Democracy, Governance and Conflict in Burundi

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ABSTRACT. The flood of events riveting the Great Lakes Region since the late 1980's has attracted much attention. Countries in this region have been in a proverbial greenhouse highlighted by the well-publicized crimes against humanity in Rwanda. In Burundi to date, more than 200,000 people have died as victims of the power struggle. While Burundians and the international community analyze the best ways to bring the country back on to the development track, the primarily agrarian nation wrestles with its new and fragile institutions. These new institutions replaced elements that once served as the social cement for the Bahutu, Batutsi, and Batwa. As a result of the conflict there are "killing fields" in Burundi instead of grounds for planting and harvesting. An assessment of some of the root causes of the current crisis in Burundi will include a brief description of some of the country's history. The implications for some of the major elements at play (e.g., Burundi's civil society, NGOs, etc.) can be seen more clearly with the help of this description. There are five strategies that might help to alleviate the civil unrest and war theaters endemic to this country.

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Development on a Theater: Democracy, Governance and the Socio-political Conflict in Burundi

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Introduction

The assessment of the Burundian crisis to be developed in this paper takes as its starting point conclusions reached by notable scholars of the region like Prunier (1995), Lemarchand (1994), Chrétien (1993), and Vidal (1991), where terms like, "struggle for power in ethnic terms" and "ethno-political confrontation" are commonplace. The crisis that has paralyzed Rwanda-Burundi (as the two countries were historically known) is also attributed by these authors to imported and misapplied ideologies. Most notorious among these are Christianity, "racial" [*sic*] superiority and Western-style democracy. It is argued that the institutions put in place to enforce these concepts replaced traditional practices and nullified existing social contracts. These factors are now seen to be damaging the country's social fabric and its potential for sustainable development.

The application of these new ideologies occurred with varying degrees of success if one considers Burundi's 67% Christian population (Roman Catholic 62%, Protestant 5%). Other effects of colonialization are less measurable in quantitative terms, though one can attest to the "ethnocide" (mass killings based on ethnic identity) that occurs at every point of political transition. Since the early 1960s and the nation's independence, Burundi's Hutus and Tutsis have known violence of massive proportions. These killings have been associated with struggles for power, which have been fueled by ethnic concepts and misconceptions.

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Drawing on the myriad and politically diverse literature for its historical grounding, this paper attempts a pro-active psychosocial exercise. It favors the post-modern Africanist academic worldview on the nature of the conflict in Burundi. Coined by Prunier (1995), this view is associated with "liberal intellectuals" [who] prefer to attribute these outbursts of violence to either political or economical causes or effects (or both), since the imperialist force is no longer directly evident or implicated. The argument here, however, is that the consequences of their historical presence linger. With the context of the situation outlined and explained, strategies for managing the socio-political tensions and for achieving suitable conditions for sustainable development are offered. Underlying those strategies is an understanding of the various elements at play in the Burundian context and their interrelated effects.

Burundi's Early Institutions

Burundi's pre-colonial history bears no evidence of ethnic conflict between Hutus, Tutsis, and Twas.1 Consider, for example, the *Ganwa* identity that represented the royal family containing both Bahutu and Batutsi members. It would appear that the differences are more socio-political rather than "ethnic" or cultural. Power struggles were expressed in different terms, for reasons other than "ethnocentrism" and against external enemies (for elaboration on this issue, see: Prunier, 1995). When conflicts did take place, there were cultural traditions and mechanisms to bring the system back to normalcy, like *kubandwa* (native religion with *Imana* as the supreme God) and *Bashingantahe* (legitimized elders) courts. Nicayenzi (1995) identified the following five institutional foundations of Burundian society, which helped to create social cohesion:

1.   The *Mwami* (king) — source of life and unity for the nation; he was directly connected with

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1 Numbers are often cited describing the country's ethnic makeup in percentage shares of the population (said to be 85%, 14%, and 1% for Hutus, Tutsis, and Twas respectively). However, since there are no records of a bona fide census ever having been conducted in Burundi, this data is unreliable. Ethnic identification in Burundi seems to happen fairly haphazardly but it is always based on the father's identity.

Imana and awarded favors (land, cows, riches, etc.) evenly to all his subjects for serving as official intermediaries to *Imana*.

2. *Imana* — God. Creator of all.

3. *Mupfumu* and *Kiranga* — intermediaries between Burundians and *Imana*.

4. *Mushingantahe* — guardian and protector of peace and justice for Burundians, selected by the local population for his wisdom.

5. *Twiyungungaye* or Common Faith and Destiny — communal work, collective needs; responding to one *Mwami* on Earth while honoring one *Imana* in the heavens.

Christianity introduced *Mungu* as a replacement for *Imana* and all His intermediaries (*Mupfumu* and *Kiranga*). As a result, Hutus and Tutsis could no longer offer *Mwami* services for his favors. This act would later prove to be particularly damaging because the role of distributing the nation's resources based on services rendered to the *Mwami*, which indirectly maintained stability, was taken away from the leadership. As a destabilization technique, the colonialists introduced the "race" myth and the notion of ethnicity. Later, in order to correct problems created by these, they introduced democracy. The problem with myths is that once created, they have a tendency to live a life of their own" (Prunier, 1995, p. 347).

Ushered out of existence as a result were the *Bashingantahe* and the sense of a common destiny. The Burundian moral authority became suspect. Along came ethnocentrism, an ideology of ethnic supremacy adopted into segments of the population and creating a great incision very difficult to heal. The monarchy was replaced with a democratic republic and all the accompanying organizations of a democracy; namely, a political party, a justice system that replaced traditional courts, a civil service corps, a military corps under a civilian President to protect the populace, and a partially unrepressed civil society with guaranteed human rights and freedoms" (press, speech, religion, association, etc.). Civil society received a boost in April 1992 with a Public Law favoring the creation of non-government organizations (NGOs). At the peak of the Burundian crisis from late 1995 to mid-1996, local NGOs registered with the Ministry of Interior at a rate of 10 per week. These organizations were usually one dimensional, predominantly unisex, limited in their membership (read ethnic

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makeup), capacity, and purpose, and more often existed in name alone with one person (along with **his** friends and family members) assuming all the leadership positions.

Breeding Ethnocentrism and Ethnocracy

As a "functional" ideology, ethnocentrism is the belief in the unique value and "rightness" of one's own group. It serves the group in its struggle for power and wealth. It also serves the individual in his/her attempt to find personal security and flourishes best in conflict situations. In fact, it breeds conflict. Hutus and Tutsis have developed a common culture and customs, share the same language (Miranda), and the same spiritual beliefs (Amana and later Mango), political institutions, and cuisine. Ethnocentrism is a new and infectious dogma plaguing the health of the nation. In fact, there are many reasons why Burundians do not fit the anthropological definition of separate tribes or ethnic groups" (Lemarchand, 1994; Prunier, 1995). A more relevant and theoretically linked explanation of the socio-political conflict is offered by Dollard (1938). In his seminal work "Hostility and Fear in Social Life," he noted that "control over [hostility toward in-group members] is one of the chief problems of social life."

Nevertheless, once [ethnic] differences in Burundi had become established as symbols of superiority versus inferiority they were used as weapons in later group conflicts. In-group members, as a result, became compelled to live in a constant state of readiness for aggressive response. The arguable defense became "do unto others before it is done unto me." And so began a vicious cycle of action-reaction-vengeance. Simpson and Yinger (1965) framed the sustenance of prejudice as follows:

> For [race/ethnic] prejudice to occur, not only must there be frustration and ensuing aggression, not only must there be permission to be aggressive but there must also be a way of identifying the people to be hated (p. 79).

The rise of ethnocentrism as a source or feeder for conflicts is largely attributed to the end of the Cold War. No longer is the struggle purely between democracy and communism. For example, convincing arguments for a Franco- versus Anglo- tug-of-war in former francophone colonies have been

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advanced by some theorists. The pursuits of political hegemony are now pursued in ethnic terms giving rise to, in the case of Burundi, "ethnocracy." In its form and substance, this new expression is a "racial ideology." "The development of a racial ideology is not a function of the state of knowledge about racial differences, but is rather the response to social conflict and crisis" (Nash, 1962, p. 285). Simpson and Yinger (1965) reasserted,

> Once members of a [community] have been set apart by a given group of historical circumstances as legitimate objects of discrimination, it is likely that other "minority" cultures/ethnies will also be set apart, although the particular sociological and historical forces involved are different (p. 110).

In Burundi, the early Belgian explorers are credited in part for those "historical circumstances." Missionaries, colonialists, and neo-colonial hegemony received some Burundian assistance in the development of their brand of "racial ideology." Nash (1962) suggested five characteristics of such an ideology, noting that it does the following: Provides a moral rationale for systemic disprivilege; Allows the members of the dominant group to reconcile their values with their activities; Aims to discourage the subordinate group from making claims on the society; Rallies the adherents to political action in a "just" cause; and defends the existing division of labor as eternal (p. 286-88).

Burundi's "ethnocracic" racial ideology inspired the addition of a sixth characteristic. Proponents of "ethnocracy" rally the adherents to "genocidal" tendencies and behaviors. Interestingly in Burundi, anyone can subscribe to this ideology so long as that individual has power or privilege to protect. Prunier (1995) summarized the apparent ethnic conflict and related "genocide" in Rwanda-Burundi as being among other things, largely a fight for good jobs, administrative control and economic advantage" (p. 227). In Kirundi, there is a saying, "He who takes food out of your mouth is the one who kills you." From this understanding, any mass lay-off/firings that takes place after one political party wins an election is tantamount to genocide. Those serving the pink slips would be equivalent to *"genocidaires."* (A popular coded/loaded term used in Burundi to describe those who believe in the total elimination of the other ethnic group). This analogy works to explain the un-ethnic nature of the current Burundian conflict since both Hutus and Tutsis (the majority in this case) were victims

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of this sort of "death" after the predominantly Hutu party won the elections placing Melchior Ndadaye, an agronomist, as President. Other politically motivated deaths were inspired, as in 1972, for example, by mainly Hutus, to create a leadership vacuum within certain political parties and "ethnic" groups.

New Meets Old

Christian evangelization was new to the Burundians when the missionaries first arrived in their corner of the Great Lakes in 1933. This new concept met with *kubandwa* — a very important initiative cult of possession — and began its destruction. That indigenous belief, reportedly practiced by 32% of the population today, played an important integrative social role, since its initiates were indifferently Tutsi, Hutu, and even Twa (Prunier, 1995, p. 369). Whether or not Christianity fails to serve as a "glue" for Burundian civil society is not at issue here. The leading churches and their representatives have played an active role in the conflict resolution efforts and most importantly, the country's healing process. In Buyenzi, a zone within Bujumbura, the predominantly Muslim community of multiple nationalities and ethnicities is lauded for their contributions to maintaining peace while the many churches continue to urge the reinstatement of the *Bashingantahe* and to pound the "love thy neighbor" message. The issue here is that one belief did not have to completely erase the other to the point where *kubandwa* faithfuls must worship "in the backwoods." The question remains, however, whether this indigenous religion alone can or could have reversed the effects of the missionaries' hateful message of one group's superiority over the other.

Another well-intentioned concept brought to Burundi also met with "the old way of doing things." Burundi, since independence, has been considered by many as a fragile democracy and even more so since the transition to the multi-party system. There was a short-lived acceptance of the electoral outcomes placing the first Hutu as a democratically elected President. His assassination on the 23rd of October 1993 slashed the hopes of many (Hutus and Tutsis alike) in civil society. Ntahombaye (1995) makes a point that highlights this regret for not being able to experience the entirety of President Ndadaye's administration. "The population was manipulated with some fallacious promises

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to gain power" (p. 66). There are other unfounded allegations that could have been proven or refuted if he had been allowed to complete his term. Civil society could have later determined the political party to which it would cast a greater number of votes after having awarded FRODEBU (Front pour la Democratie au Burundi) victory with 83.4% of the votes.

Even with the overwhelming numbers, some members in civil society refused to understand or accept the concept of a one-person one-vote and majority rule. The same population is now entangled in a conflict that to date has left over 200,000 Burundians dead and over 600,000 dispersed, displaced, and in refugee camps. As a response, some in the Burundian and international intelligentsia are calling for revamped *Bashingantahe* courts.

Ntabona (1985) investigated the prospects and significance of the *ubushingantahe* institution that was "the foundation and pillar for society" (p. 57). As he explained, this Burundian traditional system served the following purposes: Settle litigations via reconciliation or a judgment depending on the degree of the conflict; Reconcile people and families within their communities; Certify contracts (marriages, wills, sales, gifts, etc.); Serve as a watchdog for peace and truth in the community; Guarantee the security of community members and their property; Advise and harmonize political powers at all levels; Speak in favor of the common good and human rights at all times and as deemed necessary (p. 263-301).

Unfortunately, not all the litigants in Burundi today agree on the merits of these men and their capacity to "objectively" judge. Civil society now generally accepts "double-talk" and half-truths as part of their value orientation. One high-ranking Burundian official was once quoted as saying to an expatriate colleague: "You see, in Burundi, we all lie. I'm lying to you now, and I will lie to you tomorrow." With that mindset, trust and confidence are seldom found nor freely granted. But trust and confidence would be expected from an *ubushingantahe*.

Women's exclusion at the helm of these courts is one cause of the criticisms of the *Bashingantahe* today. The judgments delivered were traditionally-based — "traditions" that did not always

favor/protect women's "freedoms." The prescribed revision of this institution would have to consider these shortcomings and incorporate the tenets of democracy. Beyond that revision, an education of what constitutes the "trappings of democratization" along with its accompanying anti-discrimination message would also be needed.

Democracy Without Discrimination

John Dewey (1948), the philosopher of American democracy, linked a nation's institutions, its civil society, and their pursuits of "growth and meaning." In his book *Reconstruction in Philosophy,* he wrote,

> Government, business, art, religion, all social institutions have a meaning, a purpose. That purpose is to set free and to develop the capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class or economic status. And this is all one with saying that the test of their value is the extent to which they educate every individual into the full stature of his [her] possibility. Democracy has many meanings, but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-around growth of every member of society. (P. 376)

The Burundian drama weighs heavily from the effects of multi-party democratization; its corollary is what is now being considered here "development on a theater." Add to that weight the fear and subsequent rumors — sometimes malicious and deadly — rampant in every corner of the country. Many Burundians express the fear of a "*genocide à la manière de Rwanda*." How is this "fear" related to democratization? Dahl and Tufte (1973) cited Madison, one of the framers of America's democracy, cautioning that "A supreme danger is the possibility that a passionate majority might sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and rights of other citizens." All proponents for a democratic Africa have a responsibility to those emergent democracies.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has exemplified this type of support through their Democracy and Governance (DG) programs. In Burundi alone, over $10 million has been appropriated to DG since the crisis. Various international development partners have answered the

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USAID call to teach Burundians about DG by focusing on the DG domains namely: (1) the State; (2) the Private Sector; and (3) Civil Society. The organizations answering that call have extended beyond the Burundian border. Regional governments' policies and practices are the concerns reviewed under governance, because governance is the State apparatus — its political, economic, and administrative authority to manage all the components of a nation. Moreover, governance related policies have cross-border implications. Uganda, Zaire, Rwanda, and Tanzania are all inextricably linked to many of the governance considerations in Burundi.

As one of those partners, Africare, Inc. is applying the multiple facets of the DG construct through civil society and its non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For starters, there is sometimes a genuine cultural revolution and mental transformation among citizens engaged in a transition from a one-party into a democratic, multi-party system. Burundian politics as a whole arguably did not experience that metamorphosis. Regional evidence can be found in Rwanda and Burundi where the "ethnic card" is usually dealt at moments of political transition. In neighboring Tanzania, on the other hand, President Nyerere (ironically directly implicated in the 1996 Burundian peace settlement and largely credited for the rise of many of the Region's leaders) successfully coalesced 125 ethnic groups around, among other variables, a common purpose (nationhood) and language (Swahili) to signify that "cultural revolution."

In the transition stage (after the political settlement and brokered peace), all Burundians should be invited to define, understand, and exchange ideas on what "democracy" will mean for Burundi. Some of the conventional provisions will have to be considered. The following are brief descriptions of some democratic principles and what each could imply in the Burundian sociopolitical and development continuum.

1. **Participation** — engaging each civil society member in the social and electoral process and the making of decisions for the nation and its development; the essence of good governance.
2. **Patience —** enduring the outcomes of all transparent democratic processes and accepting the occasional "low degree of fit" associated with change and new systems.

3. **Party Politics (multi-)** — establishing multiple platforms of political ideologies and strategies that will lead to improved conditions for the whole society. As Weber (1946, cited in Herisse, 1995) described, these organizations must be understood by civil society as being "oriented toward the acquisition of social power, . . . toward influencing a communal action no matter what its content may be." In short, they should be first and foremost, legal and legitimate.

4. **Pledges/Promises** — emitting messages about a development vision and what the nation can accomplish together with its partners and educating/informing the population when those campaign pledges/promises are unrealistic, disingenuous, and underachieved.

5. **Power-sharing** — accepting the contribution of all members of civil society at every level of authority and decision-making capacity.

6. **Pluralism** — accepting the homogeneity in language and culture as a Burundian asset of strength. With homogeneity prevailing as a concept, pluralism can then take the form of a desire for basic political and economic unity along with coexistence and tolerance [*sic*] for diversity (Simpson and Yinger, 1965, p. 18, 21).

The foregoing are some of the relevant characteristics of modern democracies. Some other considerations may have been omitted if only to make the point that democracies, like the humans who legitimize them, are dynamic and can take many forms. The benefiting population should be encouraged to assess their democratic aspirations in light of other elements drawn from the global understanding of democracy. As it is, Burundian civil society is already involved in this process with the help of American organizations like Africare, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, and Search for Common Ground. Their work has involved attempts to show the link between democratization and development.

When Discrimination Impedes Development

While comparing smaller democratic systems to larger ones, Dahl and Tufte (1973) advanced some enduring axioms. Burundi best fits the description of the "smaller democratic systems" they described in their scholarly work. In such systems, they concluded, "the likelihood that conflicts among groups

involve personal conflicts among the individuals in each group is high" (p. 92). In that same analysis of small democratic systems, they concluded that "the processes for dealing with organized group conflicts are less institutionalized and are more likely to polarize the whole community than in larger democratic systems" (p. 92). The polarization is exacerbated by ancient ethnic misconceptions and myths fueling the discrimination in certain segments of civil society. That discrimination has invariably stifled development initiatives in the country.

The reality is that the Burundian group conflict, as presented earlier, is a normal phenomenon of political systems expressed in ethnic terms. For this reason, the conflict cannot be seen as a totally negative force. Nor can "homogeneity" (in all its connotations) be sought as the unique solution to the current crisis, since, in a broad sense, that homogeneity already exists in Burundi. Often there is hope that these "small systems" will realize that group conflicts entail such high extra costs in the form of individual antagonism and losses that participants would voluntarily avoid them. When that "realization" does not occur, the development practitioner is then challenged to assess the various types of personalities who may be implicated in the group conflict.

In Burundi as in any other "complex situation," the discrimination underlying the conflict and approaches to resolving the individual's discriminating posture may vary. Simpson and Yinger (1965) considered the many personality/identity types involved in discrimination. They argued that each individual would require a different approach to help her/him deal with the unacceptable discriminating behavior. The following approaches proposed here for the Burundian context were adapted from their pioneering work on racial and cultural minorities.

"*Preaching to the Choir*" — This situation occurs when the same group of like-minded individuals (moderates, liberals, extremists, etc.) seek each other out, and hold periodic meetings and conferences in which they rehash shared views, and thus lend social and psychological support to one another. This exercise leads to what has been called "the fallacy of unanimity" and ultimately "the fallacy of privatized solutions." This "choir" would be best served by exposure to divergent views. Some of these organization types exist within the Burundian civil society and should be supported.

"*Ostracizing Opportunists*" — There is a class of individuals who discriminate not on the basis of prejudice but rather because of its ease and general profits. A personal advantage is clearly sought even in silence or fear to renounce discriminators. The individuals must be brought into the "choir" (mentioned above) so that other "rewards" or non-discrimination can be obtained. As Dahl and Tufte (1973) pointed out:

> If the cost of conflict is high in the small system, the price of neutrality is higher. The neutral is not only perfectly visible but in the emotional, inflamed atmosphere of the conflict, likely to be perceived as an enemy by both sides (p. 94).

"*Punishing Prejudice*" — There is a class of individuals who will continue to discriminate based on the established status quo, dominating institutions, cultural norms, clientelism and impunity to the law, and "generally accepted practices." To those individuals, discrimination must be made to be seen as a costly exercise punishable with laws, policies, and environmental sanctions supported by civil society. Sufficient evidence suggests that these laws and policies existed in Burundi's Second and Third Republics and were applied with varying levels of success.

"*Raising Consciousness*" — There is a class of individuals who are able to hide their hostility and discriminatory tendencies via a compromise with democratic ideals. This posture can be heard through statements like, "I'm not prejudiced, but, . . . ," or, "Sure there's an ethnic majority in Burundi with full ethnic rights, but . . ." Their ambivalence is part of their rationalization of their "pseudo-democratic" or discriminatory ways. Therefore, personal and group functions, as well as traditional supports of prejudice and discrimination, must be reduced.

Countering Strategies

There are clear advantages and strengths in community development that involve civil society. History has proven that "organizations spring up in response to a conflict, and die out when it ends" (Dahl

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and Tufte 1973, p. 94). International Service Agencies like Africare (a US-based development institution with over 25 years of experience working in Africa) are working through Burundi's civil society because, among other reasons, it is the foundation of a legitimate democracy. While working in this sector, they reported that almost half (49%) of the NGO population emerged within the last three years after a landmark Public Law in April 1992. Almost 80% of the 600 plus Burundian NGOs were created after 1980. The explanation is in part due to political decentralization, liberalization, and accommodating laws promoting associations of individuals.

Many of these organizations have become effective instruments through which certain segments of civil society can be reached with conflict resolution and development programs. The rationale underlying this approach suggests that "the organization and institutionalization of conflict resolution will help prevent controversy from becoming so violent as to destroy the democratic regime" (Dahl and Tufte, 1973, p. 96).

The following strategies have been reviewed in the Burundian "theater" as approaches that could lead to conditions suitable for development. Some of these ideas borrow from efforts tried and proven in the United States and other countries where ethnic/cultural/gender diversity were valued and actively sought. The challenge in Burundi compels the governance or development practitioner to actively research the approach with the highest probability for fit and applicability.

Compromise Versus Contention

There comes a point during intergroup conflicts when the litigants weigh their position against their condition and capacity. The skilled one is s/he who knows when to retreat, when to collaborate, and when to advance. "One difficulty in intergroup relations," warned Simpson and Yinger (1965) "is determining when a vigorous program to thwart conflict is likely to be successful *despite* the opposition it will arouse in some people, and when compromise is required *despite* the short-run sacrifice of some aspects of one's ultimate goal" (p. 523). Clearly, the latter is more important when the greater good is threatened, mass terror is widespread, and when one has increasingly few allies.

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This compromise, of course, would be done in the name of democracy and for development. One reason behind this motivation was expressed earlier in claiming that democracy means participation and patience. Within reason and if individuals can visualize the "greater good," most people would end up with an opportunity to lead or be empowered.

One of the greatest examples of compromise was the Israel-PLO conflict and the South African anti-apartheid settlement, earning their leading brokers Nobel Peace prizes. Before them, Booker T. Washington in the United States had told whites, "We can be as separate as the fingers, but as united as the hand." His was a calculated compromise where the long range goal of the Black minorities' self-improvement was kept clearly in mind while day-to-day adjustments were made to the system. Burundi has had ethno-political conflicts expressed in similar "racial" terms as those seen in South Africa and the United States. The difference in the Burundian situation is that the compromise conferred by the "*Convention de Gouvernement*" following the assassination of President Ndadaye and other accords:

- did not consider long-term sustainable goals for Burundi;
- did not holistically consider the nation's existing institutions;
- did not fairly consider prevailing inequities in the system;
- aroused hostile opposition; and
- promoted ineffective contention.

This ineffective contention was characterized by attacks on individuals for their beliefs, wealth, and potential to hold leadership positions, and mass killings of "scapegoats" or "tricklecide" of innocent Burundians throughout the Provinces. The killings went on even in the refugee camps set up in neighboring Zaire, Rwanda, and Tanzania..

Collaborative Work

Nationbuilding has now emerged as the global focus since the end of the Cold War and the battle

against communism. Herisse (1995) schematically portrayed how the association movement and the organization of civil society can lead to "systems" (democratic, autocratic etc.) and ultimately nations. Implied in this organizing effort is the redirection of conflict to positive channels and a compromise to develop the nation and all its citizens. The international focus on nation building through democratic and good governance ideals (participation in associations, unions, elections, courts etc.) became mandatory for developing nations in the South. Countries can no longer be clearly communistic and accepted in North-South relationships. They have to exercise the trappings of democratization and good governance and provide related freedoms as well. Bilateral and multilateral donors like the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the European Union, and USAID have backed that message with billions of dollars spent to reinforce and develop civil societies around the world. The intention is that civil society will become involved in their country's development and participate in its governance. As a development partner, Africare, for example, has engaged in this "civil society development" process in Burundi, using experiences gained and lessons learned from working in Benin, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, and southern Africa.

Another positive lesson about the concept of collaborative work can be drawn from its beginnings in the United States (US) and reemergence today. Back in the 1940s to 60s when programs were being established to combat prejudice and discrimination across the US, teaming up youths of various ethnicities, cultures, religions, and gender in work camps proved a powerful tool. The growth and experience were lasting. Even today, as the US faces a resurgence of a "racial" divide in the South expressed by the burning of Black churches, reconstruction teams of White, Black, Hispanic, and Native American volunteers are being used to begin the needed healing for the affected communities. In Burundi, Africare along with some local NGOs, used a USAID grant to team up local youths of various ethnic groups and national origins and to engage them in community building and development work on a small scale. In the process, the youths embraced diversity, valued work and collaboration, and contributed to the beautification and development of their communities.

Social Action by Civil Society

A nation's population is by far its greatest asset; they are the foundations of a democratic system. This resource can play a major role in maintaining the overall system and arguably did so in the aftermath of President Ndadaye's assassination on 23 October 1993. With examples and experiences from Rwanda's heinous crimes bearing down upon them, Burundi's civil society did not exercise the total destruction of the regime at a time when instigators fueled the anger and fear following the attempted coup and murder of the President and some of his closest allies. These same individuals within the nation are at the conceptual root of organizations. Over a century and a half has passed since Alexis de Tocqueville (1864), in reviewing democracy in America, lauded associations as the best manifestation of democracy. Other attributes of organizations are that they are the basis of other new major institutions such as political parties, unions, and religious organizations while promoting the modernization (read development) of society (Herisse, 1995). In Dewey's (1944) view, these organizations are subsystems of a greater system providing the balance and symmetry that is essential for a democracy (20-21).

Beginning in the summer of 1995, Africare worked to develop Burundian civil society by strengthening, supporting, and consolidating local NGOs. The aim was to promote democratic principles within these organizations and contribute to the resolution of the recurring conflicts in the country. Some of these organizations received institutional support while others received funding for programs serving youths, the physically challenged, the displaced, the dispersed, and the other victims of the socio-political conflict. These same organized actors would later engage in development activities namely agriculture, water and sanitation, health, and environmental protection/rehabilitation — most needed for the refugee camps occupied by fleeing Rwandans. In addition to the aforementioned work, teams bringing together diverse youths into structured contact were also programmed for NGO partners and diverse professional members of civil society. The "intellectual" community clearly had a role to play and they were encouraged to:

- conduct and support the research on the credibility of an ethnic problem in Burundi and the proven measures to counter its proliferation;
- plan strategies for the sustainable resolution of Burundi's conflicts by developing

institutions that will balance the country's diverse interests;

- develop data gathering instruments and methodologies for assessing the role and impact of the nation's young and emerging organizations;
- plan strategies for mass inclusion of all "ethnies" and segments of civil society in all aspects of the nation's institutions;
- focus the power necessary for institutional changes in the country.

The effectiveness of this approach implies major commitments by USAID, Africare, and the Canadian *Centre d'Etude et Cooperation Internationale* (CECI) organization, to name just a few. These committed institutions have concentrated on developing civil society and working through local NGOs. The strengthening of these organizations — the further development of both coordination and specialization as well as their collaboration — is fundamental to the success of this strategy.

Leadership Development in Civil Society

Civil society will undoubtedly play a major role in the stabilization and development of conditions in Burundi. That population must be conscientized to this role and prepared adequately for the challenge. The intention of such an effort should be to convey an understanding of leadership with hopes, as Bass (1990, p. 53) explains, to convert [them] from followers to leaders. The following definitions/understandings would guide this process. Leadership is,

- the process of influencing others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization (Patterson, 1993, p. 3);
- the process of assisting followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group, organization, and society (Herisse, 1995 p. 8);
- to manage attention and meaning while articulating visions of what is possible and empowering the collective effort of the followers (Bennis, 1984 in Herisse, 1995, p. 8).

Several leadership development activities and models exist and all would have to fit the Burundian

value orientation and cultural context. As an example, the activities that imply leadership roles for women would have to consider the male domination in Burundi and the institutionalized underevaluation of women. Until those realities are dealt with, leadership development in that sector of civil society would be a short-term band-aid on a wound requiring stitches and aftercare.

Continuing Education

Education is well-accepted as an iterative process. The educated masses begin a process whereby they grow with each experience they face and thus become prepared for even more interesting challenges and growth. Philosopher Ivan Illich once defined the process as lifelong learning. In considering the various ethnopolitical clashes Burundians have faced, it is necessary to ask whether the Burundian people have started to learn about the means to control repeated occurences. What about the healing processes needed after experiencing criminalistic losses and mass destruction? Neil Kressel, in his book *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Crime and Terror* (1996) cites incidences of ethnocentrically-generated terror and genocide. The cases of Rwanda, Burundi, and Bosnia are a few of the examples reviewed. He concluded by saying that part of the healing includes prosecuting those responsible and sentencing them to death. His views are contested.

Those familiar with the Burundian past suggest that healing in Burundi will have to begin with education on the sources of the conflict and on the country's historical methods of resolving those types of conflicts when they arise. One consideration is that Burundian coping mechanisms have been severely diluted by combinations of modernization, acculturation, and misunderstanding or (at worse) misapplication of certain ideologies. The effect of this is that the continuous revision and reinforcement of accepted conflict resolution methods is required. Only after peace is achieved can real "development" begin.

In educating rural communities about development methods, a starting point is the needs assessment. This activity is best appreciated when it involves all segments of the community — especially those who can contribute, if only with their institutional memory, to the attempts made before and to their

successes. Their information always proves invaluable, since it provides the development practitioner with a barometer for what needs to be done with the community. To the extent that development in Burundi hinges on the provisions of peace and the resolution of the ethnopolitical conflicts, a similar "needs assessment" seems appropriate. This process would engage the practitioner in discussions with the *Bashingantahe* of Burundian communities for clues of what worked before. Therefore, the prescription is to re-educate the Burundians about the traditional roles played by the *ubushingintahe* institution and revive its training routines and encourage apprentices to pursue the inherent values. As a hindrance, some would remark on the elements of the Burundian conflict attributable in part to a generational struggle for power and economic control. Consider the possible reticence by the younger generation now in positions of power to adhere to the prescriptions of the *Bashingantahe*. In fact some segments of civil society have discredited the merits and values of the *mushingantahe* ascribing to them descriptions like "old drunkards who have lost touch with the reality that is now Burundi."

Conclusions

The sociopolitical conflict in Burundi is a veritable dilemma for DG and development practitioners with broader implications for the Greater Horn Region. True development has not been able to take hold because "good" governance has been absent from the Burundian experience since its independence in 1964. Bilateral donors such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and development institutions like Africare, Action Aid, and World Vision can only play the role of "catalyst" as nations develop practices and policies favorable for governance and development. Burundi's development stalemate is based on multiple and complex "realities." A formula will have to be found by the Burundians (with sufficient positive inducements from the international community) enabling the brokerage of an end to the political stalemate and the losses of innocent lives. The role of DG and human development practitioners, working through civil society, should be to provide concrete examples linking democracy, governance, and development. Additional analysis of the activities proposed here aimed at preserving peace, resolving conflicts, and preparing the grounds for development is needed to identify the best solution for Burundi.

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Development is the process by which the members of a society expand themselves and their institutions in ways that enhances their ability to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in the quality of life consistent with their own aspirations (Herisse, 1995, p. 16). This understanding of development invariably assumes certain conditions and implies the full participation of the beneficiaries. After all, that is the essence of good governance. Conditions of war, civil unrest, and political conflict, in whatever form, are natural impediments to this development. The non-involvement of civil society is also a failing when sustainable development is intended. Democratization, still being modified to fit the African context encourages the participation, thus setting the process in motion. With the momentum and adequate preparation/contribution from civil society, observers and development practitioners alike can witness the changes that improve economies, strengthen communities, develop societies and build nations.

War theaters are for soldiers and ammunition. When the will turns toward development, these arsenals and resources can be replaced with community participation and support, individual contribution and integrity, capital, and cooperation and collaboration. The common purpose of a developed Burundi is a noble cause towards which an identified segment of the population is gradually working. Our challenge now is to transform their war theater, its implements and related mentality into good governance with development tools and resources.

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