Beyond De-Ethnicisation in Post-Genocide Rwanda

Deconstruction of Identity Discourse, Reconstruction of a Political Community

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Abstract. ÷Groupistø and unidimensional construals of collective identity underpin not only much ÷conflict action,ø but also conflict theorizing and policy prescriptions for resolution. The present paper exposes the simplistic assumptions that underlie the mainstream approaches to building unity in post-conflict situations (identity ÷abolitionistø versus identity ÷accomodationistø) and seeks to offer an alternative that would be built on a more nuanced understanding. Two interconnected themes pertaining to Rwanda are explored. First, I challenge the ÷bi-polarity thesisø as the (still) dominant conflict narrative. Second, I outline what I call the ÷extension fallacyø in order to explain how and why ÷false wholeø groups are constituted in our imagination and in practice. Rwanda as any other country emerging from conflict requires solutions that are more nuanced than those currently in the stockpile of standard recipes. To be able to offer them, we need to deeply rethink ÷difference,ø ÷diversity,ø and ÷divisionø first.

The present inquiry builds on my previous work, which studied de-ethnicisation as the answer of the Rwandan government to the challenges of reconciliation and repatriation post-genocide (Purdekova 2008). De-ethnnicisationø as the new nation-building project in Rwanda aims to replace ethnicity and other potentially ÷divisiveø sub-state loyalties with an undifferentiating ÷rwandanness.ø De-ethnicisation is thus composed of the narrative of ÷unityø and ÷dissolubility of difference,ø both rooted in a re-reading of the already much embattled history. The attempt is to cultivate patriotism (õrukundo rw÷igihuguö) and õrwandanicityö (Rwandan values exemplified by the concept of õubupfuraö), while suppressing the expression of other forms of identity.

The discursive frame of the de-ethnicizsation project is ÷inclusiveø, setting itself in opposition to previous nationalist myths aiming to ÷excludeø, but this merely obscures the top-down dissemination and tightly policed boundaries of the discourse, the intolerance to dissent, as well as the forced and merely surface-deep nature of õunity and reconciliationö activities, which, as my fieldwork research suggests, are in fact openings to strengthened social control. Most importantly, de-ethnicisation does not preclude the perseverance of identities or discrimination based on these, and merely remains blind to the multiplicity of old and new difference and the transforming divisions.

If de-ethnicisation presents a sub-optimal identity politics in Rwanda, what are the more suitable alternatives? How should one create a sense of unity Rwanda while not eclipsing pluralism? In order to develop such a model, a theoretical position regarding corporate or collective identity needs to be devised first. Without it, an assessment of ÷difference,ø ÷diversityø and ÷divisionø in Rwanda and an appropriate policy of its management can hardly rest on solid ground.

The concept of õidentityö is exceedingly intricate. Some reject it outright. According to Malesevic (2007:21), identity is a ÷thin and unarticulated concept despite the astonishing variety of uses to which it has been put.ø I rather follow Brubakerøs diagnostics: Identity is a semantically

overburdened concept, which needs to be disaggregated and treated as dynamic (Brubaker 2004). Identity needs to be studied in depth, albeit perhaps selectively, if other questions which intimately tie to it are to be answered. For the purposes of my project, a critical reconceptualization is essential in order to i) understand what ÷unityø in Rwanda can mean and in which way Rwanda is a ÷diverseø and ÷dividedø society; ii) why and how current theoretical models are unsatisfying; and iii) to start devising an alternative identity politics based on the critique.

The analysis shows that a number of aspects in fact join the discourses on identity in the global north and south-- that the framework of õmulticulturalismö (posed as a solution to diversity in the north) and the framework õtribalism/ethno-nationalismö (posed as a problem of diversity in the south) in fact share some common problems. Hence the reworking that results from my analysis should be applicable outside of post-conflict societies. Further to this, by re-conceptualizing identity as such, the paper is able to offer an integrated critique of seemingly õoppositeö post-conflict identity politics, which I call õabolitionistö and õaccomodationist,ö as well as a critique of the prevalent identity metanarrative of Rwandan society, which not only survives today but which directly determines and constrains how we understand its conflicts and what we consider as available õpost-conflictö solutions.

1. Identity: Escaping the landscape of Multiple Reductions

Simplistic construals of collective identity or what Sen (2006) calls the ÷appalling miniaturization of peopleø permeate the sphere of political action and academic thought alike: From the ÷clash of civilizationsø thesis to the world of battling ethnonationalist groups or the enclosed individualist worlds of the liberal economic man, we often build our understanding and direct our action based on one-dimensional and departmentalized models of human diversity. These facile models constitute little-examined and often tacit elements of broader frameworks of theory and action. Representations of this kind might, predictably, lead to simplistic and sub-optimal prescriptions in the sphere of policy.

The particulars of identity reductionism in the non-western world are easy to make out. The story of clashing tribal or ethnic groups has become a true metanarrative of conflict. The problem with this portrayal reaches beyond the õethnicization/tribalizationö of social reality. At the core of this specific conflict discourse lies an almost universal unquestioned essentialism, which views the world as a set of clashing bounded groups, whether these groups are civilizations, ethnies, races, nations, or else. The presumption might be as obscurantist as it is dangerous. The notion that the world is wrought by group conflict ÷misrepresents the genesis of conflict and ignores the ability of diverse people to coexistø (Bowen 1996:3).

While a hidden essentialism defines the current metanarratives of conflict, the popular and openly professed constructivism has a shallow base. Theorists of nationalism and ethnicity often try to determine their position in regard to the priomordialist-constructivist continuum rather than to answer fundamental questions regarding change and permanence of collective forms. How are categories created and how and why are they propagated? Why do categories persist when identifications do not and why at times they engender action when at others they do not? Why are collective forms believed to be or portrayed by some at certain times as ever-present? In other words, when and how do different collective identities come to matter?

To take an example, ÷Hutuø and ÷Tutsiø are ancient terms, extending as far back in time as oral histories allow us to glance. Yet Hutu and Tutsi are ÷ancient words with changing meaningsø (Vansina 2001:2), diachronically (across time) evolving and synchronically (at a point in time)

polyvalent (Eltringham 2004:13). ÷The salience and meaning of Rwandaøs ethnic categories have changed over timeí European rule did not invent the termsí but the colonial intervention changed what the categories meant and how they matteredø (Strauss 2006:20). Colonialism ÷institutionalized and stabilized categories that have been more fluidí and intensified the connection between race and power (ibid:22).ø After the genocide, although these categories are banned from public discourse, they survive as identifications in private, and they continue to structure day-to-day lives. It can be said that the act of genocide and its memory have strengthened the boundaries and the self-identification on either side of the divide even as ethnic categories have disappeared from identity cards and official social and political engineering.

We can conclude that ÷Hutuø and ÷Tutsiø are everlasting categories with contingent meanings. What it means to be a õHutuö or a õTutsiö varies not only across time but also across people. As will be shown later on, identity in Rwanda is also much more complex than a unidimensional Hutu-Tutsi duality suggests. The task ahead then is to offer a critique of both of these two broad types of reductionism, the õverticalö reduction of the very nature of identity reflected in the tendency to õgroupism,ö and the õhorizontalö reduction of multiple and cross-cutting identities through representations of unidimensionality. The exposé and critique will serve to de-construct identity politics, particularly as applied today to post-conflict states, and thereafter to reconstruct it in a more nuanced manner.

i. Vertical Approach: Beyond “Groupism”

The unquestioned adoption of a ÷groupø as a basic building group of collective identity has been recently critiqued by Rogers Brubaker (2002, 2004). He calls ÷groupismø the tendency to see groups as fundamental units of analysis, as internally homogeneous and externally bounded entities, basic constituents of the social world that can be cast as actors (Brubaker 2004: 1-7). Groupism is the tendency to ÷to represent the social and cultural world as a multichrome mosaic of monochrome cultural blocks (2004:8).ø While people might have a tendency for ÷psychological essentialism,ø social scientists should not adopt categories of practice as categories of analysis. Their interest in ÷folk sociology,ø while constituting a good epistemology, is bad metaphysics (83).

÷Groupness,ø the nature of and degree to which something constitutes a group, is a variable, not a constant (ibid:4). It is what we want to explain, not what we want to explain with. Shifting attention from groups to groupness as variable and contingent, rather than fixed or given, ÷allows us to account for phases of extraordinary cohesion without implicitly treating such high levels of groupness as constant, enduring and definitionally present (2004:12).ø The degree of groupness then determines a position on the continuum starting with pure ÷categoryø to a ÷group.ø[1]

Groupism is not only bad metaphysics, its adoption as analytical lens can lead to reification of false wholes in name of which conflicts are often sanctioned by political entrepreneurs. Reification is a ÷social process, not just an intellectual bad habit, and as analysts we should account for the conditions under which this processí can work. But we should avoid unintentionally doubling or reinforcing the reification of ethnic groups in ethno-political practice with a reification of such groups in social analysis (Brubaker 2004:10).ø We can operate with ÷practical categories;ø we can study ÷race, nationality and ethnicity but without assuming that people have a nationality, a race, an ethnicityø (Brubaker).

[1] Group is a mutually-interacting, mutually-recognizing, mutually-oriented, effectively communicating, bounded collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity, and capacity for collective action (Brubaker 2004:12). ÷Categoryø, on the other hand, might and might not refer to an existing group as defined above. It might just refer to people sharing a certain characteristic. In our analysis, we can relate the two, asking about the degree of groupness associated with a particular category in a particular setting.

The dangers of scholarly reification are nowhere more apparent than in the history of Rwanda: ÷There is a chilling traffic back and forth between the essentialist constructions of historians, anthropologists and colonial administrators, and those of Tutsi and Hutu nationalists. ÷Typesø and ÷traitsø incautiously and sometimes fancifully ascribed by social scientists and bureaucrats have often taken on a terrible social reality as the reification and essentialization of cultural difference have been harnessed to deadly political visions (source).ø As will be shown later, most analysts still operate on a highly simplistic and reifying vision of social reality in Rwanda -- the õbi-polarityö thesis-- an assumption that ÷Hutuø and ÷Tutsiø form the basic building blocks of society and that division between them holds the greatest explanatory power vis-à-vis prospects for reconciliation or potential future conflict.

Brubaker is right-- certain scholarly representations should be precluded because they might feed into harmful political practice. But this is a premature ending to the discussion. Are there not certain representations that should be promoted because they preclude such practice? Fallacious groupist thinking animates political practice; violence often continues in the name of ÷false wholes.ø Is it possible to weaken these mobilizations by actively replacing the map identity they rest on? If groupness can coagulate, it can subside too[2] and if academics can unwittingly aid the former, can they also purposefully aid the latter, by promoting nuance and complexity in our understanding of identity and its manipulations? Much rests on the verdict we pass on ÷psychological essentialism:ø Is it really ÷naturalø for people to divide their world into neatly separated groups, producing a particular ÷layø categorization? Or is such a presupposition merely another patronizing and imposed essentialism, which downgrades peopleøs capacity for complexity and change?

ii. Horizontal Approach: 'Differentialism' and 'Similation'

Whereas the above could be considered a vertical cut into the questions of identity, getting into the very analytical questions pertaining to any named collectivity, the present section offers a horizontal and aggregate look at ÷diversityø and ÷samenessø. The first part sketches a more nuanced approach to diversity. It does not do this exhaustively because the focus lies on the method of recognizing or engendering this plurality rather than on ÷namingø it. The second part proceeds in the opposite direction, by asking what are perhaps the wrinkles in a particular plane of sameness (e.g. certain inequalities) that should be ironed out.

Sen suggests that ÷it makes a difference how we choose to see ourselves (Sen 2006:148)ø because ÷reductionism of high theory can make a major contribution, often inadvertently, to the violence of low politicsø (2006:xiv). Yet reductionism pervades narratives of identity. Unidimensionality, the tendency to neatly divide the world into different sets of groups whether religious, civilizational or ethnic/national, thus needs to be not only recognized but superseded. But how to eclipse unidimensionality?

Senøs proclamation that we are ÷diversely differentø (2006) starts to problematize the unidimensional models and highlights identity as multi-referential (Hale 2004). According to Sen ÷the hope of harmony in the contemporary world lies to a great extent in a clearer understanding of the pluralities of human identity, and in the appreciation that they cut across each other and work against a sharp separation along one hardened line of impenetrable division (2006:xiv).ø Benhabib (2002:16) seems to agree: ÷Strong multiculturalistsø often overlook how ÷most individual identities are defined through many collective affinities and many narratives.ø

[2] Naturally, this is not positive in all cases, oppressed people benefit from organized action.

Identity thus needs to be ÷complexified.ø Sen and Benhabib introduce a second-- a ÷cross-cuttingø- dimension. An important third dimension should be added- the possibilities of identity transformation. People switch and acquire affiliations, social action can engender new difference, and as highlighted above, groups, far from being static unchanging entities, are defined by different degrees of groupness. People are not completely free to guide identity change, but if politically, economically and socially empowered, they have the potential to be its agents. Change is not only what happens (i.e. Hutu and Tutsi come to signify different things at different periods due to social and political developments in the Rwandan state). Change can be guided. The main concern then becomes who and how should guide change.

In contemporary political theory, the question of agency over identity change resurfaces in the debates on embeddedness. In the 1980s, ÷communitarianø thinkers launched a critique of the ÷disembeddedø man of liberal theory (i.e. individualist, rational, largely undetermined by contexts). They proposed a more deterministic vision of man formed by and attached to particular physical and thus moral communities. While communitarianism ÷groundsø the abstractness of liberalism, we should avoid that vision of embeddedness which leads us to a groupist and over-culturized vision of man. As Benahbib (2002:81) suggests ÷individuals are capable of cultural narration and resignificationí [and] through their actions [they] re-appropriate and transform their cultural legacies.ø In response to communitarianism, Sen claims that ÷an enriching identity need not, in fact, be obtained through discovering where we find ourselves, it can also be acquired and earnedø (Sen 2006:36).

This vision has important implications as regards policies of recognizing or managing difference. Multiculturalism with its purposeful attention to plurality and difference has become popular in recent decades. It has been accompanied by fundamentally differentialist concepts such as ÷identity politics,ø ÷politics of recognition,ø and strengthened by the postmodern celebration of the multiple, the fragmented, the fluid and the ÷mongrelø in us (Said). According to Sen (2006:114), however, multiculturalism has gained ground perhaps not as much as an important value, but rather an ÷important slogan, since the underlying values are not altogether clear.ø Should we, for the sake of cultural diversity, support cultural preservation or cultural freedom? Unfortunately, it is precisely a mosaic preservationist multiculturalism (Benhabib 2002:8) that often comes out of state policies. The multiculturalism of today is ÷plural monoculturalism,ø the development of many cultures in separation (Sen 2006:157).

Clearly, a ÷differentialistø or ÷multiculturalø turn in policy is insufficient. ÷The merit of diversity depends precisely on how that diversity is brought about and sustainedø (Sen 2006:116). ÷Celebration of diversityø is thus empty term because it is not a value in itself. Differentialism can appeal either to traditionalism/preservationism or the freedom to take decisions and express oneself. If freedom is the value of choice, then diversity is celebrated only to the extent that it results from peopleøs choices. I opt for liberty because not only because it gives people the ability to either follow or escape the past, to reinvent themselves, but also because it heeds to the fact, albeit indirectly, that we are diversely different, have the right to a personal hierarchy of attachments, that we change.

However, there needs to be a move away not only from the simplistic visions of what difference is, how it arises and how it should be expressed; there also needs to be a sway away from the placid differentialist politics accentuating recognition. Senøs ÷diverse differenceø is a superior metaphor of human identity, but it disregards horizontal inequalities, the instances when many aspects of identity are not conveniently intermeshed but are ÷stacked upø like layers of a cake (e.g. those of specific religion are also those most disempowered). If identity politics is to conform to a broader goal of social justice (however conceived), then not only all difference is not to be valued

but sameness/convergence is to be pursued at its expense. According to White (1991, in Harvey 1996) ÷at some point, one must have a way of arguing that not all manifestations of otherness should be fostered; [that in fact] some ought to be constrained.ø

The attempt to resurrect some general principles of social justice makes us navigate away from both the universalisms of modernism with its marginalization of otherness, and the often unquestioning postmodern tolerance of multiple and hybrid ethics. It makes us reject the ÷romancing of the geographical stoneø such as Waltzerøs ÷radically particularistø theory in which every substantial account of social justice is a local account. It signifies a turning away from the communitarian emphasis on place, the ÷dwelling on dwellingø posing as a ÷reconquest of human immediacy from the tyranny of spaceø (Meier 2007:73). ÷Placeø can license the xenophobic, the authoritarian (Meier 2007). ÷Placed ethicsø builds on false wholes. It remains largely backward-looking, static and reificationist. It is blind to power relations producing oppression and inequalities.

Further to this, liberal multiculturalism, Zizek argues, leads to ÷culturalization of politicsø whereby differences conditioned by political and economic inequality are naturalized/neutralized into ÷cultural differences, different ÷ways of lifeø which are something given, something that cannot be overcome, merely tolerated.ø The flipside of this neutralization-through-culturalization effect, which is relevant to Rwanda, is an uncritical acceptance of õsamenessö in a situation where no õcultural differenceö manifests itself-- If there are no large cultural differences (donøt all Rwandans speak the same language?), it appears there is no sanction for political õdifference,ö although there have been powerful stratifying factors at work in form of mobilization using hate propaganda and particular portrayals of history, actual categorical killing and resulting trauma, powerful exclusions from politics or rising rural-urban inequality, among others. In context such as Rwanda, it is the ethnicized and groupist discourse that directly moulds the way we perceive and thus approach political claims making (Fraser; in Benhabib 2002:49). It attunes us to issues of cultural difference/similarity, making them salient, and it eclipses issues of social equality.

To sump up, current multicultural models represent an insufficient ÷identity politics.ø First, multiculturalism often follows groupist thinking, generating false wholes, which, from an instrumental point of view, are more intelligible to the state and thus easier to control and govern. Second, multiculturalism accentuates differentialism. But the ÷whatø and the ÷howø of identity politics should subsume under itself both differentialism *and* similation. We need both the recognition and accommodation of our (not unchanging) differences and the search for universalisms that are (i.e. cosmopolitan accentuation of human connection, sharing of a political project) and should be (procedural political rights, social rights). Such identity politics builds on the possibilities of transformation. Some aspects of such transformation lie in reconceptualization/reframing, others require measured and concrete investments.

New Meanings for "Unity" and "Division"

At this time we might ask where does the confusing and ideologically-charged discourse of ÷unityø and ÷divisionø fit in all of this? What are the so-called ÷deeply dividedø societies; and are there ÷deeply unitedø ones? When does difference become division? Does the absence of diversity mean unity? Can unity exist other than top-down nationalism? The Rwandan state both i) attempts to create a unified official (his)story and suppress public manifestations of particular groupness; and ii) opposes unity to difference (Purdekova 2008). Paradoxically, even with its top-down attempt at nationalism/de-ethnicisation, it still operates according to a groupist logic, operating on categories of ÷Hutuø and ÷Tutsiø and ÷Twa.ø Although it might seem paradoxical, the rise of nationalism after

the end of the Tito era in former Yugoslavia or after the break-up of the Soviet Union can be explained not so much by the ÷survivalø of tangible and everpresent ÷nations,ø but rather by the very perpetuation of national categories (although action on their behalf was forbidden) and the lack of alternative civic identities (Ignatieff 1994, Brubaker 1996). In other words, by no means does the present project stem out the possibility of conflict along ethnic lines, although perhaps due to other than ethnic reasons.[3]

Difference does matter but only inasmuch as it matters to people, representing their particular needs and/or values. Division is that kind of difference that matters from the viewpoint of social justice and relates to marginalization, oppression, prejudice and other similar kinds of perceived inequalities. This is the type of difference that matters from the viewpoint of conflict emergence as well. The recognition that such special kind of diversity is more likely to lead to conflict has been translated into models of ÷horizontal inequalityø (Stewart) or grievance models (where inequality in access to resources or political representation matter). ÷Deeply divided societiesø are societies defined by horizontal inequalities. ÷Deeply unitedø societies might not only be homogenous societies (if such exist), but ÷diversely different societies,ø where different kind of identities comfortably intermesh. Diversity recognition and division recognition are separate issues, and both are important. But this is not all. There are other ways in which a society can become more united or less divided. Attacking inequalities is important but changing perceptions and building connections is equally so. As I will show in the next section, categorical extermination or simply perception of division follow a cognitive fallacy, an ÷extension fallacy,ø which itself feeds off simplistic groupist models of human identity.

Again, what results is the need for transformation in our perception of difference and transformation in the politics of its expression and accommodation. Both Brubaker and Sen urge us to re-imagine our identities based on a more complex and accurate vision of them. Rather than perceiving us and others as participants of separate groups, we should see each of us as diversely different, our allegiances connecting us to others at different levels. Young (in Kymlicka 1995:165) calls us to create politics that treats difference as variation and specificity, rather than categorical otherness. Transformation needs to occur in the direction of similation too, both in terms of building interconnections between people and reducing vital inequalities. Unity should be seen as connectivity, rather than abrasion of difference. The goal is not ÷samenessø but rather creation of threads of interconnection. It can be conceptualized as sharing of particular goods (rights), and as convergence in particular aspects of life (Brubakerøs ÷selective assimilationø[4] thesis).

2. The Rwanda 'Bi-polarity' Thesis - Challenging a Dominant Narrative

Rwandan society and its cleavages have long been framed as an ethnic õbi-polarity.ö This approach contains in itself both the vertical and horizontal reductionisms that I have discussed above. As I hope to show, Rwanda is not simply õa country of Hutus and Tutsisö as the dominant metanarrative of this particular conflict suggests. The diversity and the dividing and connecting lines have always been more complex, and they have been changing over time. They are perhaps even more complex today after the genocide and the vast post-genocide returns from multiple countries of exile. In what follows, I want to demonstrate this complex diversity and division in

[3] Conflict is often sanctioned along ethnic lines and happens along ethnic lines but this does not mean it happens due to ÷ethnic reasonsø such as a political or economic grievance of a particular ethnic group; it might happen due to human reasons, such as to survive or to get ahead.

[4] Brubaker calls for a reformed, ÷selectiveø concept of assimilation. ÷As a normatively charged concept, assimilation is opposed not to difference but to segregation, ghettoization and marginalization (Brubaker 130).ø Certain aspects of sharing are highlighted as beneficial by the new assimilation literature (e.g. speaking of English while not loosing the language of origin; convergence of incomes).

order to undermine the dominant bi-polar vision of Rwandan society. My aim is not to enumerate all differences, to exhaust the whole variety, as this is both impossible and fruitless. After all, ÷capturingø diversity or division is always already stifling to that which is a dynamic and multi-dimensional process. I merely want to probe the simplistic identity maps presently used to draw vast conclusions.

The analysis does not seek in any way to deny that the genocide happened across clearly marked ÷ethnic linesø (although moderate Hutus and Twas were also targeted). But a bi-polar view simply cannot fully explain events and social processes in Rwanda, including the genocide. Other identities, besides simply ethnic ones, have to be taken into account. Furthermore, the fact that the genocide operated along ethnic lines does not suggest existence of two homogeneous and separate groups with unwavering levels of groupness over time. The genocide was contemplated and ordered by a minority of Hutu, only after they managed to wrestle power from the opposition, it operated along a categorical logic and rhetoric which overshadowed the diverse difference of Rwanda, and represented a temporal rise in groupness along categorical lines which had to do more with fear (resulting from war and information asymmetry) than ethnic difference (Straus 2006). What describes a conflict (conflict happening along more or less clearly demarcated lines such as religious lines in Sudan or ethnic lines in Rwanda) and what in fact causes it ó at a broad structural level as well as at the level of individual participationô are two different things.

Today as in the past, Hutu were separated from other Hutu, and Tutsi from other Tutsi by regional, lineage, clan and clientelistic affiliations, among others, which developed previous to class and ÷ethnicø distinctions (Newbury 2001, Vansina 2004). Yet these diverse distinctions have been little studied. According to David Newbury (2001:263), this has been largely a result of the focus on dynastic integrity and colonial boundaries, rather than on the process of incorporation of diverse cultural areas by the expanding Rwandan state. This has consequently ÷blinded outside observers to both the broader continuities and internal diversity [of Rwanda and Burundi]í and compromise[d] our understanding of their histories and identities (ibid:263).ø

Within three broad geographical and cultural areas (eastern grasslands, western highlands and Tanganyika shoreline), David Newbury (2001:263) identifies at least nine ÷smaller regions [which] developed their own outside fields of action and forged individual identities in opposition to each other as well as to the dynastic core.ø Some areas, especially in the northwest and northeast of present-day Rwanda, ÷were conquered only in the past century and even then imperfectly controlledø (Prunier 1995:21). Newburyøs case study of Kyniaga reveals that pre-conquest areas falling outside the purview of the Rwandan state operated primarily along clan lines. While Tutsi was likely an ÷ethnicø identity at the time, Hutu was not (Mamdani 2001:101; Vansina 2001:3). Hutu started as a transethnic, political identity of subjects, becoming relevant through the forced incorporation of a marginal area into the Rwandan state.

The dynamic historical process of expansion of the Nyiginya monarchy, originating in the Nduga area (roughly in the center of todayøs Rwanda), shows that at the time before colonization ÷*it was a centre versus periphery affair and not one of Tutsi versus Hutu* [emphasis added]. If the kingøs chiefly agents in this process were mostly (but not all) Tutsi, their ÷victimsø in the newly controlled situation were both Tutsi and Hutu, and they were defined by their geographical location (Prunier 1995:21).ø Hence the center-periphery divide was one of center-Tutsi versus all those on the particular regional periphery who did not coopt (both Tutsi and non-Tutsi) and by cooptation benefit from the expansionary state. Besides regional identities and the center-periphery divide, divides existed within the center itself among lineages and these often engendered violence (Prunier 1995:39).

Regionalism and lineage politics played an important role also in the run-up to independence, under the two Republics, even during the genocide. On the verge of independence, ÷that political mobilization of the Hutu masses was infinitely more arduous in the core area of the kingdom than in the peripheral marchesø has been argued by Felicien Kamashabi and Jean Rumiya in their analysis of peasant protest (or rather lack of protest) in the Bufundu region, which they refer to as ÷une region non prepare a la revolutionø (Lemarchand 1990:3). Furthermore, ÷the amazing proliferation of Hutu-led parties other than the *Parti de l'Emancipation du Peuple Hutu* (Parmehutu) at the time of the 1960 elections seems to suggest that regional and clan ties (focused on the so-called *bakuru bimiryango*) provided at least as important a basis for social cohesion as ethnicityø (ibid).

Many scholars have noted that discrimination under the two republics has taken the form of regional favoritism. Under the 1st Republic, Kayibandaøs rule benefited disproportionately Hutus from his home region of Gitarama in the south-central region. Under the 2nd Republic, Habyarimanaøs rule benefited the northerners, especially those from the northwest. As Newbury and Newbury (1999:299) suggest ÷the main axis of conflict [under the 2nd Republic] was based on region and class, and for most part these were conflicts between diverse Hutu factionsô again a reminder of the internal heterogeneity within these broad ÷ethnicø categories.ø

÷Within each ÷regional mafiaøø, however, there would further ÷be a tendency to create sub-units according to precise, more narrowly defined geographical origin (Prunier 1995:85).ø Under the 2nd Republic, it was the members of the Presidentøs wifeøs family and close associates who benefited because the President himself did not come from a ÷respectableø family (Prunier 1995:85). Hence the name ÷le clan de Madameø and later ÷akazuø- the little house-- a name historically given to the inner circle of a Kingøs court. By 1989, when coffee and tin prices started falling, the dividing lines within the northern support group became apparent. ÷The elite started tearing each other apart to get at the shrinking spoils, Abakiga against Abanyanduga, then among the victorious northerners Abashiru against Abagoyi, and within the top Abashiru people between the various affinity groups or families (Prunier 1997:350).ø

Regional identities, especially the recent experience of conquest and incorporation into the Rwandan state ruled by a Tutsi elite seems to account for different degrees of violence in Tutsi purges of 1959 and the genocide in 1994. Prunier (1995: 51) mentions that in 1959 ÷the harshest violence was in the north-west, where the Hutu principalities had made their last stand against the Belgian-Tutsi forces in the 1920s and where hatred of the Banyanduga ran high. Although it was the area with the smallest Tutsi population, it was where the Tutsi were most relentlessly hunted down.ø In regard to the 1994 genocide, it was again northwest Rwanda that was considered the ÷breeding groundø of ethnic extremism (US Committee for Refugees 1998:19).

There are other divisions that directly mattered as regards inter-ethnic violence and that undermine the picture of two homogeneous groups of antagonists. Allegiance to different parties, different sections of parties (moderates versus extremists; the Hutu Pawa circle), and hence different ideologies, even class difference (les petits Tutsi versus the urban-dwelling elite) also mattered. Not all Hutu political elites subscribed to extremist ideology. In fact, these were only a small sub-section. It was the elimination of opposition, and consolidation of power not only at central level but in regional centers that was determinant of the onset of mass killing in 1994 (Straus 2006). The powerful show of groupness on behalf of the Hutu during the genocide could happen only at the time when the political and ideological diversity was eliminated, silenced or side-tracked. Rather than a conflict of Hutus and Tutsis, the genocide followed a victory of a particular ideology on behalf of a sub-group in Rwanda desperately trying to remain in power.

Obscuring this process means misunderstanding and simplifying the history of Rwanda, and eventually surrendering oneself to a little too fatalistic image of its future.

After the genocide, Rwanda is even more diverse, but more importantly, differently divided than before. The pure disruptive force of genocide, the diverse experiences of it, the mass returns from various countries of exile, and the changed power structure all point to new constituencies and new inequalities that have to be taken into account. The bi-polarity thesis never fully explained the events in Rwanda, and if employed again, might miss perhaps the most important divider today.

Rwandaøs diversity today is reflected through the various experiences of genocide not only as victim and participant, but also bystander, absentee or saviour (Buckley-Zistel 2006b:1). None of these completely fit ethnic categories. The genocide hit moderate Hutus, Twas, as well as Hutus who looked like Tutsis (Prunier 1995:249). In fact, ÷the first victims were political opponents of the Habyarimana regime; many were Hutu. Furthermore, significant numbers of Hutu resisted the genocide, often by hiding and protecting those at riskø (Newbury&Newbury 1999:295). Muslims, concentrated in Kigaliøs Nyamirambo quarter, disproportionately refused to kill Tutsis and appealed to the universalistic nature of their religion, while the same cannot be said of the Catholic Church. It is for this reason that both Muslim faith is the fastest growing in Rwanda, and that there has been a proliferation of new churches.

The post-genocide returns further complicate the social landscape (Berman 2004:4) in ways that suggest tensions but are far from known and ÷do not necessarily cut along the familiar dividesø (Minow 2003:40). Since 1994, about 2.1-3.4 million refugees have been repatriated or resettled, a ÷record in world historyø (Africa Church Information Review, 18 March 2003). The result is that 25-40% of the present population[5] is constituted by post-genocide returnees, coming back from Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, DRC, and many other countries in Africa and beyond. Most returnees ÷had lived their entire lives abroad, never having seen their mother country until returnø (Pitsch-Santiago 2003:7). Despite this, it is returnees, especially Ugandan returnees, who are perceived as those who hold political and economic power in todayøs Rwanda (to be explored below).

Tutsi is hardly a unified group today. A returnee explains: ÷I feel close to other people like me, people who have returned after the war. Somehow I feel free with them, not like people who lived here before and during the war. With these people, it is more difficult. They are more cautious and closed, I donøt know where they standø (Pitsch-Santiago 2003:7). Other returnees said, ÷I do not feel close to survivors because they misinterpret us being the root cause of genocide; though I do sympathize with themø and ÷rapport does not exist [between survivors and returnees] because we do not know each other well enough; we do not have the same habits (ibid).ø Besides cultural barriers, Pitsch-Santiago cites language barriers as well. ÷In the past, most Rwandans spoke Kyniarwanda which is no longer true. Many returnees did not speak Kyniarwanda as their first language when they returned, and Ugandan returnees are not fluent in French (ibid).ø The government has recently changed all instruction in schools from French to English. Hence tensions today exist not only along returnee-non-returnee lines, among different returnee groups, but more largely among the õFrancophonesö and õAnglophonesö as the latter are perceived as being privileged by the current system.

Naturally, new diversity that defines the Tutsi as well as Hutu community does not automatically imply a diversity of division. As Straus (2006:130) notes, ÷awareness of difference alone does not cause strife.ø But is there more than awareness? Are there fundamental new inequalities between certain categories of people or grievances that might represent or lead to new

5 In some areas, a third of the population is new and in two prefectures half of the inhabitants arrived recently (Delame 2004:4).

divisions? There are indeed signs that new divisions of this kind are emerging. Power is perceived to be concentrated among the ‘Tutsi’ or the ‘Ugandan Tutsi.’ As a corollary, tensions are fuelled by ‘the feeling among the Burundian and Congolese diasporas that they are marginalized from power’ (ICG 2002:18).’ The process of reconciliation does not include Hutu victims of RPF crimes and some claim there is collective blame being placed on the Hutu. Even more worrying is the growing income inequality between town and rural areas, documented by An Ansoms (2009).

Despite these alarming developments, no academic study offers a satisfactory theory of division in post-genocide Rwanda, one that would translate the observed ‘complex orders of difference’ (Berman 1998) into predictions regarding conflict-prone cleavage. Could this be a consequence of the unwavering hold that the ‘bi-polarity’ thesis has in any analysis of Rwanda? Although it is not my aim to build a more complex theory, in the next section I will try and analyze what I believe is one important factor causing division today and will discuss how that division might be diffused through a better politics, including better identity politics.

3. Rwanda and the ‘Extension Fallacy’ – An Outcome of Groupism, An Ingredient in Reification

Identity reductionisms not only misrepresent societies and prevent our understanding of them, they also contribute to what I call ‘extension fallacy,’ a conceptual operation that has a real impact on the ground, as the case of Rwanda will again show. The ‘extension fallacy’ is a term I use to refer to the purposeful or unwitting extension from a sub-group in a category onto the whole of the category. It can be both i) the simplifying cognitive tendency to attribute actions of a sub-category to a greater category; and ii) a purposeful extension fulfilling specific aims, in which case it is hardly a fallacy for those who employ it. Extension of this kind always represents a logical mistake of ‘pars pro toto’ whereby part is substituted for a whole. The first category mistake is committed by scholars/observers and public figures alike and can be unwitting, the second is committed purposefully in order to further political agendas. In both cases it obscures the real cleavages in society and reifies false wholes.

What do we extend towards? This depends on i) the dominant construal of diversity; and ii) the dominant taxonomy or ‘metanarrative of division’. As mentioned above, diversity is often construed as unidimensional; a mosaic of fastly separated homogeneous groups (e.g. religious or ethnic). Such groups are easily ‘fillable,’ a part-for-whole mistake rests on equally mistaken assumptions regarding identity (‘groupism’). Furthermore, if groups in a particular society are often portrayed as divided along ethnic lines, then the extension fallacy would lead from a sub-group within an ethnic group or a sub-group that cross-cuts ethnics onto an ethnic group. In fact, the metanarrative of division along ethno-national lines is so strong in journalistic but also some scholarly accounts that it often acts as a quick heuristic explanatory device even in cases, such as in Rwanda post-genocide or present-day Kenya, where the dynamics are more complex. In what follows, I will demonstrate both a purposeful and an unwitting extension fallacy and their repercussions. The first example comes from the time of the genocide. This is an extreme case, which led to literally ‘categorical’ extermination, but it is no more than an example of a broader phenomenon of an extension fallacy, when all stand in for actions of a few (Straus, 2006:199). The second example comes from scholarly accounts post-genocide, which try to force-fit the old Tutsi-Hutu divide to explain new realities.

During the genocide, the extension was purposeful and it led from the group of invading *inyenzi* to all Tutsi as enemy. According to Straus, ‘the main rationale that perpetrators consistently

gave for genocidal violence is the following: the RPF killed President Habyarimana, RPF soldiers had invaded to kill Hutus; all Tutsis were RPF supporters or potential supporters; ergo, Hutus had to kill Tutsis to prevent being attacked by themø(Straus 2006:153). Straus calls this particular extension fallacy a ÷collective ethnic categorizationø(2006:173) Brubaker would highlight those cognitive processes, which at a specific moment transforms diversely different people into single-layered individuals (tutsi-non-tutsi= enemy-non/enemy), as important ingredient in the rise in groupness (the enemy has been defined) and observes that ÷over and over again, perpetrators speak of the Tutsis as a unit, as ÷one.øOver and over again, Tutsis stop being neighbours, friends and a disparate population: they become a single entity with identicalô and permanentô intentions (Straus 2006:173).ø

But is it really all the perpetrators who ÷committedøan extension fallacy? Perhaps we would commit an extension fallacy of our own if we claimed so. The actions of most Hutu seemed to be animated by other factors and informed from above. All Tutsis were targeted because killing Tutsi was understood as an act of war, relayed as a preemptive action to protect oneself in a state of generalized insecurity. Evidence gathered by Straus suggests that ÷acute insecurity and orders from above ignited a categorical logic of race and ethnicity (2006: 173).øIt is more accurate to say that the common executioners ÷carried outøthe extension fallacy.

The extension fallacy was a purposeful and desperate bid engineered by the extremist sections of the government willing to remain in power . They thought that if they could not prevail over the invading force militarily, they could do it politically, by destroying the whole Tutsi ÷power base.øEven if the *inyenzi* forced their way into a shared government, the logic went, they would have no one to represent. In July 1994, facing military defeat, the extremists pushed this logic even further. Even if the *inyenzi* won, they would have noone to govern over. Those Hutu who were not fleeing on their own, were forced to move and prevented from returning by the government on-the-way-to-exile (Prunier 1995). The Tutsi returnees might gain their home-*land*, but the population would meanwhile settle across the east border in the DRC provinces of North and South Kivu terrorized by remnants of the old government and its militias. Extension fallacies feed off or try to separate out, and in turn reify, political constituencies. Extension fallacy has always been a useful political gambit.

Today, the extension leads from concentration of power in a network of returning refugees to all Tutsi. It is done perhaps unwittingly, and often by observers of the situation in Rwanda. I came across this particular extension fallacy while writing and researching on de-ethnicisation as a ÷minority visionøof a Rwandan future, originating from and promoted by the authoritarian government whose kernel hails from exile. What caught my attention were the divergent attributions regarding the present quite-undemocratic concentration of power. While some viewed it as a Tutsi minority rule, other saw it as the rule of the Ugandan returnee group. I found Rwandaøs political system described as a ÷Tutsi monopoly of military and political powerø(Buckley-Zistel 2006:11; Reyntjens 2004:187), representing the ÷Tutsification of powerøand the nominal Hutu presence (Mamdani 2001:271), the ÷manipulation of ethnicity through ÷ethnic amnesia,øresulting in discrimination against the Hutuø(Reyntjens 2004:38), ÷ethnocracy but with just enough power-sharing at the top to enlist a measure of Hutu collaborationø(Lemarchand 1997:10).

Yet as much as the elite in power are predominantly ÷Tutsis,øthey are also predominantly ÷returneesøand, more specifically, predominantly ÷Ugandan returneesøsupporting the RPF (which itself is fragmented). Today, there is no homogeneous ÷Tutsiøcategory. Tensions exist among Tutsi

returnees and survivors (Mgbako 2005) and among the Tutsi returnee community as well[6] (HRW 2000). As Oomen (2006:19) writes ÷military, bureaucratic and political power is consolidated in the hands of a *minority of Tutsi* linked to the RPF, of whom most returned to Rwanda in 1994 after having been exiled in Uganda for decades [emphasis added]ø Reed (1996:498) further adds that ÷while the RPF maintained virtually no civilian administrative structures [in exile], nearly all the skilled manpower now available in Rwanda has come from the exiled community which gave birth to the movement.øPitsch-Santiago (2003) and Zorbas (2004) also relay the perception among the rest of the population that a sub-set of the Ugandan returnees are more politically connected and have more opportunities.

Neither ÷Tutsi ethnocracyø nor ÷Ugandan Tutsi dominationø is a completely correct rendering of what is problematic with the ÷RPF-ruled,ø effectively one-party state. Yet both are dangerously reificationist. Using such categorical attributes might later form the contours of conflict. The way the division is described is not only groupist, but it builds on the Hutu-Tutsi binary with which politics in Rwanda has been described for past 50 years. The discussion is wrongly focused altogether. It is not a group or a sub-set of Rwandan population that is a problem (this always risks an extension fallacy), but rather the political system that has come to place, which favors a particular vision of the future of the country, a diasporan nationalism repatriated. All that should remain of the discussion is that there is a monopoly of power in place, that there is a minority vision of the future pursued, and that, hence, the political process should change. The important lesson to draw here is that social markers can lose their salience if people feel that they can access resources including power on an equal footing, or at least have the same chances to do so. In other words, the solution to ÷authoritarianismø might also connote the prevention of loading of a certain social category with discriminatory meaning.

4. Conclusion: Alternative Approaches to Post-Conflict Political Unity

There are generally two mainstream and opposed approaches to post-conflict ÷unityøô the abolitionist attempt (destroy/deny/delete difference, insert unity) and the accommodationst attempt (recognize difference and balance it). De-ethnicisation belongs to the first camp. Consociational democracy or power sharing belong to the other. Yet these seemingly ÷opposedø approaches share much in common. Both are top-down structures erected on a simplistic and groupist vision of identity. Through the lens of their theory, societies are amalgams of separate groups. The two theories differ only as to whether and how these groups can be modified. While consociationalism proposes to recognize the set of groups that ÷already existø (through either pre-determination or self-determination), de-ethnicisation proposes that these separate groups can be merged into one. Neither theory is capable of challenging the dominant narrative of bi-polarity in Rwanda. Power-sharing would consider Hutus and Tutsis as the building blocks of a new political deal, de-ethnicisation does not preclude perceived inequality in access to power narrated along this bi-polar spectrum. Operating along a fundamentally groupist logic, none of the two approaches undermines the extension fallacy. Both are fundamentally disconnected from the bottom-up response.

In todayøs Rwanda, power-sharing is not the optimal scenario. As Mamdani suggests, Bahutu and Batutsi should not be reproduced as dualities, which is the case in power-sharing, but rather transcended (Mamdani 1996:30). Mamdani clearly operates on a simplistic and archaistic notion of a ÷bi-polarø society (the cleavage might not be between Hutu and Tutsi) but his general conjecture holds. ÷If people of different identities can communicate only through the recognition of

[6] E.g. ÷Tutsi who returned from exile in Burundi or Congo have found their hopes for rapid success blocked by the predominance of those who returned from Ugandaø (HRW 2000).

their differencesí how [can they] ever foster supra-ethic or universalist attitudesø? (Kebede 2001:280). The transcendence that Mamdani talks about though cannot be done by negation, suppression and even criminalization of particular expressions of groupness, even if this sanction goes hand in hand with broader õnationalö identity engineering, as is the case today. We can both build unity (universalist attitudes, interconnection), and attend to difference without instituting it as division/cleavage. The only question is how this should be done and how should it not.

Some basic contours of an alternative political system and identity politics should be apparent by now. The political outline should follow deliberative democracy. The expression of plurality should be in the hands of those who constitute a polity, although plurality (and thus liberty of expression) should be minimally eclipsed from above to exclude extremist ideology. Such approach fits within the wider waning of the ÷differentialistø turn in social thought, public discourse and public policy (Brubaker 2004:117) and builds on the resurgent interest in forms of civic commonality. This is where the new identity politics of both difference and similation fits in.

Based on all considered above, in fact a three-layer approach emerges. First layer represents the ÷proceduralism of plurality.ø Rather than building a political system on enumerated diversity (such as in certain power-sharing systems in post-conflict contexts), we should build a political process whereby difference/diversity can express itself (almost) freely and continually. It is Young (in Kymlicka 1995: 271) who calls for an ÷openness to unassimilated othernessø which is ÷perpetually being constructed and deconstructed out of the flows and shifts of social life.ø Only a democratic system allows for such a continual negotiation. In such a model, the main goal is not preservation but control over expression.

The second level represents the project of ÷common denominatorø creation. This attempt does not strive for homogeneous expression but rather connectivity and equal respect for certain givens. Such connectivity is to a certain extent achieved through the procedure of democratic participation, but this is not sufficient (Snyder and Ballentine). In order for the new identity politics to take root, certain things have to be equally shared among all-- respect for diversity, complex visions of identity, dedication to dialogue and procedural rights, common building of a vision of social justice. The third level involves ÷radical levelingø or similation. The attempt is to recognize the warping of space of difference by political economy and to address the resultant inequalities.

Altogether, the above three-layer approach seeks to overcome the simplistic attempts of accommodation versus abolition, or assimilation versus separation (depending on which vocabulary we choose). The model seeks to overcome the passive acceptance of as-is states; the groupist and unidimensional visions of diversity on which policies of separation or accommodation operate. It also shows that unity and diversity can coexist, which runs against the visions of nationalists who ÷attempt to create forced unity out of diversity, coherence out of inconsistencies, and homogeneity out of narrative dissonance (Benhabib 2002:8).ø At the same time as we allow the free play of (more complexly conceptualized) difference, and build unity as proceduralist connection and cultivation of basic denominators, we have to understand certain inequalities as difference that should not be perpetuated.

On a careful concluding note, the fact that a sort of deliberative democracy described above presents a superior political system, which can accommodate a more nuanced view of human identity, and new identity politics derived from it, does not mean that it will. Most of the world seems to be cued to simplistic dominant narratives most of the time and to behave accordingly. The renderings of conflict, and the repertoire of post-conflict solutions seem to hopelessly revolve around groups as static and bounded beings. Many political futures seem to be fundamentally eclipsed by the accepted narratives of their past. Yes, it is true that freedom and plurality of speech

and remembrance ÷open the domain of the possible to what is not yet thought or saidø (Arendt, in Saunders 2007:2). The real challenge though does not lie in bringing freedom and plurality. The real challenge is to make the freely spoken and remembered something else than divergent positions on an accepted or acceptable, and many times distorted, narrative of the past.

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