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**Perceiving the Burundi social crisis: a matter of ethnic interests  
or conflict over natural resources**

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## **Abstract**

The ethnic conflict of Burundi has deep historical and social roots. In the pre-colonial period, Burundi was a hierarchical society, but the interdependence of the political and social system gave coherence and social strength. It could be argued that the reasons for the violent internal conflicts of Burundi range from the impacts of the measures of the colonial administration to processes that have occurred during the post-independence period. The tensions between social groups in Burundi are interpreted by both Burundians as well as external observers as being caused by an ethnic strife. The ethnic identities of people are never the main cause of social crisis and violence. The ethnic divisions of communities however become an extremely dangerous source of conflicts, when they are manipulated politically. Today, the strategic natural resources are still unexploited. However, the competition for land contributes to aggravate the present social conflict. The public sector, however, remains the most important source of income for the elites. Hence, the roots of the ethnic conflict in Burundi stems from a combination of factors, such as poverty, competition for scarce resources, governance policies and practices which cause economical and social exclusion, the struggle of groups and corporations for interests and the control of the country's limited resources. The combination of these reasons have strengthened the ethnic tensions in Burundi, particularly between the groups labelled Hutu and Tutsi and these divisions have become a tool which elite groups deploy for political mobilisation, in order to secure economical and political benefits. This thesis briefly explores the historical, political and economical causes of the Burundi social crisis, how people interpret this conflict, the role the political elite groups and the national and international actors play for these conflicts, particularly concerning the struggle for the control over natural resources. The thesis recommends that all factions in the conflict form a committee and draft a political agreement, which both spells out the explicit causes of the conflict and presents a political action plan which accounts for how the conflict shall be solved and how a reconciliation process between the groups of the conflict shall be staged.

**Keywords:** *Burundi; Ethnic group Hutu and Tutsi; Conflict; historical outline; struggle for power; natural resources, poverty, Governance, policies.*

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# CHAPTER I

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Burundi is one of the equatorial countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is bordered to the North by Rwanda, to the West by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and to the East and the South by Tanzania. The administrative territory is divided into 17 provinces. Burundi occupies an area of 27,834 km<sup>2</sup> in size of which 25,650 km<sup>2</sup> is land (92, 2%), with approximately 8,037 Millions inhabitants<sup>1</sup>. This country has a density of about 270 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. These data reveal the acuity of the land issue in a country whose economy depends primarily on agriculture. Conflict over natural resources has been characteristic of Burundian society through history. A great number of articles and studies especially about ethnic conflicts have been written for instance, Rwanda and Burundi: when two tribes go to war by J.D ELLER (2002), Burundi: ethnic conflict and genocide by René Lemarchand (2002), Burundi: failed coup or creeping coup by Alison Des Forges (1994) etc. Many researchers have based their findings solely on the post – colonial period around the struggle for political power to replace colonial administration, on regional events, bad governance and the influence of neighboring states, on national and international political factors that have contributed to aggravate tension and social conflicts. Nevertheless, the former studies much more based their analyzes on the effects produced by the various events and not on the fundamental causes which gave these effects to explain the main roots of ethnic conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi. This social crisis is structured around social structures, social cohesion and social capital. Scholars debated the exact meaning of the labels “Hutu,” “Tutsi” and “Twa” in pre-colonial Burundi, but they agree that all three groups shared a single language, traditional religious practices, and political system and lived mixed together within a territory that they all knew as Burundi (Human Rights Watch, 1988). The social conflict in Burundi is based on the two major ethnic groups labeled Hutu and Tutsi. The terms Hutu and Tutsi may have derived in part from occupational differences. For instance, In Burundi, the term < ethnicity > can have a meaning of “the exclusion” and the term < Hutu > could mean a “servant”. For this issue, Paul Collier (2008) about the form of conflict asserted that the problem that is unique to few numbers of poor countries is not political conflict but its form. In the Burundi case, it is quite limited political elites that are the main culprits behind the social conflict in Burundi, which encompass a majority of people. However, since the Burundi independence in 1962, there is a very strong connection between ethnic identity and political affiliation. The gradual decline of state’s welfare policies before and post – independence has fed Hutu and Tutsi groups into grids

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<sup>1</sup> Burundi Population Census, August 2008

and grievances and has led to repetitive violence by marginalized group. Moreover, the civil war in Burundi cannot be fully understood without viewing it within a regional context. Because of the similar ethnic compositions of Burundi and Rwanda, events in one country affect conditions in the other. Recall (1) the 1959 Rwanda Revolution that brought Hutu to power in Rwanda led Tutsi in Burundi to find ways to avoid a similar transfer of power in Burundi (2) The ethnic violence in Burundi in 1972 helped inspire a new outbreak of ethnic violence in Rwanda in 1973, which contributed to the fall of the Rwanda government in a coup later that year (3) The conflict in Burundi has also been affected by armed rebels developments in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to name few. This thesis explores the different links of causes which produced effects generating this social ethnic conflict in Burundi. The study results are provided by literature reviews and the field work research. Then, the thesis investigates how Burundian people (ordinary people, council's village members, governmental officials) perceive this social crisis through the key informant interviews. It aims to critically exploring the complex linkages between different factors such as colonial outline, political exclusion, regional events, poverty, land pressure, bad governance of natural resources, and how they interact in producing and constructing the social tension of Burundi.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **2.0 BACKGROUND OF ETHNIC CONFLICT: PREVIOUS STUDIES**

#### **2.1 Pre-colonial period: Three ethnic groups' cohabitation**

The ethnic question in Rwanda and Burundi must be discussed in relation to each other because the two countries share the same history, both during the pre-colonial and colonial period. The starting point of the construction of ethnicity was launched by the Europeans anthropologists through their researches aiming to identify distinct racial categories existing at the 19th century in Europe (see below 2.3 ethnic stratification).

However, the construction of ethnicity advanced by anthropologists is not easy to define. Burges (1978) cited by Jack David Eller (1999) states that that ethnicity is “the character, quality, or conditions of a ethnic group membership based on an identity with and/ or consciousness of a group belonging that is differentiated from others by symbolic markers including cultural, biological or territorial aspects and is rooted in bonds to a share past and perceived ethnic interests”. This definition does not correspond to the ethnic figure in Rwanda and Burundi. Three groups Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, as we discussed above share the same territory, language, cultural background, and similar biological characteristics. In terms of percentage advanced by colonialists, the estimates could be uncertain and subject to error due to lack of census especially in Burundi.

Despite of this point of view, colonial historical data reveal that Batwa tribe constitute (1% of population), Tutsi (14 %) and the Hutu constitute the majority (up to 84%) both in Rwanda and Burundi (Jack David Eller 2002). This thesis cannot confirm these numerical statistics because they miss fundamentally the real scientific supports.

However, the history of the country demonstrates that Power in pre-colonial Burundi was organised around the institution of kingship. On one side, political competition occurred between ruling princes, the Sons of King (Ganwa: called Batare and Bezi). Members of the Ganwa aristocracy served as the regional governors ruling in the name of the King. If the new king reached the throne, his descendants received the name of Ganwa. The former Ganwa lost all privileges and ruling power at the expense of the new ones. Very often, this led to political conflicts between ruling princes Ganwa apart from the ethnic considerations Hutu and Tutsi. Princes of the royal blood- Ganwa, came to be seen as a separate ethnic group which alleviated the impact of any ethnic domination. This played an important part in uniting the kingdom and the figure of the king. During the pre-colonial period, an important rift emerged between two of the Ganwa lineages: the Bezi and Batare which have had significant repercussions later in the political competition before the Burundi independence in 1962 (Rene Lemarchand, 1994).

On the other side, there were chiefs Batware: Hutu and Tutsi at the low level of the provinces. And finally, there was a council of villagers constituting of Hutu and Tutsi. They were older distinguished people that settled the different conflicts in rural area.

Thus, the social bonds and social status were traditionally important, including the clan groups interactions. In pre-colonial period, Burundi social divisions were traditionally both vertical and horizontal. Two vertical gaps dominated: (a) social status which was less important during the pre-colonial period, (b) clan division that collectively constituted the princes GANWA. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the political power of the king was considerably weakened, to the point where the kingdom of Burundi became increasingly fragmented. However, conflicts were rarely based solely upon ethnicity but were also rooted as strongly in discontent of the oppression of the ruling elite (René Lemarchand 1996 ).Burundi society also includes horizontal groupings within lineages for instance Tutsi –Hima (lower) and Tutsi-Banyaruguru (higher) that were based on the geographical coordinates of their territory. Indeed, Burundian society can best be described as a vertical system of stratification, in which social categories stand in a ranked relationship to each other.

## **2.2 Ethnic consciousness in Rwanda and Burundi**

Rwanda and Burundi have the same proportion of somewhat mixed Hutu- Tutsi who often live together. The ethnic conflict in Rwanda and Burundi constitutes a laboratory of ethnicity, and



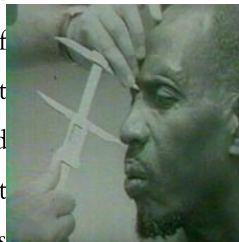
offers an opportunity to observe similar traditional, cultural and demographic pre-conditions reflecting through varying circumstances and producing varying ethnic effects (J. D. Eller 1999). Here for example, whereas Rwanda former rebels claimed national identity, Burundi rebels raised ethnic identity in the political competitions. However, the common tool deployed for their political benefits was < ethnicity >

Although Burundi's ethnic composition is similar to Rwanda, Burundi differs from Rwanda. Lemarchand (1970) argues that, in the colonial period, while "the main line of cleavage in Rwanda was Hutu and Tutsi, in Burundi the crucial important distinction was between the hereditary princes on the one hand, and the Hutu and the Tutsi in the other". The King, at least in Rwanda, had theoretically unlimited powers, and was the titular owner of all land, cattle, and other wealth in the state, and had semi divine status. The power and status of the King in Burundi was conditioned by Ganwa system that impeded centralization of the state power and elevation of the king. Thus, the stereotype system was far more advanced and rigid in Rwanda than in Burundi where "society was relatively free of racial tensions" (ibid). At the arrival of the colonizers, in Burundi, the Belgians relied far more on solidarities and divides within the clan system (Ganwa: Batare and Bezi) than on the Tutsi/Hutu distinction. In Rwanda by contrast, the Belgians focused on the Tutsi/Hutu divide, elevated the standing and power of the Tutsi and effectively ruled through them. In short, the ethnic ideology can be linked to political and social factors other than race in Rwanda and Burundi.

## 2.3 Colonial period

### 2.3.1 Development of ethnic stratification

That the Tutsi dominated the Hutu and were politically and socially superior was an invention of anthropological researchers which was relatively developed by the time of the arrival of colonialists at the end of nineteenth century (1896) in Burundi and Rwanda. In addition, Maquet (1961) cited by J.D. Eller (1999) states that European Anthropologists aimed to create the similarity of European racial categories that corresponded to those in Europe. Therefore, European Anthropologists introduced specific physical characteristics (see above the picture of one of these stereotypes) to the basic racial categories. The colonialists asserted that the Tutsi social group is characterized as "intelligent, capable of command, refined, courageous and cruel. This group is regarded as natural born- leaders, capable of extreme self-control and of calculated good-will" (ibid). This stereotype system applied predominantly to Rwanda rather than to Burundi where society was relatively free of ethnic tension. Belgian



administration in Burundi was seen as being allied with the Ganwa-Batare rather than Hutu or Tutsi. Indeed, the Belgians seemed enthusiastic to have a Batare prince succeed Mwambutsa as King (René Lemarchand).

Thus, ethnicity or ethnic conflict is a recent fact – a product of economic and political contradictions and competitions introduced since 1930s. The ethnic conflicts have been constructed out of flexible traditional social structure through a process of remembering, forgetting, interpreting and inventing. J. D. Eller (1999) states that the most obvious available candidate for a social categorization were Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi. Colonialists and anthropologists prejudices and preconceptions mixed with the political climate at the moment of their arrival led them not only to identify but to identify themselves with the Tutsi as the rightful ruling race. It also was observed a discrimination of Hutu in western education. The Ganwa and some rare Tutsi had more access to schooling. This fact served to extend the gap and increase the resentment between the two groups: Hutu and Tutsi.

In Rwanda, the colonial administrative rule initially strengthened the King position and the centralized state. But later, Belgian rule started to support Hutu dominance and aimed to decrease the king power and ultimately to break up the kingdom to the benefits of the Hutu (in electoral system a number of votes is very important and majority group of population play a predominant role). The social division was maintained but was carried out under different forms. The social division and social stratification in Burundi and Rwanda remained but the social group interpretation was inverted (dominance of the population majority took place in the colonial system since 1950s). In short, the identification between the Tutsi group and political power and privilege was considerably stronger in Rwanda than in Burundi where both Hutu and Tutsi group were subordinated to a ruling clan – Ganwa (René Lemarchand in J.D. Eller 1999). Thus, the stratification system created different forms of social clashes between Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi and Rwanda. In 1959, an ethnic massacre erupted in Rwanda (Hutu majority killed a great number of Tutsi in so called “Republican Revolution”) while Burundi strengthened its monarchic system. Two dynastic lines, the Bezi and Batare struggle for power under colonial period struggle for independence in 1961. In short, at the eve of independence, Burundian society was more dynastic than ethnic.

### **2.3.2 Ethnic consciousness development in Burundi**

As we discussed above, ethnic consciousness grew out of the researches conducted by anthropologists and rooted during the colonial administrative reform in 1930. The traditional indigenous structure power was removed. Colonial administration gradually removed the best

ruling posts of Hutu leaders in favor of Tutsi. Schooling of Hutu children was less encouraged or more oriented to the technical training. The Kingdom authority was reduced. Ben Hammouda (1995) quoted in the work of J-P Chretien (1985) found that the chiefs Hutu in Burundi were reduced from 10% in period 1929-1954 to 0% in favor of Tutsi and the latter from 21% to 26% at the same period. The rest of the posts were held by Ganwa chiefs. However, during the colonial period, there were no social revolts in spite of these changes, especially in Burundi. This was due to the fact that, people had still more respects for the king and his chiefs even if their power were reduced. Since 1958 Rwagasore, the eldest king Son strived to make UPRONA a genuinely national party. The other principal political grouping, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), was established by the Batare lineage as a counter force to UPRONA. The PDC received open support from the Belgian colonial administration, which tried to place every obstacle in the way of the more nationalist UPRONA, depicted as anti-Belgian and pro-Communist. Then, UPRONA scored an expected victory, though by a far wider margin than the Belgians or PDC had anticipated, securing some eighty per cent of the vote and 58 of the 64 seats in the legislature. Prince Rwagasore was appointed prime minister, but on 13 October, he was assassinated by agents of the PDC, perhaps acting with Belgian encouragement<sup>2</sup>. Viewed from today's perspective, one may speculate about the historic significance of Rwagasore's murder, for his death not only deprived Burundi of its ablest leader, but destroyed the ethnic cohesion he had struggled so hard to achieve. It must also be remembered that all this occurred in a climate of fear aggravated by the Hutu revolution in Rwanda, where thousands of Rwandan Tutsi lost their lives and thousands more fled into exile, many to Burundi, where they helped stoke the fires of intolerance (Ibib)

### **2.3.3 Ethnic evolution and its political implications after the Independence**

Recall that politics in Burundian society had less centered power than in Rwanda. After the murder of Rwagasore so as to avoid the Rwandan crisis and for fear of each other, Burundian King-MWAMBUTSA IV reacted impartially and tried to adopt a median solution to attempt to balance all the various interests within the kingdom. The crisis came to a head in 1965. In January, the King dismissed his Tutsi prime minister and replaced him with a Hutu, Pierre Ngendendumwe, who was shot dead by a Rwandan Tutsi refugee three days later he has formed his new government. The King now called legislative elections in an attempt to defuse the crisis. This had precisely the opposite result for Hutu candidates who took 23 of the 33 seats in the

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<sup>2</sup> African watch Burundi: the politic of intolerance (1999).Vol-8 n06.  
<http://www.iss.co.za/Pubs/ASR/8No6/AfricaWatch.html>, viewed 01042009

National Assembly. Once again and against any expectations, majority Hutu in parliament found themselves denied power by the King's appointment of court favourite Ganwa, as prime minister (Lemarchand-1999). This political event increased ethnic tensions and began to crystallize the Burundian conflict around ethnicity. There were local ethnic tensions in 1969, 1972, 1988, 1991 and the notion of ethnic belonging increased. In October 1993, the president democratically elected was killed by a group of the army. His murder caused an ethnically organized uprising. As a result and at that time the mass killings and inter-ethnic massacres affected the whole country. This situation deeply intensified fears of Hutu and Tutsi between them. These political events overshadowed the political arena and undermined the whole Burundian civil society during several decades and will affect the future generations. Since 1993, ethnic identity has become an ideological vehicle for political mobilization. Even, Arusha Agreement (2000, Preamble, Protocol I) recognizes that **“the main roots of ethnic conflict in Burundi is” fundamentally political, with extremely important ethnic dimensions; it stems from a struggle by the ruling political class to accede to and/or remain in power”**. Recall that Arusha Agreement (2000) is a political document elaborated consensually by the representatives of the political parties. It aims to promote peace and reconciliation of the Burundi population and to regulate power sharing between all the conflicting groups of the Burundian society.

In short, ethnicity has become a crucial characteristic and dividing line in both societies: Rwanda and Burundi. Moreover the grievances from the memory of past are often exacerbated by various issues which often overlap in particular with: regional events ( Rwanda, Burundi, Congo RDC), governance, demographic, land pressure and economic issues linked to the country's landlocked position, extreme poverty, international struggle for natural resources, internal or external policies, to name few. All social problems or all differential social opportunities are not literally documented. During the field work, several persons expressed their concerns relating to extra-factors linked to bad governance, impunity, hidden agenda linked to mineral resources etc. This thesis will focus on some aspects of these issues.

## **2.4.0 ARUSHA Agreement (2000)**

### **2.4.1 Common perceptions of ethnic groups in conflict**

The governmental officers (parliament members) advised me to refer to Arusha agreement (2000). This document defines clearly the roots of the ethnic conflicts retrieved by the representatives of two major ethnic groups: Hutu and Tutsi. I found that the text confirms the literary review related above.

According to the legal text drawn from Arusha Agreement (2000), Burundian social groups in conflict agreed to the following statements:

#### **2.4.1.1. About historical Causes of the Burundian Conflict**

The two ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi confirm the unity of Burundi social categories during Pre-colonial period:

During the pre-colonial period, all the ethnic groups inhabiting Burundi owed allegiance to the same monarch, *Umwami*, believed in the same god, *Imana*, had the same culture and the same language, Kirundi, and lived together in the same territory. Notwithstanding the migratory movements that accompanied the settlement of the various groups in Burundi, everyone recognized themselves as Barundi.

The existence of villagers' councils "Abashingantahe" who came from among the Baganwa, the Bahutu and the Batutsi and were judges and advisors at all levels of power were, *inter alia*, a factor in promoting cohesion.

As a result of the mode of management of national affairs, there were no known ethnic conflicts between the various groups during pre-colonial period.

Nevertheless, certain traditional practices such as *Ukunena* (extreme exclusion), *Ukwihutura* (change of ethnic identity for example hutu becomes tutsi or the later becomes hutu), *Ubugeregwa* (to borrow land to poor family), *Ubugabire* (transfer of land to neighbors), *Ukunyaga* (family land expropriation), *Ukwangaza* and *Ugutanga ikimazi-muntu* (traditional ritual practice that led to kill someone as sacrifice), *Ugushorerwako inka* (the same practice instead of sacrifice) and others could, depending on the circumstances, constitute sources of injustice and of frustration both among the Bahutu and the Batutsi and among the Batwa. These practices were not ethnically interpreted because applied to Hutu and Tutsi. Some of them were considered as the ways to face the social and economic failures.

#### **2.4.1.2 About ethnic division based on the ethnic belonging**

The two ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi agreed the following:

The colonial administration, first German and then Belgian, under a League of Nations mandate and United Nations trusteeship, played a decisive role in the heightening of frustrations among the Bahutu, the Batutsi and the Batwa, and in the divisions which led to ethnic tensions.

In the context of a strategy of "divide and rule", the colonial administration injected and imposed a caricatured, racist vision of Burundian society, accompanied by prejudices and clichés relating to

morphological considerations designed to set the different components of Burundi's population against one another on the basis of physical characteristics and character traits.

It also introduced an identity card which indicated ethnic origin, thus reinforcing ethnic awareness to the detriment of national awareness. This also enabled the colonizer to accord specific treatment to each ethnic group in accordance with its theories.

It manipulated the existing system to its advantage by resorting to discriminatory practices.

Moreover, it undertook to destroy certain cultural values (umuganuro, the practice of blessing seeds by the King, Ubushingantahe institution was less valorized in favor of new governmental officers....) that until then had constituted a factor for national unity and cohesion (Arusha Agreement 2000)

At the eve of independence 1962, the colonizer, sensing that its power was threatened, intensified divisionist tactics and orchestrated socio-political struggles. However, the charismatic leadership of Prince Louis Rwagasore and his colleagues made it possible for Burundi to avoid political confrontation based on ethnic considerations and enabled it to attain independence in peace and national harmony. The leitmotiv was the Burundi people unit and immediate independence for Burundi country.

In short:

Since independence, and throughout the different regimes, there have been a number of constant incidents which have given rise to the conflict that has persisted up to the present time: massive and deliberate killings, widespread violence and exclusion have taken place during this period.

Views differ (for instance acts of genocide: in 1972, Hutu are accused of genocide against Tutsi while Hutu claim that it was genocide against Hutu) as to the interpretation of these phenomena and their influence on the current political, economic and socio-cultural situation in Burundi, as well as of their impact on the conflict.

Nevertheless, according to the results and conclusions of the International Judicial Commission of Inquiry and National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in order to shed light on these phenomena, the social groups recognize that acts of genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity have been perpetrated since independence against both Tutsi and Hutu ethnic groups in Burundi. This means that the two ethnic groups have to share the responsibility to mass killings.

#### **2.4.1.3 Nature of the Burundi conflict**

With regard to the nature of the Burundi conflict, the social groups Hutu, Tutsi, Twa, recognize the following:” The conflict is fundamentally political and economic with important ethnic dimensions” It stems from a struggle by the political class to accede to and/or remain in power. In the light of the foregoing interpretation, the will of the social groups in conflict is to undertake the principles and implement the measures set to eradicate the social conflict. To carry out this ambition, the definition of the chain of the causes and effects which missed in the previous studies becomes paramount in this thesis in order to comprehend the roots of the ethnic conflict in Burundi.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **3.0 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES**

This thesis seeks to lighten if Burundi social crisis is linked or not on a matter of ethnic interests or conflicts over natural resources. The previous researches had described a lot about Burundi ethnic conflicts but not enough to understand the causes that produced the bloodshed effects. Recall in short the Burundian traditional political system. As far back as can be remembered, the kingship in Burundi in the pre-colonial and colonial period served as the prime focus of popular loyalties. The legitimacy of the king as an institution was never questioned. Ganwa, sons of king at the level of provinces and Hutu, Tutsi at the low level ruled in the name of king. Ganwa are considered neither Hutu nor Tutsi and are also very small in numbers. The distinctions between Hutu and Tutsi were traditionally and socially more flexible. Individuals could move from one category to the other, depending on their wealth and political prestige. The Twa less than 1 percent of the population, are not numerous enough to play a significant role in present-day conflicts at the national level. Twa and Ganwa since independence are historically set apart from the other groups in the political competition. As such, from where came up ethnic conflicts?

#### **3.1. Overall aim of the thesis**

At the light of the previous considerations, the deep-seated historical conflicts could come to the fore in the context of profound socio-political change and the grievances from the decolonization process. Thus, this thesis aims to analyze through literary review and interviews if the different colonial and internal political changes should be the main roots of ethnic conflicts. Then, the thesis aims to explore people perceptions of the tension between social ethnic groups in Burundi. How respondents comprehend and interpret these political changes as the roots of ethnic conflicts. It

investigates through some interviews the links between the conflict with historical, political events and economical factors and their impacts on the present social crisis.

### **3.2. Research Justification**

The thesis seeks to comprehend how the interpretation of the past frames contemporary strategies and actions of conflict. Elites group in conflict in their manner to attract politically their clients very often use the historical popular memory to justify how and which social group had and remained to the administrative power in Burundi. As such, can historical past justify ethnic conflicts between the three Burundi social groups, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa? Finally, this thesis aim to contribute to proposing constructive strategies for how peace and reconciliation may be achieved.

### **3.3 Significance of the Research**

The research I was conducting certainly has been carried out for other purposes. But, this thesis is conducted in order to help to consolidate the knowledge required from the literature review and field work results about the Burundi social crisis.

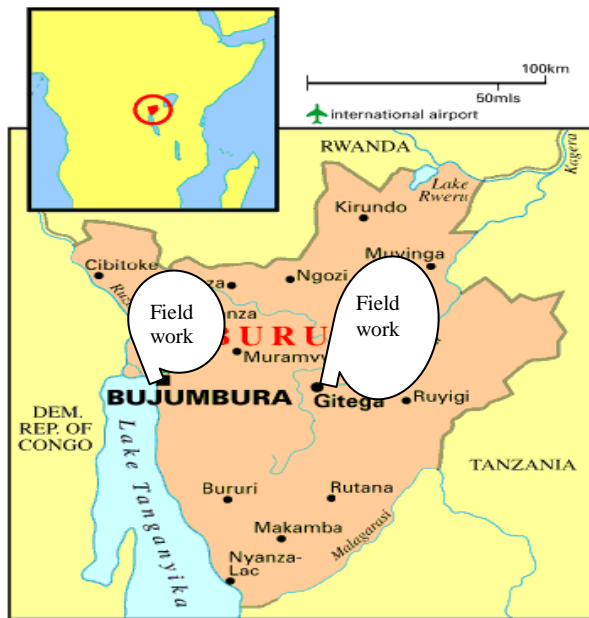
## **CHAPTER IV**

### **4.0 STUDY AREA & MATERIAL AND METHODS**

#### **4.1 Study area**

The history shows that **Twa, Tutsi and Hutu social groups** settled Burundi since the country was formed five centuries ago. Burundi was ruled by German administration before the First World War and by the Belgium colonial system after the Second World War. Belgians began to rule through the existing monarchy but they changed its practices in the mid-1950s. Applying their own racial ideas about a hierarchy among peoples, their policies served to eliminate the flexibility of the pre-colonial social and political systems and changed the three Burundi social groups into rigid ethnic categories, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. The geographical position of Burundi has played a great role in these administrative changes. As we discussed above, due to similarity in terms of ethnic compositions of Burundi and Rwanda, the historical political events in one country has affected political conditions in the other.





In Burundi more than 90% of the populations are engaged in subsistence agriculture, small-scale farming and livestock. Principal crops for local consumption are Bananas, plantains, sweets potatoes and manioc followed by beans, taro, maize, rice, corn, and sorghum<sup>3</sup>. The average farm family plot is around 0.8 hectares (two acres). About 15% of the total agricultural production is marketed. The government has been encouraging horticulture in order to diversify exports. Coffee and tea are the main export crops. Coffee provides roughly 50% of export earnings. Palm oil is obtained from trees in plantations along the beach of Lake Tanganyika. Tobacco and wheat cultivated in the highland areas also yield some cash income. In brief, Burundi is agricultural – based and landlocked country. It is one of the poorest countries in the world (167/177 According to date basis from human development report 2007/2008). Burundi has a less developed industrial sector and low educational level of the population (40% illiteracy) (ibid). These indicators contribute to increase economically Burundi ethnic tensions.

The country has an abundance of unexploited mineral resources. Explorations have revealed petroleum under Lake Tanganyika and in Ruzizi valley. About 5% of world nickel reserves are on Burundi territory<sup>4</sup>–Musongati. Copper, cobalt, and platinum are expected to be in association with the nickel. Phosphate rock deposits have also been located (ibid). There are also significant reserves of uranium, and vanadium. Due to ethnic conflict lasted for many decades, these highly profitable mineral deposits remain untouched<sup>5</sup>. The cost of fuel and other imported products are very expensive. This influences its economy generally, the essential products are expensive and poverty widespread. The major problems concerning natural resources are 1) land management of

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Burundi-ECONOMY.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/economies/Africa/Burundi.html>

<sup>5</sup> Burundi Mineral Resources (1991)

the previous political regimes, 2) land access for refugees generated by the various ethnic conflicts of the last decades, 3) the international covetousness of the not yet exploited strategic mineral resources cited above. The most common land conflicts are: a) conflicts around family plots or individual land conflicts (because family plots are still officially not registered), b) conflicts resulting from obsolete norms of land use and land law violation by the authorities c) conflicts around land for refugee etc. These types of conflicts have accounted for 90% of pending affairs in Burundian tribunals for a long time but they have never led to general armed conflict (league ITEKA 2008). Today, national and international struggles for power and resources have undergone significant modifications and generated new types of socio-economic and political issues, particularly in Burundi. The study covered the provinces of Gitega and Bujumbura.

## **4.2 Field Work Observation**

The study of how power is exercised, especially power over resources is a vital part of this thesis, not least during the field work. Furthermore, the purpose of the study was to comprehend how socially distinct groups interact in the intersection of ethnic and social conflicts. It is argued that the field study which was limited to two villages and the capital city of Bujumbura will be able to provide a certain understanding of the social tensions of the country at large.

The results of this field observation revealed that the whole Burundian population still lives in a trauma of war or fear of the opposing ethnic group. Any unknown individual in specific social settings is regarded as an enemy or potential threat.

Age also played an important role in my study. I strived to find middle aged and old people who had large personal experiences of the ethnic conflicts of Burundi. Older people were also less reluctant to discuss political and social issues. Almost 97% of the Burundian populations are between 0-65 years (Burundi population pyramid 2005). Furthermore, it is important to note that the ethnic belonging and ethnic competition for power and over natural resources constitute a hidden political agenda, which have a large impact on the electoral process in Burundi.

This state of fact affected my own fieldwork since the people whom I approached often suspected that I belonged to a political faction and that my research in reality concealed a political agenda.

Some of my informants thus suspected that the entire field work or the survey questionnaires were only camouflaged tools so as to achieve a political purpose. Their suspicions were aggravated by the fact that I was categorized as belonging to one of the ethnic groups myself; making myself both an insider and outsider observer at the same time. Even if it was evident to me that I lacked the support of government representatives, this fact was interpreted in the sense they were in short of time to discuss with me. But, in reality, the suspicions of political purpose weighted more on

the field research perceptions. Thus, the political propaganda activities and the reluctance to cooperate revealed some negative impacts on the fieldwork.

This situation became clear to me when I made interviews with individual informants in the villages or in the capital city: Bujumbura. Informants were afraid to speak freely or to answer directly to the questions. However, due to my experience and my self sensibility towards individual differences and ability to interpret the different situations, I decided to pursue the field research by using interviews encompassing 3-4 group persons. Drawing on my knowledge of the Burundian society, I succeeded indirectly to include both the major ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi in my study.

### **4.3 How to identify material to include in the study?**

This thesis discusses critically the complex interconnection between the control of scarce natural resources and the ongoing social conflicts in Burundi.

The study consisted of distinct phases of work. The first phase was focused on an extensive review of the historical literature about Burundi ethnic conflict. The second phase consisted of the fieldwork itself by doing interviews relating the people perceptions on the Burundi social crisis. The aim was to discuss (conversation around subjects instead of precise questions and explore subject beyond prefixed questions) and to interview (semi structured) a wide spectrum of the Burundi society members: both young and old people, the political elite of Burundian who is the most active part in the social conflict of the country; government representatives and the traditional elites of the villages "Abashingantahe" The latter group plays an important role in regulating conflicts among the community members.

### **4.4 Methods used of making interviews**

It was a challenge to be able to approach the householders. In some cases and as stated (Halstead et al.; 2001)" Food sharing is a positioned social mediator". I argue that to eat together could break down the barriers of differences and misunderstandings. In ongoing ethnic conflict, sharing food has a great symbolic value where discrimination, poverty, and exclusion are the focus issues. Sharing food or drink has a great positive social value and strengthens social relation and true in Burundian community. Therefore I tried to use this tool to gather adequate information and documents linking to the Burundi conflict. About twenty people have participated in focus group discussion. Furthermore, I have also taken account some individual informants according to the

importance of expected data and their experiences. The time frame on the field research was about five weeks (see 9.1 annexe chapter-9).

#### **4.5 Success assumptions on the field research**

Some assumptions relating the eventual factors of successes on the field research had encouraged me to write this thesis: “Perceiving the Burundi social crisis: a matter of ethnic interests or conflict over natural resources”. The positive factors of success were: on one side, I am Burundians citizen member and on the other side I possess enough knowledge on the field research. Knowledge from literary reviews, education programs, the living in some major historical events and ethnic conflicts such as tragic events in 1972 and 1993 provided me more understandings of Burundian trauma and interactions of distinct social groups Hutu and Tutsi. Furthermore, I had a little more good contact with some elites’ group members in conflict by the fact that some of them were my class maters.

#### **4.6 Delimitation of the Study**

Because of my restricted access to large parts of Burundi as I mentioned above the research was limited to two provinces: Gitega and some communes of Bujumbura. The interviews were too few to lead to general conclusions. For that reason, it could, however, contribute with assumption concerning the comparison of the content of literary reviews (previous studies) and the responses of different informants had put the incertitude at the lower level.

I did not include ethnic group Batwa in the study since they live more nomadic lives than are scattered in the countryside.

#### **4.7 Participants and contact Persons on the field work.**

##### **Representatives of following governmental Bodies:**

- **National Commission of land issues and other estates.**

Its mandate is to have an overall view and regulate the conflicts concerning land use and other issues opposing the victims of war to thirds or public services or private persons.

- **Secretariat of Senate**

This public institution plays a great role in the validation and regulation of laws promulgated by the parliament members. These laws include in brief: governance, national rents distribution, natural resources management, and other issues which often lead to the social conflicts.

- **Ministry of Planning.**

This ministry coordinates the different development programs and plans the national budget. It has also mediator functions for other ministers.

- **Ministry of land and Natural Resources Management**

The present thesis discusses the link between the social tension in Burundi and the struggle for control over the management over natural resources. The Minister is responsible for the management of natural resources. For that reason, an expert in land and forest management was identified as a key informant in this study. I chose this expert, because he possessed more information about conflict land issues and possessed many public documents for the land legislation for instance, land code, political and document for land legislation.

- **Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources**

The international struggle for natural resources affects the struggle for mineral resources (nickel, gold, coltan, uranium etc.) in Burundi as well as in other countries. Therefore, it was necessary to investigate the known list of Burundian mineral resources and the different issues about them.

- **Institute of the statistics and the economic studies**

This institute is very important to analyze for instance the impacts of international policies, regional events, financial crisis, oil crisis, to name few, on the market prices, and for extend on the national poverty that often leads to social conflicts for fragile states.

- **Services of Delegation of the European Commission**

Through the various financings granted by the European Commission, it is possible to discover the priorities of the Government and the failures where the region is in short of financing. This causes often social or regional conflicts.

- **Administrative Territory: Itaba Commune**

Due to insecurity in the country, the trauma of war, propaganda for the future elections of 2010, the administration seldom gives opportunities of making interviews everywhere into the countryside. However, I had a chance to participate in a communal meeting where land issue was one of the themes online. Moreover, I got opportunity to manage a meeting-interview in the one of villages.

## **B. Civil society**

The field work was really conducted in some countryside villages of two provinces: Bujumbura and Gitega. In Bujumbura Province, the different interviewers were from Commune: Gihosha, Ngagara, and Cibitoke. In Gitega Province, interviewers were from commune Itaba and

Makebuko. Approximately 30 inhabitants interviewed from the following villages: Kasenyi, Gihosha, Ngagara, Cibitoke, Gihamagara, Nkima, Rwesero, Gisoro, Mwaro, and Musinzira. In addition, some interviewees with a permanent stay status in the city Capital – Bujumbura, have participated in the study. They encompassed all ages, males and females.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **5.0. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES**

#### **5.1 Questionnaires enquiring about the roots of ethnicity in Burundi**

The thesis targets to investigate colonial period and how this one made sense in Burundi. It was clear that people have different point of views according to their age, education, and own experiences. By bringing together of social groups, Hutu and Tutsi, using the unusual tool” drink sharing as social mediator”; I discussed honestly and openly the roots of ethnicity. I paid more attention on the old and experienced (3-4) informants according to the importance of the questions. Individuals’ informants were taken account, especially in capital city: Bujumbura, where it was not easy to bring together a mass of people (because many were business men and had not enough time to discuss with me).The questionnaire was formulated as follow:

1. Do you believe that the three ethnic groups of Burundi are an invention of history or really reflect how the Burundi society members have made sense of their reality?
2. Has there occurred a war before the colonial period between ethnic groups in Burundi?
3. Who were the actors in the political competitions before independence?
4. Which are the origins of ethnic conflict in Burundi?
5. How was ethnic consciousness formed?

#### **5.2 Questionnaires about ethnic conflict over natural resources**

The procedure was the same one as for the preceding questionnaire, except that here I focused my attention on the rural informants group. The questionnaire was formulated as follow:

1. How Burundian society members legally gained and extended their plots of land for family?
2. Has inequality in land possession generated any conflict between the three ethnic groups?
3. Has land conflicts issues lead to bloodshed between Burundian social groups?

4. Do you believe that the recession of national and international economy are the mains roots of the ethnic conflicts?

## CHAPTER VI

### 6.0 FIELD WORK RESULTS: INTERVIEWS AND RESPONSES ANALYSIS

This part of thesis explores Burundian social crisis by doing an interpretation of the informants' speech and the links with the literary reviews especially in the social, political and economic areas. For instance, both interviewers and literary reviews gave different explanations to the colonial history. The latter is based on the findings of anthropological researches while the former argued that the main culprits were colonialists who favored to one ethnic group than other one. But most informants do not use any of these explanations, because as we discussed above, the age has influenced personal experiences from the colonial and contemporary period. Therefore, it was not uncommon to hear some informants declare differently the origin of the ethnic conflicts in Burundi.

#### 6.1 How common people perceive the social crisis

**Research avenue: Bujumbura Province:** Kasenyi, Gihosha, Ngagara, Cibitoke villages.  
**Gitega Province:** Musinzira, Gihamagara, Nkima, Gisoro, Mwaro villages.

**Ethnic groups questioned: Hutu and Tutsi.**

#### CONDUCTING OF INTERVIEWS

The interviews as we discussed above in the methodology followed two stages and consisted (1) to discuss around subjects instead of precise questions and explore subject beyond prefixed questions and (2) to conduct semi structured form of interview with the key informants in the way to gather the different perceptions of a wide spectrum of the Burundi society members.

##### 6.1.1. Investigations about the roots of the ethnic conflict

1. **Do you believe that the existence of three ethnic groups in Burundi is an artificial social and historical construction of history or that it constitutes a reality of the Burundian society?**

**Informant X:** woman 60 years old belongs to the common people and lives in the village of Kasenyi in Bujumbura Province. She says that the ethnic groups have existed during a long time.

**Response:** *ico kibazo ntikigoye kwishura, ubwoko mu barundi bwaramye, nta numwe yobihakana Atari ufise ibindi yitwaje.*

This question seems easy to answer; the ethnic groups have been a reality in Burundi, for a long time. Nobody can not state the contrary.

**Informant Y: man, 75 years old.** *This informant lives in the village of Gihamagara, in the municipality of Itaba. He is an old teacher in primary education. He has an experience and knowledge of the social situation in Burundi.*

**Response:** *Ivyubu biragoye, none ubwoko buriho harico bwonona. Imana ntiyaremeye umugabo n'umugore ngo bafashanye. None ko baticanye, ahubwo barakundanye mbere bemera gusangira igicumuro.*

The present situation in Burundi is problematic. I find that it is not a matter for ethnic groups' coexistence. It is similar to Adam and Eve God creation which had significance for to help each other. Doing so, they even accepted to drop in uncomfortable situation!

**Informant X: This informant is a young woman, 25years old.** *She is a seller in Gihosha commune.*

**Response:** *Jewe mu vyo twiga mw'ishure nta moko batwigishije, ariko haciye imisi numva ngo ivya moko biradutse bivuye he? Sinzi! Abavyeyi bavuga ngo ni vyo ama politike. Imvo n'imvano y'amoko ntayo nzi...ntawufise ingene asigura ivyo bintu....*

At school, they did not teach us about ethnic groups, but shortly after I had left school ethnic belonging started to become more important. I do not know where this process started. Our parents told us that it had a political origin. But no one really knows the origin of ethnicity.

**Informant X: a young woman, 20 years old, withdrew from school, a small farmer of Gihamagara village, Itaba commune.**

**Response:** *Nakuze hari amako iyo vyaje bituruka jewe nta vyo nzi. Mbere nibaza ko naho mu bibaza ari muwe muturusha kubimenya. Ntimuba i Bujumbura!*

I grew up during the ethnic conflict and I do not know where the notion of ethnic belonging originated. I wonder why you really ask me these questions; you seem to be a person who should know the roots of ethnic conflict, because you live in the city of Bujumbura!

**Q1: Responses Analysis:** The respondents above believe that social status known as Hutu, Tutsi and Twa have long historical roots in the Burundian society. They state that these identities existed as terms describing individuals' social status and have changed through time but did not make a sense of ethnicity. They declare also that social identity did not create tension or violence between Burundi society members. Thus, as Jean-Pierre Chrétien (1992) argued, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa as ethnic groups were fundamentally colonial constructions.



**Question-2. Were there any violent ethnic conflicts in Burundi before the colonial period?**

**Informant is a woman who is 65 years old. She is a small farmer of Nkima Village, located in the Itaba municipality.**

**Response:** *Jewe. Ego sindi uwavuba, nagakura, ntaryo bara nari bwumve. Imvo n' imvano nabaharanira ubutegetsi aho Umwami aviriye ku ntwaro.*

I am not young. I was born a long time ago. I did not notice that there existed any ethnic bloodshed before the King was forced to abdicate. Ethnic conflict is created so as to exercise power.

**Informant Y: a 70 years old man. He is a small farmer who lives in the village of Buhevyi, in administrative zone of Itaba.**

**Response:** *Mbe Mushingantahe, ko umengo nawe nturi muto? Ico kibazo ntiwoba ugifitiye inyishu. Kera ubutegetsi bwari ubwo umwami n' abatware. Iyi gwano si amoko. Ndi n'abana mu bwoko bwose. Mu bahutu no mu batutsi. Amoko ni ikiraro co gushikira ubutegetsi. Kuko ubu udafata amafranga muri leta, ntivyoroshe kubaho! Amatongo ntakigaburira imiryango.*

Hello Mushingantahe! It seems that you are not young; you should be able to answer that question yourself, instead of asking me. The last time, the ruling power was in hands of King and the chiefs Batware. The violence is not about ethnicity. I have sons and daughters who belong to both the ethnic groups bahutu and batutsi. Ethnic difference is a way to get power. The major reason is that if you do not earn money from the state administration, it is not easy to survive! A family plot of land does not cover the basic needs.

**Informant Y: a man, 55 years old. He is agronomer from the municipality of Cibitoke.**

**Response:** *Nakuze numva ngo umutegetsi kanaka bamwishe, haca imisi ngo umutegetsi naka yishwe. Sinari bwatahure ko bazira ubwoko. Ubu niho abanyapolitike bavuga menshi. Nta uza amenya ko ari ukuri canke ibinyoma. Muri iyi myaka ho vyaribonekeje ko abantu benshi bazira ubwoko sinzi rero ko ariko vyame.*

When I grew up I heard that some governmental officers were killed because of their ethnic belonging. But these were rare events. Today, politicians talk a lot. We do not know what is true. But during the last decades it is obvious that many people have been killed because of their ethnic belonging.

**Question-3. Who were the actors and participated in the political competitions before independence?**

**Informant Y: He is man, from the Kasenyi village, who belongs to the common people. He is 60 years old and has experienced the historical events during the independence.**

**Response: Ivyo nsanzwe nzi kandi nabonye. Intwaro y'Uburundi yari iyo umwami n'abagabo, abaganwa, abatware mbere n'ivyariho vy'abatware.**

Burundi used to rule by the king power, council, consisting of villagers, Ganwa and Batware, and even some representatives of Batware "Ivyariho

**Informant X-Woman, 70 years old. A common person from the Ngagara municipality. She has experiences of the colonial period.**

**Response: Intwaro yari yisunze abami, abaganwa n'abatware n'abandi bajejwe ubutegetsi ku mitumba. Ubutegetsi bwari kuva hasi gushika hejuru. Batunganiriza bose kandi bari bubashwe. Si nkubu!**

Administrative rule was in hands of King who was helped by Ganwa and Batware and other ruling class everywhere on the countryside. There was a hierarchy of administrative rule from the top to bottom of the Burundian society. Everybody had to follow the law and the officers were respected. It is not the same case today!

**Informant X: Woman, 80 years old. Born and former inhabitant of Gitega Province. She is a commoner and presently lives in the municipality of Ngagara.**

**Response: Aha jewe ndacafise ivyo mbazwa. Ubwenge ntibwadegeye, hari ico ncibuka! Igihugu caramutswa umwami, n'abo mu nda y'umwami. Ariko hariho abatware ari Abahutu canke abatutsi. Abo rero bakazoba urucanke gushika hasi ku mitumba. Nayo ubu intwaro ngo ni imigambwe!**

I am an old woman and I have few memories from my childhood. The administrative rule was carried out by king and his lineage. Moreover, we recognize Batware, both Bahutu and Batutsi. The rulers came from both the largest ethnic groups, especially the village's chiefs.

#### **4. How the ethnic consciousness was formed?**

**Informant-Y: Man, 65 years old, a former veterinary of Karuzi province. Today he lives in the village of Kasenyi.**

**Response. Nibaza abarundi bo mu bwoko booze baharanira ubutegezi. Ariko vyinshi vyazanywe n'intwaro y' Ababiligi.**

I think Burundi people from all ethnic groups had an ambition to rule. The main issue was to get power. But the Belgian colonizers contributed to create a more sharp ethnic cleavage than previously had existed.

**Informant Y: Man, 55 years old, a bank clerk in Bujumbura.**

**Response:** *Jewe nibaza ko vyose vyavuye mu nzira yo gusubiriza intwari y'ababiligi hanyuma mu gusubiriza intwari ya Cami. Mu nyuma bamwe babonye ko bashobora gushikira ubutegetsi abandi nabo bakabona ko boshora kubugumako.*

The ethnic division might have its origin in the eve of independence, aiming to replace the Belgian power and then the royal power. Ethnicity is manipulated so as to gain or maintain political power.

**Informant X: Woman, >60 years old, a former teacher in primary school .Gihamagara village.**

**Response:** *Vyose vyatewe n'inda zuzuzwa n'amaronko ava mu butegetsi. Ehe n'ubu raba, umunyagihugu asanzwe agiye mu migambwe atsinze amatora aba agabanuye ubukene!*

Politics has contributed to increase ethnic consciousness. Look at some cases today. Ordinary people involved in the ruling party are able to improve their lifestyle by emphasizing ethnic difference.

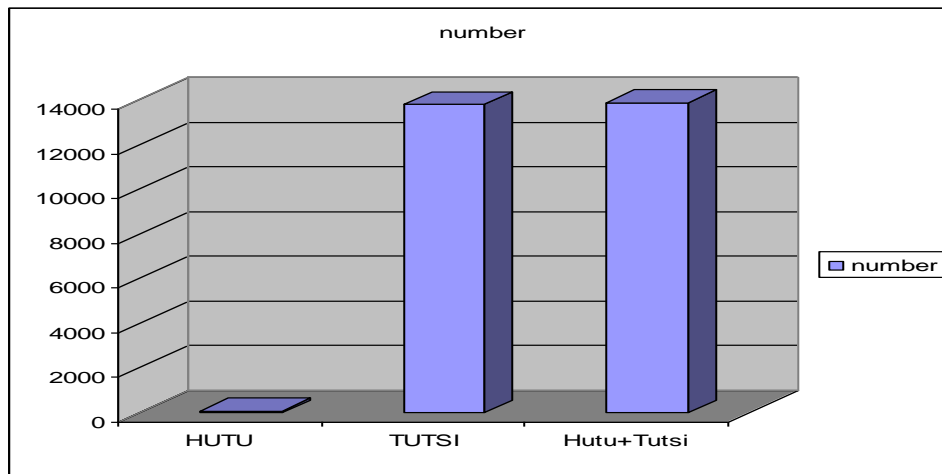
**Responses analysis of the Q2, Q3, and Q4 about the main roots of Burundi ethnic conflicts.**

At the light of the responses above, on the one hand, all the respondents paid more attention to the political competition to replace the colonial administration and to control the national rents. Informants expressed the relative peaceful between the two major social groups Hutu and Tutsi before the king was forced to abdicate. They declare that the struggle for political power (root of the ethnic conflict) finds its origins just at the time of the decolonization to replace the Belgian power and thereafter the royal power. It was a matter of "fighting to get power and to maintain it". On the other hand recall that the literary review was centered on the colonial political change especially through the colonial administrative reform in 1930 where colonial policies transformed the three traditional social status into rigid ethnic categories of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa and seek to rule through the Tutsi group who stereotypically was more closely to Europeans and therefore superior to Hutu and Twa (Human rights watch, 1998). At the light of these different investigations, it appears that both literary review and field research pointed out the origin of the ethnic conflict in the political changes. As Burundi has limited natural resources, political factions fought for the control of the national rent seeking to control public institutions, including the public administration, which have become the centre of a system of rent sharing. It was experimented that from independence to the mid-1970s, political leaders paid little attention to the economy. The country's leadership invested its energies in political and ethnic machinations to reinforce their grip on assets left by the colonial power. In this regard, the basis for major policies in the country remained on the role of the public sector which is still elitist since independence in 1962. This is the result of the choice by successive governments to reserve the relatively high

paying jobs for their political clients. However, in Burundi, the income of the mean civil servant falls among the richest 6% of the population, against an average of 13% in sub-Sahara Africa (Nkurunziza, J.D.and Ngaruko.F, 2000). Hence, in Burundi, individuals at the highest levels of office stand among the richest in country. The remaining is still rural people (more than 90% of population) or poor people in the urban area. Moreover, in Burundi where private sector is tiny, it has also been observed that a significant fraction of large private businesses are owned by politicians.

The figure-1 below shows some information about the ethnic disparity in public sector at least before the political change in 1988. Public senior services posts are such as: Ministers, Ambassadors, council’s ambassadors, general directors, justice magistrates, Military officers, enterprises managers etc.

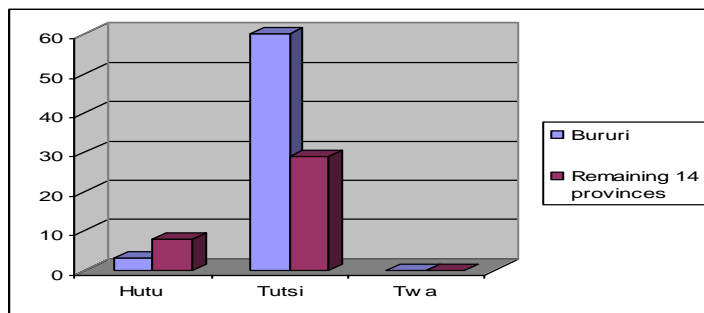
**Figure-1: Ethnic Disparity in Public Senior Service Posts in 1987**



**Source:** (Nkurunziza, J.D and F.Ngaruko, 2000)

However political change had been operated since 1988 and focused on the power sharing between Hutu and Tutsi. The second factor that has undermined Burundi society was the internal competition between regions of Burundi.

**Figure-2: Ethnic and Regional Distribution of Public Corporations’Managers (%)**



**Source:** (Nkurunziza, J.D and F.Ngaruko, 2000)

This regional tension was consolidated after the 1972 inter-ethnic massacres. But all Tutsi elites from privileged province (Bururi) did not benefit of the profits. What do these factors mean in households livelihoods analysis and in the context of Burundian grievances and ethnic conflicts? Frank Ellis (2000) states that rural livelihood diversification is defined as the process by which rural households construct an increasingly diverse portfolio of activities and assets in order to survive and to improve their standard of living. To some extent, this definition is applied in the context of sharing national rents through the political competition. In this specific Burundi case, regional factor may stand for social capital within which contributes to converting social asset into financial capital. In brief, the core of Burundian social crisis is not only ethnically based but also regional based.

### 6.1.2 Investigations about ethnic conflict over natural resources

**Q-1. How have people in the Burundian society members legally gained and extended the family land?**

**Informant X: This woman is 80 years old. She used to live in the Gitega province, but today she is an inhabitant of the Ngagara municipality. She has extensive experience of the roots of ethnic formation and the conflicts over natural resources.**

**Response:** *Kuronka itongo tureste iryo ku mugina vyava kubintu vyinshi: Ububangutsi, gushengera I Bwami, kuba mu ngabo z'umwami, kugendanira umwami n'ibindi. Ivyo vyose vyaratuma ugabana itongo.*

To get land excepted land from lineage depended of many things: to be clever, to accomplish some servant functions to the king, to participate in the king army functions, to be king accompanist etc. This let people to acquire a new land or to extend it for family.

**Informant Y: He is 70 years old, and belongs to the common. He lives in the municipality of Cibitoke.**

**Response:** *Mu kuronka amatongo abantu ntibanganya. Kandi n'ubu abantu ntibanganya itunga. Umwe wese ni uburyo bwiwe hamwe n'imigisha yiwe. Aba umwami canke umuganwa canke abatware ntibatanga ahangana kuri bose.*

The opportunities to get hold of land were unequal. Even today people do not have access to the same resources. Each one has its possibilities and chances to get rich. The King, the members of the Ganwa or Batware did not distribute the same size of plots lands to everyone.

**Informant Y: Man, 65 years old did not convince anybody because the public around me seemed to disapprove his point of view.**

**Response:** *Amatongo ataraga basokoru batubwira ko biyagurira amatongo. Ufise ububangutsi, inguvu n'umuryango munini wo kurima watwara hanini ahatarimye misi hatwara abandi. Abimuka canke ababanyi.*

During pre-colonial times our grandfathers told us that there was no shortage of land and if you had a great number of children to cultivate the land, you were given a land area. Unexploited land remained free for all people.

**Informant X: Woman over 80 years old has much experiences and skills to discuss historical issues.**

**Response:** *Egome mbere mu vyo amatongo harivyo nibagiye. Aho hagereye kugazura imyonga kuri bamwe amatongo amaze kwaga baraguriye amatongo y'imiryango mu myonga. Hari abishinze kugisha inka. Abo inka zigeze guhona imiryango ikagwira basanze bafise hato.*

Historically the people started to make use of the marsh land this last time. Doing that, people obtained possibilities to extend plots of land that belonged to their families. But, some pastoralists were busy by land pad docking and were short of time to exploit the marsh land. For that reason and due to land pressure they have shortage of land.

**Q-2. Did land conflicts issues lead to bloodshed between Burundian social groups?**

**Informant Y: Man 60 years old. He is a former secretary of the parish of Ngagara municipality.**

**Response:** *Ingwano zaramyeho. Abantu baranyarwa inka, amatongo. Ariko ntiyari ingwano y'amoko. Yari ingwano y'ubutwari kugira ngo umutware canke umuganwa kanaka yerekane ko afise ingabo ziruta abandi.*

“Conflicts and war have existed ever since Burundi became nation state. During the war, people lost cows and land. But the conflict was between the group region members, Ganwa or Batware in their administrative functions but not between ethnic groups. The conflict was based on the principle that each group community people shall strife to enhance its own interests and honor”

**Informant Y: Man 70 years old. He is an old farmer.**

**Response:** *Erega ingwano y'ubu si ingwano. Ni akabi kabishe katagira izina. Kera ko abarundi barwana bitwaje ubutwari kandi ata moko yarimwo. Kera barwana mu kwerekana ubugabo nta nzigo yarimwo. Uneshejwe waranyagwa inka canke itongo bigahereraho. Ivyo ubu ni ukwica umuntu bisunze ubwoko.*

You have to know that this issue is a bloodshed conflict. We can not name it in other terms. In the past, people fought for to extend their administrative region and consequently to get access to resources of the region, land and cows. Today, they kill people because of ethnic belonging.

**Q-3: Did Inequality in the possession of the family land generate a conflict between the three ethnic groups?**

**Informant Y: He is 45 years old. His speech is focused on how land has been fragmented due to demographic.**

**Response:** *Wumva ivyo bishoboka. Erega itongo rya so na nyoko rirabagira icyo murisangiye muvukana muri abahungu benshi. Ubu ngo mbere abigeme bagiyeye gutorana amatongo icyo bavutse, amatongo rero aze yatera induru ariko bidashyigiyeye kubwoko. Zizoba impari zabonse rimwe.*

In the past, you could be short of land if you shared a plot of land by a lot of group of male family members. But you could not kill people because of this. They are your brothers. Today, it came time to share land with your sisters. The land issue will be complicated. But the issue will be only between family members but not ethnic conflicts.

**Informant Y: Man, 50 years old, peasant of Gishingano/Kasenye municipality. He expressed his opinion like the previous informant and centered it on the lack of land.**

**Response:** *Emwe urwo rubanza n'umwana yoruka! Itongo rikwagiye nta uta ishavye ku mubanyi canke kubwoko kanaka. Hari uruhara babifisemwo? Ntavyo nibaza.*

Even the young people can resolve these issues! If you are short of land this does not mean that you have to attack others who belong to other ethnic groups. Do they have any responsibilities in your affairs? I do not think so.

**Informant Y: He is man 30 years old. He seemed to understand land issues but did not express freely how to cope with lack of land!!**

**Response:** *Reka tube tuvugana ukuri mw'isi nzima nta bantu banganya. Hamye abato n'abakuru, abatunze n'abakenye. None n'ntoke z'umuntu ntizigana. Hari ingwano y'ubukene urumva. Uratubika umukanda, ugaheza ukarondera ingene wiyungunganya.*

Socially, people are not equal in the world. Everywhere, people have or have not. Even our fingers are not equal in length. Did you hear Burundian poor people fighting themselves simply because of their poverty!! You have to endure your poverty and try to cope with it!!

**Responses Analysis of the Q1, Q2, Q3.**

At the light of the responses of the informants above, < inequalities around land existed in pre-colonial period but were not large compared to the present situation where almost the whole population are in short of land. Extensive agriculture was still possible for many centuries and the population explosion is a recent phenomenon in Burundi (see table below).

**Population increase in Burundi.**

Years	1932	1940	1946	1979	2008
Population	1.552.000	1.716.000	1.618.000	5.000.000	8.037.000 <sup>6</sup>

**Source:** (Gahama.J and C.Thibon 1994)

<sup>6</sup> Burundi. Population census-2008

Austin, G., (1996)<sup>7</sup> has argued that he did not find evidence of inequality between the ethnic groups, Hutu, and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi in terms of land size, rural income, and livestock holdings in several regions of the respective countries. Today, Burundi faces many challenges regarding the management of its natural resources, which support a very densely populated country. Here, poor farming methods put further pressure on the land issue. In this regard, Colin Khal cited by Jeffrey Sachs (2008) notes that "environmental stresses in the form of environmental degradation, and unequal distribution of renewable resources leads to violence, instigated by elites for their political interests". He continues to argue that "environmental stresses are most likely to state failure in societies that are deeply divided along ethnic groups, religious, or class lines and in societies where large parts of the population have little influence over the government. This is also applicable to the Burundi case. Subsequently and about the environmental stress, common people often express concerns over the limits of natural resources due to traditional equal heritage system between males. Today, females also claim to have rights to inherit. In 1960s, Burundi was already a crowded country as regards available land for agricultural production<sup>8</sup>. In addition, ethnic conflict has created a large group of refugees and internal displaced within the country. Indeed, Burundi experienced a mass exodus in 1972 and later in 1993. When refugees return they find their former plots of land unavailable. In 2008, Burundi League ITEKA Organisation told to IRIN, one Africa Integrated Regional Information Networks that, people in Burundi are killing each other to get access to land even family members. Additionally, the lack of property rights systems as well as a lack of ownership records threaten and exacerbate the situation of ethnic conflict. In solving land disputes, Burundians rely on a mixture of customary law and legislation, but few people are aware of their legal rights and most are too poor to pay for legal representation. According to the Burundi land law, legal title reverts to whoever occupies land for at least 30 years if no claims are made within three years of this period. This law has been applied in the cases of some 1972 returnees, many of whom have been in exile for more than 30 years. The refugees argue, however, that they did not leave their land of their own accord and have been unable to return until now, and therefore should not be subjected to the law. Since the National land commission was founded in July-2006, it has met the 1972 refugees, the occupiers of the land, and with refugees in Tanzania so as to get a sense of each group's grievances and find a path toward mediation. However, several thousand returnees are homeless and forced to rely on the kindness of friends and relatives – for these, the National commission of land issues (NCL) has no solution. For that reason, sometimes the returnees are emotionally attached to the land and refuse to be relocated to different places. Then, the land scarcity often caused by parceling and division of

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<sup>7</sup> World Bank Development Research(2007)

<sup>8</sup> J.p Chretien et Ali (1983) Histoire rural des pays des grands-lacs. Ed, karthala, Paris.



family land leads sometimes to illegally appropriate public land or private land that belong to refugees which seem to be available or unexploited. This situation often leads to the social conflict either between neighbors or any administrative institution. The length of time it takes to find a solution depends on the complexity of the problem. Nevertheless, the results of its two years history show that this public institution has yet a lot to do in terms of conflicts resolution. About (657/10451) or 6, 3 % of land conflicts<sup>9</sup> are solved. In brief, the Burundi document of land policy promulgated in September 2008 notes that the proliferation of land conflicts harms the social climate and safety. The unique solution is the implementation of law that makes the society organized. Hence, improvements in the law and implementation of laws must thus represent the major vehicle to maintain social cohesion.

**Q-4 could we assert that the degradation of national and international economy are the mains roots of the ethnic conflicts?**

**Governmental officer Y: He is a man, 55 years old. His functions focused on land degradation issues. His speech put a head the state dysfunction due to financial crisis at the national and international level.**

**Response:** *Certainement oui. Référez-vous aux salaires de la fonction Publique qui ne n'évoluent pas depuis des années et qui correspondent plus au travail du salarié. De plus, le fonctionnaire et le sénateur ou le Parlementaire ne sont pas rémunérés équitablement. Le fonctionnaire ne vit plus à cause de la flambée des prix alors que le politicien est aisé. Voilà ce qui fait perdurer le conflit dans le pays.*

The state has not increased the salaries during many years. There is a principle which means that salary and work might to be equal. Today, the government breaks out the principle implemented in the work. Moreover, government officials, senator and parliament members do not equitably earn their salaries. Government officials hardly survive due to inflation on the household basic needs. Politicians have better earnings. This situation leads to eternal conflict, since people aim to become leaders at any cost.

**Analysis of this response.**

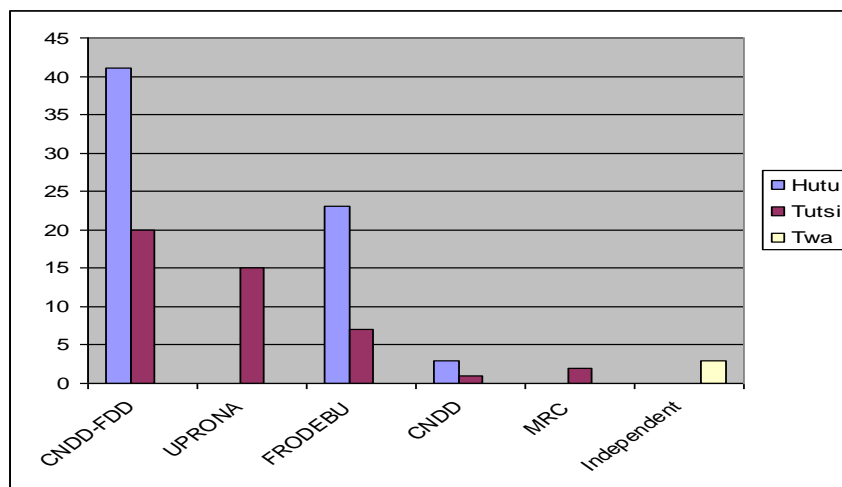
At the light of this response, informant expressed economical concerns through the impacts of the internal and external policies. On the one hand, he lifted up some concerns about national inflation. This is linked to most international policies which had lasted on the Burundi socio-economic issues during the last decades," Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs)". This policy had been imposed on poor countries especially to ensure debt repayment and economic restructuring. But the way it has happened has required poor countries to reduce spending on things like health, education and development, while debt repayment and other economic policies have been given

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<sup>9</sup> Document of the national commission for land issues and other estates.

priority. In effect, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank had demanded that poor nations decrease the standard of living of their people.<sup>10</sup> The same concerns were expressed by some informants about withdrawing pupils from schools, higher cost of health care, and lost of employment. In the context of warfare and struggle for power sharing and ethnic division, the first group who suffered from these policies was not the ruling class but those who did not have access to national resources. For that reason, through lack of income diversification, unemployment increased and many people become extremely poor. For low-income countries, the chances of war to become a trap are high (Anke Hoeffler cited by Paul Collier (2008). Thus, public power sharing became an axis of national income distribution. Political elites benefit more in the Burundi context and are known as the major instigators of the social crisis. The lack of national revenues leads to the permanent national budget deficit. Then, Burundi remains strongly dependent on external flows of capital (Burundi national budget 2009). This financing, taking into account its structure and its conditionalities maintain the vicious circles of the debt and accentuates the poverty level. Once again, poverty creates the various factors of the social conflict. Therefore, political competition that leads to political benefits serve for the networks of the social assets and could comprise vertical status including institutions, patrons, chiefs, and politicians at the different levels and horizontal status: clubs, associations, voluntary agencies with the common interests (P.Collier2008). This graphic below confirms that in the actual ethnized democratic competition, the criterion for party belonging is used in the distribution of scarce national resources (jobs, property power). In this case, the ethnic group – Hutu comes first. For instance, Hutu group takes the leader place in the government and parliament institution.

**Graphic drawn from: Official list of parliaments, 2005**



**Source:** Bulletin nr8. Semaine du 18 Juillet 2005. Available

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.globalissues.org/article/3/structural-adjustment-a-major-cause-of-poverty>, viewed 13 April 2009

All these group cohesions (parties) contribute to build up the bases of the social success. Failure in these issues leads to the collapse of community. For example, Burundian political elites give opportunities to their patrimonial networks and less educated clients to low pay jobs and thereby the latter get the means of livelihoods and increase the volume of their welfare spending. Moreover, in a corrupted state like Burundi, some political leaders loot national resources by creating a parallel state built on personal ties, public and private patronage in their illicit deals that profit their networks. For these reasons, democratic elections in 2005 would aim to improve the tendencies. But, how are ethnic and regional differences represented in Public Senior Service Posts in 2009? It is clear that Burundi's public sector is relatively small. In spite that I have no official data (convincing data are not yet available) to persuade anyone, we could refer to the parliament institution in regard to ethnic belonging. Recall that, the Burundi Government has registered more than 40 political Parties. The main Parties that play a great role in the political competition are the following: The National Council for the Defense of Democracy- Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD); Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU); the National Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD); The Union for National Progress (UPRONA); Movement for the Rehabilitation of Citizens (MRC). Moreover, there are Hutu and Tutsi members in all the political parties. Twa social group has three representatives at the Parliament institution called "independent" in this study. Oral source reported that most Hutu members of the ruling party have access to higher jobs than Tutsi. This fact leads to the endless social conflict mainly for those who are pushed into the drastic cuts of welfare spending and denied of the social progress.

**Q4 (continue): could we assert that the degradation of national and international economy is the main roots of the ethnic conflicts?**

**Informant X: She is 40 years old. She is worried about the lack of the family basic needs due to financial crisis.**

**Response:** *Ubutunzi bw'abantu n'igihugu vyaratitutse. Ubu umunyagihugu ntakigira n'ikilo c'umunyu. Ikitavuzwe ni aghuzuru. Abana bamwe bariko baheba amashure baja mu gisoda co mw'ishamba kurondera amahera.*

The people became extremely poor because of the economic recession. Ordinary people have a hard time to pay for one kilo of salt. Even, they can not afford to pay clothes. Children withdraw from schools and are recruited by the rebels' army so as to earn money.

**Response Analysis about schooling, demography and economy**

At the light of the previous response, it appears that the demography, education and economy are vital aspects of national development and national peace. If you fail to take education and demographic aspects into consideration, they affect greatly in some levels social well-fare and can

be the major cause of social threats. The informant above expressed that young people in rural area often are involved in the rebels' army due to lack of income caused by low education level (lack of skills to gain salaried employments). As Gahama, 1994 stated the success of development activities essentially is linked to the general level of education, by the people's aptitudes to understand specific phenomena and to adapt certain rules and practices which improve the life conditions. Education is thus a vital aspect in the development of the country. The major concern for (Gahama.J and C.Thibon 1994) is about education issue.

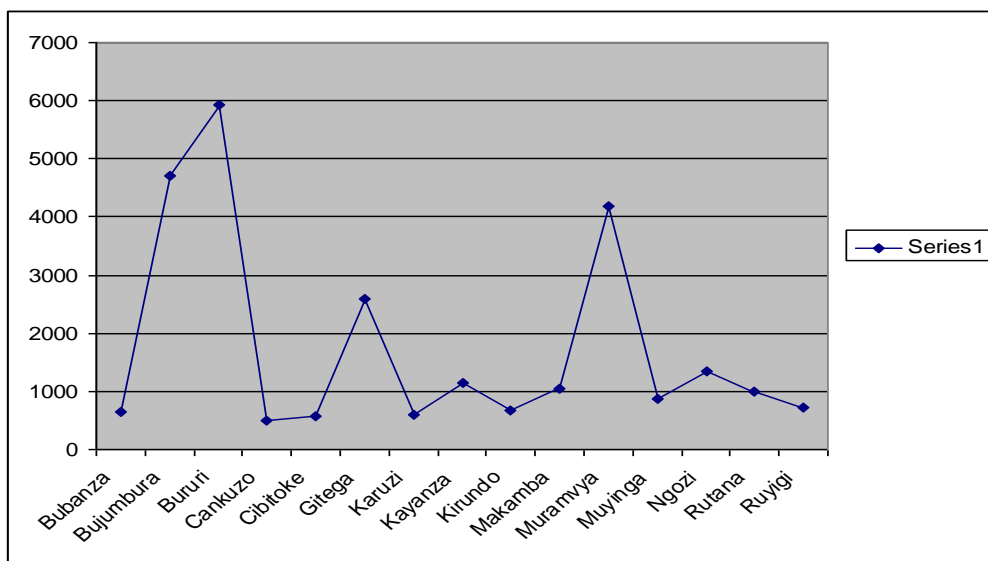
**Burundi: Schooling in primary level.**

Years	1958	1978	1980	1990
% by country	17%	20,81%	28,6%	78,9%

Source: Ndimurukundo.N, 1994

The data above shows that since 1920, colonial administration did not put sufficient efforts in the educating the Burundian people. For instance, the day after the independence in 1962, Burundi had only 13 persons belonging to the elites, and most had graduated in European Universities primarily the Belgium (Augustin Nsanze (2003). At the same period, Burundi had 18 military leaders. It was the military and civil elite who were able to benefit education, thus replacing the power position of the class-GANWA (ibid). Here, my reflections go on to understand that political competition between Burundian elites before and early independence was not justified seen from the number of educated elites. Moreover, in Burundi, the common people lived in a feudal society and were politically marginalized at least before 1952, the year, when the democratic system was installed.

**Burundi: Regional disparities of schooling on the secondary level (1988-1989)**



Source: (Gahama.J and C.Thibon 1994)

The graphic above shows regional disparities of schooling in secondary level based on pupils' origin. As (Gahama and Thibon, 1994) show, the development of infrastructures and stimulation result in an increased level of school participation.

In addition, statistics from 2005 demonstrate that, population rate that are 0 - 14 years is around 46 % and population rate between 15-65 years is around 51 of the whole population<sup>11</sup>. It is observed that when the government lacks the income to ensure the basic needs of the society, it loses its legitimacy in the eyes of the population and is unable to prevent factional infighting or even to defend itself against internal insurrection. Because of combination of overpopulation and illiteracy the conflict escalates. It also allows rebels to mix with the civil innocent population, making difficult for the government army to separate rebels from other civilians when it wishes to do so (Jeffrey D.Sachs-2008). The example below shows how a great number of Burundi young people were involved in the armed conflicts. In 2005, in Burundi, the manpower available for military service was: males 16-49 years old (1.676.855); females 16-49 years old (1.656.366)<sup>12</sup>. This case confirms that low education level coupled with a predominantly young population had huge implications for national and global stability. Regions with bulging youth populations are less socially stable than those with older populations. In that case, there are too many potential young male and female soldiers between the age span of 15-30. Especially impoverished young men without secure employment are fodder for the dreams of political manipulations> (Jeffrey D.Sachs-2008). It is known that schooling enables young people to get better and more secure employment; develops the know-how when farmers communities are working with improved technologies. Schooling benefits the community to keep the children in school for more education and avoid criminal behaviors. In addition, if the economy is weak, the state is also likely to be weak. And so rebellion is not difficult to reconstitute. For instance, a former president of Democratic Republic of Congo( DRC) asserted that in Congo RD, everyone is poor and if you possess \$US 10.000 and a satellite phone, you could hire yourself a small army (Paul Collier-2008). Young men, who are the recruits for rebel armies, come pretty cheap in an environment of hopeless poverty. Life itself is cheap, and joining a rebel movement gives these young men a small opportunity to enrich themselves (ibid). From 1994 and onwards, Burundian young men have followed the same logic and till now some are part of the armed rebel but recruited through ethnic bonds. As we discussed above, the elites group who competed for political power used the historical popular memory. The elite' political maneuver thus aggravated social tensions. The social

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<sup>11</sup> [http://economy.alumnieeni.com/burundi\\_pop\\_pop2.asp](http://economy.alumnieeni.com/burundi_pop_pop2.asp) viewed, 15 may 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Google. Burundi military 2008, CIA World Fact book.  
[http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/burundi/burundi\\_military.html](http://www.theodora.com/wfbcurrent/burundi/burundi_military.html)

crisis spread over in the whole country. Why does the social conflict in Burundi last so long? The label “state failure” can conceal the fact that not everybody suffers to the same extent in such conditions of crisis. Indeed, parts of elites may benefit in such conditions of “durable disorder”<sup>13</sup>. Once more, low income featured. The general level of income in Burundi make certain people exploit the disorder in order to enrich themselves. Conflict makes it easier for them to get access to income of national resources than if the country political situation was peaceful.

**Informant Y: He is man, 50 years old, and is a farmer of Gihosha municipality. He talked about the financial inflation which he believed was caused by a lack of export products that increase the currencies exchange rates.**

**Response:** *Nawe urabibona. Ntaco umuntu agishora naho yokwimbura vyinshi nta faranga ry’akamaro rivamwo. Umarira utwawe mu masoko ariko nturonka amahera y’ivyo ukeneye. Bwaca mu gitondo inzara ikakwica.*

You can observe yourself. You can not sell something of value even if you produce a lot. Our agricultural products have not value. You sell a lot but in return you are not able to pay something of value. After selling your products you are still short of food and might even starve to death of hunger.

**Informant Y: He is a man, 28 years old. He shares the same concerns as the informant above, concerning poverty, due to national and international economic recession.**

**Response:** *Kera ko umuntu yatungwa n’isuka. Ubu gutungwa ni vyo umuntu arimye biragoye. Amase woyagura iki ko atawimbura atagira mase. Ikilo c’amase y’ikizungu ni 1 200 fbu. Wumva woshobora iki kw’itongo ryose.*

In the past, people survived by agricultural products. Today you can not survive. In order to produce, you have to pay even more for mineral manure. The latter is very expensive, 2.000 fbu (2 US \$) for 1Kilo. How much could you pay for family land?

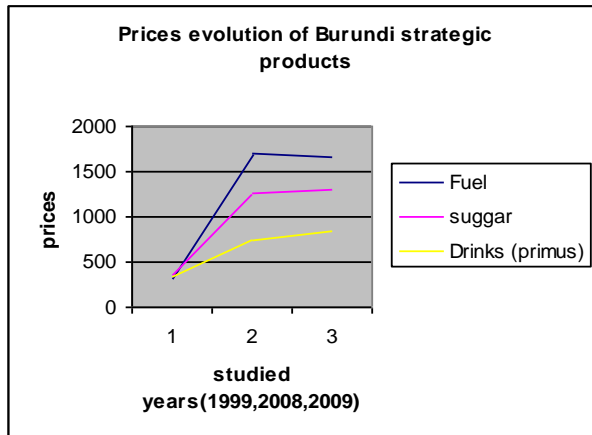
#### **Analysis of the two last interventions (Q4)**

Here, the degradation of national economy is clearly expressed by the previous respondents in the following terms” You can not sell something of value even if you produce a lot. Our agricultural products have no value. You sell a lot but in return you are not able to afford something of value. After selling your products you have not enough food and die of hunger”. This statement has a great significance. It is observed that, on the one hand, social conflict and low global price level of the traditional exports products (coffee in case of Burundi) is tied on the rise of the costs of imports. Particularly fuel is experienced in Burundi. On the other hand, the outbreak of civil war

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<sup>13</sup> P.Chabal and J-P.Daloz, Africa Works.Disorder as political Instrument (London, 1999) cited in < House of Commons Library>.Research Paper 06/51: The African Great Lakes Region. An end to conflict. October 2006.

usually coincide with the rupture of the internal capacity of the state (national inflation) to offer social protection and services to its citizens (Ashok swain et al.; cited by Cyril I. Obi, 2007). In that case, as most Burundians are rural farmers, to avoid social stresses, agriculture's contribution to food security must be framed by two key criteria: (a) increase the availability of food at prices that the poor families can afford, (b) Provide jobs and incomes that will give poor people the means to



**Source:** Economic Statistics of Burundi (2008), published by Society.PANA, arib.info, 21 November 2008.

access food. Burundian agriculture and its economy in general are not able to offer these opportunities to cope with the crisis. As IRIN (2008) claims, in Burundi, Food has become too expensive. Every day, the prices of foodstuffs go up. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 70% of family expenditure in Burundi goes to buy food. The same source warned that only 18 % of Burundi's population consumes enough food, the rest consumes less than 1.400 kilo calories (kcal) per day while the recommended intake of WFP is 2.100 kcal. In this case, can agriculture resolve the food security question, eradicate hunger and promote development?

As Ashel, C and Maxwell (2001) argue, there is now a less consensus concerning these issues in the Africans conditions. Why? The responses of my informant meet the argument of Pretty (1995) cited by Jennifer A. Elliott(1999) when he argues that in ecological terms, resources-poor farmers are concentrated in the most fragile areas (agriculture and livestock), and are exposed to drought, flooding and adverse climatic conditions. In economic terms, some farmers utilize lands quality so as to intensify production, but returns on their labour do not exceed the costs. Thus, many farmers find themselves in a downward spiral of borrowing money or resources to feed themselves or to cover costs of production. Burundian small farmers are trapped in that category which lacks the financial resources to invest in the capital equipment or inputs necessary to raise production or to implement the land use management techniques appropriate to the physical area (machineries to reply human labor forces, pumps for irrigations and expend the phyto-sanitarian's products...). Burundian farmers are little connected to political power and do not participate in decision-

making or exercise control over the many structures which influence their daily lives. Thus, their knowledge of the cause of the social crisis is inadequate.

Furthermore, NEPAD African organization (New Partnership for Africa's Development) in its ambition states to increase an agricultural growth rate of 6% per year. This program will not be achieved in Burundi. Agricultural production is limited by the financial and technical supports provided by different donors according to their political influences. These facts are coupled by lacks of own investments in terms of infrastructures, lack of human skills, brain drain, incapability to use the new technologies, low-income levels in the agricultural sector, and impacts of HIV/AIDS etc. Thus, food insecurity leads to population stress and draws the young people into the war in order to cope with the food crisis by stealing and other criminal acts. This situation is exacerbated by the decline of the global economy.

## **6.2 Other factors: Access to a coast, Governance and their impacts to the social crisis.**

Rural and urban people share the same concerns about economic hardships caused by bad governance and by the lack of access to a coast. One key informant stated " People became extremely poor. It was hard for the ordinary people to afford one kilo of salt....." Burundi is a landlocked, resource poor country with an underdeveloped industrial and manufacturing sector. For this reason, Burundi depends largely on international imports. It is a net food importer, with food accounting for 17 % of imports in 1997<sup>14</sup>. Since 1993, Burundi has suffered from massive ethnic-based violence. Some of the economically active populations are internally displaced from their family land due to lack of their security and have been unable to produce their own food. They were therefore greatly dependent on international humanitarian assistance. The worst still appeared at the time of the coup d'Etat. To protest the 1996 coup, neighboring countries, especially, Tanzania imposed an economic embargo on Burundi for three years. Also, international flights were stopped. The World Bank announced in October 1996 suspension of nearly all support to Burundi. Agriculture, commercial, industrial, transport and health sectors are hindered by Burundi's distance from the sea and high transport cost. The embargo has provoked an acute shortage of fuel, improved seeds, medicines, fertilizers, and a mass quantity of other imported food and materials for humanitarian assistance. The civil war, military coup, poor harvests, and the general insecurity have contributed greatly to inflationary tendencies. Higher transport costs led to higher market prices for food both for rural and urban people. Consequently, at the household

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<sup>14</sup> Google. [www.watsoninstitute.org/pub/op29.pdf](http://www.watsoninstitute.org/pub/op29.pdf) the humanitarian impacts of economic sanctions on Burundi.



level, increases in the price of foodstuffs and other essential items since the imposition of sanctions, combined with rising unemployment and poor harvests, reduced family's ability to cope with the ongoing crisis. Thus, the civil war continued intensively continued due to mass recruitment of youth by rebels (possible due to lack of livelihood) to benefit from political and economic disorders. Hence, to avoid the drastic social conditions, it should be realist to regional leaders, before to implement of sanctions, to think about an inclusive list of humanitarian exemptions, and to draft it in the close consultation with the United Nations. Another aspect is about the transport sector. The transport to a coast for a landlocked country depends upon how much its coastal neighbor had spent on transport infrastructures. In the Burundi case, access to the world market in order to sell its products and internal prices manufacturing and foodstuffs become expensive and leads to economic recession. According to the World Food Programme, prices of basic foodstuffs in Burundi such as beans, cassava, rice, have increased by 52% in 2007 and by 22% in 2008(WFP,2008). People are starting to eat foods they were not used to before. Thus people are often hostage to their neighbors. But on the other hand, landlocked countries are linked to neighbors directly which might create economic inter-dependence. The former case applied to Tanzania and Burundi. It reinforced social conflict in the logic that poverty creates conflict and in return conflict creates poverty. The best is to promote good policies, good governance, economic regional integration, including the elimination of intraregional trade barriers and the reduction of the external trade barriers of the region.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **7.0 DISCUSSION**

This study releases three distinct episodes: (1) the episode for peaceful of the three ethnic group Hutu, Tutsi, Twa in the pre-colonial period, (2) the phase of fighting for access to the ruling power to replace colonial administration early independence and (3) the continuation of previous phase with a particular accent centered on the fight for sharing national rents considered as a main way to access to stable households livelihoods in the crisis economy. As such, the deep-significant change in income composition and instability has become the engine of ethnic explosion in order to secure political and economical benefits. Indeed, the study demonstrates that the roots of the Burundi ethnic conflicts are found in the colonial past. Such knowledge would help to elucidate the factors involved in the repetitive episodes of Burundian ethnic conflicts. Thus, Burundi ethnic conflict is firstly the matter of historical events. This fact has a great repercussion on people perceptions about Burundian social crisis for two reasons: (1) Burundi is one of the African

countries where common people are less connected with the state power;(2) Belgian administration was less engaged than other French colonizers in Africa to promote and ensure political, social, and economic development whereas included in its political contract. Thus, a major reason for the conflict is the low level of public education in Burundi. Therefore, it was not surprising to meet some people who stated that they do not know the causes of the main roots of the present social conflict. Many informants considered without any analysis that the ethnic issue is a matter for elite politicians or those who are with higher education levels. From that case, the results of the different interviews, especially those discussing the roots of ethnic conflict were biased. The social equilibrium that existed until 1920 when the Belgian administration arrived broke down because of the unequal representation of elite people among the ethnic groups in the state apparatus. I also discovered that conflict over natural resources is more structural than conjectural or rather individuals that specific groups and manipulate an ethnic sense of belonging to gain access to the country's natural resources. Today, (1) natural resources conflict is less linked to overpopulation issue that leads to land pressure; (2) and more linked to land management of refugees. Thus, and in that case, it is the law that makes the society organized. Hence, the law respect by all the people and law execution by the government lead to offer relative equal opportunities for the social success and social cohesion.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **8.0 CONCLUSION**

This thesis discusses almost all the dimensions of development and ethnic conflicts: (1) the human dimension in terms of demography, education, social structure, culture... (2) Resources and environment that are conflicts over land and impacts of their degradation and a competition for other natural resources (3) the economic dimension that is conflict which have its base in poverty (4)the political dimension through conflicts over governance, international policies and world tendencies. To treat these issues demands a trans-disciplinary approach to development questions at large. The results of the field work research and the extensive literary reviews, confirm that the competition for land, due to overpopulation is fundamental in order to understand the social crisis in Burundi. The appropriation and exploitation of land did traditionally not create a major prejudice, but have later been aggravated by the return of refugees that fled from Burundi in the 1970s and 1990s. On the one hand, good governance and respect for the laws are the best assets to avoid conflict over natural resources and to organize society. On the other hand, and as we

discussed above, it is clear that it is impossible to wage a war if one does not possess financial resources or allies attracted by the desire of the not yet exploited strategic mineral resources. The Burundian fighters do not have access to the means to organize the rebels armed forces. For these reasons, it can be argued that the ethnically based violence in Burundi is caused by both internal political manipulation and external strategies to get access to the national resources. Finally, Burundian conflict is also rooted in the historical popular memory of the past: traditional practices of the cultural past. For instance, the condemnation to death of a family member of Hutu group at the time of the traditional festivals (see extracts above from ARUSHA Agreement, 2000, chapter 2.3).

The way ethnicity is perceived by the people is a result primarily by how it was constructed and used politically by the colonial administration. However, it could be argued that the social crisis in Burundi is caused by a complicated mix of factors such as social, historical, culture, poverty, governance and external stakes etc. Burundi obvious needs a radical change which is social, economic and political. On the one hand, Burundi must learn to down play ethnic identification. Schooling and urbanization programs should be the first stage that stimulates the consciousness development. On the other hand, Burundi needs economic and political supports from corporations and developed countries. This radical change requires a great sacrifice, an intelligent and political guidance. At last, Burundian people have to become committed to build a political order and a lifestyle inspired by its economic and social realities based on the values of democracy, and good governance.

## CHAPTER IX

### 9.0 ANNEXES

#### 9.1. Scheduled time plan

WEEKS	ACTIVITIES
Week-1	1.Trip: Sweden- Burundi(3days due to delay time) 2. Logistics + Contacts for appointments
Week-2	1. Meeting participation: Communal plan of Community Development: participatory Rural appraisal- land issue.
Week-3	1.Trip to countryside: collective interviews with villagers( young and older men, women, notables people<Abashingantahe>
Week-4	1.Visit to governmental officers(see above): collect of data basis

Week-5	1. Visit to governmental officers for collect data basis + discussion on the link between Burundi social crisis and scarcity of natural resources.
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The motive of the planning of the activities timeline is that the researchers and planners often underestimate the necessary time to carry out a definite task. For this reason I took the best advice to be practical person with my timeline. I thought that things almost always take longer than we think they should. Here for example, the visits to the local and central administration have taken a great probability in terms of duration estimated.

## 9.2 Documents collected during the field research.

Burundi Mineral Resources (1991): An investment Brochure;  
 Code of Environment;  
 Code of Land;  
 Report -2008 of the National Commission of Land and other estates;  
 Good governance (document/Report-2008);  
 Economic statistics of Burundi (2008);  
 Letter of policy of land management (2008);  
 ARUSHA AGREEMENT (2000) for peace and the Reconciliation;  
 Database on the National Education;  
 Community Development plan of the Itaba commune;

## 9.3 Focus group interviews



Sources: by Author



Source: by author

## 9.4 Events

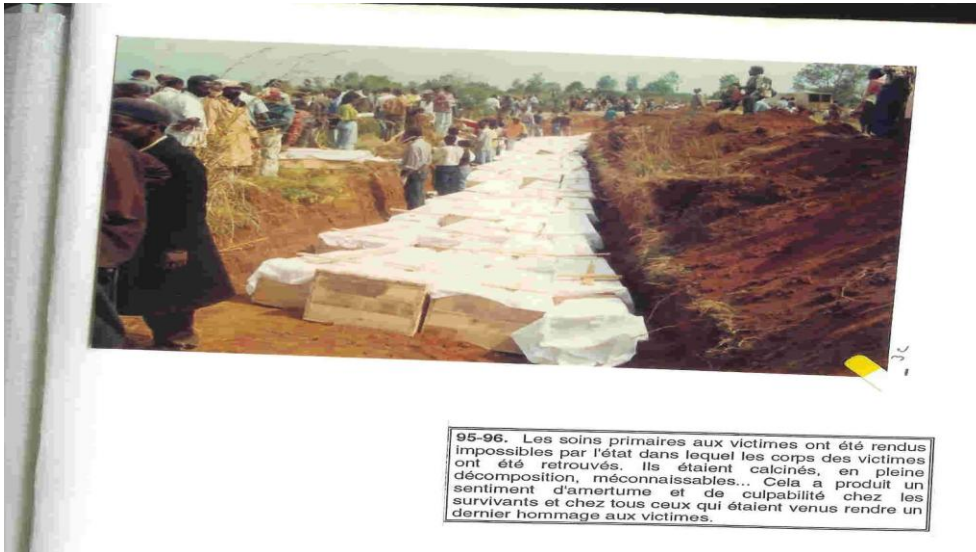
### 9.4.1 Some of mass Killings

#### A. BUTA MASS KILLINGS IN 1997.



Source: [www.tutsi.org](http://www.tutsi.org). Available every time

## B. BUGENDANA MASS KILLINGS IN 1996.



Source: [www.tutsi.org](http://www.tutsi.org). Available every time.

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