

THE CAUSES OF THE RWANDA CRISIS AND THE 'POSTCOLONIAL SYNDROME' *

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Abstract: *The investigation focuses on the Rwanda crisis and begins with a brief introduction before looking into the historical circumstances preceding the 1994 genocide. It highlights the actual causes of the genocide and the Belgian colonisers' policies (and, to a lesser extent, the policies of the German colonisers before them), which amplified the differences between the Hutu and the Tutsi. The article outlines how Rwanda became a postcolonial state, where old rivalries turned violent and resulted in massacres. Important factors were also the poor financial state of the country and the fact that Rwanda was a densely populated country, which should be seen in connection with Europe's "divide and rule" policy. Rwanda suffered as a postcolonial state because of the various parties' conflicting views on power sharing, as well as the International Community's support for an agreement that mostly benefited the minority (the Tutsi). Even if the Arusha Accords were designed to "repair" the circumstances of an already failing post-colonial experiment, the pressure used by Western circles to accept them undermined the power of the majority (Hutu) by causing additional damages rather than eliminating the previously existing ones.*

Keywords: *Rwanda, Hutu, Tutsi, genocide, massacre, postcolonialism*

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Rezumat: Cauzele crizei din Rwanda și „sindromul post-colonial”. Studiul analizează situația ce a condus la criza din Rwanda. Mai întâi este trecut în revistă contextul istoric și motivele care au generat tragicele evenimente ce au debutat în anul 1994. Ulterior este explicat modul în care colonizatorii belgieni (și într-o măsură mai mică – înaintea lor – cei germani) au amplificat prin politicile lor diferențele dintre grupurile etnice hutu și tutsi. De asemenea, este analizată maniera în care Rwanda a devenit un stat post-colonial, unde vechile rivalități s-au acutizat și au condus la masacre. Sunt evidențiați factorii declanșatori importanți ai acestor evenimente, în care se includ starea financiară proastă a țării și densitatea mare a populației. Rwanda, ca stat post-colonial, a suferit din cauza modului diferit în care împărțirea puterii a fost văzută de diferitele partide de aici. Comunitatea internațională a promovat un acord care a favorizat în principal minoritatea (aici, tutsi). Presiunea aplicată de cercurile occidentale pentru acceptarea Acordurilor de la Arusha a subminat puterea majorității (hutu) provocând daune suplimentare, în locul eliminării celor deja existente, chiar dacă acordurile erau menite să „repare” situația unui experiment post-colonial deja eșuat.

INTRODUCTION

Rwanda is a landlocked country in the region of the African Great Lakes, in East Africa. It is one of the most densely populated countries in the continent, with a population of about thirteen million: 85% are Hutu, 14% are Tutsi and 1% are Twa.¹ In terms of religious beliefs, 65% are Roman Catholics, 9% Protestants, and 1% Muslims, while there is a percentage of 25% who believe in other local religions. Kinyarwanda is the spoken language almost by the whole population of the country, while English, French and Swahili are other spoken languages.² As such, there is no correspondence between language and religion.

The Hutu arrived in the region around 1000 AD, whereas the Tutsi arrived between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries from southern Ethiopia and were a pastoral group who owned cattle. Although the Tutsi were only a small part of the overall population, they managed to rule the region as they received military training. In essence, the ownership of cattle was an important denominator of superiority and wealth, which helped the Tutsi aristocracy to impose their rule.³

¹ Paul J. Magnarella, *Justice in Africa. Rwanda's Genocide, Its Courts, and the UN Criminal Tribunal*, New York, Routledge, 2000, p. 2.

² The members of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and other refugees who came from neighbouring Uganda spoke English, as Uganda is an Anglophone country and Tutsi exiles grew up there (See Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil. The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, London, Arrow Books, 2004, p. 44).

³ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 3-7.

This hierarchical system of 'castes' prevailed in pre-colonial Rwanda and continued in the following years, augmenting the social distance between the two groups. Thus, the Tutsi were at the top, the Twa at the very bottom and the Hutu in the middle.⁴ However, it is also important to note that according to certain sources, the Tutsi-Hutu split was originally founded on geographical norms – 'centre versus periphery' and not rivalry, with the latter occurring relatively later.⁵ Although the distinction between the native populations pre-existed, the colonisers exploited this to their benefit. Rwanda's colonial history began in 1894 and became, together with Burundi and Tanzania, part of German East Africa. The Germans ruled the country until the end of the First World War when Belgian rule commenced under the League of Nations mandate system. The Belgians ruled Rwanda and Burundi until 1962, and later the two countries adopted their political systems.⁶

A summary of the events, relying on previous well-established literature, is necessary for the full understanding of the crisis and how it developed. The analysis of all the factors shows that Rwanda suffered from the "postcolonial syndrome," which is treated here as a political phenomenon. Decolonisation, as Kennedy declared, could be characterised as "the collapse of colonial empires and the creation of new nation-states across what came to be known as the Third World in the decades following World War II." As such, decolonisation is meant to describe "the political upheavals that brought an end to the European colonial empires" and resulted in the creation of several nation-states in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.⁷ However, the question that emerges is how successful these new states have been, and under what circumstances they developed. In essence, in some countries (including Rwanda) the local regimes that replaced colonial rule chose "selective amnesia," as regards the years of turmoil that preceded and ignored the interests of certain groups.⁸

THE EVENTS

The Europeans' views on Tutsi supremacy originated from Social Darwinism and other evolutionary theories, which flourished in Europe at the time. The

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 7-9.

⁵ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, London, Hurst & Company, 2019, p. 21.

⁶ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷ Dane Kennedy, *Decolonization. A Very Short Introduction*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 5, 8.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

Europeans assumed that the Tutsi, as descendants of the Ancient Egyptians, were superior to the rest of the Africans. Following the German model (which relied on the Tutsi aristocrats), the Belgians favoured the Tutsi also and relied on similar grounds.⁹ In addition, during Belgian rule, and in particular in the early years of the 1930s, the Catholic Church became an important factor in the structure of the Rwandese society, with many natives – including the Tutsi king – converting to Christianity and so being exposed to Christian values. It could be said that some of the Belgian reforms established the “modern Rwanda.”¹⁰ Nonetheless, in 1933 the Belgians proceeded also to a controversial decision, as they conducted a census and introduced a system of ethnic identity cards – indicating ‘ethnicity’ for everyone. Hence, ‘Tutsi,’ ‘Hutu’ or ‘Twa’ became ethnic labels, based on the status of cow ownership.¹¹

This system of ethnic identity cards lasted until the mid-1990s and was only abolished after the 1994 genocide. Essentially, it would not be an exaggeration to say that such an ethnic identity card system was a racist policy that inevitably caused further tension. As Magnarella claimed, this resulted in “a sub-national identity,” which divided the population, and was a case of a “negative history of dominance-subordination, superiority-inferiority, and exploitation-suffering.”¹² It was an anachronistic solution, which resulted in enmity and inevitably promoted further Tutsi supremacy.¹³

A change of attitude appeared in the 1950s when the Belgian colonisers switched their position and supported the Hutu. Several reasons contributed to this direction, but the Belgians’ turn towards democratic reforms was a basic factor.¹⁴ Of course, this change should be seen in connection with some important developments in the 19th century and the anti-colonial trend in Europe, which saw the possession of other countries with scepticism and did not leave Belgium unaffected.¹⁵ Consequently, the Hutu found fertile ground for the first time, and in

⁹ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁰ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 32-35.

¹¹ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 10-11. Keane refers to 1926, as the year when the Belgians introduced the system of ethnic identity cards (Fergal Keane, *Season of Blood. A Rwandan journey*, London, Viking, 1995, p. 193).

¹² Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 11-12.

¹³ Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 281. See also Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers. Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 229.

¹⁴ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 12-13.

¹⁵ H. L. Wesseling, *Divide and Rule. The Partition of Africa, 1880-1914*, translated by Arnold

1957, intellectual Hutu published the "Hutu Manifesto" to promote their cause for an independent Rwanda, with them (as the majority) in the lead. Two years later, the pro-Hutu party PARMEHUTU conducted a rebellion, which resulted in clashes between Hutu and Tutsi.¹⁶

In 1960, the Belgians started replacing the Tutsi with Hutu in the administration of the country, while in September 1961 legislative elections took place, with PARMEHUTU receiving 78% of the vote. Rwanda became an independent state in 1962, and Grégoire Kayibanda became the first president. Nevertheless, the new president adopted authoritarian methods, reminiscent of the traditional Tutsi aristocracy. To make matters worse, by 1963 extremist groups had killed Tutsi, whereas many more Tutsi had been forced to leave for other countries.¹⁷

Tutsi refugees who left for Burundi started to organise attacks against Rwanda and after an unsuccessful invasion in 1963, the Hutu government proceeded to a wave of slaughters against the Tutsi, while Tutsi politicians based in Rwanda were executed. Later, in 1972, political developments in Burundi had a significant impact on Rwanda, after the Tutsi-led military regime of Burundi defeated a rebellion of Burundian Hutu. The rebellion resulted in massive killings of Hutu, while many others left for Rwanda. In retaliation, Kayibanda proceeded to a new wave of attacks and many Tutsi were forced to leave the country.¹⁸ In substance, the Kayibanda regime paved the way for dangerous routes, as the president was responsible even for low-level positions in the administration. General Juvénal Habyarimana, who ousted Kayibanda in 1973 and adopted a racial societal structure with similar authoritarian policies, later adopted this method.¹⁹

As such, in 1973, a new regime and era commenced for Rwanda, and Juvenal Habyarimana became the second president. In Magnarella's words, "Habyarimana's Rwanda became a single-party dictatorship." Habyarimana focused on the separatist policies of the previous regime and kept the system of ethnic identity cards.²⁰ The pre-existing problem of population density was not resolved and by the 1980s, more refugees had been forced to leave for other countries. Despite the pleas, Habyarimana objected to any return of refugees and

J. Pomerans, Westport – London, Praeger, 1996, p. 77.

¹⁶ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 12-13.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 13 and Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁸ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁹ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

²⁰ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 14-15. See also Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder. The Rwandan Genocide*, London – New York, Verso, 2004, p. 11.

invoked the problem of population density.²¹

In the meantime, political developments in Uganda also contributed to the turbulences: Tutsi refugees from Rwanda helped Yoweri Museveni to overpower Milton Obote and seize power in 1986. These Tutsi refugees, who had taken military training, formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1987 and joined forces with some Hutu refugees.²² Although they were small in numbers, this diaspora group proved to be an effective and capable military force.²³ Aiming to return to Rwanda and get involved in politics, in the early 1990s the RPF attempted to invade the country. In response, the Habyarimana regime reacted with further repression measures against the Tutsi. Within this tense climate, Francois Mitterrand, the French president, applied pressure on Habyarimana to proceed with political reforms.²⁴ The latter made a compromise and announced the transition to a multi-party system in July 1990. In essence, Habyarimana and his party accepted this transition because they realised that the situation was at the edge of war, but, in reality, little changed, as the previous single-party system continued to enjoy all the power without any serious concessions.²⁵ In general, the RPF's attempts to invade Rwanda from Uganda and the extremist Hutu's efforts to maintain a power monopoly can be seen in the early 1990s.

Consequently, in the overall turmoil of the 1990s and with the financial state of the country deteriorating, the Arusha Accords—which Habyarimana signed rather unwillingly and despite the reactions of extremist Hutu circles – came as a final solution to satisfy these conflicting interests. The agreement provided for a ceasefire, a power-sharing arrangement, the return of Tutsi exiles, and restructuring of the armed forces and was finalised in August 1993.²⁶

In theory, the accords set the framework for a significant transition towards the democratisation of the country – allowing other parties to get involved in

²¹ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²² Their goal to return to Rwanda should be seen in connection with political developments in Uganda. After Museveni's accession to power, certain Tutsi of Rwandese origin, who helped him to overpower the previous regime, undertook key positions in the administration of Uganda. The climate was reversed though against those Tutsi refugees, and Museveni had been accused for allowing the overrepresentation of the Banyarwanda (André Guichaoua, *From War to Genocide. Criminal Politics in Rwanda, 1990-1994*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 2015, p. 29).

²³ Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

²⁴ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁵ André Guichaoua, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-43, 45.

²⁶ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

politics.²⁷ However, in essence, with the signing of the Arusha Accords (and the power-sharing arrangement overall), the RPF enjoyed several gains, whereas the Habyarimana circles would need to make significant concessions.²⁸ As Sarkin and Fowler explained reasonably, while in the abstract the Accords were based on power sharing, extremist Hutu circles viewed them as a defeat and undermined them.²⁹

The overall structure of the agreements was basically unworkable, and goodwill was a critical precondition. For instance, a decision could be made only with the positive vote of pro-Hutu and pro-Tutsi political parties, and this could easily result in the paralysis of the political system. Some of the main provisions were as follows: Rwandese troops would be made up of 40% RPF and 60% FAR (Forces Armées Rwandaises – the armed forces of the Habyarimana and Interim governments), with a 50:50 officer corps ratio;³⁰ the return of Tutsi refugees; the establishment of a commission for national unity and reconciliation as well as a national summit on unity and reconciliation; the provision for a transitional government consisting of politicians from different political parties; and the deployment of United Nations forces.³¹

In fact, the agreements transferred political and military power to the hands of the RPF and the opposition parties. In Guichaoua's words, "the RPF and the domestic opposition accorded themselves full power, with their combined two-thirds majority in parliament offering them the possibility of modifying the rules of the game." Pro-Hutu circles organized their fight against the RPF after the accords were signed, which contributed to the division of the two groups.³²

In the meantime, in neighbouring Burundi, Melchior Ndadaye (a Hutu) was elected president in July 1993. Burundian Tutsi, who saw this as a victory of the Hutu and not as the outcome of a majority decision, assassinated the newly elected

²⁷ Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

²⁸ Susan Thomson, *Rwanda. From Genocide to Precarious Peace*, New Haven – London, Yale University Press, 2018, p. 18.

²⁹ Jeremy Sarkin, Carly Fowler, *The responsibility to protect and the duty to prevent genocide: lessons to be learned from the role of the international community and the media during the Rwandan genocide and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia*, in "Suffolk Transnational Law Review", Vol. 33, 2010, No. 1, pp. 1-53.

³⁰ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

³¹ Susan Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 68. For the primary source see Article 2, 13, 14, 23E, 24A *Protocol of Agreement on Power-Sharing within the Framework of a Broad-Based Transitional Government between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front*.

³² André Guichaoua, *op. cit.*, pp. 66, 79.

president and his family in October of that year. In response, associates of Ndadaye who sought shelter in radio stations in Rwanda urged the Hutu to take revenge and kill the Tutsi – commencing racist propaganda against the Tutsi and the Accords. According to Magnarella, Habyarimana and his group were ‘alarmed’ by these changes and opposed the Arusha Accords’ implementation. At the same time, extremist Hutu started training the *Interahamwe* (a paramilitary organisation affiliated with the governmental forces) and intensified their initiation into anti-Tutsi indoctrination.³³ Because a large percentage of the Rwandan population was illiterate, radio became the main vehicle enabling extremists to spread their genocidal messages.³⁴ Of course, the extremists did not confine themselves to the radio only, as certain papers also delivered their messages and promoted this racist propaganda.³⁵ The Hutu extremists used divisive language and blamed the Tutsi, while the Habyarimana government similarly based its actions on racial politics and the view that the Tutsi were the enemy.³⁶

To understand the impact of the Burundian president’s death on the political scene of Rwanda, one needs to have in mind the past links between the two countries. In Prunier’s words, Ndadaye’s assassination had a “psychological impact” on the Hutu population of Rwanda, aside from the news of his death, which spread quickly. The Burundian Hutu refugees who arrived in Rwanda spread different stories about the aggressiveness of their compatriots.³⁷ Although it is probably excessive to assume that the violence in Rwanda was a “direct response” to the events in Burundi, the political developments in the two countries should be seen as closely related, and the fact is that the instability in Burundi contributed to the uncertain climate in Rwanda.³⁸

The implementation of the Arusha Accords was meant to take place at a time when both groups intensified their propaganda. Hutu extremist circles did not see positively the coexistence with their Tutsi compatriots and exploited the situation

³³ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

³⁴ Alison Des Forges, *Call to Genocide*, in Allan Thompson (Ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, London, Pluto Press, 2007, p. 42.

³⁵ Marcel Kabanda, *Kangura: the Triumph of Propaganda Refined*, in Allan Thompson (Ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, London, Pluto Press, 2007, p. 62. See also Linda Melvern, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

³⁶ Susan Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

³⁷ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 198-200.

³⁸ Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: race, power, and war in Rwanda*, New York, Cornell University Press, 2008, p. 190-191.

to express overtly their anti-Tutsi feelings.³⁹ By signing the agreements, Habyarimana seemingly achieved a compromise with the RPF, but at the same time, he caused the vehement reaction of his circle – who felt threatened and undermined. Thus, Habyarimana had no other option, but to postpone repeatedly the implementation of the agreements. Nevertheless, this continuous postponement made the foreign interventions more persistent, and for Habyarimana, there was another problem: diplomatic pressure.⁴⁰

Control was lost, when Habyarimana's plane was shot down. The events of April 1994, and in particular the genocide that followed, with the massive killings of Tutsi and moderate Hutu in Rwanda, constitute one of the most tragic moments of world history. On 6 April, Habyarimana went to Tanzania for a meeting to discuss the situation in Burundi, but Rwanda was not out of the agenda, as well as Habyarimana's hesitations to implement the Arusha Accords. Habyarimana had been criticised by other African leaders, who insisted on the implementation of the accords. After the end of the meeting, Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira (President of Burundi) were on the same plane when it was hit by a missile and crashed into the garden of the Rwandan president's house.⁴¹ Following that, on 7 April 1994, the media in Rwanda exhorted the Hutu to attack the Tutsi, blaming them for the assassination of President Habyarimana. Extremist Hutu circles started spreading the view that eliminating the Tutsi was a form of retribution.⁴²

According to Prunier, Habyarimana's assassination remains an 'enigma.' A popular theory is that the plane was indeed shot down by members of the RPF, but another common opinion, and perhaps one that stands on firmer ground, is that members of his own circle, who would lose their power and privileges with the signing of the accords, killed Habyarimana.⁴³ Openly, Straus claims that "the hard-liners pursued genocide to keep power" and "the argument is right as far as it goes."⁴⁴

In any case, it is reasonable to say that those who planned and executed the genocide wanted to ensure their political survival.⁴⁵ Overall, the agreements favoured the rebels of the RPF to the detriment of the Habyarimana regime and

³⁹ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 208-212.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p. 211-212.

⁴² Alan J. Kuperman, *The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention. Genocide in Rwanda*, Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution Press, 2001, p. 15.

⁴³ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 213-220.

⁴⁴ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁴⁵ André Guichaoua, *op. cit.*, p. 237-238.

his circle.⁴⁶ Consequently, it was not a surprise that the RPF supported the accords unanimously.⁴⁷ In contrast, the Hutu hardliners had to compromise on a new situation and make significant concessions.⁴⁸ Thus, they cultivated a climate of polarisation between the two groups and promoted the view that it was a battle between the Hutu, represented by the hardliners, and the Tutsi, represented by the RPF.⁴⁹ In any case, the extremists found the perfect excuse to act and execute their genocidal plan.

Those who orchestrated the violence are most likely to be a small group of extremists, once affiliated with the political, military and economic elite of Rwanda. Driven by a racist ideology, they felt that they had to protect their power by opposing any reforms.⁵⁰ As such, the Hutu elites aligned with the hardliners and believed in the legitimacy of their actions. As Straus explained very effectively, “genocide was the new order of the day” and thus “became the new law of the land.” However, most importantly, the state changed the status of an ethnic conflict into a genocide and played the most critical role in the extermination of a whole group.⁵¹ Focusing on these political developments, one is inclined to accept that “ethnic manipulation was a standard strategy” and proved to be a critical means to gain political and economic control.⁵²

The genocide commenced in early April and ended only when the RPF took control of the situation. Advancing from the north, the RPF army defeated the extremist Hutu militias and declared a cease-fire. Later, they would form a new government together with moderate Hutu politicians.⁵³ Pasteur Bizimungu, a Hutu, was president, and Paul Kagame (who played a key role in the founding of the RPF) was vice-president. After Bizimungu resigned in 2000, Kagame became president. By assuming the duties of vice-president initially, and later president, Kagame was able to oversee the political developments in the country, and thus the RPF became the dominant political power.

However, a new refugee problem emerged, as many Hutu left for other countries, mainly Zaire (later the Democratic Republic of the Congo). According to Prunier, those who planted the genocidal ideology and remained the ideological

⁴⁶ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁴⁷ Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

⁴⁸ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 48.

⁵⁰ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

⁵¹ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 66, 89, 201.

⁵² André Guichaoua, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁵³ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p.21-22 and Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 261.

leaders of their circles had planned this 'exodus'.⁵⁴ In the same spirit, Straus explained that when the hardliners left the country, they took with them the 'remnants' of their 'genocide regime'.⁵⁵ This new wave of Rwandan exiles consisted largely of the Rwandan army and the *Interahamwe*, whose reorganisation in Zaire remains a threat to the current regime in Rwanda.⁵⁶

Today, it is widely accepted that Rwanda left behind the turbulences of the 1990s and is a peaceful country. The new regime managed the crisis and reconstructed the institutions and the governance. Despite the overall stability of the country, however, there are concerns, as Rwanda remains a one-party state. Since the RPF prevailed, it controls the country at a political, economic, and military level, without serious opposition or public criticism.⁵⁷ Some even argue that Rwanda never entered a democratic era, since even though the current regime has succeeded in eliminating ethnic connotations and discriminations from the past, its authoritarian style of governance is seen as a continuation of the previous regimes. In addition, the current regime relies heavily on the aftermath of the genocide, which became "a source of legitimacy astutely exploited to escape condemnation."⁵⁸ Simply put, what one sees in Rwanda today is the RPF's monopoly on power.⁵⁹

It is also imperative to note that there is a divergence of opinions in local society. While the RPF attempted to blame the Europeans for the unfortunate events in the country and presented Rwanda's pre-colonial history as "idyllic and free from divisive notions of ethnicity and race," certain Hutu groups perceive and present the pre-colonial history of the country as a period of oppression, where the majority was ruled by a minority, and this undoubtedly remains a

⁵⁴ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 300, 314. See also Idem, *Africa's World War. Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

⁵⁶ Idem, *Studying Perpetrators: a Reflection*, in "Journal of Perpetrator Research", Vol. 1, 2017, No. 1, pp. 28-38.

⁵⁷ Stef Vandeginste, *Political Representation of Minorities as Collateral Damage or Grain: the Batwa in Burundi and Rwanda*, in "Africa Spectrum", Vol. 49, 2014, No. 1, pp. 3-25; Alexis Arieff, *Rwanda: in Brief (Updated February, 2021)*, CRS Report, Version 12, pp. 1-12.

⁵⁸ Filip Reyntjens, *Rwanda, Ten Years on: from Genocide to Dictatorship*, in "African Affairs", Vol. 103, 2004, No. 411, pp. 177-210.

⁵⁹ Idem, *Constructing the Truth, Dealing with Dissent, Domesticating the World: Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, in "African Affairs", Vol. 110, 2011, No. 438, pp. 1-34.

controversial issue.⁶⁰

THE REASONS AND THE 'POSTCOLONIAL SYNDROME'

According to Magnarella, "when analysing major events in complex political societies, such as states, the human materialist paradigm or research strategy recommends an initial focus on the material, demographic, and leadership sub-components of infrastructure as potential causal variables."⁶¹ Indeed, identifying the roots of postcolonial conflicts is always a challenging task, as the observer is obliged to focus on a combination of factors. As such, a thorough examination of the Rwanda crisis shows that the toxic atmosphere in the country was the result of extremism, which gradually grew bigger. In Dallaire's words, the "toxic ethnic extremism" had deep roots in Rwanda's history and was "built from colonial discrimination and exclusion, personal vendettas, refugee life, envy, racism, power plays, *coups d'etat* and the deep rifts of civil war."⁶²

It is an overstatement to say that the crisis in Rwanda should be seen solely in connection with the Europeans' policy of "divide and rule." As already explained, the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi was a pre-existing status. Nevertheless, the colonisers exploited these inherent dividing lines and deepened the gap between the different groups, securing that way their presence and interests. The 'divide and rule' policy became the tool that underlined the disparities between the two groups. Simply put, colonisers contributed to pre-existing separatist trends, with their 'divide and rule' approach, and prevented the creation of a common national identity, even though they did not introduce separatism *ex nihilo*. In such circumstances, colonisers frequently discovered rich ground for reviving or strengthening old passions that resulted from the inherent 'disagreements' of the locals.

The policy of 'divide and rule' aimed at the separation of the local population, by turning the different communities or groups against each other. Naturally, this led to rifts and violence, and colonisers were able to impose their control by presenting themselves as mediators or peacemakers since local populations failed to see that coexistence was a basic pre-condition for the establishment of their states. In essence, the European colonisers of the 19th and 20th centuries (and even earlier) made different agreements with each group,

⁶⁰ Erin Jessee, *Negotiating Genocide in Rwanda*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2017, p. 238.

⁶¹ Paul J. Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁶² Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 513.

building on earlier versions of the Roman model of "divide and rule".⁶³

Although they discovered an existing hierarchical system in Rwanda, the Europeans gave the two groups new meanings by modifying it to serve their colonial interests. The Belgians employed indirect control by introducing ethnic identity cards, taking full advantage of the Tutsi aristocracy's presence to control the country. Consequently, 'race' became the most crucial factor in determining power. The terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' acquired a new meaning during the colonial era: race became almost synonymous with power and the hierarchical structure of Rwandese society.⁶⁴ In substance, based on racial criteria, local society had been divided between those with certain rights and privileges (the minority) and those who had been deprived of any rights (the majority). This resulted, rather naturally, in a 'bipolar identity.'⁶⁵

An important development was the emergence of certain anthropological theories about 'race,' which took place in the nineteenth century. These theories originated from pseudo-scientific terminology and attached specific physical characteristics to each group. The Europeans adhered to these theories and believed that because of their Ancient Egyptian origins, the Tutsi had a special status.⁶⁶ Essentially, the Europeans relied on groundless assumptions, manifested in the theories of John Hanning Speke and his *Journal of the Discovery of the source of the Nile*.⁶⁷ The author referred to superior and inferior groups and his analysis lacked concrete scientific evidence. As Prunier aptly explained, the Europeans mainly focused on Speke's theories and believed that certain groups could not have "a degree of political and religious sophistication." When such theories were implemented in Rwanda, a dichotomy emerged and became a basic societal element.⁶⁸ Jacques Maquet, a Belgian anthropologist, also promoted this dichotomy of the Rwandese population and described Rwanda as a feudal society, where the Tutsi were a higher caste and thus able to maintain political power.⁶⁹

According to Prunier, these views "became a kind of unquestioned 'scientific

⁶³ Timothy Howe, *Divide and Rule: The Legacy of Roman Imperialism*, in Thomas Benjamin (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Western Colonialism since 1450*, Volume 1, A-E, Thomson Gale, 2007, p. 306.

⁶⁴ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 21-22.

⁶⁵ Mahmood Mamdani, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁶⁶ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 6-7. See also Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

⁶⁷ John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*, Edinburgh & London, William Blackwood and Sons, originally published 1863.

⁶⁸ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 10-11. See also Linda Melvern, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Susan Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

canon” for the Europeans, and had a significant ‘impact’ on the local population. Nonetheless, without scientific validity and a humanistic approach, they were basically theories that envisaged a ‘superior race,’ the Tutsi, capable of dealing with the political administration. As Prunier also declared, “these European visions did not remain intellectual abstractions, but were translated into perfectly real administrative policies.” Hence, the colonisers with their decisions “systematised and rationalised” pre-existing policies, which resulted in the monopoly of all power by a minority.⁷⁰

The Europeans cultivated certain myths, which finally led to tension and rivalry. Most importantly, even if conflicts were likely to have taken place before the arrival of the colonisers, there is no evidence of a conflict with the magnitude of casualties that occurred in the 1990s. In other words, there is no evidence of a full-scale war in pre-colonial Rwanda.⁷¹ To say that the two groups hated each other from the outset and that the genocide constituted the result of an ancient rivalry is a misleading and simplified explanation of a very complex history, where colonialism played a critical role.⁷² As Peterson explained, “this genocide could not be attributed to ancient prophecy,” and before the arrival of the Europeans “systematic violence” was not the case. Under colonial rule, strict divisions were imposed and later promoted.⁷³ In the same spirit, Mamdani also asserted that the violence originated from the way colonisers organised society, viewing the Hutu as the indigenous people of the area, and the superior Tutsi race as foreigners.⁷⁴

The connection of the Rwanda crisis with the idea of ‘tribalism’ is misleading and without solid academic ground. The idea of an old tribal conflict is only a simplistic explanation that served European interests. According to Straus, “tribe offers understanding without history” and is mainly a “pre-political category.” Rwanda could be characterised as a country with a “specific history of ethnicity,” where one sees the effects of colonialism and there are no tribes.⁷⁵ In the same spirit, Kuperman explained that the two groups have different heritage and arrived in the region at different periods. However, since the Hutu and the Tutsi share the same language and religions, let alone the intermarriages, the term ‘tribe,’ similar to the

⁷⁰ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 39.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 38-39.

⁷² Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁷³ Scott Peterson, *Me Against my Brother. At War in Somalia, Sudan and Rwanda*, New York – London, Routledge, 2001, p. 257-258.

⁷⁴ Mahmood Mamdani, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

⁷⁵ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 40.

term 'ethnic group,' is inappropriate to distinguish the two Rwandan groups.⁷⁶

Before the arrival of the Europeans, the two groups interacted, intermarried, and shared and continue to share a common language and religion. Although the Tutsi were the privileged ones, the two groups lived closely for years. Their coexistence was disrupted when the Germans, initially, and later the Belgians, imposed firm divisions of ethnic nature. Hence, the European colonisers introduced a new reality where Hutu and Tutsi had been divided based on factitious identities.⁷⁷ The Belgian colonisers played a critical role in the events, as their authorities initially backed the Tutsi and later the Hutu, depending on their interests at the time. Thus, the end of colonial rule did not find Rwanda in an atmosphere of calmness and peace, as a new era of calamities commenced, where 'retaliation' was the easy excuse for violent action. When the Belgians left, a constant contest for political power began and ended up in polarisation and bloodshed.⁷⁸ After the Hutu took the lead in the administration, the widely spread view was that their government was not just legitimate, but also "ontologically democratic." Therefore, while initially, the Belgians favoured the "superior race," later they turned to "democratic majority rule."⁷⁹

Nonetheless, the Hutu were no longer marginalized, as they became the leaders of the revolution for an independent Rwanda. As Prunier put it: "the former victims had all been told that they were now free by decree."⁸⁰ However, the problem was not just that democracy became synonymous with the majority, but the fact that it had been accompanied by extremist views and the racist propaganda mentioned earlier.⁸¹ The majority attempted to spread this ideology by downgrading the minority to a second-class category. PARMEHUTU, the pro-Hutu ruling party, promoted the view that the Hutu were legitimate rulers who should maintain political and economic control.⁸²

Hence, when Rwanda became an independent state, and the Hutu gained important positions, they realised that they had power and opportunities they

⁷⁶ Alan J. Kuperman, *op. cit.*, p. 5. See also Paul Magnarella, *Explaining Rwanda's 1994 Genocide*, in "Human Rights & Human Welfare", Vol. 2, 2002, Issue 1, p. 25-34.

⁷⁷ Jeremy Sarkin, Carly Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-53. See also Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War*, p. XXX.

⁷⁸ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 175-176, 182-183.

⁷⁹ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 80-81.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 347-349.

⁸¹ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *RTLM Propaganda: the Democratic Alibi*, in Allan Thompson (Ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, London, Pluto Press, 2007, p. 55.

⁸² André Guichaoua, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

could not enjoy before. The Hutu power became the incarnation of democracy and their rule symbolised “demographic dominance,” strictly associated with the idea of the majority.⁸³ It would not be an exaggeration to claim that the rule of democracy accommodated the goals of the extremists, who interpreted democracy as the general concept of the ethnic majority. Building their extremist philosophy on the grounds of majoritarianism, the Hutu saw themselves as the natural rulers of the country and the Tutsi as outsiders without a say.⁸⁴

Rwanda was a small country with a high-density rate. This contributed further to the already tense atmosphere and cemented the “obsession” with the ruling class.⁸⁵ The growth of Rwanda’s population led to enmity and the country’s political elites exploited these circumstances to cultivate the belief that the Hutu population could have more land, had the Tutsi population been eliminated. As farming and government positions were the two main sources of employment in the country, Hutu and Tutsi became competitors. For instance, Habyarimana argued against the return of Tutsi refugees because Rwanda was a small and densely populated country with insufficient employment opportunities. Another significant aspect of the issue was the pro-Catholic attitude (most of the Rwandese are Catholic), which opposed the birth control measures.⁸⁶ As a result, the growth of the population in the twentieth century resulted in a “food-people-land imbalance,” which finally led to a “political indoctrination” that revolved around the elimination of the enemy.⁸⁷

In the chaos that followed the assassination of Habyarimana, normal civilians became genocidaires because they believed in racial propaganda or because they were afraid of being punished by the orchestrators (who were desperate to maintain power). Others feared the RPF and the advance of the Tutsi, while others wanted to gain power and control; finally, some proceeded to genocidal actions, because of “obedience.”⁸⁸ As Thompson explained, “killing Tutsi was a state-sanctioned event that came to bear the authority of key institutions – the military, church and media.”⁸⁹

⁸³ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, pp. 227, 247.

⁸⁴ Darryl Li, *Echoes of Violence: Considerations on Radio and Genocide in Rwanda*, in Thompson Allan (Ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, London, Pluto Press, 2007, p. 94.

⁸⁵ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 3-4.

⁸⁶ Paul Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 25-26.

⁸⁷ Idem, *Explaining Rwanda’s 1994 Genocide*, p. 32.

⁸⁸ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 96, 137. See also Susan Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

Another factor that contributed to the bloodshed was the western insistence on the signing of the Arusha Accords, without the necessary psychological preparation. While Western circles applied pressure on the Habyarimana government for the acceptance and implementation of the accords, they failed to foresee that the transfer of significant power to another group would result in vehement reactions. The West underestimated the interests of the Hutu elites, who were threatened by the very nature of the new arrangement. From a diplomatic perspective, the West showed weakness in understanding the real danger: that the Hutu elites would be unwilling to hand over their power and privileges, at least not without them having the last word.⁹⁰ Although there was some scepticism about the accords, the widely spread view among western circles was that the agreements were the manifestation of diplomacy. As Melvern asserted, the UN failed to see that those whose positions were threatened, were those who controlled the army and oversaw other important institutions in the country.⁹¹

Turning to the critical question of whether the genocide could have been avoided, the observer can only make assumptions as in history there are no 'ifs.'⁹² Nonetheless, what one is obliged to acknowledge is that the West remained indifferent. Initially, Belgium, the former colonial power, kept a stance of inertia—especially after the death of the ten Belgian Blue Helmets (who protected Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana at her house) early in April. From their side, the US kept a similar position, mainly because of their fears and recent events in Somalia in the summer of the previous year. The UN Secretary-General, who referred to inter-communal killings, also kept a controversial stance.⁹³ In general, the UN, the Americans and the Europeans wanted to avoid any risks, and despite Romeo Dallaire's (the force commander of the UN mission to Rwanda) suggestions, the UN Security Council decided to withdraw a significant number of peacekeepers and treat the crisis as an internal problem.⁹⁴

When the French government requested approval from the Security Council for joint action with Senegal ("Operation Turquoise"), perhaps they wanted to

⁹⁰ Alan J. Kuperman, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁹¹ Linda Melvern, *op. cit.*, p. 60, 257.

⁹² For example, in his memoirs Dallaire explains how the international community could avoid the tragedy of 1994: "Could we have prevented the resumption of the civil war and the genocide? The short answer is yes. If UNAMIR had received the modest increase of troops and capabilities we requested in the first week, could we have stopped the killings? Yes, absolutely" (Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 514).

⁹³ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 275. See also Linda Melvern, *op. cit.*, p. 69-70.

⁹⁴ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 48. See also Linda Melvern, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

ensure the protection of their interests, as Rwanda was seen as a country within their sphere of influence.⁹⁵ As Prunier claimed, France interfered in the Rwanda conflict due to a mix of circumstances, including: "old memories, shared material interests, delusions of grandeur."⁹⁶ In any case, though, France was the only country that showed some interest in Rwanda.⁹⁷ As regards the African states, they were divided about which Rwandese party to support, and this made things more complicated.⁹⁸ In Guichaoua's words, "by action or by omission, having supported the campaign of one or the other belligerent over the previous four years, all major embassies endorsed or applauded the bellicose choices of their respective champion."⁹⁹ In the same spirit, Straus asserted "Rwanda did not command enough economic or strategic interest to justify the risks of troop deployment."¹⁰⁰

With the hesitant stance of the western powers, the extremists acted almost undisturbed. Roméo Dallaire described these western hesitations in his memoirs, as follows: "As far as I have been able to determine, on April 24 the NGO Oxfam became the first organisation to use the term 'genocide' to describe what was happening in Rwanda. Calling it 'ethnic cleansing' just did not seem to be hitting the mark. After numerous telephone conversations with Oxfam personnel in London, we queried New York if what we were seeing in Rwanda could be labelled genocide. As far as I am aware, we never received a response, but we started to use the term sometime after April 24 in all our communications. Little did I realise the storm controversy this term would invoke in New York and the capitals of the world. To me, it seemed an accurate label at last."¹⁰¹

If the observer adheres to Dallaire's memoirs, then it becomes easily understood that the Rwanda crisis "is the story of the failure of humanity to heed up a call for help from an endangered people."¹⁰² The UN and the international community failed to see that the priority was the safety of a small African country and the protection of its people from the chaos of civil war and genocide. Furthermore, the international community refrained from using the appropriate phrasing: the US spokesperson, Christine Shelly, stated on June 10 that there are "acts of genocide" but "*all* murders cannot be put into that category"; also, Boutros

⁹⁵ Paul Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁹⁶ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁹⁷ See also, Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁹⁸ Paul Magnarella, *op. cit.*, p. 51, 111.

⁹⁹ André Guichaoua, *op. cit.*, p. 334-335.

¹⁰⁰ Scott Straus, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁰¹ Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

¹⁰² *Ibidem*, p. 516.

Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, remarked on 29 April 1994 that "Hutu were killing Tutsi and Tutsi were killing Hutu."¹⁰³ Similarly, the US and the UK permanent representatives to the UN, Madeleine Albright and Sir David Hannay respectively, objected to the use of the term 'genocide' for some time.¹⁰⁴

Commenting on the use of the term 'genocide,' Kuperman asserts that the first Western organisation that used this term was Human Rights Watch on 19 April, while the Pope also used the term on 27 April. The US Committee for refugees urged the Clinton government to make a declaration about the genocide on 2 May, and two days later, the UN Secretary-General declared the overall situation in Rwanda as a "real genocide."¹⁰⁵ Sarkin and Fowler assert that it was Oxfam that first referred to genocide on 28 April, but the term was used by the RPF to describe the situation on 13 April. As regards the Americans, their Defense Intelligence Agency used the term only on May 9, and the State Department characterised the whole situation as genocide in a resolution of July 13. In the same spirit, the Western media almost ignored Rwanda throughout the crisis.¹⁰⁶

In any case, the international community lacked the necessary alertness and was unable to see the crisis in its real dimensions. They insisted on the presentation of the Rwandan crisis as an ethnic conflict and turned a blind eye to the extinction of a whole group.¹⁰⁷ The consideration of the crisis as a civil war or an ethnic conflict¹⁰⁸, to an extent, served Western interests. As Dallaire asserted in his memoirs, "While most nations seemed to agree that something had to be done, every nation seemed to have a reason why some other nation should do it."¹⁰⁹

No case is the same as another case. However, in post-colonial states with a history of violence, a critical factor for destabilisation was and still is the share or apportionment of power. The existence of minorities frequently leads to turbulences, as political representation in the institutions of certain post-colonial states becomes a critical parameter.¹¹⁰ Although the Arusha Accords were meant to accommodate the needs of the whole population, their overall structure facilitated

¹⁰³ Gérard Prunier, *op. cit.*, p. 274-275.

¹⁰⁴ Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

¹⁰⁵ Alan J. Kuperman, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

¹⁰⁶ Jeremy Sarkin, Carly Fowler, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23, 41.

¹⁰⁷ See also Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

¹⁰⁸ Dylan Lee Lehrke, *The Banality of the Interagency: U. S. Inaction in the Rwanda Genocide*, in Richard Weitz (ed.), *Project on National Security Reform. Case Studies Working Group Report*, Vol. II, March 2012, p. 467.

¹⁰⁹ Roméo Dallaire, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

¹¹⁰ Stef Vandeginste, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

the minority who would enjoy significant gains with the new power-sharing arrangement, as opposed to the majority who would have to make significant concessions. In other words, making concessions became predominantly an obligation of the majority, whereas the minority would have benefited from the concessions of the other party.

The Arusha Accords had been supported and promoted by Western diplomatic circles, who ignored the potential risks. The West failed to see that the establishment of an independent postcolonial state does not rely on the protection of minority rights and western interests (and of course, Rwanda is not a *sui generis* case, as there are other examples of postcolonial states where the majority and minority needed to coexist), nor on the representation of these rights in different institutional bodies. In such instances, psychological preparation is equally important, as to how to convince a majority, with valid and concrete reasons, about the rights of a smaller community. However, caution must be exercised while addressing the actions of extremist groups and how they can be restrained. In any case, the prospect to create and establish a common national identity in Rwanda, based on cultural, political, and other links was undermined by separatist driving forces. This is the “postcolonial syndrome,” and it should be seen as a historical-political phenomenon that occurs in certain parts of the world after the end of colonial rule.

‘Postcolonialism’ has been seen mainly as a literary phenomenon in the literature of Asia and Africa and emerged gradually in countries with a colonial past.¹¹¹ However, one should not neglect that it also denotes the historical period that followed the colonial rule. In other words, ‘postcolonialism’ and ‘decoloniality’ constitute political developments as well.¹¹² Nonetheless, if decolonisation shows the process, postcolonialism shows the outcome of that process. As has been noted, “to speak of colonialism today is really to speak of history”. Even if one argues that colonialism ended, its effects still have a significant impact on the politics, institutions, and governmental structures of certain states.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Raymond F. Betts, *Decolonization. A brief history of the world*, in Els Bogaerts, Remco Raben (Eds.), *Beyond Empire and Nation. The decolonization of African and Asian societies, 1930s-1960s*, Leiden, KITLV Press, 2012, pp. 23-37.

¹¹² Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Postcolonial and Decolonial Dialogues*, in “Postcolonial Studies”, Vol. 17, 2014, No. 2, pp. 115-121.

¹¹³ Mark Brown, *Colonial States, Colonial Rule, Colonial Governmentalities: implications for the study of historical state crime*, in “State Crime Journal”, Vol. 7, 2018, No. 2, pp. 173-198.

Perhaps the Rwandese, Hutu and Tutsi, had other intentions. Nonetheless, with their actions, they undermined the very existence of their state, as the Hutu-Tutsi conflict imposed an almost permanent status of rivalry and competition. Kagame's decision to abolish public talking about ethnicity could be seen as a positive development, but it is considered doubtful whether people have forgotten their Tutsi or Hutu status.¹¹⁴

In Kennedy's words, the states that emerged after the collapse of the empires, the nation-states, were "both the triumph and the tragedy of decolonization."¹¹⁵ Triumph, because decolonization signified an era of oppression, which ended with the independence of several new states; and tragedy, because certain postcolonial states, like Rwanda, had to face a new era of challenges and upheavals between the local groups.

As Licata asserted, colonialism became a "long traumatic relationship," which inevitably had a significant impact on the colonized, the colonizers, and their views about the world. Even after the end of colonialism, the shadow of this relationship lingers and affects people and their political culture. Even though the colonizers left, people's "minds are still colonized nowadays," and there is a situation where the ruled and the rulers remain in a permanent state of rivalry.¹¹⁶ The critical difference here is that the "postcolonial syndrome" suggests a rivalry between compatriots who failed to see themselves as such and adopted the role of their former colonizers.

CONCLUSIONS

Several reasons drove the *génocidaires* and the analysis of their genocidal action should be seen in the light of these circumstances. The analysis shows that although there was a pre-existing rivalry between the two groups, the genocide should be seen in connection with the deepening of this rivalry through the policy of 'divide and rule' – implemented by the Europeans.

¹¹⁴ The Economist, *Rwanda has banned talking about ethnicity*, March 30th, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2019/03/28/rwanda-has-banned-talking-about-ethnicity> [Accessed on 06.02.22]. See also Mahmood Mamdani, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

¹¹⁵ Dane Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 69-70.

¹¹⁶ Laurent Licata, *Colonialism and Postcolonialism: psychological dimensions*, in Daniel J. Christie (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology*, Malden, Blackwell Publishing, 2012, p. 1-5.

The Germans and the Belgians wanted to secure their presence and interests as colonial powers. Adhering to pseudo-scientific theories, they cultivated and established an untenable political reality with higher and lower castes. Despite the pre-existence of this hierarchical system, in the hands of the Belgians, mainly, it gained a status of 'normality.' When the Belgians later decided that their interests are served better through a 'democratic' turn, then majority rule became the new political reality of the day. However, this was not the end, as oppression remained and what changed was only the roles. This transition was not a smooth transfer of power but took the form of a vehement and vengeful reaction. In cases like this, there are no 'winners' and 'losers,' since the 'loser' is humanity. The genocide of 1994 in Rwanda should be seen in conjunction with the colonial history of the country, but other facts such as the poor financial state of the country, the population density and some political developments in other countries should also be seen as accompanying factors that contributed to destabilisation. Yet, as we have also seen, the genocide took place without substantial involvement by the West and the international community, even though they supported the implementation of the Arusha Accords. The outcome of the crisis shows that the West could not see the potential risks of such an agreement, nor were ready to face the challenges. Securing the rights of a minority is certainly critical to any democratic state, but doing it by causing anxiety to the extremist circles of a majority becomes a dangerous task. Thorough consideration of all parameters and appropriate psychological preparation is a necessity before the implementation of any reforms.

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