CHAPTER V
RWANDA AND BURUNDI: A COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM
INTRODUCTION

The refugee problem as is clear from the preceding discussions, is an extremely complex phenomenon. To arrive at any suitable solution one must first, necessarily address the different dimensions involved in it. Until the causal factors are negated and suitable measures taken, no durable and effective solution to the problem can emerge. Towards this end it is essential to study deeply the entire phenomenon.

For developing a suitable solution to the problem, a comparative study of the various factors involved was discussed in the first chapter. It was also argued that among the different causes, the defining factor of the refugee problem was the existence of violent conflict. There exist a group of people who have 'well founded fear' due to their beliefs, association, race, etc., and who refuse the protection of the country of their nationality. Apart from this being a reason to be granted refugee status, a person must have fled and be unwilling to seek the protection of his country of nationality.

Further, all refugee problems are not similar. Different types or pattern of refugee flows occur due to different type of causal conflicts. For example, when sudden and violent change of regime occur, in the ensuing disorder a large number of people flee and seek refuge and assistance. In such a situation as soon as conditions normalise and become conducive the refugees usually repatriate. External intervention in such situations is aimed primarily at providing humanitarian assistance and logistic support for repatriation and rehabilitation.

Usually, in long-term refugee problems a section of people struggle against the regime. The aim of such struggles is to change the equation of political control and wrestling of the State's power. Depending on the level of of rallying, the ensuing mobilisation may be of a small exclusive group or of a large section of the population.
There can be different ways in which such groups can aggregate and be consolidated. This study has limited itself to studying those conflicts where ethnicity was used to rally people. A serious implication of the use of ethnicity for mobilisation is that the entire ethnic community is entangled in the web of conflict. Justifiably or otherwise, the whole community is labelled as enemy by the opposition. This makes the whole group vulnerable, irrespective of whether or not they subscribe to the ideas of the violent section of the group. The solution therefore must address ethnic issue among other factors, for it to be successful and viable.

VIOLENT CONFLICT : A CONCEPTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Violent conflict, it was argued is not random and sporadic. External conditions and circumstances create conducive conditions for both peace and conflict. Moreover, these conditions could be suitably manipulated so that circumstances conducive for peace or conflict are produced.

The primary factor responsible for violent conflict is the hierarchical or vertical pattern of social interaction. In certain cases the pattern of social interaction is such that some people are placed in an advantageous position at the cost of others. In this scenario, those at a disadvantage may become conscious of their victimisation and may react and resist. An important characteristic of this hierarchical pattern is that it replicates through consolidation and cloning. This system does not face any challenge as long as the victims are not conscious of the violence perpetrated against them and so long as they do not attempt to resist it. However, due to the various factors like external stimuli, etc., the victim may become aware of their victimisation and of the violence being unleashed upon them by the social hierarchy. This consciousness would at some point of time lead to reaction and resistance and as a
consequence violent conflict would ensue. Perhaps the reason why violence does not occur in most such societies, is because often cultural symbols and idioms are utilised to legitimise and justify the continuance of the unequal terms of exchange.

Any solution to a conflict must first analyse the conflict from the standpoint of the existence of structural and cultural violence. For this an effort will have to be made to clarify the latent aspects of the conflict. Towards this endeavour the model of conflict triangle is an effective tool in unravelling and analysing a conflict system. Every conflict system has a set of contradictions, i.e. the existence of incompatible goals. Therefore, it is necessary that these contradictions are understood and efforts made to address them. Without this no feasible or sustainable solution is possible.

RWANDA AND BURUNDI: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONFLICT SYSTEM

The discussion in the chapter two makes evident the manner in which the conflict system or hierarchical pattern of societal interaction was established, in the case of Rwanda and Burundi. The region witnessed two different migrations. The first of the Bantus (Hutu) from the Chad region and then that of the Tutsis from the Ethiopia-Somalia region. The second group was incorporated into the established proto-State of Hutus. However, due to ecological factors the Tutsis, who practised herding, wrested the control of State. After acquiring power this group consolidated its position by using different means. Amongst these was the initiation of a new land-tenure system, by the ruling elite which led to different types of clientship relations. As the State

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became stronger and entrenched, the clientelism relations became harsher and more extractive. The Hutus were being continuously deprived and increasingly pushed to a disadvantageous position in the terms of exchange. It is noteworthy that, the Hutus were not incorporated by the new regime without struggle and resistance. But these remained very diffused and fragmented, to have any effect.

The State in the pre-colonial period in Rwanda was far more stronger and centralised than the State in Burundi. Similarly, the clan structure in Burundi was diffused and flexible whereas in Rwanda it was more rigid and clearly defined. There was a princely caste of ganwa in Burundi who were distinct from the rest of the society and were continuously squabbling amongst themselves. This made the State authority fragmented and less rigid.

The arrival of the colonial powers into the region signifies the ushering of a new phase in the history of the region. The colonial policy was based on the premise of the ‘Hamtic Theory’ propounded by Speke. The Germans understood societies on the basis of different races. Naturally this concept was extended to their colonies with one group being labelled as superior and the other as inferior. They therefore, considered the Tutsis to be a superior race with Semitic origins. This group was considered to have brought into this region the institution of State. The Hutus were understood to be a docile and subservient race which had not initiated any development or attempted State formation.

As a consequence of this, the policies adopted by the colonial rulers were favourable to and facilitated Tutsi monarchy. Educational and other opportunities were provided exclusively to them. The Tutsi monarchy used this opportunity to deepen and spread their control over the society and into areas previously outside

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their domain. The exclusive appointment of Tutsi local or native chiefs for
administering the natives only helped in this regard. The local chiefs\(^5\) became more
demanding, extractive and tyrannical. All this resulted in an increase in the physical
and structural violence against the Hutus.

Another process initiated by the colonial powers was to make these societies rigid. Prior to their arrival the Tutsi grip on the State was not very strong. Thus, the exploitation of the Hutus was also limited. There were areas (like northern Rwanda) and sections of the population who enjoyed considerable autonomy and social mobility. But policies initiated by the colonial State ended this flexibility and turned these differentiations into fixed categories. The prospect of social mobility was greatly diminished. The policy premises of German colonial administration was adopted by the Belgians when they took over these countries as League of Nation Mandated Territories. In fact, the Belgians went further and institutionalised this division by issuing racially labelled identity cards. Thereafter, all administrative matters were decided on this ground. This completely blocked any scope of social mobility.

Rwanda was at the beginning of colonial rule a coherent and centralised State with the Mwami being the effective sovereign. In the case of Burundi there was chaos, with the different princes asserting their control over their fiefdoms and constantly attacking the domains of other. This made the control of the Mwami notional and ineffective. This had a great impact on the state and society during the colonial period.

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\(^5\) Mahmood Mamdani, "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflection on Rwanda", *New Left Review*, vol. 216, March-April 1996, p. 8
THE EMERGENCE OF CONFLICT CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE VICTIMS: THE HUTUS

Due to the impact of the colonial rule, these societies were transformed and fragmented, where by emerged two rigid and monolithic blocks; each antagonistic and antithetical to the aspirations of the other. This division was brought about by the administrative intervention of the colonial State. The colonial State and the Church provided all the privileges and benefits to the Tutsis. The other group, i.e the Hutus were completely exposed to enormous amounts of direct as well as indirect violence by the Tutsis. This violence was personified in the triple office of the local chiefs held only by the Tutsi. Though the Hutus reacted and resisted this violence but it was not until after the Second World War that some form of a united and organised protest emerged; though it was restricted to Rwanda.

The consciousness of victimisation that emerged among the Hutus, was largely due to the growing number of educated Hutus. After the Second World War the colonial staff and personnel in the Church came from humbler background. They identified themselves with the suffering of the Hutus at the hands of the Tutsis. This group began to promote Hutus both in educational and employment fields. Similarly, the new clergy in the Church, which had become the primary agency of imparting education and other social services and of social intervention in every sphere of life, began to encourage and promote the Hutus.

As the number of educated Hutus grew, they became conscious of the contradictions or the latent conflict, about which they were unaware since ages. Thus the victims began to realise their victimisation, their deprivation and alienation from power and privileges. However, this realisation was restricted to only a small group;

the rest of the community/group being ignorant of their victimisation. Besides, the community was diffused and fragmented and this automatically prevented consolidation of any such realisation. Despite this, the group began to articulate its sense of deprivation and victimisation. As a result the conflict system witnessed a process of 'conscientization', i.e. the conflict or the contradiction which was so far latent and hidden into the societal structures and was being legitimised by the myth of racial or ethnic superiority, was now unravelled and made manifest.

The response of Tutsi elite\(^7\) in Rwanda especially the monarchy was intransient and arrogant. They unleashed a campaign of intimidation and violence against the emerging Hutu counter-elite and their nascent expression of dissent. However, this violence and rigid response failed to stifle and undermine the Hutu leadership.

**DIFFERENT PATHS OF CONFLICT AND THE USE OF ETHNICITY IN RWANDA AND BURUNDI**

The turn of events made the Hutu leadership realise their limitations that primarily arose from of their numerical weakness. This was more evident, especially in the face of the challenge posed by the means of coercion and legitimacy at the disposal of the Tutsi monarchy. The Hutu leadership, thus began to concentrate on mass consciousness and mobilisation, for demanding their rights and dues. For the purpose of mobilising people they used the available social resources to create ethnic consciousness and aggregation. Towards this end the ethnically marked identity cards made the task quite easy. The social milieu provided the other features for ethnic mobilisation like the presence of a pool of symbols connoting distinctiveness, different historical narrations and a referral group against whom a sense of

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\(^7\) Mamdani, n. 5, p. 23
deprivation existed. These social resources were used effectively by the Hutu leadership to transform a diffused and fragmented group of people into a mobilised, and consolidated group which now began to assert for its rights. The presence of Belgian and visits by the United Nations Trusteeship Council helped the Hutu leadership to make effective demands on the State and win concessions with regard to State power and distribution of value.

Though Burundi shared many similarities with Rwanda, however, the social conditions were very different. The society though similarly composed, was demographically different with respect to the division between the Tutsis and Hutus. They were not divided in such a clear fashion as it was in Rwanda. The *ganwa* were the ruling class that consisted of both the Tustis and some Hutus while the remaining Tutsis and Hutu were similarly placed in the social hierarchy. Besides, unlike in Rwanda there was no clearly defined group against whom a sense of deprivation could be aggregated and directed.

In Rwanda due to the behaviour of the Tutsi monarchy it was clear to the Hutu leadership that after independence they would be relegated to their former position of *ubureetwa*. The intimidation and violence unleashed by the Tutsi gangs only made it more clear to the Hutu leadership that their only chance to be able to have a role in governance was before the Belgians departed. They feared that post-independence there was no prospect of the Tutsis relenting to provide them with a meaningful role. This realisation made stronger the resolve and efforts of the Hutus to dislodge the Tutsi monarchy. As a result of their efforts and struggle, Rwanda was able to abolish Monarchy before independence.

However, unlike in Rwanda, in Burundi the State’s flexibility provided the Hutu with the hope and space for playing a meaningful role in governance. There was
a genuine hope that the state structure created during the Belgian mandate would be able to provide them with suitable avenues to play meaningful role. Every political formation had reasonable representation of the Hutus, like elected councillors during the years preceding independence. Thus, in the case of Burundi there was no need or necessity for the Hutus to consolidate and mobilise using ethnicity as a rallying point.

MANIFESTATION OF VIOLENCE IN THE CONFLICT SYSTEM OF RWANDA AND BURUNDI
In Rwanda, the Tutsis initially responded to the Hutus' articulation of deprivation, by unleashing violence. This taught the Hutus the utility of direct violence. In the run up to independence, Hutus too resorted to the use of violence against the Tutsis. Each incident of Tutsi violence was responded by greater and far more widespread violence. The sheer magnitude and ferocity of Hutu counter-violence was reflective of the pent up anger against centuries of societal violence. Many Tutsis responded by fleeing to neighbouring countries to escape these pogroms. But the violence did not end, it kept on growing in intensity even after independence, and reached its crescendo during the genocide.

As the new elite in Rwanda became entrenched, they used regular violent pogroms to facilitate their control over power. The refugees tried to recapture the Rwandan State by launching many raids into Rwanda from their countries of refuge. This resulted in more pogroms on the remaining Tutsis. The new regime used the threat of Tutsis and their sporadic raids, to demonise them and also create a fear psychosis in the minds of rural masses. However, despite this there was by 1970, a growing restlessness among the northern Hutus due to their dissatisfaction in getting their share in political power. Eventually in 1972 they seized power by staging a
coup. This group continued to rule till after the genocide. The new regime of the northern Hutus, similarly used the sense of the fear of the return of Tutsis, to divert the attention of the population and keep them in control.

Till the mid-1980s Rwanda witnessed improvement in the living conditions of the rural masses. Water, electricity and planned farming were introduced. There was a qualitative improvement in the lives of the rural people. As a result the Hutu-Tutsi division was low on the agenda though never completely forgotten. This was because as far as the leadership was concerned it remained paranoid due to conditions prevailing in Burundi and due to the activities of Rwandan refugees.

**CONDITION OF RWANDAN TUTSIS AS REFUGEES**

Meanwhile, the refugees were resigned to their fate after the initial attempts to capture power failed. Those in Tanzania began to settle down and some took up local nationality. But the conditions in other countries were not quite favourable for settling down. Depending on the attitude of those in power, the condition and facilities extended to the refugees either improved or deteriorated. Some refugees in order to gain some meaningful existence joined different rebel movements. A large number of refugees in Uganda joined the NRA. After the NRA came to power many of the refugees were given high position in the government. However, as the security situation began to improve, there was a growing opposition to these officials. It soon became apparent to the refugees that despite their support and the crucial role played by them in the struggle, they were doomed to remain a refugee and no state will ever accept them. As a result, the dream of the refugees to seek a home and settle down elsewhere was shattered and so was the futility of their efforts to return home.

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8 *Guardian* (London) 1/4/1972
Moreover, in 1988 the Rwandan President had categorically stated that there was no space for the Tutsis in Rwanda and that they should make or find permanent homes elsewhere. The main reason for this was that by 1988 the Rwandan development model or strategy was running out of steam. The policies which had helped Rwanda become the 'Switzerland of Africa' and the darling of the aid community was facing severe crisis. Economy and development could not keep pace with the burgeoning population. This led to falling income levels and extensive rural impoverishment. The situation was further aggravated by the policy of forcing the farmers to grow coffee instead of banana. Banana had a ready local market for it from the breweries. This industry provided casual job opportunity to the rural poor during lean periods. The returns on coffee production were exposed to the vagaries of international market fluctuations, and provided foreign exchange for the urban elite's consumption. Hence, there was a strong State pressure to grow coffee.

DEVELOPMENT, CRISIS AND THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

In this dismal economic and employment situation, the government accepted the provisions of SAP and decided to implement them. This only increased the hardships of the people. So by the early 1990 Rwanda faced a severe crisis of development and drastic reduction of real income and quality of life. Externally imposed conditionalities only increased these hardships. To add to it was the large surplus of young men and women for whom there were neither jobs nor land to earn a livelihood. It was this segment of population which provided ready recruits for the extremist parties and their agenda.

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The Tutsis who had stayed back after independence in Rwanda were not permitted to secure government jobs, so they started small business and were fairly successful. When rural impoverishment forced Hutu landholders to distress sales, this group began to acquire land and soon began to employ poor Hutus as contract labourers. It was not very difficult for the leadership to use this situation to revive the fear of ubureetwa and harsh clientships under Tutsis, like it was before independence.

There were external pressures on the regime for democratisation. Besides, there was also a growing internal opposition which was gaining strength due to discontent and hardships faced by people. It was in such an atmosphere that RPF launched its attack from Uganda. All this forced the regime to negotiate some sort of an accord. Soon internationally sponsored peace talks got underway at Arusha, with representatives from the government, internal opposition and the RPF. However, a remarkable fact of the negotiations was that the small group of people who monopolised power since 1972 did not actively participate. They allowed the opposition members, who were part of the power sharing arrangement, to represent the government.

After having stayed away from the internationally sponsored negotiations, this group began to establish a network of extra-state militias. The disenchanted surplus population of youth with no future and hope were recruited and provided training in camps. They also used the mass media like RTMC to demonise the successful Tutsi community and the Hutu opposition parties on the one hand, and revive the fear of Tutsi overlordship and the need to exterminate the entire Tutsi population to save the gains of the 1959 Revolution on the other hand. As the negotiations progressed the group developed detail death lists and plans, and prepared the logistics. However, the President could not resist the international pressure and finally succumbed to it and
ed to implement the Arusha Accord. While returning after agreeing to implement the accord his plane was shot down. His death ignited the fuse which had been well prepared and resulted in genocide which killed more than a million people in just a few months.

RUNDI: VIOLENCE AND HEGEMONY OF THE TUTSIS

situation was different in Burundi. Here a small minority in power realised and understood that it would face the same fate as that of the Rwandan Tutsis and spend the rest of their lives in refugee camps unless they held onto power. Initial internal tussling among different parties provided the Monarchy, the space and opportunity to surp executive power. This ended the democratisation and opening up of the State. When the Army removed the Monarchy, the Hutus remained hopeful that they would be provided meaningful role in governance. However, due to the experience of the Tutsi elite realised that it would be suicidal to allow the Hutus to have a role in governance. As a consequence all democratisation processes were stopped and the Army took tight control of the regime. This reversal of reforms and eroding of political space for Hutus, made them restless. To add to this, the success of the anad Hutus only increased the aspirations and restlessness of the Burundian Tutsi. Eventually in 1972 they attempted to seize power by force. However the up attempt failed, and the rebellion was crushed. In the aftermath of the coup the anoid Tutsi elite purged the army and the police of the Hutus.

Every time an effort was made to provide some space and democratise governance in Burundi, it met with failure due to the tight control on power exercised by the Tutsi dominated army. The reform efforts of the early 1990s too eventually

Le Monde 25/11/1972
failed, due to the paranoia of the Tutsi elite in sharing power with the Hutus. A small group of para-troopers stuck a lethal blow to the reforms by killing the newly elected Hutu President and other top leaders.11 Though the coup was put down, yet the reforms were effectively derailed. Sometimes later, despite international concern and pressure, the army again staged a coup and took over political control, thereby ending any possibility of reforms.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN RWANDA AND BURUNDI
From the foregone discussion it is apparent that ethnic conflict and the resultant violence resulted in massive displacement of people. Despite the concerted efforts by the international community at solving their plight, a large number of people in the region are still facing a challenging and uncertain future.

The reason for this continued suffering is primarily the fact that the efforts at solving these conflicts suffer from certain deficiencies. Before a discussion on these issues, it is imperative to study the different refugee flows witnessed in these countries. These two countries have experienced three different sets of refugee flows.

First was the flow of the Rwandan Tutsis who began to flee in the culminating years of the Belgian rule and in the years following independence. During this period Rwanda witnessed an assertion by the Hutus and escalation of direct violence in society. The Hutu leadership, which emerged during this period, used symbols and other societal resources to consolidate and mobilise the community. This transformed a fragmented, traumatised and diffused group of people into a cohesive and assertive ethnic community, which was willing to respond to violence with far greater and more widespread violence. The Hutus reciprocated each and every acts of intimidation and

violence by the Tutsi gangs, with greater and more intense violence. As a consequence of this spiralling violence, many Tutsis began to seek refuge outside the country.

During late 1994 and throughout 1995, more than 700,000 long-time,12 "old caseload" Tutsi refugees returned to Rwanda after spending more than thirty years as refugees, confident that the new government would welcome them. Many Tutsi returnees no longer owned land and settled on property vacated by "new caseload" of Hutu refugees.

HUTU REFUGEES OF RWANDA

The next set of refugee flow was that of the Rwandan Hutu refugees. After the defeat of the regime at the hands of RPA in 1994 the leaders fled into exile and were accompanied by about 1.7 million or more Rwandan Hutus13 who fled with them. Some Hutu refugees fled because they feared retribution by the new regime, others were prompted by their leaders to leave Rwanda. Besides nearly half a million persons were internally displaced. Many of them had initially sought refuge in the French protected Zone Turquoise,14 and then fled outside when the zone was disbanded after two months. The combination of genocide, civil war, and massive refugee exodus left Rwanda a shattered, and traumatised country during 1994-95. More than 40 per cent of the country's estimated seven million people were dead or uprooted. By 1995 approximately 20 per cent of the Hutu refugee population trickled back to Rwanda, joining the four million Hutus who had not fled the country. Most internally displaced Hutus also returned to their homes. Despite this by the end of

1995, an estimated 1.75 million\textsuperscript{15} Rwandans – overwhelmingly Hutu – remained refugees, primarily in Zaire, Tanzania, and Burundi.

The general conditions in Rwanda during 1996 were ambivalent. It improved in some respects and deteriorated in others. A crucial issue was whether conditions in Rwanda were adequately safe for refugee repatriation and resettlement. Violent incidents occurred soldiers of Rwanda's ousted regime regularly infiltrated border areas. The RPA responded to the infiltrations by conducting aggressive security sweeps in rural areas, resulting in large number of civilian casualties.

Another factor of concern was the large number of Hutus in jail.\textsuperscript{16} At the beginning of 1996, some 60,000 Hutus were imprisoned without trial, on suspicion of participating in the genocide including some repatriated refugees. An additional 30,000 persons were placed in overcrowded jails during 1996. The police, judges and the judicial system struggled to cope with this enormous task. The country was poorly equipped to handle this load, with only 16 practicing lawyers and 150 prosecution investigators to handle the more than 90,000 cases. The government enacted a new penal code that allowed the first genocide trials to begin late in the year. However, concern over arbitrary imprisonment and the crippled judicial system, were voiced and this initially deterred many refugees from repatriating.

**REPatriation of Rwandan Hutus**

Rwandan officials\textsuperscript{17} expressed eagerness for large-scale repatriation of the predominantly Hutu refugees, and regularly invited the refugees to return.

\textsuperscript{16} Michael Scharf, "Responding to Rwanda: Accountability Mechanisms in the Aftermath of Genocide", *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 52(2), Spring 1999, p. 623
\textsuperscript{17} "I would particularly like to ask the refugees to return home, to tell them we await them, that they should stop living in misery in camps and humiliation of exile," Rwandan President stated on national radio. *Africa Research Bulletin*, vol. 33(8), August 1996
Government policy too stipulated that returnees who found their homes occupied by squatters would be able to reoccupy their homes within 15 days. Authorities formed a National Emergency Committee to oversee repatriation programmes. UNHCR established transit centres in border areas capable of accommodating up to 45,000 returnees per day, in anticipation of a large repatriation. Yet, some considered that condition for repatriation were dubious, and that many Rwandan officials were not fully committed to the return of the refugees. They charged that the government and radio broadcasts sometimes characterised refugees as murderers. Besides many returnees were unable to reclaim their homes and property, despite stated national policy. Thus only 30,000 to 50,000 Hutu refugees were officially repatriated during the first half of 1996.

However, this trend in repatriation dramatically changed due to events in the second half of the same year. Approximately 100,000 Rwandan refugees were repatriated from Burundi in three different waves. About 15,000 returned during the first quarter because of violence in their camps inside Burundi. The second wave of repatriation occurred in July 1996, when some 15,000 were forcibly returned to Rwanda. UNHCR\textsuperscript{18} protested that Rwandan soldiers colluded with Burundian troops to force the repatriation. The third wave of repatriation occurred in August 1996, when 60,000 or more refugees were repatriated.

Similarly, mass repatriation from Zaire occurred when more than 700,000 Rwandan refugees were repatriated from Zaire during the last quarter of 1996. Rwandan officials, UNHCR, and many others in the international community had placed a priority on encouraging voluntary repatriation from Zaire during 1995-96. This was due to their desire to eliminate the security risk that the militarised refugee

camps in Zaire posed to the region. In August 1996, the governments of Rwanda and Zaire agreed to a strategy of rapid and total repatriation despite UNHCR opposition. UNHCR responded by stating that it would not be a party to any such forced repatriation.

During the first nine months of 1996, fewer than 10 per cent of the Rwandan Hutu refugees in Zaire were repatriated. In October 1996, an outbreak of civil war in Zaire\textsuperscript{19} – which engulfed Rwandan refugee camps there – produced what UNHCR described as the largest and the swiftest repatriation in recent times. About a half a million Rwandan refugees returned home during a four day period in mid-November 1994. Most returnees repatriated on foot, jamming the main Rwandan highway from the border. The sea of humanity stretched nearly 100 miles during the height of the return. The orderliness of the trek to home surprised many observers, who expected chaos, epidemics and violence, or other signs of tension with so many people on the move. Tens of thousands of additional repatriations by the Rwandan Hutus, continued in the following months as civil war continued unabated. Some sources estimated that approximately 720,000 Rwandans of both ethnic groups returned from Zaire during the course of 1996.

Relatively few Rwandan refugees repatriated from Tanzania during the first eleven months of 1996.\textsuperscript{20} This however, suddenly changed in December, when Tanzanian authorities, citing relatively safe conditions for repatriation inside Rwanda, expelled some 470,000 refugees. As many as 100,000 refugees returned to Rwanda in a single day. The majority of returnees entered Rwanda on foot. Rwandan government

officials handled the logistics of the repatriation influx and restricted external participation in the exercise.

By the end of 1998, approximately only 12,000 Rwandans were recognized as refugees including about 7,000 in Uganda, and some 5,000 in Tanzania. However, an estimated 500,000 Rwandans were internally displaced, although some estimates range as high as 650,000. About another 50,000 Rwandans were living in refugee-like circumstances. Their entitlement to full refugee status remained undetermined pending possible future screening.

VIOLENCE, INSURGENCY AND THE DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE

Violence in north-west Rwanda peaked during the early 1998 as insurgents widened their attacks against civilian targets and the RPA took strong counter-insurgency measures. It is estimated that several thousands were killed during this phase as many incidents, violent acts remained unreported because of the absence of international aid workers and human rights workers, who were evacuated from the north-west because of security concerns. Finally, insurgency appeared to weaken towards the end of 1998. This was partly because of the Rwandan government’s policy of depopulating strategic rural areas by temporarily moving people into towns and villages, and partly due to the turmoil in the neighbouring Zaire, where Rwandan insurgents maintained rear bases.

Some 50,000 to 100,000 persons already were internally displaced at the beginning of 1998. Displaced families included Hutus and Tutsis, pushed from their homes by violence in the north-west, and former Tutsi refugees who awaited new

21 Including an estimated 30,000 in Congo-Kinshasa, some 7,000 in Kenya, about 5,000 in Congo Brazzaville, approximately 5,000 in Tanzania, and about 3,000 in other countries. USCR Country Report : Rwanda 1998
homes after repatriation. Some lived in camps, but most lived temporarily with relatives or friends until security conditions permitted them to re-occupy their property.

Government officials at first discouraged establishment of displacement camps. Government authorities estimated in November 1998 that 630,000 people were internally displaced. The rapid increase in displaced people meant increased difficulties and inability of the government in coping with such an enormous task of rehabilitation and resettlement of the massive number of refugees who were repatriated in 1996.

Rwandan government officials claimed that the displacement indicated that local residents in the north-west had turned against the insurgents and were seeking government protection. However many aid workers attributed the massive displacement to the Rwandan government's efforts to depopulate the north-west countryside in order to deprive the insurgents of food and other supports. Authorities deliberately moved many rural residents from their homes and relocated them to designated sites. While some families moved to the sites voluntarily, others were relocated forcibly. Government authorities also indicated that some relocation sites would become permanent new villages.

The instability of the society was reflected in the renewed refugee flows in 1998. Several thousand Rwandans fled to the neighbouring Tanzania during the year. The new refugees said they fled because Rwandan security forces sometimes detained young Hutu males during security sweeps, resulting in disappearances. Rwandan officials disputed the allegations and charged that many new asylum seekers in Tanzania were either insurgents or were trying to escape local food shortages.
Although the number of internally displaced persons remained steady throughout 1999, the causes of the displacement changed. During 1998 and early 1999, insurgent attacks and the government's counter-insurgency tactics in north-west Rwanda drove hundreds of thousands from their homes. As security improved, government land-use policies became the primary cause of population displacement. But the crucial fact is that the society remained unstable and in a flux.

POLICY OF VILLAGIZATION

As security improved in the north-west, government authorities implemented a policy of villagization that required tens of thousands of rural families to relocate into the 180 newly established village sites, scattered throughout the north-west. Similar villagization policies were undertaken in other parts of the country. The size of villagization sites ranged from 100 families to nearly 2,000.

Government officials argued that villagization would ease land pressure in Africa's most densely populated country and would enable residents to benefit from schools, health centres, and other economic opportunities while maintaining access to nearby farm land, and that they would not force families to resettle involuntarily.

Critics of the policy expressed that the villagization programme was coercive, poorly planned, overly ambitious, and was due to the government's security interests rather than to economic development. Despite criticism the government used the policy of forced permanent villagization to control the security conditions. However,

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23 In early 1999, some 600,000 or more people in the north-west lived in displacement camps or had congregated for protection in towns and other government-secured sites. About half of the inhabitants of displacement camps were under the age of fifteen, and two-thirds were under the age of twenty.

24 USCR Country Report: Burundi 1999
most such sites lacked basic facilities. Yet by the mid-year, some 400,000 persons in 
the north-west were transferred from their homes and displacement sites to permanent 
villagization locations, and the authorities had dismantled numerous displacement 
camps. Those who resisted the relocation were often fined or imprisoned. By the 
late 1999, the government had reportedly established more than 300 villagization sites 
in the north-west and indicated plans to resettle 370,000 more families into as many 
as 800 new sites nationwide.

NEW PHASE IN THE SITUATION IN RWANDA

As a consequence of the decline in the actual number of refugees and the 
improvement of the security climate, the UNHCR and the United Nations Development Program signed a formal agreement in March 1999 to prepare for 
UNHCR's reduced assistance in Rwanda. "The emergency phase is over. But for 
longer term stabilization, the money gets very tight," the United Nations High 
Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, said during a visit to Rwanda in June 
1996. And in late 1999, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, **, 
warned that, "although the security situation in Rwanda has improved, continued 
peace and stability will depend on the successful reintegration of present and future returnees." 

Rwanda continued to emerge gradually from the shadow of the 1994 genocide. 
Insurgent raids occurred infrequently during the year 2000, and United Nations

25 According to United Nations reports. Some 130,000 to 170,000 residents at villagization sites lacked adequate 
housing, including thousands who lived under plastic sheeting; about 23,000 relocated families lacked 
adequate land, and approximately 150,000 recently settled persons required special humanitarian assistance. 
26 A United Nations report found authorities forced some residents to destroy their homes and move to the new 
University Press, 1998) p. 132 
humanitarian officials reported that the security situation in Rwanda remains calm. The Rwandan military's involvement in neighbouring Congo-Kinshasa had pushed Hutu extremist insurgents out of Rwanda and away from the country's border.

The government convened a Summit on Reconciliation and Unity in October 2000. However, at least 110,000 persons remained imprisoned awaiting trial for their alleged role in the genocide. Some 1,100 prisoners died during the year because of disease and mistreatment in the overcrowded jails. Rwandan lawmakers continued to consider a change in the country's legal code that would bring genocide suspects to justice more rapidly using a traditional Rwandan legal system known as gacaca law, in which local communities determine individuals' guilt and punishment. It would take some time and effort before the society stabilises.

PLIGHT OF HUTU REFUGEES OF BURUNDI

The last set of refugees is the Hutu of Burundi. In October 1993, elements within the Tutsi dominated military, assassinated President Ndadaye and other high-ranking Hutu government officials during an abortive coup attempt. This was followed by a wave of violence. An estimated 30,000 to 50,000 people of both ethnic groups perished in the violence that followed it. Hundreds of thousands fled the country or were displaced internally. However, once the violence abated, another Hutu, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was named President. President Ntaryamira died in the April 1994 plane crash, along with the President Hybrimana of Rwanda. Another Hutu FRODEBU party member, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, became president after a tense and protracted political stalemate.

During this period the country became engulfed in protracted violence that left an estimated 5,000 persons dead during 1994. Some 10,000 Burundians were killed during 1995 as the country's civil war gained new momentum, consequently, prompting a larger numbers of Hutus to join armed rebel groups. Camps for internally displaced persons became special targets for attack by both sides. The military, supported by Tutsi youth militia, violently expelled the Hutu population from many areas near the capital, Bujumbura. As a result of all this tens of thousands of the Burundian Hutus fled to Zaire and Tanzania.

Burundi's violence worsened during 1996. According to various estimates between 15,000 and 40,000 Burundians were killed. A coup brought Tutsis back to power. This resulted in the civil war spreading to the previously calm areas of the country. Besides, the neighbouring nations imposed an economic embargo in an effort to restore peace. Burundi's military began to forcibly relocate up to 100,000 persons into special camps. This caused the refugee flow to increase. The number of Burundian refugees increased to approximately 80,000. Additionally, tens of thousands of new refugees fled the country during the year but returned home before the year's end. The number of internally displaced persons fluctuated dramatically during 1996; large numbers suddenly fled and rapidly returned home when local conditions permitted.

31 The July 1996 coup eliminated the last vestiges of Burundi's democratically elected government. Coup leaders removed the President, suspended the constitution, banned political parties, and installed former President Pierre Buyoya as the country's new leader. Many Hutu officials in the ousted government fled the country or went into hiding. All the neighbouring countries imposed economic sanctions against Burundi's new government and urged without success for peace talks. The United Nations Security Council condemned the coup and supported the economic sanctions. Despite this, massacre of civilians intensified after the coup, especially by the military and extremist Tutsi militia against Hutus. *Africa Research Bulletin*, vol. 33(7), July 1996

32 At the end of 1996 approximately 285,000 Burundians were refugees. About 240,000 in Tanzania, an estimated 40,000 in Zaire, and 5,000 in Rwanda and about 400,000 persons in Burundi were internally displaced. Prunier, n. 8, pp.197-199
The country's predominantly Hutu rebel movement demonstrated its growing strength by mounting military offensives in areas of the country previously untouched by the civil war. In this civil war both sides committed abuses against the civilian population. Violence during the year claimed at least 15,000 lives. Rebel Hutu leaders charged that the Tutsi-dominated military killed 40,000 persons in the latter half of the year, as a part of their design of ethnic cleansing.

Burundi's coup intensified the violence and population displacement, particularly in the east. The military forcibly relocated approximately 100,000 persons predominantly Hutus into special regroupment camps, for security purposes. Critics charged that the forced relocations were part of a military strategy meant to deprive Hutu rebels of a support base among the Hutu population. Hutu civilians who refused to enter the camps were branded as rebel sympathizers by the army. While the civilians who resided in the forced relocation camps were derided as government collaborators by the rebels.

North-west Burundi remained a particularly violent area throughout 1996, forcing regular flows of refugees into neighbouring Zaire. Immediately after the coup, more than 500 refugees per day fled to Zaire. Refugees trekked to Zaire despite many dangers. Burundian soldiers closed roads leading to the border and fired at fleeing civilians. Landmines were planted to block escape routes in border zones. Many Burundians who were able to reach Zaire were subsequently pushed back to Burundi when a civil war erupted in Zaire in October. The outbreak of civil war in eastern Zaire pushed some 70,000 Burundian refugees back into Burundi. In many instances, the returnees ended up in the custody of the same Burundian military, from

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33 USCR Country Report Burundi 1997
34 Up to 15,000 persons per day fled to Zaire during December 1995 and January 1996. Approximately 25,000 Burundians reportedly fled to Zaire in May. An additional 7,000 Burundians sought safety in Zaire and Rwanda weeks before Burundi's mid-year coup.
whom they had fled in the first instance. Several thousand other Burundian refugees who were forced to flee Zaire's war opted to travel by boat to Tanzania, across Lake Tanganyika, rather than return to Burundi.

As Burundi's civil war spread to eastern regions, growing numbers of persons tried to escape the conflict by fleeing to Tanzania. Approximately 100,000 Burundians reached Tanzania in the final months of 1996 despite the closure Tanzania border. Many thousands of others were blocked at the border by the Tanzanian authorities.

In 199735 nearly 250,000 Burundians were refugees, some 230,000 in Tanzania, 15,000 in Congo/Zaire, and 3,000 in Rwanda. And an estimated 500,000 Burundians were internally displaced. Burundi's political and ethnic violence continued during the year, forcing tens of thousands of new refugees from the country. As violence shifted from region to region, tens of thousands of refugees who had fled earlier repatriated to their home areas. The government forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands of rural Burundians during the year as part of a strategy to deprive rebels of local support.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED AND THE POLICY OF REGROUPMENT

Burundi's estimated half a million internally displaced persons at the end of 1997 included three types: some 200,000 or more people, primarily Tutsis, who lived in designated camps; about 200,000 Hutus whom the government required to move into "regroupment" camps; and a large number of Hutus (about 100,000) who were dispersed throughout the countryside, rather than living in designated camps.36

36 A United Nations survey of displacement camps found that 60 per cent had extremely poor sanitation. One in every five sites lacked access to health care. Africa Research Bulletin, vol. 34(10), October 1997
Government policy to move rural Hutu residents into temporary "regroupment" camps began in 1996 and moved into high gear during 1997. By mid-year, an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 people resided in about fifty regroupment sites scattered throughout the country. Some observers estimated that up to half a million were in the camps. The closure of some camps late in the year allowed thousands of occupants to return home.

Although some farmers reportedly moved to regroupment sites voluntarily, the majority were apparently forced into the camps. Government soldiers in some cases burned homes to ensure compliance with the regroupment strategy. A United Nations human rights reporter\textsuperscript{37} said that families who resisted the regroupment policy were treated as enemies by the Burundian soldiers.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights\textsuperscript{38} expressed "deep concern at the involuntary resettlement of rural populations in regroupment camps" and urged the authorities to dismantle them. East African leaders called on the government to "disband the regroupment camps and allow the people to resume their normal activities." The United Nations Security Council issued a similar plea.

Government officials claimed that the regroupment strategy was intended to protect the rural population from rebel attacks. Others viewed it largely as an effort to weaken rebels by draining rural areas of potential rebel supporters.

Nevertheless, Burundian officials began to dismantle some regroupment camps during the second half of 1996, as the security situation improved. Some occupants went directly home, others shifted to transit sites. Some families returned home to find their houses looted and damaged.

\textsuperscript{37} *Africa Research Bulletin*, vol. 35(1), January 1998

\textsuperscript{38} ibid.
REPATRIATION OF THE BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

Years of violence and government population relocation policies have left at least 800,000 Burundians internally displaced, including some 350,000 or more who became newly displaced during 1999.

The country included at least three types of internal displacement. First comes the nearly 200,000 people, primarily rural Tutsis, who have lived for six years in designated camps protected by government soldiers and armed militia. Secondly, an unknown number of Hutus, who have become displaced into the countryside or stayed at makeshift sites for varying lengths of time. And lastly nearly 350,000 Hutus, whom the government required to live in regroupment camps.

Burundian authorities have pursued two waves of forced population relocation, or regroupment. The first regroupment wave occurred during 1996-98 when the government moved at least a quarter million Hutus into 50 camps scattered throughout the country. Most regroupment sites closed during 1998, allowing occupants to return home. The second wave of forcible regroupment occurred during late 1999: Authorities responded to rebel attacks near Bujumbura by requiring nearly 350,000 Hutu in and near the capital to move into about fifty regroupment sites. Approximately three-quarter\(^3\) of all residents of Bujumbura Rural Province were living at the designated sites as the year ended. Government authorities argued that the camps were a temporary measure.

However in 1999, the geographic pattern of internal displacement had changed markedly. The number of uprooted people declined by about half in several north-central provinces such as Karuzi and Kayanza, while displacement increased
dramatically in southern and north-western areas, including near Bujumbura. An estimated 70,000 residents of Bujumbura Rural Province were displaced.

The repatriation of some 90,000 Burundian refugees from Tanzania, Zaire, and Rwanda was at times voluntary, at times involuntary, and often occurred under duress due to situations in those asylum countries. UNHCR\textsuperscript{40} did not promote repatriation "because of unacceptable levels of violence in various parts of Burundi."

At least 50,000 Burundian refugees are believed to have been repatriated from Tanzania. Although many of the refugees returned voluntarily, a significant number were directly or indirectly pushed from Tanzania in a crackdown by Tanzanian authorities against refugees and other foreigners living outside of camps in border areas.

Peace negotiations involving 15 groups, plus the government proceeded slowly in 1999 without a major breakthrough. Economic sanctions imposed since 1996 by neighbouring countries remained in place. The number of internally displaced Burundians remained constant despite massive new population movements. Upto 200,000 displaced people returned to their homes, but an equivalent number became newly uprooted by violence in north-western and southern regions of the country.

Throughout 1999 Burundi's civil war continued unabated.\textsuperscript{41} Rebels mounted regular attacks in southern and western areas of the country, as well as in prime refugee returnee areas in the east. Central and northern areas of the country suffered less conflict. The most intense military activity occurred on the outskirts of Bujumbura, causing heightened tensions. The Burundian government repeatedly protested that rebels were using neighbouring Tanzania as a rear base for attack.

\textsuperscript{40} USCR Country Report Burundi 1999
\textsuperscript{41} USCR Country Report Burundi 2000.
Combatants on both sides deliberately uprooted civilian populations and targeted displacement camps for attack.

During 1999 an estimated 60,000 new Burundian refugees fled to Tanzania, joining hundreds of thousands of fellow Burundians who were already in exile. Virtually all of the refugees, new and old, were Hutus. Most new refugees departed from Burundi during the final three months of 1999 as security deteriorated in border areas. Government troops reportedly attempted to block Burundians from fleeing the country because the military feared that many might be recruited into rebel ranks when they reached asylum. Also rebel combatants reportedly forced many families into exile by burning their homes.

**COMPARISON OF RWANDAN AND BURUNDI REFUGEE PROBLEM**

The above detailed discussion makes it amply clear the complexity of these problems. It also reflects the different characteristics of refugee flows.

In the case of Rwandan Tutsis, the cause of flight was due to the violence unleashed upon them after their loss of power. The entire community was demonised and posited with negative traits by the effective use of ethnic symbols by the emerging and assertive Hutu leadership. The Hutus retaliated each act of violence committed by the Tutsis with greater violence. As a consequence the Tutsis fled in large numbers and sought refuge in the neighbouring countries. The new regime too encouraged hatred against the Tutsis and conducted regular pogroms. This violence reached its peak in the genocide.

The Rwandan Hutus too fled when they lost power to the RPF after the genocide. The paranoid elite fled when the scheme of genocide failed to sustain and
continue their grip on power. After the fall of the regime large number of Hutus fled to other countries.

The situation in Burundi was different. There, an entrenched Tutsi elite and army was defeated in the first free elections conducted in the country since independence. However the Tutsis soon used force to regain power in 1996. This resulted in massive violence and displacement of people. When violence abated the Tutsis returned and were provided aid and protection by the government while many Hutus did not return due to fear of persecution. The Hutu were moved into regroupment sites as a counter insurgency policy resulting in massive disruption and dislocations.

Among these refugee flows the case of Rwandan Tutsis was the longest one, which lasted for many decades. Though refugee flee due to fear and trying circumstances, they have an overwhelming desire to settle down and lead a normal life. In this respect, repatriation is among the most plausible solution. However, repartition is dependent on the condition prevalent at home and the policy adopted by the country of refuge. Rwandan Tutsi refugees were in many different countries and at the mercy of those in power. The condition continuously deteriorated while the prospects of their return diminished with Rwanda finally rejecting any claim or right to return in the late 80s. This gave the refugees no option but to return to the use of force. In this endeavour they succeeded. After capturing power most of the Rwandan Tutsis repatriated, thereby changing the focus from repatriation to rehabilitation and reintegration.

The situation for the Hutus who fled from both Rwanda and Burundi, were similarly trying but they did not have the privilege of staying for long and indefinite period in their host countries. The repatriation in both the case was not due to the
creation of conducive conditions at home like in the case of Rwandan Tutsis but due to the difficult situation or expulsions in the countries of refuge. The refugees were either expelled or repatriated due to lack of alternative avenue of refuge. They had no other place to escape. The conditions in their homeland did not permit repatriation yet due to the conditions in the country of refuge they were willing to face the risks. But not all of them reconciled to this fate. Many chose to join rebel or armed movements and wage armed struggle resulting in more violence.

Another facet of refugee flows is the policy adopted by the regime in power. Only in the case of Rwandan Tutsis the new regime in power encouraged and provided facilities and protection to the repatriated refugees.

The many Hutus who repatriated faced arrests and other forms of persecution. A large number of Hutus are still in overcrowded jails with no possibility of trials in the near future. Also many of them have been left to fend for themselves and out of the reach external agencies. In some instances the returnees have faced further disruption by being forced to move to camps or designated sites.

Similarly, the Hutus of Burundi too were exposed to enormous amounts of uncertainty and persecution. The Hutus were forced to leave their homes and live in regroupment sites. These sites were set up primarily to control the Hutus and deny the rebels a support base. These sites did not only move them away from their land and fields. These sites also lacked basic amenities and at times outside the preview of external agencies.

**CONCLUDING POINTS**

The extent and magnitude of the refugee flows reflect the depth to which these societies have been disrupted. The social fabric and cohesion of these societies have
been damaged to such an extent that it would require a lot of effort and time before these societies achieve any semblance of normality and stability.

In addition, the social disruption reflects the amount of violence prevalent in these societies. Both these societies have witnessed enormous amounts of both indirect and direct violence unleashed with incumbent cultural legitimisation. Unless this violence is negated and formation of conditions for positive peace is not possible. Therefore, to achieve normalcy these societies will need to work towards ending different forms of violence like allowing power sharing and other suitable measures.

The direct violence is symptomatic of the indirect structural violence. This needs to be properly addressed. The structural violence in these societies had remained latent until conflict consciousness was created using ethnicity. This implies unless the issues of identity are addressed the prospect of a bright future is low.

Thus, one can end by concluding that unless efforts are be made to solve the identity issue, social violence can not end and lead to positive peace. This and only this will solve the problem of social disruption and of refugees. But unfortunately the policies adopted by the regimes in place are at times antithetical towards the end of achieving a normal society. Thus, the prospects an of end to the problem of refugees and displacement of people in these countries appears bleak difficult.