

COLONIAL LEGACIES AND ETHNIC MOBILIZATION IN RWANDA AND BURUNDI IN THE 1950S

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Abstract

Ethnic divisions and inequality are often cited legacies of colonial rule. Colonial administrators and their agents categorized ethnic groups, defined them for administrative purposes, and sometimes adopted ethnically biased policies. However, self-identification by Africans did not always match the ethnic categories accepted by colonial regimes. This paper investigates the conditions under which ordinary Africans mobilized on the basis of the ethnic cleavages recognized by colonial authorities in Rwanda and Burundi in the 1950s. Despite Europeans' belief in Tutsi superiority and discriminatory policies, there was considerable local variation in the degree of Hutu ethnic mobilization. Using historical data, the paper demonstrates that both peaceful and violent ethnic mobilization by Hutus was greater in parts of Rwanda where clan and ethnic identities were reinforcing. In addition, using qualitative data, this paper shows that the structure of clan and ethnic cleavages may partially account for a greater degree of political mobilization by Hutus in Rwanda than in Burundi. This paper contributes to our understanding of the creation and persistence of ethnic cleavages in post-colonial states.

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Ethnic inequality and diversity in sub-Saharan Africa are important legacies of colonial rule. Migration to colonial urban areas and economic centers, for example, brought a diverse group of Africans into contact with each other and taught them to identify with broader “super tribal” groups instead of older local identities (Mitchell 1959; Young 1965; Cohen 1969). European officials shaped ethnic demography by defining the boundaries of geographic units, creating new ethnic categories for administrative purposes and, in some cases, implemented deliberately ethnically biased policies (Young 1976; Ranger 1984; Posner 2003; Laitin 1986; Mamdani 2001). Although colonial legacies undeniably influenced the ethnic landscape of post-colonial Africa, there is a great deal of variation in the extent to which Africans adopted and organized themselves on the basis of the “super-tribal” groups endorsed by the colonial state and its European agents. This paper explores the conditions under which officially sanctioned ethnic categories became politically salient in Rwanda and Burundi during the terminal colonial period.

Rwanda and Burundi are important cases for our understanding of colonial rule on identity construction in Africa. Many of the factors that scholars believe increase the salience of ethnic identities were present in these countries. First, the official account of the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi social cleavage was based on three attributes that enhance the salience of ethnic identity – social hierarchy, occupation, and a historical myth about the foreign origin of one group (Weiner 1978; Horowitz 1985; Hechter 1978). Second, pre-colonial distinctions were enhanced by discriminatory policies (Nobles 2000; Blanton, Mason, and Athow 2001; Lieberman and Singh 2012).

Rwanda and Burundi share many characteristics associated with ethnic mobilization and ethnic conflict. Both are small, poor, mountainous states in eastern central Africa with a traditionally dominant Tutsi minority (roughly 15% of the population) and a Hutu majority

(roughly 85% of the population). They share a colonial heritage and have a similar distribution of ethnic groups across the country (Table 1 and Figure 1).¹ Despite these similarities, Hutus in Rwanda were more politically mobilized during the 1950s and this political activity culminated in a violent uprising by Hutus in November 1959.² In contrast, Hutu ethnic mobilization in Burundi occurred later and on a smaller scale than in Rwanda. Moreover, there was considerable subnational variation in the degree to which Hutus were mobilized as Hutus. In addition to qualitative evidence, I focus on two indicators of political mobilization on ethnic lines by Hutus – the degree of descriptive representation in locally-elected bodies and the violent ouster of chiefs during the Social Revolution in Rwanda. I then argue that the same factors that explain Hutu political mobilization within Rwanda can account for differences in mobilization between Rwanda and Burundi.

[Table 1 about here]

[Figure 1 about here]

I argue that the presence of a reinforcing social cleavage can partially account for subnational variation in the salience of Hutu ethnic identity on the eve of independence. The argument that the presence of cross-cutting social or economic cleavages diffuses ethnic tension and facilitates interethnic cooperation is a common one in the social sciences (Lipset 1959; Chandra 2005; Baldwin and Huber 2010; Dunning and Harrison 2010; Selway 2011). In Rwanda and Burundi descent groups called clans crossed ethnic lines, but the degree to which they did so varied across space. I argue that where clan and ethnic identity were reinforcing

¹ The only year the Belgian authorities published population statistics broken down by ethnic group was 1957 (Belgium. Ministère des affaires africaines. 1957). These data were based on questionnaires administered to samples of the population (Uvin 2000). Gahama (1983) notes that there was some controversy associated with the publication of these ethnicity figures in the 1957 Annual Report, which may account for the fact that data on ethnicity does not appear in subsequent Annual Reports.

² Although I have used Hutus and Tutsis as the collective noun for these groups, other authors have used Hutu and Tutsi instead.

Hutus, who were a socially and politically marginalized group during this period, were able to mobilize along ethnic lines.

Using historical data, I show that where clan and ethnic identities were cross-cutting, Hutus were more likely to be underrepresented in local leadership in the 1950s. I then explore two indicators of the ethnic mobilization of Hutus. First, I take advantage of an extension of the franchise for selecting subchiefs between 1953 and 1956 and show that in areas where clan and ethnic memberships overlapped, the extension of the franchise reduced the overrepresentation of the Tutsi minority. Second, I measure Hutu ethnic mobilization more directly using data on the number of chiefs who fled or were deposed during the 1959 “Social Revolution,” and show that fewer chiefs were deposed where clan membership and ethnic identity were cross-cutting. Qualitative evidence suggests that where ordinary Hutus were politically mobilized as Hutus – either engaging in ethnic violence or selecting co-ethnic leaders – they did so as members of clans. I also show that clan and ethnic identity were cross-cutting to a greater degree in Burundi than in Rwanda.

In addition to contributing to our understanding of the conditions under which colonial rule affected the construction of ethnic identity in Africa, this paper raises new questions about the conditions under which cross-cutting cleavages persist, both in post-colonial Africa and more generally. Despite local variation in the degree to which clan and ethnicity were overlapping, the Hutu-Tutsi cleavage dominated politics in both countries in the post-independence period and, arguably, became more important as a result of ethnic violence. In other African countries cross-cutting social cleavages were more persistent. Laitin (1986) shows that identification with ancestral cities reduced the importance of religion for both Muslim and Christian Yorubas. Dunning and Harrison (2010) show that “joking kinship” in Mali reduces ethnic voting.

Although the British reified ancestral city membership in Yorubaland, the French did not attempt to alter or use social institution of *cousinage* in Mali. Because cross-cutting institutions promote interethnic harmony, it is important to study the institutional and demographic factors that lead to their persistence.

This paper also highlights the importance of studying politics in the terminal colonial period. Once decolonization became a possibility, Africans mobilized politically in ways that would constrain future leaders (Gifford and Louis 1982; Wantchekon and García-Ponce 2001). Both peaceful and violent negotiations of the terms upon which colonial rule would end favored groups that were able to act collectively early on. In our cases, ethnic mobilization by Hutus in the 1950s was consequential – it shaped inter-ethnic relations in both countries, determined which group dominated the state upon independence and resulted in the differences in post-colonial ethnic politics between Rwanda and Burundi.

By using an extension in the franchise to measure mobilization by a marginalized group, this paper illustrates the potential benefits of studying pre-independence elections. Wilkinson and Onorato (2013) argue colonial-era electoral assemblies encouraged the formation of cross-regional and cross-ethnic alliances. However, limited electoral participation led to cross-ethnic parties in some cases and not in others. In Kenya, for example, politicians were not allowed to campaign outside their own districts before the 1960s. In Tanzania, however, Young (1976) argues that one reason the Tanzanian African National Union (TANU) represented all black Africans regardless of ethnicity was that the British introduced a “multiracial” electoral system designed to give Asians, Europeans, and Africans roughly equal representation in the early 1950s. In both Kenya and Tanzania, the electoral rules colonizers introduced in these pre-independence elections affected the likelihood that cross-ethnic parties would emerge.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 describes the history of social cleavages in Rwanda and Burundi. Section 3 describes local variation in party politics and political violence in Rwanda and Burundi. Section 4 demonstrates that one particular local-level variable, the extent to which Hutus were in predominately Hutu clans, explains why Hutus in certain parts of Rwanda were able to mobilize politically. It also provides evidence extending this argument to Burundi. Section 5 examines alternative explanations for variation in ethnic mobilization by Hutus across both countries.

2. Rwanda and Burundi – Social Categories and History

2.1 Social Categories in Rwanda and Burundi

Rwanda and Burundi contain three ethnic groups: Hutu, Tutsi and Twa. Members of these groups speak the same language and share religious beliefs. The social distinction between a minority of high-status pastoralists (the Tutsi) and a majority of low-status agriculturalists (the Hutu) was typical of the region between the Great Lakes, which encompasses southwestern Uganda, eastern Congo, Rwanda, Burundi and western Tanzania (Figure 2). However, in no other part of the region did this particular social distinction become as salient as in Rwanda and Burundi, where it has survived despite the fact that its occupational basis has not existed since at least the 1940s (Linden 1977; Chrétien 2003).

[Figure 2 about here]

Underlying scholarly debates about whether the division between Hutus and Tutsis was an ethnic, caste, or class distinction are politically-charged disagreements about the origin of the Tutsi and the character of their relations with other groups (Longman 1999). In the pre-colonial

period, the boundary between the Hutu and the Tutsi was not fixed. It was possible, though rare, for rich Hutus or for poor Tutsis who were disgraced to change their ethnic group (Gravel 1968; Gahama 1983). When the central state took over peripheral regions, conquered peoples became defined as Hutu (Newbury 1988).

Belgian missionaries and administrators believed that Hutus and Tutsis had separate racial origins. This mythical history (the “Hamitic Hypothesis”) suggests that the Tutsi were more civilized, racially-distinct invaders who subdued an indigenous Bantu population. The Belgian administration deliberately discriminated against Hutus, limiting their access to leadership opportunities and education.

Although the Hutu-Tutsi cleavage has received most attention in the literature and although the salience of ethnic identity has increased, for much of the period before 1950 kinship groups were the primary social units for both Hutus and Tutsis. The smallest kinship group was the minor lineage (*inzu*), which consisted of up to six generations with a common ancestor who often inhabited the same hill, a key topographical feature of the two countries. Groups of *inzu* formed lineages (*umuryaango*) that together made up clans (*ubwoko*) (d'Hertefelt 1971). According to Chrétien (2003), “[Clans] have remained at the heart of social life. In the 1930s or 1960s, when one asked a peasant, whether in Burundi, Rwanda, or Tanzania, ‘Who are you’ the immediate answer was mention of a clan.” However, the political significance of these clan identities varied across the region. In some parts of the interlacustrine region, clans had little political significance and lacked both a common leadership and an internal organization.

Despite the patrilineal nature of both clans and ethnic groups, Hutus and Tutsis could be members of the same clan. Clans span ethnic groups because clan and ethnic identities were not fixed (d'Hertefelt 1971). For example, Hutus and Tutsis may have changed their ethnicity, but

not their clan, and Hutu clients may have adopted the clan identities of their Tutsi patrons. Clan and ethnic identities also changed when areas were taken over by kingdoms in the pre-colonial period (Newbury 1980).

2.2 A Brief History of Rwanda and Burundi

The histories of Rwanda and Burundi closely resemble each other. Both were Tutsi-dominated kingdoms before the advent of German colonialism in 1899 and became Belgian Trustee Territories after 1916. In both cases the central state, led by a King (*Mwami*), expanded from a central location during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both countries contain areas that came under the influence of the central state relatively late. These peripheral regions share some distinctive characteristics: Hutus are an even greater majority than in the rest of the country and several of the peasant revolts of the early colonial period were located in these areas (Weinstein 1974; Gahama 1983).

The Hutu-Tutsi political divide emerged earlier in Rwanda than in Burundi. In the late 1950s, Hutu leaders issued a number of statements critical of Tutsi hegemony and formed pro-Hutu political parties. The most important of these parties were the Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu (PARMEHUTU) and the Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse (APROSOMA). A violent Hutu uprising in November 1959 laid the foundation for the future of Rwanda as a Hutu-dominated state. The uprising began in Gitarama (central Rwanda) near the Catholic Mission at Kabgayi. However, the violence was most severe in the Northwest (Gisenyi and Ruhengeri) (Nkundabagenzi 1961). Although Hutus instigated the initial violence, Tutsis often reacted to these incidents and initiated attacks against Hutus in Nyanza, Astrida, and Kigali. (Peigneux, Malengreau, and Frédériq 1960). There was also no violence in many parts of

the country, and two provinces (Shangugu and Kibungu) remained peaceful (Munyarugerero 2003; Peigneux, Malengreau, and Frédériq 1960).

In most cases the violence was perpetrated by small bands of young men, who were often under the influence of alcohol. In contrast to later episodes of ethnic violence, in 1959, Hutus were primarily concerned with expelling and stealing from Tutsis, not killing them (Newbury 1988). According to Hubert (1965), the vast majority of attacks by Hutus against Tutsis involved the transfer of property. Further ethnic violence occurred during the communal elections of 1960. In these elections, an overwhelming majority of seats in communal councils (76%) were won by PARMEHUTU. The violence helped to convince Belgian administrators that a peaceful Rwanda required Hutu-domination and they took a number of steps to usher in a Hutu government (Willame 1994; Munyarugerero 2003).

Hutu identity was also more politically salient in Rwanda than in Burundi. In the late 1950s, the major political parties in Burundi were cross-ethnic factions representing two aristocratic families, which had competed for the succession to the throne in the pre-colonial period. Political parties championing the Hutu cause in Burundi were weak. Lemarchand counts only six actively pro-Hutu politicians in Burundi in the early 1960s. The Association des Progressistes et Démocrates (APRODEBA) was the first actively pro-Hutu party. APRODEBA disappeared shortly after it was founded because there were only two party-members (United Nations 1960). The weakness of Hutu political parties is particularly surprising given the eagerness of influential Belgians to support a Hutu political party.³ The Parti du Peuple (PP) was not a pro-Hutu party until the legislative elections of 1961 (Deslaurier 1994). Even in these

³ Resident de Fays and the court inspector F.L. Asselman were active in the launch of APRODEBA. Together with a wealthy Belgian settler, Albert Maus, a member of the Vice-Governor General's council, Asselman and de Fays later supported the Parti du Peuple (PP) (Lemarchand 1994; Chrétien and Mukuri 2002).

elections, several members of the PP defected to UPRONA in anticipation of a UPRONA victory.

Politics in Burundi became infused with ethnic tension after independence in 1962. The actions of Hutu and Tutsi extremists fostered an atmosphere of distrust. Tutsi youth militants, for instance, assassinated several Hutu politicians during the Kamenge Riots of 1961. By the end of 1962, the governing party had split into Hutu and Tutsi factions over the government's handling of anti-Hutu violence and over the distribution of government jobs (Lemarchand 1994). New violence in Rwanda and the presence of Rwandan Tutsi refugees also had a radicalizing effect in Burundi.

Despite increased tension between Hutus and Tutsis and a divided governing party, no effective Hutu political party emerged in Burundi during the 1960s. Paul Mirerekano, the leader of the Hutu faction, left UPRONA in 1964, but was unable to create a pro-Hutu political party outside UPRONA. Lemarchand (1970) attributes the absence of a strong Hutu party to the difficulty of bringing together "rural segments of the Hutu community." Although the share of seats held by Hutus in the National Assembly rose from 50% to 70% in 1965 (Lemarchand 1970), it is impossible to tell whether the number of Hutus increased because of increased ethnic voting by Hutus. According to Ntibantunganya (1999), some Hutu representatives came from constituencies where there were significant numbers of Tutsis and vice versa. Furthermore, many of these Hutu members did not come from the pro-Hutu Parti du Peuple. Ntibantunganya (1999) reports that 43 % of UPRONA seats were held by Hutus.

3. Local Ethnic Mobilization in Rwanda and Burundi on the Eve of Independence

In the following section I show that the incidence of both peaceful and violent Hutu ethnic mobilization varied considerably from one hill to another. Even though Belgian

administrators controlled a much smaller territory than their counterparts in other African colonies, there is substantial subnational variation in ethnic mobilization that remains to be explained.

3.1 Electoral Politics

In both Rwanda and Burundi parties were a loose confederation of local groups during this period (Linden 1977). Munyarugerero (2003) describes the complicated mix of clan, professional, cultural and religious associations that underlay the roughly fifteen parties formed in Rwanda after 1958. He notes that many of these parties espoused a local cause or supported an influential local person. The Hutu intellectuals who founded the major Hutu parties (APRSOMA and PARMEHUTU) failed to build a mass organization with a grass-roots presence outside their core areas (Lemarchand 1970; Linden 1977). Lemarchand (1970) observes that politics in Rwanda in the 1950s and 1960s was almost entirely conducted by cliques consisting of “local ‘notabilities’ whose influence, like that of chiefs in the *ancien régime*, remained highly localized, contingent as it was on the building and retention of a local clientele.” Although a single party (UPRONA) was eventually dominant in Burundi, it too was a collection of local factions with different goals (Gahama 1991). By 1965, the UPRONA party label was essentially meaningless and several different factions ran under the heading of UPRONA in the same constituency (Lemarchand 1970).

In a study of Rutana, a region of eastern Burundi, Deslaurier (1994) notes that local politicians had more direct control over people’s lives and that the legislative elections were less important than the local elections to the people. As a result, participation rates in these early elections show a remarkable degree of variation even across small communities in close proximity to one another (Gravel 1968; Deslaurier 1994).

3.2 Violence

As Willame (1994) notes, foreign observers were more likely to view politics in this era in ethnic terms than were most ordinary Africans. A closer examination of both inter-ethnic violence in Rwanda (1959-60) and in Burundi just after independence demonstrates that incidence of violence was highly uneven across small areas and people had little information about why it was taking place.⁴

Three cases illustrate that Hutu-Tutsi relations could be very different on neighboring hills. First, in Rwanda, Peigneux et al (1960) describe an attempt made by bands of Hutus from Kisenyi (Gisenyi) to extend the violence into the neighboring Kibuye province. They note that the population of one hill (Rubengera) organized to defend their property against these “invaders.” This armed group consisted of both Hutus and Tutsis and was led by their local chief. They were eventually successful in repelling the invaders, were not accustomed to much resistance. Second, a protestant pastor stationed in Shyogwe, a community only 8 miles away from Kabgayi (Gitarama), where the 1959 violence began, reports that his predominantly Hutu community was completely taken surprise by the violence. He notes that residents feared and resented the activities of PARMEHUTU raiding bands, whose members were motivated by greed and private grievances (Willame 1994; Lemarchand 1970). Third, in Burundi in 1965, despite the intensity of inter-ethnic violence, only the cities and the Hutu-stronghold of Muramvya were affected. One of Lemarchand’s Hutu respondents who grew up during this time says:

⁴ In both Rwanda in 1959 and Burundi in 1965, Hutu perpetrators of the violence believed implausible rumors concerning why it was necessary to attack Tutsis (Peigneux, Malengreau, and Frédériq 1960; Chrétien and Mukuri 2002).

I remember that at home and at school Hutu and Tutsi, while aware of belonging to different ethnicities, generally lived on good terms with each other... The game of politics often went unnoticed in the countryside. Thus, the repression of 1965 and 1969 programmed and orchestrated by Tutsi incumbents – had virtually no impact on the populations concerned, which today would be inconceivable (Lemarchand 1994).

Although inter-ethnic violence in Burundi in the 1960s occurred on a smaller scale than the “Social Revolution” in Rwanda, in both cases there were peaceful communities at the center of the most affected areas. According to a report on the 1965 violence issued by a Burundian NGO, in Muramvya Hutus and Tutsis organized self-defense forces to fight outsiders (Ubuntu-Action 2002).

4. Ethnic Groups, Clans, and Political Mobilization

The previous section suggested that there was a great deal of local-level variation in the both electoral participation and interethnic violence across these two cases. Using data from Rwanda, I show that Hutu ethnic mobilization occurred where clan and ethnic identity were reinforcing. Finally, I show how these findings then translate to Burundi.

4.1 Clans and Political Mobilization in Rwanda

In the mid to late 1950s, Hutus mobilized along clan lines in northwestern Rwanda. In 1955, there was a “resurgence of clan-based politics around Rwaza; the heads of the leading Hutu clans held a meeting on the hills” (Linden 1977). By 1957 members of the Gesera, Singa, and Zigaba clans around Ruhengeri held regular clan meetings in which a tribunal composed of the heads of leading families decided on local matters.⁵ Each adult male made a contribution of twenty francs to the clan treasury. The treasury of the Singa clan contained 2,820 francs in 1957 (Lemarchand 1970). Linden notes that the Singa were the best-organized group and that they

⁵ Lemarchand (1970) argues that these groups were created in response to the new electoral process introduced in 1956 as evidence of the new political consciousness as well as of the “persistence of primordial attachments among the northern populations.” Linden (1977) suggests that these clan cooperatives predated the 1956 elections.

were responsible for a number of violent incidents in Ruhengeri in 1956. Balthazar Bicomupaka, a member of pro-Hutu PARMEHUTU and later the minister of the interior, led them.⁶

Clan identity continued to be politically important in the government that ruled Rwanda after 1961. Recruitment at the local level occurred through the dominant clan or sub-clan. Even outside the Northwest, some Hutu candidates ran on separate lists or ran using the name of their clan as a party label (Lemarchand 1970). Ministerial portfolios were allocated so that all major clans were represented. Lemarchand (1970) compares this “clanic arithmetic” to the ethnic arithmetic that is important in allocating offices in other African countries.

4.2 Quantitative Evidence on Hutu Ethnic Mobilization and Overlapping Clan and Ethnic Identities

This section uses historical data to measure Hutu ethnic mobilization. I first measure the degree to which Tutsis were overrepresented in local leadership.⁷ In 1953, members of newly created councils governing a subchiefdom, the lowest level of the administrative hierarchy, were drawn from an electoral college of local notables selected by the subchief.⁸ Although almost always a majority in a subchiefdom Hutus were underrepresented in these governing councils (Figure 3). In 1956, the power to select members of these electoral colleges by secret ballot was extended to all adult men in a subchiefdom (Webster 1966). In almost all cases, broadening the franchise increased the number of Hutus on these electoral colleges. Therefore, my second proxy for Hutu mobilization is the change in the overrepresentation of Tutsis in subchiefdom electoral colleges between 1953 and 1956 (Figure 4). Finally, I use the share of all chiefs and subchiefs in

⁶ Linden (1977) interviewed Bicomupaka and notes that he led a number of violence incidents involving Hutu from the Singa clan in 1956

⁷ Data on the ethnic composition of subchiefdom electoral colleges come from Maquet and d’Hertefeldt’s (1959) study of the 1956 elections.

⁸ Subchiefdoms consisted of 2,500 to 4,500 adult men

an area that fled or were violently removed in the “Social Revolution” of 1959 (Nkundabagenzi 1961).

[Figure 3 about here]

[Figure 4 about here]

I focus on chiefs because they were important agents of the colonial state. The Belgians used taxation and forced labor to make their colony pay for itself and chiefs played a crucial role in this extractive system. Belgian rule changed Hutu-Tutsi relations in Rwanda and Burundi because Belgians recruited primarily Tutsi chiefs and increased those chiefs’ powers.⁹ Chiefs were rewarded based upon their ability to collect revenue. More importantly, chiefs held a very large degree of discretionary power, and the people they governed were often unaware of exactly what the state demanded.¹⁰ Chiefs often used forced labor on their own fields and many of them became rich as a result (Newbury 1988). In addition to influencing how much of their money and labor individuals were deprived of, chiefs were also involved in adjudicating tenure disputes and frequently had rights to communal land in their gift.

To measure the degree to which clan and ethnic identity are overlapping, I adapt the Dissimilarity Index, which is a commonly used measure of ethnic residential segregation. Even though residential segregation is not the factor at issue here, measures of education are measures of the unequal distribution of attributes. In the case of residential segregation we measure

⁹ The colonial authorities altered traditional forms of local government by replacing several political leaders with distinct functions with a single chief. They also recast a number of traditional patron-client arrangements into obligations owed to the chief and the state, increased the severity of these demands, and ensured that they fell on individuals rather than lineages (Munyarugerero 2003; Newbury 1988).

¹⁰ The ethnic identity of local political leaders mattered because ordinary people were often ignorant of the law. For example, Catherine Newbury (1988) describes a case in which the presence of a Hutu member in a chiefdom council ensured that news of a government order decreeing that peasants were no longer required to work for Tutsi chiefs was made public despite the wishes of his Tutsi colleagues. The implication is that without this Hutu council member, Tutsi notables would have continued to extract labor from Hutu peasants despite the law.

unequal distributions across space, but the same measures can be used to capture the unequal distribution of other identities across ethnic groups, i.e. clans rather than residence. This *Clan Dissimilarity Index* captures the degree to which Hutus and Tutsis tended to be members of different clans in an area; it takes on a higher value when clan and ethnicity were reinforcing cleavages.¹¹ The data on the distribution of clan and ethnic identity come from a large-scale survey of 92,000 Rwandans conducted by d’Hertefeldt (1971). Unfortunately, there is no comparable data on clan and ethnicity in Burundi.

Simple linear regressions suggest that Hutu ethnic mobilization was higher where clan and ethnic identity overlapped. Tutsi overrepresentation in 1956 was lower, it declined to a greater degree as a result of the extension of the franchise, and more chiefs and subchiefs were removed from office in 1959 (Table 2, Models 1-3).

[Table 2 about here]

As noted above, economic development and exposure to colonial education have been identified as important factors leading to ethnic mobilization and are, therefore, potential confounds. Models 4, 5, and 6 control for the number of primary school students and the number of foreign businessmen in a province normalized by population.¹² These findings are robust to the inclusion of these variables. Although the overrepresentation of Tutsis in 1956 is not

¹¹ The *Clan Dissimilarity Index* captures how the ethnic balance of clans in a region mirrors the ethnic balance of regions as a whole. It can also be thought of as the proportion of Hutus (or Tutsis) who would have to change their clan identity to produce an even distribution. The measure I use is the

$$\text{Clan Dissimilarity Index}_j = \frac{1}{2} \sum_{k=1}^K \left| \frac{h_k}{H} - \frac{t_k}{T} \right|$$

where k denotes a clan. H and T are the number of Hutus and Tutsis in a province respectively and h_k and t_k are the proportion of Hutus and Tutsis in each clan k (see Frankel and Volij (2008)).

¹² Data on the number of foreign businessmen come from the headcount census of the non-indigenous, non-African population of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi done by the Belgian government in 1958 (Belgian Congo. Direction de la statistique 1958).

statistically significant at conventional level, the estimate of the effect of this variable has a p-value of 0.13 (Table 2, Model 4).

4.3 *Clan and Ethnic Identity in Burundi*

The data from the anthropological study described above allows us to distinguish between clan and ethnicity for different territories of Rwanda. Lacking comparable data on clan and ethnic identity in Burundi, I show that clan and ethnic identities were more cross-cutting in Rwandan provinces that were proximate to Burundi. I also demonstrate that the salience of clan identity, a feature of overlapping clan and ethnic identities, was lower in Burundi than in Rwanda.

Some Rwandan provinces are closer to Burundi than others.¹³ Hutus and Tutsis were more likely to be part of the same clans in those Rwandan provinces that border Burundi (Shangugu, Astrida, Kigali, and Kibungu) than in those that did not (Nyanza, Kibuye, Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Biumba) and these differences are statistically different at conventional levels. The mean value of the *Clan Dissimilarity Index* for provinces that border Burundi is 0.29 and 0.43 for other provinces. A two-tailed difference of means test has a p-value of 0 even given the small number of provinces.

One way of assessing the salience of clan identity is to observe the depth of lineages – that is, how many generations can be linked to a common ancestor. Where clan membership was socially and politically meaningful, people were more likely to keep track of lineage ties. Examining the depth of these lineages allows us to compare the salience of clan identity across both Rwanda and Burundi. Lineages were deeper in the north of Rwanda than in the rest of the country. Linden notes that in Rwanda the minor patrilineage (*inzu*) consisted of up to six

¹³ This test requires that we assume that the provinces of Rwanda and Burundi that border each other are more similar than provinces that do not, this assumption may not be correct as much of the border is demarcated by bodies of water.

generations linked to a common ancestor and the major patrilineage (*umuryaango*) was more politically important in the North. In eastern Rwanda, Gravel (1968) found that lineages tended to contain three generations and that the minor patrilineage (*inzu*) as described in the North did not exist. Newbury (1988, 95) notes that major patrilineages (*umuryaango*) in Kinyaga (southwestern Rwanda) contained 3 to 6 generations and does not mention the minor patrilineage (*inzu*).¹⁴

In Burundi, clans were smaller and more numerous than clans in Rwanda (Mworoha 1977). De Heusch (1966) argues that clans in Burundi are not “real” clans in the sense typical of Rwanda and the rest of the interlacustrine region.¹⁵ Rather, they resemble lineage groups and trace their origins back fewer generations. If we view the depth of lineages as a proxy for the salience of clan identity it appears to be the case that clans were less important in Burundi than in Rwanda.

5. Alternative Explanations

I have shown that clans were important for political mobilization in Rwanda and that Hutus were mobilized by changes in the franchise for subchiefdom electoral colleges to a greater extent in places where ethnicity did not overlap with clan membership. Qualitative evidence suggests that the same factor that explains variation within Rwanda can account for differences between Rwanda and Burundi. However, the historical record suggests several alternative explanations for the greater salience of Hutu identity in Rwanda. Prior to the work of René Lemarchand, most theories of the “Social Revolution” in Rwanda cited causes that also existed

¹⁴ Newbury (1988) argues that the size of lineages diminished with the degree of penetration of the central state partly because of political competition, promoted by the central state and the lineage heads who were the old political leaders.

¹⁵ de Heusch (1966) distinguishes between two types of patterns in the interlacustrine Kingdoms. The Rwanda-Nkore pattern with larger, less numerous clans and the Burundi, Bunyoro, Karagwe pattern with several smaller clans.

in Burundi (Lemarchand 1970).¹⁶ I evaluate four explanations for greater mobilization by Hutus in Rwanda: ethnic grievances, differences in pre-colonial political organization, status as a cross-cutting cleavage, and ethnic demography.¹⁷

5.1 Political Grievances

Hans Meyer (1916), an early German explorer of the region, noted that in Burundi, “the rule of the Batussi has never been as despotic as in Ruanda.” The view that Hutus in Burundi were less oppressed than Hutus in Rwanda has become the conventional wisdom on ethnic relations in the two countries (Gahama 1983; Lemarchand 1970; Peigneux, Malengreau, and Frédériq 1960; Ntibantunganya 1999). In order to determine how the oppression of and discrimination against Hutus varied across both countries, I examine Hutus’ access to political power and education.

5.1.1 Access to Political Power

A 1957 Mission of the United Nations Trusteeship Council observed that relations between Hutus and Tutsis were less clear-cut in Burundi than in Rwanda. As evidence for better relations between the “races” in Burundi they cite the fact that Hutus are more likely to be chiefs in Burundi than in Rwanda they wrote, “...the evolution of institutions in Urundi, from the Mwami to the chiefs, sub-chiefs and councils has always been more conducive to a better integration of groups” (United Nations. Trusteeship Council. 1958). Given that the majority of chiefs in both countries were Tutsi (particularly by the 1930s), how do we know this is the case?

¹⁶ Maquet (1963) argued that the Rwandan revolution was a result of class conflict between property-owning Tutsi and property-less Hutu, and Codere (1962) attributed the Hutu revolt to tensions inherent in an oppressive society.

¹⁷ The Hutu “Social Revolution” of 1959-60 has also been attributed to the influence of the Catholic clergy in Rwanda (Linden 1977; Prunier 1995). The Church is largely absent from accounts of Burundian politics in the 1950s. According to Ntibantunganya (1999), the prelate of Burundi (Monsignor Grauls) failed to implement this policy because he was unable to find a Hutu “interlocutor” like Gregoire Kayibanda in Rwanda. However, secular Belgians tried, and failed, to found a Hutu political movement (Lemarchand 1970; Chrétien and Mukuri 2002). Therefore, it is likely that there was no church-sponsored Hutu nationalist elite in Burundi in the 1950s because there was little demand for one.

Ideally one would like to know how the severity of the demands made by chiefs and the colonial state varied across the provinces of Ruanda-Urundi or between Hutus and Tutsis in any given province. There are contradicting accounts of how the severity of state exactions varied across regions of Rwanda and Burundi.¹⁸ However, data on the degree to which oppression by chiefs differed by ethnic group do not exist.¹⁹

I use the data described in Section 4, to demonstrate that Hutus were not more likely to be excluded from local leadership in Rwanda than in Burundi in 1953. As above, the outcome of interest is the overrepresentation of Tutsis on subchiefdom electoral colleges in 1953. In all territories, this measure has a value greater than one, indicating that the subchiefdom electoral colleges were predominately composed of Tutsis. Figure 3 shows the distribution of Tutsi overrepresentation in these electoral colleges over space. The mean value of this ratio is 2.5 for Rwanda; that is, there are 2.5 times as many Tutsis on the subchiefdom electoral colleges as there are in the population of a province. In Burundi, where this ratio equals 4, Tutsi dominance appears to be even *higher* than in Rwanda. However, a simple difference of means test demonstrates that there is no difference, at conventional levels of significance, between Tutsi dominance of these electoral colleges in Burundi than in Rwanda.

5.1.2 Access to Education

In many African countries, access to western-style education held a political salience disproportionate to the small number of Africans who could access it. Education opened up

¹⁸ Newbury (1983) argues that Tutsi chiefs in the northwest of Rwanda were the most extractive because they were the most insecure, and that Tutsi rule was “perceived” to be more severe in the Northwest because of its relatively short duration. On the other hand, Dorsey’s study of the Rwandan colonial economy notes that forced labor requirements were most severe in the center and in the southwest of Rwanda (Dorsey 1983).

¹⁹ Although there are data on the level of the hut tax, tax levels varied by the wealth of a region and occupation because the Belgians wanted to encourage Africans to work as wage laborers for Europeans in the Southwest (Newbury 1988).¹⁹ Moreover, according to Chrétien (2003), the automatic equation of Tutsi and chief ignores the 90% of Tutsis who had no access to political power. Ordinary Tutsis were not wealthier than Hutus (Leurquin 1960).

economic opportunities and created the post-independence elite. It also played a critical role in the construction of ethnic identity in many African countries (Abernethy 1969). Education was a particularly scarce resource in Ruanda-Urundi, where the Belgians heeded their old colonial adage, “no elite no problems.” In particular, Belgian policies excluded Hutus from formal education (Linden 1977). For example, after 1928 primary schools in Rwanda were segregated, with the understanding that Tutsi schools were to be of a higher quality (Chrétien 2003). These policies caused a great deal of resentment, both before and since independence. The most often cited statistics are enrollment numbers at the *Groupe Scholaire* at Astrida, where a tiny number of Africans were educated for the colonial civil service. At Astrida, Hutu students from Burundi outnumbered those from Rwanda (Lemarchand 1970).

One way to examine whether educational opportunities for Hutus were lower in Rwanda than in Burundi is to look at how the ethnic composition of a province affected the number of primary school places available. A better way to test whether educational discrimination between Hutus and Tutsis varied across Rwanda and Burundi would be to look at how the ethnic composition of *all* levels of education varied across the region. I have been unable to find these data and the evidence I present below relies on ecological data.

I use an OLS regression in which the dependent variable is the number of primary school students in a province, and the main independent variable of interest is the share of Tutsis in that province. Because the wealth of an area is likely to increase the demand for western education, I use the number of foreign businessmen per 1000 inhabitants in the province as a proxy for

wealth.²⁰ The wealth of foreign businessmen is a reasonable proxy for the wealth of ordinary Africans because most foreign businessmen traded commodities.

Table 3 presents the results of an OLS regression predicting the number of primary school students in a province. As expected, a greater the percentage of Tutsis in a province is positively associated with both wealth and the number of primary school students. The interaction term of country and the percent of Tutsis is not statistically significant at conventional levels suggesting that Tutsi-dominated areas were not any more privileged in their access to education in Rwanda than in Burundi.

[Table 3 about here]

5.2 Pre-Colonial Political Organization

Lemarchand argues that ethnic relations were more peaceful in Burundi because its pre-colonial kingdom was more decentralized than Rwanda's. He states that after the death of the Mwami Ntare Rugamamba (1796-1850), princes (*Ganwa*) who each governed their own territory, competed for the right to succeed the King (*Mwami*). In order to prevail in these power struggles, it was necessary for the *Ganwa* to recruit allies, and, therefore, the *Ganwa* extracted less from the people they governed did comparable chiefs in Rwanda (Lemarchand 1970). There is evidence that in Burundi some Hutus had a higher status in the King's court (Ress 1991; Newbury 2001).

Although the political institutions of the late nineteenth century may have influenced relations between Hutus and Tutsis, institutional changes, both before and since, have very different implications for ethnic relations in these two countries. One difficulty with the kind of path-dependent argument advanced by Lemarchand lies in identifying the point in history at

²⁰ Data on the number of foreign businessmen come from the headcount census of the non-indigenous, non-African population of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi done by the Belgian government in 1958 (Belgian Congo. Direction de la statistique 1958).

which the proposed trajectory was fixed. There is a danger of privileging the institutions of the late nineteenth century, which the Europeans found in place in their arrival. Newbury and Newbury (2001) note that early scholarship on Rwanda assumed that these institutions represented traditional institutions that had been static over the ages.

By examining another historical period, one can make a persuasive argument for why the pre-colonial political system in *Rwanda* ought to have promoted ethnic harmony. The Rwandan political system was centralized during the latter part of Mwami Kigeri Rwagubiri's rule (1867 to 1897) (Newbury 2001). It is possible that Hutus in Rwanda benefited from the process of centralizing the state. In order to consolidate his rule, Rwagubiri attacked and assassinated members of powerful Tutsi lineages and seized their land. He eliminated the right of hereditary succession among Tutsi notables and appointed Hutus and Batwa to positions of power in their place (Dorsey 1983; Newbury 2001). His rule has been described as "good for the people and terrible for the Tutsi" (Linden 1977). Therefore, it is not clear that Rwanda's more centralized system implied a worse situation for Hutu.

Furthermore, under colonial rule, chiefs were less reliant on support in *both* countries. Administrative reforms of the late 1920s and early 1930s made it less necessary for chiefs to compete for subjects as the Belgians assumed the power to appoint chiefs. An additional consequence of these reforms is that they drastically reduced the number of Hutu chiefs.

5.3 Status as a Cross-Cutting Cleavage

Lemarchand (1970) suggests that relations between Hutus and Tutsis in Burundi were less strained than in Rwanda because social stratification did not coincide with ethnicity, as Tutsis were divided by status. At the top of the hierarchy were relatives of the King, the *Ganwa*, followed by the upper-caste Tutsi-Banyarunguru, and the lower-caste Tutsi-Hima. However, the

differences between Tutsi-Hima and Tutsi-Banyarunguru are also regional, and differences in status can probably be attributed to the fact that the Tutsi-Hima live in the South (Bururi) (Weinstein 1972; Newbury 2001).

Burundi was not the only interlacustrine kingdom in which there were significant status distinctions within the dominant pastoralist group (Gravel 1968). In Bunyoro, Buhaya, Buha, and Bushi there were aristocratic groups drawn from the descendants of previous kings (Chrétien 2003; Richards 1959). At the death of a monarch, succession struggles divided families who were related to different contenders for the throne. In Rwanda similar status distinctions also existed. In Rwanda the aristocracy consisted of the Bega and Banyiginya clans. Like the Bezi and Batare, whose rivalry formed the basis of party politics in Burundi, the Bega and Banyiginya in Rwanda traced their rivalry to a succession struggle (Chrétien 2003; Newbury 2001). As in Burundi, members of this Rwandan aristocracy were more likely to hold political office. Aloys Munyangaju (1959), a Hutu political activist, noted that in 1959 all chiefs were Tutsi and that, of these, 68.9% were from the Banyiginya clan and 11.2% were from the Bega clan.

5.4 Ethnic Demography

Lemarchand (1970) argues that the geographic distribution of Hutus and Tutsis accounts for more amicable relations between the two groups in Burundi. He writes that most of the Tutsi are found in Bututsi region:

...where they are 80 to 85% of the local population. Most other areas have only a sprinkling of Tutsi. One-third of the country is inhabited by a mixture of Hutu and Hima populations with virtually no Tutsi. In Rwanda, however, Tutsi elements were spread almost evenly throughout the country. The only notable exception was the northern region...

He argues that status distinctions between groups were less rigid in Burundi because there were almost no Tutsis in many areas.

The Belgian Annual Report of 1957 shows that Hutus and Tutsis were not distributed across Rwanda and Burundi in the way described by Lemarchand (Belgium. Ministère des affaires africaines. 1957). Data from this report demonstrate that Rwanda and Burundi shared a very similar ethnic demography. Whether one examines the proportion of people living in each province who are Hutu (Table 1, Column 1) or the percent of all Hutus in the country living in a province (Table 1, Column 2), Hutus are not more concentrated in Burundi than in Rwanda. Lemarchand's description rests on a distinction between Tutsi-Hima and Tutsi-Banyarunguru. As both groups were defined by region of origin as much as by status, and both were of a higher-status than the Hutu, it would make little difference at a local level whether the dominant group is the Tutsi-Hima or Tutsi-Banyarunguru.

6. Conclusion

Despite the important role the colonial experience played in shaping ethnic identities in Africa, only some officially sanctioned ethnic categories became politically salient to ordinary Africans during colonial rule. Considerable local-level variation in both peaceful and violent ethnic mobilization by Hutus underlay divergent national outcomes in Rwanda and Burundi. The degree of overlap between ethnic identity and pre-existing social cleavage, partially explains why Hutus in Rwanda mobilized as Hutus in some regions and not in others. In Rwanda, reinforcing clan and ethnic cleavages were negatively associated with the overrepresentation of Tutsis in subchiefdom electoral colleges and with the share of chiefs who were deposed in the 1959 uprising. Moreover, extending the franchise of these electoral colleges to all adult males led to even greater Hutu representation in places where ethnicity and clan overlapped. Qualitative evidence suggests that clan and ethnic cleavages were more cross-cutting in Burundi than Rwanda.

In addition to demonstrating that the importance of local cleavage structures in determining the salience of ethnicity in the colonial period, this paper opens two additional avenues for future research. First, cross-cutting cleavages have the potential to mitigate ethnic conflict, but the reasons why these potentially conflict-mitigating forms of social identification persisted in some places and not others remain unexplored in the literature on ethnic politics. Second, this paper uses changes in descriptive representation after an expansion of the franchise in the terminal colonial period to measure ethnic mobilization by Hutus. However, the rules governing the limited forms of electoral participation introduced in several post-colonial countries on the eve of independence are likely to have affected the likelihood that post-independence political parties crossed ethnic lines.

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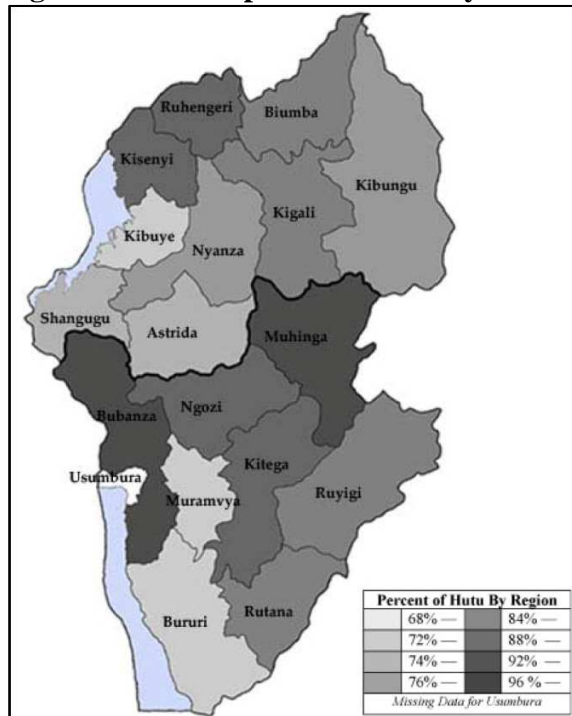
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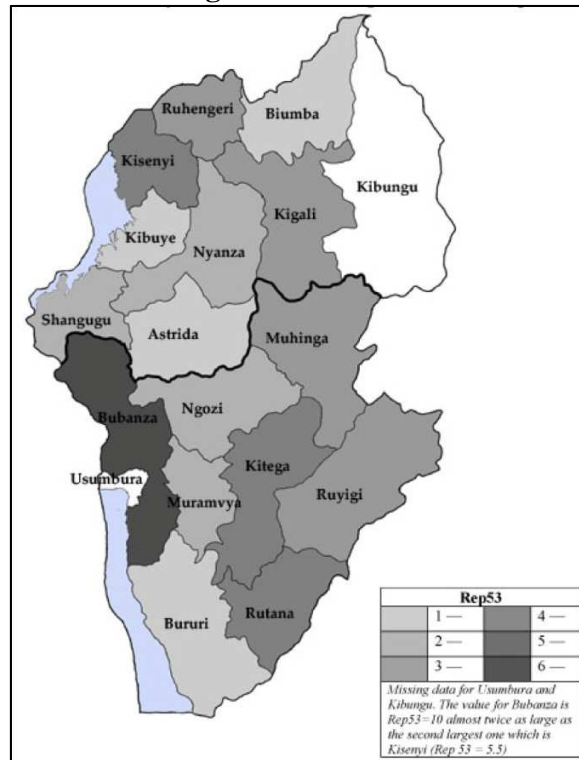
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Figure 1: Hutu Population Share by Province



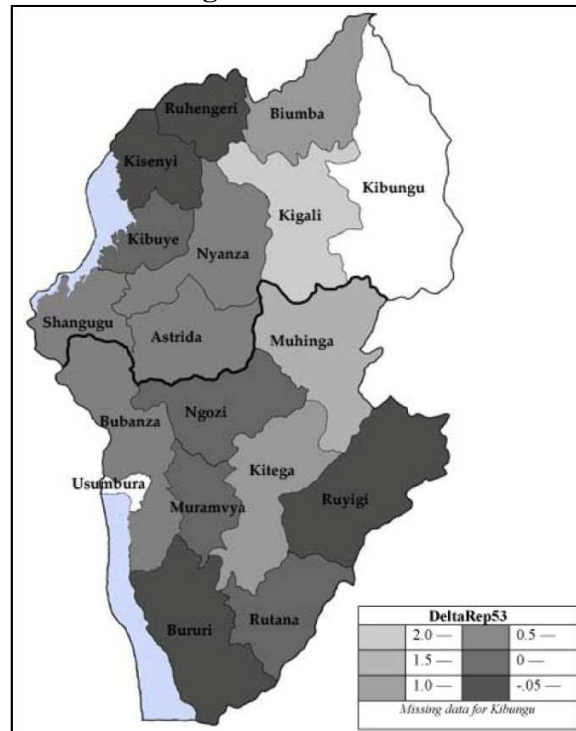
Source: Belgium, Ministère des Affaires Africaines

Figure 3: Tutsi Dominance Subchiefdom Electoral Colleges in 1953



Source: Belgium, Ministère des Affaires Africaines & Maquet and d'Hertefeldt 1959

Figure 4: Change in Tutsi Dominance Subchiefdom Electoral Colleges from 1953 to 1956



Source: Belgium, Ministère des Affaires Africaines & Maquet and d'Hertefeldt 1959

Table 1: Ethnic Composition by Province in 1957					
Rwanda			Burundi		
<i>Province</i>	<i>% Hutu</i>	<i>% of all Hutus</i>	<i>Province</i>	<i>% Hutu</i>	<i>% of all Hutus</i>
Astrida	77	17	Bubanza	98	14
Biumba	87	9	Bururi	70	9
Kibungu	84	8	Kitega	91	19
Kibuye	69	5	Muhinga	95	15
Kigali	87	12	Muramvya	74	9
Kisenyi	94	11	Ngozi	90	23
Nyanza	81	18	Rutana	88	5
Ruhengeri	92	13	Ruyigi	88	7
Shangugu	78	7	Usumbura	—	—

Table 2: Clans, Ethnicity, and Hutu Ethnic Mobilization

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
	Tutsi Dominan ce (1956)	Δ Tutsi Dominan ce 1953- 1956	Share of All Chiefs Deposed	Tutsi Dominan ce (1956)	Δ Tutsi Dominan ce 1953- 1956	Share of All Chiefs Deposed
Clan Dissimilarity Index	-1.92* (0.85)	-3.20* (1.54)	1.47** (0.47)	-1.26 (0.66)	-3.81** (0.88)	1.50* (0.62)
% Tutsi (1956)	-0.05* (0.02)	0.06 (0.03)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	0.05 (0.03)	0.00 (0.02)
Primary students per 1000 people				-0.00 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.00 (0.01)
Foreign Businessmen per 1000 people				4.02* (1.72)	-4.37 (2.02)	0.25 (1.63)
Intercept	3.74*** (0.65)	-0.28 (1.20)	-0.40 (0.36)	2.70** (0.61)	1.32 (0.77)	-0.35 (0.58)
N	9	8	9	9	8	9
Adj. R ²	0.35	0.73	0.60	0.67	0.92	0.42

Standard errors in parenthesis * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < .01$

Table 3: Access to Education by Province

DV: Primary students per 1000 people (1958)

% Tutsi in 1956	1.38** (0.63)
Burundi	-5.36 (15.91)
% Tutsi in 1956 x Burundi	-0.24 (0.81)
Foreign Businessmen per 1000 people	115.43* (62.73)
Intercept	31.95** (14.66)
N	17
Adj. R ²	0.55

Standard errors in parenthesis * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < .01$
