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# Editor's Introduction

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Fourteen years have passed since the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, during which an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 (or more) Tutsis and moderate Hutus died at the hands of extremists Hutus. Rwanda is still in the process of recovering from the genocide, which not only resulted in vicious and mass murder but virtually destroyed the country's infrastructure. Like any nation reconstituting itself in the aftermath of genocide, Rwanda is experiencing growing pains. Survivors continue to suffer the ill effects of what they were subjected to, witnessed, and lost. Many of the women who were raped now have AIDS. Those who gave birth to what are commonly referred to as "rape babies" face additional psychological turmoil and, in many cases, are ostracized by neighbors, friends, and family members. Many of the babies have been maltreated, neglected, and even left to their own devices to eke out an existence on the streets. Orphans fill orphanages, where many of the youngest children are raised by the "older" (often teenage) orphans. Groups of widows have banded together to provide mutual support and get back on their feet while dealing with the absence of beloved husbands and children. Many individuals are so scarred by what they experienced and witnessed that they are not able to function and carry on normal lives. The medical and social-services communities are stretched so thin in attempting to provide assistance to those in need that people often fall through the cracks or simply do not receive the treatment they need in order to fully regain their health (whether physical or psychological). Some 100,000 alleged perpetrators still remain in Rwandan prisons. Three different court systems—the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania), the national courts of Rwanda, and *gacaca* (the adaptation of precolonial mediation and reconciliation processes to try, today, those who are suspected of having carried out the killing and mass rapes) are currently in operation.

At the same time, Rwanda has made a remarkable comeback. The country is, for the most part, peaceful, and the people, for the most part, seem to get along, even if their daily dealings with one another—particularly between those who considered themselves Tutsi and those who considered themselves Hutu during the genocide—are often tentative, if not tenuous. The national government has mandated that Rwandan citizens are no longer Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa, as they were prior to and during the genocidal period, but "simply" Rwandans. Some, and possibly many, look askance at such a mandate, considering it naïve at best and repressive at worst, but many others seem to believe that, over time, it may be the best way to prevent future incidents of mass violence. Time will tell.

Over the past fourteen years a massive amount of scholarship (including journal articles and books) has been published on various facets of the Rwandan Genocide. Some of it has provided a clearer understanding of how genocide unfolds—in particular, how masses of people are induced to take part in the bloody and brutal killing of former neighbors, friends, and even loved ones.

This special issue on Rwanda includes three articles based on field research conducted in the hills, fields, and towns of Rwanda. The first, "A Calamity in the Neighbourhood: Women's Participation in the Rwandan Genocide," is by Reva Adler, Cyanne E. Loyle, and Judith Globerman; the second, "Interethnic Marriages,

the Survival of Women, and the Logics of Genocide in Rwanda,” is by Anuradha Chakravarty, a PhD candidate at Cornell University; the third, “The Dynamics of Genocide,” is by University of Wisconsin at Madison political scientist Scott Straus.

Adler (Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of British Columbia), Loyle (a graduate fellow in the University of Maryland’s Department of Government and Politics), and Globerman (an associate professor at the Institute for Health Promotion Research at the University of British Columbia) focus on why women assaulted or murdered targeted victims during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. During the course of their study, the three researchers found that four experiential pressures, in various combinations, shaped the female perpetrators’ decisions to participate in the 1994 genocide: “disaster mentality; fear of the new social order; confusion or ambivalence about events on the ground; and consonance and dissonance *vis-à-vis* gender roles.”

Chakravarty discusses the gendered dimensions of the genocide in Rwanda. In doing so, she seeks to explain why Tutsi women married to Hutu men appear to have had a better chance of survival than Tutsi women married to Tutsi men or even Hutu women married to Tutsi men. Based on data from a field site in southwest Rwanda, her findings and insights draw on the gendered, racial, and operational dynamics of the genocide as it unfolded between April and July 1994.

In “The Dynamics of Genocide,” Straus delineates some of the many key findings of his research in Rwanda, findings that constitute the heart of his new book, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press, 2006). *The Order of Genocide* raises critical questions about previous assumptions about the 1994 genocide (many of which have been taken at face value), and also provides new insights into a variety of significant issues, including how the killing process spread across Rwanda and why. Three specialists on the Rwandan Genocide—Lars Waldorf, who is currently Lecturer in International Law and Human Rights at the University of London and is writing a book on Rwanda’s *gacaca* process; Thierry Cruvellier, a journalist and justice expert who has written a book on the ICTR; and Lee Ann Fujii, a political scientist at George Washington University, who is in the process of completing her own book on the 1994 Rwandan Genocide—were asked by the editor to write succinct critiques of Straus’s research and findings, noting key strengths, any weaknesses and gaps, and the likely ramifications of the findings.

Linda Melvern, an investigative journalist and the author of two notable works on the 1994 Rwandan Genocide—*Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (Verso, 2004) and *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Genocide* (Zed Books, 2000)—contributes a provocative and insightful piece titled “The UK Government and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda.” More specifically, Melvern focuses on the role of the British government of John Major during the period of the genocide (April to July 1994), noting, and then discussing, the fact that in the United Kingdom neither Parliament nor the press has attempted to account for Britain’s policies toward Rwanda, and there seems to be an ongoing reluctance to do so.

This issue also includes a commentary by long-time Africanist Gerry Caplan. In his contribution, “Rwanda (and Other Genocides) in Perspective,” Caplan examines a host of issues but keeps circling back to one question: “What good has the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide done?” He also argues, and understandably, that “so long as the Permanent Five (P5) of the UN Security Council have no will to intervene, or interest in intervening, in potential or actual genocides, all the UN conventions, reports, and articles aren’t worth much at

## *Introduction*

all.” In turn, Caplan prods us to ponder the real value of the proliferation of studies, reports, journal articles, and books on genocide. It is an issue worthy of ample thought: one genocide precedes another like clockwork in our world, and little or nothing has yet been created, let alone implemented, to halt, let alone prevent, the one that always seems to be just around the corner.

Undoubtedly, over time, many more studies will be conducted and many more articles and books will be written and published about various facets of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Those who undertake to write about Rwanda in the future would do well to treat the subject as seriously and with as much care as those whose work is represented in this special issue.

*Samuel Totten*  
*GSP Co-editor*

### **Notes**

1. Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 12.

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# A Calamity in the Neighborhood: Women's Participation in the Rwandan Genocide

Reva N Adler

*Department of Medicine, University of British Columbia,*

Cyanne E Loyle

*PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, University of Maryland and*

Judith Globerman

*Institute for Health Promotion Research, University of British Columbia*

*Although public-health-based violence-prevention trials have been successful in a variety of high-risk settings, no study has addressed the prevention of genocide, a form of population-based catastrophic violence. In addition, little is known about women who participate in genocide, including women's motivations for active participation in hands-on battery, assault, or murder. In order to explain why women assaulted or murdered targeted victims during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, we interviewed ten Rwandan female genocide perpetrators living in prisons and communities in six Rwandan provinces in 2005. Respondents' narratives reveal two distinct pictures of life in Rwanda, separated by an abrupt transition: Life prior to 6 April 1994 and Life during the 1994 genocide (6 April–15 July 1994). In addition, respondents described four experiential pressures that shaped their choices to participate in the 1994 genocide: (1) a disaster mentality; (2) fear of the new social order; (3) confusion or ambivalence about events on the ground; and (4) consonance and dissonance with gender roles. The unique combination of these factors that motivated each female genocide participant in Rwanda in 1994 would shift and evolve with new situations. These findings may have implications for understanding and preventing catastrophic violence in other high-risk jurisdictions.*

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## Introduction

Deaths due to genocide have exceeded war-related deaths in every historical period, and were eight-fold higher in the twentieth century than in the sixty-nine preceding centuries.<sup>1</sup> This pattern has persisted into the twenty-first century as attacks on civilians by governments and insurgents continue around the world.<sup>2</sup> The rate of genocide-related mortality is extremely high, far greater than rates for other global pandemics, including HIV/AIDS and malaria.<sup>3</sup> The health sequelae for survivors of genocide include solid organ disease; neurological dysfunction; and psychiatric illness that may be chronic, lifelong, and intergenerational, increasing the burden of disease in affected communities for decades after the killing has ended.<sup>4</sup> In order to accelerate death and injury within victimized groups, genocidal regimes often target health-care infrastructure and personnel for destruction,<sup>5</sup> rendering them powerless to address even basic public-health requirements amidst spiraling need. The global health economy is invariably strained when scarce international resources are diverted out of a necessity to address pressing crises in conflict zones.<sup>6</sup>

Reva N Adler, Cyanne E Loyle and Judith Globerman, "A Calamity in the Neighborhood: Women's Participation in the Rwandan Genocide," *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 2, 3 (November 2007): 209–234. © 2007 *Genocide Studies and Prevention*. doi: 10.3138/gsp.2.3.209

The past fifteen years have seen at least three major episodes of genocide in close succession; the most recent, in Darfur, continues at present without resolution or international agreement on a strategy for peace.<sup>7</sup> At the outbreak of each new event, health professionals, researchers, and educators have called for diplomatic, military, and humanitarian intercession when violence is imminent or when it is first unleashed.<sup>8</sup> Within a public-health construct, this form of intervention is known as *secondary prevention* and falls into much the same category as urgent care in a hospital for someone having a heart attack. This form of intervention may prevent the death of the patient, and may ameliorate some disabilities when a problem is well established, but, by definition, it cannot prevent the underpinning health problem from developing. Secondary prevention of any problem is predictably expensive, as it is an unplanned emergency response and relies heavily on costly technology and personnel in accomplishing its goals.

As the science of violence prevention enters the global health mainstream, such international organizations as the World Health Organization (in the *World Report on Violence and Health*) and the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (in their report *The Responsibility to Protect*) have accelerated calls for the primary prevention of extreme collective violence by studying its root causes and developing anticipatory interventions that prevent extreme violence from erupting.<sup>9</sup> Primary prevention programs lower the likelihood of health problems by addressing specific risk factors that contribute to those problems, years in advance of untoward consequences. Using the example of heart attack, primary prevention would include early diagnosis and treatment of problems that contribute to the development of heart disease over the long term, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Universally, primary prevention is more effective and less expensive than secondary methods, as it is a carefully planned response, addresses problems that are cheaper and easier to treat, and forestalls the costly disability associated with entrenched pathology.

One approach to the primary prevention of genocide, suggested by successful public-health violence-prevention trials in a number of other high-risk milieus such as prisons<sup>10</sup> and inner-city neighborhoods,<sup>11</sup> is based on identifying behavioral and attitudinal risk factors for violence among *individuals and groups* years before turmoil arises, then “treating” these risk factors through programs of family, classroom, community, and media-based education.<sup>12</sup> The goal of violence-prevention programs is to lower the risk for hands-on violence among average community members and groups during times of social upheaval. To optimize efficacy, such initiatives are customarily developed to be synergistic with structural efforts to lower violence, such as improved policing, criminal penalties, and betterment of social conditions.

There have been few studies addressing the attitudes and beliefs that lead average citizens to attack or kill unarmed civilians when goaded by genocidal regimes, and no study to date has targeted modifying such risks in nations known to be at high risk for catastrophic violence. Much of the published material in this area has been theoretical or observational in design, and few authors have conducted research directly with persons who have committed hands-on violence during a genocide or other forms of catastrophic violence.<sup>13</sup> This neglected avenue of inquiry is a critical element of an interdisciplinary, inclusive approach to genocide prevention and provides the foundation for the research discussed here.

The women's interviews conducted for the study *Addressing the Root Causes of Genocide*, Phase 1 (ARC-G Phase 1), are analyzed in this article. The intellectual framework for ARC-G, discussed in detail elsewhere,<sup>14</sup> may be briefly summarized as four interrelated segments:

- Phase 1: To identify the attitudinal risk factors for genocidal violence among individuals and groups in a retrospective sample of genocide perpetrators in Rwanda
- Phase 2: To identify the same risk factors, in real time, in a sample of persons at high risk for genocidal behavior at present
- Phase 3: To craft and implement public-health-based programs to lower the risks of violence in the population described in Phase 2
- Phase 4: To evaluate and refine Phase 3 interventions

The specific aims of the women's subset of ARC-G Phase 1 (ARC-G Phase 1W) were to (a) develop a theoretical model explaining why rank-and-file Rwandan women assaulted or murdered targeted victims during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and (b) identify a group of attitudinal risk factors for genocidal behavior in individuals and groups that would have the potential to be modified in long-range public-health-based initiatives directed at preventing genocide in future high-risk settings.

## **Background and Context**

Worldwide, most crimes against the person are perpetrated by men.<sup>15</sup> As a result, genocide is more often than not characterized as a *male* crime,<sup>16</sup> the outcome of contemporary notions of *masculinity*,<sup>17</sup> and, by some authors, as a specifically gendered form of catastrophic violence.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, women are frequently portrayed as victims of genocide—through structural violence endangering the many domains of human security, through interpersonal violence resulting in injury or death, and through sexual violence that may be either random or organized.<sup>19</sup>

It follows, therefore, that the investigators who have explored the motivations of genocide perpetrators have focused principally on male participants.<sup>20</sup> Much less is known about women who participate in genocide, including the structural circumstances that lead women to perpetrate genocide-related crimes, women's roles in initiating and sustaining catastrophic violence, and women's motivations for active participation in hands-on battery, assault, or murder.

Recent scholarship has attempted to elucidate the global macro-environment surrounding many of the international episodes of catastrophic violence that occurred between 1990 and 2000. For example, the collective violence in the African Great Lakes region in the 1990s may, in part, be traced to the increase in structural violence experienced in that region during the preceding decades. A steep rise in oil prices during the 1970s gave way to a global economic downturn, falling commodity prices, increasing national debts, and structural adjustment.<sup>21</sup> These trends had a disproportionate impact on poorer countries, contributing to crises of legitimacy among ruling elites.<sup>22</sup>

The results of such global pressures on the security environment within tenuous or failing states are numerous. In an environment of economic recession and vanishing employment, leaders may choose to entice unemployed young men into military service, while at the same time making scapegoats of minority groups in an attempt to divert attention away from government culpability.<sup>23</sup> Authors point to premonitory

increases in arms stockpiles, the expansion of traditional military forces, and the amplification of exclusionary or divisive ideology as signaling impending collective conflict.<sup>24</sup> The national consciousness may become focused on ethnic “purity,” or on cleansing the nation of persons seen as alien or as dangerous to the nation’s vitality.<sup>25</sup> Men may be called upon to fight or kill for the sake of “the nation” but, most especially, to kill to protect women and children, who are envisioned in the national consciousness as defenseless non-combatants. Women, on the other hand, may be called upon to support sons, brothers, and partners in their masculine role as “defenders of national security.”

These conditions were no less present in Rwanda between 1990 and 1994, during the period of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invasion from Uganda and the introduction of a multi-party political system by the 1991 constitution.<sup>26</sup> However, evidence from the Rwandan Genocide compels us to re-examine the specific roles of women in collective ethnic violence.

Women’s involvement in the planning and implementation of the 1994 genocide at all societal levels has been well described.<sup>27</sup> Women’s participation ranged from working as main architects of the violence to acting as individual killers in small communities. Most commonly, women denounced victims and looted victims’ homes as well as their bodies.<sup>28</sup> Much less frequently, women killed directly, with a variety of modern and more traditional weaponry.<sup>29</sup>

This characterization of women’s participation is supported by available statistics. Only one woman, Pauline Nyiramasuhuko, has been indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), on charges that she incited troops to rape and kill hundreds of women in the university town of Butare during the genocide; her trial continues at the time of writing.<sup>30</sup> Statistics from the Rwandan justice system indicate that in 2004 approximately 3,000 women, representing some 3.4% of the Rwandan prison population, were incarcerated in Rwandan prisons for genocide-related crimes; the significant majority of these women have been charged either as accomplices to murder or assault (for denouncing victims or roaming with attack groups) or as thieves (for looting during the genocide). There have been no judicial executions in Rwanda since 1998; only six women (0.2%) in total have been sentenced to death for genocide-related crimes, and only one woman was in fact executed. The acquittal rate for women charged with genocide-related crimes is 40%.<sup>31</sup>

A comparison to statistics for men in Rwanda makes clear the differences in hands-on involvement in the 1994 genocide. For example, in 2002 alone, 1,909 men were adjudicated for genocide-related crimes dating to 1994; seventy (3.6%) received the death penalty, and 528 (27.6%) were acquitted.<sup>32</sup> In 1998, twenty-one Rwandan men were found guilty of genocide-related crimes, sentenced to death, and publicly executed.<sup>33</sup>

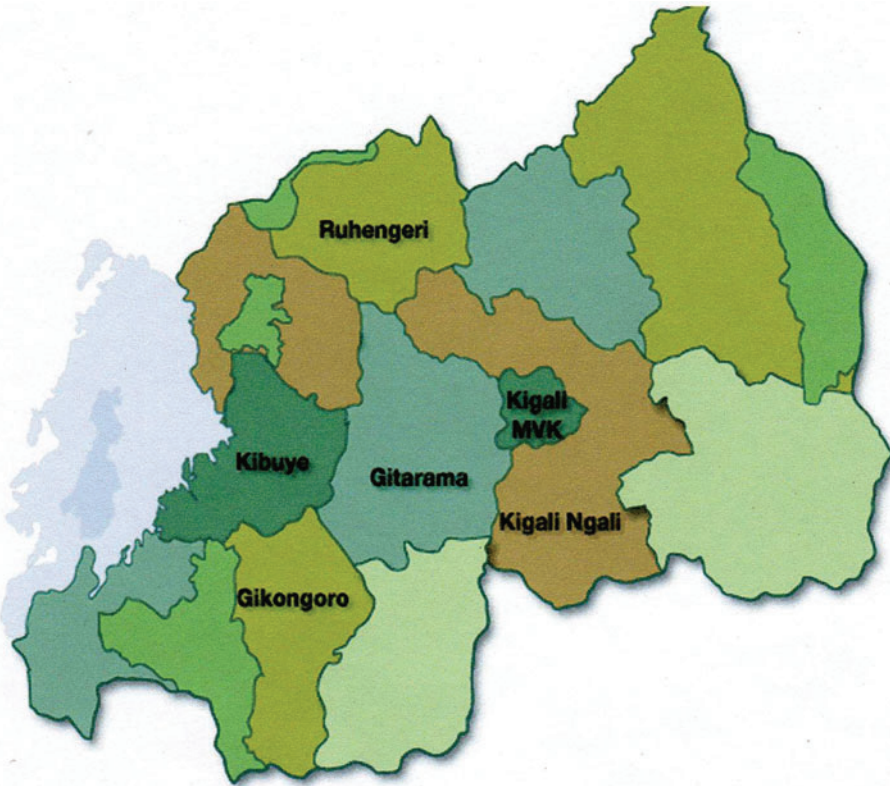
Much of what we know about female genocide participants in all of these realms has been gathered from the eyewitness accounts of victims and bystanders; little has come from the perpetrators themselves. ARC-G Phase 1W was designed to address this gap, as well as to explore the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs of women who perpetrated hands-on violence during the Rwandan Genocide.

## **Methods**

### **Study Design and Participants**

The sample was designed to represent the rank-and-file population of civilian women who participated in crimes against the person but were not political, military, or





**Figure 1.** Research sites (on map of Rwanda with 2005 provincial borders)<sup>37</sup>

attack-group leaders during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. The method used was *grounded theory*, a qualitative technique used to form a testable theory about the phenomena being studied based on the constant comparison of data within participant interviews. At the conclusion of theoretical sampling, ten women who confessed to or were convicted of Category 2 (murder) or Category 3 (assault) genocide crimes under Rwandan law participated in the study. Study participants ranged from adolescence to middle age in 1994. The sample comprised both urban and rural dwellers. In keeping with grounded theory, sampling concluded when all categories of interest were saturated (i.e., when researchers deemed that no new information on a particular phenomenon was emerging from subsequent interviews). Theoretical sampling was employed to capture target-population diversity. Selective and discriminate sampling was used to ensure exploration of evolving patterns. In accordance with the constant comparative method, new interviewees were identified to expand upon emergent and absent themes.<sup>34</sup>

Because rates of literacy<sup>35</sup> and telephone ownership<sup>36</sup> are low in Rwanda, third-party opinion leaders in prisons and communities in six Rwandan provinces—Kigali, Kigali Ngali, Gitarama, Ruhengeri, Kibuye, and Gikongoro (see Figure 1)—recruited study participants by word of mouth between February and April 2005. Opinion leaders gave or read invitation letters to community members who met the study criteria and obtained verbal permission for researchers to approach potential participants in person (as none had phones or postal access). Interested individuals

were provided with further information by the study team and given at least twenty-four hours to consider their participation. All study participants took part in informed consent procedures under a UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board certificate.

## **Interviewers and Interview Procedures**

The interview team, whose members were supervised during data collection, consisted of five trained, multilingual interviewers self-identifying as members of either Hutu or Tutsi cultural groups and originating from four of Rwanda's ten provinces according to 1994 boundaries. Data collection was carried out via a two-hour face-to-face semi-structured interview, using Grant McCracken's long interview method.<sup>38</sup> The interview guide was developed based on previous participant observation, key informant interviews, a focus group, and pilot interviews and took a "life history" format. The interview guide evolved as the interviews progressed to test and confirm emerging themes and patterns.

All interviews were audio-recorded. Because audio-recording is prohibited inside Rwandan prisons, special arrangements were made with the Ministry of the Interior to interview prisoners in offices attached to but not officially located within the prison enclosure. Interviews were conducted in the language of choice of the participant, which for all participants was Kinyarwanda. Once interviews were completed, a separate team of multilingual translators listened to the audio-recordings and, in a single step, transcribed the interviews and translated them into English. Back-translation, retranslation, and spot-check translation were used to optimize precision.<sup>39</sup>

## **Data Analysis**

Transcribed audio-recordings were loaded into Atlas.ti software and analyzed by two researchers. Transcripts were examined according to McCracken's method, using an editing approach to text analysis in five stages:

- (1) Detailed examination of individual transcripts for statements treated independently of each other
- (2) Analysis of individual statements for meaning
- (3) Identification of themes and patterns
- (4) Search for inter-theme consistency and contradictions
- (5) comparison of themes between interviews).<sup>40</sup>

Following analysis of each transcript and development of data codes, the research team identified and tested emergent theory.<sup>41</sup>

## **Results**

Participant characteristics are shown in Table 1. All respondents reporting "no income" were students. No participant experienced prolonged food insecurity in 1994. Respondents' narratives reveal two distinct pictures of life in Rwanda, separated by an abrupt transition: *Life prior to 6 April 1994* and *Life during the 1994 genocide (6 April–15 July 1994)*. For each time period, respondents described a distinct set of environmental themes underpinning their everyday lives and thereby informing their beliefs, behavior, and decisions. In addition, respondents described four experiential pressures that shaped their choices to participate in the 1994 genocide: (1) a disaster mentality; (2) fear of the new social order; (3) confusion or ambivalence

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of ARC-G Phase 1W respondents

	Respondents (N = 10)
Age (years)	
Range	15–53
Median	17.5
Mean	22.5
Residence	
Urban	5
Rural	5
Marital Status	
Single	5
Married	5
Ethnicity	
Tutsi	1
Hutu	9
Education (years)	
Range	1–16
Median	6
Mean	5.8
Annual Income (1993 \$US)	
Range	0–2315.00
Median	0
Mean	534.57
Occupation	
Farmer/landowner/herder	5
Student	2
Merchant at market	1
Accountant	1
Civil servant	1

about events on the ground; and (4) consonance and dissonance with gender roles. The environmental themes reported here were influential among individuals and groups not only during the genocide but also for years before it started and, most likely, for years afterward. Experiential pressures emerged during the early days of the genocide and, for some respondents, persist into the present day. The unique combination of these factors that motivated each female genocide participant in Rwanda in 1994 would shift and evolve with new situations.

### A Brief Description of Study Participants

- Respondent 1: A student who led the Interahamwe (Hutu Power militia) to a house where victims were living
- Respondent 2: A student who participated as a witness in an attack group
- Respondent 3: A teenaged farmer who denounced victims being hidden by her family
- Respondent 4: A teenaged farmer who denounced a child hiding in her neighborhood
- Respondent 5: A teenager who denounced a friend from school who was hiding in the bush

- Respondent 6: A middle-class businesswomen who did not want to discuss the crimes she was charged with
- Respondent 7: An Interahamwe member who admits to murdering targeted victims during the genocide
- Respondent 8: A merchant who denounced roommates
- Respondent 9: A local official who distributed weapons and detained victims
- Respondent 10: An educated worker in a large business who denounced neighbors

## Environmental Themes

### *Life prior to 6 April 1994*

Under Rwandan law prior to 1994, men sat as heads of household and women were barred from inheriting property, entering into any legal agreement, or opening a bank account without spousal permission. On average, women were less educated than men, and few women held positions of authority within any echelon of government.<sup>42</sup>

In Rwandan communities prior to 1994, gender roles for women emphasized hard work without complaint, homemaking, rearing and disciplining children, faithfulness to partners, and (for women with farms or gardens) making a success of subsistence agriculture. Some authors point to subtle changes in the conception of “femininity” in Rwanda starting with the national pogroms of 1973, when women first participated in “national security” activities by harassing, denouncing, or assaulting Tutsi women in their schools, workplaces, and communities.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, the majority of Rwandan women in 1994 adhered to the traditional expectations of homemaking, childrearing, and creating community between households.

On the other hand, men were seen as family “breadwinners.” Rwandan men were respected for “observing much and saying little,” providing financially for their wives, educating their children, protecting their families, and defending their communities (from external threats as well as from more commonplace violence). Men made up the large majority of Rwandan soldiers, legislators, and municipal officials. Men were responsible for most national and local security functions before and during the 1994 genocide.

The narratives of female participants in the Rwandan Genocide elaborate a picture of Rwandan life before 1994 that was centered on close-knit neighborhoods, community cohesion, and the principle of mutual aid. Families, regardless of ethnicity, cooperated with each other in cultivating crops, maintaining infrastructure, and sharing resources in good times; in times of emergency, they relied on one another to share food when crops failed, and to support widows and orphans in need:

- Respondent 4: We invited each other to help in cultivating one’s piece of land in turns. We invited each other to weddings and even helped each other in hard times, such as carrying the sick to hospital or burying the dead . . .
- Respondent 10: We got along with our neighbors. We had no problem with them. We shared what we had. I used to call some of them my fathers-in-law and my godmothers. I felt I was really in a family.

Although most respondents describe a life free of ethnic considerations or conflicts, women from the north of Rwanda (where the ruling MRND party originated) report a background regional climate based on exclusionary ideology and “hidden” ethnic tensions:

- Respondent 8: Young people weren’t allowed to marry Tutsis, and leaders discouraged such weddings.

Respondent 6: Before the genocide, people were interacting, but not satisfactorily. The war that broke out in 1994 had also broken out in the 1960s and 1959, and it just kept on going, though some people tried to hide it. So, whenever and wherever you went to settle down, you could see that ethnic considerations were instilled in the people . . .

When the RPF invaded Rwanda in 1990, few respondents noted any change in day-to-day community relationships, although northerners, along with residents of Kigali, report that prominent Tutsis, as well as families whose children had left Rwanda to join the RPF, were gradually marginalized as “enemy collaborators.” Tutsi and Hutu supporters of the RPF were forced underground:

Respondent 8: After the Inkotanyi [the RPF] invaded the country, Tutsis were no longer respected as people who had rights as citizens.

Respondent 6: The people who wanted to follow the RPF political party working outside of the country had to do it secretly . . . We simply felt that we had been invaded by *inyenzi* [cockroaches].

With the introduction of multi-party politics in Rwanda in 1991 tensions within communities intensified, both between Rwandan ethnic groups and also among members of the same ethnic group who joined different political parties. *Animations* (political rallies aimed at recruiting and “energizing” party members) became common in most parts of the country. Battles over political influence frequently turned violent. However, although Tutsi Rwandans became more of a national target during this period, respondents report that relationships between neighbors of all ethnic groups remained more or less intact:

Respondent 1: Let me say a bit about the multi-party period, just before the killings started. At that time, there were many parties, all of them officially sanctioned, but the members of one party would attack members of another simply because they were jealous that certain parties were attracting more members. . . . This was all about jealousy and greed.

Respondent 7: We [neighbors] interacted agreeably and we had no misunderstandings, but thereafter we disengaged ourselves. This problem arose because of our political involvements.

Political discord on the community level also divided some families:

Respondent 3: My dad had nothing against [Tutsis], but my brother was against Tutsis because he was with the killers. . . People used to call Tutsis *inyenzi* [cockroaches], but in my family Tutsis were respected. . . My dad used to tell us that he didn't believe what people were saying about Tutsis, and that they were human beings like us, and that it wasn't true that they wanted to kill Hutus.

## Life during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide

The narratives of our respondents change abruptly as they begin to speak about 6 April 1994, when the plane carrying Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana (as well as the president of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira), was shot down. Respondents experienced this event as a critical assault on national sovereignty, placing Rwanda in an official state of emergency. Interim government leaders swiftly moved to blame the incident on the RPF,<sup>44</sup> and all Rwandan Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus were just as swiftly labeled “enemy collaborators.”

The downing of Habyarimana's plane had the immediate effect of increasing the militarization of the entire country, a move pre-planned by Hutu Power militants

months earlier.<sup>45</sup> Militarization was framed as critical to “national security” and encompassed not only the armed forces but also a large proportion of Rwandan civil society. Over the next months, men and boys without military experience were recruited, trained, cajoled, and coerced to join civilian militias acting as extensions of the Rwandan military. In early April, the Rwandan armed forces, civilian militias, and their local supporters proceeded to round up and kill Tutsi men as well as prominent opponents of the Hutu Power movement. Later, women, girls, and younger children were also targeted. As for the rest of the population, non-targeted civilians, particularly women and children, were instructed to remain indoors and “out of harm’s way.”

- Respondent 8: News of the death of the president begun to spread the following morning, and the Interahamwe were going around telling people that their enemies had killed their president. Leaders ordered people not to leave their houses.
- Respondent 9: Personally, I never knew that a war would start. We shared everything, and then abruptly we heard that they had shot down Habyarimana’s plane. I think this was the cause of the killings that took place.
- Respondent 2: People used to say that Tutsis were spying for the Inkotanyi [the RPF] and that the Inkotanyi wanted to kill Hutus . . . Sometimes people said they were killing *inyenzi* [cockroaches], as if they were not killing human beings, and that to kill Tutsis was like self defense, because people were saying that Tutsis were about to kill Hutus.

After early April 2004, governance in Rwanda devolved to a complex network of government, military, and Interahamwe extremists working in loose affiliation, as well as individually, at national, regional, and local levels. During the genocide, ad hoc leaders in all social strata mobilized citizens to denounce, rob, and kill targeted Tutsi and Hutu victims—by planning and importing weapons from abroad, by assassinating formal leaders who would not cooperate with the Hutu Power agenda, by commanding the Rwandan armed forces and Interahamwe militias to attack and kill unarmed civilians, by disseminating misinformation about the RPF and Tutsi civilians at the national and local levels, and by bribing and coercing average civilians to participate in the mayhem. The impact of manipulative and destructive leadership on the attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of most Rwandans during the genocide was noted by a large majority of respondents:

- Respondent 4: I think it’s the leadership that was in place [that is to blame for the genocide], because if they had punished those who killed first as an example, the killings wouldn’t have escalated. However, the leaders in place then were very greedy people, and they wanted to stay in power.
- [Interviewer]: Who do you think could have stopped the killings but did nothing . . . ?
- Respondent 7: The leaders, because they helped us and incited us to continue the killings, while they were the ones who were supposed to condemn such atrocious acts.
- Respondent 8: Let me tell you, leaders played a big role in the killings, because they came and told us that our Tutsi neighbors were going to kill us, and that [the Tutsis] had guns in their houses . . . In addition, many of us were poor, and [our leaders] were telling us that we could keep our neighbors’ belongings.

### **Experiential Pressures: Explaining Calamity**

As previously mentioned, the female respondents who participated in ARC-G Phase 1W describe four distinct experiential pressures driving their decisions to participate

in hands-on violence after the death of Habyarimana: (1) a disaster mentality, (2) fear of the new social order, (3) confusion or ambivalence about events on the ground, and (4) consonance and dissonance with gender roles. Each of these will be discussed here in some detail.

### *Disaster Mentality*

Within hours of the downing of Habyarimana's plane at Kanombe Airport, women report, many sectors of Rwandan society went into an immediate state of crisis. A large proportion of female respondents describe knowing that something devastating had happened not only to their country but also to their communities and their everyday lives. Faced with this unparalleled disaster, and fearing that Rwanda was ungovernable without Habyarimana, most respondents felt the urgency of finding new answers to their predicament.

This omnipresent mood of disaster had a variety of effects on the emotional states of respondents; some report feeling unnerved or panicky, while others felt despondent and hopeless. Still other respondents remember feeling outraged; they quickly moved to revenge Habyarimana's death by attacking unarmed Tutsi civilians, all of whom the government characterized as RPF collaborators and thereby responsible for the death of the president.

Respondent 7: I heard on the radio how the plane was shot down, that citizens weren't supposed to scatter and a curfew was imposed . . . After hearing this, I never left home, thinking that if I did I would die, leaving my kids to be orphans, which wouldn't have been the right thing to do.

Respondent 6: The average person wanted to die, for life had become meaningless. Can you imagine seeing a man slaughtering his fellow men? . . . The country you saw, it belonged to the beasts.

Respondent 8: We people [from the north and west of Rwanda], we were really sad because we had lost our president, who was so important to us . . . and we were revenging his death. People from other regions were jealous of us [because President Habyarimana had favored people from his own northwestern origins] and we knew it, so when the president died we felt as if they were in one way or another responsible . . . People really hated Tutsis because everyone knew that they were in support of Inkotanyi. We thought that Tutsis would all be killed, and that nothing would happen afterwards, that no one would be punished for having killed them.

### *Fear of the New Social Order*

Rwanda's social fabric deteriorated in the post-Habyarimana period, as violence accelerated into chaos. Many respondents describe a social environment that was incomprehensible, dangerous, and terrifying; despite the advancing RPF and ubiquitous anti-Tutsi rhetoric, women most feared fellow Hutus involved in genocidal activities.

Respondent 4: I was terrified because there were screaming and wailing all over the place, and whistles were blown and men ordered to go to night patrols and roadblocks . . . I even asked why they were killing the Tutsis and they told me that Tutsis had to die. I always thought that [Tutsis] were innocent and being victimized.

Respondent 6: Whenever something made a slight noise, you felt [the extremists] were coming to kidnap you. You could see abducted people being led away . . . You felt you could not believe anyone. You did not even

understand how such things could be happening. Things were unbelievable. What happened in April was extremely bad.

Although women were directed to remain at home, they were also expected to maintain the traditional female roles of running the household, caring for children, and supporting the men of the family, all in increasingly perilous surroundings. Obtaining food and water became progressively more dangerous amid escalating community violence, and women had difficulty moving about freely for fear of being injured or killed in the melee. This had a multiplicative effect on women, who felt increasingly under threat even though they were not members of targeted minority groups.

Respondent 1: ... The place where we used to fetch water was too far away and we were supposed to pass by roadblocks. The document certifying that I didn't have a national identity card (because I was a minor) was denied to me. So one day, they arrested me and ordered me to sit at the roadblock where they asked me a lot of questions trying to find out if I was really Hutu.

Respondent 2: My role was that I witnessed people killing someone... I saw a group of people going down to the river with a man and [I saw them] kill him there... Of course, there were people who just watched others being killed, and had the means to save them [but did nothing].

Respondent 2: I think [people] were afraid to stop the killings, fearing to be associated with Tutsis.

Some respondents found it necessary to find new ways to ensure their safety as well as to procure the necessities of life for themselves and their families.

Respondent 1: The following day, a soldier, whom I knew, came and said, "I don't want you to be short of water. That's why I suggest you always to go with our people"... I was scared. The following day he told me, "Before you fetch water, come to see me so I can lend you my military shirt." So I agreed. I put that shirt on every time I needed to fetch water. I always went with his people. Sometimes, it was very hard to pass depending on which Interahamwe were on the road... Some of them were more terrible than soldiers.

### *Confusion or Ambivalence about Events on the Ground*

Homebound and fearful, Rwandan women faced significant obstacles when they tried to gather information and frame opinions about the escalating violence in their communities. This, in turn, placed women at a disadvantage in trying to construct a comprehensive picture of their "new world," as well as in making informed decisions about their personal actions under the circumstances.

Respondent 1: ... Women and girls are supposed to stay at home and look after the house. Men are the people who spend all their time walking and going to bars... People say that a lot of things [during the genocide] took place in bars. In Rwandan culture, no woman can spend a night in a bar. I think the difference lies in the fact that women are supposed to stay home, but men are always moving.

At the same time, however, women were also expected by armed killers to participate in the genocide by denouncing victims, looting and burning local properties, and lending support to the homicidal agenda of extremists. The majority



describe confusion regarding what to think, how to feel, and whom to believe about the unfolding genocide.

- Respondent 2: In our area, the situation was normal and calm, but at the end of April some people started to flee. . . . A few days later some people in our area started to sing songs about exterminating [Tutsis] . . . I couldn't understand how people could kill each other without a reason.
- Respondent 1: I heard people saying . . . that [Tutsis] were enemies of the state. . . . The people being killed were our neighbors, and the family had children I grew up with, went to school with. . . . So how can someone say that a fourteen-year-old kid is an enemy of the state? . . . People kept saying that Tutsis were state enemies, but there was nothing, either in our conversations or our daily lives, proving that it was true.

Similarly, many respondents describe their involvement during the genocide as being haphazard or situational, rather than informed by thoughtful deliberation or strongly held views. Some women describe responding "in the moment" to provocations for violence, without significant forethought or malice toward victims.

- Respondent 5: There was once when I went to fetch water down a hill [that] I heard people from across the other hill screaming. Then a girl came running and she hid in a bush that was nearby. I saw her and didn't say a word. . . . I then started heading home, but before reaching home I encountered some other kids my age who asked me about the screaming. I told them what had happened [and] where she was hiding. I didn't know they would give her up. . . . I went home and after a short while one of my cousins passed by our compound with the girl in his arms and [he] . . . killed her. I confessed because I knew that if I had kept my mouth shut . . . nothing would have happened to her . . .

[Interviewer]: Personally what were your feelings then?

Respondent 5: I was terrified and miserable."

Respondent 3: My dad's Tutsi friend was hiding in our house and they kept asking my father if that man was there, but always he denied it. One day I told my brother that the man they were looking for was hiding in our house, and they went and found him there. . . . I didn't do it because I hated him, or Tutsis, but because my brother promised me that he wouldn't kill him and gave me some gifts. . . . Eventually they took [my father's friend] away and killed [him]. That's when I started to feel guilty and my heart was telling me that I had committed a sin.

Respondent 9: A man came with his assault group and I heard that he had family ties with Habyarimana. He came and said to me severely, "You, local leader, I want you to protect these people." I thought that killings wouldn't reach our home area. When he came back he gathered the people in my compound and clubbed them to death. . . . I was shocked because I didn't know him and didn't know his intentions. He went for one minute and came back. I never knew that he was going to kill them.

## Consonance and Dissonance with Gender-Based Expectations

While many women attribute their involvement in the 1994 genocide to spontaneous or poorly considered behavior, some participated deliberately and with conviction. The ambient themes that conditioned Rwandan women to participate willingly in the genocide, as discussed above and elsewhere, include destructive ideology, rapid militarization of civil society, fear of extremist governance, greed, and

overpowering social upheaval. Men and women alike were caught up in the “total environment” imposed by these mutually reinforcing factors.<sup>46</sup>

Women participated in the Rwandan Genocide one of two ways: more “passively,” by cheering killers on, looting property, and denouncing victims; or more “actively,” by working with attack groups and personally assaulting targeted individuals. The former group of women, comprising the large majority of willing genocide participants, conducted themselves within the limits forged during the 1973 pogroms. While remaining within traditional gender norms with respect to spouse, home, and family, these women nevertheless lent support to the eliminationist Hutu Power agenda by egging on attack groups, informing on concealed victims, and pillaging property from the dead.

Women describe being influenced by a subtle and complicated interplay between accepting their role as homemaker and compliant spouse and, at the same time, forming and acting on political beliefs in making decisions to participate in genocidal activities:

Respondent 10: [Women] were supporting their husbands to carry out killings. You may even find such women here in prison, who defend themselves by saying, “My husband was called upon to go to a road block, and do you think I could stop him?” or “My husband would ask me for his machete, and I knew where it was, so do you think I could refuse him?” Though you could not avoid doing it, why did you also cheer [the killers] on, or undress and plunder the victims? It was because you were happy that [Tutsis] were dying.

Respondent 8, a woman who reports feeling no personal animosity against Tutsis prior to the start of the 1990 civil war, is imprisoned for having denounced one of her Tutsi housemates at the outset of the genocide. Because Respondent 8 worked outside the home, she witnessed numerous episodes of harassment and arrest in the years leading up to the genocide and was accustomed to political discussion and debate.

Respondent 8: Life wasn't good at all [prior to 1994] because of the Interahamwe . . . [who] were stealing things from people who were coming from the market, especially those who looked like Tutsis . . . If you didn't have money to pay them they would throw your goods on the ground . . . I remember during the peace negotiations some leaders used to say that there wasn't enough space for all Rwandese, that it would be better if those who were outside the country did not come back. I think they killed Tutsis who were inside the country to discourage those who were outside from returning. Their interest made them to lead people into genocide.

Her family was poor, and Respondent 8 relied on the generosity of her neighbors to make ends meet. They lived in a neighborhood where Interahamwe also resided, and she was married to an Interahamwe member who died during the genocide. Although Respondent 8 never killed anyone herself, she was nevertheless forthright in describing her belief, in 1994, that all Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus were potential RPF collaborators and therefore a dangerous threat to the safety of Rwanda and Rwandans:

I considered them to be my enemies because they had killed our President and now they wanted to kill us. For me the wisest thing to do was to kill them . . . There were some Hutus who opposed the government, so they didn't kill and were treated as traitors, or spies for the Inkotanyi. I believed what was said about them. I considered them naïve.

Thus, within the limits of a more traditional gender role, Respondent 8 encouraged and supported her husband, friends, and neighbors in prosecuting the genocide, even going so far as to return home, after fleeing her neighborhood for safety, in order to keep house for her husband:

When the fighting was approaching our neighborhood... we decided to go and seek refuge elsewhere... but my husband didn't stay there for long and he decided to return home. One day I met him coming to look for me. During the genocide my husband... wanted me back home.

During her interview, this respondent accepted responsibility for her actions and her contribution to advancing the genocide:

Men were more active in the killings, but women played a big role in the killings as well, because they could have advised their husbands not to kill innocent people.

Finally, despite constraining her behavior to norms that would have been acceptable for Hutu women during the 1973 persecution of Tutsis, Respondent 8 did not escape the scorn of family and society when her crimes became known:

When I went back home, my mother asked me if I wasn't feeling bad about things that I did in [the genocide]... and I told her that I never did anything bad... I don't know what they think now. Perhaps they think that I lied to them, [because] they don't come to see me.

Those who themselves killed victims were a small minority of Rwanda's women. Fewer than one in ten members of the Interahamwe militia were women who received "civil defense" training prior to the genocide. Because participation in hands-on violence was considered to fall outside gender-based norms for women in 1994, this small group of women not only took on the role of killer but also faced community censure for stepping outside traditional gender constraints. Some women who agreed to join the militias had reputations for challenging limits in other spheres and may have become involved precisely because of their familiarity with crossing social boundaries.

Respondent 10: There were some bad-mannered girls whose friends were Interahamwe. They must have walked together with their Interahamwe boyfriends and thus saw their deeds. When you keep on exchanging ideas with someone, you may find room within yourself to accommodate those ideas. That's why some women participated in the killings.

Of the ten women whose interviews are analyzed here, Respondent 7 was most forthcoming in describing the complex relationship between personal and external pressures driving her decision to kill at the outset of the genocide. Respondent 7 and her husband both joined the Interahamwe militia in the early 1990s. She reports being a heavy drinker and marijuana user prior to being recruited, activities that fall outside of the customary boundaries of "appropriate" behavior among Rwandan women even today. Respondent 7 received military and weapons instruction prior to the genocide and was told she was being prepared to go to war as well as to "exterminate Tutsis." Although never an enthusiastic supporter of Hutu Power herself, she responded to pressure from her husband to get involved in Interahamwe activities:

Respondent 7: There came a time when [my husband] tried to sensitize me [to Hutu Power ideology]... I then thought, "this is going to be difficult for me," but he told me that it was obligatory... Personally I never was on their side, but my husband once said to me, "If you don't take part, I will kill you myself." So I agreed to participate.

Thus, with military training and a husband committed to the cause, in the early days of the genocide Respondent 7 agreed to kill a group of targeted civilians in her neighborhood. Traumatized by her actions and determined not to kill again, she nonetheless had difficulty withdrawing from Interahamwe attack groups:

They sent me to a homestead while armed with a rifle and when we surrounded the house I shot . . . people inside. I regretted it after I killed them. I knew that I had done something wrong and I felt that if I continued killing I would also die. I went home and told my husband how I had decided not to [kill again]. I told him, “these were my neighbors and their deaths have upset me, so I won’t repeat [killing] anywhere else.” He told me then, “If you don’t continue . . . you will have to die also.” . . . Thereafter, I kept the rifle but avoided him.

Despite accepting non-traditional gender roles “for the sake of national defense,” the few women who did receive militia training were not relieved of their customary responsibilities at home. Women combatants were expected to fulfill novel and traditional roles simultaneously, both while training with militias and, later, while participating in the genocide itself.

Respondent 7: Although they trained and sensitized me, I was never interested . . . I was trained for one month and then stopped. They then asked me, “Have you mastered it?” And I said, “Yes.” I went home and continued my life, but when the war broke out they gave me a rifle and ordered me to kill people . . .

[Interviewer]: Why did you stop the weapons training sessions?

Respondent 7: I stopped because I had to take care of my children. I left them home alone and [the Interahamwe] wanted me to train into the evening hours . . . The kids had nobody to feed them, so I decided to be there for my children.

Women who joined the Interahamwe placed themselves in a social and gender stratum without precedent in Rwandan traditions. Burdened with “double duty,” women in the Interahamwe enjoyed neither the stature of full militia members, nor the welcome of their former supportive communities. It follows that our respondent in the militias reports feeling isolated from collective society, with few opportunities for guidance. As a result of such isolation, women who deliberately killed fellow Rwandans were not at all shielded from the resultant feelings of doubt, regret, or trauma.

Respondent 7: I always lived with guilt. I always thought about them. I asked myself why I killed them, but didn’t find a reason, and regretted having done it . . . I thought, “I had no conflict with those people I killed, people with whom I shared even water, and who always chatted with me. Why did I kill them?” I started . . . looking for an elder who might have some insight into these feelings, and how [the Interahamwe] had incited me to become involved. But I found that even the elderly were afraid of being killed, and they wouldn’t talk to me.

## Summary

The results of this study reveal that for women, the decision to participate in the Rwandan Genocide was motivated by a complex interaction between background environmental themes that had been in play for years and contemporary experiential pressures that gathered momentum in or around April 1994.

In brief, Rwandan women’s traditional environment of *multiethnic, cohesive, and inter-reliant communities* was undermined repeatedly in the postcolonial years and

faced its greatest challenges between 1990 and 1994, during the RPF invasion, the implementation of multi-party politics, and the ascendancy of the Hutu Power movement. However, *communities remained essentially intact until the downing of President Habyarimana's plane on 6 April 1994*, an act that the Rwandan government blamed on the RPF in order to justify intensive militarization not only of the armed forces but of civil society as well. From this point on, the Hutu Power movement's campaign to eliminate Tutsis and Hutu political opponents engulfed virtually all social, interpersonal, and experiential aspects of the Rwandan reality, and this situation prevailed until the end of the war in July 1994.

April 1994 marked the culmination of months of covert planning by extremists; the reign of terror unleashed against Rwandan Tutsis and politically moderate Hutus was well organized and pre-planned by Hutu Power leaders. *In the interests of "national security," civilians were called upon to murder Tutsi non-combatants*, who were characterized as enemy collaborators and as a threat to national security. Average women experienced this as a *true catastrophe* and had the resultant reactions of *terror, despondency, and, for some, rage and calls for revenge* against all Tutsis. At the same time, *women were terrified of the extremists who controlled national governance and their local communities*, fearing that they or their children would be ensnared in the violence. Many aligned themselves with attack groups for protection or in order to be less "visible" to the extremists, who were threatening "Tutsi sympathizers." Others witnessed murders and were too fearful for their own safety to intervene. Women, who were ordered to stay at home through the crisis, had *limited ability to gather information and thus to frame informed opinions* about the violence unleashed in their communities.

As a result of the limits drawn by gender, *some women describe participating in the genocide without substantial forethought* and others describe their actions as inadvertent. However, some Rwandan women *admit to participating deliberately and after considerable reflection*. Such women believed the government propaganda that all Tutsis were RPF collaborators and spies, plotting with the RPF to murder and enslave Rwandan Hutus. For women not willing to breach *traditional gender roles*, participation was more "passive," including activities such as *looting or denouncing hidden victims*. Other women, perhaps with a *history of transgressing gender boundaries in other aspects of community life*, joined attack groups and actively murdered victims.

## **Discussion**

From these data a picture emerges of how the "perfect storm" of violence came to pass and why the average Rwandan woman chose to become involved. The factors that were most influential in motivating each individual to participate evolved with the shifting, disturbing, and chaotic situation on the ground. Although there is no static case to draw from, it is possible to derive an aerial overview of why women chose to participate in the genocide and to understand the unique, gender-related experiences that informed those choices.

This is the first study to investigate the attitudinal risks for extreme violence that have the potential to be modified in public-health framework; as a result, there are few studies in the literature for comparison. However, some parallels may be drawn between our results and those from related fields of study.

Our finding regarding the sudden shift of women's attitudes after the 6 April 1994 "disaster" is echoed in the literature on women in neo-Nazi groups in the

United States. In her interviews with thirty-four female racist activists, Kathleen Blee reports that for nearly all respondents, the “conversion” to racial activism was prompted by “a single dramatic life event,”<sup>47</sup> such as a near-death experience or the loss of a loved one. Conversion stories took on the quality of moving from “naiveté to enlightenment,”<sup>48</sup> much as Rwandan women rapidly aligned themselves with the Hutu Power movement after the death of Habyarimana.

The situation of Rwandan women in 1994 also resembles the circumstances of German women during the Third Reich. For example, far fewer women than men were direct participants in killing during the Nazi Holocaust.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, just as their Rwandan counterparts a half-century later were admonished to stay indoors and take care of home and family, German women under the Nazis were also encouraged by official policy to confine their energies to *Kinder, Küche, Kirche* (children, kitchen, and church).<sup>50</sup> Particularly after 1938, German women were charged with protecting a peaceful, supportive space for soldiers engaged in emotionally upsetting activities at the front.<sup>51</sup> This concept reaffirms the themes conveyed by Respondents 7 and 8 in this study, who were expected to manage home and children while at the same time providing emotional support to husbands who spent their days “working” in attack groups.

Other resemblances also become apparent. Like our study respondents, some German women during the Third Reich refrained from forming political opinions, while others were steadfast supporters of Nazi doctrine and policy.<sup>52</sup> In addition, Rwandan women’s predilection for property crimes during the 1994 genocide was a reprise of German women’s behavior during the Holocaust. Highly positioned German women—including Emmy Göring, wife of Chancellor Hermann Göring—engaged in “high-class” theft of the finest goods, homes, and lands expropriated from wealthy victims, while even “average” women, such as members of the Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls) willingly ejected Polish families from their farms, and looted homesteads for the best equipment, during their campaign to “resettle” ethnic German families from occupied territories.<sup>53</sup>

Both German and Rwandan women used genocide as an opportunity to step outside of traditional constraints and enter the conventional workforce.<sup>54</sup> For example, the demands of rearmament and wartime economy called upon German women to take on traditionally “male” jobs in increasing numbers after 1936; in 1944, fully 57% of all German women were employed outside the home. Some wished to better their circumstances or advance themselves professionally, while others wished to escape the restraints imposed by more traditional roles. In Rwanda, too, a small number of women (such as Pauline Nyiramasuhuko) used the genocide as an opportunity to improve their financial circumstances or to advance “professionally” by assuming positions of authority during the time of upheaval.

Finally, it appears that the experiences of Rwandan women who themselves were part of the killing bureaucracy are also congruent with the experiences of German women in similar positions. Although there are few recorded interviews with women in the *Schützstaffel* (SS) available for comparison with Rwandan narratives, one example is Anna Fest, who was conscripted into service as a Ravensbrück guard in 1944 and was interviewed in the early 1990s.<sup>55</sup> The wife of a foot soldier on the Russian front, Fest describes feeling helpless to refuse her given work assignment for fear of damaging her husband’s standing and safety in the army.

Throughout extensive discussions, Fest continuously describes herself as naïve, or as having blinders on, for not wanting to see that although no women under her guard

died while she worked at Ravensbrück (a fact that appears to be historically accurate), the conditions there were designed to slowly annihilate inmates.<sup>56</sup> Only after Fest was subjected to a 100-mile “death march” in 1945 did she come to see the goals of the Final Solution as they really were and to rebel against them by assisting victims and publicly accusing the SS officer in charge of murder. Fest’s commentary recalls the themes inherent in the narrative of Respondent 9, a low-level Rwandan government official (*cellule* leader) in 1994 who admits to having detained and guarded neighbors who were rounded up and eventually killed by Interahamwe leaders from another part of her city. Although Respondent 9 herself never harmed anyone personally, she turned over her charges to the killers without protest, reportedly “not realizing” what would happen to them once she did. After this incident, Respondent 9 reports, she felt shocked and despondent. She spent the rest of the genocide hiding a group of targeted children in her home; all of them went on to survive into adulthood.

## Conclusion

As the international community (outside of a handful of courageous African nations) fails to intervene in known episodes of genocide that continue at the time of this writing,<sup>57</sup> statesmen, academics, and human-rights workers have accelerated the public debate on approaches to genocide prevention that might prove more effective in current and future conflicts. However, this discussion has tended to conflate long-term efforts toward primary prevention of genocide (what *The Responsibility to Protect* calls studying and addressing the contributory *root causes* of catastrophic violence) with emergency military, diplomatic, and economic “prevention” at the point when large-scale atrocities have already begun (“reaction to catastrophic violence,” in the language of *The Responsibility to Protect*).<sup>58</sup> This mixing of terminology has confused the discussion of genocide prevention, to its detriment, and has focused the international community on crises that are already out of control by the time adequate attention is paid. Regrettably, late-phase approaches—although necessary—have not been effective in preventing genocide in such countries as Rwanda, Bosnia, and Sudan, and it is apparent that new strategies for the prevention of catastrophic violence are in order. The introduction of sociological tools that predict societies at high risk for catastrophic violence now makes it possible to target vulnerable societies years in advance of an emergency.<sup>59</sup> The science of public health is uniquely situated to enter this discussion with synergistic, longer-range, primary approaches to violence prevention that have proved durable over the past twenty years.

The objective of the ARC-G agenda is to identify attitudinal patterns among potential genocide perpetrators that may be amenable to modification, years in advance of provocations by genocidal governments. The data presented here demonstrate that it is possible, in a retrospective sample of genocide perpetrators, to ascertain the attitudes and beliefs that drive average citizens to tacitly support, actively encourage, or thoroughly involve themselves in genocidal violence. In the immediate next steps of the ARC-G agenda, researchers will attempt to ascertain, through similar methods in real time, the attitudes and beliefs that drive individuals who are currently involved in episodes of extreme violence.

However, no effort of primary genocide prevention, no matter how long-range, can be successful without targeting women and girls, as well as men and boys, in well-researched programs of attitudinal change. The fact that women and girls suffer the highest casualties during episodes of collective armed conflict has been demonstrated by a growing body of recent scholarship.<sup>60</sup> In spite of this, the critical

role of women in supporting, promoting, and perpetrating episodes of collective violence must not be overlooked. Women create nurturing environments for husbands, sons, and brothers to rejuvenate from the trauma of mass killing and, in so doing, may be seen as complicit in this crime.<sup>61</sup> Women cheer on killers from the sidelines. Women are likely to be the main perpetrators of property crimes against targeted victims across genocidal outbreaks. Ultimately, a small percentage of women have participated in hands-on assault and murder in all documented instances of genocide.<sup>62</sup>

The societal pressures that drive women and girls to participate in genocide are by no means identical to those that drive men and boys within the same society.<sup>63</sup> Health-education campaigns targeting violence prevention will succeed in proportion to how well the pressures pushing each segment of the population are understood and how carefully health messages are crafted to reach each individual sector of the community. It is not difficult to imagine crafting long-range educational programs targeting female *as well as* male civilians in order to engender attitudes and behaviors that are resistant to provocation by genocidal governments when disaster strikes. Along similar lines, it is also possible to envision crafting media broadcasts targeted specifically at relatively homebound women during times of national catastrophe, in order to supply them with accessible information, balanced reportage, and strategies for successful resistance to the pressure to engage in human-right abuses and crimes.

The data on women's tendency toward more "gender-consonant" crimes such as looting or denouncement have not been explored fully with respect to genocide but have been the subject of extensive research in other settings where women commit crimes. This may prove a promising avenue of research, in that there is a substantial body of literature to draw on for future genocide-prevention initiatives targeted at the very much neglected population of young and older women who are drawn into all aspects of extreme population-based violence.

Finally, it is important to add that the approaches put forward by the ARC-G research agenda are designed to be synergistic with other later-phase military, diplomatic, and economic approaches to genocide prevention and cessation. The necessary and sufficient structural conditions that predispose societies to outbreaks of catastrophic violence have been discussed elsewhere<sup>64</sup> and will be repeated here only to point out that, from the broadest perspective, genocide is considered a crime of *governments* against their *citizens*. However, while non-democratic governments may incite their populations to attack unarmed civilians, and specific social conditions may exacerbate the inclination of groups to lash out, it is self-evident that, in any genocide, *individuals support and carry out the actual killing*. The conclusion may be drawn that any organized, scientific approach to genocide prevention will be incomplete without a long-range strategy for transforming genocide predictors *in individuals and groups on the ground*.

The data reported here represent a preliminary step in developing a more complete understanding of the roles that young and older women play in catastrophic violence, as well as in defining what a public-health-based approach to long-range, primary genocide prevention might look like. The object of future inquiry will be to test whether it is possible to apply this approach in incipient conflict zones and whether implementation of health-education campaigns, developed from similar data in a contemporary setting, will have the desired effect of lowering rates of violence in high-risk jurisdictions.



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- alleges that current Rwandan president (and former RPF general) Paul Kagame ordered the attack, it is far from certain that Bruguière has sufficient evidence to make his case. For his part, President Kagame has struck a Rwandan national commission headed by former justice minister Jean de Dieu Mucyo to investigate the role of the French in the murder of Habyarimana as well as in colluding with the Hutu Power government to prosecute the genocide. The controversy continues as of this writing.
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# Interethnic Marriages, the Survival of Women, and the Logics of Genocide in Rwanda

Anuradha Chakravarty  
*Department of Government, Cornell University*

*This article focuses on the gendered dimensions of the genocide in Rwanda. It seeks to explain why Tutsi women married to Hutu men appeared to have better chances of survival than Tutsi women married to Tutsi men or even Hutu women married to Tutsi men. Based on data from a field site in southwest Rwanda, the findings and insights offered here draw on the gendered, racial, and operational dynamics of the genocide as it unfolded between April and July 1994.*

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## Introduction

In September 1992, a military commission report in Rwanda officially defined the “main enemy” as “Tutsis from inside or outside the country” and the “secondary enemy” as “anyone providing any kind of assistance to the main enemy.”<sup>1</sup> Since the invasion of Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels in 1990, extremist propaganda had focused on the immutable racial distinction between Hutu and Tutsi. The Tutsis were denounced as historic “invaders” who had “stolen the country.” The RPF attack was cast as a similar attempt, undertaken with the help of Tutsis within Rwanda, all of whom were, by an extension of this racial logic, pronounced accomplices of the rebels.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this undifferentiated notion of “main enemy,” not all Tutsis in a given area were targeted at the same time, or in similar ways, when the genocide began on the night of 6 April 1994.<sup>3</sup> By the end of April, about half the Tutsi population had been killed,<sup>4</sup> and Tutsi men and boys had been the primary targets.<sup>5</sup> Several thousand Tutsi women and girls were killed in the first month of genocide, but it was from mid-May onward that there was a significant rise in Tutsi female deaths. According to Alison Des Forges, it was likely that a “decision to kill women had been made at the national level and was being implemented in local communities.”<sup>6</sup> By the time genocide was halted in mid-July, between 75 and 80% of the approximately 850,000 dead<sup>7</sup> were male.<sup>8</sup> For this reason, Rwanda is sometimes referred to as the land of widows.<sup>9</sup>

There is a paucity of focused theoretical work or empirical research on the gendered dimensions of genocide in Rwanda. As a rule, scholarship on the genocide has focused on its multiple causes, evaluating the role of ethnic hatred and racial ideology *vis-à-vis* the role of fear, pressure, opportunism, and poverty; on the role of international actors; on the mechanisms and patterns of local participation; and on the diffusion of violence over time and space.<sup>10</sup> Valuable information exists, however, in detailed reports prepared by human-rights organizations on sexual violence perpetrated against mainly Tutsi but also Hutu women, on the varied roles that women played as perpetrators of violence, and on estimates of the scale of rape, forced pregnancies, and the spread of HIV/AIDS.<sup>11</sup>

Survivor testimonies and eyewitness accounts in the available literature suggest that while Tutsi women were not the primary targets in the early stages of the massacres, they were not treated in an undifferentiated manner. That is, Tutsi women married to Hutu men appear to have been targeted later than Tutsi women married to Tutsi men. It also appears that Tutsi women with Hutu husbands escaped death, rape, or mutilation more often than Tutsi women with Tutsi husbands. The paucity of large-scale systematic evidence, however, prohibits us from making conclusive or generalizable arguments from these observations.

Although the scope of this article is limited, in that the validity of these observations in a single research site cannot conclusively confirm that they hold true in a general sense across the country, a self-selection problem does not exist: Masaka sector in southwest Rwanda<sup>12</sup> was chosen as a research site for entirely different reasons, such as proximity to a main highway and a local *gacaca* tribunal for genocide crimes that worked without frequent interruptions and down time. Both of these were important factors, because I was interested in investigating how knowledge about the genocide was produced at the local level through the operation of *gacaca*'s judicial process, while the relative accessibility of Masaka sector made repeat visits and long-term stays in the area possible. It was later that I discovered that Tutsi women married to Hutu men in Masaka sector had been more likely to survive genocide than Tutsi women married to Tutsi men.

It is worth noting that genocide was carried out at the local level with the widespread participation of local actors. Therefore, an intensive local-level investigation remains pertinent. This article goes beyond qualitative analysis and ethnographic empiricism to propose a theoretical explanation drawing on intersections of the gendered, racial, and operational logics of genocide in Rwanda.

In Masaka sector, of the twelve Tutsi female survivors who were adults in 1994, ten had been married to Hutu husbands. The other two had Tutsi husbands who were killed. Of all other mono-ethnic Tutsi marriages, both partners perished. Approximately seventeen Hutu women had been married to Tutsi men in 1994. With one exception, all of the Tutsi husbands were killed.

At least three Tutsi men who were adults in 1994 survived the genocide in Masaka. Of these, one was an elderly man (married to a Hutu woman) who later died of natural causes, and the two others migrated out of the sector for work. During the period of field research, there were no adult Tutsi men living in the sector. About ten Tutsi children survived in 1994. Of these survivors who were not adults in 1994, the majority are female. Except for one young man who now lives elsewhere, the others are now young adolescents or in their late teens. Since ethnicity passes down the male line in Rwanda, all of them had Tutsi fathers. But none of their fathers survived the genocide.<sup>13</sup>

I spent several months in Masaka sector, living with ordinary residents and participating in everyday life. The data for this article are drawn from in-depth interviews with a representative sample of the population and from transcripts of eight complete trials for genocide crimes observed at the local *gacaca* tribunal.<sup>14</sup> The accounts given here are reconstructions of events such as the genocide in Masaka—the data were gathered from different sources and verified for accuracy by means of cross-checking against other available information. In certain places, the narratives of respondents are reproduced in their own words. Because of space constraints, other accounts have been condensed and narrated in the third person to highlight those details that are relevant for this analysis.

## **A Three-Pronged Explanation**

Any satisfactory explanation has to go beyond blanket theses such as ethnic hatred and genocide ideology, because these cannot account for variation in the way Tutsis were targeted or explain why all Hutus did not participate in the killings.<sup>15</sup> In the following subsection, gendered practices of nationalist or identity-based violence are examined in order to explain why Tutsi men were primarily targeted in the initial stages and why it was so difficult for Tutsi males of all ages to survive. The next subsection shows how gendered constructions of the ethnic “other” help to explain why Tutsi women were allowed to survive in much higher numbers than male Tutsis. This, however, does not explain why Tutsi women with Hutu husbands were relatively safe from physical harm compared to Tutsi women married to Tutsi men. The succeeding subsection argues that the operational dynamics of genocide at the local level offer a plausible explanation. The last two subsections explore how this intersection of racial, gendered, and operational logics of genocide explains the experiences of Hutu women in interethnic and mono-ethnic marriages.

### **Targeting Tutsi Men**

Adam Jones has argued that mass killing of men has been a “definitional feature” of genocide and often a “prelude to the ‘root and branch’ extermination” of a community.<sup>16</sup> The reasons for targeting the male population might be the strategic need to destroy battle-age male non-combatants capable of joining the ranks of enemy soldiers or to eliminate social elites capable of mobilizing resistance (church leaders, opinion leaders, and politicians being predominantly male in general). The use of sexual violence against men makes it possible to inflict humiliation by feminizing the ethnic “other”<sup>17</sup>; the physical extermination of men can be used, in combination with other methods, to prevent a community from perpetuating itself.

It is not difficult to find confirming evidence in the case of Rwanda. In the numerous small-scale massacres of Tutsis during the years of civil war preceding the genocide, Tutsi men were almost exclusively targeted as potential members of the RPF.<sup>18</sup> Besides killing Tutsi men during the genocide, the perpetrators also castrated Tutsi male children, sometimes forced adult Tutsi men to have sex with known HIV-positive women,<sup>19</sup> and spared neither the very old nor the very young.<sup>20</sup> Because Tutsi men were rarely spared, they were not in a position (in reality, not alive) to cajole or bargain with perpetrators for the lives of their Tutsi wives or children.

### **Targeting Tutsi Women: Gendered Constructions of the “Other”**

The racialization of identity in Rwanda can be traced to the early twentieth century. Colonial authorities interpreted pre-existing social inequalities in light of the Hamitic hypothesis (the idea that Tutsis were racially similar to the Europeans and, thus, allegedly superior to the Negroid Hutu in physiology, intellect, and innate abilities). Following this logic, the Belgians introduced a race-based census and ethnic identification cards. Hitherto salient markers of identity such as lineage, clan, and dialect were gradually subsumed under a racial understanding of social difference,<sup>21</sup> and, in the pre-independence era, both Hutu and Tutsi elites appropriated those elements of the Hamitic hypothesis that best suited their interests.<sup>22</sup> The Bahutu Manifesto, which foreshadowed the establishment of the First Hutu Republic, pointedly stated that the social problem *was* the racial problem and should be understood as the political, economic, and cultural domination of the Tutsi race. From 1990 onward, the extremist media popularized the same logic, harping on the



“origins of the criminality of Tutsi”<sup>23</sup> and calling on “all Hutu to reinforce their unity.”<sup>24</sup>

Decades of institutionalized racism had produced mental maps of racial difference, concomitant with myths about origins, stereotypes about the “nature of the Tutsi” and the “nature of the Hutu,”<sup>25</sup> and imputation of a historic agenda of conquest by Tutsi as a race. The extremist media—Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTL) and the magazine *Kangura*—represented the Tutsi as an ambitious, ruthless, and tricky race. Tutsi women in particular were portrayed in an array of forms. Historically perceived as women of the royal courts or the upper classes, they were cast as exotic sexual objects beyond the reach of the ordinary Hutu. If a Tutsi woman deigned to marry a Hutu man, it was said to be a conspiracy of her male co-ethnics to use her feminine charms to trick Hutu men. During the genocide, Hutu males were targeted for propaganda and innuendo suggesting that they could now enjoy these exotic and arrogant Tutsi women, provided they were perpetually on guard against their treacherous nature. It is interesting that there were no specific orders for rape, nor were lists compiled of those to be raped (unlike the lists that were drawn up of those marked for death); nevertheless, innuendo, jokes, and propaganda were interpreted as intended.<sup>26</sup>

It was standard practice for female Tutsis to be allowed to live and be abused as sex slaves, either by force or by a mutual compact that traded sexual services for survival. It is also true, though, that thousands of female Tutsis were raped before being killed. The word *kubohozza* (“to liberate”) was used for the act of rape. This word had been used in the context of the launch of multi-party politics in 1991 that marked the end of President Juvénal Habyarimana’s single-party dictatorship of the National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development (MRND) party. At that time it referred to a violent campaign by the Democratic Republican Movement (MDR) party that forced MRND officials to switch their political affiliation to the MDR.<sup>27</sup> It was also associated with the coercive appropriation of land and resources and reflected a tendency to use violence in the pursuit of political ends. The use of the same word for rape indicates that sexual violence and forcible impregnation were consciously associated with politics and the extremist Hutu Power agenda.<sup>28</sup> (Here it is worth noting that feminist scholars have shown how rape and impregnation of enemy women is part of war and an attempt at ethnic cleansing.<sup>29</sup> In the former Yugoslavia, for example, raped women were kept in custody until they could no longer abort, and similar stories spread in both Serbia and Croatia about how “others” had raped ‘our’ women, and wanted to spoil our nation.”<sup>30</sup>)

### Tutsi Women in Interethnic Marriages

To argue that Hutu men were not targeted and were therefore able to protect their Tutsi wives would be to obscure the complex reality of genocide. Many ordinary Hutus were specifically singled out for violence, including old enemies of locally powerful *génocidaires*, social deviants such as thieves and sorcerers,<sup>31</sup> and sometimes the rich. Hutu men married to Tutsi women were also vulnerable targets because of the social construction of female Tutsis as spies for their male co-ethnics. The first of the “Hutu Ten Commandments” printed in the extremist magazine *Kangura* announced that any Hutu man who had a Tutsi female as wife, mistress, secretary, or even friend would be considered a traitor.<sup>32</sup> As a result, a Tutsi wife could become a source of embarrassment, if not a deadly liability, for a Hutu man among his co-ethnics and the focal point for considerable pressure from Hutu family members who felt

unsafe harboring an *icyitso* (“accomplice”). In fact, many Hutu husbands abandoned their Tutsi wives or handed them over to their killers without protest. Tellingly, in Nazi Germany in the 1930s, Christian husbands were similarly pressured to divorce Jewish wives and divorce cases were on the rise.<sup>33</sup>

Although interethnic marriages had traditionally been a way of cementing ties and building relationships based on mutual exchange between Hutu and Tutsi families, the institution was subject to intense scrutiny in the genocidal propaganda. Radical nationalist projects derive legitimacy from focusing on questions of racial purity, origin, and genealogy, where blood and semen are the pure fluids that transmit racial belonging, moral purity, and spiritual integrity; if contaminated, they are believed to transmit disease and decay.<sup>34</sup> The fear of interethnic marriages stemmed from concerns about destruction of the nation through the racially impure progeny of mixed couples. There was also paranoia about the danger posed by an “elusive enemy” who could not be identified, despite being among them, because the differences were supposedly biological and “hidden”—not cultural, linguistic, or even physiological in any obvious fashion.<sup>35</sup> Warnings such as “Tutsi, don’t try to hide yourselves” appeared in issues of *Kangura* as early as the winter of 1990/1991, referring to Tutsis figuratively as hiding behind their Hutu spouses but also directed metaphorically at *ibiymanyi* (those of mixed parentage).<sup>36</sup>

All Hutu men in mixed marriages could not save their Tutsi wives, but those able to do so were successful, in large part, because of the operational logic of genocide at ground level. Recent research has shown how ordinary people in Rwanda were mobilized by local networks of family, friends, and peers to join groups of attackers through a mix of coercion and persuasion.<sup>37</sup> The mobs were large, the most common size of a group ranging between eleven and thirty people.<sup>38</sup> In Masaka sector, there was a smaller core group whose members split up and mobilized larger groups for different attacks.

From my interviews with Hutu men who were able to save their Tutsi wives from rape or death, what stands out prominently is the fact that they were acquainted with one or more of the people at the center of the attack. This allowed them to negotiate and strike a bargain with the mob, usually involving the exchange of a cow or other livestock or property for the life of the woman. Even if the Hutu husband did not recognize anyone in the mob, a bargain was possible if a friend or neighbor who rallied around the besieged family happened to know one or more of the key actors among the attackers and stepped in to mediate.

The lives of Tutsi men were rarely spared. Thus, in mono-ethnic Tutsi marriages, the Tutsi husband was not in a position either to save himself or to protect his wife. In Masaka, the usual practice was for the death squads to grab the family’s livestock; steal bricks, tiles, and furniture from the house; and kill the couple and the children after ascertaining that there were no further assets that had been hidden away. Families split up and went into hiding, each member on his or her own, to maximize chances of survival. If someone was discovered, attackers coerced information about the location of the livestock and other property owned by the family—and then, having verified that the things were truly where he or she said they were, killed the victim.<sup>39</sup>

In contrast, a deal between Hutu men with Tutsi wives and Hutu perpetrators was still possible, particularly if three conditions were fulfilled: first, one or more of the key actors in the mob happened to be acquainted with the Hutu husband or with someone who supported the husband’s position; second, the Hutu husband was on the spot when the attack occurred; and, third, he was willing to take risks. It must

be understood that each argument with an armed and hostile mob constituted a risk, and each insistent plea for reconsideration meant that the Hutu husband was courting danger and risked being physically assaulted, if not killed.

Still other elements went into making such a compact between Hutu men durable. If the Hutu protector happened to be a man who was well respected or well liked in the community, the bargain was sealed with the attackers' promise, on their word of honor, that they would not renege on the deal. The situation changed dramatically if a Hutu man hid his Tutsi wife in the bush, or in someone else's home, and she happened to be discovered. It was unlikely that her Hutu hosts would risk the ire of the mob by attempting to negotiate or resist. If the hosts did not personally know anyone involved in the attack, there was also little possibility of bargaining to spare the woman's life. In the event that the hosts did resist, they were usually threatened and sometimes beaten up. If the Tutsi woman was found hiding alone in the bush, she could be raped or killed immediately.

### Hutu Women in Interethnic Marriages

The above account provides evidence that Tutsi men could not protect themselves, as they were denied a chance to bargain for their lives. Neither could Hutu wives of Tutsi men do much to protect their husbands, because there were no readily available templates for such social roles of women as negotiating partners with men. Rwandan men expected their women to be hardworking and submissive, and women traditionally had little access to education, jobs, or inheritance or ownership rights to property.<sup>40</sup> In Masaka, not only were the Tutsi husbands and children killed, their houses were also destroyed and property looted.

Hutu women in interethnic marriages were also perceived as traitors and were often raped or beaten up as punishment by male co-ethnics. Nationalist projects depend on maintaining the boundaries of "their" nation. This requires constant policing and tight control of women's sexuality, marriage, and reproduction—whether in Rwanda, in the former Yugoslavia, or in Nazi Germany.<sup>41</sup> Serb and Croat women in mixed marriages bore the brunt of Serb and Croat nationalisms, respectively: Serb women married to Croat men suffered insults thrown at them by ethnic Serbs, such as "Croatian prostitutes" or "Ustaša mothers"; Croat women married to Serb men were called such names as "Serbian prostitutes" and "Četnik mothers" by ethnic Croatians.<sup>42</sup> In Nazi Germany, non-Jewish women guilty of "racial misconduct" under the Nuremberg Laws were photographed and their names and addresses publicly displayed. Because male Jews were portrayed as sexual predators in Nazi discourse, most cases dealing with "race defilement" laws involved Jewish men and non-Jewish women.<sup>43</sup>

### Hutu Women in Mono-ethnic Marriages

Like every other social actor, Hutu women with Hutu husbands largely failed to extend support or comfort to Tutsi women faced with grave danger. Recent advances in feminist theory alert us to the risks of simplistic and essentialized notions of "sisterhood" and "women's solidarity" across ethnic and class divides. On the one hand, there are often real ideological or political differences between identity-based groups or class formations, and the real question for women may well be how they can bridge these differences without denying them. On the other hand, women may be too invested or rooted in these positions to shift or move across the chasm to locate common interests and build on them.<sup>44</sup>

Feminist analyses show how women are both mobilized and oppressed by their “own” nationalist movements, which glorify traditional gender codes and male power.<sup>45</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain argues that by slipping into idealized roles such as the “spartan mother” or the “beautiful soul,” women have “more often than not” exhorted their men to violence in the national interest and honored them for their actions.<sup>46</sup> Expected to be patriotic and comforting wives, German Christian women provided a soothing family environment for their men to come home to from their jobs in the concentration camps and did not confront them with questions about the war, the Jews, or politics in general—even when they heard rumors or knew from different sources about what was going on.<sup>47</sup> In Rwanda, the extremist magazine *Kangura* conferred upon Hutu women the dubious distinction of being “more suitable and more conscientious in their roles as woman, spouse and mother” and urged them to wean Hutu men away from the charms of Tutsi women.<sup>48</sup> The emotional insecurity and envy this induced may have prevented Hutu women from feeling more sympathetic toward the plight of Tutsi women. In fact, many Hutu women played an active part in the genocide. They refused refuge to Tutsis in need, betrayed those hidden in their homes, acted as informants, and also killed. As loyal Hutus, some prominent Hutu women donned military fatigues and organized the massacres in their areas.<sup>49</sup> The example of Masaka sector cautions against over-generalization in any direction. Sometimes polygamous Hutu men hid the Tutsi wife in the home of the Hutu wife. Perhaps these women were motivated by genuine sympathy for the plight of the Tutsi wives, or perhaps they did not want to incur their husband’s displeasure and submitted to his wish that they extend refuge. In Masaka, at any rate, among the surviving Tutsi women married to Hutu men, it was rare to encounter a case where they attributed their survival primarily to being hidden in the Hutu wife’s home.

### **Genocide in Masaka Sector**

There is little evidence that all perpetrators were motivated by a genocidal impulse, but it would be problematic to underestimate the extent of fear and paranoia that ordinary Hutu felt toward the ethnic “other” as a whole in the context of the RPF invasion and the unflagging hysteria broadcast over the RTLM. Tutsi residents of Masaka were suspected of secretly harboring sympathy for the rebels. A few Tutsi individuals were singled out, and rumors began to circulate about their allegedly active support for the military effort of the RPF. One of them, John, had become the object of much speculation. During my interviews, many respondents mentioned that people used to say that John hated Hutus. Many had apparently believed that documents proving his support to the rebels had been found and that John was expecting to be rewarded with political office after the RPF victory.

With the introduction of multi-party politics in 1991, various political parties had organized meetings in Biryogo, a trading center an hour’s journey by foot from Masaka. The MDR party had enjoyed a popular resurgence in this area because of its status as the party of the founding father of the first Hutu Republic and its association with the Hutu of the south. Some young men from Masaka had been sent to a neighboring district for military training. Respondents said they discovered only later that these people had been trained as Interahamwe, the feared youth militia.<sup>50</sup>

Most people clearly recalled an incident they identified as the first act of genocide in the area. The night of 6 April had been a tense one for the community. They had heard of the assassination of President Habyarimana on the radio, and the newscast

had held the RPF responsible. In the early hours of 7 April, a Tutsi businessman who lived in Biryogo was killed.

That morning some people came to our sector from Biryogo saying that Michel had been killed. They were looking for John because they said he was helping the Inkotanyi.<sup>51</sup> We had been sitting in Alex's bar at the *gasantere*. They informed us that people were taking beans, sugar, and other things from Michel's shop and many people from here went to see what they could take.<sup>52</sup>

The *gasantere* came up as a recurrent motif in peoples' narratives in the interviews and also in their testimonies at the *gacaca* tribunal. *Gasantere* are spaces at the heart of community life at the grassroots level.<sup>53</sup> Within the *gasantere* there are bars serving alcohol and meat, small shops, and a weekly market attracting local farmers and sellers from the nearest trading center. These centers became places where local strongmen orchestrating the killings met with ordinary perpetrators. Some meetings were restricted to an inner circle, whose members were well known in Masaka for their high visibility during the genocide and their leadership of mob attacks at multiple sites in the sector. Other meetings were open to the public, and people would drift in and out.

Information was pooled about the number of Tutsis killed and how many remained. People vied for the leaders' attention and provided information about possible hiding places of fugitives. The leaders divided those who gathered around them (in bars and other meeting places) into groups and sent them on specific missions.<sup>54</sup> Sometimes a mob from another sector would venture into Masaka, merge with the local groups if they happened to meet on the hills, and go on an attack together.<sup>55</sup> In the evening, stolen cows or goats would be slaughtered and the *gasantere* became sites for feasting and swapping stories about the day's events. On the aforementioned day, news about Michel's death had spread quickly as people returned home with the looted items.

It was Thursday. Around noon, the old woman came to my house. She said, "my child, our time has come" . . . They hid in the sorghum fields that night.<sup>56</sup>

"The old woman" referred to was an elderly Tutsi woman who had a Tutsi husband and a large family. The family lived near the interviewee. Except for one daughter, Odette, everybody had gone to hide in the bush that night. Odette's mutilated body, with her breasts cut off, was discovered the next morning:

I had heard loud noises and people were shouting as they went by on this road but it was dark. I did not know who they were. The family returned the next morning and they called us after finding her body. Some of us helped to bury her.<sup>57</sup>

Christopher Taylor has argued that techniques of cruelty derived from a meaningful "mythic logic" in which Tutsi were thought of as a harmful "blockage" requiring excision from the body politic to restore the nation to health. The racial logic had been organically mapped onto concepts of sickness (blockage) and health (restoration of flow) in traditional medicine. Victims were thrown into rivers, as if to represent the flowing out of impurity, and the dead were piled up in pit latrines as if the nation had relieved itself of bodily wastes. Breast oblation of Tutsi women and castration of Tutsi men symbolically represented attempts to "block" the flow of bodily fluids necessary to reproduce and sustain life.<sup>58</sup>

For the vast majority of people in Masaka, it was several days before they realized that Tutsi were the intended targets. Initially, both Hutu and Tutsi had been afraid of

spending nights at home and went to hide in the fields. The morning of 8 April was described as follows:

There had been attacks during the night in other cells also but nobody was killed there... We saw that only homes of Tutsi were burning... Our cows had been stolen. Next morning, I got information about who had taken our cows. We went there and got many of our cows back.<sup>59</sup>

Neither was there much awareness, in those first few days, that the violence had been set in motion by government leaders at the highest level and that government offices were not going to be sanctuaries for the Tutsi. Tutsis who managed to survive the roadblocks and get to the district office were killed there.<sup>60</sup>

We had gone to inform the *conseiller* about Odette's death, but he was having many problems dealing with the situation. The homes of his neighbors were burning. He told us to go to the district to get help.<sup>61</sup>

Many Tutsis had died in Masaka by the time the weekend was over. Mono-ethnic Tutsi families had been targeted first. As mentioned above, families often split up to maximize their chances of survival and went into hiding separately. Those who were found were killed. Interethnic couples in which the husband was Tutsi were also attacked, and the husband and Tutsi children were killed. Tutsi wives of Hutu husbands were hunted last.

Many Hutu respondents said that they understood after this that "Tutsi had been given up to be killed," meaning not so much that the government had ordered the killings but that the government would do nothing to step in and prevent Tutsis from being killed. They did not deny the involvement of local residents but blamed unemployed youth and soldiers from "elsewhere," as well as death squads from neighboring sectors, for the actual killings. However, based on information pieced together from trial testimonies at the *gacaca* proceedings, it appears that the initial attacks were orchestrated by core groups that were highly mobile and were trained and equipped for killing. These key actors successfully activated their local networks, attracted a mass following by providing ample opportunities for plunder, and coerced the unwilling. There was often overlapping membership across various groups. But when they went on attacks together, peer pressure and common experiences of brutality forged a similar mindset and a certain loyalty to the squad. For instance, the vocabularies of participants in the attacks reveal the use of hunting metaphors to refer to search-and-kill operations.<sup>62</sup>

## Stories of Survival

In this section, the experiences of two Tutsi women married to Hutu men will be discussed. Jill did not survive the genocide, and the account of her death contrasts sharply with the story of Chantal's narrow escape.

Chantal had worked out a routine. She would hide in the bush during the day and slip back, under cover of darkness, to spend the night at home with her husband, Paul, and their children. One night they heard the shouts of an approaching mob. Paul urged Chantal to slip away through the back door and hide in the sorghum fields. The stalks of sorghum were several feet tall and provided reasonably good cover in the dark. The attackers demanded that Chantal be turned over to them, but Paul responded that she had run away weeks ago and was probably dead by now. They refused to believe the story and searched the entire house. They held machetes at the throats of the children and threatened to kill them if Paul did not tell them

about Chantal's whereabouts. Among those leading the attack were a few people that Paul knew well; he had often shared drinks with them and visited their homes in the past. These people insisted they had a reliable tip that Chantal was alive and was being hidden by her husband. Paul began to bargain for a settlement at this point.

Roused by the shouts and the cries, a Hutu neighbor came up to the house and supported Paul's plea that the mob take the only cow the family owned and spare Chantal's life. This neighbor also knew the leaders of the group. It came out during the *gacaca* trials that he had participated in other attacks with these very same people, and that was how he knew them—but at the time, it was fortunate for Paul that the neighbor stepped up to bargain on his behalf with the mob. The two men demanded a guarantee that the mob would not renege on their agreement and return to kill Chantal later. The leaders pledged in writing that because Paul had "only one person who was Tutsi—the wife," and because this "Tutsi bears children who are Hutu,"<sup>63</sup> they would not attack his house. They also promised on their word of honor to prevent other groups from targeting the couple.

Jill was not so fortunate. Her husband had hidden her in the home of his trusted Hutu friends in another cell. She had been hiding in the space between the roof and a room's ceiling with her child for several weeks. The first group that attacked the home of her elderly Hutu hosts said that they had been informed about an *icyitso* (accomplice) hiding there, but they did not discover her up in the roof space. The Hutu hosts said they suspected that one of Jill's neighbors had seen her at their home and tipped off the attackers. Jill and her child were discovered during the second search of the house a few days later.

Jill's husband used to scout around the area looking out for attackers. It is not clear whether someone had identified him; some of the attackers discovered him and hit him with the blunt edge of a machete. The bulk of that mob came from a neighboring sector, and neither Jill's husband nor the Hutu hosts knew the leaders of the attack. The child ran to the father, and the two escaped. Jill was killed immediately in the front yard, and her hosts buried her nearby. Some attackers pursued the father and child but could not find them. The child remained with an old Hutu woman until July.

The chances of escaping rape or death shrank dramatically if the intended victims were discovered and did not have a Hutu protector present who not only had some degree of familiarity with the leaders of the mob but was also willing to take some personal risks in the victims' defense. Tutsi women were saved when their Hutu husbands were tipped off about impending attacks by reliable friends who were in cahoots with other perpetrators or when Hutu husbands were able to procure Hutu identity cards through powerful contacts in the area or to negotiate a deal that might preserve the lives not only of their Tutsi wives but also of other Tutsi relatives for at least another day.

When all other inducements failed, the argument remained that Tutsi women married to Hutu men gave birth to Hutu children. Early in the genocide, an elderly Hutu man saved the lives of two young nieces, daughters of his Hutu sister who had married a Tutsi man. The husband had been killed, but the old man intervened and argued that the lives of the girls should be spared because they would grow up to be the wives of Hutu men. The leader of this mob was related to the old man. Unconvinced that the disheveled children were indeed girls, the attackers demanded that they strip so they could be sure the argument was reasonable. As the naked

children cowered on the floor in a kneeling position, the old man argued and reasoned until the attackers finally left. He then dug a deep trench in his banana plantation, where he hid and fed the girls until the genocide came to an end three months later.

## Concluding Notes

This article has tried to cover considerable ground using a three-pronged explanation drawing on the racial, gendered, and operational dynamics of genocide in Rwanda. There is a great need to focus on the experiences of victims, survivors, and perpetrators as gendered actors. People depended on each other for survival in complicated ways—the specifics of the situation when faced with a death squad, prior relationships and mutual understandings among Hutu and between Hutu and Tutsi during such interactions—and each situation was always mediated by gender considerations.

## Notes

1. *Prosecutor v. Bizimungu et al.*, Indictment, ICTR-2000-56-I (25 September 2002), para. 4.6.
2. “Si le FPR gagnait, qui protégerait le peuple majoritaire?” *Kangura* 55 (January 1994), cited in Jean-Pierre Chrétien, Jean-François Dupaquier, Marcel Kabanda, and Joseph Ngarambe with Reporters Sans Frontières, *Rwanda: les médias du génocide* (Paris: Karthala, 2002), 118.
3. Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (London: Verso, 2004), 164. Within hours of the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana, there were killings in places such as Gisenyi and Kigali. According to Christian Davenport and Allan Stam, *GenoDynamics: Understanding Genocide through Time and Space*, <http://www.genodynamics.com> (accessed 3 August 2007), the genocide began in “three major locations: the middle of the country (Kigali Rural), Southwest (Cyangugu), and Northwest Rwanda (Gisenyi). Immediately following the onset of the genocide, the killings spread to two larger locations in the West (Kibuye) and in the capital city (Kigali). In the initial three areas, violent activity increases. This pattern continues until April 12th, when the killings begin to extend outside the capital, maintaining a presence in West. By the 19th, murders in Kibuye prefecture decrease and those from the city of Kigali begin move towards Southern Rwanda.”
4. Alison L. Des Forges, “*Leave None to Tell the Story*”: *Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999).
5. African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance* (London: African Rights, 1995), xxiii.
6. Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell*, 296.
7. Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 265. According to Prunier, about 800,000 Tutsis and 30,000 moderate Hutus were killed; he estimates that about 130,000 Tutsis survived the genocide. Estimates of genocide casualties are contested and range from a conservative 500,000 dead to calculations in excess of one million dead.
8. Gendercide Watch, “Case Study: Genocide in Rwanda 1994,” [http://www.gendercide.org/case\\_rwanda.html](http://www.gendercide.org/case_rwanda.html) (accessed 3 August 2007).
9. Claire Chavroche, *Terre des veuves: journal du Rwanda* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2001).
10. Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Lee Ann Fujii, “The Power of Local Ties” (paper presented at APSA annual meeting, Philadelphia, 31 August 2006); Philip Verwimp, “An Economic Profile of Peasant Perpetrators of Genocide: Micro-Level Evidence from Rwanda,” *Journal of Development Economics* 77 (2005): 297–323; Peter Uvin, “Ethnicity and Power in Rwanda and Burundi: Different Paths to Mass Violence,” *Comparative Politics* 31 (1999): 253–71; René Lemarchand, “Rwanda: The Rationality of Genocide,” *Issue: A Journal of Opinion* 23, 2 (1995): 8–11; Alan J. Kuperman,



- “Provoking Genocide: A Revised History of the Rwandan Patriotic Front,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6 (2004): 61–84; Christopher C. Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (Oxford: Berg, 1999); Jean Hatzfeld, *Une saison de machettes. Récits* (Paris: Seuil, 2003). For a roadmap of research priorities on the Rwandan Genocide see Timothy Longman, “Placing Genocide in Context: Research Priorities for the Rwandan Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6 (2004): 29–45.
11. Binaifer Nowrojee, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and Its Aftermath* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1996); *Rwanda: Broken Bodies, Torn Spirits: Living with Genocide, Rape and HIV-AIDS* (London: African Rights, 2004); *Not So Innocent: When Women Become Killers* (London: African Rights, 1995). Numerous reports are also available from Rwandan NGOs and from genocide widows’ and survivors’ organizations.
  12. All place names and peoples’ names have been changed to ensure anonymity.
  13. These figures are culled from reports available at the sector and in each of the cells (smallest administrative units) within the sector and from interviews with survivors (including Hutu genocide widows), local *gacaca* tribunal judges, and other residents of Masaka. The figures were verified by the local representative of IBUKA, the umbrella genocide survivors’ organization in Rwanda; she lived in Masaka, and, although she did not maintain lists of names, she knew each of these people well. Having lived in the homes of local residents of Masaka for several months, I believe these figures are highly accurate.
  14. Interviews were conducted in Kinyarwanda and translated into English by a multilingual interpreter. *Gacaca* used to be an ad hoc customary institution at the grassroots. Elders or other trusted individuals acted as mediators between parties to a conflict. For a variety of reasons, including the need to expedite the cases of at least 120,000 people accused of genocide crimes (some estimates put the caseload at 400,000 people awaiting trial as of 2005), *gacaca* was reinvented by state law, and judges elected from the largely peasant population were trained in the law. The work of these local tribunals depends on the active participation of the population in the form of testimony and confessions. See, e.g., William A. Schabas, “Genocide Trials and Gacaca Courts,” *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 3 (2005): 879–95.
  15. African Rights, *Rwanda: Tribute to Courage* (London: African Rights, 2002); Penal Reform International [PRI], *The Righteous: Between Oblivion and Reconciliation?* (Kigali: PRI, 2004). Scott Straus, “How Many Perpetrators Were There in the Rwandan Genocide? An Estimate,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 6 (2004): 85–98. According to Straus, the perpetrator population is about 200,000.
  16. Adam Jones, “Gendercide and Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 2 (2000): 185–211, 198, 201.
  17. Dubravka Zarkov, “The Body of the Other Man: Sexual Violence and the Construction of Masculinity, Sexuality, and Ethnicity in Croatian Media,” in *Victims, Perpetrators, or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Caroline Moser and Fiona Clark, 69–82 (London: Zed Books, 2001).
  18. Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell*.
  19. African Rights, *Broken Bodies*, 19.
  20. Jones integrates the positions of Leo Kuper and Steven Katz to argue that even without systematic violence against women and children of the ethnic “other,” targeting a gender group (males) in whole or in substantial part for destruction is itself one of the more common forms of genocide. Jones, “Gendercide and Genocide,” 199.
  21. Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto, 2004), 19; see also Catharine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
  22. See Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1998), 16–18. According to the Hamitic hypothesis, the Tutsis

- were a race of European extraction, possessing a superior intellect and an innate administrative ability that made them “natural” rulers.
23. *Kangura* 39, 14–19, cited in Chrétien et al., *Les médias*, 123 (my translation)
  24. *Kangura* 6 (December 1990): 6–8, cited in Chrétien, *Les médias*, 141 (my translation).
  25. In April 1999, the Catholic Church in Rwanda organized an in-house symposium that discussed, among other things, post-genocide ethnic relations. There was one session on the common stereotypes about essentialized characteristics of the “other” held by Rwandans. See *Sinode igeze he mu madiyosezi yose [How Far Is the Synod in All Dioceses?]* (report, 12–15 April 1999), 21–24.
  26. African Rights, *Not So Innocent*, 44.
  27. The First Republic had been a one-party state of the MDR. Habyarimana, who usurped power through a coup in 1973, also set up a one-party state and banned the MDR. His own party, the MRND, was dominated by the Hutu of the north. After the introduction of multi-party politics in 1991, the MDR made a quick comeback. Before the genocide began, however, the MDR and other parties split into moderate and extremist factions.
  28. Nowrojee, *Shattered Lives*, n. 61.
  29. Nickie Charles and Helen Hintjens, “Gender, Ethnicity and Cultural Identity: Women’s ‘Places,’” in *Gender, Ethnicity and Political Ideologies*, ed. Nickie Charles and Helen Hintjens, 1–26 (London: Routledge, 1998), 11.
  30. Mirjana Morokvasic, “The Logics of Exclusion: Nationalism, Sexism and the Yugoslav War,” in *Gender, Ethnicity and Political Ideologies*, ed. Nickie Charles and Helen Hintjens, 65–90 (London: Routledge, 1998), 80.
  31. Interview respondents mentioned witnessing the death of a female sorcerer and her daughter. There were also incidents of murder of local troublemakers. There was some controversy in Masaka as to whether the (Hutu) widow of a (male Hutu) thief murdered during genocide should be considered a genocide survivor in the same way that Hutu widows of Tutsi men were commonly thought of as survivors.
  32. *Kangura* 6 (December 1990), cited in Chrétien, *Les médias*, 141.
  33. Sybil Milton, “Women and the Holocaust: The Case of German and German-Jewish Women,” in *Women and the Holocaust: Different Voices*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, 213–49 (New York: Paragon, 1993), 217; Jonathan C. Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable: Essays on Sexuality, Gender and Holocaust Survivor Memory* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2002), 30.
  34. Sarah Benton, “Founding Father and Earth Mothers: Women’s Place at the ‘Birth’ of Nations,” in *Gender, Ethnicity and Political Ideologies*, ed. Nickie Charles and Helen Hintjens, 27–45 (London: Routledge, 1998), 34.
  35. Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, 23, cites Omer Bartov’s concept of the “elusive enemy.” Bartov writes of the Nazi regime, “. . . as in all nightmares, this elusive enemy generated much greater anxiety than the easily identifiable one. The notion that the enemy is among us yet cannot be unmasked has always been the stuff of fear and paranoia and the cause of destructive imaginings and violent eruptions.” Omer Bartov, “Defining Enemies, Making Victims: Germans, Jews, and the Holocaust,” *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 771–816, 780.
  36. *Kangura* (March 1991), cited in Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, 23.
  37. Charles K. Mironko, “Ibitero: Means and Motive in the Rwandan Genocide” (working paper, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 2004); Straus, “How Many Perpetrators”; Fujii “Power of Local Ties.”
  38. Straus, “How Many Perpetrators,” 92.
  39. Masaka sector *gacaca* trials #4 and #6 (May–June 2005).
  40. Nowrojee, *Shattered Lives*, n. 19.
  41. In the discourse of French right-wing nationalism, “sexual metaphors are used . . . to warn about the vulnerability of the French nation to invasion and thereby destruction—mainly through a mixing of French women with ‘other men.’” Charles and Hintjens, “Gender, ethnicity,” 10.

42. Mirjana Morokvasic-Miller, "From Pillars of Yugoslavism to Targets of Violence: Interethnic Marriages in the Former Yugoslavia and Thereafter," in *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, ed. Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, 134–51 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 144. The terms *Ustaša* and *Četnik* derive the names of a Nazi-controlled Croatian puppet government and a Serbian loyalist/anti-Communist guerrilla force known to have collaborated with the German occupiers during World War II, respectively. There are layers of meaning to the use of these terms, including both "enemy"—the *Četniks* and *Ustašas* fought each other during World War II—and "collaborator" (with the occupier).
43. Friedman, *Speaking the Unspeakable*, 29.
44. Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997); Cynthia Cockburn, *The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 5; Lois A. West, *Feminist Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
45. Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, "Gender and Conflict in a Global Context," in *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, ed. Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, 3–23 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 9.
46. Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Thinking about Women and International Violence," in *Women, Gender, and World Politics*, ed. Peter R. Beckman and Francine D'Amico, 109–18 (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1994), 109.
47. Gitta Sereny, "Into That Darkness," in *Women and the Holocaust: Different Voices*, ed. Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, 270–86 (New York: Paragon, 1993); Claudia Koonz, *Mothers in the Fatherland: Women, the Family and Nazi Politics* (London: Methuen, 1987).
48. "Voici les 10 Commandements," *Kangura* 6 (December 1990), cited in Chrétien, *Les médias*, 141 (my translation).
49. African Rights, *Not So Innocent*, 49–52.
50. The word *interahamwe* means "those who stand together" or "those who attack together." The Interahamwe was the youth militia of the MRND party.
51. *Inkotanyi*, meaning "tireless warriors," was the name by which the RPF referred to itself.
52. Interview #48 (male Hutu). A random number has been assigned to each interview to ensure anonymity as far as possible.
53. The *gasantere*, or center for the sector, is usually in close proximity to the government office. Each cell or every two or three cells in the sector may have its own center.
54. Trial transcript #4 (May 2005).
55. Trial transcript #6 (June 2005).
56. Interview #41 (female Hutu).
57. Interview #32 (male Hutu).
58. Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, ch. 3.
59. Interview #39 (Hutu widow of Tutsi husband).
60. Although the *conseiller* (sector leader) of Masaka at that time has not been accused of orchestrating genocide crimes, some cell-level leaders have been implicated. In various other places across the country, sector and cell-level leaders have been accused of taking leadership roles in the killings in their areas.
61. Interview #26 (male Hutu).
62. Mironko, "Ibitero."
63. Chantal has carefully preserved the letter containing the "promise," signed by the leaders of that mob. When the piece of paper began to tear at the folds, she photocopied it, and later she introduced it as evidence in a trial.

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# The UK Government and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda

Linda Melvern

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“I can think of no more irresponsible act of a British government in modern times . . .”  
—Geoffrey Robertson, QC<sup>1</sup>

The genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994 will remain, for our generation, the enduring failure to intervene in the face of massive human-rights abuse. The genocide lasted for three months, and during that time an estimated one million people were killed. The killing was organized in advance; it was the direct result of a deliberate government policy and was carried out according to an explicit strategy.

The combination of revelations about the scale and the intensity of the genocide, the failure to intervene to prevent it or to stop its progression country-wide, and the suppression of information about what was actually happening is a shocking indictment not just of the UN Security Council but of governments and individuals who knew what was happening and who chose to remain silent. The failure of UN policy toward Rwanda, a policy devised by members of the Security Council, had a decisive effect on events. It merits precise documentation.

The focus of this article is the role of the British government led by Prime Minister John Major. While the United Nations has shown its willingness to uncover how and why it reacted the way it did,<sup>2</sup> in the United Kingdom there continues to be a reluctance to try to account for Britain’s policies toward Rwanda. Neither press nor Parliament has shown any enthusiasm to scrutinize this particular part of history or to explain why the United Kingdom, a country with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, should have chosen to influence events in the way it did.<sup>3</sup> Britain, far from taking a back seat, was instrumental in shaping the UN response to the crisis,<sup>4</sup> and this leaves unanswered a central question: Was the United Kingdom, a country with special power and privilege in the Security Council, impotent or unwilling to implement the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (UNCG),<sup>5</sup> either to prevent the occurrence of genocide in Rwanda or, once it began, to stop it from spreading?

In the United Kingdom, a country where secrecy pervades most aspects of government, the issue of Rwanda is particularly sensitive. There are continuing attempts to obscure individual responsibility in the decision-making process. There is even a claim that, in the archives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in Whitehall, the paper trail on Rwanda, 1990–1994, has been weeded.<sup>6</sup> There is resistance to release any of the diplomatic cables that passed between the policy makers in London and Britain’s UN mission in New York. Some officials involved at the time are reluctant even to discuss Rwanda, a reluctance bolstered by the ongoing failure of press and Parliament to examine this episode in British foreign policy. In the writings and memoirs of those concerned, there is hardly a relevant word—in John Major’s case, the genocide has completely vanished from the public version of his period in office.<sup>7</sup>

When I first began to query government policy toward Rwanda, I was given various reasons for the inaction. I was told that the FCO and the then foreign secretary, Douglas Hurd, did not know what was happening in Rwanda. “We had absolutely no sources of information,” our UN ambassador, David Hannay, told me.<sup>8</sup> “The genocide came like a bolt from the blue,” another insider claimed. There was no British embassy in Rwanda, which was considered to be in the “francophone sphere” of Africa; the government had simply believed what the French were saying.<sup>9</sup> Alternatively, it was claimed that British policy makers were given inadequate briefings by UN officials in the Security Council and that this had made the United Kingdom “look in the wrong direction.” There were several claims that the United Kingdom had simply gone along with “UN policy.”

It remains unclear what advice, if any, the FCO’s legal advisors, headed by Sir Franklin Berman, offered on the determination of genocide in Rwanda and the responsibility of the British government, as a signatory to the 1948 UNCG, to abide by this treaty. By contrast, in the United States, under the Freedom of Information Act, some relevant memoranda from the Office of the Legal Advisor have been released.<sup>10</sup> But the rest of the story is hidden from view, and requests in the United States for a congressional investigation into the decision-making process are ignored. Only a tiny fraction of the government documents regarding this issue has been released.

## **Peacekeeping in Rwanda**

With hindsight, the creation by the UN Security Council of a feeble UN peacekeeping mission for Rwanda—with its weak mandate and minimal capacity, suitable for only the most benign environment—is seen to have been a tragic error. On the face of it, the UN assignment in Rwanda was unambiguous, with a three-year civil war that had ended in peace and a handshake between government and invading rebels. The corrupt regime was to be reformed and a power-sharing government created. This was classic, textbook peacekeeping; there would be no proactive soldiering, no peace enforcement. Peacekeepers monitor compliance with cease-fires; they do not seize weapons. The peacekeepers of the UN observe, they mediate, but they do not compel the parties to cease hostilities, nor do they try to end human-rights abuses.

In peacekeeping, the transition period, when the warring factions vie for power, is the most dangerous. It is the time used by extremists to make the most of the vacuum, to derail peace. In the case of Rwanda, by the time the UN peacekeepers arrived, it was probably already too late. And just how half-hearted this UN mission was is plain to see, for it lacked even the barest essentials. It was soon clear that the readiness level of this paltry force bore no relationship at all to what was needed.

The timing for Rwanda and its fragile peace agreement could not have been worse. The UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was created as a small and rather insignificant mission at a time when the Security Council was preoccupied elsewhere. There was a crowded agenda and new demands on the council’s time; the end of the Cold War had led to an evolution in peacekeeping, with a series of new high-cost, large-scale, and open-ended missions created in the early 1990s. The Security Council had enacted a blizzard of peacekeeping mandates, and some of them had proved ambiguous, inadequate, and written with scant consideration for the realities on the ground. In the former Yugoslavia there had been tragic mistakes, particularly when the Security Council sent peacekeepers into situations with orders they

could not follow. When UNAMIR was created, the council was responsible for seventeen UN missions worldwide and some 80,000 peacekeepers in the field. It was trying to keep track of problematic operations in Cambodia, in Somalia, and in the former Yugoslavia. Rwanda seemed quiet. In comparison with other missions it seemed even hopeful, and there existed a degree of optimism about the Arusha peace accords.

Peacekeeping requires ceaseless political direction. In every operation throughout the world, the mandate, authorized by the Security Council, provides crucial guidance. By the end of February 1994, the mission for Rwanda was beginning to cause concern, and at the end of February there was a series of violent incidents, with militia seizing the center of Kigali and a series of political murders. These events were of such concern that the Belgian foreign minister, Willy Claes, flew to Kigali, and almost immediately upon his return home Belgium decided to ask the Security Council for a more robust mandate for the peacekeepers. The Belgian government, which had 450 paratroopers in UNAMIR and intelligence operatives attached to its embassy in Rwanda, warned that the mission was in the deepest trouble. It asserted that the peacekeeping mandate must be increased to allow for a more robust UN response in the face of increasing violence.<sup>11</sup> In New York, urgent meetings were convened by Belgium's ambassador to the United Nations, Paul Noterdaeme. There was a diplomatic blizzard from Belgian diplomats who believed that the peace agreement in Rwanda was being sabotaged and that if this UN mission collapsed the result would be a huge loss of life. The peacekeepers needed to be able to take proactive action and to seize illegal and stockpiled weaponry; they needed better protection and reinforcements. After the genocide, an enquiry by the Belgian Senate would reveal how two members of the Security Council, the United Kingdom and the United States, given these warnings, remained adamant that no further help should be given to Rwanda. These two states were showing reluctance about the mission. In fact, given the level of violence, they wanted a time limit imposed, for it seemed unwise for peacekeepers to remain in a country where the peace agreement was collapsing. Unless the situation improved and the peace agreement got back on track, the UN peacekeepers would have to pull out completely.

This idea, which was discussed at an informal Security Council meeting on 5 April 1994, did not receive unanimous support. Ibrahim Gambari, the representative for Nigeria, a non-permanent member of the council, argued that Rwanda—one of the poorest countries in the world—should be given sufficient time to achieve democracy. Rwanda should receive the same resources and attention given by the council to other conflict zones, particularly in the former Yugoslavia, where the Council had mandated more peacekeepers than anywhere else in the world.

By now the British government was in possession of its own information about Rwanda. A report detailing the very real risks involved had been sent to London, written by Edward Clay, High Commissioner in Kampala, Uganda, who—after a visit to the Rwandan capital, Kigali—provided the FCO with details of what was happening.<sup>12</sup> One insider would later claim that had this report received the attention it deserved, Britain's record in the Security Council at this time would have been somewhat different.

It has since been acknowledged that the British government was also reading detailed cables about Rwanda from UNAMIR Force Commander Roméo Dallaire with desperate warnings of impending calamity<sup>13</sup> It remains unclear how the British government managed to obtain strictly internal UN documents.

Also available to the British government was more public information from human-rights groups, giving extensive detail about Rwanda: the formation and training of a country-wide militia, the existence of death squads committing political murder, and continuing arms purchases in contravention of the peace accord. There was evidence of a racist propaganda campaign against the Tutsi minority in extremist publications and over the airwaves of the newly created Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), which was relentless in its incitement to ethnic hatred. The UN Commission on Human Rights had sent a special rapporteur, Bacre Waly Ndiaye, to Rwanda; he thought the word “genocide” was appropriate to describe the killing by the government of members of the Tutsi group. Ndiaye warned of “the odious disinformation advocating ethnic and political intolerance, hatred and violence.”<sup>14</sup>

British journalist Richard Dowden, foreign editor of the *Independent*, was told during a January 1994 visit to Rwanda that militia were being armed by the government and that there were plans to promote mass killings of Tutsis throughout the country. The warning came from Philippe Gaillard, chief delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Gaillard warned that genocide could take place. But Dowden later wrote that Gaillard was the only person who spoke to him of genocide and that everyone else he had spoken to had been optimistic. To write a “sensational story about impending genocide would have been dishonest and irresponsible,” he thought.<sup>15</sup>

Among others who saw the warning signs was a Polish peacekeeper, Major Stefan Stec, who described how, in the weeks beforehand, “genocide hung in the air.” The peacekeepers had opened reception centres for Tutsi families, who were frequently trapped in their homes by Hutu Power militia and too scared to sleep at home.<sup>16</sup> Some of Kigali’s churches were also used in this way. Some Rwandans chose exile. Others believed that with the United Nations in their country they would be safe.

In all these circumstances, the British government may not have been as ignorant as it professed to be.

## **Warning Signs in Kigali**

In one telling paragraph in the 2005 *Report of the Commission for Africa* are these words: “Just 5,500 troops with robust peace enforcement capabilities could have saved half a million lives in Rwanda. Evidence shows that prevention can work.”<sup>17</sup>

This, then, is most likely the first indication of an admission by British government signatories of grievous errors made by politicians and civil servants on Britain’s behalf in 1994.

The question of when exactly the government was aware that genocide was underway is crucial. Some sources have confirmed that within weeks genocide was apparent; the information came from the most reputable sources, including the ICRC and the British agency Oxfam.

One now retired senior civil servant recalls that immediately before the genocide the Foreign Office warned the Cabinet Office that there could be great loss of life in Rwanda. There appears to have been an assumption that should the peace agreement collapse, there would be many casualties, and that massacres would take place similar to those that had taken place in neighbouring Burundi in October 1993, when an estimated 50,000 people had been killed. In relation to Rwanda in late

April 1994, another insider comments, “When it got to 100,000 dead we thought it was a bit persistent.”

In the United Kingdom, it was Oxfam that first publicly acknowledged the genocide in a press release dated 29 April: “Oxfam fears genocide is happening in Rwanda.” At this stage, the British government chose to obscure the reality, describing what was happening only as “civil war.” In the Security Council in New York it was the British ambassador, David Hannay, who first offered the idea that the UN peacekeepers be withdrawn; he suggested leaving behind in Rwanda a “token force to appease public opinion.” Hannay said that the peacekeepers could achieve very little and that ambassadors should beware a repetition of Somalia, where a few months earlier a peacekeeping mission had spiraled out of control, ending in ignominious failure, at least for the US military. Peacekeeping was not appropriate in the midst of civil war, Hannay said.<sup>18</sup>

But the situation in Rwanda was strikingly different from that which had existed in Somalia a few months before. In Rwanda a civil war was under way, but so was genocide—and at a terrible speed, in broad daylight, in schools, hospitals, clinics, and churches, the places where terrified Rwandan citizens had sought refuge. The eventual Security Council decision, made public on 21 April, to withdraw the bulk of the UN mission may have encouraged the *génocidaires*, for within a few hours of this vote in New York the killing in Rwanda spread south.

In the days that followed, three non-permanent members of the Security Council—the Czech Republic, New Zealand, and Nigeria—made every effort to try to persuade both the United Kingdom and the United States to focus their attention not just on the civil war but on the daily murder of thousands upon thousands of civilians. These three states tried to persuade the great powers that the council should recognize that genocide was underway. Were the genocide to be recognized, they argued, there would be a legal and a moral imperative to do something about it. These countries also lobbied for reinforcements for UNAMIR. But the resistance was determined, and at the end of April there was an eight-hour debate in the Security Council about the use of the word “genocide” in relation to Rwanda. During this debate, the United Kingdom argued strenuously against the use of the word. In the end, the council reached a compromise. It was thanks only to the drafting ability of the British that the Presidential Statement issued by the council used wording from the 1948 UNCG but avoided using the word itself. The statement read in part,

The Security Council recalls that the killing of members of an ethnic group with the intention of destroying such a group in whole or in part constitutes a crime punishable under international law.<sup>19</sup>

That same day in Geneva, the headquarters of the ICRC, whose delegates were operating an emergency hospital in Kigali, issued the most strongly worded statement in that organization’s history. It described how whole families were being exterminated, and, in a clear message to the Security Council, the ICRC demanded that measures be taken to put an end immediately to what it called the “terrifying mechanism of the massacres.”<sup>20</sup> By now evidence of mass slaughter was leaking through Rwandan rivers: an estimated 40,000 bodies were removed from Lake Victoria. Oxfam, in spite of a lack of interest from the British press, kept up the pressure, and on 3 May a letter was sent to Prime Minister Major informing him that genocide was happening in Rwanda. But the British government continued to want to deny the reality. On 9 May, the House of Commons was told by Mark Lennox-Boyd, the parliamentary under-secretary of state for foreign and



commonwealth affairs: "There are estimates that more than 200,000 may have perished in recent *fighting* in Rwanda . . . it is a horrific and tragic *civil war*."<sup>21</sup> Yet by that time the latest ICRC estimate was that 250,000 people had been murdered—not killed in a civil war.

That murder of this magnitude could unfold without the government of the day's making any statement on the issue of genocide to Parliament is extraordinary. It was not until six weeks after the genocide began that there was a debate in Parliament, and only because one Opposition member managed to get the issue on to the agenda. On 24 May, Labour MP Tony Worthington expressed shock that so little attention had been paid to Rwanda. Worthington told an almost empty House of Commons at close to midnight, "It is inconceivable that an atrocity in which half a million white people had died would not have been extensively debated in the House." Worthington said that the press had a terrible tendency to dismiss the events as tribalism. "Genocide is certainly involved," he continued.<sup>22</sup> There had never been a clearer example of genocide, and he warned the House of Commons that Britain was a signatory to the 1948 UNCG. He was told that Rwanda was in the "midst of civil war" and that the UK "was at the forefront of those insisting the UN should remain engaged."<sup>23</sup>

This was not quite the case. In the Security Council, as we have seen, it was the Czech Republic, New Zealand, and Nigeria, three non-permanent members, that were insisting that the UN remain engaged in Rwanda. A month later, Worthington made another plea for information about Rwanda: "What kind of House and Government do not seek to make a statement when 500,000 are murdered?" Worthington asked on 22 June. "We are on the Security Council," he reminded the House of Commons.<sup>24</sup>

That genocide in Rwanda had occurred was officially recognized by an impartial commission of experts, created by the Security Council in July 1994, whose interim report to the council in October 1994 documented that "a concerted, planned, systematic and methodical" campaign against the Tutsi and Hutu opponents of the extremists had taken place. There were ample grounds to prove that the 1948 UNCG had been violated between 6 April and 5 July 1994.<sup>25</sup> A provisional list of massacre sites was produced. Corpses were still piled high in classrooms and churches, strewn across the country in an apocalyptic landscape.

As previously noted, the world's catastrophic failure in Rwanda has been examined by the United Nations through an independent inquiry seeking to establish the role of that organization in what happened. The Carlsson Report into the actions of the United Nations during the genocide in Rwanda was authorized by Kofi Annan, who became secretary-general in December 1996 after the United States vetoed a second term for Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

This report, published in December 1999, calls the genocide "one of the most abhorrent events of the twentieth century."<sup>26</sup> The report leaves no doubt that each part of the UN system, and in particular the secretary-general, the Secretariat, the Security Council, and the member states, must assume and acknowledge their responsibility in the failure.

To this day the British government has not done so.

For three months of genocide, from the beginning to the end, all UN governments and official bodies continued to recognize as legitimate the government of Rwanda, a government hastily sworn into office as the genocide began and intended to replace those government members, part of Rwanda's pro-democracy movement, who had

just been murdered. It was called an interim government, and for the next three months it would create a regime based on genocide. This government was represented on the UN Security Council; for the duration of the genocide it ran a spin campaign to convince the world that people were dying in the renewed civil war. Not one government called on the *génocidaires* to stop the genocide. Not one government called for Rwanda's representative to be suspended from the Security Council.

The British government was reluctant to take even the slightest action—such as jamming the hate radio. The government paid no attention to either stabilizing or reinforcing the tiny garrison of UN peacekeepers that had stayed behind in Rwanda. At first Lt-Gen Dallaire, following the loss of ten Belgian peacekeepers in the first hours of the crisis, was told to plan for total evacuation of the force, but he refused and stayed on in Rwanda with volunteers. His was the “token force” that Hannay mentioned. These soldiers, mostly from Ghana and Tunisia, had been mandated by the Security Council to try to negotiate a cease-fire in the civil war. Beyond this mandate, Dallaire and his men were also trying to save as many people as possible, sometimes risking their own lives to do so. In daily contact with Dallaire were officials in the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York, headed by Kofi Annan, who were making desperate efforts on Dallaire's behalf to get him rations, gasoline, water—anything at all. But Dallaire and his men were not even resupplied. In one cable to headquarters he wrote,

The ineffective reaction to meeting the critical needs of this mission is nothing less than scandalous from the word go and even bordering on the irresponsible... This has directly led to the loss of many more Rwandan lives, to the casualties among our troops.<sup>27</sup>

Reinforcements were available for Rwanda. A Ghanaian company of soldiers was on stand-by in Nairobi, and other African countries also offered troops.<sup>28</sup> What was urgently needed was an airlift to get them to Rwanda and about thirty armored personnel carriers to help protect troops on the ground. In response to these urgent requests from UN officials, the British Ministry of Defence and its then minister, Malcolm Rifkind, offered fifty four-tonne four-wheel-drive trucks—but no means to get them to Rwanda. Still, the offer allowed the Major government to claim, on 13 July, that the United Kingdom had “responded to the request of the Secretary-General for the supply of equipment.”<sup>29</sup> It was yet another tactic used by the UK government to deflect the reality of the situation. A variety of British government representatives would subsequently claim that the United Kingdom was doing all that the UN had asked of it. It was for the want of fuel, not courage, that more Rwandans were not rescued.

In June 1994 Dallaire flew to Nairobi, where, at a press conference, he told international journalists they had dropped the ball: they were allowing “fence-sitting politicians off the hook for the Rwandan genocide.”<sup>30</sup> But with no outcry about genocide in the press, no choices were given and no risks taken. The genocide, described in British newspapers with inappropriate and racist clichés such as “tribal bloodletting,” gave the impression that what was happening was too terrible for “foreigners” to prevent; this bolstered the line from the UK diplomats and politicians who kept insisting that only a massive and dramatic intervention would succeed and that such an intervention was out of the question in the midst of a civil war.

Rwanda's genocide occurred in the year in which we wept through Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List*; it was happening while Western leaders walked along

the D-Day beaches and celebrated the defeat of fascism. It was left to “UN peacekeepers” to take the blame for Rwanda.

In both London and Washington there are politicians and civil servants who made decisions in 1994 that cost the lives of an incalculable number of people. They should bear full responsibility. The 1948 UNGA was the world’s first truly universal, comprehensive, and codified protection of human rights. It stands for a fundamental and important principle: that whatever evil may befall any group, nation, or people, it is a matter of concern not just for those people but for the entire human family.

The United Nations was founded on the commitment to the rule of international law—and to a rules-based international society. The erosion of this law and its abuse by democratic politicians should be of some concern. In an effective democracy, it is the job of journalists to ensure that governments do not evade their responsibility under international law and that they are held accountable for their actions. This story is massively incomplete, as the author is the first to admit. We should never forget the gaps.

In a recent off-the-record interview with a foreign office insider, someone who later became a senior figure in the government of Tony Blair, I asked why the British response had been so poor. This was the shocking and cynical reply: “Of course we didn’t do anything...[about Rwanda]...Neither the press nor the public was interested.”

## Notes

1. Statement by Geoffrey Robertson, QC, Doughty Street Chambers, London, July 2006.
2. Ingvar Carlsson, Han Sung-Joo, and Rufus M. Kupolati, *Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the United Nations during the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda*, UN Doc. S/1999/1257 (1999), <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=S/1999/1257> (accessed 1 August 2007) [Carlsson Report].
3. The main exceptions are Linda Melvern, “Death by Diplomacy,” *The Scotsman*, January 1995, 1–3; Linda Melvern, “The UN and Rwanda,” *London Review of Books* 18, no. 24 (1996):11–14; Linda Melvern, “Missing the Story: The Media and the Rwandan Genocide,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 22, no. 3 (2001): 91–106; and Linda Melvern, “Is Anyone Interested in Rwanda?” *British Journalism Review* 12, no. 2 (2001): 52–58.
4. University of Wales, Aberystwyth, Hugh Owen Library, Rwandan Genocide Archive, Security Council “Informals,” account of meetings, April–May 1994. The same materials are also held in the author’s archives.
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# *The Order of Genocide: The Dynamics of Genocide in Rwanda*

Scott Straus

*Department of Political Science, University of Wisconsin, Madison*

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## Introduction

To begin, I'd like to describe the origins of the research project that ultimately became *The Order of Genocide*. I first traveled to Rwanda as a journalist in the mid-1990s, and, during my travels there and in what was then Zaire, I became deeply interested in the dynamics that ultimately led to the 1994 genocide. From my perspective as a journalist traveling in the region, the genocide was an absolutely seminal event, but one that was poorly understood. Eventually I returned to the United States and began a PhD program in political science at the University of California, Berkeley, where I began to study the origins of genocide and mass violence, African politics, and the history of the Great Lakes region. *The Order of Genocide* is based on my PhD dissertation.

Three related questions drove my initial inquiry. First, what explains the ability of Rwandan elites to mobilize a large number of citizens effectively and quickly during the genocide? The literature on African states consistently indicates that governments are relatively weak, especially outside the capital. Yet in Rwanda state authorities successfully solicited the participation of hundreds of thousands of citizens in an extermination campaign. Second, what explains the participation of ordinary civilians in the genocide? When I began to research Rwanda in the late 1990s there was much speculation but little by way of satisfactory answers to this question. Yet given the scale of participation, understanding the dynamics and conditions driving individuals seemed crucial. Third, why did the elites choose the strategy they did? The literature on Rwanda was clear that governing, military, and party officials fomented mass violence; the genocide was not a spontaneous eruption of hatred. Moreover, an instrumentalist consensus dominated the literature: elites were said to have deliberately advocated violence to protect and promote their interests. But instrumentalist hypotheses go only so far; they do not say why elites chose a strategy of genocide over alternatives.

As I considered these questions, a separate set of concerns began to occupy me. In particular, I became concerned about the gap in detailed evidence about the genocide. Most existing empirical information was anecdotal or focused on the top (such as discussions of the history of ethnicity or examinations of national-level propaganda before and during the genocide). There was relatively little empirical information about the dynamics of the genocide in rural areas, where the absolute majority of violence occurred.<sup>1</sup> In short, the situation I found as I began to research Rwanda was that a number of key questions remained unanswered and there was little systematically collected evidence that could be used to evaluate different hypotheses. To compensate, I sought to create a research design that would allow me to generate new empirical information and to evaluate different arguments.

As many who read this journal know, generating evidence about the dynamics of genocide presents specific problems. Three in particular stood out for me as I started

my research. First, in the aftermath of genocide and the wars in the Congo, trauma and fear were widespread. Second, narratives were highly politicized, and individuals across the political spectrum presented highly interested and stylized accounts. Third, because the topic was the subject of criminal prosecutions, the research questions had inevitable legal and political implications and were also of concern to institutional oversight boards, with whose regulations I, like many US-based researchers, had to comply.

## **Research Design**

Nonetheless, I designed a field research program that consisted of three main stages. Because my questions focused on the dynamics of violence, I decided to focus primarily, though not exclusively, on those who took part in the killing. The first and main research phase was a nationwide survey of imprisoned perpetrators. For the survey, I used a stratified random sampling method to select and interview sentenced perpetrators who had pleaded guilty in Rwanda's domestic courts. The central research instrument was a semi-structured questionnaire, which I designed to evaluate competing hypotheses about the dynamics of violence and participation in it. In total, using this method, I interviewed 210 prisoners in fifteen central prisons across Rwanda.

The second research phase involved comparing the dynamics of genocidal violence in five Rwandan communes (the main local unit of administration in 1994). During my first research phase, I discovered that the patterns of mobilization that led to the onset of genocide varied from commune to commune (more on this below). In addition, there was one commune under government control where genocide did not occur. For this second research phase, therefore, I selected four communes that exhibited variation in how genocide began as well as the one commune under government control, Giti, where genocide did not take place. I then studied the dynamics of violence in each commune in depth through interviews with perpetrators, survivors, current and former government officials, and non-participating Hutus.

The third stage of research entailed return trips to prisons. During the first two phases, one clear pattern had emerged: in most communities, a nucleus of core perpetrators was central to how the violence unfolded. While some of those individuals fell into my random sample in the first phase, most respondents were lower-level perpetrators. Thus, for the third research phase, I selected particular individuals to interview, ranging from top communal authorities to young men who were particularly active killers in the genocide. I interviewed about nineteen individuals using this method. In addition to this field research, I also collected as much information as I could from secondary sources, such as court documents, human-rights reports, government studies, journalist accounts, and scholarship.

## **Principal Findings**

One important finding from my research is that there was significant regional and local variation in when and how the violence started. Immediately after President Juvénal Habyarimana's assassination—the trigger for the genocide—national hard-liners seized control of the Rwandan state and called for the killing of all Tutsis and prominent Hutu political opponents. However, that call did not translate into actual violence at the same time in all regions. In some areas, genocidal violence began within days of the president's assassination; in other areas, however, it did not begin

until four or five days after his death, while in still others the violence took two weeks or more to get started. In many areas, Hutu leaders and ordinary civilians initially responded negatively to calls from the central government to kill Tutsis. By and large, the areas that initially resisted efforts to start the violence were those where the domestic Hutu political opposition had the most support. Genocidal violence ultimately began, and succeeded, in those areas, but not before an important delay and not without a power struggle among Hutus.

In terms of how violence began, significant variation existed among local areas. In some places, local administration officials clearly started and directed the killing. In other areas, however, the push came from military officers. In still others, political party leaders and militia took charge. In some areas, local elites outside the official administrative hierarchies mobilized to assume control. And in many areas some combination of these occurred: soldiers worked with local officials or militia and the rural elite worked with political party officials.

The point to emphasize is that, even though the genocidal outcome was similar across Rwanda, how and when the violence started varied considerably. Not all Hutus responded in the same way to the call to commit genocide. That finding is inconsistent with some common hypotheses about the genocide, particularly the idea that the decision to take part in the genocide stemmed from a widespread racist culture and indoctrination; it is also inconsistent with the claim that the genocide was seamlessly and hierarchically orchestrated, with local officials and peasants blindly following orders. In fact, the spread of genocidal violence looked more dynamic, like a cascade of tipping points, rather than being meticulously prepared and implemented.

I collected demographic information from perpetrators, including age, occupation, number of children, literacy, and years of education. The general finding is that the perpetrator profile, judging from my sample, was quite similar to that of the adult male Hutu population in Rwanda at the time of the genocide. In other words, on the whole, the perpetrator population was not comparatively younger, more unemployed, or better educated. Rather, the perpetrators were average Rwandan men.

With respect to ethnicity, I found little evidence of widespread interpersonal ethnic hatred. On a series of indicators—interethnic personal relations, attitudes toward ethnic intermarriage, and family connections to Tutsis through intermarriage—the survey yielded consistent evidence among respondents of positive pre-genocide ethnic interaction. That said, many respondents spoke in categorical terms about “Hutus” and “Tutsis,” in particular when discussing the very tense period after Habyarimana’s assassination. Some respondents also repeated elements of the genocidal regime’s propaganda, such as the idea that the rebels killed Hutu children and disemboweled pregnant women. On the other hand, certain commonly cited propaganda elements had limited resonance. For example, less than 10% of respondents had heard of—let alone respected—the infamous “Hutu Ten Commandments.”

To investigate the issue of motivation, I asked respondents direct and indirect questions about how and why they chose to participate in the genocide. As expected, respondents expressed a range of motivations, from looting to joining attacks to avoid suspicion that they were hiding Tutsis in their homes. However, two main types of motivations emerged from these interviews. The first was some form of intra-Hutu intimidation. Many respondents said that once the violence started in their communities, they faced strong pressure from other Hutus to participate and feared negative consequences for themselves and their families if they refused. The second most common motivation was war-related: respondents said that, in the aftermath of

Habyarimana's death, they feared that the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was invading Rwanda and was killing Hutus.

This discussion of my findings is very brief. Considerably more detail, evaluation, and triangulation of the findings, as well as historical analysis of prior periods of violence, can all be found in the book.

## **The Argument**

In *The Order of Genocide*, I conclude that three main factors drove the genocide in Rwanda. First, war: I argue that the context of war was critical for the outcome. War provided the essential rationale for mass killing: security. The logic of Rwanda's genocide was predicated on eliminating a threat, on self-protection, and on re-establishing order. Moreover, the war that took place during the genocide was intense and defensive, and thus it created a climate of acute uncertainty and insecurity, sometimes a feeling of panic. That context was critical in motivating some individuals to foment violence; it was also a key reason that individuals who gravitated toward extreme measures gained the upper hand wherever they were.

The assassination of Rwanda's president was part of this dynamic. The assassination ruptured Rwanda's political order and thereby created a temporary gap in authority. The president's death independently caused anger, leading to calls for violent revenge; the assassination augmented the anxiety, fear, and confusion of the war; and the rupture in political order also set the stage for local power struggles. This last factor is particularly important. After the president's death, Hutu hardliners succeeded in gaining control of the state and urged war against the Tutsi "enemy." That idea—war against the Tutsis—then became the terms around which local actors asserted power and authority in their communities. The hardliners and those who adhered to the program of genocide ultimately won the upper hand in almost all areas not yet lost to the rebels. But such would not likely have happened outside a context of war, including the president's assassination.

Given the importance of war and of the president's assassination, as well as my findings about how the genocide unfolded at the local level, I conclude that a dynamic of escalation was a critical factor in the genocide. That, in turn, leads me to argue that while the genocide was organized, systematic, and ultimately promoted by the hardliners who took control of the state after the president's assassination, the genocide—meaning here the countrywide extermination of the Tutsi population—was not necessarily meticulously planned in advance, as is often claimed. To be clear, I argue that the Hutu hardliners who controlled the state are responsible for the actions they took and, ultimately, for the genocide; however, the dynamics that led them to foment mass violence, and to succeed in doing so, were in part situational and, in particular, had to do with the course of the war, including the president's assassination.

Second, Rwandan state institutions are critical to understanding why genocide happened and the participatory character of the violence. The Rwandan state matters for a number of reasons. First, the state has unusual depth and resonance at the local level in Rwanda, which meant that, by controlling the state, the hardliners had the capacity to enforce their decisions countrywide. Second, control of the state allowed the hardliners to associate killing Tutsis with authority, thus equating violence with *de facto* policy. Third, Rwanda has a long history of obligatory labor, and expectations derived from that history contributed to large-scale civilian mobilization during the genocide. The potency of the Rwandan state cannot be taken for granted,



especially because most African states are weak—particularly in rural areas. Thus, in addition to demonstrating the importance of the state to the outcome of genocide, I also explain in the book why Rwanda's state is so effective at civilian mobilization. Here I emphasize Rwandan political history, dating to the precolonial period, as well as the country's dense geography.

Therein lies a tension. In *The Order of Genocide* I make the case that insecurity, uncertainty, anger, and fear related to war and to the president's assassination drove the promulgation and spread of violence. However, once coalitions of actors emerged to win effective control in their communities, they drew on the power of Rwanda's local state and the resonance of authority to unleash violence quickly and effectively. The nature of Rwanda's institutions and geography also limited exit options, which both drove high rates of Hutu participation and limited escape opportunities for Tutsis. The result was a very rapid killing campaign.

Third, ethnicity mattered, but in surprising ways. Overall, I found that ethnic prejudice, ethnic antipathy, manipulation by racist propaganda, and nationalist commitments were not the primary drivers. However, the logic of extermination in Rwanda depended on the idea that Tutsis are of a piece. The genocidal mandate from the hardliners was to equate "enemy" with "Tutsi" and to declare that Rwanda's "enemies" had to be eliminated. I argue in the book that the mechanism that allowed this process to happen is collective ethnic categorization. In case after case, when justifying killing civilians, perpetrators substituted the category "Tutsi" for the individuals they were attacking.

The hardliners did not create this category from thin air. Ethnic and racial categorization has a deep and significant political history, dating, in particular, to the early colonial period and extending in periodic but pronounced ways into the first two postcolonial republics. In short, the ethnic/racial categories were ingrained, even if ethnic hatred was not, and those categories ultimately were essential to the character of violence—to the fact that violence in Rwanda became genocide.

What caused a shift from an awareness of ethnic categories to collective categorization and violence? I argue the principal mechanisms had to do with uncertainty, fear, social pressure, and opportunity. In the aggregate, Hutus participated in genocide because they wanted to protect themselves during a war and a period of intense uncertainty; because they felt that complying with those who told them to kill would be less costly than not complying; and because they opportunistically used the period of confusion and violence to obtain power and property. These dynamics, I argue, are inseparable from the specific context of war and from the nature of Rwandan state institutions and geography.

## **Implications for Post-Genocide Rwanda**

Like the presentation of my findings, my argument here is truncated.

In closing, I would like to discuss briefly—again, more detail is in the book—the implications of my findings and argument for post-genocide Rwanda.

Rwanda's RPF-dominated post-genocide government has favored strong control over public political discourse and maintained a strong military emphasis. These policies are based, at least in part, on an interpretation of mass participation in the genocide that tends to see the genocide as an undifferentiated event and the main cause of participation as mass beliefs and mass racist indoctrination. This interpretation essentially posits a persistent post-genocide threat, because the Hutu population is considered to be either genocidal or brainwashed and thus prone

to becoming genocidal. The logical response to such an ongoing threat is strong coercive control over the potentially dangerous population.

However, there is substantial risk that a strong security outlook, even though it will keep the peace in the short term, will alienate large portions of the population and sow the seeds of instability in the long term. Here the evidence I collected could contribute to rethinking policy. First, the evidence does not support collective blame of the Hutu population. Not all Hutus were *génocidaires*, and not all perpetrators participated to the same degree. Second, the genocide was not perpetrated in a seamless, “machine”-like manner. Rather, the violence was the outcome of local-level struggles for dominance, and many initially resisted or tried to avoid becoming involved in it. Third, the evidence suggests that while ethnic categories were an important background condition for the genocide, neither interpersonal ethnic enmity nor a deeply imbibed racist culture was the wellspring of most individuals’ participation in the violence. Rather, specific conditions in Rwanda triggered the saliency of ethnic categories and enabled a dynamic of violence to take hold. Thus, in considerations of how prone Rwanda is to future violence, the stress should fall on those situational factors that sowed the seeds of insecurity and destabilization that allowed a dynamic of violence to take root.

All this indicates that some key conditions that facilitated the genocide in the first place are no longer present. By extension, the prospects for post-genocide confidence among social groups may be greater than many Rwandan and outside observers fear. Nothing about social reconstruction after mass violence is easy, but my evidence shows that Rwanda is not, and was not, a nation of people predisposed to violence.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Samuel Totten for publishing this book forum and to the three commentators.

## **Note**

1. An exception was Alison Des Forges’ impressive human-rights documentation: Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999).

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# A New Model for Studying Mass Murder: *The Order of Genocide* by Scott Straus

Lee Ann Fujii

*Department of Political Science, George Washington University*

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Scott Straus's *The Order of Genocide* stands as a groundbreaking work. It asks and answers some of the most troubling questions about the genocide—how and why it occurred and how and why so many ordinary men and women participated in it. Straus brings extraordinary assets to this ambitious project, including his background as a journalist working in the region (before obtaining his PhD), scholarly expertise in genocide and African politics, and an acute sensitivity to method and evidence. The result is a book that adds a great deal of knowledge to our understanding of the Rwandan case and of genocide in general.

*The Order of Genocide* boasts multiple strengths, not the least of which is Straus's ability to hone in on the most important questions. Straus asks, for example, "Why did the hardliners choose genocide as their strategy and why were they so successful?" (63). Hardliners do not always seize on genocide as their preferred strategy for staying in power, and it is not clear from the evidence, argues Straus, that the hardliners in Kigali had done so before the assassination of the Rwandan president on 6 April 1994, the date most observers mark as the start of the genocide. Straus argues convincingly that the genocide was not "meticulously planned," as many have maintained, but was the hardliners' response to an increasingly threatening and dynamic situation. Genocide was not the first strategy they took; rather, it was the one they took when they felt the most threatened, that is, when the RPF had (allegedly) killed the president and had begun a swift advance through the country. This argument is novel and extremely convincing; it also illustrates the author's sophisticated and thorough treatment of new and existing evidence.

What guides Straus throughout the book is a keen awareness that methods matter. He remains skeptical of any single source of data, be it the words of confessed killers, the decisions of an international judicial body, or any other text. This skepticism drives him to look for multiple ways to triangulate the data. For example, he compares different periods in Rwandan political history to look for common dynamics driving episodes of past violence targeted at Tutsi; he situates the testimony of confessed killers within that of other witnesses and survivors to probe the veracity of the killers' words; he tests his own argument as he goes along to see if each subsequent step is consistent with previous ones. All of these methods show a great deal of exacting logic and creativity in pursuing answers to extremely difficult questions. Straus is also transparent about the choices and assumptions he makes. A person might disagree with any of his decisions, but no one can fault Straus for hiding how he arrived at either his data or conclusions.

It is Straus's methodological conscientiousness that makes the findings from the interviews he conducted with confessed and sentenced perpetrators a seminal contribution to the study of genocide and mass killing. These findings are critical because they put to rest many of the tropes surrounding the genocide. Indeed, what

is striking about these data is what Straus does *not* find. He does not find evidence that extremist radio or ideologies compelled these men to murder; instead, he finds that their reasons were much more immediate—they feared being killed by other Hutu perpetrators or by the equally fearsome RPF if they did not join in the carnage.

Straus also finds no evidence to support the common argument that ethnic hatred drove people to kill. He does find that among the most aggressive killers, ties to Tutsis were less extensive and expressions of antipathy toward Tutsi more common. The vast majority of confessed killers, however, report that they had no problems with their Tutsi neighbors before the genocide. What ruptured relations were key events that caused widespread panic and insecurity, such as particularly deadly RPF attacks and the assassination of the president.

Finally, Straus finds no evidence of a “culture of obedience” whereby Rwandans blindly followed orders to kill Tutsi. His informants *do* say that they were following orders to kill, but Straus eschews a facile interpretation of these statements. Peasant killers followed orders because mobilization often occurred through face-to-face confrontations that left little room for refusal or evasion.

Straus is exceedingly thoughtful in interpreting his data. He never overreaches but always leaves the door open for the possibility that new evidence or a new way of looking at the evidence might shed new light on his reading of events. This readiness to reassess his thinking shows Straus’s commitment to understanding the genocide in its full complexity and depth, rather than in a superficial or overly pat way.

To be sure, there are times when Straus could go further. For example, he argues that people were afraid of the RPF but does not consider other possible sources of this fear, such as *how* the RPF was waging war. The atrocities the RPF committed against civilians were not pure myth, after all, but had been witnessed by countless people.

Straus might have also looked for patterns in how local leaders mobilized people for mass murder, rather than assuming that mobilization occurred randomly (120). Given the level of surveillance that was in place, the population density, and the topography (all of which Straus chronicles nicely), it might be equally likely that local leaders knew very well whom they could tap as “enforcers” and, by extension, who would be most vulnerable to recruitment into mass murder. Understanding patterns of mobilization would also have helped Straus to develop a theory of agency on the part of ordinary perpetrators.

Straus’s argument regarding the role played by ethnicity (or “race,” as he calls it) is the weakest of the three main arguments he makes about the causes of the genocide. His arguments about the critical role played by the war and about local elites’ use of violence to establish authority are extremely well documented and well argued; with respect to ethnicity, however, he makes a less than convincing leap from people’s awareness of ethnic difference to the mechanism he calls “collective ethnic categorization,” which became activated at crisis moments. From his data, it is not entirely clear whether “collective ethnic categorization” was a product of or, precursor to, people’s participation in the violence. It may well have been both, but Straus’s analysis does not probe this distinction.

Straus can hardly be faulted for any of these lapses, however. No book can do everything, and this one does much more than most. Indeed, other scholars would do well to emulate its breadth, depth, and systematicity. Its most important contribution, however, may be the tenacity and courage that Straus shows in explaining the unthinkable—how otherwise ordinary people could imagine, conceive, and carry out genocide.

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# Ordinariness and Orders: Explaining Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide

Lars Waldorf

*Centre for International Human Rights, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London*

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The most troubling and perplexing aspect of the Rwandan Genocide is why so many joined the killings so quickly. This participation seems even less comprehensible given the violence's terrifying intimacy: ordinary killers often turned on their Tutsi neighbors and family members, using machetes and other everyday tools. Searching for answers, journalists and even some scholars have clutched at comforting metaphors and mono-causal explanations: a "blood orgy," tribalism, ethnic hatred, hate radio, a "culture of obedience," structural violence, and "conspiracy to murder." With bracing clarity and scrupulous fairness, Scott Straus painstakingly demolishes these simplistic notions and sets a new standard for empirical research on mass violence in *The Order of Genocide*.

Using data from interviews with 210 convicted, confessed perpetrators and with a range of actors in five communities, Straus constructs a sophisticated explanation of how genocidal violence happened at the local level. First, he finds that most perpetrators in rural Rwanda were ordinary farmers (though rural elites and young thugs played a crucial role in driving the violence). Second, most of those ordinary perpetrators committed genocide for fairly banal reasons: "the Rwandans' motivations were considerably more ordinary and routine than the extraordinary crimes they helped commit" (96). Third, he calculates that between 175,000 and 210,000 civilians participated in genocidal violence—an enormous number, to be sure, but far fewer than the half-million who now stand accused in Rwanda's community courts (*gacaca*). Finally, he identifies three key factors behind the widespread participation: (1) anger, fear, and uncertainty caused by the renewed civil war; (2) opportunism linked to local power struggles; and (3) social pressure and coercion derived from intra-group dynamics, state authority, communal labor obligations, and social surveillance. The latter point is perhaps Straus's most controversial finding. Challenging popular conceptions of the Rwandan Genocide, he writes that "intra-ethnic coercion and pressure [among Hutu] appear to have been greater determinants of genocidal participation than interethnic enmity [between Hutu and Tutsi]" (148). This explanation is consistent with many of the testimonies I have heard in *gacaca* trials, but more systematic analyses of those testimonies and more micro-level studies are needed.

A constant refrain that Straus hears from confessed perpetrators is that they were following orders and that disobedience would have led to punishment or even death. This sounds like egregious self-absolution from admitted killers, but Straus makes us take it—and them—seriously. Nonetheless, it would have been helpful to parse perpetrators' motivations more closely to distinguish better among group conformity

(peer pressure), obedience to authority, and coercion or duress. These distinctions matter enormously for imputing legal guilt, assigning moral blame, and understanding why ordinary men kill. In his classic study of German police reservists in Nazi-occupied Poland, Christopher Browning emphasizes the need to distinguish obedience from conformity, particularly as perpetrators are more likely to invoke authority to diminish (or erase) their personal responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

In explaining obedience, Straus is right to emphasize the historical continuity of Rwanda's strong administrative state and compulsory labor mobilizations. Yet it is also important to recall Rwanda's long (if less well known) tradition of peasant disobedience. In the 1980s, for example, peasants uprooted state-owned coffee bushes as the world price of coffee fell, and they often shirked mandatory communal labor (*umuganda*). Even those who participated in the genocide sometimes resisted government orders to bury the rotting corpses. More recently, the current regime has had difficulty in compelling people to participate in *gacaca* trials. I once saw farmers running into banana groves to avoid local officials who were rounding up community members to attend *gacaca*. All this suggests that ordinary Rwandans have a great deal of agency: they choose to conform or obey when it best suits their self-interest.

Straus runs into a major explanatory difficulty with his emphasis on social pressure and coercion. Having estimated a high of 210,000 perpetrators, he is forced to recognize a problem: "If my hypothesis is correct that . . . social pressure and coercion played an important role, then why were there not *more* genocide perpetrators?" (120). He offers three possibilities: first, some of those approached were able to get out of killing (by paying a fine or feigning illness); second, the mobilization of perpetrators was random (and thus partly a matter of luck); third, most of the killing was finished before more people could be mobilized. As Straus recognizes, further research is needed to answer the crucial question of why some became perpetrators and some did not. Just as importantly, we need to understand the motivations of, and pressures on, ordinary bystanders and ordinary rescuers. Did they perceive the level of social pressure and coercion differently, and, if so, why?

There are several limitations to Straus's study, which he is the first to acknowledge. I want to note just three here. First, most of his informants were fairly low-level perpetrators, so it is not surprising that they offer a defense of "following orders." Perhaps as more members of the rural elites and the genocidal government confess in order to win reduced sentences, there will be opportunities to investigate their motivations and decision making. It will be particularly interesting to see whether they corroborate the statements of those ordinary killers who claim to have been unwilling executioners. Second, most Rwandan perpetrators (even those already convicted) have incentives to minimize their role, rationalize their actions, and shift the blame to others. This process is often linked to an economy of guilt within Rwanda's prisons, where prisoners buy and sell confessions, inculpations, and exculpations. In addition, prisoners are acutely aware of how their confessions (especially the naming of accomplices) will affect their families on the outside, setting them up as possible targets for revenge.

Finally, Rwandans are highly practiced at what one political scientist elsewhere has termed "ritualized dissimulation."<sup>2</sup> When 91% of his respondents tell him they have never disobeyed authorities, Straus reacts with appropriate skepticism, while also recognizing how important it is for them to be perceived as complying with authority. Yet this makes it all the more necessary to measure perpetrators' narratives

in terms of compliance with the current regime's ideological discourse. Indeed, his respondents' accounts are consistent with the government's emphasis on explaining the genocide in terms of "bad leadership" and an uneducated peasantry inculcated in habits of obedience. Straus's interviewees may also have minimized ethnic tensions before the genocide, in conformity with the current regime's suppression of ethnicity.

Overall, Straus's book takes its place besides Jan Gross's *Neighbors*<sup>3</sup> and Christopher Browning's *Ordinary Men* as essential reading for anyone wanting to understand how ordinary men can so quickly become *génocidaires*. Such understanding is essential to preventing genocide. For, as Rwanda reminds us, mass violence is impossible without widespread civilian participation, cooperation, and passivity.

## Notes

1. Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 174.
2. Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 82.
3. Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community of Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

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## Book Review

**African Rights, with photographs by Jenny Matthews. *Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka: In the Eyes of the Survivors of Sainte Famille*. London: African Rights, 1999. Pp. 96, paper. \$10.00 US**

Reviewed by Samuel Totten, *University of Arkansas, Fayetteville*

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The headline of the 21 July 2007 edition of the *New Times* (billed as “Rwanda’s First Daily”) reads, “Genocidaires Munyeshyaka, Bucyibaruta Are Finally Arrested.” In the article itself, journalist James Munyaneza reports the following:

Munyeshyaka, who was until his arrest an active priest, was last November sentenced by Rwanda’s Military Tribunal to life imprisonment in absentia for his role in the slaughter of over 200 people at St[e]. Famille Parish, St. Paul Pastoral Centre and CELA [Centre for the Teaching of African Languages] in Kigali during the 1994 Genocide.

Rwanda has for the last decade been calling on France to apprehend Genocide suspects on her territory, so did the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) last month.

... The two men [Munyeshyaka and Laurent Bucyibaruta] have been arrested a month after the ICTR prosecution transferred their cases to Paris, implying that they will most likely be prosecuted in France. However, what remains unclear is whether Paris will extradite Munyeshyaka to Rwanda to serve his life sentence since he is already a convict.

According to an ICTR charge sheet, Munyeshyaka, 49, is charged with genocide and three crimes against humanity (rape, extermination and murder). (2)

When *Father Wenceslas Munyeshyaka: In the Eyes of the Survivors of Sainte Famille* was published in 1999, Munyeshyaka was still on the run from justice. Although Munyeshyaka had been arrested in France, following the filing of a petition by a lawyer on the behalf of the Rwandese community in France (which included relatives of various victims of the genocide and the survivors of the massacres at the Parish of Sainte Famille) in June 1995, he was—following the hiring of top-flight Parisian lawyers by the French Catholic Church to defend their priest, much legal wrangling, and a series of convoluted and highly illogical legal decisions—set free. This was a man who not only “let the *interahamwe* roam around the church freely, drawing up their death-lists, but exposed us to danger by calling [the Tutsis] *Inyenzi* in front of them [the *Interahamwe*]” (71). His release constituted a gross mismanagement of the legal system and a horrible insult to those seeking justice on behalf of those Tutsis who were murdered because of his actions and his failures to act (e.g., his silence in the face of the murderous activities of the *Interahamwe* and other Hutu extremists) during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.

This ninety-six-page book begins with a succinct but valuable discussion of the background leading up to the massacres perpetrated at the Parish of Sainte Famille in Kigali; the massacres themselves; the role of Father Munyeshyaka during the period of the massacres; the political influence of the Catholic Church in Rwanda;



a summary of the charges against Munyeshyaka as they stood in 1999; the legal proceedings against him through 1999; and the ongoing debate in France over his innocence or guilt, as well as “a plea for action” by Africa Rights, calling on the Catholic Church to make “an effort to establish the validity of claims against the [Rwandan] clergy” and to bring those cases to justice that merit it (10).

The rest of the book (11–96) features more than forty first-person accounts by survivors of the Sainte Famille massacres. In addition to harrowing accounts of the murder of innocents, these first-person statements provide a host of information about those who sought shelter at the parish; the vastly different ways in which Hutu and Tutsi were treated by the different parish fathers; Munyeshyaka’s relationships with the Hutu extremists, the Tutsis, and the general Hutu population; the views Munyeshyaka espoused during his sermons, in which he denigrated the Tutsis, accused them of culpability for the ongoing civil conflict, and stated that they should suffer accordingly; his selection of those who would be allowed to seek the protection of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and those who, in his eyes, “deserved” to be killed by the Interahamwe; and his rape of young girls (and the “gifts” and “penalties” he presented or meted out to those who “accepted” or “rejected” his predatory sexual advances).

One survivor/witness after another—including many who had known Munyeshyaka for years, attended his church, and even considered him a friend—comment on how his personality changed at the beginning of the genocide, how he had taken on a new persona. A classic example is his change in dress: he replaced his cassock with a bulletproof vest and wore a pistol on his person even while celebrating mass. There were even times when he carried grenades and a rifle.

Munyeshyaka’s deliberate inaction in the face of certain murder of Tutsis speaks volumes about his role as a collaborator with the Interahamwe, the Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR), and other extremists. Indeed, his lack of care for the plight of the Tutsis who had sought sanctuary at Sainte Famille is overt proof of the hate in his heart—a far cry, obviously, from the compassion usually associated (perhaps naively) with a man of the cloth. In decrying Munyeshyaka’s lack of care, a survivor observes that

Munyeshyaka refused us water and provisions, which caused the death of several people—the sick, elderly and children. We often went for several days without eating or drinking anything, though there were supplies in the Ste. Famille store. (39)

Discussing the evacuation of Tutsis to a safe area controlled by the RPF, another survivor notes that

On several occasions when UNAMIR came to evacuate refugees, [Munyeshyaka] was [deliberately] nowhere to be seen. He was absent. [Y]et, he was the only one who could give UNAMIR the order to start evacuating people to the FAR or RPF sections. (91)

But Munyeshyaka’s behavior was not limited to inaction. For example, as one survivor notes,

Munyeshyaka put guards at the entrance to Ste. Famille. They demanded a high price before they let in Tutsi who were running away from the *interahamwe*. Those who could not find money were refused entry. Their death was then certain because the *interahamwe* nearby were on the look-out. (64)

Munyeshyaka also took an active role in targeting those he believed should be murdered. Indeed, his selection of those who were to live and those who were to die is a

grim reminder of the actions of Dr. Josef Mengele at the Auschwitz death camp. One survivor of Sainte Famille tells the following tale:

As I was responsible for the refugees at Ste. Famille, I told Munyeshyaka that we should begin by evacuating the young men, who were most sought after by the *interahamwe*.

He [Munyeshyaka] spat at me and said, "You are really stupid. Don't you know that these are our future enemies who are going to swell the ranks of the RPF? They must all be killed." (12)

...Instead of following the alphabetical lists [requested by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda and which contained the names of those who wished to be relocated to an RPF stronghold], he passed these on to the *interahamwe*. Munyeshyaka did not want the men to be evacuated. (13)

Another survivor/witness notes that

The *interahamwe* were watching out for those who had the forbidden wish to go to Kabuga [in the RPF-controlled zone]. Munyeshyaka had given them the list. Many of these were killed before being evacuated. (16)

Another survivor reports that

During the first evacuation, Munyeshyaka described the Tutsi refugees as *Inyenzi* ["cockroaches"—the derogatory term for the Tutsi used by extremist Hutus], in the presence of militia who surrounded us. Afterwards, he asked us: "Who knows how to write?" I held up my hand, Munyeshyaka stared at me with a terrible look in his eyes and said, "Write down only the names of the members of your family and yourself." I immediately scribbled down the names of the remaining members of my family, not forgetting to write down my own. I even went beyond the instructions I was given and put other people on the list, like my friends who were waiting to be evacuated by UNAMIR. Munyeshyaka had also chosen Hyacinthe Rwanga to do the same thing.

That night the RPF rescued the refugees from St. Paul [a pastoral centre in Kigali]. The next day, 17 June, we were astonished to hear the militia who had come to take reprisals, asking for the people who had written the lists the day before: Hyacinthe and myself. They were violent and we scattered ourselves throughout the enclosure. They shot many young women and two women, Hyacinthe and "Teteri." (17-18)

And according to yet another survivor,

During the evacuation, the priest [Munyeshyaka] turned against those who wanted to go to the RPF Zone. [Not only did he] give the assassins a copy of the list of names before the evacuation took place, he limited the number of people to be evacuated, although there was no lack of space. He refused to let me go to the RPF area, by repeatedly erasing my name from the evacuation list. (38)

As for Munyeshyaka's relationship with the killers, a survivor/witness asserts the following:

Munyeshyaka held meetings with killers like préfet Tharcisee Renzako, councilor Odette Nyirabagenzi, and inspector Angeline in his small office. I saw all of this because I was a member of the committee [in charge of internal security] within Ste. Famille. The military men were from Rugenge... After these meetings, the killers would send their militiamen to abduct Tutsis to murder. (56)

One survivor after another comments on Munyeshyaka's use and abuse of the most beautiful girls who had sought refuge in Sainte Famille: the priest, they state, had his security men search out the prettiest girls, lodged them directly next door to

his own room, and “visited” them nightly; he provided these girls and women with extra food and took care of them and their families by providing sanctuary for them at the Hotel Mille Collines. Some also recount how he saw to it that one woman, Hyacinthe Rwanga, who rejected his advances, was shot and murdered by the Hutu militia:

He [Munyeshyaka] liked girls a lot. One day Hyacinthe [a Tutsi teenager] went into his room to beg him to hide her, but he began to kiss and caress her. Hyacinthe refused and came back crying. When I asked her why she was crying, she told me that Munyeshyaka wanted to rape her. (75)

Some of Munyeshyaka’s actions were a throwback to the Nazis’ charade at Theresienstadt. During the winter of 1943, the Danish Red Cross submitted a request to the Nazis to allow it to inspect the camp. The Nazis agreed to the visit, but insisted that it be done at a later time. In the ensuing months, the Nazis forced Jewish prisoners to create a façade for the camp, transforming their filthy and depressing prison into a sparkling clean and pretty place by painting walls, planting flowers, and “disposing of excess bodies” by shipping them off to death camps. Prior to the visit by the Red Cross officials, the Nazis instructed the prisoners, on the threat of death, what to say and how to say it. In the end, the ruse worked, and the Red Cross walked away satisfied that all was well within the camp. Similarly, a survivor of the Rwandan Genocide asserts that

one day, journalists [from RTLM], including a Belgian who worked for RTLM, Georges Ruggiu, were accompanied by military officers. . . . That day Munyeshyaka had chosen four refugees, three Tutsi boys and myself. He had taken us aside and told us: “You are going to be interviewed by journalists from RTLM who want to talk with the accomplices of the Inyenzi-Inkotanyi. I expect you to say that you are well, that you are eating, that you wash yourselves, and that your enemy is the RPF. You must also add that you are counting on the victory of the FAR to save you.” So that was how we spoke to these journalists telling them all the things which Munyeshyaka dictated to us. I remember that I gave a false name to these journalists during the introductions. (41)

The facts and stories related in this book, along with the reality that it has taken well over a decade for the international community to hold Munyeshyaka responsible for his murderous actions (or, so it appears at the time of writing—and, in fact, the latter is contingent on whether the French either honor the Rwandan government’s request for Munyeshyaka’s extradition or decide to move forward with their own trial in France *and* avoid allowing some slick law firm and the Catholic Church to turn justice on its head), raise a host of questions—questions about the seriousness of the international community’s commitment to ending impunity for *génocidaires*, about the justness of the judicial systems of certain nations (in this case, France), and about why the Catholic Church has such a tortuously difficult time coming to grips with the fact that genocide is an abomination and that, if its brethren and leaders are culpable for its perpetration, then they deserve to face both the justice system and their maker but certainly do not deserve to be protected from prosecution by the Church itself. Each question-*cum*-issue is ripe, of course, for additional research, but, even more significantly, it is high time for each to be addressed in the most concrete terms possible in order to ameliorate the problems they pose for our world in its ongoing struggle with what it means to be civilized.

Throughout the book, many survivors/witnesses compare and contrast Munyeshyaka’s wicked behavior with that of certain other priests who helped the Tutsis—most notably Father Célestin Hakizimana, who showed great courage,

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love, and care in his efforts to help the refugees who were in such dire straits. His own insights and his condemnation of Munyeshyaka's demonic demeanor and actions close the book. He concludes his highly informative statement with the following words: "I hope that Fr. Munyeshyaka will be brought to justice" (96). All one can really say in response is, *Amen*.

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# Editor's Introduction

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Fourteen years have passed since the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, during which an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 (or more) Tutsis and moderate Hutus died at the hands of extremists Hutus. Rwanda is still in the process of recovering from the genocide, which not only resulted in vicious and mass murder but virtually destroyed the country's infrastructure. Like any nation reconstituting itself in the aftermath of genocide, Rwanda is experiencing growing pains. Survivors continue to suffer the ill effects of what they were subjected to, witnessed, and lost. Many of the women who were raped now have AIDS. Those who gave birth to what are commonly referred to as "rape babies" face additional psychological turmoil and, in many cases, are ostracized by neighbors, friends, and family members. Many of the babies have been maltreated, neglected, and even left to their own devices to eke out an existence on the streets. Orphans fill orphanages, where many of the youngest children are raised by the "older" (often teenage) orphans. Groups of widows have banded together to provide mutual support and get back on their feet while dealing with the absence of beloved husbands and children. Many individuals are so scarred by what they experienced and witnessed that they are not able to function and carry on normal lives. The medical and social-services communities are stretched so thin in attempting to provide assistance to those in need that people often fall through the cracks or simply do not receive the treatment they need in order to fully regain their health (whether physical or psychological). Some 100,000 alleged perpetrators still remain in Rwandan prisons. Three different court systems—the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (Arusha, Tanzania), the national courts of Rwanda, and *gacaca* (the adaptation of precolonial mediation and reconciliation processes to try, today, those who are suspected of having carried out the killing and mass rapes) are currently in operation.

At the same time, Rwanda has made a remarkable comeback. The country is, for the most part, peaceful, and the people, for the most part, seem to get along, even if their daily dealings with one another—particularly between those who considered themselves Tutsi and those who considered themselves Hutu during the genocide—are often tentative, if not tenuous. The national government has mandated that Rwandan citizens are no longer Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa, as they were prior to and during the genocidal period, but "simply" Rwandans. Some, and possibly many, look askance at such a mandate, considering it naïve at best and repressive at worst, but many others seem to believe that, over time, it may be the best way to prevent future incidents of mass violence. Time will tell.

Over the past fourteen years a massive amount of scholarship (including journal articles and books) has been published on various facets of the Rwandan Genocide. Some of it has provided a clearer understanding of how genocide unfolds—in particular, how masses of people are induced to take part in the bloody and brutal killing of former neighbors, friends, and even loved ones.

This special issue on Rwanda includes three articles based on field research conducted in the hills, fields, and towns of Rwanda. The first, "A Calamity in the Neighbourhood: Women's Participation in the Rwandan Genocide," is by Reva Adler, Cyanne E. Loyle, and Judith Globerman; the second, "Interethnic Marriages,

the Survival of Women, and the Logics of Genocide in Rwanda,” is by Anuradha Chakravarty, a PhD candidate at Cornell University; the third, “The Dynamics of Genocide,” is by University of Wisconsin at Madison political scientist Scott Straus.

Adler (Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of British Columbia), Loyle (a graduate fellow in the University of Maryland’s Department of Government and Politics), and Globerman (an associate professor at the Institute for Health Promotion Research at the University of British Columbia) focus on why women assaulted or murdered targeted victims during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. During the course of their study, the three researchers found that four experiential pressures, in various combinations, shaped the female perpetrators’ decisions to participate in the 1994 genocide: “disaster mentality; fear of the new social order; confusion or ambivalence about events on the ground; and consonance and dissonance *vis-à-vis* gender roles.”

Chakravarty discusses the gendered dimensions of the genocide in Rwanda. In doing so, she seeks to explain why Tutsi women married to Hutu men appear to have had a better chance of survival than Tutsi women married to Tutsi men or even Hutu women married to Tutsi men. Based on data from a field site in southwest Rwanda, her findings and insights draw on the gendered, racial, and operational dynamics of the genocide as it unfolded between April and July 1994.

In “The Dynamics of Genocide,” Straus delineates some of the many key findings of his research in Rwanda, findings that constitute the heart of his new book, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press, 2006). *The Order of Genocide* raises critical questions about previous assumptions about the 1994 genocide (many of which have been taken at face value), and also provides new insights into a variety of significant issues, including how the killing process spread across Rwanda and why. Three specialists on the Rwandan Genocide—Lars Waldorf, who is currently Lecturer in International Law and Human Rights at the University of London and is writing a book on Rwanda’s *gacaca* process; Thierry Cruvellier, a journalist and justice expert who has written a book on the ICTR; and Lee Ann Fujii, a political scientist at George Washington University, who is in the process of completing her own book on the 1994 Rwandan Genocide—were asked by the editor to write succinct critiques of Straus’s research and findings, noting key strengths, any weaknesses and gaps, and the likely ramifications of the findings.

Linda Melvern, an investigative journalist and the author of two notable works on the 1994 Rwandan Genocide—*Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (Verso, 2004) and *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Genocide* (Zed Books, 2000)—contributes a provocative and insightful piece titled “The UK Government and the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda.” More specifically, Melvern focuses on the role of the British government of John Major during the period of the genocide (April to July 1994), noting, and then discussing, the fact that in the United Kingdom neither Parliament nor the press has attempted to account for Britain’s policies toward Rwanda, and there seems to be an ongoing reluctance to do so.

This issue also includes a commentary by long-time Africanist Gerry Caplan. In his contribution, “Rwanda (and Other Genocides) in Perspective,” Caplan examines a host of issues but keeps circling back to one question: “What good has the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide done?” He also argues, and understandably, that “so long as the Permanent Five (P5) of the UN Security Council have no will to intervene, or interest in intervening, in potential or actual genocides, all the UN conventions, reports, and articles aren’t worth much at

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all.” In turn, Caplan prods us to ponder the real value of the proliferation of studies, reports, journal articles, and books on genocide. It is an issue worthy of ample thought: one genocide precedes another like clockwork in our world, and little or nothing has yet been created, let alone implemented, to halt, let alone prevent, the one that always seems to be just around the corner.

Undoubtedly, over time, many more studies will be conducted and many more articles and books will be written and published about various facets of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Those who undertake to write about Rwanda in the future would do well to treat the subject as seriously and with as much care as those whose work is represented in this special issue.

*Samuel Totten*  
*GSP Co-editor*

### **Notes**

1. Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 12.

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# Contributors

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**Reva N. Adler** is a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of British Columbia who focuses on working with older adult survivors of genocide and on violence prevention research. In 2006, Dr. Adler completed the first phase of the study *Addressing the Root Causes of Genocide* (ARC-G), funded by the Fulbright Scholarship Board of the US Department of State, the University of British Columbia, and the Vancouver Coastal Research Institute. Dr. Adler has been invited to participate in a number of international consortia addressing genocide prevention, including the Stockholm International Forum and the Tenth Anniversary Conference Commemorating the Rwandan Genocide, and she has consulted on issues of primary violence prevention for the UN Office of the Special Rapporteur on Genocide Prevention, the US Department of State, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission in Rwanda, and USAID. The results of ARC-G Phase 1 will be published in a variety of scholarly journals in 2007.

**Gerry Caplan** is an independent scholar and activist who focuses mainly on genocide and African underdevelopment. He has undertaken a series of assignments for the African Union and several UN agencies dealing with the well-being of African children; he was senior adviser to the former UN Special Envoy for AIDS in Africa and chair of the International Advisory Board of the University of Toronto's Special Initiative on AIDS in Africa. He is the author of *Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide* (2000), the comprehensive report of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities appointed by the Organization of African Unity to investigate the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. He has just completed a book titled *The Conspiracy against Africa*, which will be published in 2008 by Groundwood Press.

**Anuradha Chakravarty** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Government at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. She is completing her dissertation, which is titled "The Politics of Moral Ambition: The Gacaca Tribunals for Genocide Crimes in Rwanda." The Ford Foundation-funded Workshop on Transnational Contention, the Peace Studies Program at Cornell University, and the Einaudi Center at Cornell supported eighteen months of fieldwork in Rwanda. For the year 2007–2008, she will be a Fellow of the Joan B. Kroc Institute at the University of Notre Dame.

**Thierry Cruvellier** is a French journalist and author who, in 1996, co-founded *Diplomatie Judiciaire* (Arusha, Tanzania), the online newspaper on international justice. Since 1997, he has covered the hearings of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). In 2002 his investigative reports led to the withdrawal of the indictment and release of one of the accused at the ICTR. Cruvellier has written a book in French on the Rwandan Genocide. Between 1994 and 1996, he regularly covered the war in Sierra Leone as a freelance journalist. He also worked with Reporters Sans Frontières, an international human-rights organization defending the freedom of the press, for which he was the permanent representative in the African Great Lakes region in 1994 and 1995. In 2003 he moved to Freetown, where he began covering the Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



Cruvellier holds a master's degree in journalism from Sorbonne University, Paris; in 2003/2004, he was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University.

**Lee Ann Fujii**, Assistant Professor of Political Science at George Washington University in Washington, DC, has conducted research into the social dimension of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. During the course of her research, which spanned some nine months of fieldwork in Rwanda, she conducted interviews with killers, victims, bystanders, resisters, and rescuers from two rural communities. She is currently in the process of completing a book on the Rwandan Genocide.

**Judith Globerman** is an Associate Professor at the Institute for Health Promotion Research at the University of British Columbia.

**Cyanne E. Loyle** is a Graduate Fellow in the University of Maryland's Department of Government and Politics. She received her Master of Arts in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey. In 2004, Loyle served as the Documentation Center Coordinator during the construction of the Kigali Genocide Memorial in Kigali, Rwanda. She has consulted for Inclusive Security: Women Waging Peace and was the project coordinator for Dr. Reva Adler's University of British Columbia ARC-G study of genocide perpetrators' psychology.

**Linda Melvern** is an Honorary Professor in the Department of International Relations, University of Wales, Aberystwyth. She is an investigative journalist and author who for thirteen years has researched the circumstances of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. She has published six works of non-fiction, including two books on the Rwandan Genocide, *A People Betrayed* (Verso, 2000) and *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (Verso, 2004).

**Scott Straus** is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Straus is the author of two books on Rwanda: *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda* (Cornell University Press, 2006) and, with Robert Lyons, *Intimate Enemy: Images and Voices of the Rwandan Genocide* (MIT/Zone Books, 2006). *The Order of Genocide* received the 2006 Award for Excellence in Political Science and Government from the Association of American Publishers. Straus also co-authored, with David Leonard, *Africa's Stalled Development: International Causes and Cures* (Lynne Rienner, 2003) and translated Jean-Pierre Chrétien's *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History* (MIT/Zone, 2003). An essay on the comparative study of genocide is forthcoming in *World Politics*. Straus has also published articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, the *Journal of Genocide Research*, and the *Wisconsin International Law Journal*. Prior to beginning his career in academia, Straus was a freelance journalist based in Nairobi, Kenya. In 1996 he was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

**Lars Waldorf**, who holds a BA from Harvard College and a JD from Harvard Law School, is currently Lecturer in International Law and Human Rights for the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London. He was a Fellow at Harvard Law School's Human Rights Program after running Human Rights Watch's field office in Rwanda (2002–2004) and covering genocide trials at the UN's

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International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (2001). He is writing a book on Rwanda's community genocide trials (*gacaca*) with support from the US Institute of Peace. Among his numerous publications are "Mass Justice for Mass Atrocity: Rethinking Local Justice as Transitional Justice" (*Temple Law Review*, 2006) and "Rwanda's Failing Experiment in Restorative Justice" in *Handbook of Restorative Justice: A Global Perspective*, edited by Dennis Sullivan and Larry Tift (Routledge, 2005). He previously taught at the New School and Harvard. Before becoming a human-rights advocate, he litigated civil-rights cases in the United States for nine years.