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**An Analyze of Rwandan Conflict in the Perspective of
Instrumentalist Theory. Horizontal Inequalities as a Main
Causes**

Political Causes of Violence

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Introduction

The Rwandan ethnic conflict has become one of the most famous tragedies of the 20th century. In 1994 long-term ethnic hostility escalated into a Genocide against the ethnic group Tutsi, committed by Hutu. But, was just ethnic hostility the real cause of this events?

The purpose of this work is to reveal the essence of Instrumentalism theory and to illustrate how the concept of ethnicity is used in the conflict as the mask and political instrument, concealing the substantial political and economic causes, which are result of horizontal inequalities between fighting ethnic groups. In this case the Rwandan conflict is a prime example, which illustrates as ethnic animosity between Tutsi and Hutu was falsely created by Hutu's political elites (the main actors of the conflict) with the aim to mobilize the population to exterminate a rival ethnic group to capture and hold political power and control economic resources, that was the result of long-term economic backwardness and low social status of Hutu at the national level.

The research is based on the literatures on intrastate conflicts, ethnic identity issues and instrumentalist theory.

Approaches to the Definition of the Concepts of «Ethnicity» and «Ethnic Group»

Recently the concepts of «ethnicity» and «ethnic group» have become central in both many interstate and intrastate conflicts, therefore it is necessary to reveal their essence, to understand how they can provoke conflicts.

For example, political sociologist Joane Nagel proposed next definition «ethnicity is a specific negotiated status, determined by an interplay between external ascription and individual self-identification» (Nagel 1994, 153).

Russian scholars in the field of ethno-political science Tishkov and Shabayev emphasize « «ethnicity» it is primarily a form of human identity and cultural

tradition, which are two basic elements for the existence of human coalitions in various configurations and relationships» (Tishkov, Shabayev 2011, 94).

Social scientists define ethnicity as «a shared racial, linguistic, or national identity of a social group» (Jary and Jary 1991, 151).

Also, Fearon and Laitin emphasize that «ethnicity» is in fact a form of «social organization, based on a belief in common descent, a common history and a common homeland» (Fearon, Latin 2003,75).

The proponents of the Instrumentalist theory offer their fairly specific definition of «ethnicity», emphasize the hidden meaning of this concept and argue that «ethnicity» is just an effective political instrument.

For example, Sarna, argues that «ethnicity» is an attribute of social construction, which is united by common economic and political objectives and serves as a tool for gaining resources (Sarna 1978, 373). Patterson insists «The ethnicity, its strength and viability are used to serve the economic and political interests of its members and at the same time manipulating tool for political elites» (Patterson 1975, 348).

The notion of an «ethnic group» is different from the concept of «ethnicity».

Barth defines the «ethnic group» as a «social organization with specific psychological boundaries, which is created as a result of the interaction of specific historical, economic and political circumstances» (Barth 1969,11).

Smith also offers almost similar definition of this concept with an emphasis on the historical and cultural similarities: «ethnic group» is named human population with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity» (Smith 1986,32).

But definition, proposed by Ross relies on political aspects: «ethnic group is a group option in which resources are mobilized for the purpose of pressuring the

political system to allocate public goods for the benefit of the members of a self-differentiating collectivity» (Ross 1982, 455).

Instrumentalists Green and Seher present radically distinctive interpretation of this term and argue that the «ethnic group» is a « *group of individuals who exhibit common social, religious, or linguistic traits, but the bond between group members is not natural or given, it is a malleable and fluid bond based on common interest; individuals choose to associate with an ethnic group because they believe that they will somehow benefit from doing so*» (Green, Seher 2003, 521).

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, we can conclude in that the «ethnic group» is community of people united by common biological, historical and cultural features into a separate social unit, but «ethnicity» is a characteristic or rather a property, indicating the biological, cultural, mental similarities that belongs to a certain group of people and distinguishes it from other groups. Both these terms emphasize the aspiration of social group to «self-identification» that subsequently is supported by more substantial economic and political goals.

The «Ethnic Conflict» from the Perspective of Instrumentalist Theory.

Horizontal Inequalities in the Ethnic Conflict

Ethnic conflict is a form of intra- and interstate confrontations, in which at least one of the parties is mobilized and organized along ethnic lines (Tyshkov 1997, 312-313).

The Instrumentalist theory explains that «*ethnic conflict does not emerge directly from differences in ethnic identity*». In opinion of instrumentalists ethnic conflict is a result of manipulation and polization of the concept of «ethnic identity» on the part of political elites «*to generate political and socio-economic advantages for an ethnic group at the cost of depriving or neglecting other ethnies*». In other words, instrumentalists believe that the concept of «ethnicity» in the ethnic conflict is just a «mask» behind which the political elites skillfully

conceal such factors as security concerns, competition, social and economic inequalities and greed» (Che 2016, 3).

For example, William argues, that ethnic conflict is a deliberated and rational decision of political elites the purpose of which is to protect the fundamental economic and political interests and to increase the power under existing economic and political horizontal inequalities between competing ethnic groups. (William 2015, 148).

Instrumentalist Bates supports William's position and argues that *«ethnic conflict is a conflict among rational agents over scarce resources»* (Bates1973, 82).

Green and Seher also argue that in the ethnic conflict political elites *«capitalize on differences between groups, such as language, physical appearance, or religion, in order to establish ethnically based political movements aimed at increasing the well-being of their group or region to making individuals aware of the connection between private interest and political action»* (Green,Seher 2003, 521-522).

Varshney insists *«from the perspective of the Instrumentalist theory the «ethnic conflict» rests on the purely instrumental use of ethnic identity for political or economic ends by the elite, regardless of whether they believe in ethnicity»* (Varshney 2002, 27). Tyshkov supports the above opinions and emphasizes the role of political elites in ethnic conflict, that mobilize ethnic feelings, deliberately provoke ethnic tensions and increase it to the level of open conflict (Tyshkov 1997, 312-313).

It is important to note, that using the «ethnicity» as the motive and «covert» political tool of struggle in the ethnic conflict is often the result of evident horizontal inequalities between the warring parties.

Horizontal inequalities imply an imbalance in the social, political and economic level of development between members of ethnic conflict, that in fact is

the underlying cause of such conflict from the perspective of Instrumentalism. Thus, *«violent mobilisation is more likely when a group that shares a salient identity faces severe inequalities of various kinds: economic, social or political or concern»* (Stewart 2010,7).

Stewart and Brown noted: *«when cultural differences coincide with economic and political differences between groups, this can cause deep resentment that may lead to violent struggles»* (Stewart, Brown 2007, 222).

Also, Stewart stresses: *«any type of horizontal inequality can provide an incentive for political mobilisation, but political inequality (especially political exclusion) is most likely to motivate group leaders to instigate a rebellion»*, as can be seen in the case of Rwanda (Stewart 2010, 7-8).

The horizontal inequalities between ethnic groups are often the result of historical events, particularly colonial policy, which purposefully privileged one ethnic group over others (Gurr, 2000).

We can conclude in, that instrumentalists argue that the emergence of ethnic conflict is related on purposeful activity of political elites to instigate ethnic hostility as a reaction to the apparent social, cultural, economic or political disproportion of development between ethnic groups in order to achieve other *«veiled»* goals.

Horizontal Inequalities as Key-Causes and Concept of «Ethnicity» in Rwandan Conflict

Based on historical tradition the concept of «ethnicity» in the case of Rwanda has a very special interpretation. As Krivushin argues- division of the population on ethnic groups Tutsi and Hutu did not occur by the classical criteria of ethnicity (biological, cultural, religious). In fact, they had similar racial and cultural traits, spoke the same language, it was rather the division by the socio-economic status - pastoralists «Tutsi» and agriculturists «Hutu». The concept of ethnicity in this case was sufficiently flexible- Hutu despite his innate biological and cultural features

could easily become a Tutsi if he acquired cattle and vice versa (Krivushin 2015, 3).

Ethnic self-determination also has been strengthened in the 19th century by the colonialists, who considered more physically, mentally and economic developed Tutsi as more «civilized», like the Europeans. The authorities of the metropolis supported Tutsi and endowed them with special status, that caused great dissatisfaction of Hutu, which was aggravated with time. *«Under Belgian rule, the difference in status between the Hutu and Tutsi became socially fixed, the entire population was divided into ethnic groups and this was applied to every single aspect of life»* (Haperen 2012, 98). Thus it increased the sense of *«ethnic identity» in each of these two groups- one preferred and other discriminated»* (Krivushin 2015, 4).

Long-term impairment of Hutu's rights and their frustration were aggravated by substantial economic and political causes. The important fact is that *«the Rwanda's political system were structured by the ecosystem and construction of Rwanda as a nation resulted from construction of Tutsi monopoly over control of natural resources and gradual reduction of Hutu access to them»* (Batware 2012,5).

Hutu were aware that the vast territory, which was inhabited by the dominant ethnic group Tutsi contains a powerful resource base and it has a number of advantages for the favorable development of the economy, while Hutu, who inhabited infertile savanna suffered from hunger and poverty due to frequent droughts. Tutsi monopoly over control of natural resources didn't only get them significant economic benefits but became also a powerful instrument of their political domination and social development (Batware 2012, 6-7).

In fact, the natural resource base, which had Tutsi become the core cause of their economic prosperity, positioning them as an elite and privileged ethnic group.

Economic success of Tutsi was supported by relatively high level of social development. At the same time the colonial administration saw a significant potential of successful Tutsis and strongly contributed to their political and social development in contrast to the poor Hutu, who were associated with a group of «underdeveloped savages». Representatives of Tutsi were appointed to high administrative positions, later only Tutsi could receive higher education and employment. Subsequently, all these factors have become the basis of constructing a rigid hierarchical system of society with obvious domination of the Tutsi ethnic group and infringement of Hutu's positions (Karabacak 2012, 7).

Initially, natural, historically formed economic inequalities escalated into large social, political, cultural and educational inequalities, which have turned Hutu into poor and uneducated «lower-class» ethnic group.

Thus, the result of these inequalities were growing intolerance against Tutsi, frustration and awareness of the hopelessness, which instigated Hutu to make a social revolution and radically change their position.

Ethnicity as the «Mask» and Genocide as the Political Strategy in Rwandan Conflict

It is important to emphasize that the first bloody ethnic clashes - Social revolution 1959 were not the result of «natural» long-term ethnic intolerance, rather it was the result of deliberated instigating of ethnic hostility, emerged in the context of an acute economic crisis and strengthening Hutu's ethical feelings as the aggrieved ethnic group forced to endure «misery and humiliation» because of the Tutsi's dominant position and the concentration of vital resources for their power.

In this situation, a crucial role was played by skillful strategy of Hutu's political elites. Charismatic leader Gregoire Kayibanda was the first, who grasped, that the hopelessness of the economic situation, a low position in the Rwandan society, a significant increase in marriages between Hutu and Tutsi the result of which was a social transition from «Hutu» into «Tutsi» with the aim to get

economic advantage, continuously increases the risk of extinction Hutu as the ethnic group (Berry and Berry 1999, 200) .

Kayibanda also understood that an intensive population mobilization is necessary to capture political power and to create absolutely new Hutu-dominated republic, but he saw, that emaciated Hutu's population was rather passive in achieving these goals.

Deliberately provoking of «ethnic hatred» was fixed in the «Hutu Manifesto»- powerful propaganda instrument, created by Kayibanda with the purpose to arouse Hutu's ethnic feelings that would motivate them to revolt. «Manifesto» deliberately created the image of Tutsi as cruel oppressors of Hutu, who illegally possess their land and natural resources are the «cause of all disasters».

In fact, Kayibanda's propaganda had really powerful effect - it not only encouraged Hutus to rebel, contributed to intense rapid mobilization, but also gave rise to widespread anti- Tutsi extremism. The final result was the establishment of Hutu's power in 1959 (Haperen 2012 ,97-101).

The situation worsened in 1970's, when Juvénal Habyarimana, Kayibanda's successor came to power. Habyarimana's government understood the precariousness of its position, especially when the Tutsi's population, who tirelessly sought to restore their power was much more higher. Frequent Tutsi's attacks and their significant human resources threatened the Hutu's security, concentration of their political power and control over economic resources.

In this situation, for Habyarimana's government the extermination of Tutsi as the ethnic group was the only way to keep his power and protect the Hutu population.

To achieve these goals was also required considerable public support, Habyarimana used the same intense political instruments as his predecessor. When Habyarimana came to power, a large-scale propaganda, which purposefully created enmity and hatred between two ethnic groups.

As the chairman of the African Centre for Conflict Research Golooba-Mutebi argues «*Habyarimana and Hutu elites seeking to acquire and monopolise power had portrayed members of the Tutsi community as enemies who should be killed «in self-defence», while the image of the Tutsi as alien enemies of Rwanda and of the Hutu community faded during periods of calm and stability, during times of crisis and uncertainty or whenever Hutu elites wanted to whip up anti-Tutsi sentiment, it would be re-activated»* (Golooba-Mutebi 2008,17).

Habyarimana's powerful propaganda instrument was «Hutu Ten Commandments», cleverly thought-out document, which contained false statements about Tutsi and provoked a strengthening of ethnic hatred. In this new manifesto Habyarimana argued: «*Tutsi are blood and power thirsty, they want to impose their hegemony on the Rwandan people by cannon and sword»*. Also he insisted: «*Ever Since the social revolution of 1959 not one day has passed that the Tutsi have let go of the idea of reconquering power in Rwanda and exterminating the intellectuals and dominating the Hutu agriculturists. The Hutu must stop taking pity on the Tutsi»* (Jean 2006,2). As Jean noted «*these three commandments represent how the Hutu elite would use any means to maintain power, even through genocide»* (Jean 2006,2).

An important role in this propaganda also played media control by Hutu. Particularly Radio RTLM, which literally enlisted and recruited Hutu to exterminate Tutsi. As Yanagizawa emphasizes «*RTLM propaganda engaged in ethnic stereotyping that promoted hatred against the Tutsi population, such as highlighting inherent differences between Hutu and Tutsi, that Tutsis were not to be considered Rwandan citizens, stressing the disproportionate share of wealth held by Tutsis, and the horrors of past Tutsi rule before independence»* (Yanagizawa 2010, 9).

Thus, the skillful manipulation by the concept of «ethnicity» led to the genocide which claimed the lives of more than a million Tutsi. As M. Hintjens argues «*in the case of Rwandan conflict ethnic and racist ideologies mainly*

served as a mask or pseudojustification for the more fundamental goal of regime survival under conditions of sharp socioeconomic crisis and growing political opposition» (Hinjens 1999, 242).

Thus, the real purpose of genocide 1994 was to maintain political power and control over resources.

Conclusions

This paper investigates the impact of pseudojustification of ethnic differences between two ethnic groups and deliberate provocation of ethnic hatred to achieve the hidden aims of the political elites.

The paper argues that Rwandan conflict was not purely ethnic, it has political and socio-economic background. Fighting ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi were almost ethnically homogeneous, but a significant difference between them was the level of social and economic development. In fact, just these horizontal inequalities, particularly the concentration of economic resources and political power under authority of Tutsi ethnic group infringed Hutu's position became the real cause of the conflict, which was cleverly veiled as an ethnic. The decisive role in the conflict belongs to the charismatic leaders of the Hutu – Kayibanda and Habyarimana, who launched the effective mechanism of ethnic hate propaganda, that is proved by a series of historical documents.

Finally, the Rwandan conflict explains the Instrumentalism theory the concept of «horizontal inequalities», that from the standpoint of this theory are key-causes of the ethnic conflict, in which «ethnicity» is just a mask, which hide them.

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