

## An Analysis of the Rwandan Genocide

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### ABSTRACT

*This research paper examines the influence of culture and religion on conflict management through a case study of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. The paper analyzes the impact of cultural and religious differences on conflict resolution and considers the advantages and disadvantages of these influences. The research draws on a range of scholarly sources to explore the role of shared values and norms, common identity, mediation, and reconciliation in conflict management. The paper also considers the negative effects of ethnocentrism, identity politics, and the use of culture and religion to justify violence. In furtherance, this paper details on the historical understanding of the Hutus, Tutsi and Twa peoples for better assimilation of the study, explains the colonial influence in the political system that reshaped Rwanda and how it triggered the genocide of 1994, and goes ahead to focus on the transformation origin of the Hutu and Tutsi. There is an elaboration on the Hutu revolution and its aftermath. This study also expatiates on the cultural and religious differences between the Hutu and Tutsi that contributed to the onset of their conflict and how these strategies were justified with the use of culture and religion. The merits and demerits of adopting religious values and norms in conflict resolution and how these influences can be utilized to promote peaceful coexistence were outlined. The research adopted a case study secondary qualitative research method with a descriptive approach to the study. Overall, this research provides a nuanced and circumspect analysis of the role of culture and religion in conflict management, highlighting the need for an inclusive approach that promotes peace, understanding, and mutual respect.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The bloody history of the Hutu and Tutsi conflict stained the 20th century, from the massacre of about 120,000 Hutus in Burundi in 1972 by the Tutsi army to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, where Hutu militias targeted Tutsis and killed about 800,000 people in about a hundred days. However, many scholars remain amazed to learn that the ongoing conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis has nothing to do with language or religion; they speak the same Bantu tongues in addition to French, and they both typically practice Christianity, and many

geneticists have struggled to find significant ethnic differences between the two, though the Tutsis have typically been noted to be taller. Many people think that in order to more accurately classify indigenous peoples in their censuses, German and Belgian colonizers tried to distinguish between Hutu and Tutsi.

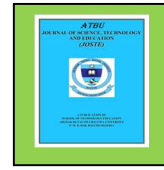
The Hutu-Tutsi conflict typically results from class conflict because the Tutsis are thought to have greater wealth and social standing (as well as favoring cattle ranching over what is seen as the lower-class farming of the Hutus). These [ethnic] disparities first appeared

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in the 19th century, were made worse by colonization, and reached their peak at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kamalu, 2020).

Right after the Hutus arrived from Chad, it is believed that the Tutsis travelled from Ethiopia. The Hutus took control of Rwanda by force after the Tutsi monarchy, which had existed since the fifteenth century, was overthrown at the urging of Belgian colonizers in the early 1960s. But in Burundi, a Hutu uprising was crushed, and the Tutsis took power. Long before the 19th-century European colonization, the Hutu and Tutsi people interacted. Some scholars claim that the Hutu people were the original inhabitants of the area, while the Tutsi came from the area around the Nile. The Tutsi were able to quickly establish themselves as the local leaders after they arrived. There was a significant amount of intermarrying while the Tutsi people rose to "aristocracy."

Belgian colonists established Ruanda-Urundi in the region in 1925. However, the Belgians, with the support of the Europeans, installed the Tutsi in power rather than establishing a government from Brussels. This choice allowed the Tutsis to take advantage of the Hutu people. The Hutus started to rebel against their treatment in 1957 by publishing a manifesto and carrying out violent acts against the Tutsis. Belgium left the region in 1962, and two new countries, Rwanda and Burundi, were established. The Hutu and Tutsi engaged in a number of violent clashes between 1962 and 1994, which all culminated in the genocide of 1994.

The researcher examines the influence of culture and religion on conflict management through a case study of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. The Hutus and Tutsis conflict, which occurred in Rwanda in 1994, is a compelling case study of the influence of culture and religion on conflict management. This conflict, which lasted for 100 days, was characterized by human rights abuses, violence, destruction of property, and a genocide that resulted in the deaths of an estimated 800,000 people, mostly Tutsis (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

The influence of culture and religion on the Hutu-Tutsi conflict cannot be ignored. Both groups shared a common language, and religious root (Christianity), but their slight difference is in cultural and religious beliefs. The Hutus were predominantly Catholic, while the Tutsis were mostly Protestant. These religious differences were exploited by extremist groups to justify violence and promote hatred. Similarly, cultural differences such as social hierarchies and norms of behavior also contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

The study therefore analyzes the impact of cultural and religious differences on conflict resolution and considers the advantages and disadvantages of these influences through drawing on a range of scholarly sources to explore the role of shared values and norms, common identity, mediation, and reconciliation in conflict management. The negative effects of ethnocentrism, identity politics, and the use of culture and religion to justify violence is also considered.

In furtherance, this research will endeavor to provide an analysis of the role of culture and religion in conflict management, highlighting the need for an inclusive approach that promotes peace, understanding, and mutual respect. This research is significant because it sheds light on the complex interplay between culture, religion, and conflict, which has important implications for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners working in the field of conflict resolution.

## STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The genocide committed in Rwanda between Hutus and Tutsis in 1994 was among the worst conflicts of the modern era. Disparities in ethnicity, culture, and religion were used as an excuse for the violence and bigotry that led to this conflict. Culture and religion play a complex and multifaceted role in how conflicts are handled. In the same way that they can foster mutual appreciation and harmonious coexistence, they can also fuel hostility and violence.

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Using verifiable statistics, it is difficult to determine the extent to which culture and religion have contributed to conflicts. Nonetheless, a number of studies indicate that religion is a factor in roughly 60% of armed conflicts worldwide (Center for Systemic Peace, 2021). Similarly, cultural differences contribute to conflicts in numerous regions of the world, particularly in multiethnic societies. Findings from different scholars indicate that some of these conflicts have been resolved using culture and religion as instruments:

1. The conflict between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland was resolved by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which acknowledged the significance of cultural identity and arrangements for power-sharing between the two factions.
2. The conflict between Sudan and South Sudan was resolved in 2005 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which acknowledged the cultural and religious diversity of the two countries and established a power-sharing framework.
3. The 2005 peace agreement in Aceh, Indonesia, was predicated on the recognition of cultural identity and included the implementation of Islamic law in the province.
4. In the early 1990s, the peace process in Mozambique included the recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity and arrangements for power-sharing between the government and opposition groups.
5. The 2006 Nepal peace agreement included provisions for cultural and linguistic diversity, recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples, and the establishment of a federal government.
6. In 2014, the peace agreement in Mindanao, Philippines, acknowledged the significance of cultural identity and autonomy for the predominantly Muslim region.
7. The 2001 Bougainville Peace Agreement resolved the conflict in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea, by recognizing the cultural and political autonomy of the region.

8. The 2003 Liberian peace accord acknowledged the significance of cultural and ethnic diversity and established a framework for power-sharing and reconciliation.
9. In Colombia, the peace process included the recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity, the rights of indigenous peoples, and the formation of a truth commission.
10. The 1996 Guatemalan peace agreement acknowledged the rights of indigenous peoples and established a framework for power-sharing and land reform (Center for Systemic Peace, 2021).

There are many established literatures from numerous authors on how culture has been utilized for the generation and resolutions of conflict and how religion has served same purpose but there is little research on the combined influence of culture and religion towards conflict management. Studies have indicated that religion and culture have been mechanized as a tool for conflict in sub Saharan African and other parts of the globe through ethnic tensions, political instability, propaganda, rejection of international intervention and failure of diplomacy, this has become a pattern in Africa and other regions. This study therefore delves to focus on this pattern of conflict as a knowledge gap, with the use of the Rwandan genocide as a case study to investigate and recommend solutions where necessary.

In furtherance, this study will investigate how various cultural and religious factors interacted with conflict management strategies to bring an end to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. By analysing the benefits and drawbacks of these influences, the study will recommend future conflict management strategies that promote peace, understanding, and mutual respect. This research will help policymakers, scholars, and practitioners in the field of conflict resolution understand the significance of culture and religion in conflict management by investigating this topic.

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## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions provide a clear focus and direction for a research study, ensuring that it is relevant, purposeful, and well-designed. They also guide the selection of appropriate methods and analysis techniques, leading to valid and reliable research outcomes. The following research questions are appropriate for this study:

- 1) How did cultural and religious differences between Hutus and Tutsis contribute to the onset of the conflict, and how were they employed to justify violence?
- 2) What are the advantages and disadvantages of adopting cultural and religious values and norms in conflict resolution, and how may these influences be utilized to promote peaceful coexistence?
- 3) What can be learned from the Hutu-Tutsi conflict regarding the importance of culture and religion in conflict management, and what measures can be taken to prevent future conflicts based on cultural and religious differences?

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To identify the cultural and religious factors that contributed to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict.
- 2) To analyze the advantages and disadvantages of adopting cultural and religious values and norms in conflict resolution, and how may these influences be utilized to promote peaceful coexistence.
- 3) To investigate the impact of inter-ethnic contact on reducing inter-ethnic prejudice and conflict in the context of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, and recommend culturally appropriate conflict management strategies that can be applied in similar contexts to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict.

## METHODOLOGY

This study will, with the use of a case study, explore extant secondary data to address the objectives of the research. This includes an extensive review of literature, with a view to getting information relevant to the study as well, identifying the gaps which we hope to fill.

Furthermore, a descriptive approach would be employed as it best describes characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied, this approach also, best answers the question, “what” is the influence of culture and religion on conflict management and our case study of the Hutu – Tutsi covers the characteristics and phenomenon.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture and religion plays a fundamental role in shaping the conflict management styles and approach in various societies. Ayse and Rufaro (2021), in the research “How cultural differences influence conflict with an organization: A case study of Near East University” asserts that Cultural values and beliefs shape conflict attitudes and, as a result, the preferred conflict management approach. Conflict avoidance and accommodation, for example, are frequently preferred over competition and domination in cultures that value harmony and collectivism. Cultures that value individualism and assertiveness, on the other hand, may prefer a confrontational approach (Ayse and Rufaro, 2021). Understanding the cultural values and beliefs of the parties involved in a conflict is therefore critical in developing effective conflict resolution strategies.

According to David (2022) in his publication “Religion in World Affairs: Its Role in Conflict and Peace”, he states that religion provides individuals and communities with a moral and ethical framework for resolving conflicts. Reconciliation, forgiveness, and compassion are essential for resolving conflicts, and they are promoted by religious teachings. Nevertheless, religious beliefs can also exacerbate conflicts, particularly when used to justify violence and discrimination against other groups (David, 2022). Understanding the religious beliefs of the parties involved in a conflict is therefore essential for the development of effective conflict management strategies.

The role of Faith in cross – cultural conflict resolution, a research conducted by Abdul and Nathan (2020), they opine that cultural

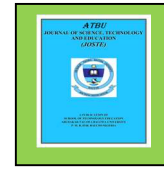
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factors played a significant role in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda. They state that the Hutus and Tutsis' attitudes towards one another were influenced by their disparate cultural values and beliefs. The Tutsi, who were primarily cattle herders, were oppressed in the eyes of the Hutus, who valued egalitarianism. On the other hand, the Tutsi valued hierarchy and thought of themselves as a superior race (Abdul and Nathan, 2020). As a result, the conflict between the two groups was significantly influenced by cultural differences.

Kelvin (2021), in his journal, "The role of religion in conflict and peace building" affirms that in Rwanda, the Catholic Church played a significant role in promoting ethnic divisions between Hutus and Tutsis. The Church hierarchy was overwhelmingly Tutsi, and they used their position to promote Tutsi superiority and Hutu oppression. Furthermore, some Hutu extremists used religious rhetoric to justify their violence against Tutsi. As a result, religion played a multifaceted role in the conflict between the two groups (Kelvin, 2021).

### CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Some key concepts that should be further clarified and defined in the context of this research topic include: Culture, Religion, Conflict, and Conflict Management.

#### **Culture**

Culture is a multifaceted concept that encompasses shared values, beliefs, practices, and norms that shape the way people perceive and interact with the world around them. It can be described as the shared set of beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that characterize a group or society. Culture is learned and transmitted from one generation to another and plays a significant role in shaping individuals' behavior, beliefs, and attitudes. And even though it is dynamic and can change over time, it provides a sense of identity and belonging for individuals and groups. According to Hofstede and Minkov (2020), culture is "a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people

from another". This programming includes both explicit and implicit elements, such as language, customs, and beliefs. In the context of conflict management, culture can play a crucial role in determining how individuals perceive and respond to conflict situations. For Fischer and Shweder (2021), culture shapes individuals' attitudes towards conflict, and understanding cultural differences can help in resolving conflicts. Additionally, culture influences conflict management strategies and approaches, with different cultures having varying approaches to managing conflicts.

#### **Religion**

Religion refers to the system of beliefs, practices, and values associated with the worship of a divine or supernatural being. As noted by Sherkat and Ellison (2018), religion "is a complex social phenomenon that encompasses beliefs, practices, and institutions that involve a relationship with the sacred or transcendent".

Religion plays a significant role in shaping individuals' values, attitudes, and behaviors, and it has been found to influence conflict management in various ways. According to Eidelson and Eidelson (2020), religion can provide a sense of identity, meaning, and purpose, which can help individuals cope with conflict situations. However, religion can also be a source of conflict, with religious differences leading to conflict and violence.

#### **Conflict**

Conflict refers to a situation in which two or more parties perceive that their goals, interests, or values are incompatible and in opposition. According to Wallensteen and Johansson (2021), conflict is "a situation in which one or more parties perceive that their interests are in opposition to the interests of others, and that they are therefore in a state of actual or potential opposition". Conflict can be manifested in various forms, such as interpersonal conflict, intergroup conflict, and international conflict. Conflict can arise from a variety of factors, including cultural and religious differences. Conflict can be managed in a variety of ways,

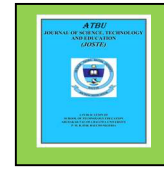
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including through negotiation, mediation, and other forms of conflict resolution. Conflict can have both positive and negative effects, with positive effects including increased creativity, innovation, and growth, while negative effects can include violence, destruction, and loss of life.

### **Conflict Management**

Conflict management refers to the processes and strategies used to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in a peaceful and constructive manner. Rahim (2018) defines conflict management as "the process of identifying and resolving disputes, disagreements, and problems in a manner that is fair, respectful, and effective". Conflict management involves various stages, including conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict peace building. Conflict management strategies and techniques can vary depending on the context and the parties involved in the conflict; but commonly include, communication skills, problem-solving skills, and negotiation skills. According to Longman (2021), effective conflict management requires understanding the root causes of the conflict, building relationships, and using collaborative approaches to address the conflict.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

There are several theories that are related to this study and are essential in the evaluation of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict". However, the following two shall be examined, namely, Just War Theory and Contact Theory.

### **a) Just War Theory**

Just War Theory is a moral framework that provides guidelines for determining when it is justifiable to use military force or go to war, and how these should be conducted. This theory has been developed over centuries by philosophers and theologians, such as St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine of Hippo, Cicero, Hugo Grotius, Michael Walzer, etc., and has been used to justify and critique wars throughout history. The application of this theory to the Hutu-Tutsi conflict requires an examination of whether the violence

that occurred meets the criteria for a just war and whether the conduct of the conflict was consistent with the ethical principles of the theory.

The first criterion of Just War Theory is "jus ad bellum", or the justice of the war itself. This criterion outlines the conditions that must be met for a war to be considered just, such as having a just cause, legitimate authority, and right intention. In his book, "The Ethics of War and Peace: An Introduction to Legal and Moral Issues," Paul Christopher argues that one of the necessary conditions for a just war is that "war must be undertaken with a just cause, such as self-defense or defense of others, against an unjust aggressor" (Christopher, 2019). In the case of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, it is arguable that neither side had a just cause for the war. The conflict arose out of longstanding ethnic tensions, but the specific events that triggered the violence, such as the assassination of President Habyarimana, do not appear to have been sufficient grounds for a just war. Additionally, both sides engaged in acts of aggression and violence that violated the principle of just cause.

The second criterion of Just War Theory is "jus in bello", or the justice of conduct during war. This criterion outlines the ethical principles that must be followed during the conduct of war, such as the principles of proportionality, discrimination, and humanity, meaning that it should only be used against legitimate targets and should not cause unnecessary harm to non-combatants. In their article, "Just War Theory," Seth Lazar and Helen Frowe argue this point when they note that "combatants are required to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, and to avoid causing unnecessary harm to non-combatants" (Lazar & Frowe, 2021). In the context of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, both sides engaged in acts of violence that violated these principles. For example, the Hutus engaged in acts of genocide against the Tutsis, which clearly violated the principle of discrimination. Similarly, the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front engaged in indiscriminate attacks against civilians, which violated the principle of proportionality.

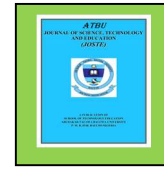
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The third criterion of Just War Theory is "jus post bellum", or the justice of the aftermath of war. This criterion outlines the ethical principles that must be followed in the aftermath of war, such as the principles of retribution, restitution, and rehabilitation. In his book, "The Morality of War," Brian Orend argues that "the aim of jus post bellum is to ensure that peace is not merely the absence of war, but a just and lasting peace" (Orend, 2018). In the case of the Hutus and Tutsi conflict, there were significant challenges in achieving justice and reconciliation in the aftermath of the war. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established to prosecute those responsible for the genocide, but its effectiveness was limited by logistical and political challenges. Additionally, efforts to promote reconciliation between the Hutus and Tutsis have been ongoing but have faced significant obstacles.

In conclusion, the application of Just War Theory to the Hutu and Tutsi conflict highlights the ethical complexities and challenges involved in managing conflicts that are deeply rooted in cultural and religious differences. While Just War Theory can provide a useful framework for evaluating the justice of war, it also underscores the importance of addressing the underlying social, economic, and political factors that contribute to conflict in the first place.

### b) Contact Theory

Contact Theory is a theoretical framework that proposes that intergroup contact can reduce prejudice and conflict between groups. The theory, whose major proponents include: Gordon Allport, Thomas Pettigrew and Linda Tropp, and Miles Hewstone, among others, posits that, under certain conditions, contact between members of different groups can lead to increased understanding, positive attitudes, and decreased prejudice towards the out-group. In the case of the Hutus and Tutsi conflict, contact theory can offer insights into how intergroup contact could be used to reduce prejudice and conflict between the two groups.

Recent research has also highlighted the potential role of religion in shaping the effects of

contact between groups. For example, in a study conducted by Straus (2020) in Italy, it was found that contact with members of different religious groups led to greater positive attitudes towards outgroup members, but only among those who had a secure religious identity. This suggests that the role of religion in shaping intergroup contact effects is complex and requires further investigation.

Another important factor to consider in relation to contact theory and the Hutus and Tutsi conflict is the role of cultural norms and values. As noted by Tropp and Pettigrew (2020), cultural norms and values can influence the way that intergroup contact is perceived and experienced by members of different groups. For example, in cultures where interdependence is valued over independence, intergroup contact may be perceived as a more positive and beneficial experience.

According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2016), contact theory identifies four conditions that need to be met in order for contact between groups to reduce intergroup prejudice and conflict. These conditions include "equal status, common goals, intergroup cooperation, and support of authorities, laws, or customs" (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2016).

In addition to these conditions, the nature of the contact itself may also be important in shaping outcomes. For example, "the quality and nature of the interaction, such as the extent to which it is personal and direct, the amount of cooperation involved, and the perceived similarity of the individuals, are all factors that can impact the effects of contact on intergroup relations" (Petersen, 2018).

In the case of the Hutus and Tutsi conflict, the conditions highlighted by Pettigrew and Tropp were not met. The contact between the two groups was largely negative, with instances of violence, discrimination, and oppression. The Tutsis were seen as the dominant group with higher status, power, and wealth, while the Hutus were marginalized and discriminated against. Cooperation towards a common goal was also absent, with both groups working towards their own interests and

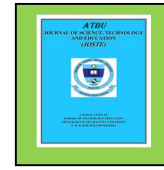
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objectives. Finally, support from authorities was lacking, as the government at the time of the conflict was largely controlled by the Hutus and supported their discriminatory policies towards the Tutsis.

However, it is important to note that contact theory is not a panacea for all intergroup conflicts. It is not a one-size-fits-all approach and may not work in every context. In some cases, contact between groups can actually increase conflict and prejudice if the conditions are not met or if there is a history of violence and mistrust between the groups. Therefore, it is important to carefully consider the context and specific conditions when applying contact theory to conflict management.

### **HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUTUS, TUTSI AND TWA PEOPLE**

Over 2,000 years ago, ancestors of the Hutu and Tutsi settled in what is now Rwanda. Initially, people were organized into small groups based on lineage or loyalty to leaders, contributing to Rwanda's complex state. They shared a sophisticated culture, including the Kinyarwanda language, song, dance, poetry, and common heroes, even during the genocide. Most people in the region were cultivators, while a smaller group of pastoralists, raising cattle, coexisted with them, particularly in different parts of the country. Rwanda's fertile soil and consistent rainfall allowed the population to grow, making it the most densely populated African country by 1994.

By the 18th century, Rwanda became a major state, with rulers measuring power by the number of subjects and cattle. Cattle were used to gain supporters, and military leaders rose to power, particularly under Rwabugiri in the late 19th century. Both cultivators and pastoralists influenced Rwandan institutions, with rulers gaining authority over both military and agricultural matters. By the end of the century, the ruling elite was more defined, with the terms "Tutsi" and "Hutu" emerging: Tutsi referred to the wealthy, elite pastoralists, while Hutu referred to the majority of cultivators.

When Europeans arrived in Rwanda, the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi was becoming more pronounced, though some power structures still included people who would be considered Hutu today. Marriages were typically within each group, leading to physical distinctions between Tutsi (taller, thinner) and Hutu (shorter, stockier). While intermarriage was rare, it increased after the 1959 revolution. The genocide complicated these distinctions, with some people killed because they were mistaken for the other group based on their appearance.

The Twa, a smaller group accounting for 1% of the population, were distinct from both Hutu and Tutsi. Originally forest dwellers, the Twa worked as potters or laborers and were physically smaller. They were discriminated against by both Hutu and Tutsi, with rigid boundaries between them. Although some Twa were victims during the genocide, others became perpetrators. Data on the Twa is limited, so their role in the genocide is not fully explored in this study.

### **COLONIAL INFLUENCE IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM THAT RESHAPED RWANDA**

The Germans and Belgians who took control of Rwanda after the First World War, sought to rule the country at the lowest possible cost and profit. This was done by using the impressive indigenous state, but the colonialists found it difficult to control the multiple hierarchies that had allowed the ruler to maximize his control. In the 1920s, the Belgians began to change the Rwandan state in the name of administrative efficiency, installing state officials in autonomous enclaves to remove the power of the heads of lineages and local small states. They also created a uniform supply of goods and services that local officials could demand, reducing the burden on the population (René, 2021). As a result, the density of administration and the resulting customary burdens on the people decreased little in the central part of the country, while increasing in the north and southwest.

The colonialists in the 1920s and 1930s imposed a series of new demands on the

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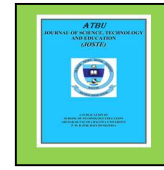
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indigenous people of Rwanda in order to integrate the country into the global economy. These demands included the abolishment of multiple hierarchies, restrictions on residence, and the forced migration of thousands of people. The Europeans also established European-style courts and removed Hutu from positions of power, preventing them from obtaining higher education and imposing a Tutsi monopoly on public life. The only Hutu who were not forced to work were those who were allowed to study in religious seminaries.

### THE TRANSFORMATION ORIGIN OF HUTU AND TUTSI

The Belgians set the stage for future conflict in Rwanda by ensuring a Tutsi monopoly on power, however, they were not so much enacting a "divide and rule" strategy as they were enacting racist convictions. The Tutsis, Hutu, and Twa were thought to be three distinct, long-existing, and internally coherent groups of people, and Europeans assumed they were closer to Europeans in the evolutionary hierarchy and more capable than the other three groups. Europeans were aware of the "Hutu" contribution to Rwanda's development, but initially welcomed these ideas about their superiority, which aligned with their own beliefs. Rwandan poets and historians resisted providing information about Rwanda's past during the early years of colonial rule, but eventually agreed to provide information that would reinforce this bias. The assistance of European clergy and academics in the late 1920s and early 1930s produced a sophisticated and convincing but inaccurate history of Rwanda, while also validating European assumptions (Gérard, 2019).

Twa hunters and gatherers were the area's first and indigenous residents, while the slightly more advanced Hutu cultivators arrived to clear the forest and evict the Twa. From the north, the capable, if ruthless, Tutsic descended and used their superior political and military abilities to defeat them. The most important details of Rwanda's history are the distorted version of the 1920s, which was packaged in Europe and returned to Rwanda, where it was

distributed through schools and seminaries. This led to a high regard for European education among Rwandans and the Tutsi, who were bound to suffer as a result of it. In the 1960s, a new generation of scholars began questioning the assumptions of this history and persuaded other scholars to accept a new version of Rwandan history that demonstrated a more balanced participation of the Hutu and Tutsis in the creation of the state (Theunis, 2020).

However, the Belgians had less success in spreading their ideas outside university circles even in the 1990s. When they decided to limit administrative positions and higher education to Tutsi, they faced the difficult task of determining who belonged to them. Some physical characteristics were identified, but not all. The most important details of the phrases Rwanda, Belgians, Tutsi, and Hutu are that the system of written registration was implemented in the 1930s, with each Rwandan being asked to declare their group identity (Christopher, 2018). This system was implemented by the local government office and printed on identity cards that adult Rwandans were required to carry. However, the introduction of official population registration made it more difficult for the ruling elite to emphasize their separateness and presumed superiority, while Hutu, who was officially excluded from power, began to feel oppressed solidarity.

### THE HUTU REVOLUTION

In the 1950s, Belgium's colonial administrators increased opportunities for Hutu participation in public life, responding to the end of colonial rule and pressure from the United Nations. The Belgians replaced many Tutsi authorities with Hutu leaders, and in 1960-1961, the Hutu political party, Parmehutu, won the first elections, marking the "Hutu Revolution." This revolution was seen as a long struggle against oppressive forces, where Hutu leaders used violence to consolidate power, strengthen unity, and gain respect by attacking perceived enemies. The Hutu benefited both short-term from looted goods and long-term by taking lands from Tutsi who were driven out.

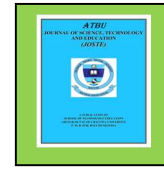
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In 1967, violence against Tutsis ended, but about 20,000 Tutsis were killed, and over 300,000 were displaced. The new government maintained ethnic labels (Hutu, Tutsi, Twa) but used them to discriminate in employment and education. After the revolution, the Tutsi population in Rwanda sharply declined, partly due to massacres, flight, or some re-identifying as Hutus, dropping from 17.5% in 1952 to 8.4% in 1991.

Cultural and religious factors have also played significant roles in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict. The two groups had distinct cultural practices, including different traditional beliefs, which contributed to division. Tutsis were associated with cattle herding, and Hutus with farming, reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices. Social hierarchy was deeply rooted, with Tutsis viewed as the superior group, leading to resentment and discrimination from the Hutu side, while Tutsis felt threatened by the Hutus. The political manipulation of these ethnic identities fueled the conflict.

Religion also contributed to the division. Christianity, introduced by European missionaries, became a defining element of identity for both Hutus and Tutsis. Some Christian leaders were involved in inciting violence during the genocide, while others protected Tutsi refugees. Political leaders used religious differences to mobilize support, further deepening the divide.

Cultural and religious differences influenced the strategies used during the conflict. Some Hutu leaders promoted traditional practices like 'gacaca' courts to settle disputes, while some Tutsi leaders emphasized forgiveness and reconciliation. However, these differences also led to divisive strategies, including hate speech and revenge tactics, deepening the cycle of violence.

### THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HUTUS AND TUTSIS

The cultural and religious differences between the Hutus and Tutsis that contributed to the onset of their conflict and how they were

employed to justify violence are highlighted below.

- 1) **Ethnic identity:** Traditionally, the Hutu and Tutsi peoples were distinguished by occupation, with Tutsis as cattle-owning elites and Hutus as farmers. Over time, this difference evolved into a cultural and ethnic divide, with Tutsis perceived as more "civilized" and "noble" than Hutus.
- 2) **Colonialism:** During the colonial period, Belgium ruled Rwanda and elevated Tutsis to positions of power, causing Hutu resentment. Existing ethnic tensions were exacerbated by the colonial legacy.
- 3) **Social exclusion:** Hutus were systematically excluded from political and economic power, which fueled their resentment of the Tutsi minority.
- 4) **Propaganda:** Political leaders and media outlets disseminated propaganda depicting Tutsis as a threat to Hutu identity, instilling fear and paranoia among the Hutu population.
- 5) **Stereotyping:** By portraying Tutsis as physically and intellectually superior to Hutus, a stereotype was created that reinforced the divide between the two groups.
- 6) **Marginalization:** Tutsis were frequently marginalized and portrayed as outsiders, despite their long history in the region. This contributed to the Tutsi population's sense of alienation and resentment.
- 7) **Ethnic cleansing:** To justify violence against Tutsis, the idea that they were taking over Rwanda and needed to be purged was used.
- 8) **Historical grievances:** The two groups had historical grievances that were used to justify violence against Tutsis, such as the killing of Hutus by Tutsi rulers in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 9) **Political manipulation:** Political leaders exploited the ethnic divide for their own gain, inflaming ethnic tensions in order to gain support and consolidate power.
- 10) **Fear and insecurity:** The region's sense of fear and insecurity made it easier for

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political leaders to manipulate the population and justify violence against Tutsis.

### ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ADOPTING CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS VALUES AND NORMS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Some of the advantages of adopting cultural and religious values and norm in conflict resolution are outlined below;

- 1) Conflicting parties can establish mutual understanding, trust, and cooperation on the basis of shared values and norms. Cultural and religious norms can aid in defining the appropriate behaviour and expectations of conflicting parties, thereby providing a framework for resolving disputes.
- 2) By incorporating cultural and religious values and norms into conflict resolution, solutions can be tailored to the particular needs and preferences of the parties, thereby increasing the likelihood of a lasting peace. Also, by providing a common language and framework for communication and negotiation, cultural and religious norms and values can assist in bridging the gap between conflicting parties.
- 3) By respecting cultural and religious values and norms, conflicting parties can develop relationships based on mutual respect and understanding, which can lead to increased empathy and cooperation.
- 4) By adopting cultural and religious values and norms in conflict resolution, parties to the conflict can draw upon the wisdom and experience of their cultural and religious traditions, which can aid in the development of innovative and effective solutions. Cultural and religious norms and values can provide a sense of continuity and tradition, thereby reducing the sense of displacement and alienation that can lead to conflict.
- 5) By incorporating cultural and religious values and norms into conflict resolution, parties involved in the conflict can increase their understanding of each other's points of view, which can lead to greater tolerance and empathy. Cultural and religious values

and norms can provide individuals and communities with a sense of purpose and direction, which can motivate them to work towards peace.

Some of the disadvantages include;

By reinforcing group identities and boundaries, cultural and religious values and norms can exacerbate existing conflicts and be extremely divisive. Also, the rigidity and inflexibility of cultural and religious values and norms can make it difficult to find creative and innovative solutions to conflicts.

Through cultural and religious values and norms, conflicting parties can reinforce their respective stereotypes and prejudices, making it difficult to build trust and understanding. It can be challenging to find common ground when cultural and religious norms and values are highly subjective and vary greatly between individuals and communities.

By relying too heavily on cultural and religious values and norms, parties to the conflict may overlook other important factors, such as economic and political factors, which may be contributing to the conflict and those in authority can use cultural and religious values and norms as a tool for manipulation and control, which can undermine the legitimacy of the conflict resolution process.

Even in the face of compelling evidence and arguments, cultural and religious values and norms can be deeply ingrained and resistant to change as conflicting parties can overlook the significance of individual rights and liberties, which can result in oppressive or unjust outcomes. Also, cultural and religious norms and values can be used to justify violence and conflict, especially when they are used to justify aggression or discrimination against others.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the case study of the Hutu and Tutsi conflict, the following conflict avoidance and management strategies are recommended for situations where culture and religion may be contributing factors:



- i. Encourage intercultural and interfaith dialogue: Promoting dialogue and communication between different cultural and religious groups can help to foster understanding, respect, and empathy, which are essential for preventing and managing conflicts.
  - ii. Education and raising awareness: Education about cultural and religious diversity can assist in dispelling myths, stereotypes, and prejudices that contribute to conflict. Education can also aid in fostering tolerance and comprehension of various cultural and religious practises.
  - iii. Encourage inclusive governance: Ensuring that all members of society, regardless of their cultural or religious background, have a voice in governance and decision-making can assist in addressing the power imbalances that frequently fuel conflict. An example of inclusive governance that may have reduced any chances of the conflict is in the establishment of rotational power sharing system which ensures all tribes are represented in important public offices.
  - iv. Establishing conflict resolution mechanisms that are accessible, transparent, and impartial can aid in preventing the escalation of conflicts to violence. Mediation, negotiation, and arbitration are examples of these mechanisms. These conflict resolution mechanisms will take into cognizance effective alternative dispute resolution strategies which engenders the socio-cultural and religious leanings of the different groups, and to which they are loyal. The ADR mechanism should be entrenched in the constitution as an intricate part.
  - v. Many conflicts have economic and social causes, such as poverty, inequality, and marginalization, which must be addressed. Addressing the fundamental issues underlying socio-economic problems through policies and programmes to address these issues can help reduce the tensions that contribute to conflict.
- Effectively, conflicts will increasingly become less palatable with improved socio-economic status of the people.
- vi. Encourage continued reconciliation, reintegration, rehabilitation, reconstruction and healing. Conflict frequently leaves behind deep scars and wounds that need to be healed. Promoting reconciliation and healing through programmes that facilitate dialogue, forgiveness, and the reestablishment of relationships can contribute to the establishment of lasting peace. Through continued inter-marriage, inter-trades, peace building and peace management programmes (through annual national awards for peace for instance), social cohesion could be built.
- Summarily, conflict avoidance and management in situations where culture and religion may be contributing factors necessitate a holistic approach that addresses the underlying factors that contribute to conflict while promoting understanding, dialogue, and reconciliation.

## CONCLUSION

The Hutu-Tutsi conflict is a complicated issue that cannot be attributed solely to culture or religion. However, it is clear that cultural and religious factors influenced the conflict. Culturally, the Hutu and Tutsi were distinguished by their social status, with the Tutsi traditionally considered to be the ruling class. This created a power imbalance between the two groups, fueling resentment and conflict.

Both Hutu and Tutsi were predominantly Christian, but there were also significant numbers of Muslims and traditional religious adherents. During the conflict, however, religion was used to mobilize people and fuel violence. In terms of conflict resolution, the cultural and religious factors that contributed to the conflict had to be considered. Recognizing the role of culture and religion in the conflict, as well as addressing the underlying issues that led to the violence, was necessary for the reconciliation process.

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Overall, the Hutu-Tutsi conflict highlights the complex interplay of culture, religion, and conflict, as well as the importance of including these factors in conflict resolution efforts.

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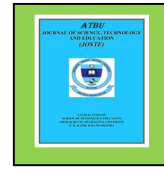
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