feudal system their pre-eminence within the society extended to outright economic and political dominance over the Hutus. In terms of possessions, the Tutsis had more cattle than the Hutus meaning that they were rich by comparison to their Hutu and Twa counterparts, (Louis, 1963: 8).

What is clear is that there are various conflicting theories about not only the description of the Barundi as various ethnic groups but also their respective origins. It is evident that the identities that had been mentioned above do not, in reality, correspond to any of the categories that had been crafted by various authors. As it would be, these identities have crystallized the racial stereotype which still applies at present. Hence, the author is able to conclude that the identities to Barundi were politically motivated by the Belgians.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Nationalism, Nation and National Identity in Burundi.

Nationalism has long been ignored as a topic in political philosophy, often written off as a relic of the past. It has recently come into the focus of philosophical debate, partly in consequence of rather spectacular and troubling nationalist clashes in Cote D'Ivoire, the former Yugoslavia and within the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, (Hensel, 2002: 35). In a prelude to the clashes mentioned above, it is cited in the work of Kohn (1971) that nationalism was "rooted in the dignity of a people" and goes on to say that nationalism "represents the quest for their identity to be collectively recognized and respected," (see Chapter 1). The quest for a particular identity creates a reflection of a particular dilemma of solidarity with a people yearning for a common national identity within secured boundaries. Naturally, this includes oppressed national groups yearning for independence, on the one hand and revulsion in the face of crimes perpetrated in the name of nationalism on the other.

The Yugoslavia-type of nationalist wars have become less conspicuous, whereas the issues of terrorism, of "clash of civilizations" and of hegemony in the international order have come to occupy public attention, (Huntington, 1993: 23-27). This indicates that the issue of nationalism points to a wider domain of problems having to do with the treatment of ethnic and cultural differences within a given polity, which are arguably among the most pressing problems of contemporary political theory.

One important link with earlier debates is provided by the contrast between views of international justice based on the predominance of sovereign nation-states and more cosmopolitan views that either insist upon limiting national sovereignty, or even envisage its disappearance, (Mamdani, 2002: 1-4). A good example to be considered was the rejection of the European Union (EU) constitution not only in France but also within the broader Europe. This was a rather tangential proof

that nationalism was not on the verge of extinction but was still a force to be reckoned with.

The surge of nationalism usually presents a moral ambivalence when considering the Scottish problem vis-à-vis the rejection of the broader EU constitution. The point of departure is that national awakening can be drawn from biological discourse on race, but also needs to be understood as a question of political identity. While at the same time, such nationalism could be traced to stigmatization brought about by colonial masters seeking to enforce state-led distinction of peoples on the basis of their looks, (Sebasoni, 2000: 17).

The above provide impetus for national awakenings and struggles for political independence that are often heroic and inhumanly cruel. The formation of a recognizably national state often responds to deep popular sentiment, but can and does sometimes bring in its wake inhuman consequences, including violent expulsion and ethnic-cleansing of non-nationals, all the way to organized mass murder such as in Burundi and Rwanda, (Gahama, 2002: 8).

In recent years the focus of the debate about nationalism has shifted towards issues related to international justice, probably in response to changes on the international scene and the trends of armed conflicts that had surged sharply upwards in the beginning of the 1990s, (Hampson *et al*, 2002: 43-44). In Burundi the Hutu majority was involved in a conflict largely seen as “a war aimed at opposing Tutsi domination of government in all aspects of life within the country”, (Hampson, *et al*, 2002: 43). The question is; does the Burundi political crisis constitute the quest for Burundi (both Hutu and Tutsi) to be recognized as a nation because there is a problem of domination of one group by another?

The concept of “nationalism” is widely used to describe a number of aspects: among the most commonly cited are those that are related to:

- (a) the common attitude of members of particular nations have when they associate themselves with a particular identity, and

- (b) the kinds of actions they take when they seek to achieve or even sustain a degree of self-consciousness (determination), (Gellner, *et al* 1996: 367-8).

It is important then to revisit the above determinant factors, especially the first one which raises questions about the concept of national identity. In this instance, an individual's membership in a nation is often regarded as both involuntary and also voluntary. It is involuntary as one is unable to choose one's parents. This, of course, entails that once an individual is born of a certain parentage the identity of belonging to a particular nation becomes automatic. It should be mentioned that many studies have adopted a basic assumption in analyzing national identity and its significance. This is better cited by Gurr *et al*, 1994, by saying that such a consensus that seems to reflect the aspect of the state are centered on nationalistic tendencies.

While many states are nations in some sense, there are many nations which are not fully sovereign states. As an example, the Zulus in South Africa basically constitute a nation but not a state. The reason for this is that they do not possess the requisite political authority over their internal or external affairs. If the members of the Zulu nation were to strive to form a sovereign state in the effort to preserve their identity as a people, they would be exhibiting a state-focused nationalism within given territorial boundaries, (Sach, 1986: 19).

In Africa the example mentioned above applies to the majority of independent African states. In post-colonial Africa, some leaders and their people were concerned with a precedence of population identity over colonial "symbols" as represented by territorial demarcation. For example, Somalia under dictator Mohammed Siad Barre, was harbouring territorial ambitions and subsequently laid claims to territories of Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti for the simple reason that they appear homogeneously Somali and predominantly Muslim, (Lemarchand, 2000: 23). But, of course, as history has indicated, their homogeneity did not save the country from descending into chaos. Indeed, the very fact that Barundi

speak one language has not saved the country from following the Somali example just mentioned.

There are often obscure and conflicting views as to the salient point of the history often cited as the origin of the country. As indicated in Chapter One of this thesis, the Burundi speak one language, Kirundi. The common language they speak could in turn entail that they have a common origin, ethnicity, or cultural ties. In essence the language factor is powerful enough to qualify them as a people belonging to a nation.

In contrast, within the United States of America, being part of the nation or federation to be precise, is both involuntary and voluntary. There are those who volunteer to be US citizens by virtue of taking an oath of allegiance to the flag of the country on the one hand. While, on the other hand, the state then assumed complete authority over such people be that in the domestic and international affairs domains. It is traditional, therefore, to distinguish nations from states — whereas a nation often consists of an ethnic or cultural community, a state is a political entity with a high degree of sovereignty.

Within Burundi itself, it is often cited in colonial history that the first inhabitants of the country were the baTwa, (Oketch, 1992: 91). The writer further mentions that the baTwa community were not indigenous but arrived in Burundi during 1000 AD having moved from Congo Basin, their place of refuge where they eked out a marginal existence. Currently, as a community, the baTwa constitute a small community as they only constitute about 1 percent of the total population of Burundi, (Oketch, 1992: 91).

The other two communities, the Hutus and Tutsi, are cited as being associated more with the people of Mali, the Central African Republic and that of Ethiopia from where they are supposed to have migrated. The vexing question that has to be answered is: who between the Hutus and Tutsi migrated from Mali or

Ethiopia? Similarly, the same question could be posed with regard to the other version of stories that Hutus and Tutsis originate from the Central African Republic. A question that can be posed is; why was there such discrepancy and seemingly speculative assertions about the origins of these people. Is it difficult to locate them within concrete migratory patterns of people that are often cited in history? This of course is compounded by the lack of archeological evidence to support these migration theories that are cited in various writings by experts, (Oketch *et al*, 1992: 91).

Whether the pattern of events that led to the formation of the nation of Barundi correlates to the broader theory of the formation of nations applies in this case is difficult to decipher. Both the pre-colonial and colonial history of Burundi do not say much about the formation away from what has always been mentioned by Gorju (1938). The latter is widely regarded as the doyen of scholars on the history of Burundi.

With regard to the pre-colonial and colonial eras of the country, Barundi were considered to be a highly tolerant people. Not only were they regarded to be in harmony with one another but also they were largely considered to be a homogeneous people. The only distinction that one could make of these people was through occupation. The Hutus were occupationally defined as cultivators of the land, farmers to be precise, while the Tutsi were engaged in pastoralist activity and animal husbandry, (Gahama 2002: 4). This kind of arrangement made it easy for people from either side to move from one side to the other. This means that it was easy for Tutsis who, for example, lost their cattle possession and assumed farming to be considered as Hutus. Either way, Hutus that gained material possession or owned a good number of cattle and get engaged in pastoral or animal husbandry automatically assumed the identity of Tutsi.

Members of each group could marry into the other and rear children who will assume the occupation that their parents enjoy. In essence, off-spring of Hutus

who could gain possession of cattle could easily become Tutsi and vice versa. So loose was this arrangement, coupled with the fact that these people spoke one language that these people were marrying across occupational groups with ease. Ironically, it was colonialism that told the story of how different Hutus and Tutsi was, (Stewart, 2002: 108).

In analyzing the nature of Barundi people, ancient Burundi was stratified in a simple way that was understandable to all. The strata were as follows; at the top of the stratum was the *Mwami*. The Mwami was a highly revered figure within the country and amongst the people. He enjoyed status that was on a par with that of a king. The *Mwami* was also widely considered to be “father of the nation,” (Prunier 1994: 3). The Mwami was the one who was responsible for the day to day running of the country and also seen as a guarantor of the prosperity of the kingdom. The authority of the *Mwami* was relayed to his people through a selected group of chiefs known as “*ganwas*” who headed all of the country’s administrative regions, including large peripheral provinces, (Prunier, 1994: 3).

Since the *Mwami*, through the assistance of the *abaganwa* (singular *muganwa*), was in control of the country, he had harboured a lot of secrets that he would not share with the latter group. Like in any normal society, the royal household has its own secrets but with no institutions to hide or keep them. The Mwami would share royal secrets with a small group of aristocratic Hutus better known as *banyamahanga*. The latter group was responsible for organizing one of the most important feasts known as *umuganuro*. The importance of *umuganuro* cannot be seen in isolation because it was that feast that was seen as being the “feast of seed sowing.” (see Chapter One pp 18).

The aristocratic *Banyamahanga* also held religious powers within the provinces that they controlled with a majority of them being well off while some even controlled militias. The sub-divisions of the territories were run by subchiefs better known as *ivyaribo* most of whom were chosen on merit rather than any

other qualifications. These people were operating at grassroots level as customary chiefs, regulators of social life and even arbitrators. It was among these people that the Mwami will select an individual who would adjudicate high profile cases. In essence, personal qualities of these individuals rather than their birth rights were important in the country and respected by the Mwami.

At the heart of the community was a nucleus family known as inzu (or household). Inzu formed the first level of the community that Barundi found themselves in. On the second level these people, from the same familial lineage, would then constitute umuryago because they praised the same ancestors. It was at the third level where things were recognized by their clan names rather than family links even though they bore the same surname. It was at this stage of communal living that the Barundi were realizing a developing nation-state through their monarch.

The set of links mentioned above was an important element of social cohesion. Everybody recognized one another as being a Murundi and each recognized the other as having the right to be a Murundi. In effect, a person when a person was required to disclose his/her identity that particular person would introduce him/her self by mentioning the clan without ambiguity. To the Barundi, the clan name implied that the concerned person were of the same origin and by extension of the same ancestry. That kind of relationship and family links placed the entire people, irrespective of social standing, in the same family of fellow Barundi. Such was the closeness of the people that even in folktales this kind of relationship was emphasized.

They would either share their produce or pay a stipend to the people whose land they were utilizing on a rental basis. Such people were called abagererwa and abashumba. Of course, since the abagererwa and abashumba happened to be landless people, their conditions of poverty were caused by political or family problems rather than being discriminated against due to ideological inclination.

To enforce the idea of brotherhood within the system, Barundi practiced what was referred to as Ubugabire, (Mworoha, 1997: 188). This practice allowed Barundi who were not in a position to fend for themselves to borrow cows from those who had them in exchange for services. Barundi would hire cattle from their kinsman to cultivate arable land in exchange for food products that would be harvested. These intrinsic cultural values anchored Barundi society to a large extent.

There were be disagreements between and within communities. Such disagreements would be referred to elders who were specifically designated to deal with complicated matters. These elders, better known as, abashingantahe, were designated to and regarded as part of the then civil society because they played an important role in conflict resolution among Barundi. They were wise elders chosen among the community and were also managers of regulators of basic social life. They were seen as adjudicators in disputes and widely believed to be the guardians of peace and justice. Despite all that has been mentioned above, there was never a census that was conducted to indicate how many people were regarded as Hutus or Tutsis since the society was intertwined and affirming allegiance to the Mwami. This in itself indicates that there was social cohesion and social relations that were based on brotherhood.

The social cohesion just mentioned rested on cluster of relationships that the Mwami had with a number of Ganwa princes. The Ganwa princes and the role they played made Burundi to resemble a loose confederation of power-sharing between both the Tutsi and Hutus royalists. That is because they were deployed in various areas where they wielded authority and reported to the Mwami once they needed to do so, (Scherrer 2002: 19). In essence, kings and their subjects seemed to have been working together in harmony. The rider to the whole affair was the role that was played by the colonial master, Belgium, who introduced identity card for the people of the country. These cards bore the ethnicity of the

people and also ensured that Tutsi were to be seen as superior to their Hutu counterparts.

The ideal for the Belgians was to inculcate a sense of a hierarchy in which Hutus were to be regarded as inferior in a political game of manipulation instituted by the colonial masters. All native tribunals in the country were turned over to the Tutsi. Tribalization became fixed as even some schools could not accommodate Hutus on the basis of background. With independence around the corner, the rise of the politicization of cultural identity among Hutus became exaggerated. Hutus began their political agitation for change in their status as though Tutsi were aliens. The notion of ethnic self-determination by Barundi as a nation, took root in a political setup that was fundamentally flawed. This is at the root of the Hutu-Tutsi split and animosity.

3.1 Colonialism: Sowing The Seeds Of Political Discord

The just concluded 20th century was abounding with extreme forms of violence. In all probability, the 20th century could be regarded as the most violent century ever recorded in history. It was during the 20th century that two world wars were witnessed, two atomic bombs were exploded in Japan and countless revolutions were seen elsewhere with bloodletting of unprecedented levels. Within the African context, the violence generated during the preceding 18-19th century was conducted through colonial conquest. This means the African continent was replete with violence for almost three centuries. As an example, such forms of violence at the hands of the colonial masters was exemplified by the mass killing of Hereros at the hands of Germans in Namibia, (Gewald, 1999: 141-230).

The many wars that were conducted by the settler colonial minority within their colonial possessions seemed to be different from the wars that they waged in Europe. As an example, the then British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, saw nothing wrong in the extermination of Africans by mentioning that the latter group

was of an inferior nature, (Lindqvist, 1996: 107-117). His thinking was common currency within the colonial master's mindset. The destruction of the lower race, as non-Europeans were previously regarded by other races, was acceptable. This was recognized by Frantz Fanon in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*. It was Fanon (1967) who managed to debunk the violence of the colonial master against others as a means of producing and sustaining the relationship between the settler and the natives, (p33).

The above brings us to the following question: "is man is a rational animal?" This is a philosophical assertion by one leading philosopher of the past, Aristotle. In Burundi, life was brutish and short. The colonial master, Belgium, never hesitated to deal harshly with dissent. This did not have a positive impact on the kind of political life that the colonial master was preparing the country for but it instilled, in the people, "that might is right." The violence of the colonial masters could be interpreted by Burundi as normal, (self emphasis). Or if one group wanted to assert themselves over the other, violence was seen as a normal option. This underlying mindset would later re-emerge in the genocidal conflict that erupted between the Tutsis and Hutus.

For the natives, the anti-colonial violence that they pursued against the colonial masters was interpreted as a derivative of the kind of violence that turned victims into killers. The belief among the natives as described by Fanon, was that the settler community, probably referring to the savage war that was conducted by metropolitan France with Algerians, understood nothing but force, (1967: 66). The denominator is that modern day violence was nurtured by European settler community often imposing their will by force, (Arendt, 1975: 184-6). But to take the debate a little further is that Fanon is instructive when he mentions that "the native who kills not just to extinguish the humanity of other, but to defend his or her own, and of the moral ambivalence this must provoke in other human beings like us", (p68). To locate this within the context of Burundi it became clear that the notion of "might is right" began to take hold as will be indicated below.

3.2 German Influence in Burundi

When the Germans took over the country following the carving up of Africa by Bismarck in 1884, they carried with them the state systems that they believed would be better applicable in the western traditional sense in Burundi, (Louis, 1964:12). The belief of the Germans was that Burundi should fall within the broader scope of conquest of Africa as a German colony under Germany East Africa Administration. It was through the Germany East Africa Administration that a military outpost was established in Burundi in 1896 and only three years later they decided to create the district of Ruanda-Urundi, (Louis 1964: 14-15).

The monarchy of Ruanda constitutes the present day state of Rwanda while Urundi, with a similar system happens to be present day Burundi. As it was common practice elsewhere, the colonial masters would brook no challenge to their rule and sought to destroy the indigenous systems of governance by introducing their own style of rule to stamp their authority over the country and its people. In Burundi the Germans attempted indirect rule and to limit the power of the *Mwami*, the ruler of Burundi. On a closer look, it was apparent that the colonial masters were dithering as little was done to establish any permanent administration, (Gann *et al* 1977: 14-15). But what was clear was that they did not allow dissent to the authority they imposed on the country.

The outbreak of World War I saw the Germans facing almost the entire world. The war caused a lot of casualties and subsequently the Germans lost the territory of Burundi to allied forces in Europe and elected to relinquish some of their overseas territorial possessions. It was during that period in which the territories of Ruanda-Urundi were captured by allied forces, with the task of administering the Ruanda-Urundi being transferred to Belgium. Of course, it was also clear that the arrival of Belgium had nothing to do with the consent they hardly sought from the Burundi. In 1919, with the blessing of the League of

Nations (L.N.), Belgium was mandated to administer Ruanda-Urundi as a trust territory.

3.3 The Belgium Interlude in Burundi

Like their German counterparts before them, the Belgian administration made little effort in extending their own brand of administrative skills to the Burundi people. Of importance to them was that they place significant emphasis on exploiting the people of Burundi as much as they could. Many people were forcibly placed under hard labour to produce crops that the master would like to export to the metropole, Belgium.

No more was the practice of *abagererwa* but that was substituted by a policy of forced labour. So onerous was forced labour that it resulted in a peasant revolt hardly a year after their mandate to administer the country was blessed by the League of Nations, (Kimber 1996:4). To subject Burundi to such inhumane action was also an indication to the people of the country once more that “might is right.” The expulsion of the British Germans was nothing less than a quarrel between external powers with little regard to what the opinions of the local people were. Just like the Germans before them, the Belgian authorities became increasingly authoritarian and began to manipulate the *Mwami* system to their own advantage. Ethnic ties became more salient with old identities based on locality, kinship and dynastic rule being eroded.

In 1930, similar revolts took place indicating that Belgium had learnt very little from their past policies. In fact, it would appear that things became harder for the locals while the weak League of Nations was undergoing re-organization following the conclusion of the World War II. With the League of Nations reorganized and replaced by the United Nations Organization (UNO), international pressures continued to mount on the Belgians to prepare the trustee

territories for independence. The reluctant Belgians resisted international pressure to grant the country independence.

However, it is important to examine the Belgian version of administration in Burundi. When the Belgian administrators came up with in-direct rule in Burundi, they began to favour the Tutsis over Hutus, in effect inculcating the idea of ethnic divisions that were never recognized before. In practice, the works of German explorers such as Baumann O., G.A Earl, Von Gotzen and Dr R. Kandt attest to the efforts of the colonialist of perfecting social engineering within Burundi. They articulated the view that ethnic divide within the community of the Burundi was a reality by labeling them in a model attuned to and based on socio-cultural references from Europe.

All of a sudden, the theory that was propagated about Tutsis was that they were hermetic, of foreign origin and in turn they were a caste whose arrival in Burundi subjugated the majority Hutus and the Twa, (Vidal 1991: 23). This was how the hermetic ideology was born. It was also claimed that Tutsi were natural leaders of the people of Burundi. It was clear that at the heart of the whole exercise of labeling people into various ethnic groups was the ideology of endorsing the tribal divide. This would plague the country for some time to come.

In the past, all administrative regions in the country boasted a mix of Tutsi and Hutu personnel being responsible for various administrative tasks within the country. This was done at the behest of the Mwami. However, with the reforms that were brought about by the Belgians, all Hutus were expelled from influential positions in the administration in favour of the Tutsi, the new aristocrats! This action in itself was a great blow to the confidence which people (both Hutus and Tutsis) enjoyed. To make matters worse, it took the colonial masters seven years to conclude this process thus rendering the Hutus powerless in the country of their own birth.

In practical terms, Tutsis automatically became the elite and were given favourable status by Belgium. They were enrolled into the prestigious school, better known as *L'Ecole d'Astrida*, to be trained as managers. That was in 1929. But in essence they would only serve the interest of the colonial masters as auxiliaries, (Prunier 1994: 5). To cement the entire exercise, the Belgian colonial masters made it a point that they expel all Hutus from administrative reforms that were instituted to ensure that only Tutsis were to be in office.

The Tutsis began to assume the role of elites and in turn causing the Hutus and Twas to be second and third class citizens respectively, to the resentment of the latter groups. There was an extraordinary promotion of Tutsi over their erstwhile counterparts with education opportunities, social and political advances taking centre stage at the expense of others. The Tutsis gained significant advantages over their peers. Shortly after the conclusion of WWII, free political activities commenced in 1948 with all Belgian colonial possessions given a chance to exercise their freedoms.

In essence, the Belgians faced a rather tricky political situation. Unlike the Germans who were forced to surrender their colonial possession following their defeat during World War I, the Belgians were also asked by the League of Nations to relinquish control of the colonial possession too, (Prunier 1994:4-5). However, the Belgians had a different idea, they continued to manipulate the population of Burundi, for example, the colonial administrator began to favour Tutsi over everybody else because they thought they could be controlled.

It will be recalled that they played the role of auxiliaries and trained to be officials for the European civil service. Tutsis, having been seen by their counterparts as basically sellout, were left to their own means. They had to fend for themselves in a hostile political environment which was ethnically crystallized by the Belgian administration. They would no longer be considered as the darlings of the colonial masters who had changed their tactics of manipulating the populations

that once boasted social cohesion. Despite the colonial manipulation of the people, Barundi did mount a number of revolts against the colonial master, first in 1912-22 (Rubengebenge), two more times in 1992 (Inamuvyeyi Nvavyinshi and Runyato and in 1934 (Inamujandi), (Kimber, 1996: 5). This was evidence that Barundi were not just docile and following orders from the colonial master. Barundi did resist colonialism but their resistances were put down.

3.4 The Mechanics Of Inducing An Identity-Conflict Crisis

The arrival of the settlers and missionaries in Burundi brought in its wake a number of works that were published during the colonial period. Some of the early works on the sociology of the country were pioneered by German explorers such as J.M. Van der Burgt, H. Meyer, H. Ghislain and Bishop Julien Gorju, (Louis, 1963: 4). For a very long time, these missionaries and colonialists were widely regarded as knowledgeable about Burundi. These missionaries went as far as starting the ideology of race in the country by classifying the communities of Burundi into race, tribe and even castes. First among the story about Burundi was the propagation of a colonial ideology that Tutsi were aliens. In effect inculcating the idea that Tutsis were of Egyptian or Ethiopia origin, (Gahama 2002: 5).

The demarcation of Barundi began to assume the form of crystallization of ethnicity by referencing them as Hutus, Tutsis, and abaTwa. According to this nomenclature the Hutus assumed majority status, with the Tutsi as a significant minority and abaTwa coming in last. In terms of percentages, the Hutus were estimated at 85% percent of the population, with the Tutsi at 14% and the remainder of 1% was given to abaTwa. Contrary to popular belief, what escaped the minds of the colonial missionaries was that there was not a single occasion in which a census was carried out, (Vidal, 1991: 23). Despite that, the cleavages were being systematically inculcated and often repeated without comment.

The above mentioned manipulation of the Barundi people continued unabated with the result that the certain stereotypes were then being continually fashioned out. Among the theories was that Tutsi were alien invaders that came from the North. As such, they were conquerors of the indigenous peoples. As with many colonial theories about indigenous people, the Twa were also labeled as immigrants who came to the country in the 16th century. That theory was questioned by other scholars who believed that Hutus and Tutsi were communities that infiltrated the country from elsewhere and subsequently drove the baTwa out of their place of origin into the bush, (Keuppens, 1959: 8-16).

As the colonial period was ever drawing to a close, the Belgians shifted their support of the Tutsis to Hutus. The Tutsi ceased to be the auxiliaries that were favoured by the colonial administration and given preferential treatment at the expense of others. The opposite took effect with favours now going to the Hutu community. The shift by the Belgian towards the Hutus was a form of political expediency for that time. It was becoming clearer to the colonial master that Hutus will certainly hold sway in the government in future.

This also meant that Tutsi, as the then favoured people would bear responsibility for the mistakes that were associated with colonialism in a way exonerating the small white community. To display that the colonial masters had achieved their goals of crystallizing the ethnicity the Resident-General of Ruanda-Urundi, Jean Paul Harroy claimed responsibility for creating ethnic tensions within Barundi, (Prunier 1994:5). Contrary to the spirit of cooperation that existed before between the communities of Burundi, the damage done by the colonial administration ran deep.

Chief among the problems that were being experienced by Barundi was the importation of misplaced ideologies at the expense of ubushingatahe. Ubushingatahe was one of the strongest bonds that the Barundi relied upon to solve their problems through Imana that was regarded as directly connected to

the Mwami. That institution had seriously eroded kubandwa (native religion) that was identified with the institutional foundation of Burundi society, (Prunier 1995: 345-7). It was replaced by the Christianity which brought about Mungu as a replacement of Imana.

As a result, the Barundi could no longer provide the normal services that they would usually provide to the Mwami and vice versa. This entailed that favours that came through the association with the Mwami, through abashingatahe, had been taken away by the colonialist. That development destroyed the sense of common destiny and damaged the role played by the Mwami. It undermined the ability of local institutions to resolve conflicts peacefully, (Prunier, 1995: 347).

At the stroke of the pen, the ushering out of the abashingatahe, led to a gradual decline of Burundi moral authority. Along came ethnocentrism where ethnic identity became supreme. The supremacy of one ethnic group over the other became the norm and the segments of the society that came to replace communalism, as understood by Barundi, opened up an incision very difficult to heal. Compounding the problem was that the person that was identified with the state, the Mwami, was replaced with a democratic republic resulting in the replacement of all institutions that were associated with the stability of Burundi.

The republic that was ushered in bore all the hallmarks of the wishes of the colonial master, Belgium. Burundi had in its system a quasi-nationalist setup that betrayed logic. While the system was ran, as indicated earlier, by abaGanwa along the lines of a republican government, the king still enjoyed protection and favours from the system that was still supported and abetted by the colonial administration. AbaGanwa, as was indicated earlier were not a distinct tribal grouping within the society but a selected clique that was beholden to the King and enjoyed judicial/adjudication powers over disputes. This exclusive group, however, what developed tribal tendencies and a rivalry within the system

leading to them being associated with the Bezi and the Batare who were the then traditional professional politicians, Prunier 1994:5).

The form of state at the time of independence was a constitutional monarchy seen as necessary to regulate the wishes of the republicans and monarchists under one roof. This institutional mechanism was regarded as the best in solving the vexing question of conflict that was in ascendancy coupled with the devolving of power in an exercise and control fashion, (Bizimana 2009). However, the system proved to be cumbersome for the polity that was used to be ruled from the centre by one person, the Mwami.

Two chiefs, Baranyaka and Mwambutsa were ideally positioned to take the reigns. The latter was seen as more of a joker than a serious politician while Baranyaka was taken seriously by Belgium. Baranyaka exerted more influence over Belgium than Mwambutsa because he was considered to be beholden to colonial masters. His party, the *Parti Democratique Chretien (PDC)* was seen as a the “lesser of two evils” by Belgium while the *Union Pour le Progrès National (UPRONA)* was detested, (Harroy 1987: 399).

Belgium sought to stop the progress of *UPRONA* whose leader they had little regard for. However, the PDC fared badly in the election and *UPRONA* emerged as the favourite party with Prince Louis Rwagasore, eldest son of Mwambutsa, as head of government. Of course, the victory was not taken lightly in Belgium, where radical leftwing politics was detested leading to the country’s fragile stability being compromised by the colonial masters and political malcontents alike.

3.5 One Thousand Days Of Political Dissonance

In neighbouring Rwanda, the “winds of change” that were espoused by Winston Harold Wilson began to take hold. Political activities had commenced earnestly

but began to be characterized by bloody ethnic rivalries. As a show of force, the Belgians dethroned and dismissed the Mwami in Rwanda in a move aimed at sending a veiled threat to Burundi. The latter was removed from power together with a large number of fellow Tutsi who escaped death. This happened at a time in which the Burundi were also being prepared for independent nationhood. However, the violence in Rwanda was being seen as a “warning” to Burundi that the colonial powers had will and ability to destabilize the budding quest for independence.

It was during that period, towards the end of the 1950s, that Belgium noticed that there was more agitation for independence in their trustee territories, especially the Congo (Kinshasa) and that some were beginning to rumble. In their minds, the colonial masters, the countries were spinning out of control and the only way to arrest the downward slide into the unknown was for Belgium to grant its trust territories hastily arranged independent nationhood. The preparation for independence commenced in 1959.

Within a year, Congo, Kinshasa was granted independence and the country’s politics “spun out of control.” Of course, it was bound to be because one year is not enough to prepare a country as large as the Congo with the main political leader, Patrice Lumumba, imprisoned by Belgium. Lumumba was widely regarded as a leftist and not worthy of leading the Congo. This was a wrong way of ushering independence to Congo but it was a way in which the Belgians could demonstrate to their subjects that they wielded considerable influence and power to dictate the course of history. Worse still, the crisis in the Congo took centre stage as a prelude to the independence of Ruanda-Urundi. The Congo was to be an example to other aspirant former Belgian colonies. The Congolese discovered to their dismay that Belgium would not let go and allow them to run the country as they wished.

It was during this time when the Belgians mentioned to the Congolese people that “*before independence = after independence*” basically meaning that the situation will remain the same whether the independence of the country had been granted or not. The Congolese people took to the streets and sought full independence. However, the critical one thousand days of mayhem sowed by the Belgians entailed the following with regard to the politics of Congo:

- Patrice Lumumba was first arrested in early Nov 1959 and subsequently released due to massive protests. Six months later the country was granted independence with Lumumba as Prime Minister. During his speech to Parliament, Lumumba lambasted colonial Belgium for its treatment of Congolese people to the dismay of King Albert.

- The Belgian government together with the American Central Intelligence Agency spies plotted the removal of Lumumba from power. The Americans said that “Lumumba’s removal is not irreversible: they went on to say that “Lumumba in opposition is almost as dangerous as in office.”

- The Prime Ministers fate was sealed by the then Belgian Foreign Minister who wrote a telex to his assistant in Congo-Brazzaville and mentioned to him that “The constituted authorities have the duty to render Lumumba harmless.”

- On 17 January 1961 barely a year since the nationalist movement assumed power, PM Lumumba was murdered and summing up the word of Prince and later King Albert the opinion of the Belgians was that “the Congo crisis is the responsibility of a single man, Patrice Lumumba.” (de Witte 1999: 22-26).

The Belgians, in their quest to rid Congo of Lumumba were assisted by the American Administration through the Central Intelligence Agency. It was through Operation Barracuda, led by Major Dedeken and J. Van Gorp an intelligence

officer from Belgium. On November 25, 1965, Mobutu Sese Seko mounted a coup d'état which led to the murder of Lumumba whose body was never found, (Misser: March 2000). The involvement of Belgium was palpable!

The message became clear to the people of Burundi that Belgium possessed the wherewithal to cause trouble in the region. They had already planted the seeds of discord in Burundi. With that in place, it was just a matter of time that the same kind of treatment was to be meted out to any of the Belgian colonial possessions. Within the territories themselves the Belgian authorities were doing everything in their powers to ensure that they would get the kind of political outcome that would certainly suit them.

Belgium, despite the pressure it was getting from the United Nations Organization to free themselves of the colonies, earnestly tried to manipulate the political situation in Ruanda-Urundi. With independence only 18 months away following the conclusion of the 1000 days of political disorganisation in Congo-Kinshasa, the stage was set for the next episode of Belgian political designs in Ruanda-Urundi.

Burundi's turn to independent nationhood came in 1962 after elections were held in 1961 in which, contrary to the wishes of the colonial masters, the "wrong" party *Union pour le Progrès National* (UPRONA) won the legislative election. The party that was favoured by the colonial masters was the rival *Parti démocratique Chrétien* (PDC). The latter appealed to the colonial masters. Its appeal to the colonial masters, rather than its own Burundi supporters, was its seemingly anti-Communist line. It could be said that parties were ill-prepared for the task that lay ahead because of lack of proper training and preparation for independence, (Cornwell *et al* 1999)

Compounding the challenges associated with running a state was the lack of coherent modern democratic institutions that would support the new state.

Despite the founding of political parties in the 1950s, the country's colonially imposed ethnic character mattered very little as this was made evident by the accession of the country to independent nationhood without bloodshed. The country adopted a form of state that was a constitutional monarchy.

It was the power struggle of the royal elites that culminated in the formation of rival parties seen to be aligned to the royal throne. Of significance was that the ethnic pendulum swung open upon the instigation of Albert Maus, a colonial enthusiast who loathed his country's impending loss of territorial possession. The first signs of politically motivated murder happened almost exactly on the anniversary of the death the late Prime Minister of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba.

Burundi was able to achieve independent nationhood with relative calm. However, this was not to be within the Barundi royal groups, the Bezi and the Batare that happened to have founded their own political parties. Despite the rivalry of the parties, there were other political formations such as the Party for the Promotion of the Hutus (UPROHUTU), the Party for the Popular Emancipation (PEP) and the People's Party (PP) formed in February 1960 virtually on the eve of independence by the colonial resident, Albert Maus.

Clearly, the formation of the UPROHUTU was aimed at reversing the damage that was done by the Belgians who excluded most Hutus from the administration of the country. Despite the intentions that the party had for the Hutus, there was also an element of a community wanting to assert itself in the political scene once power was restored to the indigenous people. Among the parties mentioned above, there was also a youth movement that went with the name *Jeunesse Nationalist Rwagasore (JNR)*. The first signs that all was not well in the political setup of the country was when the youth movement killed about five Hutus some of whom were trade unionists. In effect, the stage was set for the future politics of the country.

3.6 The Eruption of War in Burundi

The author would like to commence by borrowing from Samuel Huntington's wisdom about the "clash of civilizations." This refers to the mortal threat posed by other civilizations (communities) to potential targets or assumed opponents. However, by studying Huntington, it is a bit difficult to come to a conclusion that the Burundi war could be seen as a "clash of civilizations." Rather, it was an "ethnically charged pogrom of extra-ordinary proportion". The reason for this is simple: from a broader perspective, it would be impossible to imagine two groups of people who share remarkable cultural homogeneity yet at the same time display the kind of social stratification with an extra-ordinary potential for violence.

In this kind of ethnically stratified social order, all it takes for ethnicity to spark a war is the manipulation of the occupational differences. Clearly, in a society that is characterized by such vices, the absence of moral constraint and where power means everything to a community, killing becomes a moral duty. The preservation of ethnic hegemony is usually perceived as a condition for physical survival and the elimination of rival claimants to power.

At the heart of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Burundi lies the same confrontation that took place in the wake of the Rwandese one during the period 1959-1962. during that period, 60 000 Rwandese fled into Burundi as the result of the war became apparent that Hutu and Tutsi could "not live together," (Lemarchand 1970: 15). Following the flight of Rwandese into Burundi also had a hand in instigating further domestic instability in the country. The returning refugees then took part in the Burundi pogrom of Hutus in 1972. The reverse flow of refugees took place resulting in what was termed as the Ntega and Marangara incidents, (Prunier 1994:5)

Of importance is that from 1972 onwards, power then resided in the exclusive control of Tutsi-Himas who hailed from Bururi. Power was with the army and the little coterie of officers who controlled it caused the state to be more fragile. The small group of officers themselves saw many internal strife among them as competition for power became intense while at the same time the broad populace was being killed in ever large numbers, (Rothchild and Groth 1995: 74).

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Decolonization in Rwanda

The strategic position of Burundi vis-à-vis that of Democratic Republic of Congo should not be overlooked. It had a direct bearing on what was happening in the neighbouring Belgian colonies. Independence to Burundi came on 1 July 1962, almost a year and a half following the assassination of Lumumba in DR, Congo. His death was sanctioned by the Belgians and, of course, this reverberated badly in the ears of neighbouring Belgian colonies including Burundi, (De Witte 2002: 25).

Despite being favoured by the Belgians during colonialism, Tutsi elites became supporters of a swift removal of Belgian rule from Burundi. In reaction, the Belgians began to regard Tutsis as communist inspired and not interested in transforming the conditions of the vast majority of people in the country. They even labeled them as solely determined to hang on the privileges in a new order that would be without Belgian influence. These characterizations assumed the role of determining factor with the relations between Tutsis and their erstwhile colonial masters.

The Hutus founded the Party for the Emancipation of the Hutu People (PARMEHUTU) whose manifesto was anti-communist, social justice and supported the extension of economic privileges to Hutus, while Tutsi's founded the Union for National Progress (UPRONA). The strangest shift of policy by Belgium, after backing the Tutsis all along, was that they supported the Hutus and were active with them in the opposition aimed at ousting Tutsi rule. Over 125 000 refugees fled the country and when local government elections were held in 1960 PARMEHUTU won two thirds of the seats and 78 percent of the votes in the legislative election a year later, (African Rights, 1995: 11-12).

The events just mentioned above were regarded by the Belgians as a “revolution” of some sort but in reality it was a replacement of one elite by another with the help of the colonial master and the Catholic Church. What was missing from this “revolution” was the element of reform that was so much sought after by the landless peasants.

4.1 Decolonization in Burundi

While in Burundi the Union for National Progress (UPRONA) posed the main challenge to Belgian rule, the former was led by a popular prince whose appeal to the people posed as challenge to the colonial masters. As their manipulation tactics would become an art form, the Belgians would then back the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) while at the same time imposing punitive conditionalities on UPRONA. That was done for obvious reasons despite the restrictions placed on UPRONA, the latter won 58 of the 64 seats in the National Assembly with Rwagasore as Prime Minister. His rule was not to be as he was assassinated by a hired gun that was supported by the Belgians, (Lemarchand, 1996: 55).

The peace that accompanied Burundi’s decolonization was soon shattered. It was made worse with the repeat assassination in 1965 of Prime Minister, Pierre Ngendandumwe (Hutu). This event was a prelude to more carnage. Ngendandumwe was known for his moderate ideas. By that time, Tutsi had consolidated power in the civil service by occupying all important posts including controlling the military, (Gahama, 2002:6).

However, it should be revealed that the incipient form of ethnic violence began to rear its head in 14 January 1962 when five Hutus were killed in Kamemge district of Bujumbura by party youths belonging to *Jeunesse Nationalists Rwagasore (JNR)*. The latter act coupled with the assassination of Rwagasore, made it clear that it was guns that would determine who rules the country other than the ballot, (Lemarchand, 1996: 55)

By the time that this interplay of murder and counter murders from both groups was being experienced in the country, the Tutsi were in firm control of the country. As a counter to the JNR, the Hutus formed the *Jeunesse Populaires Ngendandumwe (JPN)*. Even trade unions began to take shape in the form of ethnic unions. Through another pro-Hutu party, the Party of the Promotion of the Hutus (UPROHUTU), many Hutus rallied to the party in search of salvation. A few months later, another election was organized in which Hutus returned to power winning twenty three of the thirty three seats.

To prove that the Tutsi would not countenance another Hutu as leader, King Mwambutsa IV appointed a Tutsi who was summarily executed by Hutu officers in the army. In a clear retaliation, Tutsi purged the army of all Hutu officers and physically eliminated them leaving the army in the hands of the Tutsis. In essence, the semblance of Hutu was to be purged by the Tutsis thus eliminating the entire first generation of Hutu leaders in structure of the military, (Lemarchand, 1996: 72).

After the death of Ngendandumwe in 1965, another election was then organized by the king. However, the outcome of the election was to prove to be challenging to the political elites. Hutus had regrouped and voted in numbers for UPRONA but the majority of the Members of Parliament were Hutus. However, the King for reasons better known to him chose a Tutsi to be a Prime Minister. The PM, Mr. Loepold Biha, was his personal secretary.

Hutus were hoping that their leader, Mr. Gervia Nyangoma was fit for the job despite being outside party structures. Biha was unpopular even among his tribal affiliates, the Tutsis. This led Nyangoma and his associates to resort to violence with the aim of unseating Biha. Predictably Tutsis were attacked and about 500 of them were killed. The resultant action was that the Tutsi led army was to murder 2000 Hutus in retaliation, (Manirakiza, 1970: 57-70).

A young army captain was the one who was assigned to put down the above mentioned insurrection. His name was Capt Michel Micombero. His actions on the battle ground when he was assigned to restore order earned him support within the armed forces. By this time, King Mwambutsa IV was, to all intent and purpose, an absentee king as he enjoyed the luxury of Switzerland and Spain. As he was unable to lead the country he was deposed and replaced by his son Prince Ndizeye. The latter assumed the regal name of King Ntare V. but real power resided in the army captain, (Cornwell et al, 1999:4).

With the hardening of ideas and attitudes like wise taking place between the two groups, the Hutus and Tutsis, they began to openly vie for their respective ethnic political homes. This was the culmination of ethnic politics leading to a crisis in the country. During the ensuing crisis, a coup d'etat was carried out by Tutsi army officers led by Captain Michel Micombero. That coup was to be vehicle with which Tutsis managed to effectively consolidate their grip on power. Captain Michel Micombero became head of state, minister of defense and leader of UPRONA. He subsequently abolished the monarchy ushering the first republican era for modern day Burundi, (Lemarchand, 1994: 74). His proclamation of a republican government did not solve the problems of ethnicity.

In the ensuing pursuit of power, instead, the coupists exacerbated the ethnic problem because they ensured that all remnants of Hutus in the army and all other state administrative duties were removed. In his administration, he ensured that he appoints some of the most hated figures in the government. He appointed his close friend, Major Albert Shibura as army chief of staff and deployed one of the most feared men in the country, Arthémon Simbananiye¹ as the public prosecutor.

¹Legend has it that Simbananiye once drafted a plan to eliminate all Hutus in the country. He is said to have a plan for genocide known as the "Simbananiye Plan." Although the "plan" has yet to be seen in public, many people in Burundi believe that it exists. They think the 1972 massacre was predicated on the "plan."

The carnage that was to follow eliminated almost all educated Hutus from the country. In retaliation, there was to be another revolt by Hutus in the country which led to the death of several thousand Tutsis. The rebellion in question broke out in 1972 and the intervention of the armed forces became disproportionate resulting in the death of about 300 000 Hutus, (Dravis, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/burundi.htm>). However, it should be pointed out that the real problem that emerged was the demise of the monarchy and its support structures. Micombero declared it dissolved in November 1966.

4.2 Power Politics And The Social Divide In The Country

It is important for the thesis to examine the institutional framework that Barundi inherited at independence. The first constitutional framework that was adopted at independence was promulgated on 16 October 1962. This type of institutional framework allowed for the abolition of the monarchy that enjoyed more influence before. The Mwami, the government, the parliament and the judiciary were the four arms of government. Below the superstructure of government were the local authorities at the communes which supported the monarch. However, much emphasis was placed on the centre specifically a place where most of the conflict originated from, (Cornwell *et al*, 1999:4).

It should be recalled that at independence, the Mwami lost all of his powers and these were taken over by a parliament that exercised executive powers. This entailed, in essence, that the Mwami was reduced to a figure-head, a tradition that was alien to Barundi. Accordingly, the government was led by a prime minister who enjoyed full executive powers. He had the right to appoint and dismiss ministers. This prerogative entailed that the Mwami was but just consulted as and when it was necessary to do so by the Prime Minister.

In totality, the Prime Minister wielded the same powers that the Mwami enjoyed in the past. Whether this was wrong or right at that time of independence is

debatable. However, it should be mentioned that the controls of the state and its machinery happened to be the prerogative of the Mwami, who at independence was made powerless by the departing colonial masters. In essence the Mwami was dislocated from his people, (Cornwell *et al*,1999:4).

The parliament that was adopted by the new state was bicameral in nature. It was composed of a national assembly and a senate. The former was elected through universal suffrage while the latter by an electoral college. This new system was a bit much for a country such as Burundi which had a monarch to contend with. Furthermore the internal problems that that were caused by the system were manifested in parliament where major decisions would be made but would then be blocked by the ruling party. This was a deliberate effort by the ruling party to ensure that it rendered parliament impotent in the face of tasks that were at hand. The army was to be the arbiter. In the process, political inertia set-in in the country leading to poor management of state machinery, tension and ultimately violence.

There are social divides that had been with Burundi since time immemorial. These divides were both vertical and horizontal. The most common divides were numerous however the following were prominent:

- i) ethnic,
- ii) clan-based, and
- iii) regional

The three divisions or divides that area alluded to were fluid in nature and bore little resemblance to systems that are hardened. It was easy for people from one clan or ethnic group to cross to the other and be accepted. Some even lost out on being “the other ethnic group” because of certain circumstances as will be indicated below. The class-based divide was prominent among those who hailed from the rural areas against those who came from the urban areas, (Prunier, 1994:10-11).

The ascendance of the urbanite was deemed as a proverbial “ticket” to better treatment for the simple reason that the group would be exposed to a better life or better material possession than their rural counterparts. The latter group would be from farming backgrounds and in possession of little material wealth. On the other hand, for example, Bururi was considered as the most prominent and powerful province for the reason that it provided three presidents and much of the dominant commanders from the army, (Prunier, 1994:9-10). Yet Bururi, then, was considered to be backward.

Among the divisions between the ethnics groups too was a dubious distinction that translated that the any one who possessed a bit of material wealth, no matter how small, will be a Tutsi and could associate with other wealth people. These associations crystallized as such, the Hutu-Tutsi divide became a norm as those with little material wealth would be discharged of being Tutsi and relegated to being Hutu. Such actions would be cemented by the provincial background of an individual.

It was crucial also for individuals to possess educational background of some sort. Education also was pivotal in determining one’s standing in society either as a Tutsi or Hutu. This complicated social mosaic was carried over from generation to generation and between ethnic groups themselves. Strangely among Tutsis themselves, there were certain qualifications that were acceptable as qualification for being a Tutsi of a higher class. This was a kind of vertical classification of Tutsi, (Prunier 1994:10).

There are Tutsi that are regarded as a lower class. These are Tutsi Hima as compared to others of a higher class, the Tutsi Banyaruguru. The Bururi province was seen as the epicenter but not exclusive source of the latter group. Partly as a consequence of colonial manipulation, the Belgians relied far more on solidarities and divides within the clan system and further made the mosaic as

confusing as it sounds here. This too had had an impact on people coming from Bujumbura, the capital city, who regarded others from other prefectures as not worthy.

Each group, would mobilize politically as it deemed fit within its own strand to the exclusion of others. Each group would do the same along economic lines as it deemed fit further making societal discrimination not only a norm but also a social obligation. Economic and political differences became accentuated. Discrimination occurred between people once considered to be princely and having profound solidarity guided by the “father of the nation”, the Mwami.

Women, as a group were also seen as being of a lower status despite one being a Tutsi. Legally they were minors and were not allowed to get credit in banks let alone inherit the material possession of their late husbands. They were also subjected to domestic violence. Of significance is that the Twa, the most marginalized community featured nowhere, economically, politically and socially. They were relegated to perpetual poverty and seen as outcasts, (Gahama, 2002: 4). This was the cruel reality of the country’s polity: a citizenship crisis of great magnitude.

The group that suffered too, in these purges was the abaganwa. Abaganwa used to enjoy the patronage of the king and served the latter in his day to day duties of running the country. As indicated in chapter two, the abaganwa served as a buffer between the king and his subjects, both Hutus and Tutsis. The abaganwa were replaced by officers who were beholden to Capt Micombero. This group of officers lacked in experience and more often than not, did not even possess the necessary education that would allow them to assist in running the country, (Prunier, 1994: 8).

The reason for Micombero to select such a group of people was that he came from Bururi, a province that was regarded as being inhabited by lower class

Tutsi, the Himas. Member of the Tutsis that Micombero came from were seen by other Tutsis as “small”. In essence, the Micombero coup d’etat was a double edged sword, not only aimed at eliminating the Hutu scourge but also seeking to promote Tutsis seen as a lower caste from Bururi.

Tutsis that were having an upper hand in the country came from Muramvya province. They were of abanyaruguru heritage. The latter group designated themselves as the high class and rightful rulers of the country. Essentially, Micombero pre-empted them and established a ruling-clan of Tutsi who empowered themselves and fiercely defended their new-found elitist status. The people who were associated with the president hailed from Bururi meaning that the de facto authority within the administration became even smaller at the exclusion of other Tutsis.

This created resentment and division from the Tutsi monolith that was opposed to Hutus, their arch enemies. The ancient tribal rivalry began to manifest itself as an intra-Tutsi conflict. The fear among the Tutsis was that they were moving towards a divisive intra-Tutsi conflict that would derail Tutsi unity against a common enemy, the Hutu. But of course, Micombero had other ideas. For him, the ascendancy of the Tutsi Hima was real. The latter wanted to suppress the other Tutsi and their fellow Hutus alike, thus ensuring longevity of his regime and himself to power. He ensured this by rigging elections and arresting any one who opposed his rule, (Prunier, 1994: 10).

4.3 The Calibration Of The Military And The Law

In response to international pressure Belgium committed itself to put Burundi on the road to freedom. The colonial parliament was dissolved. With parliament dissolved, the Mwami assumed ceremonial powers and a council that was indirectly elected assumed power. To ensure that such a system was “protected”

the Belgians buttressed these arrangements with the army that was initially formed as a territorial guard.

At independence in 1962, the territorial guard in question was subsequently transformed into a national army. The army possessed specialized units, such as the commandos that were placed under the command of Captain Michel Micombero. With the formation of Burundi political parties events pointed to a situation in which the Belgians were beginning to lose control. The eldest son of the Mwami, Prince Louis Rwagasore took over UPRONA as head of the party that was genuinely nationalistic in character, (Lemarchand 1970: 327-8).

However, during the mid-1960s, the Hutus were increasingly resorting to Rwanda style elimination of people. It should be recalled that in Rwanda Hutus began killing Tutsis immediately after independence and thereafter proclaimed a republic. It was clear that Hutus were beginning to think along these lines as this was made evident by the coup attempt of October 1965 carried out by Hutus who belonged to a gendarmerie. The coup attempt was subsequently suppressed. Many Hutus leaders were then tried and executed with some resorting to the relative safety of exile. Of course, there were counter killings of Tutsis families, killing which clearly indicated to many that there was a hardening of attitudes from both sides.

The battle lines drawn entailed that it will be Hutus vs. Tutsi in a war of attrition. The Hutus made it a point that they wanted to gain power and unleash a Hutu revolution that would see Tutsi relegated to second class citizens. At the same time, the Tutsi would have nothing of it because they controlled the means of coercion, the army. The aims of the Hutus became apparent again when in September 1972, they carried out another coup attempt with the view of eliminating all Tutsis, once and for all, (Frame 2007. 152-156).

The Tutsi regime hardened under the influence of Tutsi extremism. The right hand man of Micombero, Interior Minister Shiburi, ordered the general murder of Hutus and began the process by killing King Ntare V. himself. The mass killing of Hutus was brief and brutal resulting in more than 300 000 people losing their lives. The Burundi, referred to the 48 hours of that mass killing as the *ikiza* meaning catastrophe, (Kiraranganya, 1977: 77-80).

During period of mass killings, Hutus came from Tanzania with the view of exerting revenge by seeking to exterminate Tutsis. War broke out in the south and tens of thousands of Tutsis were killed in retaliation. The attendant repercussion of that civil war resulted in massive exodus of refugees into neighbouring countries. A year later these refugees attempted to return to Burundi enmasse but this action ended in failure. In November 1976, Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Baptiste Bagaza, launched a coup d'état that saw him assume executive powers, (Lemarchand 1996: 108). Bagaza deposed Micombero and ushered in another bout of Tutsi Hima rule. Bagaza came from the same town as Micombero.

Bagaza's regime enjoyed a better period of tranquility thanks to the high coffee prices that the cash crop earned in the international market. With the money that the country was making, he was able to bring about rapid modernization of the country by building roads, schools, clinics and even brought about electrification to some administrative centers, (Lemarchand 1994: 106). A period of relative peace descended on the country but those who lost their land during the exodus were still harbouring grudges. With regard to institutional systems in Burundi, it became clear that the antagonism between Tutsi and Hutu had been made worse by the inability of the leadership to rise above narrow ethnic politics.

There had been very little attempts to address the very problem that made them fight: power and access to resources. Power was jealously guarded by those who had or controlled it. The main problem with regard to power politics was that

those who exercised it used it as a source of revenue meaning that the struggle for it became a matter of life and death. As philosophy would have it, the natural history of power was that of violence, where there had been attempts to seek the concurrence of those who are being governed.

At least with the achievement of obedience there would have been a degree of peaceful co-existence among the antagonists. But, *alas*, the history of the country had been fraught with problems. This had been made evident by the Tutsis who made little or no concerted efforts to ensure that their problems with the Hutus were sorted out. The issue is that they learnt, through the actions of the colonial masters that “might is right”. This brings the thesis to seek to understand the relationship between the various regimes and violence in Burundi.

Of importance is that the Bagaza regime sought to allay the fear of Hutus in the country by mentioning that the “dark days” of mass slaughter were over and that social and political opening would be entertained by his government. Little did people know that Bagaza and his “revolution” had other ideas. The military regime did little in terms of reconciliation let alone apologize to the Hutus about the past excesses of the military government of which he was part. Bagaza’s coming to power was but just a palace coup, where the military and its close supporters held sway.

In simple terms the Bagaza regime carried out very little change. During his tenure of 1976-87 as head of state, Bagaza only managed to induct four Hutus as cabinet minister and out of a total of 52 members of parliament, only 17 were Hutus by birth. Essentially his changes were all but cosmetic because Bagaza continued to recruit his military personnel from his home province of Bururi ensuring that the narrow recruitment policy sustained his regime in power with a design to constitute a Hima Empire encompassing, Uganda, Rwanda and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, (Gahama, 2000: 9). Through his way,

Bagaza even became worse than his predecessor. With the help of his most trusted lieutenants, Ministers of the Interior, Education and Security, Messrs Charles Kazatsa, Isidore Hakizimana and Lt-Col Laurent Ndabaneze respectively.

His regime became a closed book to many. He relied on the security services of the state to spy on even the most low-level of meetings in the country. His network of security even ensured that the freedom of the press was subverted and controlled the dissemination of information from inside. Bagaza went as far as harassing the church and carrying out mass detention of assumed opponents. Those who were imprisoned were subjected to torture and eliminated for even the slighted pretext.

Strangely, even the Bururi community, which constituted the bulk of his regime, felt the brunt of his rule and began to question his methods. He made things worse by trying to retire some officers with the view of recruiting the restless youth in the ranks of the army. That was to be his undoing. Bagaza was overthrown in a coup d'état that saw the rise to power of Major Pierre Buyoya, (Lemarchand 1994: 107). Buyoya too, is a Tutsi-Hima.

4.4 Immunity To Deterrence: The Role Of Violence In Suppressing Dissent.

Since the outbreaks of violence in 1962, 1965, 1972, 1988, 1991 and 1993, the major enemy of the people of Burundi became fear. Hutus tried to gain power through violence after independence and their efforts were crushed militarily. There was a repeat of such as indicated in the dates mentioned above. Fear gripped the country and was exacerbated by the notion that Hutus were of inferior quality than their Tutsi compatriots. It will be recalled in Chapter One that the departing colonialist even attached a hermitic tag on Tutsi thus rendering them aliens in the country of their origin.

With the state institution dysfunctional and the military siding with those in power, it became clear to the Hutus that no matter what they were doing, rightly or wrongly, there was no recourse to the justice system. Tutsis who had committed crimes against their Hutu compatriots were either acquitted or never made to serve any sentences even though they were guilty of criminal activity. Above all, there had been no reparations for victims of crime from either side during all the times when violence was the norm.

With the state incapable of exercising its authority and managing in accordance with executive prerogative, the wounds that were created by the violence that engulfed the country never healed. Instead they were exacerbated by the inability of the state to do its constitutional duties, protecting the citizens. In short, the spilling of blood seemed more appropriate than recourse to justice. This created an anomic society whereby values were abrogated at the expense of “seeking” understanding from their own communities. People then began to understand that there only way to settle a score with opponents was by either killing them or members of their community. In essence, the genocidal ideas began to be strengthened at a frightening pace.

Social life became dominated by violence with the military playing a significant role in it. The military, because it dominated social life and was mainly Tutsi entailed that the soldiers that are supposed to guard against external aggression were used internally to suppress dissent. Irrespective of whether the dissent was real or imagined, blood would flow and the language of confrontation became the order of the day. The Hutus were at the receiving end of the violence because the coercive arm of the state, the military, was mainly Tutsi and controlled by Tutsi, (Cornwell *et al*, 1999: 4).

Hatred of each community by the other led to vengeance, injustice, exaggerated conformism in the daily lives of the Barundi. The crisis of authority was replaced

by the calibration of the military, by those who control it, to a means of a deterrent force against attacks. Given the cycle of hostilities that were being experienced in the country, misery set in, abject poverty descended on the Hutus and chronic underdevelopment exacerbated already fragile relations between Hutu and Tutsi. The entire country was not spared the bloodletting meaning that the history of Burundi was literally read in blood. This, no doubt led to further suspicions among Burundi.

The conflicts that characterized the politics of Burundi are tainted by a serious dichotomy and distorted vision of the future. Those who were involved in the killing of others saw this as a normal activity aimed at bringing the other group to heel. There had never been an apology coming from a Tutsi to a Hutu and vice versa. The collective psyche of the people was the acceptance that death is inevitable at the hands of the opposing group. This had been the order of the day from the first, second and third republics.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 What is genocide?

The deliberate enmasse killing of political opponents is largely seen as criminal. It is worse when such killings are politically commissioned and deliberately target at specific group(s) with the aim of exterminating them. During the Second World War (WWII), the well documented actions of Nazi Germany targeted a specific community, Jews to be precise, for mass murder. 6 million of them perished but also more than 20 million Russians met the same fate. The international community, through the League of Nations, referred to that Nazi organized killing orgy as the holocaust. The savagery that was displayed is well documented elsewhere and will not be repeated here.

In the recent past, taking the example of Yugoslavia, the dominant Serbs (orthodox Christians) targeted all and sundry who did not agreed with the broader aim of maintain the federation. They ended up antagonizing all the people that belonged to the Yugoslavia Federation leading to the birth of states like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Kosovo. Then the Serbs resorted to targeting Muslims with the aim of driving them away from their homes through the use of military force. This led to the deaths of thousands of people during the Balkan war of the 1990s resulting in ethnic-cleansing of imagined or perceived opponents, (Becker.munfw.org/2009). Coupled with such acts, was another form of genocide that had led to the indictment of Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, for genocide in The Hague.

In the African continent, France engaged in mass killings in Algeria too, as described by Alistair Horne in his book, "The savage war for peace". Their intention was to preserve the colonial status because they regarded Algeria as part of France. These same can be said of the attempted extermination of the Hereros by the Germans when they controlled Namibia during colonialism. Of

importance here is that the perpetrators of these killings were colonial masters carrying out their desire to kill as much as possible people of a country that they yearned to control. It was these kinds of mass killings that are widely regarded as holocaust or genocide, depending on the description that one wants to make. In Burundi there was a pattern too, where a sequence of events led to tragic consequences.

5.1 The Anatomy of Genocide in Burundi.

The thesis has deliberately chosen to deal with the Burundi conflict by associating it with genocide. Burundi has the sad distinction of having experienced the first post independence genocide recorded in the Africa, (Esterhuizen 1998: 101-103). In Burundi, the proverbial stage for conflict was set at the onset of independence as explain before in Chapter 2 (see 2.1. *Sowing the seeds of discord*). Despite the electoral victory of the Hutus, having won 58 of the 64 allocated seats in parliament, the then Mwami Mwambutsa's son, Rwagasore, won the election and assume the role of Prime Minister. The latter turned out to be his own master and managed to develop his own brand of nationalism. He was deemed as the "Red Prince", by the colonial masters, Belgium, because they perceived him as having socialist inclinations, (Prunier 1994: 5). This association of Rwagasore with being a "Red Prince" led to his assassination on 13 October 1961, (Esterhuizen 1998: 102). As a consequence of his assassination, those labeled as his followers lost their lives and many more had to flee into exile.

The assassination of Rwagasore was seen as having historical significance for it not only deprived Burundi of a person who enjoyed nationalist credentials but also its ablest leader. Rwagasore had struggled so hard to achieve ethnic cohesion in the country and as an example of his open-mindedness, he married a Hutu lady, Marie-Rose Ntamikevyo, (Prunier 1994: 5). His death created a power vacuum in the country,.

To fill the power vacuum, the Mwami Mwambutsa appointed a Hutu, Mr. Pierre Ngendendumwe to lead the government. The latter's reign was not to be. He too was shot dead by a Rwandan refugee three days later on the day in which he was to announce his cabinet. This tragic event became the manifestation of many political problems associated with Burundi, (Prunier 1994:7). People began to revolt openly and take on the might of the state. The violence that was unleashed knew no proportion while at the same time the Mwami sought to quell it by holding fresh national elections aimed at generating new leaders. This has the opposite effect. The Mwami anointed a Tutsi, Leopold Biha as prime minister thus provoking a Hutu-led coup attempt. The dye was cast.

The coup attempt was violently put down by Captain Michel Micombero, leader of the Commando Unit of the Army. However, during this period, the Mwami whose son, Charles Ndizeye, was abroad was recalled and subsequently anointed by his father to be the regent. In a move reminiscent to a palace *coup de grace*, Ndizeye deposed his father and declared himself the Mwami Ntare V with Capt Micombero as his prime minister, (Lemarchand 1994:74). The political space that was created for the two to collaborate was to close for Ntare V whose powers were of insignificance. The real power lied with Micombero widely seen as the "strongman" of the country, (Prunier 1994: 8).

Six months after taking the reigns, Ntare V was deposed by Capt. Micombero was subsequently declared himself, President, Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and leader of UPRONA, the ruling party, (Lemarchand 1994:75). With the stroke of a pen, the monarchy was abolished and a republican government came to being. Out went the abaganwa who were widely regarded as a buffer between the Tutsis and Hutus and they were replaced by Tutsi of mediocre personalities. Micombero's regime was to commence another brand of Tutsi politics, that of promoting Tutsi whom he regarded as like-minded and were sidelined before, (Prunier 1994:8-9)

From the political confusion that plagued the country, the Captain Micombero's brand of politics was even more divisive as it proved to be a new step of ethnicity not only between Tutsi and Hutu but also among the Tutsis themselves. His mistrust of his own Tutsi brethren was to cause him to develop paranoia, nursing an idea that the deposed Mwami was raising an army abroad that was aimed at reversing his political gains, (Cornwell *et al* 1999:4). With Ntare V exiled in Uganda, Micombero managed to have the former Mwami abducted with the aid of General Idi Amin, then military ruler of Uganda. Upon arrival in Bujumbura, Ntare V was executed triggering violence that led to the death of almost 200 000, (Hakizimana, 1991: 21-24).

Like the ushering of independence in 1962, the first republic was also greeted by unimaginable bloodletting caused by political intolerance. This was also made evident by the number of coups and countercoups that were accompanied by inter-communal violence. Of significance, as an example, was when the Hutus staged an uprising in 1965 in which they sought to overthrow the government and the Tutsi-controlled army. In this milieu what was significant was the singling out of leading Hutu politicians and army officers who were immediately arrested and summarily executed. Between 1965, 1969, 1972, the spate of killing were condemned by the international community not only in the consequence of the East-West confrontation (even though there was closeness), it was unbridled policy of murder of Hutus.

In the midst for control of the state machinery, many Hutus were displaced while others fled to exile in both Tanzania and Rwanda. The resultant development was the further impoverishment of Hutus whose basic rights including access to state institutions were further closed. Hutu army officers were executed or purged from the armed forces leaving a door open to recruit more Tutsi to increase their numbers in the army and entrench their control of the states coercive machinery. That nightmarish developments in Burundi were reminiscent

to developments in Rwanda were too, there happened to be mass killings because of competition for political power, (Reyntjens 1995:6-7).

The April 1972 revolt was started in the armed forces too. In a short space of time, a number of Tutsi about 2000 (accounts vary) were killed by Hutu elements in Bururi where both civilian and military personnel suffered considerably. Hutus had then seized armories in Rumonge and Lac Nyanza and began to rum amok. In a location situated near Bururi, in Vyanda to be precise, they proclaimed an independent Republic of Martyazo, (see Heimer 2001). In a matter of seven days, the Tutsi-led armed forces regrouped and took back the town thus dismissing the idea of a Hutu republic within the boundaries of Burundi.

It was this revolt, that led to the killing of almost 100 000 people while others put the figure at 300 000, (Kiraranganiya, 1977: 9). During the uprising, both Hutus and sympathetic Tutsis met the same fate: indiscriminate accusation of sympathy to the coupists and their subsequent execution. What seemed as a seamless operation by the coupists directed at the Tutsi-led government also translated into a frenzy of killing directed at the Catholic Church, which played a role in educating and providing medical assistance to Hutus.

Earlier in the thesis it had been indicated that the Tutsi-led government was pursuing a policy of obstructing Hutus from gaining education and even commercial viability. The anti-Catholic church campaign received wide condemnation from the international community, (Prunier 94:12). The manner in which Tutsi discriminated against their brethren was blatant. The Tutsi's would not allow for political participation of Hutus that they (Tutsis) never approved of. It was a situation so similar to the apartheid one where blacks who were in agreement with the white minority government, would be given nominal powers to exercise and paraded as credible blacks to the international community.

Despite this arrangement, recruitment of Hutus into the armed forces was not encouraged. Tutsis would, instead use their security forces to perform acts of genocide against Hutus. Among the tactics they employed were the prevention of dissent by disallowing protest or discourage political formations deemed to be anti-establishment. Prominent amongst other methods employed to discourage dissent were the routine arrest, torture and murder of political opponents. Some people were arrested for a mere lack of positive identification reminiscent to the apartheid days in South Africa. Some would die in prisons which were full and more often lacked food, (Hakizimana 1991: 40-41).

Some specialized units within the armed forces were formed to perform such tasks. Among them was the infamous Bubanza Brigade, composed of mainly Tutsi hardliners which was responsible for killing countless civilians. It is indicated that the most hard-line of the Tutsi came from the Tutsi Himas who were also coming from small sub-clans of Matana and Rotovu. Its response to dissent by Hutus was singularly to round up suspected people (of Hutu descent) and kill as many as possible in villages where an uprising was initiated.

Each time these uprisings, coups and counter coups took place, both Tutsi and to a larger extent Hutus were killed large numbers ranging from tens of thousands to more than 300 000 at a go, (Cornwell *et al* 1999:4). In essence, such violence meted out by people inhabiting such a small place in Africa affect even the smallest units of families in Burundi. Basically, every Burundi family was not spared of the violence but also had other family member subjected to life in exile. Indeed, thousands of Hutus were summarily executed in a two months orgy of violence that affected the entire Burundi.

The violence that beset the country was then translated into what Burundi referred to as *ikiza* today. *Ikiza* is better known as catastrophe in English. The *ikiza* ushered in a pattern of selective genocides dotted by a long series of military governments run by the Burundi-based Tutsi Himas. Any form of

resistance, demonstration, dissent or hint of opposition to the ruling Tutsis was dealt with harshly, (Kiraranganya, 1977: 9-10).

It had always been a problem to come to terms with the figures that are mentioned each time people were killed in the country. It depends on the books one reads in order to get an opaque picture of the calamity affecting Burundi. However, of common knowledge in all this is that it was a derivative of a plot translated by Hutus as emanating from Arthémon Simbananiye, the then minister of interior and later of foreign affairs, (see Chapter 3 : 66).

At the time of the mass killings, many Hutus regarded Simbananiye as the man who drafted the “final solution” presumably aimed at provoking them to stage an uprising so that Tutsi could ultimately justify their mass killing of Hutus to ensure that, once and for all, they eliminate all Hutus. To Hutu’s, this was a confirmation of the long held view that Tutsi harboured a genocidal intension and their determination to keep them as an oppressed underclass, (Reyntjens 1995:7).

Even with the overthrow of one Tutsi led regime by another Tutsi led coupist, such as the 1976 deposition of Micombero by his cousin, Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Baptiste Bagaza, and that of the latter 1987 by his nephew Major Pierre Buyoya, the pattern of selective genocide bore striking similarities, (Reyntjens 1995:7). It can be said that their politics were centered on “who will best kill the Hutus and preserve Tutsi pre-dominance,” (self emphasis). Although Buyoya was a bit restrained in the killing of Hutus and that he tried to bring within his administration a semblance of Hutus presence, he nonetheless presided over the deaths of 150 000 Hutus, (Chrétien *et al* 1989: 9).

There was a sequence of events that led to the deaths of the 150 000 people mentioned above. First, Buyoya was under pressure from the international community to be different from his predecessors. He was pressured to liberalize the country’s polity. He responded in two ways, by co-opted a number of Hutus

in his party, UPRONA and followed by opening up the political space for all to contest future elections. Secondly, it was during this period that the *Front pour la Démocratie au Burundi* (Front for the Democracy in Burundi or FRODEBU) was established and nominated Melchoir Ndadaye as its leader for the June 1993 election, (Bentley *et al* 2005: 45).

Despite Buyoya's efforts to open up the political space for political competition, he was not to be believed by many Hutus as he hailed from the same clan that had been perpetrating the atrocities that caused so much damage to the fabric of Burundi society. These beliefs were to be proven true by the repeat performance of violence on 14-15 August. This was to be known as the Ntega-Marangara incidents. In these two incidents, PALIPEHUTU militants went about killing Tutsis in the communes and cause a wave of reprisals that astounded the Buyoya government. More than 20 000 people were killed in two days of violence leading to the intervention of the Tutsi-led army on the third day where many more suffered reprisals, (Chrétien *et al* 1998: 15). This was to mark the armed advent of PALIPEHUTU in the conflict in Burundi.

5.2 Negotiations and the Quest for Peace

The world community was getting impatient with the war in Burundi. The humanitarian crisis in the country had already reached many television screens all over the world and the United Nations Organisation, through the Security Council debated the matter with a view of arriving at a binding resolution. The United Nations Organisation voted and adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1021 to address the violations of international humanitarian law in Burundi, (UNSC 1012 of 1995). The recommendation of the UNSC were proposed were aimed at enhancing the role of the international community at taking legal, political or administrative measures that would bring about justice in the country. These went further by recommending that those held responsible

for acts of injustice in the country be sanctioned so as to eradicate impunity and promote national reconciliation, (UNSC 1012 of 1995).

To the layman, the action by the UNSC was seen as the proverbial “breath of fresh air” because the UN, as an organization, had found it difficult to intervene in countries where war was still raging. It was at this stage that the UN appointed a 5-member Commission to be chaired by Madagascar’s Mr Edilbert Razafindralambo to look at the Burundi conflict. The UNSC, through the then Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali demanded full cooperation from Burundi authorities with the view of ensuring that the commission’s work became a success, (UN Chronicle 1995).

Despite the call by the UNSC that violent conflict cease in Burundi, the opposite was realized. Violence worsened and Burundi had a full scale civil war at hand. It was at this juncture that the UNSC, once more, passed UNSC Resolution 1049 of 1996 which considered the possibility of sending a multinational force that would be tasked with implementing a rapid humanitarian intervention, (UNSC 1049).

President Ntibantunganya sought to have international assistance to save his country from itself. He solicited assistance from the Carter Center to give this idea a boost and also asked for the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to play a role. It was the latter that proposed the late President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere to be the Special Representative of the Secretary General and play a role in solving the political problem in Burundi, (Press Release SC/6213 of 1996). However, Mwalimu also requested the involvement of other statesmen such as former President Nelson Mandela, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia and President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda. Nyerere, through gentle persuasion of the protagonists in war, managed to get the approval of all role players that he led with the preparation for formal negotiations, (Bunting, *et al* 1999 :4)

From April – July 1996, the later Mwalimu Nyerere manage to get the opposing political parties, UPRONA and FROBEDU, together to negotiate as the main statutory blocs in parliament leading to a Summit of Heads of State and of Government that was convened in 1996 but commenced in 1997 in Arusha, Tanzania, (Bunting, *et al* 1999 : 4). It was during this period that the late Nyerere tried to bring all parties to the table that the unthinkable happened - a coup d'état led by former President Pierre Buyoya overthrew Pres. Ntibantunganya, (Cornwell, *et al* 1999:7).

As doubts about the peace process arose, the political role players employed a twin-track approach to help solve the problem. While Nyerere was busy facilitating the talks in Tanzania, there were also other talks which were secretly held in Rome, Italy that the government began to make moves towards an inclusive government that would oversee the transition until the next general election, (Nijimbere.com).

The coup d'état came in the wake of a hostile international environment that would not brook such an irresponsible action at a time when the international community was in the process of trying to assist the country to get out of the political problems that affected Burundi. Crippling sanctions were imposed on the leadership and a trade embargo was also imposed making it difficult if not impossible for the country to undertake normal business transitions with its international partners, (Arusha Communiqué, 16 April 1999). Burundi, through its come-back President Buyoya began to feel the effect of the sanctions and discreetly dispatched a delegation to meet with rebel leader, Leonard Nyangoma of the CNDD-FDD, under the auspices of the Rome-based Catholic group, the Community of Sant'Egidio, led by Father Matteo Zuppi, (Nijimbere.com).

Nyerere was credited with bringing many parties to the talk, albeit small. Nonetheless the bigger role players such as the CNDD-FDD together with the

PALIPEHUTU managed to join the talks later. This culminated in the Arusha II Agreement, which was duly handled by his team of experts and assisted by South Africa. The negotiations were run through four committees that oversaw the deliberations of the various delegates to the talks. The four committees were given various tasks.

- Committee One dealt with issues ranging from logistical matters to the determination of the nature of the conflict in Burundi. The proposed committee provided the points of discussion.
- Committee Two was created to deal with matters of democracy and good governance while,
- Committee Three looked at ways and means which could be employed to tackle the problems of reconstruction and economic development in the country.
- Committee Four and Five handled matters associated with the peace and security for all Burundi while at the same time entertained matters associated with guarantees for implementation of the peace agreement respectively, (Bunting *et al* 1999: 7-9).

These committees were led by foreigners among them, Father Mateo Zuppi. It was the work of the committee system that ensured progress with regards to the negotiations. With the international community putting pressure on the leadership through the maintenance of sanction, the pace of negotiations was not satisfactory, as it is always the case with such, but was accelerated with contentious issues, such as the an agreement to a ceasefire, economic reconstruction, representative government and reconciliation reaching an irreversible position.

To make the job of the committees easy, former President Nelson Mandela, who had taken over following the death of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, whipped up support for the peace process by drawing in the likes of former President Jacques Chirac of France, King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, President Olusegun

Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda – the Chair of the Regional Summit and former President William (Bill) Clinton of the United States of America.

They were all joined by the Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Salim Ahmed Salim. To make this point clear, that he wanted greater international involvement in the Burundi conflict, Mandela flew to New York to address the United Nations Security Council which responded with a positive Security Council Resolution 1286. Mandela had also called for international sanctions to be lifted. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) responded by approving a US\$13 million credit facility to assist with the post-conflict reconstruction effort and economic recovery, while later, an International Donors Conference was called in Paris to bring help and assist the country to support reconstruction, (Burundi Peace Negotiation January 2000).

Disagreements ensued and were followed by bilateral, domestic and multi-track diplomacy. On the bilateral front, the European Union (EU), through the office of Special Representative Aldo Ajello, co-coordinated efforts of bringing all on board the peace process. EU ambassadors were the driving force. On the domestic front, Buyoya launched a campaign of stability in the country in 1998 aimed at enabling civilians to defend themselves against Hutu militia. However, it was the political partnership agreement between the main parties, UPRONA and FROBEDU that led to the formation of a coalition government for the country. This agreement, took away Buyoya's executive powers of veto.

To make this agreement work, Buyoya began to crack down on human rights violators within the armed force, with a view that the next round of negotiations will cover constitutional issues and the integration of the rebel forces into the army and police, (Africa Confidential, 20 December 2002). On the other hand, the domestic environment, the centuries-old tradition of *ubushingantahe* was

being revived to deal with matters associated with the violence. This version on of ubushingantahe was a form of “truth and reconciliation” that would be held national wide to help heal the rift between the two communities.

Mandela had done his job of bringing the warring parties closer to one another and then handed over to Jacob G. Zuma, the then Deputy President of South Africa. On 4 December 2003, it was Jacob G. Zuma, who confirmed the irreversibility of the peace process and called for the involvement of the United Nations Organizations to take over the peace mission from the OAU and now the African Union, (Lederer, 2003: 3). It was this confirmation that signaled to the outside world that Barundi had agreed to do away with the Tutsi ethnocratic military regime that came to dominate the state at the expense of Hutus.

First among the corrective measure to be undertaken was the re-organization of the armed forces. An inclusive army was to be created with the absorption of military formations that had been fighting the regime. It was one of the most contentious issues, because, as explained before Tutsi used the army to usurp power and to control the means for social mobility, the wealth of the country and access to it. However, what was achieved in the negotiations was the sharing of power and wealth in a just and equitable way so that lasting peace could be achieved.

This was made evident when Buyoya made way for a Hutu president in Domitien Ndayizéyé on 30 April 2003, (Africa Confidential 2 May 2003). It was this watershed political development that also paved the way for local government elections of 3 June 2005 which witnessed the ascension to prominence of the CNDD-FDD led by President, Pierre Nkurunziza, (Africa Confidential 24 June 2005). This, in itself could not be regarded as the much renowned “South African option” of power sharing agreement that saw a democratically elected Government National Unity take the replace the much maligned apartheid

system that was propagated by the white minority in South Africa, (Mamdani 2002: 273-4).

The Facilitator, as the JG Zuma team was known, was not transplanting the version of political settlement that was arrived at in South Africa. In Burundi, there were no settlers who oppressed indigenous people. It was a case of local people oppressing others local people. As such, there was a need that the settlement that should be arrived at reflect a state that had been reformed, equal citizen rights recognized as imperative to the survival of the people and, of course, the extension of state services to all people despite of race. To achieve this feat, a reconciliation process had to be instituted between Burundi had to commence, (Mamdani 2002: 279).

For the people of Burundi, the reform of the state was to be straight forward, there was no need to look at their political problem as matters that need to be dealt with by simply bringing in opponents of the government on board the political system. There was need to ensure that all people, participate in the political setup and systems of the country as equals. The issue of race, in the form of Hutu and Tutsi were to be done away with, (Arusha Peace Agreement 2000). The assumption here is that the people of Burundi will be participating in the political system in the interest of morality and acting freely. It is common knowledge that human beings cannot act freely if their actions are causally determined, (Ayer 1969: 271-284).

CHAPTER SIX

6. Lessons and Conclusion

Exclusion of Hutus from decision making processes, the deteriorating socio-cultural values, the common language that was shared by Burundi, the culture that happened to be a bond among the people became alien concepts. Moral values of harmony dictated by *botho*, humanity and *ubushingantahe* disappeared from the political landscape of Burundi. To borrow from Ramose 2004, the question is; “what went wrong and, how may this be rectified”? Ramose, goes on to say that “engagement in politics may not be predicated on the false conventional wisdom of ‘politics is a dirty game’, (49).

Sense of probity, justice, honesty and respect of others had disappeared in Burundi. The decency that was attached to political institutions (during the time of the Mwami), the nobility and self control in a cohesive society were replaced by the opposite. The crisis of identity set in. This led to the crisis of morality which in turn heightened the tendency of injustice. A premium was placed on ethnic relations to the detriment of the Burundi citizenship.

The roots of the Burundi problem, the mass killings that went unpunished for far too long and even went deeper than the regime could acknowledge. Many Burundi were abducted, tortured, severely ill-treated in what can be termed as impunity leading to genocide. As an example the Bagaza’s regime propagated national unity yet it was easy for it to commit genocidal acts. Whether the kind of rhetoric that came from his military machinery was aimed at placating the Hutus or just plain lies became apparent much later.

Bagaza actions proved that he was not interested in national unity within the country. What was important for him was unity within his Tutsi community or the elites that formed the back bone of his regime. He instituted very little reforms in

the country but can be credited for allowing trade union activity in the work place. With work places and government dominated by Tutsi, his reforms meant little to Hutus and other ordinary people in the country. Hence his fall from grace came in September 1986 when Major Pierre Buyoya deposed him in another coup d'état to affect the country, (Cornwell *et al*, 1999: 5).

Buyoya brought about timely but little changes in the country. He appointed a Hutu prime minister and brought in other Hutus within his administration. The changes that he brought about happened at a time when there was heightened tension in the country following another bout of bloodletting between the two groups which saw Tutsi murder thousands of Hutus in 1988, (Prunier, 1995:350-368). The addition of Hutus within the administration of the country proved to be too little to late. The other oddity that engulfed the Buyoya regime was that the army remained untouched. His too was a purely Tutsi establishment and with a coup attempt in February 1989, Buyoya was reminded that his was but just a mask to the debilitating political and identity problems of Burundi. This also was a stark reminder to Buyoya that he better watch where he was taking the country. Tutsis wanted to ensure the continuation of a history that was appreciated through the prism of ethnicity with them at the helm.

The much talked about peace process in Burundi was froth with problems from the onset. Hutus and Tutsi never trusted one another. Compounding the problem was that the peace process they were engaged in was a top-down approach. It could be argued that all peace processes are top-down, meaning that they are imposed from the top and led by the political elites. But of course, there's yet to be a peace-process that was driven from the grass roots to the top and accepted by the major role-players.

In the case of Burundi a top-down approach was meant to strengthen the ability of leaders to create and build on the peace process and there after organize the rank and file of their people about the necessity to promote such peace. Most

obvious in this case was the campaign to educate people on the values of democracy, acceptance of differences as a normal democratic practice and propagation for a culture of human rights. Political competition and normal electoral dynamics were to be enshrined in the Arusha Peace Agreement, (Arusha Peace Agreement 2000).

Essentially too, was that the Arusha Peace Agreement allowed for a space that was aimed at accommodating the Tutsi while accepting Hutus as important decision makers within the country's polity. Without an agreement that would allow for a transition and a power sharing scheme, it is difficult to see how the peace agreement would have fared. In this way, the Tutsi would be assured of a role within the political system while Hutus, largely excluded from power before, would be central to the decision making processes of the country and allowed too, to be part of the cohesive machinery of the state, the armed forces.

Surely based on the above, there was little evidence that ethical consideration were proverbially shifted to side while mere accommodation of each group took centre stage. Similarly, the genocidal tendencies that were characteristic of the state machinery were left to be dealt with by the traditional system of *ubushingantahe*, overlooking the quest for justice and retribution, in favour of political accommodation and control of state machinery.

Despite the fragility of the political system, there was an agreement on the need for full economic participation of all people in the country, meaning that the centuries-old tradition of exclusion of Hutus would be done away with. This, of course, was a major boost to the peace process but for a country with a small economic base such a Burundi, it was difficult to see how Burundi will fare without international assistance playing a prominent role. It was the international world that was supposed to push for a greater role in not only giving a boost to the economy but also helping the country to expand its proverbial economic cake for it to be shared by all.

In terms of political participation, this is a right for all Burundi. For Tutsis to have limited the participation of Hutus, was a violation of the inalienable rights of Hutus to be political-players in the system that was designed to be Burundian. It was unfair and unjust to have been robbed of the right to be political-players, albeit, in a military dictatorship that was designed to preserve Tutsi pre-dominance in the political system and pre-eminence in the social hierarchy, (Arusha Peace Agreement). The achievement of peace which excluded that element was of greater assistance for the proverbial “leveling of the playing fields” (self emphasis). The rights of Burundi, both Hutu and Tutsi including the little talked about Twa’s.

It was the idea of a common destiny that had to be emphasized on the both ethnic groups. Without a required determination to achieve the common destiny through a jointly-run country that both ethnic groups lay claim to, there existed little hope that there would be lasting peace in the country. Similarly the elements that within the armed forces that perpetrated acts of gross violation of human right and genocide needed to be isolated and held accountable.

There was also the pertinent issue of how would the people of Burundi, both ethnic groups, deal with the issue of forgiveness or retribution for that matter. However, it was common knowledge that many countries emerging from conflict situations chose to handle the healing process through reconciliation and other relevant processes. However, the unique character of the Burundi reconciliation process involved among others, to learn the reasons that led to involvement of the political elite in genocide and draw from such lessons “antidotes” that would be designed to curb such excesses in future. Such antidotes are meant to deal with the morally opprobrious problem of genocide, the truth. Ramose (undated), acknowledges the “importance of truth as the founder of a new nation and the guarantor of its stability,” (12).

The demands for the restoration of justice require truth to be told by the perpetrators on the basis of full disclosure, (Ramose, undated: 12). Such disclosures are then translated into amnesty extended by the victims to the perpetrators. Similarly, African tradition including Christianity allows for forgiveness based on penitence.

For Burundi, the process of arriving at a genocide-free country involves not only truth and reconciliation but also full disclosure from both the Hutus and Tutsi so that such excesses are not repeated and that the country could, for the future enjoy peace.

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CHAPTER ONE

i. Preface

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