



CONFLICT PREVENTION AND DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION IN AFRICA: A POLICY WORKSHOP

Country Case Study

STRUCUTURAL CAUSES, DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION IN BURUNDI AND RWANDA

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INTRODUCTION

This paper analyzes the relation between development aid and the structural causes of violent conflict. It does so through a case study of two countries, Burundi and Rwanda.

Burundi and Rwanda are about as structurally alike as two countries can be: they share agro-ecological conditions, ethnic composition, colonial history, economic constraints, and, unfortunately, histories of mass political violence. And yet, there are profound differences between them, with major implications on the dynamics of violence and the role of development assistance therein.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 1 analyzes the structural and intermediate causes of the mass violence that beset Burundi and Rwanda in the 1990s. It explores the standard causal factors usually identified in the literature and synthesized in the background paper to this conference. It also addresses, lightly, the degree to which development aid up to the early 1990s affected these structural and conjunctural factors. Note that until the mid-90s aid did not have as a conscious aim to prevent or reduce violent conflict.

Section 2 analyzes in more detail the extent to which development aid, after violence broke out in both these countries—and especially after peace returned—sought to deal with the structural and intermediate causes of violent conflict. There is a lot more to say here, as by this time, preventing the (re)-occurrence of violent conflict has become a major aim of the development community in Africa.

The conclusion will do what its name suggests, trying to capture some major, original, and usually rather unpleasant insights based on this double case study.

I. HISTORY

Before the arrival of the colonizers, Burundi and Rwanda were both kingdoms with fine socio-political hierarchies. In Burundi, the King (Mwami) was surrounded by an aristocratic/princely class (*ganwa*) which was in competition between different clans for the next kingship. The King was neither Hutu nor Tutsi; he embodied the nation. In the middle, various levels of Tutsi existed: first those at the royal court in Muramvya, the Tutsi-Banyaruguru; below them the ordinary pastoralist Tutsi, mainly Tutsi-Hima. Below, there were the large masses of Hutu. All these groups were divided and united by lineage and clan and by the changing vagaries of closeness to the Court. The Twa, few in number, were ill considered by all. Hutu chiefs existed at different levels, and some Hutu played major roles in the royal administration. A final important and *non-ethnic* institution was the *Bashingantahe*—wise men, appointed by local communities themselves, acting as local mediators and judges.

This closely resembles the set-up of neighboring Rwanda. It is generally recognized that the Kingdom was more centralized in Rwanda than Burundi. Rwanda had neither the institution of *Ganwa* or of *Bashingantahe*—and both these are institutions that in their workings created space for Hutu to be associated with the exercise of power. In short, Rwanda's pre-colonial set-up was more exclusionary and rigid than Rwanda's.

The colonial period

Germany, briefly, and then Belgium, for four decades, ruled Burundi and Rwanda through indirect rule with the King and the royal court and administration still in charge of running the territories, but under the supervision of colonial authorities. But the Belgian rulers also altered the system profoundly. The Ganwas and Tutsis in Burundi (and the Tutsi alone in Rwanda) were seen by the colonial power as the ruling group with the Hutus destined to obey. Only they received higher education. Traditional socio-political relations were modified. Political, social and economic relations became much more rigid, unequal, and biased against the Hutu.

At the same time, the state intervened more heavily in people's life. New taxes were introduced, as was compulsory public labor, mandatory cropping, and occasional forced labor for the maintenance of streets and buildings. Some of these measures were ostensibly for the people's benefit—mandatory manioc cropping, for example, to reduce the risk of famine, or ditch digging to combat water-induced erosion. Others were needed by the colonial state pay for its upkeep—mandatory coffee production to pay for taxes, for example. These two interventionist but low-capacity and unequal states turned independent on July 1, 1962, with little preparation.

Independence

Burundian politics started with the 1958 victory of a royalist, nationalist, multi-ethnic party UPRONA, led by Prince Louis Rwagasore, a popular prince with good links to the Hutu community. Rwagasore who was assassinated in October 1961—a crucial event that changed Burundi forever. During the next four years, Burundian politics was extremely unstable and gridlocked. The main parties became divided internally, the Hutu-Tutsi division became much more important, governments came and fell rapidly. After a failed Hutu *gendarmarie* coup d'Etat in 1965, the military officer in charge of the violent counter-operations, Major Micombero deposed the King and declared the First Republic, with himself as President. This was the start of almost three decades of military rule by a small group of Tutsi-Hima from Bururi province: Michel Micombero (1966-1976), Jean-Baptiste Bagaza (1976-1987) and Pierre Buyoya (1987-1993). Their rule constituted the creation of a low-caste Tutsi dictatorship.

Burundi was dominated by one single party, UPRONA. With its women's and youth movement, all Burundians were theoretically members. There was little separation of power between executive, legislature, judiciary branches of the government, the army, and the single party. The central clique, all Tutsi, derived its power from control over the higher echelons of the army, the key levers of the state (and, consequently, of aid flows) and party, as well as the small business sector. Dissent was crushed increasingly violently.

In 1972, after an uprising by Hutu and Congolese rebels, during which Tutsi were killed, the army went on a two months pogrom, systematically killing almost all educated Hutu throughout the country. Between 80,000 and 200,000 Hutu were killed and hundreds of thousands more fled the country, often for decades. These events are at the core of Hutu identity in Burundi until now.

Rwanda served in many ways as a mirror image of Burundi. It shared a political system characterized by a single party, omnipresent throughout the country, which was controlled by a small, ethnically and regionally determined clique of people, whose control of the army was crucial to their survival. It shared as well the presence of massive numbers of refugees of the

“losing” ethnic group on the territory of its neighbors. But in Rwanda, the group in power was from the beginning solidly Hutu, i.e. the “opposite” of Burundi. Indeed, in the years leading up to Independence, the King had been overthrown through what came to be labeled the “social revolution” of 1959. Between 1959 and 1963, repeated pogroms against Tutsi took place, sending a large proportion of (mainly elite) Tutsi into exile in Uganda, Burundi, and elsewhere. In Rwanda, then, the “ethnic majority” ruled. One of the ways successive regimes kept themselves in power was by maintaining the social revolution ideology, and the notion of Tutsi as outsiders, ready to grab power and restore “feudal oppression” if given half a chance.

Burundi and Rwanda, in short, were each other’s worst nightmares. The political system in the one provoked fear in the elites of the other; violent ethnic cleansings—of Tutsi in Rwanda and of Hutu in Burundi—proved that the “other side” could not be trusted. In the 1990s more than ever, the violent political crises in both countries fed into each other on a daily basis.

The explosions of violence in the 1990s

Things began spiraling out of control from the late 1980s onwards. In 1988, an uprising occurred in Burundi, organized by a radical Hutu movement with roots in the Tanzanian refugee camps and in Rwanda. Hundreds of Tutsi were killed, as well as thousands of Hutu in army reprisals. In 1990, the Rwanda Patriotic Front, composed of Tutsi rebels from Uganda and the rest of the diaspora invaded Rwanda, beginning a civil war there. Tensions rose dramatically throughout the region. Realizing how broke the system was and under significant international pressure to democratize, Burundi’s military President Buyoya began a political opening which eventually led to elections, won by a recently created Hutu party, Frodebu. Rwanda was forced towards elections as well, as a result of the peace negotiations in Arusha—but it never got there.

Things spiraled out of control in late 1993. In October, Burundi’s first elected Hutu president ever, Melchior Ndadaye, was assassinated by the army after 3 months in power, as was the vice-president and a number of ministers. The coup plunged the country into chaos and violence. First popular pogroms against Tutsi took place in many parts of the country: thousands were killed. This was followed by mass reprisals by the army against Hutu: tens of thousands died, and hundreds of thousands fled. The coup itself formally failed a few days later, after major international pressure bolstered by freezes of aid—a partly successful use of aid as a tool for political change. But it was too late for Burundi. The dynamics the coup had set in motion remained: a constitutional and profound political crisis that was to last for years, mass ethnic violence throughout the country, a new refugee crisis of enormous proportions, and further confirmation for both sides that the other was not to be trusted.

Many of the Hutu who fled Burundi in 1993 would eventually participate in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. But more than that, the “Tutsi coup” in Burundi demonstrated once again to Rwandans that Tutsi could not be trusted (even though many Burundian Tutsi regretted the coup). As many as 800,000 Tutsi were killed in a hundred horrific days in Rwanda. Burundi’s violence was more continuous and low-intensity: over the next decade, an estimated 300,000 persons were killed, and millions fled their homes.

Ending the wars

The civil war in Rwanda and the genocide ended as abruptly as they had started: by July 1994, the FPR was victorious on the battlefield; the genocidal interim government and up to 2 million Rwandans fled the country, and the FPR created a government of so-called national unity that was totally dominated by its armed wing. The civil war in Burundi lasted for more than a decade, in what was soon to be a stalemate between various Hutu rebel armies (constantly splintering into smaller groups) and the Tutsi-controlled army. The war ended through negotiations in Arusha and in Pretoria, with a set of ethnic compromises guaranteeing that the army, the government, the parliament, and indeed all other modern institutions of the state shall become multi-ethnic.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE RELATION BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT AT THE ONSET OF CONFLICT

In the next pages, I will briefly look at the standard factors identified in the literature on the structural causes of civil war in Africa, and well synthesized in the background paper to this conference. The aim is to analyze if these factors do indeed explain the violence in Burundi and Rwanda: which generally recognized factors are relevant and which are not? What is their interaction? What are the differences between Burundi and Rwanda, and what does that mean for our understanding of the importance of these factors? I also briefly explore in each section the impact development aid has had on the particular variable under discussion. At the end of this section, I will pull these factors together and provide a more general, systemic analysis.

Structural/Root Causes

poverty

Collier statistically argues that civil wars occur far more frequently in poor countries: only at a certain point of income per capita do trends reverse and peace becomes the norm. Almost any development practitioner in Burundi and Rwanda, and all donor and government policy documents, tells us the same: violence is the result of poverty. Below, we briefly look at the data.

The facts seem to contradict any simple causal relation between poverty and violence. Both these countries were among the world's very poorest and peaceful long before their respective civil wars began.

An important distinction is often made between poverty (static) and impoverishment (dynamic). Medium-term trends in GDP per capita on a PPP basis (i.e. adjusted for the real cost of living) were significantly upwards for both countries in the decades preceding their civil wars. Rwanda at the time of the genocide was significantly less poor than its neighbors: it was generally considered a model of development in Africa (Ansoms & Marysse 2005; Uvin 1998) Composite indicators such as the Human Development Index demonstrate improvements in performance for much of the preceding decades in both countries. (UNDP XXX) In some data series, these upwards trends largely continued up to the genocide; in others, there were declines in recent years—one can find data to “prove” either argument. So, clearly, neither poverty, nor long-term impoverishment, can explain the descent into violence of Burundi and Rwanda, for both data and logical reasons.

Gross domestic product based on purchasing-power-parity (PPP) per capita, in \$

	1980	1983	1986	1989	1992	1995
Burundi	384	490	567	644	718	565
Rwanda	669	797	989	929	962	898

IMF 2007

Burundi and Rwanda HDI

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2003
Burundi	0.285	0.311	0.345	0.353	0.324	N/A	0.378
Rwanda							

UNDP

Development aid did try to decrease poverty and promote economic growth, of course—for much of the decades preceding the 1990s, this was its sole aim. Rwanda’s growth was higher as its government was generally more efficient, but, as we know from all available studies, project-based aid alone (the norm for almost the entire time) is very ineffective in promoting economic growth anywhere: small-scale successes rarely lead to large-scale change, and gains are often unsustainable.

Inequality (static and dynamic):

In *Aiding Violence*, I argued that inequality was high in pre-genocide Rwanda and that this was casually related—as part of broader dynamics of social exclusion and what I called humiliation—with the genocide. I believe the same holds for Burundi.

Let us be clear: inequality by itself, even if high, does not cause violent conflict: what matters is the legitimacy of the processes that create the inequality. In both Burundi and Rwanda, as in many other countries, inequality was produced by the control of a small elite of the levers of the state (and foremost the army). Corruption as well as unequal access to education and to aid funds were the main mechanisms by which small elites managed to reproduce their advantages. The resulting system structurally blocked the potential life chances of the overwhelming majority of the population—a situation of “structural violence” that is often propitious to acute violence.

The nature of inequality was very different between Burundi and Rwanda. In Burundi, inequality was between ethnic groups (eventually parties to the war)—the famous horizontal inequality of Frances Stewart²: almost no Hutu were well off, and all the well off were Tutsi (although clearly, not all Tutsi were rich either). In Rwanda, inequality was between elites and non-elites defined in largely non-ethnic terms—in other words, inequality was both intra-Hutu and intra-Tutsi.

The similarity, however, is crucial too: in both cases, it is control of the state and the army that determines the group that is at the upper side of a high and growing inequality. The core variable, then, is not economic inequality as such, and even less ethnicity as such, but patterns of

² See Francis Stewart, 2004, *Horizontal Inequalities: A Neglected Dimension of Development* Working Paper No. 1, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security, and Ethnicity (CRISE).
<http://www.crise.ox.ac.uk/pubs/workingpaper1.pdf>

exclusionary governance—once again, not something easily measurable quantitative studies that have dominated the debate.³

Every Burundian knows this system is *the* key problem, the main cause of poverty and misery – and that continued blind development assistance merely strengthens it. Some examples. In a recent exhaustive study on ethnic perception in Burundi, people of all ethnicities overwhelmingly identified the causes of ethnic violence as corruption (30%), social exclusion (22%), the behavior of elites (20%). Poverty is in 4th place, with only 6%; the 1972 violence 4%; and ignorance 3%! (Nimobona 2005: 18). Similarly, the popular consultations that were part of the PRSP process often have ill governance in first place, ahead of the war, poverty, sickness, land scarcity, and all other factors specialists tend to privilege.

Overwhelmingly, development aid did not work on these variables. On the contrary, by its blindness to these insidious processes of social exclusion, it tended to reinforce them. Education is maybe the best example of this. In both countries, much international assistance went to this sector, from universities down to primary schools. Schools were built, exercise books imported, teachers trained, and ministries reformed. But nobody seemed concerned with the true stake of education: higher education (at least end of high school and preferably university) is the only way for Burundians and Rwandans to escape a life of inescapable poverty in agriculture and the informal sector, and entry to these higher levels was profoundly conditioned by processes of social exclusion. This was extremely blatantly the case in Burundi, where access to university was stunningly biased towards Tutsi from Bururi to the detriment of the entire rest of the population. But in Rwanda, as well, through corruption and social networks, access to higher education ended up reproducing the benefits of a small elite. In both cases, this led to amazing regional mal-distributions of aid—in education and more generally—in favor of presidents’ home regions. In both countries as well—although more prevalently and visibly in Burundi—corruption rose, and much of this was based on the capture of aid resources. Aid, not deliberately nor consciously but blindly, ended up strengthening deeply anchored systems of social exclusion in both Burundi and Rwanda.

Weak states

Both countries are often described as weak states, and this weakness is seen as a cause of violence, in both the general literature on violent conflict and reports on Burundi and Rwanda. Of course, we first need to clearly define what “state weakness” actually means. Deborah Brautigam defines it by the state’s capacity to levy taxes⁴. I take the term to refer to a multitude of variables that measure the capacity of the state to achieve its aims as a state (incl. to raise revenues in a stable manner as required for its survival). This is likely to depend on a sense of statehood among the population; the human and financial resources at their disposal relative to the task at hand; and the existence of an un-captured bureaucracy. Rwanda scored high on all three these variables, whereas Burundi scored much lower (with the exception of the first one). In short, Rwanda was a very strong state at the time of its self-destruction, whereas Burundi was much more a typical weak state, although less so than many other African ones. State weakness, then, is not by itself the cause of civil war. However, it is necessary to nuance standard

³ See Ravi Kanbur. ‘*Poverty and Conflict: The Inequality Link*’, International Peace Academy, New York, 2007.. <http://www.ipacademy.org/asset/file/189/mgs-povr.pdf>

⁴ Aid Dependence and Governance. Stockholm, SIDA, 2000. www.egdi.gov.se/pdf/20001pdf/2000_1.pdf

understandings of state strength and weakness, which may shed very different light on the question of state weakness.

Both the Burundian and Rwandan states were profoundly socially anchored. Both were longstanding, centrally governed monarchies, whose current boundaries were very close to what prevailed before the colonizer arrived.⁵ Burundians and Rwandans have known themselves as such since centuries, and that holds for Hutu as much as Tutsi. Being rather small, equipped with a good communications network and with a long history of central control, both countries had omnipresent states that managed to extend control over the entire territory. Between the unique party and the public administration, Burundians and Rwandans were under constant supervision of the center down to the level of the *nyambakumi*—the “ten household” chief. In this respect, both Burundi and Rwanda were far from weak states.

Admittedly, financial and human resources were very weak once one leaves the center. After independence, with the Belgians leaving these countries almost totally devoid of qualified human resources (except for priests), the needs for education and technical assistance were dramatic. Over the years, however, major progress was made here, among others through international development assistance: while these states were still characterized by significant financial and human resource weaknesses in the 1990s, those constraints were much less severe than before. Van de Walle points out that state capacity weakness in Africa is by now more an act of policy choice by African leaders than an unavoidable necessity, and this holds for Rwanda and especially Burundi too⁶.

The final criterion of a strong state is the existence of a solid bureaucracy, as attested not only in well trained people but also in the presence of an ethos of bureaucratic competence and autonomy for the public good.⁷ Such a bureaucracy has never existed in Burundi⁸, and exists only in part in Rwanda.

While the central state is strong in Rwanda and weak-but-stronger-than-the-African-average in Burundi, what concretely happens on the ground throughout these countries is strongly tributary to local networks of power and affinity. The central state intervenes in these local networks through the nomination of crucial local power holders—administrators, school teachers and directors, party leaders, and other educated intermediaries. But it does not fully control them from above, and is obliged to co-opt them, work with them, offer them *quid pro quo*'s. The key mechanism by which violence extends from the center (where it always begins in these countries) to the periphery is through the actions of these cadres of intermediary elites: they compete with each other for local benefits, doing so in part by their relations with powerful politicians in the center, as well as their control over development resources at the local level. It

⁵ Pierre Englebert suggests that African states' post-colonial capacity is stronger if there is “congruence with pre-colonial institutions” and the more informal institutions “are embedded in domestic social relations.” Pierre Englebert. 2000. “Pre-colonial Institutions, Post-colonial States, and Economic Development in Tropical Africa.” In *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 53, no.1 (March), pp. 7-36.

⁶ *African Economics and the Politics of Permanent Crisis*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

⁷ *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. New York, Princeton University Press, 1995.

⁸ Laely, Thomas. Local Communities, and Central Power in Burundi. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, 4 (1997): 695-716.

is their local competition that drives local dynamics of violence⁹—within a centrally-created climate that favors violence.

While there are major differences in state strength between Burundi and Rwanda, there is a way they are both very alike, namely the profound artificialness of their institutional landscape. All the “modern” institutions, the ones the international (aid) community recognizes and supports, would basically cease to exist if it were not for foreign money. Since decades, more than half these states’ budget comes from aid, and so does basically the entire NGO sector’s financial lifeline: both could not remotely exist in their current form if it were not for this continuous flow of external subsidies. Even the Church, a major player in their social and economic landscape, could not survive in its current form without constant donations from abroad. Much of what exists in terms of modern, formal enterprise—construction, transport, banking, food services—exists because of the physical presence of the international community. In short, the modern institutions of Burundi and Rwanda are artificial, in that none of them can be sustained by internal resources and efforts. None of them have either domestically emerged or been negotiated among internal social forces¹⁰. This may well be *the* key issue in understanding the nature of the state and its relation with social exclusion and violence.

Hence, the state in Burundi and Rwanda was (and still is) simultaneously weak and strong. As a concept, it was recognized by people in ways that few current African states are: it built on a long history of central rule. As an institution, the state towered (and still towers) over all others, and its control over the territory was (and still is) significant, although weaker in Burundi. But at the same time it was (and still is) a weak institution, not internally negotiated or owned and almost entirely dependent for its survival on foreign support.

What was the impact of development aid on state weakness? As said, the development community has for decades recognized lack of capacity as a problem, and has consequently invested billions of dollars in capacity building programs throughout Africa, including in Burundi and Rwanda. This has been successful: the number of qualified people in both countries is far higher than it used to be, and so is the number of laws, procedures, institutions and mechanisms that we associate with strong, competent, efficient states. Yet, obviously, this has all hardly changed the nature of these states: the Burundian state is pretty much as weak (or strong) as it always was, and so is the Rwandan state. And so, more capacity building, training and investment is being thrown at these states right now.

The deeper syndrome of “state extraversion”¹¹ described here is profoundly connected to the presence of massive amounts of development assistance. Interestingly, political conditionality—

⁹ Scott Strauss. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006. See too Peter Uvin. *Life After Violence: A People's Story of Burundi*. London, Zed, 2008.

¹⁰ At least not in their pure western form –one could argue that the inefficient, corrupt form that state takes in Burundi is the negotiated one, but this is the result of an odd negotiation, not internal but half external (outsiders impose a form, then some insiders get a hold of it and negotiate it both with the outsiders, who possess lots of money to push for the form they prefer but are truly ignorant about what is really going on, and the insiders, who know what is going on much better but are mostly weakly organized.

¹¹ Alain de Janvry, *The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981.

even if in favor of democratization or good governance and other such aims that ought to strengthen the relation between states and citizens—risks reinforcing this exteriority syndrome and hence undermining what it seeks to achieve.¹² As long as no ways are found that truly support citizens' capacities to bargain with the state, and to learn from that, externally driven efforts towards greater state accountability risk being unsustainable¹³.

Weak regimes

Scholars often conflate state and regime strength. The former is about the institution of the state, regardless of who is in control of it; the latter is about the strength of the particular regime in power, and a crucial variable here is regime legitimacy. It is often believed that weak regimes, unrecognized and detested by their citizens, are at the heart of civil war in Africa. I will show that there were major differences between Rwanda and Burundi in this variable and its relation to mass violence.

The legitimacy of the Rwandan state was rather high: indeed, it is in part this very legitimacy that made the genocide possible. The two central pillars of regime legitimacy The Burundian state was much less legitimate from the majority of the population

Here, too, pre-1990s Burundi and Rwanda differ, and very profoundly so. Schematically, the Rwandan regime benefited from a strong social legitimacy, which, in part, facilitated the spread of the genocide throughout the country; the Burundian regimes, on the contrary, had very low legitimacy, which explains the popularity of the civil war against it.

Successive Rwandan regimes' basic legitimacy strategy came from the fact that they represented the majority Hutu people. For three decades, the "social revolution" and the rhetoric of national development were the pillars of regime legitimacy, and, by all accounts, these pillars held up rather well. Rwandans everywhere subscribed to this state of affairs, as did many foreigners. The genocide was legitimized by the need to defend democracy defined as majority—and thus automatically Hutu—rule.

Burundi's minority military rulers tried the inverse strategy, denying the existence of ethnicity and invoking Burundi-ness, trying to use symbols of a royal past (independence hero Rwagasore, the tambours, the *bashingantahe*); in addition, they, too, used the rhetoric of national development as their second platform. Both of these increasingly failed to convince the Burundians masses, as the extremely limited nature of the regime—the three successive military presidents who ruled for almost 3 decades came from one single village!—was clear to all, and the benefits from development were very few and very unequally distributed.

The similarity between the two is that it is the interplay between the exercise of political power and ethnicity that is crucial; the difference is that this interplay took the form of a very different configuration in both countries; the final and sad similarity is that, at the end, hundreds of thousands died as a result of the collapses of these systems in the 1990s; the differences in these collapses is that one was a state-organized genocide and the other a stalemated civil war.

¹² Peter Uvin. *Human rights and Development*. West Hartford, Kumarian press, 2004.

¹³ IDS. Working Group on the Future State. *Building Effective States*. London, 2005.

Another similarity is that the international community neither understood these differences nor acted on them. In both countries, before they fell apart into violence, the nature of the state was largely off the development agenda. This is not entirely true: Rwanda was a far more popular aid recipient, in part because as a stronger state it seemed more effective in handling aid money well, and in part because many donors bought into the democracy-as-majority-Hutu-rule argument. As a result, Rwanda received more aid per capita than Burundi, and it remained well supported until the day the genocide broke out. But what is alike in both cases is that, apart from occasional pressure, the development enterprise did not discuss such political variables nor try to act on them, in both countries.

Political and Civil Rights Violations

On the Freedom House's well-known Freedom in the World ratings,¹⁴ Rwanda attained the very lowest score on political rights for the entire 1973-1994 period (with a small improvement in the last years before the genocide because of the theoretically occurring democratization); Burundi, similarly, had the lowest possible score throughout the same period. Both countries were militarily ruled one-party states with fake elections painted on top. There was no free press, no independent parties, and occasional instances of mass violence, all of them characterized by total impunity¹⁵.

Yet, this may over-state the matter. In daily life, both countries were not characterized by constant violence—the human rights violations inherent in their wars were vastly worse than those they knew during peace-time. True, there were no opposition parties, but that did not mean politics did not take place. Most people, most of the time, went peacefully about their lives. Burundi's situation, as usual, differed from Rwanda's in that the level of institutionalized political violence was much higher: an entire people for decades hardly dared to send its children to school anymore because of the memory of 1972.

Note, too, that the rights violations that touched most people most of the time were not the major ones measured in Freedom House's political rights index, but the much more insidious daily attacks on economic and social rights—the land confiscated (but never compensated for) for a development project, which soon ended up in the hands of the administrator; the aid stolen by intermediaries; the cash crops paid by the state at 80% below fair (world) price; the denial of health care to the poor in favor of the better-off, etc. It is this daily, grinding impunity, which I have called elsewhere structural violence, which constituted the main source of rights violations for Burundians and Rwandans.

Neighborhood factors

The literature on regional insecurity complexes¹⁶ is very relevant for both countries.

¹⁴ See <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15> for details.

¹⁵ See the writings of Filip Reyntjens or Rene Lemarchand on this.

¹⁶ Among the growing literature on regional insecurity or conflict complexes, see Halvard Buhaug and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. "The Origin of Conflict Clusters: Contagion of Bad Neighborhoods?." Paper prepared for the Third European Consortium for Political Research General Conference, Budapest, 8-10 September 2005; and Andrea Armstrong and Barnett R. Rubin. *Policy Approaches to Regional Conflict Formations*. New York: Center on International Cooperation, New York University, November 20, 2002.

- the two countries represent each other's worst nightmare, and for much of their history have supported rebels on each other's territory
- the DRC has acted as a safe haven for opponents and rebels of all kinds. Tanzania (for Burundi) and Uganda (for Rwanda) were the other sanctuaries, which brings us to the next point.
- But foremost, the festering refugee problem is the key to war in both countries. The unresolved presence of hundreds of thousands of refugees in neighboring countries has been at the heart of political instability and violence. Different issues are important here. One is that the Burundian (Hutu) and Rwandan (Tutsi) refugees had good reason to assume that they would never be able to return to their countries, as their governments had *de facto* policies making return impossible. Some chose to seek integration into the local society and economy¹⁷ but for others only violent regime change in their home country seemed a solution: this is how the FPR and the Palipehutu were born. Second, the refugee-hosting states did not interfere with the development of "refugee-warriors," either because they sought to destabilize their neighbors or because they were too weak to stop it¹⁸.

Most of these issues are far beyond the power of development assistance to affect: they require concerted and long-term international diplomatic efforts. The last point, though, does of course have a serious humanitarian aid component, obliging the humanitarian community to come to grips with the political ramifications of its service work, and posing very tough and unresolved ethical and political problems in so doing¹⁹. But even there, the real level of decision-making lies higher up than the individual relief agency.

Dependence on mineral exports

Both countries hardly have any mineral exports: for Rwanda in 1990, for example, they made up less than 0.1% of GDP. They do depend heavily on agricultural exports—coffee foremost, as well as tea—but these are produced by smallholders throughout the country and are thus very different in the sort of political implications they have than the case usually made for minerals. Heavy economic reliance on such rain-fed crops is a recipe for instability in both household and public revenues, but there is no direct causal relation with violent conflict here²⁰.

Malthusian arguments: Environmental pressure and the youth bulge

It is often observed that Burundi and Rwanda are the most densely populated countries in Africa. This is correct. However, the next point in the argument, that the violence in both countries is the direct result of over-population—a "Malthusian trap," as some have called it—is wrong²¹. Both countries always have been densely populated, and their land productivity could be vastly higher

¹⁷ A path followed by many individuals. See Liisa Malkki. *Purity and Exile*. University of Chicago 1995 and Marc Sommers. *Fear in Bongoland. Burundi Refugee Youth in Urban Tanzania*. Berghahn, 2001.

¹⁸ See various contributions in Adelman and Suhrke, such as Ogenga Otunnu. "Rwandan Refugees in Rwanda." In Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke (eds.) *Path of a Genocide – The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*. Transaction Publishers, 2000.

¹⁹ See Fiona Terry. *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2002 for a fine analysis of this problematique after the Rwandan genocide.

²⁰ But see Macarthan Humphreys in this conference for a different argument.

²¹ See my "Reading the Rwandan Genocide" *International Studies Review*, 3, 3 (Fall 2001) for an overview of this literature.

than it currently is (in other words, it is poverty rather than land that is the constraint) Also, there are other countries, and regions within countries (even in Africa) that are much more populated and do not have genocide or lengthy civil war.

That said, land scarcity and soil degeneration *are* major factors of concern to Burundians and Rwandans. They form part of the constellation of extremely serious constraints these two countries currently face, as most policy-makers and experts, as well as all ordinary people in both countries know. While enormous productivity improvements are possible, as well as economic diversification and urbanization, it is true that most Burundians and Rwandans eke out a decreasingly poor life in smaller and smaller plots of land. This creates despair and fear for the future. But this factor is not by itself the cause of genocide or brutal civil war.

Both Burundi and Rwanda are among the top countries in the world in terms of the proportion of the population that is below 30. This is a consequence, rather than a cause, of their poverty—and one these two countries *grosso modo* share with all other African countries, including the ones that have known no civil war at all²². These young people are overwhelmingly young men and women who work hard, morning to evening, to survive and progress, desperately try to take care of their parents and children, go to church and play soccer, study and invest. They are the greatest asset these countries have. They do not automatically act as a cause of civil war, although small proportions of them—in Burundi at the very most 3% of young men between 12 and 30—participated in it. That leaves more than 97% who refused to join.

That said, the violence in both countries was disproportionately executed by young men, not by grannies; in addition, it takes only small numbers of violent “shock troops” to create environments of instability and chaos that are propitious to mass violence (Uvin 2008). Hence, it is important to know why young men join violent movements. In conversations with tens of Burundian ex-combatants, I heard four types of arguments as to why they went to fight during Burundi’s civil war. The three most important ones, more or less equally frequent, were: insecurity (they joined the war because there was a war!); an ideological agenda (they joined a war because they wanted to change the system); and poverty (they joined the war because it was a way to make money). Far behind, a fourth answer was offered as well, namely force (they were kidnapped)²³. In Rwanda, similarly, scholars have identified fear, extremist values (not a nice ideology, maybe, but a real one nonetheless), and opportunism as reasons why young men joined. And, once again, in both cases, most young men did not join. Hence, much finer analysis is required than what youth bulge or Malthusian arguments provide us with.

Intermediary Factors

Economic decline

²² For example, Benin, the Gambia, Senegal, Togo, Malawi, and Kenya all have between 42 and 46 percent of their population under 15 years, similar to Burundi’s 45 and to Rwanda’s 46 percent, but have not experienced similar levels of violence in the recent years. Some countries such as Mali and Niger even have a higher share of young people (48 percent) and have not experienced large-scale violent conflict. Data from Population Reference Bureau, *2007 World Population Report*, Washington, DC, 2007.

²³ *Ex-combatants in Burundi: Why they joined, why they left, how they fared*. Washington DC., World Bank MDRP Working Paper no. 3, Aug. 2007.

There is a compelling argument to be made that political crises erupt more frequently and more strongly when economies contract. The data for Burundi and Rwanda seem to confirm this: there were clearly economic crises in these countries in the years preceding their spiraling into violence. In both cases, coffee prices were dropping (because of the collapse of international coffee agreements), oil bills were skyrocketing, and weak, inefficient and heavily subsidized industrial sectors were bleeding the state coffers empty.

This led to structural adjustment policies, accompanied by significant increases in aid volumes.

However, oddly, per capita income adjusted on a PPP basis (real purchasing power) shows no decline in both countries income up to the year of the violence itself. This maybe demonstrates, once again, that the data are worthless, but if this is the case it will be hard to settle this argument with data alone and it becomes little more than feeling.

But there is another possibility. It suggests that the impact of economic change on violent conflict occurs not because the masses become poorer but because the elites are hurt (or are afraid of being hurt). There is no doubt that this process was occurring in both countries. Both were under major pressure for structural adjustment, consisting everywhere of reducing the size of government—and hence the cake to be distributed among competing elites. More generally, in both countries the models of state-led accumulation, which had benefited those who controlled the upper echelons of the state so well, had run their course: they were leading to economic stagnation, and new entrants found no place anymore.

Many scholars have suggested that structural adjustment is to blame for violence in much of Africa²⁴: in its most simplistic, but remarkably popular form, structural adjustment is to blame for growing poverty and misery and thus for civil war. This is nonsense: structural adjustment was a response to profound economic crisis, not the cause of it—with or without the IMF and the World Bank, these countries would have had to adjust, and it would have been painful. But the real argument is elsewhere: the distributional impact of adjustment is far higher on the better-off than on the poor, as it was the better-off who benefited from the previous political-economic system, and not the poorest. It is increased elite insecurity and intra-elite competition that set in motion the dynamics that led to genocide—not mass impoverishment as such.

The sort of large-number quantitative studies, on which most research on the relation between economic factors and violent conflict is based, cannot grasp these dynamics, for they a) focus on economy-wide changes only (e.g. Hintjens 1999) and b) do not disaggregate between social groups. The rich and the powerful are the ones who matter foremost for civil war and mass violence, and it is the impact of economic changes on *their* security and perceptions (fear of the future) that matters. This process was accompanied, in both countries as well, by democratization and violence used by the out-groups—both dynamics likely to lead to the entry of entire new groups into the ranks of the elites competing for a smaller pie. Hence, economic and political

²⁴ See Michel Chossudovsky's 1995 paper *IMF-World Bank policies and the Rwandan holocaust* (<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/35/033.html>) for a painfully bad analysis of Rwanda, and David Keene's *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone*. London, Palgrave, 2005. for a much better analysis of Sierra Leone.

trends combined in both to create profound insecurity and fear for the future among ruling elites. In both cases, Tutsi could be blamed for these declines: Tutsi refugees were obviously the key force behind the FPR, but internal Tutsi also held many advantageous positions in trade, international development, and business.

As I analyzed in my *Aiding Violence*, the functioning of aid in Rwanda was entirely unrelated to these political stakes and dynamics. Civil war, growing social polarization, increasing human rights violations, the militarization of state and society, acute competition for power—none of those seemed to remotely affect the *what* or *how* of development aid, which continued on its own path, blissfully unaffected by its environment.²⁵ The same held for Burundi. During those years, whatever changes took place in the way development aid was given were all caused by dynamics *internal* to the development community: then it was the spread of structural adjustment, and debates about technical assistance and program aid.

Democratization:

Ongoing processes of democratization, set in motion in large part by pressure from the international community, were key factors leading to the outbreak of mass violence in both countries. In both cases, the main object of political competition was of course central power, but the politics of division and growing violence took place at the local level: new counter-elites emerged everywhere, allying themselves with similar disgruntled players at the national level. The ruling powers, both nationally and locally, often resorted to violence to intimidate challengers, who often responded in kind. Political violence and ethnic and political radicalization had begun spreading throughout the territory before things finally fell apart in both countries.²⁶

The relation between democratization and violence has long been recognized²⁷. Both countries show that the crucial variable is not increased popular demands, but rather the use of violence by elites that feel threatened in their position. In both countries, the groups that benefited from the status quo — including the higher echelons of the army — had good reason to fear their fate in the case of successful democratization, and used violence to defend their privileges. If there are no well-organized, relatively powerful, explicitly pro-democracy groups within a country, the process of externally-imposed democratization becomes easily subverted by those who have most to lose. The end result may well be worse than the starting situation.

Note that in Burundi and Rwanda *demokrasi* means something far different from what it means for Westerners: it is a key concept in the ideology of 'Hutu power,' which since the end of the 1950s holds that Rwanda belongs to the Hutu, who are its true inhabitants. Hutu have been subjugated brutally for centuries by foreign masters, the Tutsi, but managed to wrestle power away from their oppressors and install a true democracy, representing the majority of the people, the Hutu. In Burundi, similarly, the word *demokrasi* acts as a code word for Hutu rule. This also

²⁵ Uvin 1998; Helen Hintjens. Explaining the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37, 2 (1999), 241-286.

²⁶ See Strauss 2006 and Michele D. Wagner. All the 'Bourgmestre's' men: making sense of genocide in Rwanda. *Africa Today*. 45, 1 (Jan-March 1998): 25-37.

²⁷ For example Edward D. Mansfield, Jack Snyder. Democratization and War. *Foreign Affairs* (May-June 1995) 74, 3.

has very different implications: in Rwanda, the genocide took place in the name of the defense of *demokrasi*; in Burundi, democracy sounded like a scarcely veiled threat to most Tutsi.

Triggers

Specific acts of political aggression (in Rwanda, the shooting down of plane carrying, among others, President Habyarimana; and in Burundi, the coup d'Etat against Ndadaye) acted as the triggers that set in motion the mass bloodletting. In both cases, development aid was reduced if not suspended, but this had no impact on the unfolding events. When polarization and violence have reached this level, the tool of development aid typically becomes close to useless, even in those rare instances where concerted action occurs.

Interestingly, in both countries, major uncertainty remains about the trigger. In Rwanda, it is still not clear who shot down the plane: officially it was disgruntled former allies of Habyarimana who came to see him as a liability to their radical plans, but many scholars and Rwandans (including Tutsi) are convinced that it was the FPR that masterminded this, as it feared elections which it was bound to lose. In Burundi, it is still not clear who actually organized the coup d'Etat. Officially, it is a small group of disgruntled officers, but many Burundians are convinced the orders came from much higher, possibly all the way to former president Buyoya. This lack of historical clarity—which also applies to many other events—provides ample fuel for further radical interpretations in the future.

Conclusion

In both countries, there is an important link between political power -- that is, control of the state as an instrument of accumulation and reproduction of a social class -- and ethnicity. However, the nature of this link differs in each country and thus the dynamics of conflict are different too. Both countries represent more or less archetypical examples of very different categories of violent conflict

In Burundi, ethnic difference constitutes the dividing line between the haves and the have-nots; as a result, popular discontent focalized primarily along ethnic lines. A combination of brutal oppression and the denial of ethnicity were the prevalent tools of the elite to perpetuate its hold on power. By the end of the 1980s, a third method, cooptation—the entry of increasing numbers of Hutu into higher positions in the state—allowed the dividing line to become more porous. Cooptation, combined with democratization, might have weakened the dividing line further, but the 1993 coup d'état reaffirmed it brutally. Predictably, bloody violence broke out as both sides sought to achieve militarily what had been politically impossible. Civil war was the result, and it lasted for many years as both sides were equally strong.

In Rwanda, the dividing line was not ethnic, but social and regional; the political competition for scarce resources was primarily intra-Hutu. Ethnic violence followed from a "racist" strategy of legitimization used by the ruling elite to maintain its power. After the 1990 FPR invasion, and even more so after the Arusha peace agreements which forced elections on the political system, the ruling elite took recourse to the old, widely shared images of Tutsi as dangerous, enemies of the majority people. By 1994, the Tutsi as a group were outside of the "universe of obligation" of society, meaning that the moral values that apply to other people did not apply to them anymore.

Genocide was the result, made possible also by the fact that the army and police and paramilitary troops affiliated with the government were far more powerful than the individual Tutsi. Only the FPR could stop the genocide, which it did after three months.

In both countries, one reason why control over the state had become so important was the personal enrichment it afforded to its occupiers. In states where impunity reigned, for both political crimes and daily abuses; where corruption and clientelism were the norm; where aid and trade resources could be monopolized by those who were in the right place at the right time, competition for control over the state was bound to become violent.

Social exclusion and the ethnicization of politics, then, are the two central elements to violent conflict in Burundi and Rwanda that, like electrons, spin around a core of massive poverty and institutional weakness. Indeed, Burundi and Rwanda are two of the poorest countries in the world, with mass poverty, undiversified economies, and extremely small middle classes. People at all levels of society are desperate to escape poverty, and the competition to do so is extremely tough. Constant hard work, perseverance against enormous odds, and luck are how most people manage to scrape by, but it is common knowledge by all that those who manage to get a hand in the public pie can move up vastly faster than all other people. The prime locus of this is the state, but the aid system, in and by itself—i.e., not only to the extent that it finances the state, but also to the more direct extent that it creates benefits for its employees, contractors, or drivers—is the other main channel.

In short, the modern institutions of Burundi and Rwanda are artificial, in that none of them can be sustained by internal resources and efforts. None of them, either have domestically emerged or been negotiated among internal social forces²⁸. And yet, it is these very same institutions that provide faster access to the so necessary resources for survival. No wonder these institutions became the theater of corruption, abuse, and violence. No wonder, either, that these fragile systems eventually exploded.

But, most importantly, while Burundi and Rwanda share many structural factors, it should be clear to the reader that they are fundamentally different cases of violence. This is relevant in any discussion of structural variables (and what aid can do about them): structure is a weak predictor of anything, and an even weaker tool to understand a particular place. As I wrote a decade ago in a scholarly comparative article:

On a theoretical level, the most important lesson is that social structure does not explain everything; content is needed as well. The social structure of domination in Burundi and Rwanda is almost identical: both are exploitative dictatorships that have favored a small class of haves over the large majority of the have-nots; both countries, moreover, have almost identical economic and social structures. It thus seems reasonable to put them in the same category when doing comparative research. Yet, this fails to capture the

²⁸ Either, at least not in their pure western form –one could argue that the inefficient, corrupt form that state takes in Burundi *is* the negotiated one, but this is the result of an odd negotiation, not internal but half external (outsiders impose a form, then some insiders get a hold of it and negotiate it both with the outsiders, who possess lots of money to push for the form they prefer but are truly ignorant about what is really going on, and the insiders, who know what is going on much better but are mostly weakly organized

dynamics of violence in both countries, which are fundamentally different, for the simple reason that the social composition of the elite is different. As a result, divergent strategies of state control and legitimization have been used, leading to different modalities of protest and counter-repression. The end result in both cases is ethnic violence, but the dynamics involved are very different²⁹.

III. ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

The activities of the international community—incl. the development aid enterprise—in Rwanda post-1994 and in Burundi post, say, 2004, are vastly different from before. This is because of the emergence, at about the time of the Rwandan genocide, of a new post-conflict / liberal peace / human security agenda (itself, of course, in part due to the fact that the violence in these countries became too massive to be avoided anymore).

Simply spoken, the post-conflict agenda rests on four main pillars, which one finds back, both ideologically and organizationally, in all post-conflict situations, incl. in Burundi and Rwanda:

- Establish security (support to negotiations; peacekeeping troops; DDR; SSR)
- Create democratic governance (elections, decentralization, civil society support)
- Jumpstart development (measures to support economic growth and social service delivery)
- Promote justice and reconciliation (conflict resolution programs; support to justice systems with a special focus on transitional justice)

All of these pillars potentially deal with the structural and intermediate causes of violence. Indeed, the post-conflict agenda is also the conflict prevention agenda: the aim is to prevent the next round of violence. More generally, what donors concretely do when they “do” conflict prevention is pretty much the exact same as what they do in post-conflict situations: it is not as if there are mysteriously other tools out there that can only be used for conflict prevention. Presumably, the difference is simply that one does so earlier and that doing so should theoretically be easier and less costly, as less blood has been spilled and less things broken.

Security

Security is the immediate concern of the international community in countries emerging from civil war: get the fighting to stop, for without that nothing else will happen. Ending violence is foremost a military and political matter: either one side wins or the warring parties agree to lay down arms after negotiations. The main way the international community can influence this dynamic is through support to negotiations—a matter of diplomacy rather than development work, although attempts are made to wave the carrot of increased aid in order to bring parties to the table.

A majority of civil wars nowadays end as a result of negotiations,³⁰ which often involve significant amounts of international supervision and arm-twisting. This was the case for both

²⁹ ‘Mass Violence in Burundi and Rwanda: Different Paths to Similar Outcomes’ *Comparative Politics*, 35, 2, April 1999

³⁰ Call and Cousens report that of the 48 wars that ended between 1995 and 2004, 36 or 75% concluded with a negotiated agreement. See Call, C.T., E.M. Cousens, 2007, ‘Ending Wars and Building Peace’,

Burundi and Rwanda before the genocide: their peace agreements are even known by the same name, after the Tanzanian city in which they were negotiated, Arusha. The difference is that the Burundian one worked, whereas the Rwandan one spectacularly failed, leading to a genocide and a renewed peace, this time through total military victory of one of the parties, the FPR.

It is unclear what accounts for this difference. After all, the Burundian negotiations had many parties to them as well, including official spoilers who never joined (the CDR in Rwanda; the FNL in Burundi), all of whom had access to neighboring countries' territories. Serious international arm-twisting occurred in both cases, and weak UN peacekeeping forces were on the ground in both as well. Explanations may include the fact that in Burundi the main parties knew themselves to be in a military (mutually hurting) stalemate (although the continued fighting by the FNL demonstrates that such rational assessment is not exclusively important) whereas in Rwanda both sides thought they could win; the different political cultures of these two countries, with Burundi always having had more of an inclination towards compromise-based, consociational politics³¹, and Rwanda being a strong case of winner-takes-all total control; or individual-level, idiosyncratic factors.

Creating security amounts to the inverse movement of the escalating factors that led to mass violence—de-triggering, de-escalating, so to speak. This means it is necessary to neutralize the actors who could create explosive violence (spoilers) and create socio-political dynamics that depolarize. Afterwards comes the equally tough job of seeing through on the commitments and incipient changes—the actual “transition” phase. Here, the role of development aid can become bigger, as financial resources can help alleviate some political constraints. In Burundi, for example, external agencies funded cantonment camps for many months, even including rebels whose movements had not yet formally laid down arms; paid for a plethora parliament and government that bought off politicians from all sides for a few years; or funded and assured the personal security of rebel leaders for the first few years after they came out of the bush. None of this is enough to guarantee that security will hold, but it is the sort of smart, flexible, politically savvy stuff that avoids the process stumbling on every stone it encounters.

During this transitional phase, major political decisions need to be made by the international community, and often they are not very palatable ones. Feeding rebels who were still at war and known to have committed war crimes is not exactly an easy decision to make: one can imagine

Working with Crisis Working Paper Series, New York: International Peace Academy, p. 3.

http://www.ipacademy.org/asset/file/151/CWC_Working_Paper_ENDING_WARS_CCEC.pdf

³¹ It may seem strange to talk about ‘compromise-based’ political culture in a country that experienced decades of military rule, a decade of civil war, and the assassination of its first elected president, but a number of political scholars rather convincingly argue that Burundi, throughout all this, has constantly tended to return to compromise solutions. Hence, before the 1966 coup d’Etat, the country experienced a set of multi-ethnic (but highly unstable) governments. When Buyoya started opening up the regime from the late 1980s onwards, he created a multi-ethnic government—50% Hutu and 50% Tutsi. After election in 1993, President Ndadaye, similarly, created a multi-ethnic government, as did, 13 years later, president Nkurunziza after the first post-war elections. And of course the Arusha peace agreement is a perfect piece of consociational political engineering. See Daniel Sullivan, ‘The missing pillars: a look at the failure of peace in Burundi through the lens of Arend Lijphart’s consociational theory’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, 1 (2005), pp. 75–95 and Stef Vandeginste. ‘Théorie consociative et partage du pouvoir en Afrique’, in F. Reyntjens and S. Marysse (eds), *L’Afrique des Grands Lacs, Annuaire 2005–2006* (L’Harmattan, Paris, 2006)

the newspaper headings had it gone wrong! In post-genocide Rwanda, the international community strategically looked the other way when “Kabila’s” troops just had to go through the refugee camps in their pursuit of the retreating Zairean army, killing hundreds of thousands and sending most of the remainder back to Rwanda. Ending war, and maintaining that, is dirty work, often pretty much as dirty as waging war in the first place; contrary to declarations, it will entail counter-violence against potential sources of violence, the extension of control by the center over the (often unwilling) periphery, and all kinds of (hopefully temporary) compromises between security, justice, democracy and development—the four pillars of the post-conflict enterprise. Dirty decisions will need to be made, choices between second-best solutions, trade-offs between human rights.

The problem is that the international community rarely has the stomach or the consistency, for this. In Rwanda, this was overcome by the fact that the government—essentially the FPR—was strongly in command and had a clear and strong agenda which it ruthlessly pursued, while the international community was more or less unified in its sense that it ought to support the new government that had risen out of the ashes of genocide. But in Burundi, we encounter the more usual configuration, which is that, once the peace agreements have been signed, and even more so once an election has been held—typically within 2 years—there is no more joint position left. The international community stops speaking with one voice, the forums for coordination become weakened, and international actors (embassies, UN agencies, donors) start doing their own thing, brandishing rhetoric of human rights, democracy and peace without any power to do anything about it. If, at the same time, the government itself is internally divided and weak, as it is in Burundi, stalemate and slow decline in the security situation is likely. Contrary to exalted expectations, the new Peace-Building Commission seems to make no difference at all regarding this. Fortunately, *the* absolutely crucial key to Burundi’s successful transition—the integration of the Hutu rebels into the Tutsi army, making it multi-ethnic and balanced—is still solidly in place.

A rather new security-related sector in which the development community plays a major role is DDR—the demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration into regular civilian and economic life of combatants from all sides. From a technical level, in both countries these programs were very successful: tens of thousands of soldiers and rebels have been successfully demobilized. The usual problems with DDR apply here too, though: what are the long-term development/reintegration aspects of ex-combatants, and is it possible to include women better in these programs? But most importantly, DDR does not address a structural cause of the war, but rather a consequence. Successfully demobilized ex-combatants basically become as poor as the others who did not fight—but the real issue of course is overall levels of absolute and relative poverty for *all* of them.

Governance

Democratic governance broadly defined has been a central element of the post-conflict agenda in both Rwanda and Burundi. In the late 1990s, maybe as much as one-third of all aid to Rwanda went to investing in the institutions of democracy—state agencies, parliament, the press, civil society, the legal sector, oversight mechanisms, etc. This “democracy building” work is much more varied than used to be the case a decade ago. When government policies started deviating significantly from the desired and professed democracy aims, some diplomatic arm-twisting and development conditionality was employed as well, in both Rwanda and Burundi (although with

the same problem described above of a lack of a unified and clear political vision by the international community).

In both countries, the attention paid to matters of governance far outstrips what happened before these wars began. To the extent that ill governance is widely and correctly seen as constituting a root cause of the war, this work is very important to structural conflict prevention. But there are of course many problems, both operational and conceptual: I will briefly hint at them.

Democratization in this region is fraught with dangers: recall that the mass violence in both countries took place against the backdrop of, if not directly caused by, processes of democratization. Anno 2007, Rwanda is one of the world's most totalitarian countries, with almost total control by the government of every aspect of private and public life—and with elections predictably won by the president. Burundi is more democratic, but it is a shaky situation, characterized by threat, clientelism, and shared elite access to the trough as much as by electoral legitimacy.

Many of the problems with democracy promotion in post-conflict countries are well-known. The aims are ambitious and large, but the resources put into motion to achieve these aims are small, short-term, un-coordinated, un-strategic, un-adapted to local specifics (cookie-cutter approach). Too many eggs in the basket of “a few good men”—i.e., some nice human rights NGOs who become easily isolated and destroyed, as happened in Rwanda in 2004—never forget, if donors and government fight each other through the intermediary of local civil society, as was the case in Rwanda in the early 2000s, the donors will always lose. To make matters more difficult, resistance against democracy comes not only, predictably, from people in power, but also from large swaths of society. In both Rwanda and Burundi people do not clamor for western-style democracy. In Rwanda, empirical research reveals that many people fear democracy defined as multi-party elections³². In Burundi, my own work shows that most people never ask for democracy as such (and those who do always have a direct political agenda against the current government); but ordinary people do display a strong desire to being listened to better and having (local) government respond to their needs better, as well as to cutting down on corruption³³.

Donors are rightly prioritizing the field of governance: it is a root cause of violence and of moving out of violence. This is a major improvement over past practice. However, the approach taken is too formalistic, too a-political and a-historical—based on planning rather than searching, to copy from Easterly.³⁴ This limits results: much of the work is useful in the short term and may even contribute, often in unexpected ways, to longer-term dynamics, but at the same time it feels oddly besides the point, detached from what is really going on in society.

The net result of all this is often an amazing sense of *déjà vu*, in which these countries return pretty much to the exact position they started from. This is the case for both Burundi and Rwanda, but it is especially in the latter case that this outcome is truly amazing. After one of the

³² International Rescue Committee.

³³ Uvin 2008.

³⁴ William Easterly. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Effort to Aid the Rest Have Done so Much Ill and so Little Good*. Penguin Press, 2006.

most total self-destructions in all of recorded history, with 10% of its population slaughtered and maybe 50% having been displaced, with a team in power that had never set foot in the country before the war ended and basically nobody left who was in power beforehand, current Rwanda resembles nothing as much as a more extreme version of pre-genocide Rwanda, both in its governance and in its political economy. Burundi is doing much better. It is clear to all Burundians that nobody can win the war: the mutually hurting stalemate lasted long and hurt a lot, and there is no social basis for further fighting. In addition, the integration of the rebels into the army has created, for the first time, a bi-ethnic army up to the highest levels, creating a real sense of comfort among many people. And finally and most importantly, Burundians themselves have changed in the way they relate to the state and to the power-holders: more critical, more independent, more demanding. That said, the old has not disappeared either: power-holders are socialized into old patterns of clientelism and corruption; disgruntled politicians seek to use violence to achieve their aims; fear and hatred are of course still around. Burundi is on a knife's edge, with great potential to develop a different political system and great potential to revert to the old.

Development

In both countries, the development portfolio looks different after the war than before. Mainly this is because of what was described so far: the use of significant proportions of aid funds for the “new sectors” of security and governance (and conflict resolution) programming. But there are also attempts to make the “old sectors” of development work—access to services, economic growth, agriculture, health, education, etc.—more “conflict sensitive”³⁵. The idea here is not so much what one does but *how* one does it, *i.e.*, can projects and programs be designed in such a way as to also throw off pro-peace benefits?

There now exists a wide range of such activities, including: Community-Driven Reconstruction projects, designed to combine grassroots development with conflict resolution mechanisms; the promotion of local administrations, enterprises, or cooperatives that bring together different ethnic groups; conflict-related criteria for targeting of emergency aid development assistance; the adoption of a rights-based approach to development that seeks to combat social exclusion and marginalization at the local level; food-for-work programs in areas with high numbers of unemployed youth or ex-combatants, etc. In both Burundi and Rwanda, projects in traditional sectors such as health, education, credit, even agriculture have routinely been infused with a dose of conflict resolution aims and methods.

While there is interesting experience with such work—for example, Oxfam’s experiences in Rwanda and CDR projects more broadly³⁶—this still amounts to quite little at the end of the day:

³⁵ A distinction first discussed in Peter Uvin. *The Influence of Aid in Situations of Violent Conflict*. Paris, OECD, 1999.

³⁶ Antonia Chayes & Martha Minow (eds.) *Imagine Coexistence: Restoring Humanity After Violent Ethnic Conflict*. London, Wiley, 2003. For good analyses of CDR programs, see Michael Lund & N Wanchek. *Effectiveness of Participatory Community Development in Managing Conflicts. Local Democracy, Social Capital, and Peace*. Washington, USAID, 2004 and Ghazala Mansuri & Vijayendra Rao. Community-Based and –Drive Development: A Critical Review. *World Bank Observer*, 19, 1, 2004.

there is little money available and, unsurprisingly, the small successes that do occur are not extended further. There are different reasons for this. One is the system's return to its default mode of technical-ness: the development enterprise is still all about delivering products, spending budgets on time on pre-planned activities that come in handy little packages. For many a manager and practitioner, all the rest are add-ons, diversions, risky ventures into unknown territory—whereas a good vaccination program, a well-constructed building, a nicely planted field, speak for themselves. Conflict sensitivity, in contrast, takes time, is intangible. At the same time, basic needs *are* indeed enormous at the end of war, and both governments and populations wish for rapid improvements in access to services. Under this conditions, working on conflict sensitivity seems like a luxury, an intellectual add-on whose importance pales besides crying immediate needs. Finally, much of this work ends up being rather political in nature—even if only at the local level—and thus may find itself being sabotaged by local and national power holders who fear its implications or do not share its premises. This is especially the case for Rwanda, where the government has very definite ideas about how reconciliation and peace shall be achieved—and these run counter to many international experts' opinions. At the same time the government of Rwanda is very strong at the technical parts of development and deeply beloved for it by HIV, IT, and any other acronym specialists. And hence, after a few years, what we mostly see is a return of the old stuff, and the emergence of a vague discourse that development is the best conflict prevention.

Conflict sensitivity mainly deals with symptoms, with the immediate drivers of, or consequences of, violence: it seeks to decrease polarization (or promote rapprochement), avoid further division, include the angry. Even if consistently implemented, of course, it faces a number of fundamental challenges to be successful: first, national political dynamics may be much more important determinants of these variables than are local-level actions; and second, the size of the problems far outstrips the available resources. Sure, a project may be successful in getting hundred or even thousand angry young men off the streets—and thousand would be a great success indeed!—but beside those there are 10,000, or 100,000 more angry young men whose life has not changed because of the project. In short, the crucial variables lie either in the realm of high politics, more amenable to action by ambassadors than by aid projects, or in the realm of the structural, amenable only to long-term change.

Development aid seeks to affect these structural issues as well: it seeks to decrease poverty, diversify the economy, improve economic policy choices, create pro-growth—and nowadays pro-poor growth--institutions, and so on. These variables, of course, are hard to influence, and they change slowly. In both Burundi and Rwanda they are constrained more than elsewhere by geographic isolation, population density, regional poverty and instability, a profoundly un-diversified economy, and low availability of human and financial capital. The challenges are truly enormous, and, to be frank, nobody has much of an idea on how to get out of the low-level equilibrium the region is in.

Rwanda and Burundi have followed rather different paths since the end of the war, as both governments have sought to take the economy in directions that they claim will reduce the risk of future violence while being politically palatable to themselves and their closest allies on whose political support they depend. Paying lip service only to donor-pushed pro-poor growth agenda's, the Rwandan government has consistently followed an urban based growth strategy based on

education and IT. It wants Rwanda to become a player in the future global economy, and it is banking on a 2-3 decades economic modernization strategy to achieve this. This Singapore-inspired approach is working in many ways: in an almost unimaginably short time, Kigali has been transformed from a haunted wasteland to a modern, high-tech, dynamic economic center; educational levels have been dramatically enhanced; and services and construction are booming. This has led to dramatic rises in income inequality³⁷, which are—and this is politically dangerous—mainly between the city and the countryside, which de facto means between Tutsi and Hutu³⁸. Only recently has the government begun to invest in rural areas as well.

Burundi, so far, seems to have followed a different strategy, insofar as one can identify any strategy at all in Burundian policymaking. Lots of investment has gone to the rural world. This is a clear and smart political move by the President to signal the departure from the ancient regime, which was urban and Tutsi based; it has been very popular with many Burundians. It can also be seen to address one of the root causes of the war—provided it produces a long-term impact, of course. It contains its own risks, namely its excessive neglect of urban despair and dynamism.

The international community's impact on these policy choices has been ambiguous. Rhetorically, donors adhere everywhere to the idea that they support homegrown PRSP, reflecting a pro-poor consensus shared by the government and the population; in post-conflict countries such as Burundi and Rwanda, such PRSP's will of course also be geared towards conflict prevention. Reality is far removed from that.

Governments are obliged to live under an ambiguous combination of neo-liberal policies and commitments to immediate poverty eradication—the pro-poor growth idea, very nice in theory, for it avoids tough choices (as policies can seemingly be simultaneously good for economic growth and good for the poor, and even, why not, for peace and stability), but simply not the way the world works. And thus the Rwandan government made a PRSP for public consumption but in reality follows a different policy, whereas the Burundian government PRSP is hardly worth the paper it is written on.

At the end of the day, donors pretty much fund whatever the government strategy is—in other words, they support Rwanda's and Burundi's diametrically opposed strategies (although Rwanda receives significantly more aid, just like before the violence, because it still is the better managed country and donors still love that). At the same time, the international development community does continue to fund very major portions of the economic and political systems of both countries. Indeed, one can essentially state that in both countries, the government, civil society, and the formal business sector would pretty much cease to exist if it were not for foreign aid. International aid does create tens of thousands of jobs, directly and indirectly; fund government policies, whether good or bad; builds and equips the institutional structures that many Rwandans and Burundians work in. De facto, the international community underwrites government strategies, and this is as it should be.

³⁷ An Ansoms and Stefan Marysse, "The Evolution and Characteristics of Poverty and Inequality in Rwanda, in Marysse and Reyntjens, *The Political Economy of the Great Lakes Region in Africa*, 2005

³⁸ Already observed by Gerard Prunier in June 1997: Rwanda: the Social, Political and Economic Situation. <http://www.grandslacs.net/doc/1018.pdf>

Looking back at the previous section of this paper, we argued that the core root causes of violence in both countries reside in an insidious combination of mal-governance, structural violence, poverty, and ferocious intra-elite competition. Most of these elements are not addressed in the PRSPs, government policies, or donor declarations—understandably so, given their highly political and painful nature.

Justice

The international community, including the development enterprise, now also pays great attention to the justice/reconciliation agenda. Part of the appeal of this agenda is that it makes the international community feel good to stand for principle and human rights after the facts; part is that promises to address impunity, a crucial structural cause of the war. After the Rwandan genocide, a group of Hutu and Tutsi met in Geneva for months. The only thing they could agree upon across all sides to the conflict was that *the* core element was impunity: nobody in Rwanda had ever been punished for inciting or committing political murder. And the same holds, to this day, for Burundi as well. In my own work on the Rwandan genocide, I have argued that the smaller daily impunity of corruption and abuse of power is crucial to understand the eruption of violence as well: it is a cancer that eats away at the trust in the institutions of society.

Especially in Rwanda, an enormous amount of money has been poured into transitional justice: I cannot think of another country or time at which foreigners have spent so much, compared to local resources, on various forms of justice: the ICTR, the formal justice system inside Rwanda, and, later, the gacaca tribunals. In Burundi, much less actual spending has taken place, but it is still a major sector, with a lot of upswing potential should the government get its act together enough to please the donors. This, too, is a major change of the pre-conflict period when no investment at all took place in this sector.

The difficulties encountered in this sector resemble those of the governance sector, of which it is logically a sub-set. This work takes long time, especially given that both countries have little prior experience with western-style justice: it is not reconstruction of the justice system, then, but the first-time construction thereof that is at stake. As in all such cases, it is easier to get the form of justice—courts, laws, trained people—than the true function, i.e., blind justice. Progress in the justice sector is unlikely to happen in isolation of progress on all governance dimensions and on broader security sector reform.

Finally, here too, ordinary people themselves do not necessarily deeply desire justice either. Indeed, donors and analysts tend to erect dichotomies in which the bad government/rulers obstruct justice, free press, democracy, whereas the good civil society, and behind them, as one man, the entire population, desire all these good things, but in both Rwanda and Burundi nothing could be further from the truth. People in both countries may well fear democracy, or have no clue as to what it means; they may well want punishment for their opponents but not for those from their own side; they have developed (and come to value) ways of surviving and moving on that are based on silence and accommodation rather than on truth-telling and punishment.

In part to anchor themselves more in local society, the international development community has found in both countries a new and cutting-edge willingness to build on traditional/local

mechanisms—*gacaca* in Rwanda and *bashingantaha* in Burundi. These systems, though, suffer from far greater degrees of politicization than many donors realize, and are more deeply embedded in the dynamics described above. Hence, rather than being participatory / cheap / legitimate / restorative alternatives to formal justice (top-down / expensive / politicized / retributive?) work, they are politicized and contested as well. This does not take away that there are promises here, but the clear risks shall be addressed with open eyes, which has often not been the case in both countries.

Conclusion

The project of which this paper is a part “seek[s] to demonstrate that only by targeting structural risks and state fragility will development cooperation achieve human security.” This paper started with a brief historical overview and then proceeded by analyzing the extent to which the usual structural explanations identified in the scholarly literature do indeed explain mass civil and political violence in Burundi and Rwanda; it also briefly touched on the impact of development assistance on these structural factors during the years leading up to the mass violence (1993/4). The paper then analyzed how donors, now much more interested in conflict prevention, have sought to address the profound causes of conflict after their respective wars ended. What have we learned?

Our historical review and the analysis of structural causes demonstrated three general points. First, many, but not remotely all, of the usually recognized structural causes *are* present in Burundi and Rwanda. Burundi and Rwanda fit comfortably in most structure-based explanations: they are very poor, they did have economic crises before the mass violence; they suffered from severe natural resource constraints; they were military dictatorships; they had an enormous proportion of youth. But it became equally clear that structural factors alone explain little: what really matters is knowing their interaction, and their specific *content* and *context*. I concluded earlier that structure is a weak predictor of anything, and an even weaker tool to understand a particular place. For example, notwithstanding all their structural similarities, the dynamics of violence in Burundi and Rwanda are very different from each other, as is the political culture. Rwandan society is rigid and harsh; the violence was a genocide; the political culture is based on total control. Burundian society is much more flexible; the violence was a stalemated civil war; the political culture reverts back to consociationalism. Structural analyses such as those dominant in much popular scholarship—which are reflected in many peace and conflict impact assessment tools—are at best superficial hints of reality, and at worst besides the point; actions solely based on these insights or tools are bound to be a waste of money. What is needed, then, is far more than knowing the mere structural factors—substantive and in-depth local knowledge is required.

In addition, structural causes do not change easily—that is why they are structural! For understanding, and especially for *acting* on violent conflict, “conjunctural” and “intermediary” political and social factors matter much more than structural ones do. Development aid, to have an impact on violent conflict, then, will need to finely analyze the context within which it works.

All this is good news and bad news: bad news as aid is hardly very good at this sort of fine political analysis and action, but good news as aid is even worse at affecting structural factors with anything of the speed and focus required for conflict prevention.

Coming to the second part of the analysis, we observe that the international community does now deal, much more than before the 1990s, with root causes of violent conflict in Burundi and Rwanda. Many issues that are at the heart of the conflict nexus—ill governance, impunity, social polarization, unaccountable and inefficient security sectors—are now on the development agenda in Burundi and Rwanda, and tens of millions of dollars are spent each year in both countries on affecting these dynamics. In both countries, the post-conflict aims of the donors have been smart and broad³⁹; successes, both at the national and the local level have occurred, especially in those rare circumstances where visionary individuals met flexible donors; and lots of good thinking and writing has taken place. There is real progress here, and real learning has taken place in many of these sectors.

But—and these are big buts—there are enormous constraints on the capacity of the development system to achieve its aims. These include

- the already described lack of fine knowledge on these countries : donors largely see what they want to see, and largely interact with people who have a vested interest in making sure this continues.
- the automatic “technicalization” of all political issues by the development community
- the ridiculously inflexible, short-term, administratively-heavy nature of project aid (and most activities done for conflict prevention or post-conflict purposes are done in the form of projects)
- the absence, safe under rare circumstances, of a deep and coordinated integration between diplomacy and development aid. On paper we can envision such an approach⁴⁰, and it has happened at times (e.g., Burundi 2000-05), but most of the time in most of the places we are far removed from that.

In short, the aid community remains largely unimaginative, inflexible, politically impotent, crushed under bureaucratic and short-term pressures, and largely irrelevant to the crucial dynamics of socio-political change, of violence and peace, in both countries. It does not possess the knowledge and flexibility and political spine to do achieve its aims. And, let’s face it, these aims are tough and hard to achieve in any case. I personally think the post-conflict/conflict prevention agenda as it now stands is unachievable, a dream without anchoring in reality.

Not surprisingly, the results of the new approach seem meager. In Rwanda, after having failed at making reconciliation and democracy happen on their own terms, donors have accepted to shore up a deeply authoritarian government while compromising on issues that would address the true root causes of the genocide, *i.e.* profound inequality and the closure of life chances for the majority of the rural poor; lack of political participation and inclusion. In Burundi, donors find themselves supporting deeply inefficient and increasingly authoritarian structures, whose real

³⁹ See too Peter Uvin. “Human security in Burundi: The view from below (by youth),” *African Security*, 2007, arguing that broadly, the donor agenda mirrors what ordinary people desire in Burundi.

⁴⁰ See an excellent paper by Juana Brachet & Howard Wolpe. *Conflict-sensitive Development Assistance: The Case of Burundi*. Washington DC., World Bank, Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Paper no. 27, June 2005.

functioning is far removed from the democratic values the donors see at work. In both cases, the sense for ordinary people that the future may be different from the past has dwindled fast, and their current political functioning resembles nothing as much as what preceded the violence.

Some proposals

Are there ways out? I can only hint at some here

- *Act fast.* Speed and flexibility are important in transitional countries. But more is needed as well: “acting fast” is not a matter of just running after every urgent need being presented to a donor, but of being able to understand how long-term dynamics can be influenced by short-term actions, of recognizing windows of opportunity when they open. In post-conflict Burundi and Rwanda, people constantly say that “everything is a priority.” There truly *are* urgent social and political needs, requiring creative solutions; they cannot wait years for boiler-plate answers. Yet, the international aid community could keep on funding infrastructures for the next century—many of them would probably very like to do so—without making the slightest difference in these countries’ predicament, which centers on issues of governance. What is required, then, is fine analysis of deeper socio-political dynamics and a capacity to think long-term. In short, speed plus flexibility *and* brains plus a long-term vision are required
- *Do less.* In the name of conflict prevention and good governance (presumably all the same), donors now intervene in all domains of social and political action. Their aims are large, on paper very laudable, and entirely un-achievable; as a result, everything is fair game for donor intervention and nothing can ever be criticized for failing. The list of objectives and domains of intervention must be reduced. This is to be done not by randomly choosing a few domains of the current long list and excluding all the others (there seems to be no intellectually satisfying way to complete such an exercise) but by developing mechanisms that allow for choices to be made that are appropriate for each case and permit for the subsequent evaluation and steering of these choices
- *create opportunities for people to lead, to bargain, to organize, to learn:* such opportunities are matters of program design, of attention to process; they can be mainstreamed in all sectors—not just in what we call civil society building or governance programs. What this means for governance, in other words, is that we should be preoccupied less with products—the right laws, institutions, and office equipment— and more with processes—creating spaces, adapted to the local situation, in which people can bargain for their own institutions.
- *anchor projects in citizens’ representative institutions:* while locally elected institutions exist in both Burundi and Rwanda after the war, donors do not work with them, and especially not with those institutions that are closest to the people. To the extent possible, we should use the institutions of citizenship rather than those of clientship, created by ourselves.
- *reflect critically on the way much development aid directly contributes to weak governance:* its clientelist relation with the “beneficiaries”, its own total lack of transparency; its biases in hiring and its blindness to the political behavior of its partners and employees; the way it substitutes for state-society negotiations; its uncoordinated and essentially unpredictable nature which amounts to institutional destruction—all these factors undermine state-society relations. The first thing aid agencies control is their own behavior, so it is time to start critically looking at that and creatively improving on it.
- *dramatically improve on the ground co-ordination,* in function of people’s expressed needs and initiatives, and in close collaboration with the local structures in charge. Indeed, lack of co-ordination –

both on the ground and at the national—remains one of the prime ways in which aid agencies weaken both state and citizenship institutions; the short-term-ness of most aid is another way.

- *mainstream personal transformation and conflict resolution approaches*, focusing not only on ethnicity but also on power differentials, the rural-urban gap, a restoration of community, etc. When institutions are weak, working on personal transformations is important. This must be mainstreamed into projects through creative non-costly mechanisms. This is not about missionary zeal – we do not know what is good for people — but rather about allowing people to discover other ways of relating to each other.
- *work with utmost transparency towards all players* (public and private) in order to empower them. Lack of transparency by development actors – about overall aims, budgetary availabilities, procedures, criteria for engagement, cost structures, contractual conditions, etc — is another major way in which aid actors continue to dis-empower Burundians.
- *Act as a learning organization*, Donors, in conflict-affected countries more so than usual, must become learning organizations, reaching beyond the level of simple bureaucratic project implementation to making a policy difference. If one considers projects as policy experiments, they are not a multitude of small actions to solve a multitude of small problems, but rather ways of innovating, of learning, of influencing policy, or, in other words, of supporting national governments to develop evidence-based and experience-based policy (policies that can possibly later, if they graduate to that level of trustworthiness and capacity, be funded through budget support). To do that, the desire to learn must be built into the project design and budget from the beginning.
- *Work on corruption*. Corruption is usually the key cancer that eat away at the social body of societies moving towards war or coming out of it. Without progress on corruption, people everywhere right away figure out that nothing has changed. Ordinary people will not defend peace and democracy if they do not think it helps their lives. True, doing something about corruption is complicated, and anyone who has a simple solution is bound to be wrong. Change will be slow, and there are reasons to continue working with governments even while corruption is prevalent, but all this is no reason not to directly deal with this central issue. Simultaneous action at three levels is required:
 - At the grassroots levels, donor should create multiple mechanisms providing access to ordinary people to information on what is being done, at what price, and why. In addition, mechanisms should be created that allow people to act when abuse of funds is occurring: this could include ombudsmen, complaint procedures, the use of the press, support to already existing administrative complaints procedures, judicial assistance for those who use the judiciary, etc. There is no one way that will suddenly end corruption once and for all. People are afraid to tell what they know or do something about it, for they do not trust the justice system, and they have learned that they cannot rely on the principles of the aid community either –hence they will be slow to use these mechanisms. But a beginning should be made, in every single project –i.e., not only in so-called governance projects, or justice projects—with mainstreaming concerns with information and accountability, both by strengthening already existing mechanisms and by creating new, project-specific ones⁴¹.
 - At the level of each donor organization, from NGO to UN, it is necessary to become much more self-critical towards corruption and clientelism. What is the social representativity of our staff? How are hires and fires and promotions done? What does the organization do when it is confronted with corruption by its own staff and partners? What organizational culture exists to

⁴¹ See Peter Uvin. Development and human rights. West Hartford, Kumarian Press, 2004, chapter in RBA for much more analysis of this approach.

deal with these issues? What degree of internal transparency prevails? When staff is threatened and leave, what follow-up action is taken?

- At the highest political levels, the international donor community, preferably speaking with one voice, should put corruption high up on the agenda. It should become clear that this is one of the prime things the international community expects change in, and that action must be forthcoming, by all sides to the equation. Ambassadors, heads of agencies, especially when speaking together, cannot be threatened or sabotaged the way ordinary project employees can: they need to take up their responsibility in this matter.