HUMILIATION AND VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN BURUNDI

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Paper prepared for Round Table 1 of the 2005 Workshop on Humiliation and Violent
Conflict, Columbia University, New York, December 15-16, 2005.

Introduction

Burundi is a small republic, landlocked between Tanzania to the East and South, Rwanda to the North, and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the West. Within its surface area of 27,840 square kilometers, Burundi's population is estimated at 6 million people.

Before colonization, Burundi had been a strong, organized kingdom for centuries. Society consisted of four groups: the Twa potters, hunters and entertainers, the Ganwa the ruling aristocracy (today regarded a Tutsi subgroup), the Tutsi mainly cow herders and the Hutu mostly cultivators. Society was a hierarchical web of patron and client ties, with the princely Ganwa enjoying the highest status, and the Twa the lowest. How Hutu and Tutsi related was not clear, but actually the history of their relationship is much politicized.

The societal boundary among groups was somewhat fluid with a narrow social space allowing shifting from a group to another except for the Twa. A rich Hutu could come to be regarded as a Tutsi, and an impoverished Tutsi as a Hutu. Hutu and Tutsi with merits and high achievements in the society could be elevated at the Ganwa status. Inter-marriages among the groups were tolerated. All groups spoke and still speak the same language, shared the same culture, and practiced the same religion.

Burundi as it is known to have fixed its boundaries during the slavery treat. It became a strong centralized kingdom which fought successful the slave traders.

Sixty years of colonial rule greatly affected relationships among the groups. Burundi was colonized and absorbed by the German East Africa in 1989, and then administered by the Belgians as the United Nations Organization Mandate in 1918. The Tutsi received preference during the colonial administration especially in the colonial-run school system. In 1933, the Belgians ousted traditional Hutu chiefs and ruled the country through the pool of better educated Tutsi and Ganwa.

A 1934 census by the Belgians complicated even more the social boundaries. The cows had acquired more value than other Burundian products. Persons owing more than ten cows were arbitrary classified as Tutsi. As result, relatively wealthy Hutu suddenly became Tutsi, and some poorer Tutsi became Hutu. Ethnic identity cards were issued freezing Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa social identities into law and ethnic groups. Already identified with relative deprivation, Hutu and Twa became strongly associated with poverty and powerlessness. The census classified 85 per cent of the population as Hutu, 14 per cent as Tutsi, and 1 per cent as Twa. These strange percentages are still applied to Burundi today.

The most particularity of Burundi is that there are no Ganwaland, no Twaland, no Tutsiland, and no Hutuland. People live intermingled in that small mountainous country. These groups had everything to live peacefully together by complementing each other. However, it is known that the Burundians have a long history of conflicts, becoming more increasingly intense in the second half of the twentieth century, and culminating in a bitter civil war in 1993. Many scholars present ethnic differences as the primary

motives of so much animosity, massacres, genocides, and daily violence. I have looked elsewhere for causes of conflict. In this paper, I focus on how systematic humiliation has contributed to the genesis, evolution and escalation of violence in Burundi.

Exploring the role of humiliation in Burundi will shed light on the origin of the Hutu-Tutsi conflicts and the degree of their integration into the Burundi society while the conflict theory will help answer certain questions related to the fundamental relationships between the Hutu and Tutsi. Before my analysis, this paper will try attempt to clarify what I believe constitutes the causes of the Burundian conflicts, their escalation, the parties involved, and the issues. In conclusion, I will present what should be the alternatives to the Burundian social conflicts.

Part One: Description of the Conflict

1 Causes of Burundi social conflict

Since 1993, the country is in a civil war. How Burundians have been treating each other for centuries has resulted in many conflicts. Their coming together has generated tense relationships, which have been manipulated and politicized. The actual civil war is among the consequences of such conflicts perceived by scholars as incompatibility over the symbolic power and the management of the national resources. I clarify these concepts by making a distinction between the immediate or triggers, the precipitants, and underlying causes of the conflicts

1.1 Immediate or trigger causes

In 1990, the Conference of la Baule in France asked the African military regimes to democratize their economic and political institutions. France conditioned its assistance and cooperation by the installation of a democratic process in those countries. In addition, the fall of the Berlin Wall marked the progressive erosion of the Union of the Social Soviet Republics support toward African military regimes. Many African countries had no other choice than to embrace the democratic processes. Burundi did not escape the courant and started to democratize its institution in 1991.

    The events, which may have triggered the actual crisis in Burundi can be located in the brutal political and social changes introduced by the 1991 democratic process, which include the contradiction in leadership vision: the Tutsi fight to maintain the status quo while the Hutu increasingly demand for democratic elections; a precipitated and ill-prepared democratic process (the former unique Uprona party manages the process, drafts the new constitution and the electoral law, has the power to admit or refuse other emerging political parties); a very short campaign period (two weeks) and the victory of the opposition; the assassination of the democratically elected President and his cabinet; the anarchy characterized by the absence of authority and the lack of a strong government for decision making.

    In the summer 1993, the country held its first presidential and legislative elections. For the first time in history, a member of the Hutu ethnic group, President Ndadaye Melchior, became Burundi's supreme executive officer. He incarnated the aspirations and hopes of the Hutu ethnic groups to assume the management of the state affairs from which they

had been excluded for centuries. The new power undertook democratic reforms: edification of a state of law to curb impunity, fight corruption and embezzlement, and many other administrative reforms including the security services.

The Tutsi were deeply humiliated by the victory of what they called "Abasuku" the servants. They interpreted the elections as an ethnic census. The democratic reforms upset the status quo, threaten entrenched political and economic interests, and raise issues of minority rights and in the short-term they saw in the elected government and parliament a new order, which no longer protected their own interests. They believed their security was at stake and decided to overthrow the new democratic institutions. On October 21, 1993, a group of military assassinated the new president and his cabinet. Before the assassination, one could hear in the Tutsi milieu words such "agateka aho kamye, nta muhutu yigeze atwara" (Nobility has to prevail, never a Hutu has ruled). The Hutu majority population considered this act as serious insult, a Tutsi deliberate refusal of the newly established democracy and intolerable arrogance. Inter-ethnic massacres followed which culminated in a civil war.

1.2. Precipitant causes

According to Kimmel, shorter historical events allow deeply seated structural forces to emerge as politically potent and begin to mobilize potential discontents (Kimmel, 1990, p. 9). In the case of Burundi, these structural forces include the assassination of Hutu political leaders (1962 up 1965), the different (real or prefabricated) military coups d'etat (1965, 1966, 1969, 1971, 1976, 1987, 1993), the different Hutu rebellions followed by brutal repression of the civilian population (1965, 1972, 1988, 1990) and most of all, the fear generated by many refugees in the neighboring countries. All these events have created a climate of insecurity and eroded the Hutu-Tutsi trust and mutual respect. Besides the loss of innumerable human lives, they have produced many refugees and internally displaced. They have destroyed the social fabric and natural resources.

1.3. Underlying or precondition causes

In Burundi, the fundamental and long-term causes, which created the conditions of the precipitants and immediate triggers of conflict, can be classified into three categories: the Burundi social structure and the predominant myth of social order, the political organization and economic property control, and external factors.

1.3.1. The Burundi social structure

The society evolved in a hierarchical web of patron - client ties with the princely Ganwa enjoying the highest status, and Twa the lowest. In the middle were Tutsi and Hutu, but how they were related is less clear. Nevertheless, the history of such relationship is fiercely politicized in modern-day Burundi. The societal hierarchy however was somewhat fluid and ethnicity was determined by occupation as well as heritage (USCR, 1995, p3). A rich Hutu could come to be regarded as a Tutsi, and impoverished Tutsi could be socially Hutu, beholden to a patron. Inter-marriages were common

The Burundians normally recognized each other according to their clans. They evoked their merits and achievement by naming the clan they belong to. The term "Hutu" "Hutu" was used to refer someone to a social subordinate in relation to somebody higher up in the pecking order. Actually, it refers to its cultural or ethnic underpinnings. In first sense, this social classification was based on feudal systems and was itself subject or condition for social conflict. The Tutsi considered themselves to be an aristocratic group (ganwa) and the Hutu and Twa to be their rightful servants.

Early differentiation between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa may also have manifested in a deep psychological need for enemies. Tutsi as cattle keepers fought the sedentary Hutu and Twa over food and lands for their cattle pastures. The process of group formation and differentiation (particularly the role that images, perceptions, stereotyping, and dehumanization) was determinant for the key players in the decision-making in communities. This led inevitably to conflicts among different groups.

1.3.2. Political organization

Burundi was a homogeneous society. According to the colonial historians, Burundi was a long-established and decentralized kingdom until the 15th century. People in Burundi spoke the same language, share the same culture and practice the same religion (reference).

The ruling class, that is, the ruler himself and his aristocratic minions, comprised only a very thin layer of the population. It would have been impossible for it to oversee the other majority of the population. Then they employed a large number of retainers (co-opted among the population) to do most of the work for them. The retainers acted as go-betweens, brokering the incredible power of the aristocrats to the lower class in a patron/client system. They included tax collectors, the military, skilled artisans who provided the nobles with luxury goods, storytellers, any of a variety of functionaries and religious clergy. These intermediaries derived their livelihood from their services to the aristocrats and were answerable only to them.

All of these functionaries facilitated the high-handed dealings of the upper class and enriched themselves in the process by what has been called "honest graft," their legal cut of the surplus that the peasants produced in the land. In this tributary mode of production, high taxation led the peasants to extreme impoverishment and eventual loss of land and cattle through debt and foreclosure. The elite controlled the chain of production of the crops, and could easily bankrupt a peasant by lending him the land or cattle they knew he could never pay back. Farmers were reduced to sharecropping, where they got only a pitiable portion of what they grew, often on what was their own land.

One wonders how such an exploitative system could have existed for so long without rebellion. Aristocrats and their retainers worked in two ways to keep a lid on the situation. First the extractive economy left just enough for the peasants to keep them alive in this system of subsistence farming. The response to any resistance was public humiliation and brutality: meaning one lost what little he had had and be submitted to the contract of *ubugererwa* (for the land) or *ubugabire* (for the cattle), or worse, forced into exile. Yet the worst was death for the whole victim family. The loss of the breadwinner would surely mean starvation for one's family in a society whose leadership was totally

without concern for the welfare of the individual, and whose peasants had next to nothing to share with the poor.

Second was the constant reinforcement of the myth of reciprocity, that the aristocrats were the great protectors from external attack and the all-powerful providers of a successful economy. The peasants interpreted natural catastrophes as a punishment of an eventual nurturing or real rebellion or disobedience to authority. This contributed to their blind submission.

1.3.3. External factors: slavery and colonial systems

The underlying sources of contemporary conflicts in Burundi lie deep within the Burundi state history and their basic socio-political structures, which have not evolved in time and space. They have also been shaped by Burundi slavery experiences and the colonialism.
 The contact with the slave traders pushed the Ganwa rulers (mostly Tutsi) to organize an absolute centralized monarchy in which religious and secular authorities were fused. The monarch became a powerful person with "divine authority", and right on the people lives and their lands. Anybody challenging the authority was either hung publicly or exiled, or sold to slave traders or threatened to (by the ruling group with the help of the retainers), generating a mix of fear, submission, hatred, and animosity.

Sixty years of colonial rule greatly affected relationships among the four groups. Burundi was absorbed by the German Eastern Africa in 1889, followed by Belgian control in 1916. Both Germans and Belgians tend to identify with the ruling group (mostly Tutsi). They gave preference in the colonial-run education and administrative systems. They progressively ousted traditional Hutu chiefs and ruled the country through the pool of better educated Ganwa and Tutsi.

A 1934 census by Belgian rulers blurred social and ethnic lines. Persons owning more than ten cows were arbitrarily classified as Tutsi. As a result, relatively wealthy Hutu became Tutsi, and some poor Tutsi became Hutu. Already identified with relative deprivation, the Hutu became even more strongly associated with poverty and powerlessness. The census classified 85 per cent of the population as Hutu, 14 per cent as Tutsi, and 1 per cent as Twa. These strange percentages are still applied to Burundi today.

The rule by force accentuated inequalities in the relative economic, social and political fortunes among the "ethnic groups." The colonial administration generally pursued a doctrine of divide-and-rule, which eroded and prevented any attempts toward unification.

During the colonial era, Hutu (in general), Hima (a Tutsi subgroup considered as bad clan) and Twa groups were progressively denied political rights or participation, or the opportunity to develop their self-worth. They were denied equitable access to economic resources or opportunity. Severe economic conditions deprived the majority of a reasonable means of livelihood and the security of the person and property could not be effectively guaranteed. Finally, as colonialism legalized social identity into "ethnic identity," the social space between Hutu and Tutsi increased. The Belgian's indirect rule reinforced the politics of exclusion and increased Tutsi power, ignoring the Twa group completely.

When people have been excluded, directly or subtly, from participating in deciding how their lives are run, and when recourse to democratic redress seems hopeless, the only recourse open to them is to subvert or sabotage the process (The Mediator, 1998, p.1).

2. Parties involved in the conflict

The parties involved in the conflict fall into three major categories: the Tutsi, the Hutu, and the international community. The Tutsi comprises the government and its army, the administration, the civil society, the Tutsi political parties, and their militia. Their interests are to continue controlling the political power and economic and natural resources, to maintain international relations, and to maintain their impunity for the past crimes. They fear for their security once they are not in control.

   The Hutu consists of all those oppressed by the Tutsi political systems, including the Twa. Their needs are the basic human needs such as security, recognition, participation or political representation. They fear repression, exile, execution, continued exploitation, and loss of their human rights.

   The international community may not be directly involved in the Burundi conflict, but its financial and moral power is very important in the process of conflict resolution and transformation. Its presence can stabilize or fuel a conflict. It comprises the world super powers (the USA, the UK, France, Belgium, and Germany), the international organizations, the non-governmental organizations, and the Churches. Its interests are to have political stability and access to resources. They fear losing their influence and market through nationalization.

3. Issues

One can summarize all the issues involved in the Burundi conflict in three major groups: identity, governance and resources.

3.1. Identity

Identity is defined as an abiding sense of selfhood, the core of which makes life predictable to an individual. To have no ability to anticipate events is essentially to experience terror (Alert, 1996, p.9). Because identity is a basic condition of existence, perceived threats against it often result in conflicts being expressed violently. In Burundi, the Hutu and Twa identities (perpetual servants) are challenging the Tutsi identity (the perpetual ruling class). The recently educated Hutu population, exposed to Western political and social concepts of human rights and democracy, attempted to achieve by force what Tutsi ruling class would not give to them (Alert, 1996, p. 10). The emergence of good and bad clans among the Burundian groups came to complicate their relationship. But this was done for political objectives. Rulers and retainers emerged mostly from the good clans (Bahanza, Bajiji, Bavumu for the Hutu, and Banyaruguru for the Tutsi, none from the Twa group).

3.2. Governance

My grand-father used to tell me that the Hutu (Bahanza and Bajiji clans) were the first to organize the kingdom of Burundi. But the history does not precise how it came to be dominated by the Tutsi since there was no conquest. In the 17th century, the Tutsi took

over and excluded progressively the Hutu from power. They also excluded the Hima (a Tutsi subgroup) rendered the pariahs of the society (Rurimwishiga interview).

The issue of governance concerns the ways in which the Burundi society has been governed and is being governed, the distribution of the contested authority and resources within the society, and most of all the legitimacy of the authority in the eyes of Burundi society. The sources of power have always been authority, human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible psychological and ideological factors, and material resources and sanctions (Burgess, 1994, p. 19). According to Ian Doucet, there is a link between good governance and legitimacy in producing networks of social relationships, which are stable and durable (1998, p.7). Between the Hutu majority population and the Tutsi minority power, relationships are retained by coercion and maintained by the threat and the use of force, not legitimized by both parties. Ian Doucet states also that when legitimacy does not exist or is thrown into doubt, demands for social change can result in political turmoil and social unrest (1996, p. 7).

3.3. Resources

Burundians are disputing over access to and control of territory and economic and natural resources. There are wide structural inequalities between the "Haves" and the "Haves not", including the unequal distribution of land, income, housing, employment, public health, and political rights and representation. The increase of the population and the environmental degradation and exiguity of the land further perpetuates this inequality of resources.

4. Escalation of the conflicts

The Burundi conflict escalation occurred during the colonial period. At the independence in 1962, the existing institutionalized mechanisms could not respond constructively and the Hutu and Tutsi had reached open expression of hostility. Both sides employed a discourse of violence; Tutsi political leaders and the press vilified the Hutus and the Hutu language was increasingly of demands, threats and ultimata. No other event did more to sharpen ethnic hatreds in Burundi than the 1959 Hutu revolution in neighboring Rwanda.

Given the ethnic affinities between Rwanda and Burundi, the Hutu inevitably realized the implication of majority rule. At the same time, many Tutsi saw in the Rwanda upheaval an ominous pre-figuration of their destinies. Brutally uprooted from their traditional habitat and haunted by memories of homes destroyed and relatives killed, the Tutsi refugees added a potent source of ethnic hatred to a social arena already ripe for a Hutu-Tutsi confrontation.

The Hutu increased demands for more participation and representation, recognition, security and development, but the Tutsi refused and maintained the status quo. Mobilizing outsiders to support their causes to gain political, financial and moral support, all the parties were prone to violence. The killing of Hutu political leaders was seen as a sign the Tutsi would never accept sharing power. The Hutu attempted to overthrow the kingdom and failed in 1965, triggering massacres and many other killings in 1969, 1972-73, 1988, and 1990-91. In 1993, the country organized legislative and presidential elections because of the social movement and international pressure. The ruling class lost

the elections. They lost and staggered out a campaign to refuse to be ruled by their former servants. The Tutsi army overthrew the democratic institution within three months of existence, and a civil war started in 1993 and continues today.

Part II: Analysis of humiliation in Burundi conflicts

1   Concepts

1.1. Humiliation

Humiliation in the Burundi culture means the enforced lowering of a person or group, a process of subjugation that damages or strips away their "Ubuntu" (pride and honor and dignity). Acts of humiliation are common in the Burundi society (especially the authority feels humiliated when someone rebels against it). Anybody can be placed, against his will and often in a deeply hurtful way, in a situation that is greatly inferior (umusuku vs iteka) to what he feels he should expect. "Ugukengera" (or Humiliation) entails demeaning treatment that transgresses established expectations. It may involve acts of force including "ibitutsi" (insults) or violent force such "kumanika" (killing by hanging publicly) "gukubita ikimoko" (beating someone publicly), and forced works. At its heart is the idea of "kugaya" (pinning down), "gusuzugura" (putting down) or "guhana n'imbwa" (holding to the ground). Kunyaga (making someone helpless) and Kwangaza (chasing people from their lands) are among of the defining characteristics of humiliation as a process to force the victim into passivity.

According to the research conducted by Evelin G. Lindner, the victim is not necessarily passive. A victim may feel humiliated in the absence of any deliberately humiliating act – because of misunderstandings, or as a result of personal and cultural differences concerning norms about what respectful treatment ought to entail. A "victim" may even invent a story of humiliation (this tactic was used many times by those in power) in order to maneuver another party into the role of a loathsome perpetrator (Evelin G. Lindner, ?, p. 4).

My experience with humiliation brings me to the conclusion that, in most of the cases, the behavior conducive to violence is generated by a strong desire or a wish to eliminate the feeling of shame and humiliation and replace it by its opposite, the feeling of pride. For certain people that feeling is too painful to bear, and so intolerable that they are ready to do anything in their capacity to regain their violated self-esteem. The equivalent words of humiliation in my language (Kirundi) are many—agakengere, akagayo, agasuzugure, ugukura ubuntu, uguhana n'imbwa, according to the context in which it is used – while there are very few words for arrogance and pride-kwishima.

1.2. Conflicts: Assumptions

1.2.1. Conflict theorists assume that those who have or control desirable goods, services and other resources will defend and protect them at the expense of others (Eshleman J.R., 1993, p. 96)

1.2.2. Functionalist theorists answer the following questions: what are the parts of the social systems, what are the functions these parts intend to serve, and how do the

parts influence each other? Functionalist theory assumes that social systems have a tendency to be in equilibrium or balance (Cashion, G.B., 1993, p. 45).

1.2.3. Rational theorists assume that life is a series of exchanges involving rewards and costs, and that unequal exchange may result in dominance of one party over the other or even end the relationship. Social life is a process of bargaining or constant negotiation, and social relationship and interaction are based on trust and mutual interests (Basirico, L.A., 1993, p. 54).

1.2.4. Microinteractionist theorists assume that society exists within every socialized individual and that its external forms and structures arise through the social interaction-taking place among individuals at the symbolical and physical levels (Eshleman, J.R., 1993, p. 49).

1.2.5. Evolutionary theorists, particularly early sociologists, often equated evolution with progress and improvement, believing that natural selection would eliminate weak societies and those, which could not adapt. For this reason, some theorists, such as first name Spencer, opposed any sort of interference that would protect the weak and interfere with natural evolutionary process (Eshleman, J.R., 1993, p. 42).

1.2.6. Revolutionaries feel that life is not the way it ought to be, advocate, and express the need for change. The strategies can be violent or nonviolent. According to Steve Vago, revolution is a fundamental, rapid change in political organization, power relationships, stratification, economic property control, or the predominant myth of a social order within a society (Vago, S., 1990, p. 128).

1.2.7. Social movements are conscious, collective, and organized attempts to bring about or resist large social change in the social order by non-institutionalized means: They can be transformative, reformative, redemptive, and alternative (Vago, S., 1990, p. 310).

2. Analysis

In the light of the above assumptions, I am going to show the characteristics of Burundi social systems. We know there is cooperation among the members of the same ethnic group because of similar or complementary interests and because they need each other to accomplish those things beneficial to all. On the other hand, if one considers the Hutu and Tutsi as sub-units of the society, they compete with each other. All human societies, paradoxically, are always ordered, always changing and competing, and always held together by complementary interests and by consensus on cultural values, but also by coercion (Eitzen, D.S., 1991, p. 45).

I will base my analysis on the above humiliation and conflict concepts and try to answer the following questions: What is the fundamental relationship between the Hutu and the Tutsi? Why is there a conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups? What is the degree of integration in the Burundi society? What are the types of social changes and what is the degree of stability of the country?

2.1. Acts of humiliation in the Burundi society

In Burundi, the acts of humiliation transpire mostly in the daily relationship among people, their occupations, and the language used. For example, "Agateka aho kamye" was the expression used by Tutsi before the assassination of the 1993 Hutu elected president. This would mean that nobility could not shift from one group to another. It also conveyed the humiliation felt by Tutsi in loosing the elections. The expression was arrogant and insulting to the Hutu because Tutsi is was considered themselves born to rule over Hutu for ever.

Except for a few regions in Burundi, the Hutu Tutsi relationships have always been that of domination, subordination, power, and conflict consequent to humiliating acts.

2.1.1   Domination

In Burundi, the conflict arose from the nature of its social organization. Some positions have an institutionalized right to exercise control over other positions and to ensure compliance with authority through coercion. In other words, some individuals and groups are subject to authority rather than participants in its exercise. The perpetuation of such authority structures results in relationships of dominance and subordination and provides the occasion for exploitation. At the same time, social organization rests on social differentiation and the division of labor through which the satisfaction of individual wants and the provision of collective good are pursued. This division of labor has created complex relationships of exchange in different social positions. The combination of the division of labor with super- and subordination makes up the basic configuration of social positions, strata, and classes in the Burundi social system. In this sense, conflict is an everyday, normal, ongoing, and for most, institutionalized process that is a natural part of the social reality. That is why Max Weber defines conflict as action, intentionally carrying out the actor's own will against the resistance of the other party or parties (1974, p. 132).

However, a look at history illuminates the dynamics of Burundian political development and its implication for the future. If Burundians now are facing ethnic violence, mass killings, massacres and genocide, it is not a result of ancient tribal hatreds, but the consequences of acts of humiliation generated the political structures and systems, the divisive slavery and colonial policies and the post independence struggle for power among politico ethnic elite in the polarized and overpopulated country.

Mahmoud says: "Before the slavery and colonialist period, Tutsi was an identity of wealth and power. Hutu signified a lack of both. A Hutu with means could go through a social ritual called Kwihutura. It was a ritual by which a Hutu shed his Hutuness. Your children could now marry Tutsi and their children would be considered Tutsi. Likewise, a Tutsi family without means may find it difficult to find a Tutsi spouse for their off-spring. These children would then have no choice but marry Hutu. While the social space between Hutu and Tutsi was vast, with Tutsi as power and Hutu as subject, it was a space that some could and did negotiate, either through opportunity that came with enrichment or through compulsion that was a consequence of impoverishment. (Mahmood, 1998, p.10)" . My grand father used to tell me stories where many people fled their lands and came to settle in our region where the coexistence of Hutu and Tutsi was peaceful.

2.1.2. Subordination and exploitation: Effects of the slavery system on Burundi society in the 17th century.

Many times the slave traders attempted to enter Burundi by force. Burundians organized around their Ganwa leaders and fought and defeated the slave traders. However, their contact with the Burundi primitive society left deep scars and germs of subordination and domination. The victory over the slave traders conferred to the leaders more political and military power. This had two consequences on the Burundi society: the administration became centralized, and a feudal exploitation system was institutionalized with their corollaries of domination and subordination. The king, his sons, and relatives became masters of lives, land, and cattle. The ruling class threatened whole villages with slavery in order to deter those nursing ideas of rebellion or dissidence. Famine and death resulting from the raids, as well as intra-clanic and internecine warfare, forced fugitives to return from the jungle and voluntarily enslave themselves to the raiders.

   The greed of the political leaders pushed to submit poor people under two social bondage contracts: Ubugererwa[1] (land contract) and Ubugabire[2] (cow donation). Society was not monetized; therefore, without a contract one could not acquire these two precious values of land and cow. The system was unjust because the value of tasks required by the contracts was by far superior to that of the borrowed land or cow (Ndarubagiye, L., p. 21, 1995). Helpful specific practice.

   The Hutu submitted to their Tutsi masters for fear of being sold into slavery. This feudal system was in itself a source of conflict as emphasized by First name Marx: "The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life. At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of property with which they had been at work before (Marx, 1959, p. 44)".

2.1.3. Power

Under the influence of colonialism the ethnic ties became more salient. Centralization and modernization eroded old identities based on localities, kinship and dynasty rule. In its divide-and-rule politics, the colonial system gave power to Tutsi in two ways: freezing the social identities into ethnic ones and administrating the colony indirectly.

2.1.3.1. Identity frozen into law
a. Classification
The Germans understood Africa through the optics of the late-nineteenth century imperial Europe that saw humanity as a conglomeration of races requiring identification and hierarchical classification (Mahmood, 1996, p. 11). Such was the inspiration behind the new discipline of physical anthropology, whose foot soldiers now began to classify the

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[1] Ubugererwa means the lease of a small piece of land by the Tutsi to a Hutu who had no land or whose patch of land was too to feed his family. In return for this lease the Hutu contracted to fulfill all kinds of household and field works for the proprietor.

[2] Ubugabire means the lending or donation of a cow by the owner of a herd of cows to someone who had none. In this case also, the beneficiary of the lending or donation was compelled to do all kinds of work on behalf of the lending family.

population as separate races: the rich and powerful Tutsi as a superior Hamitic race, the poor Hutu as an inferior Bantu ethnic group, and the Twa as pygmies.

The Belgians, from 1918 to 1933, used this theory to organize the administrative apparatus of colonial Burundi. As a result, the superior class received more advantages while the inferior class was subjected. The superior class enjoyed impunity, while the inferior was forced into exile or killed after his belongings had been confiscated. This punishment was extended to the culprit's whole family. Naturally, such practices generated much tension among the population, specifically, envy of the inferior class toward the rulers and resentment of the inferior class against the system (Fanon, 1967, p. 52).

b. Identification of ethnic groups

Before the colonialism, the Burundians were classified under four major groups: Ganwa, Twa, Tutsi, and Hutu according to their social occupation. Burundians themselves emphasized the clanic identity (belonging to a common ancestor) rather than the social one. Under the Belgians, Burundians' identities were regrouped into two politico-ethnic identities: Hutu and Tutsi. Tutsi became an identity linked more with power than wealth and Hutu became a subject identity. The Tutsi became a race ruling over the Hutu ethnic group. However among the Tutsi there two subdivisions: the highest nobility class (abanyaruguru) and the lowest common class (abahima).

The Bahima Tutsi subdivision could not perform any activity at the royal court. They were considered as bringing bad luck, especially when you meet them in the morning. Their status was even worse compared to that of Hutu and Twa.

The previous social institution of Kwihutura[3] that prevented the Tutsi-Hutu distinction from hardening into caste-like difference or generating a Hutu counter-elite was suppressed. Now the socio-economic distinction between exploiters and exploited, or rich and poor, became political. These ethnic identities gave the Hutu an opportunity to organize, claim their civil and political rights, and demand that justice be done equitably among the population. The Tutsi contested the Hutu claims, increasing the ethnic tension.

Coser's definition of "conflict" is particularly helpful in understanding the situation in Burundi. He defines "conflict as a struggle over values or claims to status, power, and scarce resources, in which the aims of the conflicting groups are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure, or eliminate rivals" (Oberschall, 1973, p. 30). Those who are favored have a vested interest in conserving and consolidating their existing share. Those who are negatively privileged seek to increase their share, both individually and collectively. The problem in my country is complicated because the opposing interests are ethnic. Privileges—the desired things in life and the social positions and relationships that assure their continued enjoyment—are not given up without resistance. The very institution that creates the misery and suffering of some contributes to the freedom and security of others. Negatively privileged groups gain freedom, rights, and material wealth at considerable risk, sacrifice, and expenditure of time and resources. Trotsky once remarked that societies do not change its institutions as need arises the way a mechanic changes his instruments. The tenacity and determination of stakes in resisting change makes social conflict a fundamental fact of existence.

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[3] The Hutu who was able to accumulate riches and rise through the socio-economic hierarchy could shed Hutuness and achieve the political status of Tutsi.

2.1.3.2. Indirect rule:

The colonizers, instead of liberating the Hutu from the Tutsi yoke, maintained intact the local administration. The colonial state structures were superimposed on the traditional Burundi society. During the colonial period, the indigenous administration, headed by the Tutsi superior class, dealt with matters concerning the customary law, the land and cow, collection of per capita tax, recruitment of labor and convicts,[4] and births and deaths registration. The colonial administration dealt with health care, education, trade, finances, foreign relations, recruitment of civil servants,[5] and remuneration of employees of the two administrations.

The previous trinity (agriculture, security, Justice) of chiefs was abolished, and powers, which had been before separated and differentiated, were fused into a single agent and trusted to the superior race. This fusion increased animosity and hatred between the Hamits and the Bantu and resentment of the colonial system. Lemarchand confirms this:

"This concentration of powers in the hands of a single chief, exercising unfettered control over his people, was bound to lead to abuses; not only did it deprive the Hutu of opportunities to play one chief against another, but it also eliminated the channels of appeals offered by the previous arrangements. These institutional changes augmented more conflicts in the society. This system excluded progressively the Hutu majority ethnic group inferior class from the participation in the management of their society and consequently could not benefit of the advantages generated by the system (in Mahmoud, 1996, p.12)."

The system created inequalities among the population and contributed to increasing the animosity among them. The period preceding, the independence was characterized by three sources of tension: Hutu against Tutsi, Tutsi Bahima against Tutsi Banyaruguru, and Tutsi against Belgians.

2.1.4. Conflict

2.1.4.1. Brutal shifting of power by the 1940s

The Catholic Church took one side and helped the oppressed Hutu ethnic group. The Hutu were allowed to go to school and could be engaged in the colonial administration. Therefore, the expansion of money and school based Western education eroded the Tutsi-hamit economic supremacy, while, for a time, leaving intact their political supremacy.

The money economy opened up opportunity for enrichment other than through the ownership of cattle, weakening the bonds of pastoral servitude that had been Ubugererwa and Ubugabire contracts between patron and client. The expanding school and money system provided the structural basis for the emergence of Hutu counter-elite. The educated Hutu began to raise their voice and to claim a better treatment and equality with the Tutsi. Such action angered the Tutsi and triggered their animosity against the church

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[4] The Tutsi recruited labor convicts to do the following: build roads, carry luggage of whites, bring stones and beams for constructions, construct public edifices, cultivated the fields of white men, etc. They did not recruit their brothers to execute those strenuous jobs.

[5] Belgians and Germans allied to Tutsi in order to dominate Hutu population. Most of civil servant was Tutsi. This strengthened the Tutsi power over the Hutu. The colonial texts and law also legalized the Tutsi ethnic power.

and the Hutu ethnic group. The Tutsi manifested a vehement opposition against the Hutu claims and urged the Belgians and the United Nations not to recognize the Hutu petitions. This act in turn sparked Hutu anger against the Tutsi. The Belgians not only accepted the petitions to appease the mass majority community but also granted independence to Rwanda under Bantu majority rule. The decision was taken in keeping with the standard democratic principles of majority rule and minority rights enshrined in the present civilization and covenant. Belgians understood that the Tutsi could not maintain their power contested by the Hutu majority population. Tutsi felt humiliated by the Belgian position and increased hostilities toward the Belgian administration, the Catholic Church, and the Hutu. The mutual hatred became so strong that it developed into political struggle for leadership, into a wholesale scramble for total control, supremacy, and survival between the two groups, and finally into the first Hutu and Tutsi violent confrontation in Rwanda in 1959.

In Burundi, it was the opposite. The Belgians lessen the tension by allowing Hutu to form their political parties and compete with the Tutsi leadership. The Bashingantahe (a college of wise people in communities) institution played a very important role to appease the tension between the two groups. This institution was able to bring Tutsi-Hutu together and struggle for the independence. Unfortunately, the Bashingantahe institution had been progressively suppressed and Hutu leadership has been eliminated since the independence in 1962. Was it a deliberate Burundian Tutsi strategy?

In 1962, Rwanda became independent under the Hutu majority rule while in Burundi the Belgians maintained the status quo. This aroused a sentiment of the Belgian injustice toward the Hutu of Burundi and the Tutsi of Rwanda. Not only this made feel that the Belgian administration failed to prepare the country for independence; but also precipitated a bombshell of ethnic animosity, massacres and civil wars in the two countries. The independence was granted with that culture of violence already sown in the heart of people.

2.1.4.2. Social conflict and the social order:

Some Hutu, threatened with the loss of their livelihood, clang tenaciously to traditional ways; others, reaping unheard-of profits in an age of progress, seek to speed the process of change and prepare to defend their gain against newer claimants. Others find further progress blocked by the determination of still powerful groups not to yield their inherited privileges. The existing social arrangements and institutions were no longer suited to solve new problems of an altogether different magnitude, dissatisfaction mounts and hatreds accumulate. As we can see, social conflict is seldom a simple mechanical reaction to grievances and frustration experienced in the pursuit and defense of material interests, but is experienced and interpreted through ideals and highly-regarded principles about right and wrong with reference to the social order.

In Burundi, the presence of several types of discontents, together with institutional weaknesses and the difficulties of implementing reforms and resolving conflicts over authority, were the major issues during the immediate post independence period. They even precipitated a crisis of national unity.

With the departure of the colonial power, a post-independence government attempted to work out the major issues of legitimacy and the social organization, but the different groups in the society manifested a vested interest in what appear to be mutually exclusive

solutions and sought help from other countries to defend their interests. Burundi also entered the contemporary world without having prior cultural unity and a sense of national consciousness among the population, which instead directed its sense of identity and loyalty to ethnic collectivities and not to the newly established state.

2.1.4.3. Effect of the colonialism

The colonial administration and commercial system favored the Tutsi ethnic group with educational and employment opportunities that resulted in their subsequent monopolization of civil service and clerical positions. Such favoritism left a legacy of unequally shared opportunities and development—a situation of latent conflict.
The attempts at settlement of each of national problems accentuated identification with and loyalties to traditional communities and groups and led to an articulation and aggregation of interests along line of ethnic cleavage, threatening the national unity because the same groups faced each other as antagonist on all major issues[6].
The enforcement of the traditional ruler's privileges and authority was utterly repulsive and unacceptable to the Hutu majority who were committed to achieving a modern structure of authority through democratizing the political process.

The choice of French as an administrative language by the colonialists immediately favored the Tutsi for civil career chances. The replacement of expatriate administrators and army officers by Burundians favored the Tutsi who for historical reasons became more highly educated and urbanized and raises fear among the Hutu in a government dominated by the Tutsi ethnic minority.

After the independence, the country rushed to initiate social and economic development programs, but did not address any of the past grievances between Hutu and Tutsi. They were completely ignored. The competition for the distribution of scarce goods and political advantages led to clashes of interests between Hutu and Tutsi (previously mobilized for independence). This increased ethnic antagonisms also contributed to promoting regional polarization (regionalism). Characteristically in post independence situations, several major societal issues crop up at the same moment, and in such an intensely competitive situation, the winners on any single issue looked as though they might turn out to be the winners on all issues. Consequently, losing on one issue may well mean complete loss of the social, economic, and political power all in one, a situation hardly conductive to compromise. Lipset's viewpoint on the transition from the traditional to modern political institution is this: " When major issues of societal organization and values are dealt one by one, with each more or less solved before the next arise, chance of nonviolent and institutionalized conflict regulation are increased. But when major issues pile up unresolved and confront contending groups at the same historical moment, the chance for compromise and tolerance are slim" (Lipset (1963) p. 71).

One can always question the deepest motives of Burundian confrontation at the eve of the third millennium. Is it fair to continue to blame the slavery experience or the colonialism after so many years? Looking at the Burundians themselves, the society still

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[6] The major issues at the independence were: the national symbols such as flag, holidays, anthem, position of traditional chiefs, settlement of the king and princes, integration of Hutu in the administration, distribution of power between the government and the subunits, religion and language of instruction, replacement of Europeans administrators by nationals, position of the new state on the international scene

has many problems which require serious debate. There is no basic Burundian consensus on societal norms and values or the proper form of social organization. Among other things, there is controversy on allocation and distribution of power and social influence. The ethnicities within the Burundi society are not integrated. If it appears so to some foreigners, it is pseudo-integration achieved by force and fraud, because the many conflicts have never been resolved or properly transformed. They have only been suppressed through many acts of violence including suppressing and humiliating the "enemy". By doing so the human needs haves never been adequately addressed by any of the successive regimes.

2.1.4.4. Basic human needs:

My experience is that Burundian politician elites struggle over power and resources control. They believe that the solution is more power and resources. The elite politicians openly express that if they have more people, guns, money, and international support they will be able to force the other side to be reasonable and they will achieve what they need and deserve. But the leaders sometimes forget that, as John Burton says, conflicts are not ultimately about power and resources, but about something deeper called human needs. (Burton, 1993, p) These are powerful needs for identity, security, respect and recognition, needs that have more to do with the human spirit and social reality than with material resources and power. It is true, on one hand, that land, resources, wealth and power are material issues around which conflicts appear to resolve. However, in reality, if I refer to the social interaction and reward theory, resources and power are rather avenues through which people meet the basic human needs, which are indispensable for their natural development. If people can find ways to meet the needs, which drive them, they can afford to be much more flexible with the arrangement of resources and power than might seem possible at first glance. When the parties are locked into the conflict over resources and power, however, they fail to see and deal with the underlying needs that drive them. Thus, in Burundi, the parties pretend to battle over ethnic lines, but in fact, the deeper motivation is a quest for security (for the Tutsi) and recognition and participation (for the Hutu). When these deeper needs are not recognized and the conflict is instead treated as a contest for power or resources, parties engage in behaviors that to onlookers, and particularly to opponents, seem wildly irrational. The Hutu and Twa need recognition, positive identity, and participation. The Tutsi need security. These needs are universal and not negotiable.

   Conflicts driven by basic human needs are often characterized by high level of volatility and violence. Given that people care more about security, recognition, and identity rather than about material resources or possessions, they often willingly sacrifice any material asset in a struggle to meet these basic needs. One implication of this is that force and power rarely have the impact on opponents that people expect them to have. Deterrence assumes that opponents will count the cost of resistance in material terms and decide it is too high. However when people are driven by unmet basic human needs they do not count material costs. Efforts to deter them usually prove far costlier than opponents expected. Repression may work for a time (1965, 1969, 1971, 1972-1973, 1979, 1988, 1990, 1991), but not forever. After such an extended period of repression, the 1993 civil war was all the more chaotic and ferocious. Arrangements for power sharing have been approached, but because they did not address the human needs involved, they

did not work. The challenge is to identify the basic human needs that drive the parties and find ways to truly resolve them. This will require negotiation over material resources, but the biggest and most fruitful changes are likely to be found in the way the parties treat each other. The Burundians need and crave for the mutual respect, security, freedom, human rights, understanding, personnel development, creation and idleness, and participation and this has more to do with the human spirit than with the material. How people are treated in social interaction has greater impact on meeting their basic human needs than the size of their house, the form of health care they use, the kind of transportation they use, or even the amount of salary they receive.

3. Tactics used by the parties

3.1. The Tutsi used conquest, divide and rule, manipulation, cultural invasion, military coup d'etat, killing, exiling, and appropriation (all these elements have always interpreted by Hutu as acts of humiliation).

The Tutsi ethnic group dominated the government and behaved like oppressors. In order to dominate they have no choice but to deny to the Hutu and Twa the right to say their own words and think their own thoughts. The Tutsi attempted to destroy the human qualities of the Hutu and presented a world of deceit designed to increase Hutu alienation and passivity. It is what Paolo Freire calls conquest (Freire, 1997, p.119).

As the Tutsi minority group wanted to subordinate and dominate the Hutu majority ethnic group, it must divide it and keep it divided in order to remain in power. The minority could not permit itself the luxury of tolerating the unification of the Hutu, which would undoubtedly signify a serious threat to its own hegemony. Accordingly, it halted by any method, even violent, any action, which in even incipient fashion could awaken the Hutu to the need for unity. It was in the interest of the Tutsi to weaken the Hutu still further, to isolate them, to create and deepen rifts among the Hutu (Freire, 1997, p. 122). The Tutsi even bribed other Hutu to humiliate their brothers.

Manipulation was also an instrument of division and conquest. The Tutsi try to conform the Hutu to their objectives, using myths and cultural invasion. They imposed, via the media, their own views of the Burundi society upon the Hutu and tried to inhibit the Hutu creativity by curbing their expression (Freire, 1997, p.133). The cow (symbol of Tutsi nobility) has progressively become the most valuable thing, like money of exchange, in the Burundi society dominated by the Tutsi.

The Tutsi were aware that despair and hope are the two emotions, which, once combined, could propel the Hutu majority into revolutionary activity. That is why they had organized several military coups d'etat when the population was desperate with the social, economic, and political situation. The new leaders, in their social discourse, promise to redress the situation giving new hopes to the population. The Tutsi considered themselves as born to rule forever over the Hutu and Twa. They did not (do not even now) hide it in their daily discourse or language " iteka aho ryamye, ntaho ryabonetse ko umuhutu atwara igihugu" (meaning nobility must prevail, servants have never ruled in the history of the country)

2.1   The Hutu utilized revolution (violence and nonviolence) and social movement.

During many occasions throughout Burundi history, the Hutu denounced injustices committed against other human beings. They got organized into social movements to claim the respect of human rights dignity (Ubuntu). Some movements were non violent (revolt of Inanmujandi, 1933 refusal of ethnic identity cards, 1960 political parties, 1988 open letter to president Buyoya) while others were violent (1965, 1972, 1990), but they all were bloodily repressed. The summit of the repression was in 1972 where almost 300,000 Hutu were killed within three months. As the democratic recourse to redress the situation seemed impossible, the only ways the Hutu opposition could oblige the Tutsi to bring about social change in Burundi was to organize themselves into violent social protest movements with the formation of an armed rebel group in 1994.

Despite repression and alienation, the Hutu had managed to develop some area of competence and new forms of expertise. Unfortunately, the social structure did not change to integrate them. A perceived discrepancy between the Hutu expectation and the Tutsi society values has persisted up today. In his book, Gurr states that when the perceived difference between what the people expect of society and what it appears, society will be able to provide generates revolution (Kimbell, 1990, p.77).

The Hutu social movements became natural, conscious and collective because attempted to bring large-scale change in the social order by non-institutionalized means. Their movements were also more transformative rather than reformative at their beginning since they advocated the liberation Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa together for unjust rules and a better society for all. Now that the Hutu leaders have been killed the movements have been reduced to redemptive ones seeking total change in individual rather in supra-individual systems.

Social movements and revolutionary demands for change occurred in Burundi because the social and political structures had rendered standards and expectations inefficient. The human personality (for Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) was affected on all levels (moral, spiritual, physical). The human ego's capacity to master internal and external reality was disrupted. The foundation for stability of the society had been eroded; the common political vision of the leaderships did no longer exist. The solution for this crisis resided in finding responsible and accountable leadership able to create space for dialogue, to negotiate the common good and the preservation of the society.

3.3. The international community has always adopted the strategy of *laissez- faire in the Burundi case*. This was justified by the principle of non-intervention in internal national matters. In fact the most powerful party felt indirectly backed by the international community since the International community did not take any open action to denounce the abuse of human rights and neither did not it encourage the state of law. Facing the international community silence, many Burundians questioned the necessity of the international declaration of human rights, the principles of democracy, freedom and equality.

1   4. Alternative to Burundi conflict: traditional, radical and liberal social analysis

It is awful to see how human beings have been suffering in Burundi for a long time. However, Burundians can no longer continue to blame each other for their own mistakes. Nor have they to blame the slavery and the colonialism experiences, or the international community for its silence. They must responsibly take their destiny together. They must burry their mutual hatred, heal their history, and reconcile with themselves.

I have explored the historical dimension of the Burundi humiliation and conflict, its structural elements, the various divisions of the society, and the multiple levels of the issues involved.

As presented, the Burundi society is an ascending pyramid society, controlled from the top and with very little participation from the bottom. Those who are in control are the arbiters of the social process, determining how the society should function, imposing the social order, and defining the common good. The majority of the population has always contested this authoritarian model of government.

The alternative to Burundi conflict would be to consider the society as changing and adopt a transformative, interdependent and participative model to achieve the integration of the whole society. Burundians need a new leadership that can positively mobilize people energy and direct tensions produced by conflicts toward creative solutions of the nation problems. The Burundian objectives should be to seek creative paths that can lead to new and better society through fundamental structural transformation.

My suggestions to implement this strategy are the following:
A national debate of the issues of identity, governance, and redistribution of resources is needed to heal the past wound of Burundian society. Nowadays, it would be suicidal for the Burundi leadership to continue to hide the cancers that have been eroding the Burundi social fabric. It would be better to tackle openly and find solution for a lasting peace. First of all the human rights must be recognized, and respected. Justice must prevail at all the levels of the society.

- Never repress a conflict or simply manage it, but seek creative ways of transformation through dialogue and participation. Write a new constitution protecting the citizens and the nation
- Empower a new leadership able enforces the law; impunity is the gangrene of the society.
- Heal the humiliating past histories by re-humanizing the society and its people
- Clearly identify the deepest structural causes of contemporary conflicts in the social, political, economic, and cultural institutions of our society and deal with them constructively
- Bring the elite Burundians to an awareness of the negative consequences of their behavior in the short-, middle-, and long-term; Prepare the elite to apologize and face the social reality that confronts the nation as a whole entity
- Finally, appreciate the importance of positive social change within the Burundi society. The big task is to find mechanisms to rebuild the trust among Burundians and change the mentality of eternal "nobility" and "servanthood" into a constructive and integrative dialogue.

Thank you

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