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Research for Action 24

**Development, Aid
and Conflict**

Reflections from the Case of Rwanda

Peter Uvin

Research for Action

UNU World Institute for
Development Economics Research
(UNU/WIDER)

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This study has been prepared within the UNU/WIDER project on the Wave of Emergencies of the Last Decade: Causes, Extent, Predictability and Response, co-directed by Professor E. Wayne Nafziger, Kansas State University, and Professor Raimo Väyrynen, University of Notre Dame.

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FOREWORD

This paper seeks to understand the relationship between the processes that brought about genocide in Rwanda and the 'development enterprise'. The tragedy that took place in Rwanda, and still unfolds there, is of such a devastating nature, such profound evil, that it cannot but shock all of us out of complacency. Like with the Holocaust, people will need to analyse the Rwandan case for decades to come, to come to grip with it, to learn from it.

The analysis is multi-disciplinary, drawing on insights from economics, political science, history, anthropology and psychology. Uvin's use of the concept of human development, and the absence thereof, allows him to link these various disciplines in a more or less coherent manner.

It is often believed that the Rwanda case is unique, *sui generis*, and without relevance to other cases of conflict in Africa. Indeed the pathological nature of the genocide, its sheer enormity, and the depths of hatred, tends to lend credence to such a vision. This approach has been strengthened by the fact that the specialists of the Great Lakes region are few and highly specialized, thus treating what happens in these countries as largely *sui generis*, without much reference to other cases. Uvin's provocative paper seeks to go against both these trends. He draws on a large body of literature, beginning with the Holocaust half a century ago, but also including literature about conflict in other African countries. He seeks to draw conclusions that are valid also in countries other than Rwanda and Burundi. Indeed, one of his key contentions is that, although they may lead to different outcomes, the processes he documents for the case of Rwanda are at work in other countries too, producing similar results. As such, Uvin seeks to develop the groundwork of a general theory of conflict, violence, and maldevelopment. This theory deserves to be tested elsewhere: the cases of Kenya, Algeria or Sri Lanka – all cases considered until recently to be successful development countries – come to mind.

The study is a part of UNU/WIDER's research project on the political economy of complex humanitarian emergencies, co-directed by E. Wayne Nafziger, UNU/WIDER Senior Researcher, and Raimo Väyrynen, University of Notre Dame. The research project seeks to use economic analysis, as well as political analysis, to explain the causes of humanitarian emergencies. Uvin's thoughtful analysis of the origins of Rwandan genocide is one of the initial efforts by researchers associated with the UNU/WIDER project to analyse humanitarian disasters. The paper will also serve as a vehicle for scholars and practitioners in East and Central Africa to address the issue of this genocide, and provide feedback to the author, other researchers, and most of all to policy-makers who face manmade disasters of this magnitude. I strongly recommend this to those with an interest in this area.

Giovanni Andrea Cornia
Director, UNU/WIDER
September 1996

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This paper is the first step in a reflection process that is at the same time intensely personal and extremely open. It is not in any way a definitive statement; rather, it seeks to provoke discussion among Rwandans, people who have worked and lived in Rwanda, and more generally all those committed to social change in Africa.

I owe thanks to many people who have been partners in this reflection process until now; however, none of them is in any way responsible for what is written here, and some of them may well strongly disagree with parts of it. The moral and practical support of Antonio Donini and Norah Niland of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) have been crucial: without their help, the reflection would in all likelihood have remained much more limited. Lindiro Kabirigi, Secretary-General of PREFED (Programme Régional de Formation et d'Echanges pour le Développement, in Bujumbura, Kigali, and Kinshasa), has been another partner all the way: through his own writings and his support of this endeavour, he has greatly influenced this process. Daniel Fino, of the IUED (Institut Universitaire d'Etudes du Développement, Geneva, Switzerland), is a long-time friend and mentor to me, and, again in this case, he has proven to be a man I could count on.

I gratefully acknowledge support from DHA to kick off the reflection with some meetings, from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) to provide financial support to the process, from my colleagues and the staff at the World Hunger Program/Watson Institute of International Studies to get this paper ready for publication, and from UNU/WIDER to publish it.

The evil that has been done in Rwanda cannot be undone. All we can do is to learn from it, and commit ourselves to avoid its repetition, in Rwanda and elsewhere. May those who died rest in peace; may those who survived live in peace.

Peter Uvin
Providence, 18 August 1996

ABSTRACT

Rwanda's genocide is the end-result of a combination of processes, none of which can easily be prioritized or separated from the others. These processes are: extreme pauperization and reduction of life chances for a majority of the poor, especially from 1985 onwards; the Front Patriotique Rwandais (FPR) invasion and the civil war that followed; an uninformed and uneducated peasant mass treated in an authoritarian and condescending manner; a history of impunity, human rights violations, corruption, and abuse of power; a deep-felt frustration and cynicism by many poor people; rapidly growing regional, ethnic, and social inequality; political strategies employed by small elite groups in search of protection against the pressures of discontent and democratization; the existence of past and current acts of violence; and a history of institutionalized, state-sponsored racism.

It is a key assertion of this paper that the way development has been defined, managed, and implemented by the government and supported by the international aid community is of central importance in understanding the creation and evolution of these processes.

Rwanda, like many other so-called developing countries, is structurally a very violent society. It is not only violent when massive physical harm is being done with arms by one group against the other, such as from 1990 onward. The violence is continuous, manifested in a deep and widening inequality of life chances; corruption, arbitrariness, and impunity; lack of access to information, education, health, and minimal basic needs; and an omnipresent, authoritarian, and condescending state and aid system, which limit rather than enrich most people's life chances.

Acute violence, then, serves different functions: it is a tool for temporary personal gain, as culturally acceptable as it is common; it is a pressure release for frustration and lack of self-respect, as acceptable as it is encouraged by the political leadership; and it is a job opportunity for the lucky few who join militia and mobs, its gain potential vastly bigger than any 'legal' opportunity available. Structural violence breeds acute violence and vice versa, and attempts to finance 'induced development' defined as economic growth, while neglecting social, political, and ethnic issues, will change very little at that, if they do not contribute to it.

Violence in Rwanda emanated from a racist/genocidal ideology that, in turn, fed on two basic structural processes, one emanating from the top, and one from the bottom. For decades, anti-Tutsi racism had served as a deliberately-maintained strategy of legitimization of the powers-that-be, and was kept alive through a systematic public structure of differentiation and discrimination, in which the 'Tutsi problem' was never allowed to be forgotten. Under threat by political and economic processes, parts of the elite increased their use of the old strategy and effectively managed to spread it throughout society. At the same time, racist prejudice was a means for ordinary people,

subject to structural violence and humiliation, to make sense of their predicament, and to explain their ever-growing misery through projection and scapegoating. State-supplied racism provided poor Hutu a sense of value, as well as an 'explanation' for the mal-development they faced daily in their lives.

Rwanda's genocide was the extreme outcome of the failure of a development model that was based on ethnic, regional, and social exclusion; that increased deprivation, humiliation, and vulnerability of the poor; that allowed state-instigated racism and discrimination to continue unabated; that was top-down and authoritarian; and that left the masses uninformed, uneducated, and unable to resist orders and slogans. It was also the failure of a practice of development cooperation based on ethnic amnesia, technocracy, and political blindness.

INTRODUCTION

On 7 April 1994 began a well-planned and massively executed genocide in Rwanda, leading to the slaughter of up to one million defenceless Tutsi children, women, and men in less than three months, as well as thousands of opposition politicians. This genocide was the culmination of a 3.5 year period during which the Rwandan Patriotic Front (FPR [Front Patriotique Rwandais]) instigated civil war as well as government-inspired militia violence already cost the lives of tens of thousands of persons, Hutu and Tutsi. Both these processes took place against a background of pervasive and institutionalized racism, as well as the unresolved consequences of previous occurrences of violence, including a festering refugee problem. In the aftermath of the genocide, up to three million Rwandans fled the country, with the majority of them still remaining in camps more than two years later. These same camps contain the leaders of the genocidal regime, as well as the vast majority of its executioners: virtually no signs of regret or compromise have emerged from these quarters. The current Rwandan government, largely an emanation of the FPR, seriously lacks legitimacy, is under attack from some of the refugees, and increasingly resorts to terror and extrajudicial killings to assert its rule. The chances for further development in Rwanda are remote: further violence and destruction seem the only certitudes.

Yet, for most of its history as an independent country, Rwanda was considered by most people in the development community a nicely developing country. As a result, up to the last minute, thousands of technical assistants and foreign experts were building roads, extending credits, advising finance officials, training farmers, protecting environmental resources, and reorganizing ministries, at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars of development aid – the lion's share of all non-current government expenditures. For most of these people, and for their employers in Washington, Bern, or Amsterdam, Rwanda was a model of development in Africa, with good performance on most of the indicators of development – whether the 'usual' indicators such as GNP, electricity consumption or services growth rates, more 'social' indicators such as food availability or vaccination rates, or the new, 'bottom-up' indicators such as the number of NGOs and cooperatives in the country. As a matter of fact, during the 1990s, a time when torture, violence, corruption, racist discourse, and genocidal preparations were becoming state policy and civil war raged, international aid to the Rwandan regime more than doubled.

This contradiction led me to a long and profound reflection process, of which this paper is a first, intermediary, and partial result. The basic questions of this reflection process are: What does 'development' mean if a country that was generally considered a model developing country can destruct itself in a matter of months (at the most 42 months, the time since the beginning of the October 1990 civil war, generally credited with setting in motion the processes that led to genocide)? Is there something about the definition of development, and the indicators used to measure it, that makes the development community blind to the social, political, ethnic, forces that exist in society? What was an expensive battalion of technical cooperation personnel and experts doing in Rwanda if

they all claim that they had no idea this was coming? What is the role of development as conceived and implemented in Rwanda in explaining the horrible events?

It is a key assertion of this paper that the way 'development' is defined, managed, and implemented by the government and supported by the international aid community is of central importance in understanding the creation and evolution of violence in Rwanda. This assertion is controversial. Currently, the dominant position, adhered to by most practitioners in the international development community as well as by many Rwandans, is that Rwanda *was* indeed developing quite nicely in all respects (although the agricultural situation was worrisome) and that an *external factor* caused it to collapse. That external factor is usually considered to be the FPR invasion, but for some it also may be the collapse in coffee prices and the imposition of structural adjustment, the influence of the international community (premature pressures for democratization, and French, Zairian or Ugandan military involvement), or the general nastiness of the *akazu*, the small clique around Habyarimana's family that planned the genocide. Whatever the specific factor privileged, all these explanations are alike in that they see no link between Rwanda's development process and the 1994 genocide; the latter is due to some unfortunate *deus ex machina* that disrupted an otherwise more or less excellent process. It should be clear that I am not arguing that all of the above factors play no role in the events that led to the 1994 genocide. On the contrary, no explanation would be complete without analysing the 1990 FPR invasion, as well as the characteristics and objectives of the *akazu*. However, treating these events as if they were unlinked to the enterprise of development that so characterized Rwandese society at all levels is what we object to, and seek to remedy here.

A complete analysis of the causes of Rwanda's genocide, I believe, lies in a combination of extreme pauperization and reduction of life chances for a majority of the poor, especially from 1985 onwards; the FPR invasion and the civil war that followed; an uninformed and uneducated peasant mass treated in an oppressive, authoritarian, and condescending manner; a history of impunity, human rights violations, corruption, and abuse of power; a deep-felt frustration and cynicism by many poor people; rapidly growing regional, ethnic, and social inequality; political strategies employed by small elite groups in search of protection against the pressures of discontent and democratization; the existence of past and current acts of violence; and a history of institutionalized, state-sponsored racism and discrimination. Any understanding of the Rwandan crisis should analyse the origins and construction of these factors, and how the so-called development process interacted with them, if not created some of them.¹

I believe that Rwanda constitutes an extreme case of the perverse effects of the dominant model of development and development cooperation in Africa. This does not mean that the development process, and even less the foreign aid given to promote development, is solely to blame for the genocide; one should not remove the blame from those who organized it. However, it is a basic assumption of this paper that we cannot make abstraction of the massive presence of development aid, its funds, ideas, practices,

¹ A few works that stress similar factors included Kabirigi (1994); Willame (1995); and OXFAM (1996).

organizations, and individuals, in understanding the construction of extreme violence and social destruction in Rwanda.

I thus believe that the basic forces I will uncover in this paper are present in other parts of Africa, where, adapted to specific local circumstances, they produce similar results. From Kenya to Liberia, from Togo to Burundi, from Somalia to Zaire, people are engaging in intercommunal violence. Almost always these acts of extreme violence seem to follow ethnic patterns, even in places where historically there has been no animosity between the groups concerned. All these countries were large recipients of foreign aid, and at least one of them, Kenya, was until recently also considered a model developing country. Again, I do not suggest that these countries await fates identical to Rwanda's, or that foreign aid is the sole determinant of what happens there. However, there may be reasons to assume that the way the process of development is defined and implemented, among others by the development aid system, and the way it interacts with other processes of nation-building, social differentiation, political exclusion, and cultural change, is similarly related to these occurrences of violence in all these countries.

I POWER, PREJUDICE, AND DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Rwanda before independence: a contested history

The majority of scholars on Rwanda believe that, before colonization, most of current Rwanda was a monarchy dominated by a Tutsi king. The cattle-rearing Tutsi had arrived in successive waves from the north during the fifteenth and sixteenth century, fleeing famine and drought. The agriculturist Hutu they met in Rwanda had immigrated into this fertile region centuries earlier from central Africa. The longest-standing inhabitants of the region are the Twa, a small and marginal group (only 1 per cent of the population), primarily engaged in pottery and hunting. These, then, were for a long time the three main groupings in Rwanda. Their integration had gone very far: they speak the same language, believe in the same God, share the same culture, and live side by side throughout the country. There are few cases known anywhere in the world of different ethnic groups sharing so many of the same characteristics. This has led many to challenge the notion of the existence of ethnic groups in Rwanda.

Indeed, there exists little agreement among specialists of the precolonial period. Disagreement exists on the nature of the distinction between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. Are they distinct ethnic groups? Or are they socio-economic divisions within the society of Banyarwanda (the local term for Rwandans), akin to castes perhaps, or even social classes? Some authors suggest that by the nineteenth century hundreds of years of cohabitation and intermarriage had produced an 'integrated' social system wherein the categories of Hutu and Tutsi were largely occupationally defined: whoever acquired a sizeable herd of cattle was called Tutsi and was considered highly. In the same vein, Rwandan émigrés in neighbouring Zaire were until recently known as belonging to the ethnic group of Banyarwanda: many of them grew up knowing themselves solely as such.

Another important issue that divides the specialists concerns the nature of the precolonial political system. It seems incontestable that, at the time of the arrival of the colonizer, at the end of the nineteenth century, Rwanda was a kingdom with a Tutsi king and a predominantly Tutsi court. Yet, intense debate exists as to the exact nature of that system. Was the kingdom highly centralized and inegalitarian, or was the power of the king and the Tutsi surrounding him more theoretical than real outside of the central region? What were the levels of mutual control, exchange, and obligation between Tutsi and Hutu? What is the role of lineages, which included both Tutsi and Hutu, in the social and political system? When did the cattle-work exchange, the centrepiece of so-called Tutsi feudalism, originate, and what was its precise nature? What possibilities for upward mobility, if any, were open to Hutu? (de Heusch 1994; Franche 1995; Willame 1995).

There exists no consensual scientific knowledge to answer any of these questions. This is partly due to inherent difficulties of recreating the history of oral societies, as well as

the distortions introduced by the eurocentric and often outright racist accounts by the first colonizers, missionaries, and ethnographers (the only 'eye-witnesses' to the old political system). However, the prime cause of the difficulty in reaching any agreed-upon interpretation of these issues is the fact that, since the early days of the anthropological and historical enterprise in Rwanda, these issues have acquired important political stakes, both in Rwanda and among scientists. The 'official Hutu' position, held by the previous genocidal government and based on certain scientific evidence, is that Rwanda was invaded by 'foreign' Tutsi cattle rearers, who gradually, due to their sophisticated organization, managed to install a system of centuries of oppression and exploitation. The inverse position, held by groups opposed to the government (mostly, but not solely Tutsi) as well as by a fair number of scientists, asserts that, although the population of Banyarwanda is composed of groups who, centuries ago, had different origins, the Rwandans are basically a single ethnic group, with the differences between Hutu and Tutsi reflecting socio-economic divisions. These people advance detailed refutations, arguing that many of the pretended mechanisms of exploitation and oppression are simply misinterpretations if not outright propaganda. They also point out that Rwanda has never known any conflict or war between Hutu and Tutsi before the end of colonization. All in all, one can argue almost any position on these debates, and invoke a series of famous and not so famous social scientists to 'prove' it.

I do not choose sides in these debates. In order to explain the 1994 genocide, it is of little importance to know what the precolonial political situation between Hutu and Tutsi exactly was – whether it was one of legitimate albeit unequal 'ethnic' harmony or one of more or less long-standing and balanced clientship and inequality. The precolonial history does not by itself explain, and even less justify, genocide or extreme violence now. Even if it could be 'proven' that Rwanda's history is not one of antagonistic ethnic groups but of harmony, that would be irrelevant for the present. Ethnicity is a socially constructed phenomenon, an 'imagined community,' and not a matter of historical accuracy (Anderson 1991; see also Gurr 1993). In 1994, as in 1959, distinct ethnicity was most certainly a fact of life in Rwanda at the level of discourse, state policy, or individual sentiment. Ethnic violence has caused innumerable deaths and pain and cannot be wished away by pointing to a harmonious past, nor justified by past oppression.

There was one other important socio-geographic division in precolonial Rwanda. In the north-west (currently the provinces of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi), until the end of the nineteenth century, there existed a set of small Hutu kingdoms in which Tutsi also lived, but were few and devoid of political power. These kingdoms were fighting aggression from the Tutsi kingdom in central Rwanda and were only incorporated into what is now Rwanda at the beginning of colonization with German military help. It has been widely observed that the 1959-1963 violence against Tutsi was especially widespread in the north (Lemarchand 1970; Prunier 1995). Former President Habyarimana is also from that region, as is the establishment that was responsible for the 1994 genocide (Habyarimana's wife and her family, the major conspirators behind the genocide, were from a traditionally prominent northern lineage). It is also in this region that large-scale massacres against Tutsi took place in 1990-1993. From the end of the 1980s onwards,

internal political opposition in Rwanda came very much from southern Hutu, excluded from the spoils of power for two decades, and there had been instances of popular unrest in the south since the end of the 1980s. Many southern Hutu opposition leaders were killed in the 1994 genocide. Hence, this north-south division is clearly of importance to understand contemporary Rwanda, although it is by itself not sufficient to explain the genocide.

Approximately one hundred years ago a fourth ethnic group entered Rwanda, descending from central Europe. This group is commonly referred to as the *Bazungu*, the term used for whites, but in reality not referring to skin colour but to an exclusive lifestyle. It never comprised more than 1 per cent of the population, but came to own the largest share of the country's purchasing power, vehicles, telephones, etc. The newly arrived *Bazungu* conquered Rwanda by means of force and diplomacy. The latter essentially involved the delegation of an important, albeit subservient, political role to the King and the Tutsi rulers surrounding him in return for their cooperation – the famous indirect rule. At the same time, with *Bazungu* (German) help, the control by the central Tutsi aristocracy over the territory of Rwanda greatly increased. Some small Hutu kingdoms in the northwest were annexed and their land tenure systems brought under monarchic control, while the other peripheral regions of the country were brought more forcefully under centralized command (Newbury 1988; de la Masseliere 1992).

Simultaneously, the nature of the state changed: it became a conduit for the rule of the colonizer, imposing onerous legislations, taxes, and obligatory cash crops to pay them. 'For the good of the people,' compulsory work programmes were started, obliging farmers to cultivate a certain number of acres of crops, dig ditches, etc. These infamous and often brutal forced labours were strongly resented (Prunier 1995:35; Willame 1995:113; Schoepf 1995; Franche 1995). Simultaneously, new sources of power and privilege emerged that were related to the new administration, mastery of the language of the *Bazungu* (French), adherence to his religion (Catholicism), and insertion into the money-based market.

Under *Bazungu* control, these new sources of power accrued exclusively to Tutsi. During most of the colonial period, the *Bazungu* were convinced that the Tutsi were more intelligent, reliable, hardworking – in short, more like themselves – than the Hutu, who were seen as lazy, stupid, and unreliable. *Bazungu* instituted a system of rigid ethnic classification, involving such 'modern scientific' methods as the measurement of nose and skull sizes, and the attribution of obligatory identity papers stating one's ethnicity. They reserved education, as well as jobs in the administration and the army, largely for the Tutsi. For many scientists, as well as for many Rwandans, the origins of ethnic conflict and racism in Rwanda lie in this discourse of the Belgian colonizer; others dispute this hotly.

Hence, under indirect rule, social relationships in Rwanda changed greatly: they became more uniform, rigid, unequal, and exploitative than ever, with a clear hierarchy from *Bazungu* to Tutsi to Hutu to Twa, with each higher level having privileges denied to the

lower level and disdaining it.² While formally the old monarchic political structure of Rwanda was still intact, its nature had changed profoundly (Lemarchand 1970; Newbury 1988). During this period, an ideology based on the distinctness and superiority of Tutsi had been strengthened and implemented through decades of public policy.

At the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, two important processes occurred abruptly: the abandonment by the *Bazungu* of formal political power (decolonization), and the overthrow by a few Hutu educated at the Catholic schools of the Tutsi monarchy (the so-called social revolution). Both these processes were to alter radically the face of Rwanda, and begin the cycle of violence that rocks it today.

The social revolution consisted of the overthrow of the monarchy and its replacement by a presidential republic. It took place with the acquiescence if not connivance of the departing *Bazungu*. Indeed, in the last years before independence, in the name of a suddenly discovered attachment to democracy, as well as fear from the much more radical (Leftist, anti-colonial) Tutsi elite, *Bazungu* administrative and religious authorities switched their favour to the Hutu (Prunier 1995:49).

The process took place in three stages. In 1958-1959, pogroms took place in some provinces: hundreds of Tutsi were killed, and many more lost their houses and fled the country. In 1960-1961, legislative elections led to a massive victory of PARMEHUTU, a radical Hutu (virulently anti-Tutsi) party, and the replacement of the monarchy by a presidential regime. In 1961-1963, Tutsi refugees attempted to return *manu militari*, launching small guerrilla assaults from Burundi and Uganda. These assaults were stopped easily, but led to mass killing of innocent Tutsi civilians. Together, up to 30,000 Tutsi were killed, and more than 100,000 Tutsi fled the country (Lemarchand 1970; Kuper 1977).

1.2 State-building, legitimacy, and development discourse

Independence created a profoundly new and ambiguous situation in Rwanda. Even though the independent state's geographic boundaries coincided more or less with its precolonial ones, its functioning, structure, legitimacy, and goals were very different. Its political system was now inverted, with a small Hutu elite on top of the political power structure, the former Tutsi aristocracy dismantled and the *Bazungu* withdrawn. Yet, these two previously powerful groups were still physically present in the country, holding many of their previous assets. The number of *Bazungu* actually increased, and their influence in the economy if anything increased even further. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi still remained in the country, many of them well-educated and wealthy. The new powerholders also faced the need to justify their hold on power to their fellow Hutu: after all, although some Hutu now controlled state power, the lives of the large mass of Hutu peasants were basically unchanged. What was the ruling clique's claim to power?

² Prunier (1995:30) talks about a 'hardening of the social relationships'.

At the same time, the state was, and remains today, by far the main source of wealth accumulation in the country. The lion's share of salaried jobs was in the public service; in Rwanda, even jobs in the private sector or in development projects were accessible only through the state (World Bank 1994:21). Higher education, the main path for upward mobility, was largely state-controlled, although often executed by religious orders. Foreign travel and education came almost exclusively through the state (with development aid money). Little changed in that respect over the decades. Whatever development has occurred, it has not diminished the centrality of the state as the prime path to enrichment.

Hence, a dual mandate of state-building existed for the new elites: first, the strengthening of the state as an institution with authority and capabilities; and second, the legitimization of the control of the state by the powers-that-be.

The Rwandese powers-that-be have been unusually successful at both these tasks. Representatives of the state and of the unique party were present even at the lowest level of social organization: each *colline* (literally: hill, the prime geographic and social point of reference in Rwanda), each family was surrounded by centrally appointed administrators, chiefs, security agents, policemen, as well as a plethora of local party cadres of all kinds. The state was in charge of all fields of human endeavour, from education, health, and rural development to the promotion of culture and the 'right' social values.

The second mandate of state-building consists of the strengthening of control over the state by the powers-that-be. Also in this field, the Rwandese elite was highly successful. Two strategies were adopted by the post-independence regimes: the use of force on the one hand, and the quest for legitimization on the other.

The Kayibanda regime (1962-73) imprisoned, chased, and killed virtually all former Tutsi powerholders and Tutsi politicians, even the most moderate ones, as well as those opposition Hutu politicians who did not join PARMEHUTU. By 1965, the latter had become *de facto* and *de jure* the single party allowed. The second Republic under General Habyarimana (1973-1994) was an autocratic, military dictatorship. It killed many of the powerholders of the first Republic (including Kayibanda himself), and its internal security kept a tight lid on any opposition or dissension for more than a decade. The legal system was independent only in name and impunity was the norm (ICHRDD 1995; Kabirigi 1994). Regular popular elections were a farce in which Habyarimana was always re-elected with more than 98 per cent of the vote. Any form of critical press was at the risk of one's life.

But the main strength of the successive regimes lay not in their oppression (which was relatively low-key compared to other countries), but in their capacity to legitimize themselves internally and externally. In this, the regimes employed two separate discourses of legitimization: one was the ethnic, 'social revolution,' largely tailored for domestic consumption, designed to legitimize their hold on power and undercut any vindication for power sharing; the other was a 'development' legitimization, aimed at

both the international audience and the domestic one, facilitating the maintenance of the powers-that-be in their position (Newbury 1992).

The ideology of 'Hutu power' can be synthesized as the notion that Rwanda belongs to the Hutu, who were its true inhabitants, but had been subjugated brutally for centuries by the foreign masters, the Tutsi. In 1959, the Hutu had wrestled power away from their former masters and installed a true democracy, representing the majority of the people. This notion that the government is the legitimate representative of the majority Hutu, and the sole defence against the Tutsi's evil attempts to enslave the people again, constituted the powerful core of the legitimization of the ruling clique's hold to power (Kabirigi 1994; Reijntjens 1994; de Heusch 1994; Prunier 1995:58; Pabanel 1995). This racist ideology was, and still is, powerful in its appeal; given that the ancient regime was 'feudal' and unrepresentative, the new one must be progressive and democratic (de Heusch 1994). This ideology was backed by the Church as well as by some foreigners, who accepted its claims to progressiveness and democracy.

The development ideology is hardly more sophisticated than the other strand of legitimization. It basically consists of an argument that the state's sole objective is the pursuit of economic development for the underdeveloped (Hutu) masses; as a result, all those inside the country and abroad who seek to promote development should work with the state to make that possible. This ideology legitimizes the government's intrusive presence in all aspects of social life, and diverts attention from all things political, replacing them with a realm of technicality and goodwill. A whole symbolic discourse served to underline this idea. The name of the single party was rebaptized to 'Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement,' the parliament was called the 'Conseil National de Développement.' And a local journal proudly announces that the President of the Republic 'en-nobled' the term 'peasant' by extending it to all Rwandans (Ntamahungiro 1988)! If all Rwandans are peasants, there are no more divisions, no inequalities, except between Hutu and Tutsi, the only allowed, never forgotten, difference.³

1.3 The institutionalization of prejudice

In line with its ideology of the 'social revolution,' the new Hutu elite developed a policy of systematic discrimination against Tutsi, especially in areas of direct political importance and of vertical mobility. Tutsi were almost totally excluded from the army, diplomatic service, and parliament (*Physicians for Human Rights* 1994). A quota system was installed that limited access to higher education and state jobs to a number supposedly equal to the Tutsi proportion of the population. The system of ethnic identity papers introduced by the Belgians was kept intact by the post-colonial governments, and indeed continued to exist until the 1994 genocide, greatly facilitating its execution. The return of the Tutsi refugees – who would grow to up to half a million by the 1990s, mainly as a result of natural population growth – was categorically excluded, with the argument that there was no more place in Rwanda.

³ Along similar lines, see Ferguson (1990); Medard (1991); Chatterjee (1993:219).

The quota system was only partly implemented: most authors seem to agree that in the public sector, with the important exception of the army, Tutsi remained represented beyond the 9 per cent they were theoretically allowed.⁴ In all likelihood, during the last two decades, Hutu from the south were as discriminated against in access to schools and universities, for example, as Tutsi: the juicy jobs, rewarding contracts, and scholarships for travel abroad largely went to people from the northern region of the President. Moreover, in other sectors of society, such as commerce and enterprise, NGOs and development projects, Tutsi were also present.

All in all, the quota systems, combined with the ethnic IDs, served more to keep the distinctions alive (Chretien talks about maintaining the 'stranger-ness' of Tutsi) and to allow for social control by the state, than for direct actual discrimination. The same holds for the interdiction of the military to marry Tutsi women – interdiction, some suggest, also more or less applied to those who wanted political appointments (Kabirigi 1994). They were part of the institutional structure of Hutu power, administrative 'proofs,' or reminders of the fact that the Tutsi were different from everyone else, and the state was watching out for the interests of the majority Hutu. In crisis times, they provided a tool that could be activated for increased discrimination against or targeting of Tutsi. This happened in 1972-73, when the Kayibanda regime was losing its legitimacy: unhappy with the slow speed of development, popular discontent spread. Soon, under the leadership of the highest echelons of the state, mass anti-Tutsi campaigns were orchestrated with the aim of strictly enforcing quota policies. As a result, thousands of Tutsi youth were kicked out of schools, and Tutsi adults lost their jobs; some were killed, others fled the country. It happened again in the 1994 genocide when the ethnic IDs allowed the perpetrators of the genocide to compile lists of Tutsi locality by locality, check their 'Tutsiness,' and slaughter them. Alison des Forges, one of the foremost American specialists on the Great Lakes region and a human rights activist (working for Africa Watch) bitterly laments the fact that all foreign aid agencies accepted the continuation of these ethnic ID's and did not pressure the government to abandon them, not even in 1992, when it became clear that they were being employed to target Tutsi for extermination (Des Forges 1994).

1.4 The social nature of prejudice

What are the historical and social roots of this racist prejudice? What explains its rapid, widespread, and continued acceptance for decades? Why were the powerholders able to exploit a prejudiced ideology so successfully so long? What functions did racist prejudice fulfil to remain so dominant in Rwandese society? After all, no Rwandan alive has first-hand experience with the 'pure' Tutsi rule, before the arrival of the colonizer. By the 1990s, more than 80 per cent of the population was born after Independence and the so-called social revolution, and has thus never personally known Tutsi rule, not even in its indirect form under the Belgian colonizer (calculated from UN 1991a).

⁴ For some data, to be interpreted with utmost caution, given their extremely political nature, see Funga (1991) and Munyakazi (1993).

In Rwanda, basic psycho-cultural images about 'the Tutsi' and 'the Hutu' are a prime element of society. Psycho-cultural images are 'assumptions, perceptions, and images about the world that are widely shared with others and not idiosyncratic' (Ross 1993:10). These images treat Hutu and Tutsi as radically and unchangeably different, in their history as well as in their characterial, moral, intellectual, and social attributes and roles. These images predate the so-called Hutu revolution; indeed, they allowed the latter to take place. It is fascinating to look at the terms in which, from the 1950s onwards, the debate was casted, and the images that were vehiculated in the famous texts from that time, that are still referred to today. The 1957 Hutu Manifesto, which is the basic political text written by Rwanda's President Kayibanda states that 'the problem is basically that of the monopoly of one race (sic!), the Tutsi ... which condemns the desperate Hutu to be for ever subaltern workers'.⁵ In return, the circle of notables around the King wrote that there could never be fraternity between Hutu and Tutsi, for the Tutsi had conquered the Hutu and the latter shall always be their inferiors (Ross 1993). From the opposite perspective, these people vehiculated identical, divisive, and widely shared images (Prunier 1995).

There is considerable divergence as to the origin of this prejudice: is it a construction of the colonizer, or did it precede colonization? It seems most probable that images of a superiority/inferiority difference between Hutu and Tutsi already existed when the colonizer 'discovered' Rwanda. Although the first ethnographers, missionaries, and administrators have in all likelihood profoundly misinterpreted much of what they saw, they probably did not invent these images *ex nihilo*. This is not to say that these images necessarily bear a close resemblance to reality: they may have been the ideology of a kingdom in full expansion, myths developed to add historical legitimization and normality to its recent conquests and its centralization of power. It seems also likely that, when the first Germans came, the king was more than happy to make them believe in the long-standing and accepted nature of his rule; and indeed, the Germans, by conquering new territories in the north, greatly helped the king extend his power (Prunier 1995). It is certain that during colonization both the administrative authorities and the Church shared images of Tutsi as naturally superior, and acted in consequence (Franche 1995). By the time independence was becoming a buzzword throughout Africa, at least a century of myths and associated practice had created a divisive practice and ideology that was to become the basis for the post-independence instability.

After independence, the new regime used the 'Hutu power' ideology as the prime strategy for legitimation of its control of the state. This ideology constituted both a reversal and a continuation of these long-standing psycho-cultural images. It was a continuation in that it continued to stress the eternal and profound differences between 'the Hutu' and 'the Tutsi,' seen as homogenous, mutually exclusive, categories. It was a reversal in that the moral and social privilege associated with the Tutsi was turned on its head, with the Tutsi now in the position of inherently evil, dangerous oppressors. Erny states it well when discussing the so-called social revolution of 1959: unlike the French Revolution, in Rwanda the distinctions between people were 'inversed and not reversed/overthrown' (Erny 1994:59).

⁵ For the full text, see Mkundabigenzi (1961).

The occurrence of violence – in Burundi, where in 1965 and 1972, hundreds of thousands of Hutu were slaughtered by a Tutsi-dominated army, and in Rwanda in 1959-63 and 1972-1973 – rigidified racist prejudice further. This includes the violence perpetrated both by Tutsi (the attacks by the refugees) and by the Hutu themselves, for, as someone rightly observed, people struggle as much to make sense of their own violence as of the violence of others (Warren 1993:9).⁶ As Prunier states eloquently: 'In 1959 the red seal of blood put a final label of historical unavoidability on this mythological construction, which from then on became a real historical framework' (Prunier 1995:xiii).

⁶ On the general aspects of this violence, see Schoepf (1995).

II THE NATURE OF DEVELOPMENT IN RWANDA

2.1 Image: development against the odds

Profound racism notwithstanding, the image created about Rwanda by the development community was an idyllic one. Briefly, it was one of a country of subsistence farmers, faced with daunting environmental challenges, but endowed with a government that followed the right kind of policies, of which the hardworking population enjoyed the fruits. It was the image of a country in which business was good for all those working in development. The construction and repetition of this image is revealed by examining the language of the foremost oracle of the development community, the agency that defines success and failure, the World Bank.

In 1976, the *Memorandum on the Economy of Rwanda* states that 'despite these handicaps, the present Government ... has made perceptible progress in developing a strategy to lift the economy from its present low level' (World Bank 1976:1). Fifteen years later, the World Bank still describes Rwanda in almost identical words: 'despite these constraints, Rwanda has made a creditable effort toward economic and social development' (World Bank 1991d:468). And the same paragraph goes on to say that 'Rwanda has been able to attract substantial volumes of external aid from a great diversity of sources, confirming donor perceptions that the government is development-oriented and pursuing generally appropriate objectives' – a most amazing circular reasoning! The construction is always the same: 'although the task was forbidding, ... Rwanda's approach to economic and social development could be considered as successful' (World Bank 1989b:3).⁷ As the tables below show, there exists plenty of data to back up the image.

TABLE 2.1
DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS FOR RWANDA

GNP per capita growth rate, in %	1965-1988	1.5
Industrial growth rate, in %	1980-1988	3.6
Services growth rate, in %	1980-1988	3.4
Agricultural growth rate, in %	1980-1988	0.3
Energy production growth rate, in %	1980-1988	5.5
Gross domestic investment growth rate, in %	1980-1988	7.4
Exports annual growth rate, in %	1960-1980	7.8
Exports annual growth rate, in %	1980-1993	2.5

Source: World Bank. 1991c and 1995.

⁷ For a similar description, see Voyame (1996:57).

TABLE 2.2
INDICATORS OF INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR RWANDA

	1970	1980	1990
Paved roads, in km	78	405	720
Electricity production, million of kilowatt-hours	81	163	176
Telephone main lines, number of connections	2300	3300	10400

Source: World Bank. 1991c and 1995.

The forbidding obstacles Rwanda had to overcome are always the same: low income, embryonic modern sector, land shortage, rapid population growth, and the farmers themselves: 'The principal problems come from the vicious circle of poverty, high population growth and pressure on the environment. In this cycle, the poor are the chief victims and the chief culprits' (World Bank 1994:29). This list basically is identical to all other African countries. It is the generic image of underdeveloped countries in need of the type of technical solutions the aid agencies have to offer (Ferguson 1990). Do not figure in that list (even in the above quoted report written during the genocide): state sponsored racism; authoritarian government and condescending extension; a festering refugee problem; systematic impunity; and social, ethnic and regional inequality.

The country's assets to overcome these obstacles are always the same too. They invariably include the country's political stability (World Bank 1984:1, 1986:2 and 1989c:3), the government's concern for the rural population, and its prudent, sound, realistic management (World Bank 1989b:3, 1991d:1 and 1991b:1). Other reports mention 'the cultural and social cohesion of its people' (World Bank 1986b:2), or the ethnic and socioeconomic homogeneity of the country (World Bank 1991b:3).

This shows not only how images are constructed and repeated over time, but also how little the consultants writing these reports really care about these aspects. Even during the most peaceful period in Rwanda, it was impossible for anyone to stress the 'cultural and social cohesion of its people.' Ethnicity has always been one of the major stakes in Rwandan society, yet, in a 100 page historical and policy analysis of 'the role of the communes in socio-economic development in Rwanda,' there is only one line that mentions that Independence was 'accompanied by widespread disturbances in the countryside' – and this for a discussion of the nature of the state and decentralization under the colonial and post-colonial period (World Bank 1987:5)! The 'sound management' and 'deep concern for the rural poor' of the Rwandan government was contradicted by the evaluations of the Bank's own projects (see below), by the increasing corruption, and by the lack of accountability. Yet, the image was kept intact until the genocide.

This image is not accidental nor the result of the incompetence of the specialists writing these reports. As Ferguson observes in a similar study on Lesotho, World Bank experts are as qualified and intelligent as the author of this paper as well as its readers. Rather, these simple if not outright false images constitute a crucial part in the construction of Rwanda as a 'development problem' that can be solved by development aid. Such

development problems preferably take the shape of national, 'plannable,' subsistence agriculture economies, in which training, credit, infrastructure, agricultural research and extension, planning, and public health interventions constitute the solutions, for which the experts in the aid system happen to have the answers (Ferguson 1990). Ethnic inequality; institutionalized, state organized racism; regional politics; the generalized presence of impunity, fear, and the absence of justice; human rights violations; or the oppressive presence of the state; are emphatically not part of this 'solvable problem' or of the problematique of development. They are thus evacuated, ignored, or sometimes considered non-existent, which, of course, pleases the powers-that-be!

2.2 The place of development aid in Rwanda

Until the genocide, and in accordance with its positive and popular image, Rwanda was one of the most aided countries in the world. According to the OECD, official development aid accounted for 11.4 per cent of its GNP in 1989-90; above the already very high average for Africa and the least developed countries. According to the World Bank, foreign assistance financed over 70 per cent of public investment in the 1982-87 period. Development aid to Rwanda was vastly larger than private investment and commercial exports combined.

By the 1990s, there were approximately 300 donors in the country: 20 or so bilaterals, 30 multilaterals, and 250 or so foreign and local NGOs. They managed more than 1,000 projects in 1986, ranging from the very small to the very large. Rwanda had the highest density of technical assistants per square kilometre in Africa; there were approximately 1500 of them (without counting the missionaries, many of whom are at least part-time in the business of development, and the specialists on short-term missions). And the size of development aid increased from an average of US\$ 45 per person in the 1980s to US\$ 80 and above during the 1990s!

2.3 Toward a holistic definition of development

After thirty years of development practice and theory, it has become commonly accepted, albeit not implemented, that development is a broad process of social change in which different aspects of people's lives cannot be separated: the economic from the social, the cultural from the political and the religious. It also has become commonplace to observe that improvements in macro-economic indicators do not necessarily translate into improvements in the quality of life of the poor, and can even coexist with deteriorations thereof. To analyse the nature and extent of development in Rwanda (as in any other country), therefore, we will need to go beyond the above-mentioned economic indicators, and look at development in a more holistic manner, centred on the poor.

During the last years, several authors have attempted to draw together what is known about 'human development' or 'social development,' terms used to denote that development cannot be conceived without putting people at the core, and that economic growth (the usual definition of development) is but one of many elements of it. Probably the most visible among these is the UNDP, which in 1990 began publishing its annual

Human Development Report. Designed as an explicit alternative to the World Bank's *World Development Report*, this series has generated much debate over the years, regarding both the factors to be included and the way to measure them. In its first year, human development was defined as 'the process of enabling people to have wider choices.' Much attention was devoted to health, education, and nutrition, which had been largely neglected during the structural adjustment decade of the 1980s.

With each successive year, the team in charge of the *Human Development Report* has re(de)defined the concept, based on the criticism and suggestions received. By 1996, the definition of human development has become much more comprehensive, including:

- empowerment: basic empowerment depends on the expansion of people's capabilities – expansion that involves an enlargement of choices and thus an increase in freedom. But people can exercise few choices without freedom from hunger, want and deprivation. ... Empowerment carries an additional connotation – that in the course of their daily lives people are able to participate in, or endorse, the decision-making that affects their lives. ... People should not be passive beneficiaries of a process engineered by others. They should be active agents in their own development.
- cooperation: people live within a complex web of social structures – from the family to the state, from local self-help groups to multinational corporations. They are social beings who value participation in the life of their community. This sense of belonging is an important source of well-being. It gives enjoyment and direction, a sense of purpose and meaning. ... If people live together well, if they cooperate in a mutually enriching way, this enlarges their individual choices. ...
- equity: equity is usually thought of in terms of wealth or income. But human development takes a much broader view – seeking equity in basic capabilities and opportunities. ... This applies in particular to women ...
- sustainability: sustainable human development meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. ... What needs to be sustained are people's opportunities to freely exercise their basic capabilities.
- security: for too long the idea of security has referred to military security or the security of states. One of the most basic needs is security of livelihood, but people also want to be free from chronic threats, such as disease or oppression, as well as from sudden and hurtful disruptions in their daily lives. Human development insists that everyone should enjoy a minimal level of security (UNDP 1996:55-6).

Coming from a different perspective, Robert Chambers, father of the rapid (participatory) rural appraisal approach to development research, has synthesized decades of work with local communities throughout the world. He argues that, from the point of view of the poor, what he calls the condition of 'deprivation' reaches far beyond lack of access to income and goods. Deprivation is characterized by *social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation* (Chambers 1995). For the poor, actions that target only one of these aspects – usually lack of income – are too limited and often self-defeating, to the extent that progress on that characteristic (i.e., increases in income) has often gone hand in hand with setbacks in the other characteristics (such as increases in vulnerability and instability).

It seems that the same elements come back over and over again: for poor people, development is about increases in income as well as in access to the means of production; reductions in insecurity and vulnerability and the creation of a sustainable and hopeful future; empowerment through participation, justice, freedom, access to information and education; overcoming of physical weakness through access to health and nutrition; and human dignity, social cooperation, and a sense of equity. In the rest of this section, I will analyse Rwanda's economic growth in the light of these factors.⁸

2.4 Development as economic progress for the poor

Contrary to the 'urban bias' that supposedly characterizes most Third World government policies, the Rwandan government has always put priority on agriculture and sought to avoid urbanization. Every economic and social development plan has been organized around one central goal: to deal with the population-resource imbalance the country faces and to promote food self-sufficiency (World Bank 1989a:1). A multitude of administrative policies existed that made migration to cities all but impossible.

However, notwithstanding this discourse in favour of the peasant masses, actual expenditures reveal different priorities. Urban infrastructures take up 40 per cent of the Rwandan development budget, higher education 5 per cent, and subsidies to a small and inefficient parastatal industrial sector 7 per cent. At the same time, only 6 per cent of current expenditures are devoted to agriculture, three-fourths of which are invested in infrastructures and the functioning of the public services; while 20-25 per cent of investment expenditures are allocated to agriculture (World Bank 1989b:8-9; Voyame and Friedli *et al.* 1996:53).

Still, even with these data, Rwanda scores better than most other African countries, albeit significantly less well than its rhetoric suggests. The same holds for public expenditures on health and education. According to UNICEF, the Rwandan government spent up to 20 per cent of its budget on education, and did not bias this spending toward tertiary education. Expenditures on health were below average, but also there Rwanda

⁸ See also UNDP 1996:56.

was characterized by a rather dense network of rural hospitals, if one includes the many church-operated ones. Until the 1980s, expenditures on defence were lower than average.

TABLE 2.3
SOME SOCIAL INDICATORS OF DEVELOPMENT ⁹

	1970	1980	1990	1992
Access to safe drinking water, %	67	55	69	66
Access to sanitation, urban, %		60	88	77
Access to sanitation, rural, %		50	17	56
Infant mortality per thousand	142		117	110
1-year olds vaccinated against DTP, %		36		85
1-year olds vaccinated against polio, %		25		85
Women vaccinated against tetanus, %		5		88
Primary school enrolment, %	68		71	51
Secondary school enrolment, %	2		8	

Source: Data are derived from Barrere et al. 1994; UNDP 1995, UNICEF 1995; and World Bank 1995.

What were the results of thirty years of development policies and projects? Fundamentally, Rwanda remained one of the poorest countries in the world, situated in the lower half of the least developed countries. On the other hand, as stated above, its GNP growth rate was higher than the average of that group. It is hard to draw conclusions concerning health, education, or nutrition – the so-called basic needs, and an important part of the 'human development' vision. If the data are reliable, access to education, safe drinking water, or sanitation has essentially stagnated for decades. Maybe this is an achievement in a country with the world's highest fertility rate, but it fails to impress if one considers the hundreds of millions of dollars of development aid annually dispensed in the country. Access to secondary education was the lowest in Africa (World Bank 1989b:17). Moreover, the data tell us very little about the quality of the education and the health services received by the majority of the population. Functional illiteracy in Rwanda has been estimated at up to 90 per cent, while health care centres often lack medicines and motivated personnel (UN 1991b:35-6). It is generally accepted that their quality declined further in the second half of the 1980s. Significant progress, however, seems to have been made only in providing vaccinations: in the 1980s, Rwanda was one of the three best pupils of UNICEF in Africa! It is unclear if this trend would have been sustainable without massive international involvement, but one can safely say that the large majority of those doing the killing, and those being killed, in the 1994 genocide were vaccinated. All in all, the aggregate level of development remained woefully low in Rwanda, even after three decades of successful policies.

⁹ The wide margins indicate that the data originate from several sources, and thus may not be comparable.

2.5 Development as equity: who gets the benefits?

There exists a widespread feeling that Rwanda was a very egalitarian society. This is part of the development image of Rwanda as described above: a nation of poor peasants, more or less equal, working hard and successfully to eradicate poverty. This image is highly incorrect. Below, I will argue that the development process in Rwanda was profoundly inequitable in a multitude of ways. Moreover, inequality was rising dramatically in the 1980s.

There are few national data on poverty and inequality. A 1994 World Bank report on poverty reduction and sustainable growth states that the proportion of the population living in poverty grew from 40 per cent in 1985 to 53 per cent in 1992 (World Bank 1994:i:10). From 1993 onwards the *World Development Report*, in table 30 on income distribution, indicates that the percentage share of consumption of the poorest 20 per cent of the population is 9.7 per cent, and of the richest decile 24.6 per cent. These data put Rwanda in the position of the most egalitarian country among all low-income and middle-income countries in the world: as a matter of fact, one has to move up to the level of Hungary to find a more egalitarian country!¹⁰ The 1994 poverty reduction and sustainable growth report also writes that 'land is less unequally divided than elsewhere, (...) household expenditure is relatively evenly distributed in Rwanda, and (...) government expenditure and tax policies are income neutral' (World Bank 1994:5, 60, 25). All these observations, needless to say, put Rwanda in a much better position than other African countries.

I will argue that these data greatly underestimate the extent of poverty and inequality in Rwanda. They are largely statistical constructs, part of the image the development community liked to believe in for Rwanda. I will seek to demonstrate this contention by first, analysing data on food expenditures and undernutrition; second, proposing a case study of the impact of development aid on inequality; and third, looking in more detail at the documented rise in land and income inequality in the 1980s.

2.5.1 Undernutrition and ultra-poverty

The above-mentioned figures on poverty in 1985 and 1992 are based on a 1983-85 census, in which the poor were defined as 'the bottom 40 per cent of the sample in terms of expenditures per capita' (World Bank 1994:5). In other words, poverty in 1983-85 was thus *by definition* set at 40 per cent!

The same report tells us that 'expenditures on food were 88 per cent of total for the poor and 74 per cent for the non-poor' (World Bank 1994:6). This suggests that a very large proportion of the so-called non-poor are in fact extremely poor as well. A decade ago, in a major research project for the World Bank, Michael Lipton defined the 'ultra-poor' as the bottom group of society that is so deprived that it does not even benefit from those policies and projects that may bring benefit to the 'ordinary' poor. What characterized the ultra-poor, in Lipton's work, was that these households spend 75 per cent or more of

¹⁰ See also UNDP (1995).

their income on food (Lipton 1988). Another typical characteristic of the ultra-poor is that they are likely to be malnourished, weak, often sick, with little capacity to benefit from opportunities or projects that may be of use to the ordinary poor. Their life is a constant fight for sheer survival; they can hardly invest in productive assets nor take risks. If we use Lipton's cut-off point, it seems that the incidence of ultra-poverty may well be higher than 50 per cent, while, beyond that, another significant part of the population is poor!

TABLE 2.4
PROPORTION OF RURAL PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN STUNTED

Year	Proportion of stunting (0-60 mo.)	Indicator
1976	33	below 90% height-for-age
1980	40	- ditto -
1983	56	more than 2 standard deviations
1991	52	below reference
1992	49	- ditto -

Source: Various surveys

Data on childhood malnutrition support this assertion. Two researchers recently have created a more or less cleaned-up data series of child undernutrition in Rwanda – a tedious task, given the inconsistencies and incompatibilities in the various surveys (the 1976 and 1980 below data are not really comparable with the following ones) (Grosse, Krasovec *et al.* 1995). These data on child undernutrition, often used as a proxy for general undernutrition (Mason and Jonsson *et al.* 1996), also suggest that half of Rwanda's population probably lives in ultra-poverty. The localized cases of famine observed in the second half of the 1980s suggest the same.

2.5.2 *Development projects and inequality: the Mutara agricultural development projects (1974-86)*

A rare insight into a particular development project's complicated social effects is afforded by combining an analysis by René Lemarchand with the official Bank reports on an IDA-sponsored rural development project that began in 1974 and ended, after two phases, twelve years later. The first Mutara agricultural development project began in 1974, after six years of identification studies and difficult negotiations. Its goals were to install 7,000 families on *paysannats*, government-sponsored farms started by the colonizer in 1953 and continued by the independent government, located in so-called underpopulated areas, on which farmers are given a fixed quantity of land in a contract that specifies the agricultural techniques to be employed. A major innovation was the creation of ranches following a similar pattern: grazing rights as well as small plots of land would be given to 3,000 pastoralist households against certain behaviours (destocking, payments, etc.). A parastatal organization, OVAPAM, was created to manage the project.

The audit of the first phase observes that most physical targets of the project had been met. Indeed, 750 km of roads were constructed, and OVAPAM's own elaborate infrastructure was built: 47 houses, 2 warehouses, offices, etc. The cars and office supplies were also bought. The experts and the employees could sleep safely, although the Rwandan director of OVAPAM never spent a night in its rural headquarters!

The rest of the project was a complete failure. A water supply scheme that was part of the original project was dropped because the cost of the above-mentioned constructions had greatly exceeded planned budgets. No social infrastructure for the population was built at all. This was 'deeply resented by the population,' according to the audit (World Bank 1979:10 and 1981:4). The crucial extension component of the project had also failed: neither farmers nor ranchers had adopted the proposed techniques.

Thus, after six years of studying, five years of working, and spending 4.5 million dollars (to be reimbursed, albeit on soft terms), the project's sole output was an enormous infrastructure for itself (84 per cent of total project cost: World Bank 1981:6) and the creation of some 160 jobs (60 were considered necessary). Its economic rate of return was negative; its management was bad and conflict ridden; cost overruns plagued the whole project; and consultants had not managed to train anyone because they hardly spoke French! The audit report also mentions *en passant* that many pastoralists who used to live in the region had left for Uganda out of fear of the project and the intentions behind it (World Bank 1979:14, 1981:35 and 1991a:2), and that the rules on land distribution had been violated consistently. The so-called beneficiary committees set up to oversee the process of distribution never functioned; people from outside the zone (from Ruhengeri, the president's region) have in all likelihood benefited disproportionately.

Happily, the audit report manages to conclude on an optimistic note: the project created dialogue between the Bank and the government (World Bank 1979:18 and 1981:44). As a result, a second phase was proposed, with the same institutional set-up and an extension of the zone, as well as slightly adapted objectives: a primary focus on the creation of social infrastructures (water supply, schools, health centres), and improvements in the extension messages to farmers and pastoralists (World Bank 1979:26).

The 1991 completion report, covering phase II of the project (1979-86; note that the report this time comes five years after the end of the project) announces that the physical targets have been met, although with substantial cost overruns and a two year delay (the water system was finally built in 1986, twenty years after the first mission, twelve years after the project began). The bad news is that the 'technical extension package had little to offer' to the farmers and the research station did not create any outputs of relevance to the farmers (World Bank 1991a:iii:5). Most of the innovations proposed were either not adopted or abandoned after the project ended. The group ranches still are not sustainable; in fact, the ecological situation has probably become worse during the project's life (World Bank 1991a:iv). Project management remained as conflictual and unclear as before.

Until now the story is essentially one of mismanagement, ineffectiveness, and a remarkable form of ignorance, qualities often encountered in the development business. But Lemarchand's analysis adds a broader picture that links it up to the more profound forces of politics, ethnicity, and mal-development in Rwanda. According to Lemarchand, the unexpected results of the project are not accidents, but directly related to the forces of exclusion that characterize the project zone and Rwanda in general. These forces are foremost ethnic, and have played an important role in the allocation of land and cattle. Lemarchand documents a 'more or less deliberate policy of ethnic favouritism on the part of influential Hutu politicians at the regional and national levels,' directed primarily against Tutsi, but also against the Barundi refugees in the zone. He demonstrates that this policy primarily favours people from Ruhengeri and a selected number of other 'client' Hutu (Lemarchand 1982:25-6).

But the forces of exclusion are not solely ethnic; they are also between the small urban, well-connected, educated sector and the peasant masses (Lemarchand 1982:23). 'Pre-existing differences have been further accentuated by the ability of the wealthier and better educated recipients to supplement their income through a variety of jobs within and outside the project parameter' (traders, OVAPAM employees, workers in Kigali) (Lemarchand 1982:59). These same people are the ones who managed to get many of the terrains distributed during these 10 years: indeed, according to Lemarchand, up to 40 per cent of the lands were awarded to absentee ranchers, i.e., people who do not cultivate the land, but rent it to others. These absentee ranchers were mainly politicians, civil servants, and OVAPAM project employees themselves (Lemarchand 1982:45 and 58-9).

The end result of this project, then, is a great increase in inequality between regions, classes, groups, and people (Lemarchand 1982:27; 41; 58; 63). It is a system in which a small group of people managed to obtain most of the advantages of the multi-million dollar project: jobs in and outside of the project, free land to be cultivated by family members, renters, or political clients; or large herds overgrazing at the expense of the original Tutsi and Hima herdsmen. It is no accident that those who benefited were often from the president's region, nor that almost all of them belong to the usual class of *evolués*, i.e., those in the loop, those with the right connections. They also received the benefits of cars, motorcycles, foreign training, and 47 new buildings. They, in return, fuelled a system of clientelism, through which ordinary Hutu could get access to land, salaried jobs, agricultural inputs, etc.¹¹

The above description is particularly worrisome if one looks beyond one specific project to uncover the regular pattern behind decades of 'failed' projects. We believe that projects routinely have the effects described above for the Mutara project: increased inequality, favouring the same categories of the politically well-connected, the administration, the politicians, and the powerholders from the north; and few if any benefits to the masses in whose name the projects were undertaken, except if they are willing to engage in clientelistic relations with the former. These effects are thus more than unfortunate, more than 'bad luck;' they are structural. This 'repeated practice' is the

¹¹ On the clientelistic nature of social relations in Rwanda, see also Kabirigi (1994).

norm, the result expected both by the population at large and by the real beneficiaries, which partly explains the latter's desire to repeat the same type of inefficient projects over and over again.

In this respect, it is instructive to look at the population's attitude toward development projects. Anyone who has worked in Rwanda will agree that distrust is probably the prime attitude, combined with lack of involvement if not outright resistance. Thus another team of experts writes with a straight face:

The local population does not, in general, question the nature of the projects to be carried out, provided,

- i) they participate as paid labour (thereby earning extra cash income);
- ii) land developments do not affect their farm holdings (requisition of land or encroachment for infrastructure or other works);
- iii) the works can be reversed (erosion control measures); and
- iv) most of all the projects do not involve compulsory participation in the form of labour or result in heavy financial charges (World Bank 1987:12-3; and 27).

This paragraph should provoke some very serious thinking: it states quite correctly that most poor people manage to live with/survive development projects and the associated administration as long as these projects do not hurt them or force them to participate. The main merit of projects for poor people then often seems to reside in the fact that they create temporary jobs.

This discussion could not be complete without mentioning the concept of impunity. If there is only one point that all parties in the conflict in Rwanda are willing to agree upon, it probably is that impunity is a key underlying problem in society (Groupe d'Ecoute 1995; Kabirigi 1994). Impunity is often considered solely a matter of tribunals and the consistent application of the law. These *are* important aspects of the problem, but it is much more insidious. In Rwanda as in so many countries, impunity is a matter of daily life. There is little if any justice in how jobs are allocated, benefits received, tasks implemented, or abuses of administrative power punished. As a result, people lose their faith in the system, become cynical,¹² and will be easily tempted to break laws themselves. Impunity, the flip side of inequality, usually occurring in tandem with it, creates frustration and loss that require the need for scapegoating and can lead to violence (OXFAM 1996:8).

¹² Especially as the practice of impunity conflicts so dramatically with the liberal-meritocratic discourse of development (Braun 1990:37-8).

2.5.3 Trends in land and income inequality in the 1980s

The control of urban real estate has provided great opportunities for personal gain to the well-connected (Pabanel 1995:115). Similar processes take place in the countryside. Although Rwanda has a policy that forbids the purchase of land by those with three or more hectares, farmers have been able to circumvent that through long-term leases, or by buying in black markets (World Bank 1991b:61). Willame discusses results from one commune in 1988 that indicate that 21 per cent of the fields had been bought (mostly the result of 'distress sales' by their previous owners), while the official data are much lower (Willame 1995:140). This suggests that real land inequality is in all likelihood much higher than what the figures indicate, and that these black market mechanisms have become prevalent during the last decade. As a result, 'there is an emerging group of landowners with 5 or more hectares, while the number of landless farmers is increasing apace' (World Bank 1991b:3; 57). According to data in the 1984 USAID financed National Agricultural Survey, approximately 15 per cent of the farmers own 50 per cent of the land, especially in the provinces of rural Kigali, Gitarama, and Gikongoro. And IWACU adds that 26 per cent of the population has become landless (IWACU 1991:51).

Like elsewhere in Africa, the majority of these land purchases are not by small farmers who through sheer hard work manage to buy a few acres more, but by 'big men' with money earned outside agriculture in government and aid agency wages or commerce (IWACU 1991:41; Downs 1988:3-9; 15). Erny and many others describe the population as 'extremely unhappy with the accumulation of land by the privileged of the regime and the constitution of large pastoral domains' (1994:80). The situation in Rwanda, where almost all the poor depend on agriculture and where public policy renders migration to the city or employment in the informal sector nearly impossible, leaves people with little hope for the future, and with no possibilities of escaping extreme poverty!

In addition, the state can and does expropriate land at very low compensation (if at all) with great regularity, causing extreme resentment and destitution (actually, legally, the state owns all the lands, and just takes them back from the farmers). As a World Bank expert writes on this subject in an uncharacteristically blunt manner, 'these laws are not unusual in the world, but are carried to a rather severe extent in Rwanda. For example if a local government decides to zone an area for industrial development, or middle-class housing, peasants will have their land confiscated. As practised, this policy is strongly anti-poor' (World Bank 1994:35). Yet, as good as all development projects are characterized by the construction of infrastructures, demonstration fields, access roads, etc. on lands that were similarly expropriated!

As Maton has shown, income inequality has grown quickly in the 1980s: the income share of the richest decile in Rwanda has increased from 22 per cent in 1982 to 52 per cent in 1994, vastly higher than the World Bank data suggest (Maton 1994). And according to data by Marysse and his colleagues for a rural region in the Province of Butare, the 20 per cent richest earned 66 per cent of that region's income in 1992. At the same time, 43 per cent of the households spend nothing on education, while one-fifth has nothing left for health care (Marysse, De Herdt *et al.* 1993). Note that these data do not include the well-known salaries and lifestyles of most technical assistants and

consultants, which have been calculated in the Burundian context to be 600 times higher than the incomes of farmers or the special benefits of those lucky few working with them (travel abroad, foreign goods, access to good cars). They also do not include, by definition, illegal earnings from smuggling, corruption, and the like.

These people are all closely linked to the powers-that-be and derive most of their wealth from this closeness to the state. As elsewhere in Africa, the two main paths for enrichment are land speculation and trade: there were and are major temporal and spatial differentials in prices for the same good, allowing for extremely juicy opportunities for enrichment (Willame 1995:160). As the lion's share of the population was kept almost immobile on its meagre lands through policies that forbid migration, or rendered excessively costly self-employment and small trade, these opportunities for enrichment were open only to the well-connected, and led to greatly increased and widely resented inequality. In the 1980s, while a small elite was rapidly increasing its wealth, the rural economy of Rwanda collapsed, and with it the future of most of its youth.

To conclude our discussion of equity, we have presented a very different picture from the usual one. In the beginning of this section, World Bank data suggested that inequality in Rwanda is low, and government policies neutral in that respect. We have shown this to be a statistical construct: as society is arbitrarily divided in two segments of almost equal size and poverty artificially limited to one group, it is to be expected that tax and expenditure policies will be neutral; after all, there is little difference between the two groups.

The data and processes we described above paint a very different picture, in which approximately half of Rwanda's society must in all likelihood be considered ultra-poor, up to 40 per cent more poor, 9 per cent non-poor, and 1 per cent positively rich; if we include the few thousands of technical assistants and experts who were at any given time in the country, the inequality rises even further. Poverty in Rwanda is then both much more profound and more unequal than the usual data suggest; it was also rising fast in the 1980s. The impact of government policies and development projects, too, looks very different from the benign picture usually presented, contributing greatly to rising inequality along ethnic and regional lines, as well as impunity. It seems that Lipton's observation that the ultra-poor as a rule do not benefit from projects and economic trends that may benefit the poor holds true in Rwanda also, meaning that up to half of society has not benefited from the progress observed in the macro-economic data. This is admitted by some people, both in writing (UN 1991b:34-40) and in policy: I encountered one major aid agency in Rwanda that explicitly said it did not seek to work with the poorest 30 per cent of the people because they were beyond help.

2.6 Development as empowerment: the freedom to think

Rwanda's agricultural extension system, the prime mechanism for 'development' in a country where up to 95 per cent of the population lives from farming, was extremely top-down and authoritarian. Most critical observers describe the role of the farmers as

mere executors in programmes conceived without asking their opinion (Derrier 1985:613-4; World Bank 1987:86-7; Ntamahungiro 1988).

At the same time, the content of the messages being forced on the farmers, and the competencies of those doing the forcing, was more often than not unadapted to local needs. Most of the agricultural extension evolved around the promotion of a few export crops, foremost coffee, and not the food crops of prime interest to farmers (Little and Horowitz 1987). The extension agents are little-trained and largely incapable of doing more than relaying messages. They, like their superiors, display condescending attitudes toward most farmers, if they do not seek to avoid meeting them at all. In short, 'the system is very vertical and authoritarian. ... There is an enormous loss of content between the top and the bottom of the system. ... Only some simplified messages arrive at the level of the farmer. Moreover, the extension agents tend to situate themselves hierarchically towards the farmers, and abuse their position.'¹³ This is typical for Africa, but, given the omnipresence of the state and the development machinery in Rwanda – much more so than in other African countries – it led to an almost military style development approach, an 'encadrement' on the verge of forced labour. In fact, the system of obligatory community labour was largely perceived in these terms (Guichaoua 1991; Willame 1995:142).

This mirrors the vertical and authoritarian nature of public administration and politics in Rwanda (see above). No wonder, as one of my Rwandese students, an agronomist with a Belgian-funded project, put it incomprehendingly: 'in our project, I asked myself the question why we always had to 'force' the farmers to listen to us, to adopt the new techniques proposed by the Ministry via the project. Why were people resisting when we were working for their development?' The answer may well be: because nobody ever listened to them, because experience showed them that most of the projects in their name do not help them, because they do not wish to be treated like ignorant children, because they had lost all faith in the development enterprise.

2.6.1 *Coffee*

The largest share of farmers' income comes from only one crop: coffee. On a macro-economic level, the same is true for the government, which earns 60-80 per cent its foreign currency from export taxes on coffee (Marysse, De Herdt *et al.* 1993:28). As a result, it is not surprising that agricultural extension by the government is almost completely geared to coffee (World bank 1983:39). As with anything else in Rwanda, promoting coffee production was done in a top-down manner. Uprooting of coffee plants is illegal, as is interplanting with other crops; farmers can be, and are, fined for either (World Bank 1983:39). Coffee production was also mandatory on the government-sponsored group ranches (Little and Horowitz 1987 and 1988).¹⁴

From 1969 to 1981, coffee production grew by an average of 4.4 per cent (split evenly between a 2.2 per cent increase in acreage and a 2.2 per cent increase in yields), while

¹³ See also Ericum (1986:22) and Nkeshimana (1987:85).

¹⁴ For a different vision, see Robins and Ndorehayo (1988).

tea production increased by 17 per cent a year (caused by a 15.5 per cent annual increase in acreage planted and a low 1.3 per cent increase in yields) (World Bank 1983:39). However, the quality of Rwanda's coffee has deteriorated since the end of the 1970s, while world competition has greatly increased.

As a result, coffee prices are subject to extreme volatility of up to 20 per cent or more (World Bank 1986b:5). Hence, besides being extremely poor, most Rwandan households are also uniquely vulnerable to shocks. The policy to push coffee production at all cost has continued, if not strengthened, Rwandans' vulnerability.

2.7 Development as (self)-respect: the second prejudice

Prejudice exists in Rwanda not in one but two forms. One is the already discussed official 'Hutu' ideology. The other is the prejudice of what are locally called the *evolués* – the urban, educated, modern, 'developed' people – versus their backward, rural, illiterate, 'underdeveloped' brothers.

A few authors have made passing reference to this concept. Destexhe writes about a 'fourth ethnic group', that incorporates those Hutu and Tutsi who have acquired an education and a European knowledge (*savoir-faire*). (...) All these people denigrate the rural way of living' (Destexhe 1994:68). This group has a lifestyle that is radically different from the majority of the population. It has a different language (French; in every conversation with the ordinary people, its members will make sure to regularly employ French words, incomprehensible to the latter, so as to remind them of the difference), is literate, travels, has access to cars (pens and paper, as well as car keys, casually displayed, are other important symbols of the *evolués*), watches TV, eats different food, drinks different beer, and wears different clothes. It is their lifestyle, culture, language, and dress code that is upheld as the only desirable, modern one. For the few who have acquired it, it accompanies an often extremely condescending, rude, and manipulative attitude toward the masses. Even family members are treated as inferior and their habits often ridiculed.

As Ntamahungiro writes,

A bad habit has installed itself in our mores, in which the rich, the powerful, the civil servant, the educated person always has priority over the poor, the weak, the non-educated, the 'non-civil servant.' This can be observed in court, at the doctor, in the administration and even in taxis. (...) This lack of respect towards peasants manifests itself amongst others in the way they are addressed. They are spoken to in a commanding tone, often with disdain. They are required to behave as inferiors, to make themselves very small (Ntamahungiro 1988).

A large part of the population has internalized these values, accepting this lifestyle as the only 'good' one, and judging its own fate as primitive, inferior, and extremely undesirable. Little is left of the 'traditional' pride of the African farmer in his culture, in

Rwanda as elsewhere. Most farmers, especially the young, consider the need to farm a demonstration of failure and lowness, and would give up farming immediately to become a simple sentry, cook, or, especially, driver, in any development project, and to live in the city (Willame 1995).

2.8 Conclusion

From the point of view of the poor, the results of thirty years of 'development' in Rwanda include: constant reduction of 'life chances' for a majority of the people and increasing vulnerability; an uninformed and uneducated peasant mass treated in an oppressive, authoritarian, and condescending manner; a history of impunity, corruption, and abuse of power by local and national elites, often committed in the name of development; a deep-felt frustration and cynicism by many poor people; and growing social, ethnic, and regional inequality. Viewed in a holistic manner, deprivation has not decreased, but rather increased, for the large majority of Rwanda's poor. For most poor Rwandans, social inferiority, powerlessness and humiliation are a constant feature of life. Cultivating ever smaller lots of land more intensively, depending on one cash crop for their meagre incomes, their vulnerability to external shocks increased rather than decreased. The hope for a better future becomes smaller for each generation; the rhetoric of development, the exhortations, and the promises are less and less believable.

It is hard for most of us to imagine how tense and frustration-rich a society must be in which the large majority of the population is subject to prejudice – whether racist prejudice or the 'second prejudice' of the development game, which acts in the name of the poor but excludes them from its benefits, which humiliates rather than strengthens them. It is by no means surprising that under these circumstances, there exists a strong need to scapegoat others, and to direct aggression and frustration externally. As Simpson and Yinger wrote long ago,

Prejudice is an attempt to find meaning, to explain. ... Prejudice may be an attempt to enhance one's self-esteem or to remove a threat to self-esteem. In a culture that stresses the opportunities each person has for success but prevents success (by its own definition) for a great number, it is not surprising to find a great many people creating a shadowy image of success by placing themselves, categorically, above all members of inferior groups (Simpson and Yinger 1953:61).

To turn these prejudices into genocide, a set of events and processes must push people over the limit, events that bring elites to push ethnic hatred and racism into high gear as a strategy of self-defence, and that push the masses into more extreme despair and frustration. The economic crisis that began in the middle of the 1980s, the political challenges to the regime, and the civil war that started in 1990 provided these pushes.

III THE RADICALIZATION OF PREJUDICE: THE PUSH TO GENOCIDE

3.1 The economic crisis

The economic crisis faced by Rwanda was both financial and agricultural. In 1985 a decade-long decline began in the international price of coffee, Rwanda's major export. Coffee export receipts fell from US\$ 144 million in 1985 to US\$ 30 million in 1993 (FAO 1994). This greatly reduced the earnings of the Rwandan state as well as the purchasing power of most rural households (Marysse, Ndayambaje *et al.* 1992:45). The available data indicate that aggregate GDP per capita decreased from US\$ 355 in 1983 to US\$ 260 in 1990.

As a result of this crisis, Rwanda's foreign debt, low by African standards until the end of the 1970s, rose rapidly, and the government became obliged to sign a structural adjustment programme with the World Bank. In an effort to boost coffee exports and to reduce imports, the Rwandese currency was devalued twice: by 40 per cent in 1989 and by an additional 15 per cent in 1993. Expansion of public sector jobs halted (except the army), and salaries eroded. At the same time, increased shares of the remaining government budget were taken up by debt reimbursement, and after 1990, by the war effort (UNDP 1995).

At the same time, a severe agricultural/food crisis hit Rwanda. According to recent research, 'over the period 1984-91, kcal. produced by Rwandan farmers dropped from 2,055 per person per day to 1,509,' i.e., from already low level to intolerable one (FAO-GIEWS 1995; Clay, Byiringiro *et al.* 1995:1).¹⁵ This decline is the result of a combination of conjunctural and structural factors: climatic fluctuations in the middle and late 1980s; the effects of erosion, land degradation, and poverty, combined with the exhaustion of the development model followed until then (the debate regarding the role of environmental resource scarcity in explaining Rwanda's crisis has come down quite strongly on the side of minimizing its direct explanatory value).¹⁶ From 1990 onward, the civil war compounded the agricultural crisis.

Data on population growth suggest how severe the crisis was, and how profoundly it affected people's lives. Between 1982 and 1992, Rwanda's total fertility rate plummeted from 8.4 to 6.2 children per woman (Barrere, Schoemaker *et al.* 1994:30). Such rare and dramatic drops have been interpreted in other contexts as reflecting a profound insecurity felt by people about their futures, leading them to rapidly delay their age of marriage and first birth, and desire dramatically smaller family sizes (Working Group on Demographic... 1993).

¹⁵ See also World Resources Institute (1996; Table 10.1).

¹⁶ See Ford (1995); Olson (1995); Percival and Homer-Dixon (1995); and Uvin (1996).

3.2 Political challenges to the elites

At the beginning of the 1990s, three processes combined to increase greatly the political pressure on the regime. One was the rise of internal discontent within the country, emanating mainly from disgruntled urban Hutu, and spreading to the countryside. This took a regional form with political opposition coming mainly from the south and the centre, because positions of power in the Habyarimana regime were almost fully monopolized by people from the president's northern district (and family), and most public investments took place in that region. According to some data, from 1982 to 1984, nine-tenths of all investments were in the four provinces of Kigali, Ruhengeri, Gisenyi and Cyangugu (the first is the capital, the others are provinces in the north, the President's region *sensu largu*), while Gitarama, the most populous province after Kigali, received 0.16 per cent, and Kibuye 0.84 per cent (World Bank 1987:12; Nshinyunurenyi 1993). Widespread corruption, geographical exclusion, and disappointment with the slow pace of development combined to challenge the regime from within

The second threat was the October 1, 1990 invasion from Uganda by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (Front Patriotique Rwandais [FPR] in French), a small but experienced guerrilla army primarily, but not exclusively, composed of descendants of old Tutsi refugees that had fought at Museveni's side in the civil war for the control of Uganda. Although the invasion was pushed back, the FPR continued to control part of the territory in the northeast, and its threat was permanent. This guerrilla war led to the killing of many innocent civilians, although it is unclear how many (Reijntjens 1995:116). It also created a massive flow of refugees, temporarily reaching 900,000 persons at its peak: innocent people who had lost their lands and sources of living and in squalid camps around Kigali.¹⁷ The war led to a short-term strengthening of the internal position of the government (Reijntjens 1994:93, 150, 181), but at the same time posed major threats, both because of its obvious military danger, and because a number of domestic opposition groups eventually made overtures to the FPR.

Finally, following the end of the Cold War, the international community suddenly discovered a strong attachment to democracy, and put pressure on the regime to democratize and to negotiate power sharing with the FPR and the domestic opposition and organize free elections (Reijntjens 1994:104ff). As a result, political parties were allowed from July 1991 onward and so-called coalition governments formed from 1992 onward (Reijntjens 1994; Prunier 1995). I will not present detailed descriptions of the political platforms, strategies, and alliances of the main players in government, the military, the FPR, and the many small opposition parties, nor analyse the slow, halting, and ambiguous Arusha peace cum democratization negotiations and the tentative power sharing arrangements put in place from 1992 onward; this has been done very well already¹⁸ and is of little importance to the argument I seek to develop here.

¹⁷ By late 1993, this figure had fallen to 300,000 (World Bank 1994:12-3).

¹⁸ See Reijntjens (1994:112), Guichaoua (1995); and Prunier (1995).

It is sufficient to say that these processes threatened to deprive the Habyarimana regime and its cronies of their control of the state. The regime was under attack from all sides, and part of its main elements took recourse to the usual, time-tested solution: the revival of ethnic hatred. Ethnicity could serve to unite the large majority of the population around the government, take the momentum away from the opposition, combat the FPR, and render elections impossible. Ethnicity was to be the tool for power for factions of the elite, as it has been for the last thirty years (de Heusch 1994). These factions were not invited to participate in the Arusha negotiations, but this did not prevent them from becoming stronger (with active support from the presidency and the highest levels of power) and to plot the use of violence to revert these externally-inspired changes (Adelman and Suhrke 1996).

3.3 From elite fear to the incitation of genocide

Under the leadership of the so-called *akazu*, the small clique that formed around Habyarimana and his wife, a variety of dynamics were created that sought to radicalize racist prejudice. The first was the extension of the FPR threat to *all* Tutsi. The most well-documented expression of this strategy came immediately after the FPR invasion. On the night of October 4, 1990, the army staged an all-night shooting attack on Kigali. This fooled the world for quite some time (it was only unmasked months later), strengthened a sense of psychosis against 'the enemy within,' and was used to justify the imprisonment of some 10,000 Tutsi. Most of them were liberated only after months of international pressure; many were tortured, some killed, or their possessions stolen (Prunier 1995; Pabanel 1995:118). Thus, a direct link was created between the rebels and all Tutsi in the country (Nkubito 1992:22).

More generally, at political rallies and speeches as well as in extremist local language newspapers and radio stations (foremost the infamous Radio Libre des Mises Collines and Kangura, a radical newspaper) Tutsis were constantly the subject of hateful propaganda.¹⁹ This involved explicit and regular incitations to mass murder, verbal attacks on Tutsi, the publication of lists with the names of people to be killed, threats to anyone having relations with Tutsi, etc. (Chretien 1991; Centre Nord-Sud 1994). These genocidal and extremist voices not only were tolerated but also were supported morally and financially by people at the highest levels of government and the military (Reijntjens 1994).

During the same period, extremist political parties that openly preached hatred and violence were created, again with support from the highest echelons. These included the CDR (Commite de Défense de la Révolution, a party to the right of, but close to, the party of Habyarimana) as well as a set of armed militia (the infamous *interahamwe* and *impuzamugambi*) linked to both the CDR and the party of Habyarimana (*Human Rights Watch* 1994). These parties and groups served to radicalize and divide the opposition and to slow down the process of the Arusha negotiations. Soon, under pressure from the

¹⁹ It must be noted that, according to recent data in Barrere (1994:20) few households have access to mass communications media, especially in the rural areas: only 30 per cent of rural households possess a radio, for example, against 62 per cent in the urban areas.

polarization of society, other opposition parties began to split between radical, so-called 'Hutu power' wings that were close to the CDR and its discourse, and moderate wings. During the genocide, most of the leaders of the moderate factions were slaughtered.

From the beginning, frequent massacres of Tutsi were committed by the army, the presidential guards, and the new militia (Reijntjens 1994:117). Thousands of Tutsi were killed between 1990 and 1993, often by 'mobs' directed by local authorities, national politicians, and the police. The involvement of the authorities in these crimes of terror is well-documented and was widely known (Centre Nord-Sud 1994; Human Rights 1994). Massive amounts of arms were imported in Rwanda and distributed to the militia.

All these processes are well-documented and resemble similar processes in past genocides elsewhere in the world (Du Preez 1994:83, 101-07). They successfully sought to spread ethnic fear throughout society; to organize, legitimize, and routinize the forces of violence and genocide; and to desensitize people to violence.²⁰ Through actions and words, these processes contributed to the dehumanization of the Tutsi, and authorized and routinized the use of violence against them.

In April 1994, when the plane carrying Habyarimana from a peace negotiation in Arusha was downed, the scenario unfolded along predictable lines. The army was ready, as were the militia and the victims. The violence started in Kigali and was largely executed by the presidential guards, the militia, and the army. Its spread to the rest of the country took weeks and did not happen spontaneously: the large majority of the provincial governors, communal burgomasters, and ordinary citizens did not join in the carnage for weeks. The so-called interim-government replaced those civil servants by new, extremist ones, and flew in the militia from the capital. It was only then that the violence spread to the rest of the country. Hundreds of thousands of defenceless children, women, and men were killed. Tens of thousands of people participated (African 1994).

²⁰ For discussions of exactly the same processes before the Holocaust, see Kelman and Hamilton (1993:235); Sabini and Silver (1993:121-3) and Goldhagen (1996:137).

IV CONCLUSION: STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE AND DEVELOPMENT AID

Almost two decades ago, Pierre Spitz wrote about the structural violence of hunger, poverty, and famine, in which inequality and powerlessness deny the poor the opportunities to live decent lives or even feed themselves (although they are the world's primary food producers) and about the 'dehumanization' of poor people through top-down types of development aid that perpetuate if not strengthen structural violence (1978). His writings have lost the popularity they had in the 1970s, when the North-South struggle for a New International Economic Order was fought on a high moral ground.²¹ Since then, the failure of the NIEO and the debt crisis followed by structural adjustment have turned most scholars away from such lines of inquiry.

Yet, Rwanda, like many other so-called developing countries, is a structurally very violent society. It is not only violent when massive physical harm is being done with arms by one group against the other, such as from 1990 onward. The violence is continuous, manifested in a deep and widening inequality of life chances; corruption, arbitrariness, and impunity; lack of access to information, education, health, and minimal basic needs; and an omnipresent, authoritarian, and condescending state and aid system, which limit rather than enrich most people's life chances.

The physical (ill health, malnutrition) and psychological harm done through these forms of structural violence may not be as visible as the mass graves that sporadically hit our television screens, but their effects are as profound and debilitating. If one recognizes the condition of structural violence, one can understand that outbursts of murderous violence are not something new, but primarily part of a continuum of ever-present violence in which violence is the answer to violence, and in which victims temporarily become perpetrators and then victims again.

Acute violence, then, serves different functions: it is a tool for temporary personal gain, as culturally acceptable as it is common; it is a pressure release for frustration and lack of self-respect, as acceptable as it is encouraged by the political leadership; and it is a job opportunity for the lucky few who join militia and mobs, its gain potential vastly bigger than any 'legal' opportunity available. Structural violence breeds acute violence and vice versa, and attempts to finance 'induced development' defined as economic growth, while neglecting social, political, and ethnic issues, will change very little at that, if they do not contribute to it.

Violence in Rwanda emanated from a racist/genocidal ideology that, in turn, fed on two basic structural processes, one emanating from the top, and one from the bottom. For decades, anti-Tutsi racism had served as a deliberately-maintained strategy of legitimization of the powers-that-be, and was kept alive through a systematic public

²¹ See too Galtung (1981).

structure of differentiation and discrimination, in which the 'Tutsi problem' was never allowed to be forgotten. Under threat by political and economic processes, parts of the elite increased their use of the old strategy and effectively managed to spread it throughout society. At the same time, racist prejudice was a means for ordinary people, subject to structural violence and humiliation, to make sense of their predicament, and to explain their ever-growing misery through projection and scapegoating. State-supplied racism provided poor Hutu a sense of value, as well as an 'explanation' for the mal-development they faced daily in their lives. As Simpson and Yinger stated in their seminal work on prejudice: 'the designation of inferior groups comes from those on top – an expression of their right to rule – as well as from frustrated persons often near the bottom, as an expression of their need for security' (Simpson and Yinger 1953:83).

Rwanda's genocide was the extreme outcome of the failure of a development model that was based on ethnic, regional, and social exclusion; that increased deprivation, humiliation, and vulnerability of the poor; that allowed state-instigated racism and discrimination to continue unabated; that was top-down and authoritarian; and that left the masses uninformed, uneducated, and unable to resist orders and slogans. It was also the failure of a practice of development cooperation based on ethnic amnesia, technocracy, and political blindness.

What is the role of development aid in this? This question is not easy to answer. One can begin by observing that the development aid system still neglects most of the non-economic aspects of development in favour of a narrow economic-technical approach. It does not include addressing human rights violations, income inequality, authoritarianism, humiliation, fear, or persistent impunity in daily life to be part of its core mandate. These issues, albeit certainly not appreciated by most development practitioners, are considered to be outside the purview of the development aid mission (Tomasevski 1989; Stavenhagen 1990), and there are little or no working relations between the development aid system and organizations dealing with these issues, such as political movements, human rights organizations, or unions. Of course, this wilful ignorance does not make these issues disappear, nor does it limit their impact on development, even narrowly defined. Rather, it allows the processes of exclusion and humiliation to continue unabated, if not to become strengthened, to the greater pleasure of those benefiting from them. Hence, much development aid helps to lay the groundwork for further inequality and mal-development, as well as structural, and, eventually, acute, violence.

Most of the development aid system also continues to function along top-down, externally-defined, lines, bypassing people's own creativity, capacities, histories, and sense of value (Rader 1990:229). This goes hand in hand with the functioning of the state system that, for the same ideological reasons as well as for pressing reasons of political control, is also highly top-down, authoritarian, and ignorant of local dynamics. Thus the ideological tenets of the 'developers' and the political requirements of the powers-that-be join in defining development largely without people's input, without much respect for poor people, and often without much benefit to them.²²

²² See also CIDSE (1995).

This inevitably has a major impact on the minds and aspirations of people. Instead of people and their values, macroeconomic aggregates and technologies are treated as the core of development, and it should not be surprising that people will resist these reductionist schemes – whether by being passive, obnoxious, fundamentalist, cynical, racist, or violent. As Soedjatmoko, late Rector of the UNU, wrote 'without freedom to dissent, responsibility for creative developmental impulses of a society disappears' (quote in Tomasevski 1989:155).

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