

Defining Genocide in Rwanda

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by

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It is remarkable to look at the twentieth century, one distinguished by crucial human rights victories, and realize the stain that genocide has left on its underside. It is essential that in the twenty-first century, these acts be studied and better understood, not only as a way to honor those victims, but to curb such events from happening in the future. Erick Weitz, in his *A Century of Genocide*, studies four genocides, searching for a clear definition of the term. Through his work, genocides are given clear boundaries that make it possible for future members of society to see the warning signs that take place before such atrocities. Weitz looks at the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin, Germany under the Nazis, the former Yugoslavia, and Cambodia under Khmer Rouge. Weitz argues that, although each genocide has unique properties, there are significant characteristics to each that help historians define when something becomes a genocide. The three main factors that lead to genocide are as follows: certain view points on race and nation, revolutionary governments that uphold certain utopian ambitions, and times of crisis that have been created by “war and domestic upheaval.” He divides up each case study into different stages: Power and Utopia, Categorizing the Population, Purging the Population, and the Ultimate Purge.<sup>1</sup> Weitz argues that this act of hatred is rooted in the growth of race and nation as the “primary categories of political and social organisations.”<sup>2</sup> In this study, I will be applying Weitz’s theory on genocide to that of Rwanda in 1994 to argue that the same factors that contributed to Weitz’s genocides were also present in the Rwandan genocide.

The Rwandan genocide has been studied from a number of different aspects, and by a wide array of historians. Overall, there is a wide acceptance that the event in

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<sup>1</sup> Eric Weitz. *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

Rwanda amounted to genocide and many historians have given it the acknowledgement that the victims deserve. However, for all the research that has taken place on the genocide, there is little that asks if the 1994 killings really fit into that category. As the example of contemporary Holocaust deniers proves, time can fade memories and make once-obvious truths suddenly debatable. It is crucial that questions like this be asked now, while the evidence is still fresh, so that in later years a strong defense for the term is already in place. It is for this reason that I believe my research is beneficial in this field. By applying Weitz's definition to the Rwandan killings, an essential element of the defense's foundation will begin to take shape. Another reason for my research can be echoed by Gérard Prunier as he argues that studying the Rwandan victims is a way to honor their death, and that, though "the purpose of history cannot be to teach lessons or impose a moral lecture on the reader...history can have a cleansing effect."<sup>3</sup>

Although there are plenty of resources available for studying why the genocide took place, many historians so far have looked at the genocide through a wide lense. This paper will take a much more narrow approach, and look at three personal narratives of Rwandans who lived through the genocide. It will then use their accounts to prove that the slaughter in 1994 Rwanda was a genocide. In the following pages, I examine two Tutsi Rwandans, Immaculée Ilibagiza and Reverien Rurangwa, and one Hutu Rwandan, Marie Beatrice Umutesi. By studying the genocide's roots, as well as the actual event, through the eyes of these Rwandans, I will demonstrate that Weitz's theory can be applied to the Rwandan Genocide.

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<sup>3</sup> Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), xii.

The overriding question being asked is whether the killings in Rwanda classify as a genocide according to Weitz's definition. Under this overarching issue, I seek to answer the following specific questions: Was the Rwandan genocide led by a government with exclusive viewpoints on race and nation? Was this government revolutionary and did it uphold certain utopian goals? Was it spurred on by a time of crisis? Lastly, I will examine whether the stages that Weitz applies to his four genocides also apply to that of Rwanda.

In Weitz's book *A Century of Genocide* the author knowingly left out the 1994 occurrences in Rwanda. Other authors, however, have contributed to the definition of genocide in relation to Rwanda, making arguments on what exactly classifies such an event. One such author is Philip Gourevitch. In his *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda*, he argues that the difference between genocide and other acts of "political violence" is that in genocide, people don't see the suffering of individuals, but only "a people." As more and more die, the indifference of collective peoples increases. He also looks at the ways the genocide came about, saying that the economic collapse in Rwanda during the years leading up to the genocide only increased the racial tensions and the anti-Tutsi sentiments.<sup>4</sup>

Many authors have explained that the ethnic divisions in Rwanda were fluid and flexible. The ethnic division in Rwanda dates back to the pre-colonial era, but only during and after colonialism did it transition into the extreme racism that was found during the 1990s. According to Rene Lemarchand the colonizers thought that the Tutsi had come to

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<sup>4</sup> Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 82.

Rwanda from Ethiopia, taking over the region where the Hutu lived as agriculturists.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that the divisions of the pre-colonial era were more to do with these economic issues than the ethnic differences. While the Hutu continued with agriculture, the Tutsi worked as cattle-herders, helping to make cattle the status for wealth.<sup>6</sup> The area also held Twa, who made up about 1% of the population and worked as hunter-gatherers. While there were definite distinctions between the three ethnic groups, the boundaries were still often blurred. According To Gerard Prunier in his *The Rwandan Crisis: History of a Genocide*, Hutu and Tutsi lived next to each other, intermarried, and shared the same language and religion.<sup>7</sup> Alain Destexhe argues that the two groups couldn't even be described as different ethnic groups.<sup>8</sup> It was here that the colonizers came in and exaggerated the differences between them.

After the Germans came in 1897, and later the Belgians in 1923, the line between the two groups became much more fixed.<sup>9</sup> William B. Wood argues that the traditional dominance that the pastoral Tutsis had was strongly strengthened by the colonizers.<sup>10</sup> The Europeans saw the Tutsi's long, angular features and organized state, and considered them to be a different race from other Africans. They viewed them as superior to the "Negro race" and claimed that they had a unique history. During the genocide, resentful Hutus would cut off Tutsi noses to rid them of their unique, supposedly more Aryan

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<sup>5</sup> Rene Lemarchand, "The Coup in Rwanda" in R.I. Rotberg and A.A. Mazrui, *Protest and power in black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 89.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> H.M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 247.

<sup>8</sup> Alain Destexhe, *Rwanda and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (East Haven: Pluto Press, 1995), 36.

<sup>9</sup> Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 25.

Timothy Longman, "Rwanda: chaos from above" in L.A. Villalón and P.A. Huxtable, *The African state at a critical juncture: between disintegration and reconfiguration* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 79.

<sup>10</sup> William B. Wood, "Geographic Aspects of Genocide: A Comparison of Bosnia and Rwanda," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 26, no. 1 (2001): 60.

shape.<sup>11</sup> These ideas formed by the Europeans became ingrained in the minds of both ethnicities over the years. While the Tutsi began to view themselves as naturally superior, the Hutu started to think of themselves as inferior.<sup>12</sup> This favoritism naturally led to bitterness and resentment of the Hutu toward both the European colonizers and the Tutsi.

Another main theme among historians of Rwanda looking at the genocide is a study of the killers. In all genocides, such mass acts of hatred and the passive or aggressive support that it requires is puzzling. Mahmood Mamdani in his book, *When Victims Become Killers*, takes on the task of answering how the Hutu extremists were able to get so many Rwandans to take part in the killings, especially when it came to the educated professionals. He also asks why places known for refuge, such as churches, suddenly became places of such hatred.<sup>13</sup> Mamdani argues that the roots of this hatred can be found in Belgian colonialism, when the Europeans successfully turned the terms Hutu and Tutsi into racial divisions and spurred on bitterness against the Tutsi through favoritism. The Belgians were able to turn the Hutu into the indigenous, lesser people, and the Tutsi into an alien, more Aryan race. He argues that the Tutsis time in Uganda and their following invasion into Rwanda in 1990 was a crucial period. It was here that the Tutsi realized that they would never be accepted as citizens in Uganda and, after the invasion, when the Hutu came to believe that the Tutsi must be destroyed as a people group.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Reverien Rurangwa, *Genocide: My Stolen Rwanda* (London: Reportage Press, 2009), 51.

<sup>12</sup> Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 7-9.

<sup>13</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>14</sup> Mahmood Mamdani. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 8.

Mamdani disagrees with a number of historians on the importance of the 1959 Revolution. He argues that the problems with the revolution were political more than social or economical, which goes against Rene Lemarchand. Lemarchand believes that 1959 dramatically strengthened those political identities that were created during Belgian colonialism. Mandani also disagrees with other historians by saying that the “revolution should be problematized,” not shrugged off like Prunier seems to do (in his opinion), or see too idealistically, as he views Rene Lemarchand’s stance on the debate.<sup>15</sup>

Another prominent historian, Linda Melvern, emphasizes the Hutu leaders’ act of taking control of the highly centralized government and, from there, acting against the Tutsi. While doing this, she makes it clear that this was an act from the state, and not a consequence of African “tribalism.” Instead, this was a well thought out conspiracy of genocide, in which the elimination of the Tutsis was the goal from the outset.<sup>16</sup>

There are a number of other historians who look in depth at this question as well. Peter Uvin and Gerard Prunier both study how the genocide came about, and give readers a deeper grasp of what actually happened. In Uvin’s *Reading the Rwandan Genocide*, he gives three main camps of thought: elite manipulation with the goal of staying in power, a scarcity of resources and the population density that spurred it on, and sociopsychological features on the part of the killers.<sup>17</sup> Prunier takes the theory of population density to a deeper level, saying that this contributed to a strict hierarchy of government that helped lead to the genocide.<sup>18</sup> In the early 1990s, curfews were put in place and permission was needed to leave a commune. For much longer, peasants had been directed in what to

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>16</sup> Howard Adelman, “Review: Bystanders to Genocide in Rwanda,” review of *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide*, by Linda Melvern, *The International History Review* 25, no. 2 (2003).

<sup>17</sup> Peter Uvin, “Reading the Rwandan Genocide,” *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (2001): 79-84.

<sup>18</sup> Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 13.

farm, when to farm it, and were under compulsory labour once a week. For a genocide, this compliance meant that a detailed plan could be carried out quickly and efficiently. It might be that the common person could feel less or no responsibility for their actions because of their deeply ingrained respect for the hierarchical system.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that this does not take the burden of the crime off the killers, but only shows that it was not just the leaders of the government that brought about the genocide.

Leading up to the 1959 Revolution, the Belgians began to alter their treatment of the Hutus. They became more committed to giving them a certain amount of representation, and make steps toward independence.<sup>20</sup> This was in large part because of pressures put on them by the United Nations, who desired them to open up more opportunities for the Hutu. At the same time, World War II brought in new Belgian officials who were more sympathetic towards the Hutu.<sup>21</sup> Soon, more Hutu were being admitted into secondary schools and seminaries, creating a new elite class of Hutu.<sup>22</sup> Not only was this a time of new educational opportunities, but the Belgians also brought in wider reforms. Unfortunately, their actions were seen as too extreme by the Tutsi, and not nearly radical enough by the Hutu.<sup>23</sup> This left the Belgians facing disfavor on both sides. Many Hutu began to view physical action and violence as the only affective way of

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<sup>19</sup> H.M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 270-271.

<sup>20</sup> Rene Lemarchand, "The Coup in Rwanda" in R.I. Rotberg and A.A. Mazrui, *Protest and power in black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 89.

<sup>21</sup> H.M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 252.

<sup>22</sup> Rene Lemarchand, "The Coup in Rwanda" in R.I. Rotberg and A.A. Mazrui, *Protest and power in black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 89.

<sup>23</sup> Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 38.

making the masses aware of the political situation and bringing them to a point of action.<sup>24</sup>

After the death of the Rwandan ruler Mutara Rudahigwa, and the succession of his pro-Tutsi half-brother, violence began between the two ethnic groups. The Belgians were finally able to bring peace, and with it, replaced around half of the local Tutsi officials with Hutus. This enabled the Parmehutu, a major Hutu party, to come to succession in the 1960-61 elections. In 1961, the majority of Rwandans voted to end the monarchy, finishing what is now known as the Hutu Revolution.<sup>25</sup> Mamdani argues that, while the revolution brought in social and economic changes, it had major political problems. His reasons are founded in the idea that the Revolution only reinforced the ethnic divisions between the Hutu and Tutsi. It did nothing to bring about peace and agreement between the two groups, but rather polarized them even more.<sup>26</sup>

### **Power and Utopia**

According to Weitz, key to defining genocide is understanding the ideology of the government, the visions held by the leaders, and use of the state in the attempt at creating a “utopia.” By studying the state put in place during the time of the 1994 killings, it can be determined whether the government in Rwanda and its vision were the same as Weitz’s criteria for genocide. From the beginning of the new regime, there was tension between the Hutu and Tutsi. Following the revolution of 1959, the majority of the Tutsi

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<sup>24</sup> Rene Lemarchand, "The Coup in Rwanda" in R.I. Rotberg and A.A. Mazrui, *Protest and power in black Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 894.

<sup>25</sup> Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 39.

<sup>26</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 105.

who were attacked were previous leaders of the Belgian-supported Rwanda. Though a number of Tutsi died during the violence that ensued, the main goal of the upheaval was not to exterminate the Tutsi race, but to move them elsewhere. While many simply resettled in other parts of Rwanda, a large amount also found refuge in neighboring countries, namely Uganda.

Over the next six years, a cycle began to take shape, where Tutsi refugees would attack Rwanda, and the Hutu government would then punish the Tutsi in Rwanda for what their ethnic relations had done. The Hutu leaders manipulated the situation, making the attacks a means of unifying the rest of the country against the Tutsi. Through these encounters, the leaders were able to shape history; making the Revolution into a long, courageous struggle for freedom of the majority. During this time, an estimated 20,000 Tutsis were killed and 300,000 forced out of the country.<sup>27</sup> From these numbers, it is clear that, though the genocide did not start until almost thirty years later, there was a racial mindset in Rwandan society, and it was showing itself in the shape of violence. By 1973, when General Juvénal Habyarimana's coup landed him as President, Tutsi were in danger for the simple fact of being Tutsi. No longer did it matter if they were a common citizen or a past official. Under his direction, Rwanda's political structure became reminiscent of colonial times, with a burgomaster and numerous councilors to control the population on a local scale.<sup>28</sup>

Concerning the common Rwandan, there was a range of discrimination felt, depending on the village, family, and region of the country one was from. In her memoir, Immaculée Ilibagiza recalls that the first time she recognized a separation of Hutus and

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<sup>27</sup> Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 175.

<sup>28</sup> Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 40-42.

Tutsis was when she started school. At that time, the names of the different ethnic groups were still foreign to her. She was simply happy to be called a Tutsi because it was a nice-sounding word. It was only in eighth grade when she first felt the discrimination of being a Tutsi, as she was refused a scholarship for continued education based on her ethnicity. Her family, being respected Tutsis of the area, had refused to teach their children the political and racial tensions that overwhelmed their country.<sup>29</sup> Not all regions allowed this type of innocence though. In Reverien Rurangwa's recollection of life before the genocide, he remembers certain members of his family who hated their Tutsi relatives, showing open dislike as early as the 1970s, and finally refusing them shelter once the killings started.<sup>30</sup>

Immaculée Ilibagiza recalls university in the 1980s, and the increased hatred she felt being directed at her. Simply walking down the street, she could hear people muttering "Tutsi" and giving her threatening looks.<sup>31</sup> Although the Hutu elites' scapegoating was a key factor in the genocide, it did not come from nowhere, and can therefore not be seen as the root of the genocide. These beliefs were already in the minds of many Rwandans, installed in them from long-standing traditions and prejudices.<sup>32</sup>

While examining the ideology behind the purging of the Tutsis, it is important to look at the process that shaped the foundation for instigating these killings. During colonization, there was a distinct difference in the way that the Tutsi chiefs were treated from the Tutsi peasants and the Hutu peasants. By the 1950s, intermarriage between Hutu men and Tutsi women was common enough that many Hutu officials, not the least of

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<sup>29</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 13-17.

<sup>30</sup> Reverien Rurangwa, *Genocide: My Stolen Rwanda* (London: Reportage Press, 2009), 21.

<sup>31</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 21.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Uvin, "Reading the Rwandan Genocide," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (2001): 79-81.

them their future president, had Tutsi wives. After the Hutu Revolution though, the new officials seemed to forget their Tutsi neighbors that had endured the same discrimination as they had. It was one of Reverien Rurangwa's family friends and neighbor that became his family's killer.<sup>33</sup> This separation of Tutsi and Hutu was not at all accidental consequence of the new regime. Instead, the Hutu leaders strategically based the divisions between Hutu and Tutsi on the colonial foundations, and simply deepened them. A key figure in shaping this belief was the founder of Parmehutu, Grégoire Kayibanda. Kayibanda defined the ethnic groups as "two opposed races," in which the Tutsi had always ruled over the Hutu.<sup>34</sup> In the final killings, it was this separation that became a justification of the violence.

During the three decades following the Hutu Revolution, tensions between the two ethnic groups ebbed and flowed, but generally decreased over time. However, the invasion of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) led to a backwards slope in these tendencies. As discussed in more detail later, the Hutus feared that an RPF victory would mean a return to Tutsi domination.<sup>35</sup> This threat was crucial in the resurfacing of Hutu Power, an ideology that started in the revolution. This ideology said that the Tutsis were not a Rwandan ethnic group, but an alien race. Their ultimate goal was for the power of Rwanda to stay in the hands of Hutus. In their eyes, they were not the majority. They were the nation, and the Tutsi were foreigners. This differed significantly from Habyarimana's Second Republic. As time went on, the republic's policy on Tutsis was to view them as a Rwandan ethnic group. Hutu Power used propaganda in an effort to

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<sup>33</sup> Reverien Rurangwa, *Genocide: My Stolen Rwanda* (London: Reportage Press, 2009) 34.

<sup>34</sup> Josias Semujanga, *Origins of Rwandan Genocide* (New York: Humanity Books, 2003), 172.

<sup>35</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 188.

undermine Habyarimana's attempt to bring ethnic reconciliation, and reinforce the idea that they were a different race altogether.<sup>36</sup>

Hutu Power took full advantage of the media available to them to convince Rwandan Hutus that their only option at survival and success in the face of the RPF was to discriminate against, and ultimately kill, the Tutsis of the countries. The most widely used means of propaganda were the Radio et Télévision Libres des Mille Collines (RTLM radio) and the newspaper *Kangura*. RTLM radio told them that they had one of two options: kill or be killed.<sup>37</sup> While both branches of media were important means at mobilizing the population, high prices for issues of the *Kangura* made RTLM radio the most effective means of influence. Although there was no spoken support of the hate radio station by the government, it found its support in the government-owned radio station, Radio Rwanda.<sup>38</sup>

For many, especially the educated, it was hard to take such propaganda seriously. Immaculée Ilibagiza remembers finding the station "almost funny" and scoffing at the idea that anyone would take it seriously. It was only once the genocide started that she saw how effective it had been. She recalls the voice of the Hutu propagandist broadcasting the idea that "These Tutsi cockroaches are out to kill us. Do not trust them...we Hutus must act first! They are planning to take over our government and persecute us. If anything happens to our president, then we must exterminate all the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 189-190.

<sup>37</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 190-191.

<sup>38</sup> Frank Chalk, "Hate Radio in Rwanda" in Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 96.

Tutsis right away! Every Hutu must join together to rid Rwanda of these Tutsi cockroaches. Hutu Power!”<sup>39</sup>

In 1990, the Hutu Power newspaper *Kangura*, published the *Hutu Ten Commandments*. The article gives insight into the mindset had by the Hutu leaders and, to an extent, civilians, leading up to the genocide. It is clear that the leaders wanted to keep Tutsi out of all areas of power, political or otherwise. They were prohibited from the majority of leadership roles, including all “strategic” offices, Armed Forces positions, and teaching jobs.

There were deeper, more personal levels of control that they are vying for however. This can be seen through the sexual jealousy displayed in the *Hutu Ten Commandments*, where one of the main themes addressed is the condemnation of Hutu-Tutsi intermarriage. The writers have a fixation on women, and attempt to alienate the Tutsi women as they bring forward their Hutu counterparts. The writers of *Dictionary of Genocide* write that, while the Tutsi were in power, many had illicit relations with Hutu women and prostitutes. Later, as the Hutu came to power, many elite Hutu men chose Tutsi wives and mistresses for themselves. The advantages to Tutsi wives included economic and social advancements. Through the years, this led to a substantial amount of resentment in the lower Hutu classes that played out in the genocide and earlier killings.<sup>40</sup>

By 1994, Rwanda had become an extremely regimented state, which gives insight into the mass obedience shown to the genocide leaders. The massive population in such a small country meant that the state was extremely orderly and organized. This overtly strong government, and its refusal to accept the Tutsi population, was one factor that led

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<sup>39</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 37.

<sup>40</sup> Samuel Totten, Paul Robert Bartrop, Steven L. Jacobs, *Dictionary of Genocide, Volume 1* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 200.

to the genocide. The killings were not some spur-of-the-moment occurrence that was implemented by an out-of-control mob.<sup>41</sup> It was planned to the point that by January 1994, the United Nations knew that death lists were being drawn up by the Rwandan government. The instigators of the genocide, for the most part, were top army and civil service officials, all part of the Hutu elite. They were able to take the Rwandan strong sense of national identity and aim it at a common enemy.<sup>42</sup> Also important was the artificial sense of normality that led up to the genocide. The government was able to transform youth clubs and self-help groups into militia, training men in guerrilla tactics.<sup>43</sup> These groups were ingrained with beliefs of Hutu superiority and a hatred for not only Tutsis, but moderate Hutu as well.<sup>44</sup> While this control of the state is not enough in itself to cause a genocide, combined with other factors at hand, it led the events of 1994.

The Rwandan state, their ideologies, the policies put in place proves the first and second of Weitz's criteria. In the first part of his definition, Weitz says that for genocide to be present there must be racial thinking and discriminatory practices embedded in the ruling powers. Rwanda of the 1990s was a society becoming increasingly and dangerously divided on racial lines. The ideology of Hutu Power was slowly taking over the minds of Hutus in all levels of society, at the same time that the Second Republic was trying to bring about an amount of ethnic reconciliation. The second requirement of Weitz's definition is a government that upholds and attempts to create their vision of utopia. By killing Tutsis, the Hutu extremists were bringing this about, which was a

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<sup>41</sup> Timothy Longman, "Rwanda: chaos from above" in L.A. Villalón and P.A. Huxtable, *The African state at a Critical Juncture: Between Disintegration and Reconfiguration* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998): 75.

<sup>42</sup> H.M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 246-249.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>44</sup> Samuel Totten, Paul Robert Bartrop, Steven L. Jacobs, *Dictionary of Genocide, Volume 1* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 200.

Rwanda that was completely dominated by the Hutu. Through the use of mass propaganda, and the encouragement of an already traditionally obedient state, the extremists were creating a state that could take the necessary control that a genocide requires.

### **Categorizing the Population**

This ideological vision of a purely Hutu-led society led to a further categorization of the population. Unlike some of the genocides that Weitz looks at, categorizing the Rwandan population was one that started long before the 1994 killings had been thought up. The beginning of the practice started with the entry of the colonizers. Though the Tutsis and Hutu were seen in the pre-colonial state as two separate groups, their identities were more economic based and flexible. A Hutu with enough money could become a Tutsi. The colonizers' role in the ethnic identities was to make them into racial differences. The divisions that they created had prejudiced foundations and repercussions. What makes their identification of the Hutu and Tutsi different than the pre-colonial one was the racist ideology that they used to rule, and the different treatment that each group received.<sup>45</sup> The categorizing of the Rwandans became more official in the 1930s, when the Belgians brought in identification cards with ethnic foundations. They were created on a self-identification basis, though for many years there was a trade of Hutus buying Tutsi cards to attain a greater status. These cards were used until the genocide, and made identifying one's ethnicity quick and efficient. In the 1990s, Immaculée Ilibagiza was confronted at a road block and told to show her identification card to the Interahamwe.

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<sup>45</sup> Peter Uvin, "On Counting, Categorizing, and Violence in Burundi and Rwanda" in David I Kertzer and Dominique Arel, *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 160.

Only Hutus, and the few Tutsis they decided were acceptable, were allowed to pass by.<sup>46</sup>

As seen in her case, these cards led to easier identification, discrimination, and ultimately, faster killings. Needless to say, after the genocide they were abandoned.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1940s and '50s, mainly after World War II, the methods for identification became more scientific. A number of scientists began applying different techniques for deciding on one's ethnicity. Some, like Jean Hiernaux, measured a person's physical features only. Craniofacial anthropometry, the measuring of skulls to determine race, was a common practice for scientists in other areas of the world as well. Others, such as Jean Maquet, relied solely on personal interviews and surveys. His work revealed distinct differences between their social identities. However, neither of them had accurate samples, and mostly got their data from people closest to the typical Tutsi and Hutu stereotypes. This was because the government organized the sample selections, and ensured that the people examined would fit the present stereotype. It is important to note however, that even in the 1950s, the focus in censuses and data collection was not on ethnicity. Instead, the population was divided on the lines of sex and age.<sup>48</sup> There was also a distinct separation between the Hutus in the north, and those in the less developed south. Even in the 1980s, the major political division in the country was on these geographical lines, not the Hutu/Tutsi ones.<sup>49</sup> However, this does not imply that Tutsi and Hutu divisions were not prominent in the minds of Rwandans. Instead, this mindset

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<sup>46</sup>Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 33.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Uvin, "On Counting, Categorizing, and Violence in Burundi and Rwanda" in David I Kertzer and Dominique Arel, *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 156.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Uvin, "On Counting, Categorizing, and Violence in Burundi and Rwanda" in David I Kertzer and Dominique Arel, *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 156.

<sup>49</sup> "Rwanda 1994: A Report of the Genocide." *Physicians for Human Rights* (1994).

was not yet the major focus of the country on a personal and national level, as it would soon become.

The Revolution of 1959 did not bring a period of unification and healing, but saw an extreme polarization between the Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda. Instead of dissolving the ethnic divisions of the past few centuries, they were only reversed, and through that, magnified. For the Rwandans, categorizing the population became a way of dominating the population. By continually reinforcing the belief that Tutsis were aliens and unjust oppressors of the Hutu for centuries, they gained power over the Rwandan masses. This categorization led instantly to discrimination, found mostly in areas that could lead to “vertical mobility,” such as politics, state jobs, and teaching positions.<sup>50</sup> Ethnic quotas were put in place to “balance” the ethnic make-up in the professional realm of the country. With a population of 85% Hutu, it was then a given that most jobs and school scholarships went to Hutus.<sup>51</sup> Some branches of work, such as the parliament, army, and diplomatic work were overwhelmingly given to Hutus.<sup>52</sup>

In 1992, a secret report was dispersed among Hutu commanders by chief of staff Colonel Déogratias Nsabimana defining who the actual enemy of the state was. The principle enemy was described as being “the Tutsi inside or outside the country, extremist and nostalgic for power, who have NEVER recognized and will NEVER recognize the realities of the 1959 social revolution and who which to reconquer power by all means necessary, including arms.”<sup>53</sup> He also included a second branch of the enemy, mainly

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<sup>50</sup> Peter Uvin, “On Counting, Categorizing, and Violence in Burundi and Rwanda” in David I Kertzer and Dominique Arel, *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 164.

<sup>51</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 17.

<sup>52</sup> “Rwanda 1994: A Report of the Genocide.” *Physicians for Human Rights* (1994).

<sup>53</sup> Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 63.

being anyone who actively or passively supported the principle enemy. In the description, he formally excluded those who wanted “peaceful and democratic change,” but then went on to condemn any Rwandan, Tutsi or Hutu, that opposed Habyarimana’s regime. In the statement, the terms Tutsi and RPF were used interchangeably a number of times, displaying further that his earlier statement was simply their for political reasons. The document also gave areas where the enemy might be found, including Tutsi refugees, the National Resistance Army of Uganda, Tutsis outside of the country, Hutu opponents, the unemployed, foreigners married to Tutsis, and criminals.<sup>54</sup>

In these ways, the population was being categorized during the 1980s and 1990s. However, divisions made in the years of Habyarimana’s regime were not new ones, nor were the ones made in the 1960s after the Revolution. Instead, they were reversed. While the Hutus and Tutsis continued to be viewed as different races, there was a reversal of roles, where the Hutus ended up as dominate. The categories, however, had been in place since colonial times, and to an extent, even before the Germans and Belgians arrived. This categorization of the population directly supports Weitz’s first claim that Rwanda had a limited view of race and nation. It was because of this ideology that they felt the need to identify the different ethnicities, or “races,” of the country.

### **Purging the Population**

Population purges were nothing new to Rwandan society by 1994. Through the purges and discrimination used in the three decades leading to the genocide, preparation was being done for the 1994 slaughter, and the mindsets that had to be in place to allow it. The genocide of 1994 was by no extent the only killing spree that took place during the

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 63.

twentieth century. Instead, there were a number of purges of the Tutsis that occurred after the Hutu Revolution of 1959. Although they were not as large-scale as the genocide, they were a definite foreshadowing of what was to come, not to mention a clear reflection of the state of the nation.

After the Revolution in 1959, there were four years of continual attacks against the Tutsi inside of Rwanda, leading to between 200,000 and 300,000 Tutsis in exile. In December of 1963, groups of refugees that had been living in Burundi instigated a number of small attacks across the Rwandan border. This only led to more tension between the two groups in Rwanda and extreme consequences for those Tutsis still in Rwanda. It is estimated that around 1,000 Tutsis died, and even more were sent into exile. By the mid-1960s, it is estimated that half of the Tutsi population was living in countries outside of Rwanda.<sup>55</sup>

This cycle took place multiple times between the 1959 Revolution and the 1994 genocide. Refugees from neighboring states would attack Rwanda, the Hutu government would point fingers at the Tutsi inside the country, and more killings inside Rwanda would take place. Over time, the attacks became more and more tied to the RPF in Uganda and those refugees. The purges also followed a pattern, taking place after major events in Rwanda. The purge in 1961 took place after the Hutus first won the legislative elections, and a purge the next year was started after Rwanda became completely independent.<sup>56</sup> Each time the Tutsi refugees attacked, it led to more and more violence for those in Rwanda. Marie Beatrice Umutesi, a Hutu and refugee in Zaire during the genocide, recalls being one of many Hutus and Tutsis that questioned the RPF's motives.

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<sup>55</sup> John A. Berry and Carol Pott Berry, *Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1999), xv.

<sup>56</sup> Reverien Rurangwa, *Genocide: My Stolen Rwanda* (London: Reportage Press, 2009), 24.

It was hard to believe that their actions did not have selfish motives, as their attacks hurt the Rwandan Tutsis in obvious, fatal ways.<sup>57</sup> The majority of the RPF were Rwandan refugees in Uganda, who had been trained as previous members of the Ugandan National Resistance Army.<sup>58</sup> In 1990, the refugee army attacked Rwanda in earnest, leading to even more killings of Tutsis. This time though, those Hutu who opposed the Second Republic were also targeted.<sup>59</sup> Among those in the spotlight were the Tutsi intellectuals, who were suspected of supporting their ethnic ties in the RPF.<sup>60</sup> Although the first of the Arusha Peace Accords were signed in July 1992, they meant little to either party, and were officially broken in February 1993 when the RPF invaded again, this time on a massive scale.<sup>61</sup>

During these attacks and consequent purges, the Hutu government painted an image of the Tutsi rebels that brought mistrust and shame on the Rwandan Tutsi population. Immaculée Ilibagiza recalls sitting in class and her teacher announcing that the RPF had attacked Rwanda. He described them as “foreigners” who simply wanted to take over the government. For many Hutus, the true history and aim of the RPF and Tutsi refugees was unknown. Such ignorance and propaganda put extreme pressure on such people as Ilibagiza, and made her feel an outcast in a school dominated by Hutu. She felt embarrassed and singled-out in a once-friendly place.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Marie Beatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: the Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee in Zaire* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 19.

<sup>58</sup> Ogenga Otunnu, “An Historical Analysis of the Invasion by the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA)” in Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, *The Path of a Genocide: the Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 32.

<sup>59</sup> Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 60.

<sup>60</sup> Marie Beatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: the Ordeal of a Rwanda Refugee in Zaire* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 20.

<sup>61</sup> Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (London: Verso, 2004), 38.

<sup>62</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 24.

The purges in Rwanda, the discrimination that the Tutsi faced, and the skewed persona of Tutsis that was perpetuated by the government all fulfill Weitz's second requirement that the government in concern attempts to create their vision of utopia in the context of a genocide.

### **The Ultimate Purge**

Discrimination and violence toward the Tutsis were not new to Rwanda in 1994. So what led to such a dramatic purge? Why not continue in the cycle already in place, instead of a mass targeting of Tutsi? I argue that a combination of factors pushed the purges over the edge, and transformed them into genocide. Between the military crisis of the 1990-1993 war and the economic crisis that continued to eat away at society, Rwanda reached a boiling point that led to a mass slaughter of Tutsis and Hutu opponents.

The Rwandan economy had been fairly stable until 1986, when the coffee prices fell dramatically. As coffee was one of the country's main exports, an economic downturn quickly followed, and lasted until the outbreak of genocide. The government blamed the debt as a 'conspiracy' between the businessmen in the country, 'coincidentally' focusing on the jobs in which most Tutsi were found.<sup>63</sup> To worsen the issue, Rwanda was dealing with the invasion of the RPF, which took place in October of 1990.<sup>64</sup> This led to a movement to militarize the state money and other parts of the state. Food shortages were made worse by the fact that crucial money was being used to build

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<sup>63</sup> H.M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 256.

<sup>64</sup> Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, 1995), 66.

up the army instead of feeding the people.<sup>65</sup> A growing population also put pressures on resources, especially the available land. At the time, the majority of families split their holdings among all their sons, which led to a fragmentation of land as well.<sup>66</sup> Hutu Power extremists used the mounting concern and fear to bring about action. They warned that if the RPF took over the government, they would also take over Hutu personal land holdings.

The consequences of the failed economy was a drastic increase in deaths, theft, and unemployed. Starting in 1988, malnutrition was leading to an increasing number of deaths, especially in the countryside. Thievery became a common practice, and many that were caught were beaten and killed by business and field owners. Lastly, a new population of unemployed young men was stemming from the crisis. A combination of limited land and a lack of jobs outside of agriculture meant that many men were forced to look for jobs in the military. In this way, such groups as the RPF and the Interahamwe gathered large groups of desperate young men. Marie Umutesi recalls traveling with a young man that used to be a member of the Forces Armées Rwandaises. He talked of the hopeless situation for young men at the time, and how armed service gave him the opportunity to “earn a living and to feel like ‘someone.’”<sup>67</sup>

The second crisis that led to the genocide was the civil war and its aftermath. In 1990, the RPF invaded Rwanda, leading to a three-year war between these refugees and the Rwandan army. While the RPF expected to be welcomed back and embraced by the

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<sup>65</sup> H.M. Hintjens, "Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37, no. 2 (1999): 257.

<sup>66</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 197.

<sup>67</sup> Marie Beatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: the Ordeal of a Rwanda Refugee in Zaire* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 18-19.

Hutu peasants, the majority were displeased and afraid by their invasion. It brought them back to the pre 1959 regime, and the Tutsis rule over the Hutu. Many feared, and were encouraged by propagandists, that RPF rule would mean Tutsi rule. Compared to the semi-mild '70s and '80s, the 1990s saw a renewal of racial tensions that were last seen in the days of the Hutu Revolution.<sup>68</sup> In 1991, Immaculée Ilibagiza's family was put on a death list. Like many Tutsis of the time, her parents were skeptical that anything would come of it, unable to conceive that things would return to the 1960s' hatred, much less surpass it. This hesitation cost them their chance to flee the country into Zaire.<sup>69</sup>

A consequence of the civil war was the mass amounts of displaced peoples resulting from the RPF invasion. The RPF attacked from the north, taking some of the most fertile and agriculturally important land with it. As they moved further into Rwanda, the Hutu peasants they encountered fled, leaving their villages abandoned. This led to a dramatic decrease in agricultural produce and an excess of unemployed men, as mentioned earlier. At the same time, Rwanda was receiving high numbers of Burundi refugees. Massacres from 1972, 1988, and 1993 brought a total of 400,000 Hutu refugees into an already overpopulated country. These refugees played a crucial role in the genocide. For one, these were Hutus who had recently experienced racially-rooted violence by Tutsi leaders. In the genocide, they would be known for extreme ruthlessness, seeming to take out their revenge on the Tutsis of Rwanda. At the same time, they were an example to their ethnic relations. To many of the Rwandan Hutus, the

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<sup>68</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 189.

<sup>69</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 40.

massacres in Burundi clearly acted out what their future would look like if the RPF took power.<sup>70</sup>

Another aspect of the military crisis to consider is the role that the defeated armed forces played in it. Instead of discouraging the army, their defeat only seemed to spur them on. Fragments of the army, especially the Presidential Guard and the Interahamwe, simply changed tactics in their fighting. Their loss on the actual battlefield only made them turn to internal forces, and begin targeting the Tutsi and opposing Hutu that could be found in Rwandan towns and villages. Their belief in doing so was that they were removing the parts of Rwandan society that kept it from purification, and ultimate victory. Mahmood Mamdani refers to this group as the “génocidaire tendency.” They declared that they were working to create a national unity, and did so through Hutu Power.<sup>71</sup>

The last consequence of the civil war was the Arusha Peace Agreement, which was signed in August 1993. The final compromise had four crucial parts that helped lead to the genocide. The first was to merge the RPF and the Rwandan army into one. This would mean that 50% of the officers would be from the RPF, and 40% of the soldiers. Consequently, this meant that vast amounts of previous soldiers would now be unemployed in a failing economy. The second was that the RPF would have control of the Ministry of the Interior. With this, they were given almost complete control over “forces of coercion.” The third promised seven out of the eleven parliamentary seats to the RPF, while excluding the CDR, the Hutu Power party, from any seats. Lastly, and

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<sup>70</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 206.

<sup>71</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 207.

key, was the promise that all refugees would be allowed back into Rwanda. This confirmed the Hutu's fears started by Hutu Power extremists. It seemed inevitable that the refugees would come in and take over their precious, already scarce land.<sup>72</sup>

Looking over these crises, it is clear that what led to the genocide was not anger or hatred, but fear: fear that the Tutsis would take Hutu land. Fear that life would return to pre-1959 order. Fear that Burundi was a forecast of Rwanda's near future. This fear reached its apex in the cumulation of these crises. First the Arusha Agreements were signed October of 1993. Two months later, Burundi's attempt at reform disintegrated as the Tutsi army led another massacre with the assassination of their Hutu president. It was clear to Rwandan Hutu extremists that this proved that reconciliation and power-sharing was impossible. To finish it off, the figurehead's of Rwanda's work towards reconciliation, President Habyarimana and Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, were killed within days of each other. Habyarimana was shot down in his helicopter on April 6<sup>th</sup>, and Uwilingiyimana killed the next morning.<sup>73</sup> The multiple crises that took place in Rwanda fulfill the last of Weitz's definition, in where he states that some sort of crises is needed to create a genocide. In Rwanda's case, it was a culmination of crises that led to April 1994.

The three months of genocide looked different for each individual. Although there were common threads, like the mass use of machetes, personal betrayals, and chaotic fear, each person's experience is unique and shaped them in a different way. For one individual, genocide took the shape of the four sides of a bathroom. Some experienced it

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<sup>72</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 211-213.

<sup>73</sup> Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 188.

as a refugee camp. For many others, it looked like watching the mass slaughter of their family and friends. By looking at the first hand accounts of Immaculée Ilibagiza, Marie Beatrice Umutesi, and Reverien Rurangwa, a clearer, more defined image of the genocide will be in place.

Immaculée Ilibagiza experienced the genocide inside a bathroom for ninety-one days. She was accompanied by seven other women. Immaculée spent the first few days of the genocide in her family house with her parents and three brothers. Seen as leaders in the community, hundreds of Tutsi flocked to her parents' house for guidance. After the Interahamwe surrounded the house, confirming the inevitable, her father convinced her to leave for a family friend's house, Pastor Murinzi. Her father and brothers were afraid that she would be raped, and decided separation was the better option. As both a Hutu and a pastor, there was a certain amount of security at Pastor Murinzi's house. The last thing she heard her father say was "Remember, Immaculée, I will come get you myself."<sup>74</sup> When the priest showed her the bathroom she would be hiding in, she remembers being sure that she would survive because of how hidden it was. In a house that had two bathrooms, it was easy to push an armoire in front of the one containing the women and conceal them. Multiple times throughout her stay in the bathroom, the killers would come looking for her and the others. They knew Immaculée wasn't dead and they were determined to kill her.<sup>75</sup> At one point, she heard her once friendly neighbors searching, saying "...we know she's here somewhere...Find her- find Immaculée" and "I have killed 399 cockroaches...Immaculée will make 400. It's a good number to kill."<sup>76</sup> (xix)

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<sup>74</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), 52-55.

<sup>75</sup> *Ghosts of Rwanda*, DVD, directed by Greg Barker (2004; Hollywood, CA: Frontline, 2004).

<sup>76</sup> Immaculée Ilibagiza, *Left to Tell* (Carlsbad: Hay House, Inc., 2006), xix.

This genocide was made up of personal killings. These were people that knew her and called her by name as they hunted.

After ninety-one hidden days of no tears or speech, the women left the bathroom. Soon afterwards, Immaculée learned of her family's fate. Her father had gone to the governor's office in order to collect food, but had been shot, dragged into the street as a road block, and used as a warning to other Tutsi. Her mother was killed when she came out of hiding, thinking she had heard her son crying. She was choked to death. Vianney, her younger brother, was killed in a football stadium with hundreds of others. First, the killers used machine guns. Afterwards, they used grenades, and then finished the massacre with machetes. Her older brother, Damascene, was killed as he attempted to escape Rwanda. Hutus found him, cut off his limbs, the rest of his body, and then split his head to examine his brain. He was killed by a classmate, and pleaded that the classmate would be the one to do it, as at least "he would know it was him who did it."<sup>77</sup>

Marie Beatrice Umutesi, a Hutu, had a much different genocide experience. Although she did experience suffering during the spring months of the killings, the majority of her story takes place afterwards. During the genocide, Marie lived in a constant state of fear, having the physical characteristics of a Tutsi. She knew that many killers would not take the time to check her identity before killing her.<sup>78</sup> After the RPF government took control of the government, over 250,000 Hutus were violently forced out of Rwanda to become refugees. Her struggle was one on foot, where she made the journey to Zaire, today's Democratic Republic of the Congo. Marie spent four years as a political refugee before moving to Belgium, and travelled over 2,000 kilometers by foot.

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<sup>77</sup> *Ghosts of Rwanda*, DVD, directed by Greg Barker (2004; Hollywood, CA: Frontline, 2004).

<sup>78</sup> Marie Beatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: the Ordeal of a Rwanda Refugee in Zaire* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 20.

Much like the Tutsis during the actual genocide, she and other Hutus were hunted down by the RPF. By the end of her time in Zaire, Marie had experienced famine, refugee camp, and finally, the blind eye of the international community.<sup>79</sup>

Reverien Rurangwa experienced yet a different genocide. This one, however, is more closely related to Immaculée's. Reverien was only fifteen years old when he witnessed forty-three members of his family die at the hand of Hutu extremists. On April 7<sup>th</sup>, his family was a part of the thousands that flocked to the nearby church. Before that day, he had never experienced much discrimination except for an occasional dirty word or comment. Reverien had no clue that it was simply his parents' protection that had allowed him a peaceful childhood. It was inconceivable that "the boy with who you play football twice a week" could "become your enemy" overnight. Like his family, many Tutsis believed that they would find safe haven in the churches as they had in previous massacres. In the genocide, that was not the case. Hutu extremists were using new, less reserved ways of killing. With all of the nuns and priests out of the church, there was no reason for them to refrain from mass killings. Reverien recalls how the clergy and nuns, established members in the community, "abandoned" them at the very start of the genocide. "They left in a rush. Not even taking a child with them."<sup>80</sup>

After thirteen days of hiding inside a hut used by church cowherds, his family was found by their neighbor, Simon Sibomana. Reverien watched as Sibomana and his companions slaughtered his grandparents, aunts, uncles, and immediate family with machetes. He was the sole survivor, simply because they believed they had killed him. Before the women were killed, they were stripped of their clothes and humiliated. He left

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<sup>79</sup> Marie Beatrice Umutesi, *Surviving the Slaughter: the Ordeal of a Rwanda Refugee in Zaire* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 137.

<sup>80</sup> Reverien Rurangwa, *Genocide: My Stolen Rwanda* (London: Reportage Press, 2009), 34-39.

the hut and his family with only one arm remaining.<sup>81</sup> After encountering Sibomana and the others again, they circled him and further maimed him. They cut off his pronounced, Tutsi nose in the attack. Reverien recalls dragging himself along the street, pleading to be killed, until he was picked up by medics from the Kibgayi hospital.<sup>82</sup> He would leave Rwanda for Switzerland without a hand, nose, and with a face and body that would be forever scarred with the traces of spears and machetes.<sup>83</sup>

These three accounts give a vivid picture of what life inside the Rwandan genocide looked like. While all are different, there are common threads that can be found, especially in Reverien and Immaculée's experiences. Although there were many extremists, there were also many Tutsi and Hutu families that did not think on the lines of race. Those Hutu extremists that did participate in the killings usually stayed locally, killing in their towns and villages. It was common that they would kill their previous neighbors, co-workers, and friends.

The accounts of Immaculée Ilibagiza, Reverien Rurangwa, and Marie Beatrice Umutesi bring many questions to the surface, not the least of them "how?" Though the slaughter of those three months can be studied and analyzed, the mobilization of thousands of Hutus against their Tutsi neighbors will forever be a mystery on some level. However, there are some questions that can be answered in complete certainty.

The killings in Rwanda between April and June 1994 do constitute a genocide by the definition layed out by Eric Weitz. His three criteria, a unique and limited view on race and nation, a revolutionary government that aims at a utopian nation, and a period before the genocide of political and domestic crisis all present themselves in Rwanda

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 79.

during the 1990s. The ideology of Hutu Power proves the first factor, with its racial thinking and discriminatory practices. Hutu Power advocates believed that the Tutsis were a different race than themselves, and alien to Rwanda. Their main goal before the genocide was the remove Tutsi from any job that had any amount of power or prestige. During the genocide, their goal became total annihilation of the ethnic group. These racial beliefs led to a need to categorize the population according to so called race. Weitz's second requirement is for the government to uphold and try to create their version of a utopian nation. Rwanda's practice of this can be seen through the cyclical purges and discrimination they faced, as well as the distorted image the government painted of their characters. Finally, it was a number of different military and economic crises that finally brought about the genocide, or final purge. Through the fulfillment of Weitz's three-part definition, it is clear that what happened in Rwanda was not just another purge, tribal conflict, or civil war. By all reasoning, and the study of personal accounts, the occurrences of 1994 were a genocide.

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