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Essays on Transforming Security and Development in an Unequal World

Niagalé Bagayoko and Lyndsay McLean Hilker
March 2009

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Niagalé Bagayoko and Lyndsay McLean Hilker

Summary

These two papers add further dimensions to the discussions in *IDS Bulletin* 40.2 (March 2009) on 'Transforming Security and Development in an Unequal World' edited by Robin Luckham, Niagalé Bagayoko, Lucia Dammert, Claudio Fuentes and Michael Solis. Like the contributions to the latter, they were first discussed at the founding Colloquium of the Global Consortium for Security Transformation held at Kandalama, Sri Lanka in September 2007.

Niagalé Bagayoko's paper on 'State, Non-State and Multilateral Logics of Action in Post-Conflict Environments' considers the complexities of Northern policymaking and their impacts in post-conflict countries. It thus differs from but complements *IDS Bulletin* 40.2, which focuses mostly on security and development from a Southern perspective.

She argues that a number of different policy logics are at work in the security, development, humanitarian and media etc domains, which are sometimes coordinated – but often in tension with – each other. Her approach thus differs from that of certain critical voices in the NGO and academic worlds, which hold that there is a danger that Northern security priorities might 'securitise' the humanitarian and development agendas, particularly in post-conflict environments. While these dangers are real, nevertheless one should not stereotype all international actors as 'Northern' or as promoting Northern security (e.g. anti-terrorist) agendas. It is instead more fruitful to view such actors as diverse players with conflicting interests that operate according to different policy logics.

Lyndsay McLean Hilker's paper on 'Why Identity Politics Matters for Security and What Follows for Research and Policy' spells out a general framework for analysis of identity-based violent conflict, drawing upon empirical examples, including Rwanda, where she has focused her own research. It is unique in its focus on the implications of analysis and research on identity politics for development policy.

She contends that identity politics matter both to the persistence of insecurity and to the achievement of greater security. Evidence from multiple contexts

demonstrates that identity provides an effective basis for group mobilisation into collective action – both violent and non-violent in nature. If we are to work to combat insecurity at the local as well as the global level, we need to look in more depth at the processes leading to violence in the name of identity in specific contexts, and explore the types of interventions that can prevent and respond to such violence. It is especially important to understand under what circumstances identity politics can be exercised in ways that are inclusive and empowering rather than exclusionary or violent.

Keywords: security; conflict; ethnicity; identities; post-conflict reconstruction; humanitarianism; peace-building.

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State, Non-State and Multilateral Logics of Action in Post-Conflict Environments

Niagalé Bagayoko

Critical voices in the NGO and academic worlds argue that there is a danger that Western security priorities might ‘securitise’ the humanitarian and development agendas, particularly in post-conflict environments. While these dangers are real, nevertheless one should not stereotype all international actors as ‘Northern’ or as promoting ‘Western’ security (e.g. anti-terrorist) agendas. Rather than caricaturing all the international actors that intervene in post-conflict situations with such global labels, it is more fruitful to view them as diverse players with conflicting interests that operate according to different policy logics.

Indeed, post-conflict environments involve an ever-increasing range of international actors. The first category of actors includes agents deployed by Northern states, while the second category constitutes the agents deployed by multilateral organisations. A third set of international stakeholders include non-state actors, such as NGOs, private companies and media organisations. These various actors are driven by very differing normative agendas. While they engage in the same fields of study and reform, their logics of action refer to standards, norms or procedures that are often hardly compatible one with each other.

It is thus possible to identify five logics of action that can explain the failures or limited successes of interventions in post-conflict environments:

- *the security field* is both embedded in a military and a constabulary logic of action;
- in *the humanitarian field*, the charity logic of action often clashes with a political approach to humanitarian assistance;
- in *the field of peace building*, institutional engineering is often torn between different national approaches to public service;
- in *the reconstruction field*, a profit logic may be in opposition with a solidarity logic;
- the *media field* finds it difficult to harmonise communication with audience rating logics.

In addition some post-conflict policies, particularly those of great powers, are primarily driven by the transformation of their internal security structures rather than by needs on the ground.

1 The security field, between military and constabulary logics

Two kinds of security missions characterise post-conflict environments. The first type involves preventing the resumption of hostilities and ensuring the protection of minorities. These missions clearly fall under the responsibility of the military, which often adopts a deterrent posture continuing into the conflict management phase. The second kind of mission consists of maintaining and enforcing law and order. These missions consist of quelling riots, preventing violence through community policing, managing ethnic tensions, fighting against organised crime, and dismantling criminal networks.

Interventions in the field of law and order fall under the responsibility of both military and police forces.¹ For instance, the French armed forces have developed the so-called 'crowd control' doctrine (*doctrine de controle des foules*), which is intended for riot management, while American land forces have increasingly become involved in penal and judicial missions, as well as the training of internal security forces, notably in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Concurrently, police forces have become new actors of post-conflict operations. The UN has developed the International Civilian Police Program (CIVPOL) and the European Union (EU) has promoted a constabulary approach within the framework of the 'civilian management of crises' concept, developed under the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The police forces of Southern Europe (France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal) have joined together under the European Gendarmerie Force.

Military and police forces each refer to different standards (principles of war such as concentration of forces; strategies of offensive action and surprise versus negotiation and minimal use of force, etc.). Corporate rivalries between military and police forces can also prevent both forces from collaborating on the ground.

Beyond the military and police, private companies are now fulfilling a growing number of functions that were previously fulfilled by the traditional armed and police forces (Makki 2004). These private security companies are bringing in new operating procedures and standards that interfere with both military and police force norms.

2 The humanitarian field, between charity and politics

The humanitarian field is the one with the most diverse set of intervening actors. This sphere of action is surrounded first of all by international organisations, be they multilateral (United National High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, etc.) or not (International Committee of the Red Cross). These organisations, which were specially created with the aim of assisting marginalised populations, are operating according to a charitable model and have a mandate to act during emergencies as well as over the longer term.

¹ Charles Moskos' distinction between military and constabulary ethos in peacekeeping can also be applied to post-conflict environments (Moskos 1975).

NGOs specialising in emergency assistance constitute the second category of actors. These organisations differ from one another with regard to their codes of ethics, their funding strategies, their operational capacities and the relationships they develop with other actors. It is thus difficult to consider NGOs as comprising a homogeneous and coherent group. Nevertheless, most French NGOs demonstrate their willingness to promote the principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality. To them, humanitarian action is an end in itself and cannot be considered as instrumental; humanitarian assistance must only be driven by an exclusively charitable logic.

This logic of charitable action, concurrently claimed by international organisations and by some NGOs, places human rights at the heart of organisational commitment in post-conflict environments. These actors believe that individual rights take precedence over the interests and the sovereignty of states and that 'humanitarian assistance' should be defined in terms of 'human security'. Other notably American NGOs (such as CARE, World Vision, Save the Children) promote the same human security principles but do not insist in such a demanding way on the independence of their sphere of action. Instead, they collaborate more easily with the other actors that intervene in the humanitarian field.

In addition to multilateral bodies and NGOs, the armed forces also engage in the humanitarian field. The dangers of the 'militarisation of the humanitarian action' are frequently underlined, with servicemen often being accused of encroaching on the NGOs' field of action. It is, however, advisable to maintain a distinction among the logics of humanitarian intervention of different Northern military and security structures. Indeed, contrary to common belief, military intervention in the humanitarian field is far from only a recent phenomenon, stemming from the formalisation of the CIMIC (*civilian–military cooperation*) doctrines developed by NATO and American armed forces.

Indeed the Geneva Agreements and the international laws of armed conflict impose a number of humanitarian obligations on the armed forces. Some armed forces, such as the French or the US Marines, have fulfilled humanitarian missions since the nineteenth century. According to the rules set up by colonial Generals Lyautey and Gallieni (Dabezies 2001), or by Calwell's 'small wars' doctrine, implementing humanitarian programmes (supply of care, construction of schools, roads and other infrastructure) has, for a long-time, been considered a tactic requiring the insertion of soldiers into the local environment (Calwell 1986). That is why many servicemen consider intervention in humanitarian affairs to be legitimate despite the reservations of humanitarian NGOs.

At the same time military intervention in the humanitarian field is increasingly being connected to more political logics. During the past 15 or so years, the humanitarian field has become increasingly occupied by political and strategic concerns. Political actors are knowingly co-opting humanitarian action as a tool for crisis management. Increasingly, politicians view humanitarian action as a political instrument that can provide legitimacy to security policies. US military action in Indonesia following the tsunami is a telling example, as the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) mobilised contingencies to bring humanitarian assistance to devastated regions. According to US officials, this allowed the image of the US

to be restored, showing Muslim countries that the US did not hesitate in helping a country that is home to the largest Muslim population in the world. Humanitarian assistance in that case aimed not only at helping populations affected by a natural disaster, but also at widening American 'soft power'. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) combining security, relief and development functions in Afghanistan and the Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART) in Iraq show that humanitarian intervention is increasingly seen as a 'force multiplier' in some American politico-military circles.² The armed forces of other western armies are also called on to directly assume humanitarian work within the framework of the CIMIC doctrine or to provide visible support to NGOs.

Thus, an instrumentalist approach is developing, which tends to consider humanitarian assistance as a politico-diplomatic lever. This obviously clashes with the principles guiding the action of a number of NGOs inspired by the inheritance of the French *Medecins Sans Frontieres*. To these NGOs, the instrumental approach established political control over humanitarian assistance, prioritising political objectives rather than the needs of the populations on the ground. Facing growing interference by the military in the humanitarian field, several NGOs have pleaded for a clarification of the roles of each actor. They also argue that being linked to the security objectives of external intervention forces is likely to endanger their own safety and, consequently, limit their access to civilian populations. NGOs tend to consider that their insertion in the local environment and the relationships of trust they are able to develop with local people are their best protection. Being identified with the armed forces tends to destroy this protection as well as the NGOs' independent stance. NGOs risk being characterised under the Western label and are often seen as occupying forces by local communities.

Consequently, coordination of the actors intervening in the humanitarian field seems difficult to achieve, as so far the charitable principles that drive the actions of numerous NGOs seems widely paradoxical with the political logic underlying the humanitarian action being deployed by northern states.

3 The field of state-building (politico-institutional engineering): a public service logic

The objective of state-building is to reorganise Southern states' apparatuses following conflicts by favouring the restoration of basic institutional structures. With the former institutional system having disappeared or been modified profoundly due to conflicting dynamics, new missions and modes of functioning of the state are enacted during post-conflict periods often under the aegis of the international community. First, state-building aims to restore the state's ability to manage key institutions such as the police, the judicial system, and the economy (budget, currency, taxes). Then, a new organisation of powers (organisation of the

2 The PRT are made up of mixed teams, integrating both civilians and servicemen (often from the Special forces). Their mission is to facilitate development and reconstruction in Afghanistan. In Iraq, the DART, mostly made up of civilians and deployed under the aegis of the USAID, provides humanitarian assistance in order to support the military activities of the US armed forces.

legislative, executive and judiciary powers) is introduced while a more efficient administrative structure is established.

Setting up a temporary government is often the first step towards the institutional reorganisation of a post-conflict country. In this field, multilateral organisations (UN, EU, etc) are often the main actors. Northern states are also often called upon to deploy their own experts in order for them to provide assistance in the politico-institutional engineering process. Policemen and territorial administrators can be sent by the home offices, and the Ministries of Justice can mobilise jurists and magistrates. Such agents can be deployed as members of the UN administration, as members of regional missions of the UN or Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), or as experts of their own national government in a bilateral framework. They can then serve as advisors to the new local civil servants.

These state or multilateral actors intervene according to a public service logic. However, one should keep in mind that state-building, in essence, refers to the exporting of politico-institutional models. By contributing to state-building in failed states, Northern countries seek to promote their own modes of organisation. As a consequence, there is often a latent competition between the various members of multinational coalitions, with each trying to reorganise the administration according to its national model.

The case of the reorganisation of the police in Kosovo is a good example of this competition between national models. The USA wished to set up a decentralised police system, while France suggested setting up a dual police system (with both police and gendarmerie forces). In Afghanistan, the Bonn agreement ended by giving each international actor the responsibility of reorganising one sector as a whole; Italy was responsible for judicial reorganisation, Germany was in charge of the police, Japan was responsible for Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, UK for the fight against drugs, the US for training the Afghan army, and the European Commission and the World Bank for reform of the state. The institutions that emerge in the wake of such sharing arrangements are often seen as being 'tinkered' with; in this sense, they are the result of an artificial combination of heterogeneous elements that stem from various national traditions rather than being the result of a coherent framework that is tailored to local specifications.

4 The field of reconstruction: profit and solidarity

It is during the post-conflict phase that the first programmes of reconstruction, aiming at rebuilding infrastructure, begin to form. Profit, connected to industrial purposes (e.g. the purchasing of concessions), is one of the forms of logic that drive the intervention of northern states in the field of reconstruction. National strategies, aimed at winning post-conflict reconstruction markets, are set up in support of national private companies. The conquest of post-conflict local markets then depends on the efficiency of the diplomatic apparatus. Indeed, the promotion of national economic interests, through support to private companies, requires very specific methods. It does not solely consist of bilateral negotiations at the political level.

Mostly, post-conflict countries are small states with unreliable markets that do not offer large-scale or long-term profit opportunities. Competition in these markets is not the same as in stronger markets. Further, the major characteristics of a post-conflict environment are latent insecurity and competition between companies to acquire multilateral financing for reconstruction programmes. At both these levels, private companies seek support from their national governments. First, companies need to acquire support (technical and logistical assistance, information, personal security when necessary) that is frequently provided by the national armed forces. Second, private companies need to be introduced to multinational donors, as the ability to lobby multilateral donors is key in the defence of national economic interests.

However, in the field of reconstruction, the logic of profit is not the only one that prevails in the intervention of Northern states. Most interventions are also concurrently driven at least in principle by a logic of development. The logic of development does not necessarily contradict the logic of profit, as programmes dedicated to the rehabilitation of infrastructure can rely on both logics. For instance, in France, the double role of the AFD (Agence française de développement) – operating both as a banking institution (which provides grants and loans to companies) and as an operator for development on the ground – illustrates the possible complementarities between development and commercial logics.

Of course development is not solely confined to the material aspect of reconstruction. Development policies also aim to provide structural and long-term support to social groups weakened and marginalised by conflict. This support includes programmes with health, social or educational goals, aiming to create the conditions for durable and equitable development. They are operated by the individual donors through their development agencies (USAID, DFID, AFD), by multilateral bodies (UNDP) or by some NGOs specialised in the provision of long-term social programmes. Such development actors generally consider that reconstruction has to draw on a logic of solidarity, while private companies – supported by some departments of their national governments – consider that their contribution to reconstruction has to guarantee them a return on their investments.

Consequently, in post-conflict environments, reconstruction is at the heart of a twofold debate:

- Firstly, must assistance be directed toward supporting national private companies, or must it be directed toward providing direct assistance to local populations? This question is the subject of considerable controversy and debate in Northern countries.
- Secondly, what should be the role of local actors in reconstruction processes? Indeed, local actors tend increasingly to denounce development actors as well as international companies for imposing unfair competition on local companies. Such a situation prevents, in their view, the emergence of a local private sector.

5 The field of media, between audience ratings and communication

Intervention in the field of media involves publicity for actions and programmes implemented in post-conflict environments. All actors (states, multilateral organisations, non-governmental organisations, etc.) seek to involve the media and adopt a communication logic, which aims to legitimise their actions and augment public support. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the media as such is often strangely absent in post-conflict environments. It is mostly before and above all during the conflicts that the media plays a crucial role by alerting the public to the dramatic reality of some conflicts, which may, as a consequence, provoke intervention from the North. By contrast, after conflicts the media are rarely mobilised because the logic of audience ratings cannot be sustained once conflicts pass into a less dramatic post-conflict phase. One of the challenges in post-conflict environments is to succeed in making the logic of audience rating and the logic of communication coincide. Indeed, it is often because of the absence of public interest during post-conflict situations that Western governments fail to make strong and sustainable commitments to post-conflict environments.

6 Influence of decision-making processes and inter-institutional relations

The difficulties in harmonising the different logics that drive the actions of the various actors involved in post-conflict environments can explain why international security policies are often far from meeting the needs on the ground. But the issue of coordination is not only a challenge for Northern actors deployed in post-conflict theatres. There is a further factor that can have a negative impact on post-conflict processes: bureaucratic relations between actors and institutions involved in policymaking processes (Egeberg 1999; Graham and Zelikov 1999; Halperin and Kanter 1974). Indeed, post-conflict policies are often just as much informed by inter-institutional processes as by local dynamics and interactions. Strategic choices made in the North are shaped by the interests of each department involved in the construction of post-conflict policies.

It appears that competition rather than convergence remains the main trend in inter-institutional relations when post-conflict policies are at stake. Rivalries are born out of the different institutions' desires to play the role of a 'lead agency' on post-conflict issues. The linkage between security and development is frequently at the core of inter-institutional competition: increasing involvement in security issues constitutes a means for institutions involved in development (such as DFID, USAID, or Development General Directorate in the European Commission) to respond to doubts regarding the efficiency of their development strategies. At the same time, departments traditionally involved in security issues, notably Departments of Defence, aim to affirm their credibility and to keep a hand on processes that, in their perspective, still primarily rely on military dynamics. The policies on the ground are often the result of compromises among these different bureaucratic actors.

7 Conclusion

Increasingly, major powers like the US, UK or France, as well as politico-economic organisations, such as the UN and the EU, call for joint interagency approaches aimed at increasing coherence among the institutional actors involved in post-conflict environments. The emergence of so-called 'integrated approaches', which aim at enhancing the coordination and comprehensiveness of security policies on the ground, is the major symptom of this tendency. However, to be successful, such 'joined-up government' must harmonise the normative agendas that determine the actions of each kind of institutional actor involved in post-conflict situations. While comprehensiveness is often viewed as a way to harmonise the practices, there is an urgent need to address the opposition – and in some cases the competition – that exists between the institutional cultures, as well as the normative standards of the actors deployed on the ground.

Why Identity Politics Matter for Security and What Follows for Research and Policy

Lyndsay McLean Hilker

8 Introduction: the relationship between identity, violence and (in)security

Although the destruction of human groups on the basis of their religious affiliation, national identity or other group membership has a long history, it seems that 'identity-based' conflicts have occurred more frequently in recent decades.³ Violence is increasingly perpetrated against individuals on the basis of their belonging to a particular group (e.g. ethnic, religious, national, clan, caste), often by individuals apparently acting on behalf of another group. Perhaps most disquieting is the increasing number of 'ordinary' civilians who are involved in this violence as both victims and perpetrators. In some cases, people who have lived side-by-side in peace for many years, engaging in friendships and even matrimonial relations, suddenly turn against each other with astonishing brutality.

Much of the literature on the relationship between identity, violence and (in)security has tended to polarise between two perspectives. The first variously sees 'identity-based' conflicts as a product of 'primordial' cultural differences (Geertz 1963), pre-existing kinship or religious ties (Smith 1986), longstanding antipathy between different 'ethnic' or other groups (Kaplan 1993), or insurmountable differences between civilisations such as 'Islam' and 'the West' (Huntington 1996). To varying degrees, these authors see 'ethnic', and other identities as culturally determined, immutable or essential aspects of human societies. The second perspective comprises those who argue that such violence is not about identity at all, but is really about competition between groups over access to power and resources (e.g. Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Cohen 1974). Proponents of this perspective argue that ethnic, nationalist or other identities come into being and endure for a purpose and are only relevant in as far as they can be exploited for political or economic advantage in interaction with other groups. Some authors highlight the role of 'ethnic entrepreneurs' – political leaders that strategically instrumentalise cultural values, 'ethnic' and 'religious' symbols to mobilise support for their claims (Brass 1985; Turton 1997).

3 For example, the data presented by Stewart (2008a) show an increase in the proportion of major political violence labelled as 'ethnic' from 15 per cent in 1953 to nearly 60 per cent in 2005, but she comments that this in part is likely to reflect differences in the labelling of conflicts in the post-Cold War era (pp 6–7).

Both of these perspectives might lead to that conclusion that it is not necessary to pay much attention to the politics of identity. The first, because conflict on the basis of identity differences is seen as inevitable, thus the focus should be on intervening to prevent the use of violence. The second, because identity differences *per se* do not matter, thus the focus should be tackling underlying grievances and mediating competing interests between groups in ways that do not result in violence. In relation to the first perspective, however, there are now numerous studies of violent contexts, which have shown that there is nothing inevitable either about the nature of the identity differences purported or their articulation through violence (e.g. Bringa 1995; Mamdani 2001; Valentine Daniel 1996). Equally, the absence of violence in many contexts with sharp cultural, religious or other group differences suggests that this perspective is flawed. In relation to the second perspective, although there is little doubt that collective violence is largely rooted in competition over power, resources, territory and livelihoods, these instrumentalist arguments often fail to question where specific 'ethnic', 'religious' or other identities originate or why 'ethnic' or 'religious' symbols have such appeal to the wider population (Turton 1997). Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that struggles over ideas, beliefs and values are important in their own right – not just in an instrumental sense (e.g. Bartov and Mack 2001; Juergensmeyer 2003; Langer and Brown 2007).

In contrast to both perspectives, this paper argues that identity politics do matter – both to the persistence of insecurity and to the achievement of greater security. It argues that if we are to work to combat insecurity at the local and global level, we need to take identity politics seriously, to look in more depth at the processes that lead to the perpetration of violence in the name of identity in specific contexts, and to explore interventions that can prevent and respond to this violence. In particular, we need to understand under what circumstances identity politics are exercised in ways that are exclusionary or violent rather than inclusive and empowering. The next section will therefore discuss why and how identity politics matter and the final sections will draw out some implications for research and policy. To illustrate key points, this paper will draw on the case of Rwanda, the location of some of the most brutal violence perpetrated in the name of identity.

9 Why and how identity politics matter for security

The primary reason why identity politics matter for security is that *evidence from multiple contexts demonstrates that identity provides an effective basis for group mobilisation into collective action – both violent and non-violent in nature*. Whether or not it is argued that identity differences are themselves a causal factor in violent conflict, examples from contexts as diverse as Bosnia, India, Sri Lanka Rwanda, and – more recently – Kenya, demonstrate that identity provides an extremely effective basis to mobilise people into violence. Whatever their complexities, in all these cases, violence has been perpetrated against people targeted on the basis of their (assumed) belonging to a particular 'ethnic' or 'religious' group, usually by people belonging to another group.

It is important to recognise, however, that identity politics need not necessarily lead to violence. Identities can also provide an important basis for empowerment

and are used by groups to make claims and support the development of citizenship. Luckham *et al.* (2006) highlight the example of Bolivia, where they argue that mobilisation of the indigenous Quechua and Aymara populations – although occasionally punctuated by violence – has opened up key political spaces for their rights and interests to be represented, in particular with respect to the distribution of benefits from exploitation of the country's natural resources (see Crabtree 2005). It is therefore important to consider *why* identity provides such a strong basis for group mobilisation and *which factors* determine whether this results in violent rather than peaceful action. I will now examine the different arguments made in the literature and reflect on how they apply in the case of Rwanda.

The first reason given to explain why identity provides an effective basis for mobilisation is that *discrimination and exclusion often coincide with or take place on the basis of group identities*. In many societies, groups defined (by their own members, other groups or the state) on the basis of racial, ethnic and religious or other characteristics are marginalised or excluded from access to political, economic or other resources. It is therefore argued that these shared grievances provide incentives for groups members to come together and engage in joint action. For example, Stewart (2008a) argues that 'horizontal inequalities' (defined as 'inequalities in economic, social or political dimensions or cultural status between culturally defined groups')⁴ are an important cause of violent conflict. On the basis of eight case studies in Latin America, Southeast Asia and West Africa, Stewart and her colleagues find that there is an increased probability of conflict occurring where socioeconomic horizontal inequalities are high, especially when these are consistent with political inequalities (pp 291–3).⁵ They stress, however, that they have found a *correlation* between horizontal inequalities and risk of conflict and that there are cases where inequalities are high, but widespread violence has not occurred (e.g. Bolivia) or where violence is not primarily identity-driven despite high horizontal inequalities (e.g. Guatemala).

In the case of Rwanda, there were certainly high levels of inequality in the decades preceding the 1994 genocide, but the principal gap was between a small politically powerful and wealthy elite and the rural masses – Hutu and Tutsi alike – most of which lived in abject poverty (Uvin 1998). Nonetheless, for at least a century, the political system has systematically discriminated against one or other group. In the late nineteenth century, King Rwabugiri expanded state authority and placed increasing power in the hands of Tutsi authorities, which they used to enhance their control over land, cattle and people at the expense of Hutu lineages (Newbury 1988: 17). Under colonial rule, underpinned by the racist ideologies of

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- 4 Stewart uses the following indicators of horizontal inequalities across the different dimensions:
 (i) Political = political participation in the cabinet, parliament, bureaucracy, local government and army;
 (ii) Economic = ownership of assets (financial, land, livestock, human and social capital), employment opportunities and incomes; (iii) Social = access to services (education, health, water, sanitation and housing) and human outcome indicators (health level, educational achievements); (iv) Cultural status = (lack of) recognition of group's cultural practices (dress, language etc)(p13).
- 5 In this case, they argue that both the leadership (because they are politically excluded) and the mass of the population (because they suffer from socioeconomic inequalities) have a motive for mobilisation.

the era,⁶ the preferential treatment of Tutsis continued. Critically, the Belgian colonial power *racialised*, politicised and institutionalised the identities 'Hutu', 'Tutsi' and 'Twa' through a number of measures: the distribution of ethnic identity cards; reforming the state administration and chieftancy to 'purify' it of Hutu elements; strengthening systems of taxation and bonded labour; and establishing a civil service training school almost exclusively for Tutsi (Prunier 1995: 26–7; Mamdani 2001: 89–91). The combined effect of these measures was to consolidate further the power of Tutsi chiefs over the (largely Hutu)⁷ peasantry and pave the way for political and economic competition to take place on 'ethnic' lines.

After the 1959 'social revolution'⁸ and Independence in 1962, this underlying 'structural violence' and 'racist prejudice' continued under three decades of the Hutu Republic, although it was inverted and it was the Tutsi population that suffered systematic discrimination (Uvin 1997). Tutsis were almost totally excluded from political power and their vertical mobility was curbed via an 'ethnic' quota policy,⁹ which limited their access to education and certain employment sectors. In practice, however, there were still a number of wealthy, educated Tutsi and the majority of the Hutu population continued to suffer from poverty and marginalisation. Nonetheless, the Hutu elite managed to maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the population by its claims to defend the rights and interests of the 'Hutu majority' (Uvin 1997: 98). Both Uvin and Mamdani argue that in the early 1990s, in a context of economic crisis, civil war and increasing impoverishment, this long-standing 'ethnic' discrimination and the 'ethnic' ideology underpinning it were key factors in the genocide.

The case of Rwanda therefore demonstrates two additional issues: (i) the key role of the state in producing, politicising and institutionalising 'ethnic' or other identities;¹⁰ and (ii) that perceptions of inequality,¹¹ discrimination and intergroup animosity can be as important as the objective reality. This latter point is the

6 The 'Hamitic hypothesis' purported to explain the origin of 'anomalous' advanced civilisational traits in central Africa. It alleged that the Tutsi were 'Hamites', a Caucasoid race from north-eastern Africa who possessed superior moral and cultural characteristics and had conquered the less intelligent Negroid or 'Bantu' peoples of the region, including the Hutu and Twa of Rwanda (Taylor 1999: 55–97).

7 The Hutu are the majority group in Rwanda, making up roughly 85 per cent of the population, with the Tutsi an estimated 15 per cent and the Twa less than 1 per cent.

8 Although its precise nature is disputed, the 'social revolution' was a Hutu uprising, supported by the departing Belgian colonial power, which led to the end of the Tutsi monarchy and the installation of the 'Hutu Republic'.

9 Tutsi officially represented 9 per cent of the population and therefore the quota system stipulated that there could be no more than 9 per cent Tutsi in schools, the civil service or any given sector of employment (Chrétien 1985: 158–9).

10 Luckham *et al.* (2006) discuss the way the state uses identities to regulate, discipline and control the population, thereby both politicising and 'securitising' them.

11 Based on research in Ghana and Nigeria, Stewart *et al.* (2008) stress that perceptions of horizontal inequalities (rather than actual objective inequalities) also affect the likelihood of conflict i.e. people take action because of perceived injustices rather than on the basis of data of which they might not be aware (p293).

second reason given in the literature as to why identity provides an effective basis for mobilisation – *that people perceive identities to matter and these perceptions inform their actions*. This is broadly the view of social constructivist theorists of identity who lay emphasis on what people believe or think identities to be (e.g. Barth 1969; Anderson 1983; Jenkins 1994). These authors stress, however, that the fact that identities such as ‘ethnicity’ are socially constructed does not prevent them from enduring and having a material effect on people’s lives: ‘although [ethnicity] is (to various degrees and in various ways) “imagined” and “invented”, it is not, as has often been pointed out, “imaginary”’ (Turton 1997: 3).

Returning to the case of Rwanda, in contrast to Uvin, a number of authors argue that the genocide was not directly *caused* by ‘ethnicity’, but by other factors such as the economic and political crisis, the context of civil war, the extent of state power and control and individual opportunism’ (e.g. Prunier 1995; Straus 2006). Nonetheless, the genocide was clearly *about* ethnicity in terms of the selection of its victims and the specific nature of the torture and killing they endured (Taylor 1999). Whilst Tutsis were not the only victims of the mass killing that took place in Rwanda from April to July 1994, the majority of individuals were targeted on the basis of their assumed belonging to the Tutsi ‘*ethnie*’. Furthermore, testimonies suggest that to many of the victims and perpetrators, the killing was very much about ‘ethnicity’ and getting rid of Rwanda’s ‘Tutsi’ population (Hatzfeld 2000 and 2003). Thus, even if the genocide was not caused by ‘ethnic’ differences *per se*, this does not mean that people’s understandings and experiences of ‘ethnicity’ did not shape individual motivations, processes of mobilisation or the nature of the killing.

In this respect, David Turton (1997) notes that ‘ethnicity’ seems to be particularly potent as a mobilising force in violence.¹² Drawing on Glazer and Moynihan (1979), he argues that the ‘strategic efficacy’ of ethnicity as a means of mobilising groups around common material interests is due to its non-material (symbolic) content, which masks those interests for the group members. He says that ‘ethnic’ symbols of culture, religion and language are by definition ambiguous, imprecise and flexible and thus effective as a mobilising tool because they allow ‘scope for interpretative manoeuvre’ (Cohen 1985). Thus, in periods of change, members may still experience their ethnic identity as a constant and leaders can use these malleable but potent symbols to mobilise collective action in response to new conditions and in pursuit of new objectives. In short: ‘[I]ts very effectiveness as a means of advancing group interests depends on it being *seen* as “primordial” by those who make claims in its name’ (Turton 1997: 11).

The explanations above certainly give some insights into why certain identities provide an effective basis for group mobilisation, but they seem insufficient in terms of explaining specifically when and why collective action results in violence. In this respect, Luckham *et al.* (2006: 6) argue that violence is more likely to occur when its benefits rise relative to other forms of collective action and when the costs of violence are reduced. They list a number of conditions they say can combine to generate violence including: poor conflict management where groups

12 Turton’s arguments cover ‘ethnic’, ‘religious’ and ‘national’ identities.

are unable to pursue grievances through political processes; moments of transition or acute political crisis; challenges to the state's monopoly of violence; the existence of material (e.g. high-value resources) or non-material (e.g. religious) rewards for violence; and the role of international actors (diasporas, transnational crime and terrorist networks) who may nurture violence for their own ends (pp 6–8).

Again, although explaining why political elites or particular interest groups may choose violence as a means to achieve political or economic ends, they seem to fall short of explaining situations like Bosnia and Rwanda where ordinary civilians become perpetrators of violence. In this respect, Sen (2006) argues that a key factor in contemporary violence is the 'illusion of a singular identity' – the assumption that any person pre-eminently belongs to only one collectivity. Sen argues that those intent on using violent means to achieve their goals skilfully cultivate this illusion of a singular identity – eclipsing the relevance of other affiliations – and then redefine this sole identity in a belligerent form to incite people to commit violence in its name (pp 175–6).

Although perhaps not useful in explaining situations like Somalia where multiple identities are at play, Sen's thesis certainly resonates in the case of Rwanda. As discussed above, an analysis of the testimonies of victims and killers, as well as the political discourse and genocidal propaganda of the early 1990s, demonstrates the extent to which a binary 'ethnic' logic dominated in the lead-up to the genocide. This logic systematically equated 'the Tutsi' as a group, *all* Tutsi (not just those fighting with the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA)) as the categorical enemy of *all* Hutu – and thus as legitimate targets for violence in a situation of war (Straus 2006: 9; Chrétien *et al.* 1995: 139–208). This still doesn't explain, however, why the equation 'Tutsi = enemy' resonated to such an extent that it led so many people to kill their former social intimates, in some cases voluntarily or willingly (Des Forges 1999: 260; testimonies in Hatzfeld 2003).

Building on Turton's arguments, the example of Rwanda also demonstrates that the *specific nature of the ethnic discourse and symbols used to distinguish between, mobilise and vilify groups of people matters*.¹³ The genocidal discourse was replete with particular deeply-engrained 'ethnic' stereotypes of Rwandan society and history, which recalled past periods of 'ethnic' violence¹⁴ and stressed the danger represented by '*the* Tutsi' because of their innate nature: their propensity to rule, intelligence, malice, superiority, secrecy and clannishness (Chrétien *et al.* 1995: 151–62). The existence of these longstanding stereotypes made the constant warnings about the risk of 'infiltration' by Tutsi *ibyitso* – 'accomplices' of the RPA – seem plausible and contributed to the atmosphere of fear and paranoia. Furthermore, the fact that the differences posited between Hutus and Tutsis had long been constructed as primordial or *racial* made them

13 A similar argument has also been made in the case of political Islam, which makes universalising moral and political claims directed at all Muslims and thus is capable of mobilising people for political goals across national boundaries.

14 Indeed, violence itself can play a key role in forming, transforming and politicising 'ethnic' and other identities.

particularly potent and durable. The implication was that these differences were innate and therefore unchangeable, therefore providing a justification for the claim that the only solution to Rwanda's problems was to eliminate all Tutsi. Thus, when the organisers of the genocide reworked pre-existing 'ethnic' myths and stereotypes, they resonated sufficiently with people's prior knowledge to persuade them that what the propagandists claimed was true: that their liberty, land and livelihoods were under threat; that the enemy was not just the RPA, but all Tutsi; that the choice was to kill or be killed.

10 Implications for research and policy

The discussion above suggests that identity politics matter for security as identity can provide an extremely effective basis for collective mobilisation. The case of Rwanda also demonstrates that the specific ways in which 'ethnic' and other identities are constructed, experienced and politicised can be a key factor in violence. This suggests that we need to look in more depth at the processes that lead to the perpetration of violence in the name of identity in specific contexts and to explore the types of interventions that can prevent and respond to this violence. In this respect, there are a number of specific areas where further research would be useful:

- 1 *Improving understanding of the proximate causes and dynamics of identity-based violence in specific contexts:* Although many of the underlying structural causes of violence (e.g. poverty, inequality, exclusion, resource scarcity/abundance) have been well researched, there is a more limited body of research on the proximate causes of violence. In particular, we have a limited understanding of precisely why, when and how particular organisations, groups and individuals decide to engage in violence rather than adopt other strategies to achieve their objectives. There is evidence to suggest that the role of leaders is very important in mobilising violent action (e.g. Brass 1991; Gallagher 1997), but there are few comprehensive studies of the followers and precisely what motivates them to support or engage in violence. Who are the followers and why do they follow? How do they come to see violence as legitimate? Are there specific triggers (e.g. economic shocks, elections) that lead to violence?
- 2 *Exploring why particular identities (e.g. religious, ethnic) provide such an effective basis for political mobilisation and mobilisation into violence:* In the wake of recent 'Islamist' terrorist attacks, there has been popular speculation about whether there is something inherently violent about Islam. Although such popular myths can be quickly dispelled through informed analysis (e.g. Lawrence 2000), there is a need to better understand why certain religious and ethnic identities provide such an effective basis for mobilisation – especially into violent action. We need to examine more closely how religious and ethnic identities are constructed, interpreted, represented and rendered belligerent and how this impacts on the potential for violence. What are the similarities and differences between processes of ethnic and religious mobilisation in different contexts? What forms of ethnic or religious discourse

are particularly powerful and why? What are the roles of values and beliefs in motivating people to engage in violence?

- 3 *Identifying how global, regional and local factors intersect to aggravate or alleviate tensions between groups:* The role of transnational or cross-border factors (e.g. competition over resources, international organised crime networks, international military interventionism, global financial crises cross-border flows of arms, drugs people etc,) in driving and sustaining violent conflict is increasingly recognised (e.g. Duffield 2001; Kaldor 2007). It would be useful to build on this work and look specifically at how global or regional factors impact on the politics of identity in particular contexts and aggravate or alleviate tensions between groups and countries. Equally, it would be useful to look at the role of trans-border or globalised ethnic and religious identities, building on the work of Stewart (2008b), which suggests that inequalities faced by a group in one part of the world (e.g. Muslims in Western societies) may become a source of grievance and mobilisation elsewhere.

11 Implications for policy and practice

In terms of the implications for policy, there are a number of conclusions that lead on from the discussion above:

- 1 *There is a need to bridge the gap between analysis of and response to identity-based violence:* Rwanda remains the classic case of international inaction in the face of predictions of widespread ethnic violence (Melvern 2000). Since this time, there has been a proliferation of new tools and approaches adopted by policymakers – particularly Northern donor agencies – to conduct better analysis of the causes and consequences of conflict. Nonetheless, recent evidence suggests that there are still gaps between analysis and response. For example, although it was difficult to predict the scale of the post-elections violence in Kenya in early 2008, there has been a history of political mobilisation on the basis of ethnicity and election-related violence in Kenya since 1992. This suggests that a degree of violence could have been anticipated and measures taken to prevent it, but also that underlying grievances related to land, exclusion and access to political power have not been tackled for many decades. In many cases, like Rwanda in 1994, the gap between analysis and response relates to a lack of political will, but in others it reflects difficulties in applying the analysis to practice.
- 2 *Local and international policies and programmes need to be designed in ways that do not aggravate tensions between groups:* Uvin (1998) demonstrated how external development assistance reinforced a state system responsible for widespread 'structural violence' and group-based exclusion in Rwandan society and therefore unwittingly abetted some of the factors that contributed to the genocide. In the wake of this and similar studies, there has been a widespread move towards 'do no harm' approaches – basing aid programmes on rigorous analysis of the underlying dynamics of conflict to ensure they do not aggravate intergroup tensions (Anderson 1999). Recent evaluations suggest that while many individual projects and programmes have been

reasonably effective in this respect, further work is needed to make links between 'micro' and 'macro' projects, to look at the 'cumulative impact' of policies and programmes across sectors (Anderson and Olson 2003) and to better integrate humanitarian, development, diplomatic and military interventions (Call and Cousens 2007).

- 3 *There is a need for more policies and programmes to reduce inequalities and tensions between groups, combat negative stereotypes, and build positive relations:* There has been recent interest among policymakers in the design of institutional mechanisms to manage identity politics peacefully and promote inclusion and accountability (e.g. via 'statebuilding' and 'democracy building' approaches). This is yet to be matched, however, with more proactive ('peacebuilding' or 'reconciliation') approaches targeted specifically at reducing tensions and building positive relations between groups. In this respect, Stewart *et al.* (2008) review a range of policy options for reducing horizontal inequalities¹⁵ and Luckham *et al.* (2006) present policy measures to address the underlying conditions of identity-based violence or tackle such violence directly.¹⁶ These authors stress the need to design interventions based on analysis of the nature and sources of inequality and grievance in a specific society, the importance of tackling intergroup prejudice and negative perceptions, and of assessing carefully how best to initiate, implement and manage policy changes. For example, in the case of Rwanda, the current approach to reconciliation, which is based on 'de-ethnicising' Rwandan society and promoting a unified Rwandan identity, does not appear to be working (Buckley-Zistel 2006). Whilst the goals may be laudable, recent research suggests that ethnic identities are still salient, inter-'ethnic' relations are characterised by significant levels of fear and mistrust, and there is a worrying persistence of certain negative 'ethnic' stereotypes, which were a factor in the violence (McLean Hilker forthcoming). The Rwandan case demonstrates clearly the need for proactive policies to explicitly combat negative stereotypes and promote opportunities for dialogue, cooperation and the fostering of positive relations between groups.

15 These include direct approaches (e.g. affirmative action, group quotas, credit measures targeted at specific groups), indirect approaches (e.g. power-sharing and voting systems, anti-discrimination legislation, progressive taxation policies) and 'integrationist' approaches, which are aimed at reducing group salience (e.g. banning ethnic/religious political parties, civic citizenship education, incentives for shared economic or political activities across groups).

16 Policies to address the underlying conditions of identity-based violence include: addressing regional, horizontal and vertical inequalities and unequal resource distribution, tackling bad governance and corruption, working through civil society as well as the state, support for decentralisation, opening spaces for dialogue and inclusion. Policies that aim to tackle identity-based insecurity directly include: improving the quality of and access to justice and policing systems; measures to tackle prejudice and build public support for non-violent conflict resolution, supporting anti-corruption measures and tackling organised crime, inclusive human rights programmes, tackling gender-based violence, and promoting inclusive recruitment into security forces.

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