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SOCIAL CAPITAL and the RWANDAN GENOCIDE **A Micro-Level Analysis**

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Abstract: This paper applies the theory of social capital to the unfolding of genocide in a Rwandan community located 50 km south of the capital. Using the concepts defined by Putnam, Coleman and Woolcock, we find that the activities of political parties, civil war in the north of the country and the use of coercion and violence inside the community weakened existing ties between members of the two ethnic groups, Hutu and Tutsi. Within these groups however, social ties were strengthened to a degree where collective action against the minority group became a feasible option. In this process, we analyse the role of a small group of key players in the community and link their role with their political and economic status. The genocide is thus situated and interpreted in the social fabric of a Rwandan community. The paper is the result of intensive field work in Rwanda.

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1. Introduction

From April to June 1994, in a matter of less than 100 days, over 800,000 Rwandans were wantonly murdered at the hands of their own countrymen. There is a dire need to delve into the inner-workings of how and why people, alone or in groups, could be moved to kill their neighbors, friends and even family members. Without such investigations, few advances can be made to understand when it could happen again or to prevent it from recurring in Rwanda or other places where genocide has already obliterated portions of the population.

Much research has been produced in the past eleven years about the Rwandan genocide, but much of it has primarily focused on the macro- or meso-level of government and cities. While such an approach is greatly needed, academia has tended to neglect micro-level investigations. Genocide analyses have also been inclined to focus on the psychological, societal and political motivations for the killings. We will demonstrate that the literature on social capital theory offers a useful paradigm for genocide studies as well. In this contribution, we intend to provide a local-level analysis of the participation in the genocide, specifically in the remote cellules of Akatwa and Nyagasera¹, Rwanda, where one of the authors lived for three months. The analysis will focus on the local organization of the genocide at the cellule (village) level. Through the build-up of bonding social capital and the politicization of such capital among extremist Hutu, we will seek to explain how the genocide was able to be carried out at such a rapid pace with tragic consequences.

2. Social Capital Theory

In researching post-conflict and development theory, a recurring buzzword from the last decade is the term “social capital.” In general, this concept is used to refer to the “norms, values, and social relations that bond communities together, as well as the bridges between communal groups (civil society) and the state” (Colletta and Cullen, 2000). Many scholars defer to social capital theory in their studies of economic development, village organization, social mobility and networking. Robert Putnam (1993), the first scholar to popularize the theory, writes that social capital consists of “the features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate

¹ Note, the names of these cellules have been changed to maintain the anonymity of the interviewees.

coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”. His work focuses on horizontal associations, those within the community, and within this concept he considers trust and norms as the means by which societies are regulated. Networks are the means to improve the efficiency of social organization. Social capital thus facilitates coordination and cooperation for the mutual benefit of the members of the association.

James Coleman’s (1988) definition of social capital is broader than Putnam’s. Coleman introduces vertical associations to the mix, defining social capital as a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of the social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors within the structure. Vertical relationships are characterized by both hierarchy and an unequal power distribution among members. Consequently, while social capital may be beneficial to some, it can also be useless or harmful to others. Coleman’s perspective on social capital therefore encompasses both micro- and macro-level horizontal and vertical relationships, which is essential to understanding the Rwandan genocide and how politicization of social capital leads to the violence.

Michael Woolcock (1998) takes the theory a bit farther by breaking social capital into four categories: strong ties, weak ties, formal institutions, and state-community interactions. Strong ties refer to those between family member, neighbors and friends. Woolcock sees these strong ties as primarily based on kinship, ethnicity, and religion. They act in the same way as what Putnam (1993) called “bonding social capital”. This kind of social capital brings likeminded people together, such as Catholics in the church, workers in the union, or doctors in a medical association. These associations serve common interests and strengthen the bonds between peers.

Weak ties, in Woolcock’s (1998) definition, are those with the outside community and between communities, also known as linkages. People who work in jobs outside of their own communities can serve as these weak ties, bringing together and connecting those from different communities who would not ordinarily interact, in effect acting as a cross-cutting mechanism. In Putnam’s (1993) context, this is termed “bridging social capital” when it realizes and strengthens relationship between people who are not necessarily similar to each other. The people who act as weak links in a community are those who could potentially foster bridging social capital.

The formal institutions in Woolcock's (1998) theory are more of the macro-level, vertical associations put forth by Coleman (1988) and can encompass state bodies and their capability to function. These hold a great deal of influence over the political and social environment, especially the ability to have a thriving civil society. Finally, state-community interaction relates to the extent and nature of the state's involvement in the community (Colletta and Cullen, 2000).

Social Capital has been viewed as an overwhelmingly positive concept throughout the literature of the past two decades. Research generally concludes that social capital enhances cooperation among members for mutual benefit, helps increase economic growth, serves as an information sharing device, helps job seekers find jobs, acts as an insurance mechanism, and even helps people or communities lift themselves out of poverty. Moreover, it can enhance or facilitate cooperation among members of an organization/association. While admittedly these all can be results of high levels of social capital, little research has investigated social capital and its role in violent conflict. Most would agree, "violent conflict within a state weakens its social fabric" (Colletta and Cullen, 2000). In Rwanda; however, where relations and trust between Hutu and Tutsi undoubtedly eroded, it is also possible to see how social interactions, dynamics, networks, bonds and trust were actually strengthened, bolstered and reinforced among the many Hutu. More interesting though, is to look at how the politicization of social capital happens in the context of the Rwandan genocide and how this pushes the conflict into extreme violence.

For the purpose of this research project, the definitions of social capital set forth by Putnam (1993), Coleman (1988), and Woolcock (1998) will be used. This allows us to investigate how social capital was affected during the Rwandan genocide. In order to learn about the nature of both bonding and bridging social capital, we considered the role and functions of associations in Akatwa and Nyagasera. These associations took on various forms; one type being local agricultural organizations whose members managed a collective field, harvested the field together and shared the collective benefits of the crops. The *tontines*, or rotating savings groups, were another type of association whose members contributed a small amount of money each month, which was given to each member on an alternating basis (Uvin, 1998). Looking at the vertical associations between the administration (communal, sectoral, and cellular) and Akatwa and Nyagasera, we considered

how these administrative structures interacted with their respective communities. Additionally, in both cellules, there was the state sponsored agricultural project known as the *paysannat*. Each family was allotted a certain plot and had to grow a number of coffee trees. They had to sell their output to the government owned and run coffee company (Save the Children, 2000).

The main question in this part of the research is whether social capital was affected by the genocide. It can be seen in this research that much organization and cooperation were needed for carrying out the genocide; this would preclude the necessity of social capital. Bonding social capital was reinforced and strengthened within the Hutu in the communities, which was hastened with the rise of political parties into daily life. We investigate the political transformation and the perverted use of to the social capital to bolster Hutu cooperation. Much of this perversion can be tied to the weak links in Akatwa and Nyagasera, those who had the potential to bridge members of various communities or ethnic groups together but instead worked to foster Hutu power.

3. Methodology

This research was part of a larger project on the local level dynamics of genocide.² Rwanda's governmental structure is extremely organized and hierarchical, so in order to begin the research, I (Shanley) visited officials at each level of the local administration to explain the purpose for moving to the field (See Figure 1). For the next three months, the translator and I lived in a remote village between Akatwa and Nyagasera, in the Southeast region of the Gitarama province, Ngali sector, and a crossroads between Rwanda and Burundi³. In this time frame, I conducted fifty interviews, each averaging two hours.

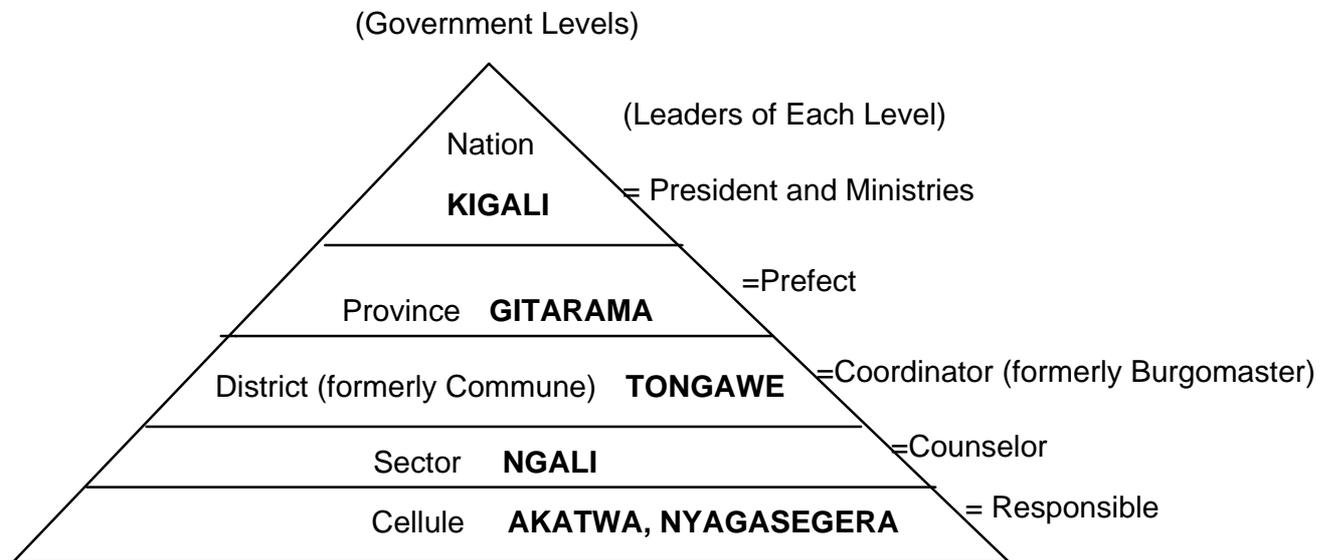
The research was mainly focused on the happenings in the cellules of Akatwa and Nyagasera from 1990 until after the genocide in 1994. However, the cellules' activities before, during, and after the genocide cannot be considered mutually exclusive and must be analyzed looking at the events of the sector as well. Akatwa's story cannot be understood without Nyagasera's events and neither

² Shanley Pinchotti was a team member of this research project and Philip Verwimp coordinated it.

³ As it stands today, Ngali sector's territorial boundaries remain unchanged since the pre-genocide days. The only difference is that it was once part of the Tongawe Commune, which now is called the Tongawe District after a recent administrative reorganization of the country. The same seven cellules remain intact: Akatwa, Nyagasera, Rugindo,

can be written about without discussing the entire Ngali sector.

Figure 1: Administrative Organization of the State and the Leaders at Each Level⁴



Because the genocide remains a sensitive topic, it was essential to gain trust and be engaged in daily activities. At the beginning of every interview, Shanley and the translator had to assure the interviewees that we were not from the judiciary or the government. We explained the purpose of our research, guaranteed anonymity and promised that the information would never be shared with anybody else. Under these terms all of our respondents agreed to cooperate with us.

At the beginning of each interview, a list of 10 general questions were asked pertaining to biographical information, number of children, occupation at present time, occupation during the genocide, whether they owned land, worked on others fields, membership in tontines, membership in agricultural associations, *umuganda*, and whether they lived in the *paysannat*. As the comfort level between ourselves and the interviewee grew, we then began to pose more detailed questions about the genocide. We would write down the translation after every few sentences that were

Urgwongwe, Togende, Mzungambu, and Sussenge.

⁴ There is also one more level below the cellule. This was comprised of ten households grouped together and led by a Nyambakumi. Interviewees never referred to this level of organization in reference to the genocide and it could not be ascertained as to whether the Nyambakumis played an important role. It is also important to note that all place names have been changed.

spoken. After a day of interviews, we returned to our hut and rewrote all the interviews by candlelight.

Working in the two cellules proved to be very different experiences. Akatwa was a much more open and welcoming cellule. The Responsible was a survivor himself, who was elected to this position by the people after the genocide, and it seemed that there was a feeling of reconciliation happening in Akatwa. In Nyagasera, conversely, the Responsible, who was known to be a leader in the genocide, remained in power for the ten years following the killings and had only recently lost his re-election one week before our arrival. This contributed to a very suspicious and uncomfortable atmosphere in the cellule, with many interviewees afraid to speak about what had happened. Fortunately, we were able to meet some very courageous people willing to share the details of such emotional events in their lives. The dichotomy of experiences allowed a more balanced point of view for this research and an understanding of the situation that still afflicts the country at present time.

4. Brief Overview of the 1994 Genocide

To this day, Rwandan history remains debated upon by scholars and Rwandans themselves. Most of the interviewees that we spoke with reported that Hutus and Tutsis lived together with no problems. While scholars doubt that the situation was ever quite this idyllic, Hutu and Tutsi had, by most reports, existed symbiotically throughout the decades. Hostilities existed from the pre-colonial days when a type of feudal system was in place. Tutsi were considered pastoralists and rulers whereas Hutu were cultivators who worked the land of their Tutsi lords. But, these were socio-economic labels rather than rigid racial identities. In fact, a Hutu could become a Tutsi if s/he obtained land or cows (Newbury, 1988). It wasn't until the Belgian colonialists instituted an identification system based on ethnicity that one can speak of a rigid ethnic categorization of Hutu and Tutsi. Historians have seen that due to the Belgians preference towards the Tutsis, they became the elite class in society. Tutsi were allowed to attend schools and hold all the ruling positions in the government. Hutu were relegated to the lowest class in society even though they made up 85 percent of the population. (Mamdani, 2000)

In the mid-1950s, under influence of the Catholic Church, the Belgian administration granted greater rights to the Hutu. In 1959, the Hutu Revolution occurred, which resulted in the Party for Emancipation of the Hutu People (Parmehutu) taking over the country in a violent overthrow of the ruling Tutsi. When the Belgians left Rwanda in 1961, the Hutu had already gained control and removed the Tutsis from their favored status. Thousands of Tutsi fled to bordering countries and formed rebel groups, namely in Burundi, Uganda and Zaire (now DRC), which aimed to reclaim Rwanda for the Tutsi. In 1962 the country gained formal independence under the first Hutu president Gregoire Kayibanda, and this takeover was accompanied by mass killings of Tutsi. Then in 1973, General Habyarimana, a powerful Hutu leader from Northern Rwanda, took over power after a series of government sponsored purges of Tutsi from schools, jobs and administrations. This led to a new exodus of Tutsi to neighboring countries. Until the mid-eighties, the Rwandan economy performed better than the other economies in sub-Saharan Africa, resulting in the supply of mass loyalty to Habyarimana. However, the situation worsened from 1986 onwards and outdated economic policies could not turn the tide. The 1987-1989 period was marked by drought, crop failure and a decline of the coffee price on world markets (Verwimp, 2003).

In October of 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi rebel group from Uganda and off-spring of refugees, made an advance into the northern region of Rwanda and Habyarimana sent military forces to quell this attack. Tutsi within Rwanda were arrested and killed, accused of collaborating with the Tutsi rebels. From 1992-1994, the RPF continued its attacks in Rwanda, and as a result, hate policies towards the Tutsi were expanded. Hutu militias, known as the *Interahamwe*, were being trained in the country to kill the “traitor” Tutsi. Under pressure from the international community, President Habyarimana reluctantly signed a peace accord with the RPF, granting them political and military representation in Rwanda. On his flight back from signing the peace accords in Arusha, Tanzania on April 6, 1994, Habyarimana’s plane was shot down and he died. To this day, the debate continues as to who shot the plane down. Hutu extremists immediately blamed the RPF, while the RPF maintained its innocence. The RPF contends that the Hutu extremists were angry at Habyarimana for having negotiated a peace deal with the RPF and that they wanted to kill him to start the genocide. Either way, government forces and the *Interahamwe* began the killings immediately following the news of Habyarimana’s death (Uvin, 1998).

Over the course of the next three months, approximately 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were slaughtered all over the country. Many Hutu were willing participants in the killings, but others were forced to kill when they tried to resist the extremist Hutu's orders. They looted and burned Tutsi houses, stole their cows and ate all their crops. In some instances, neighbors killed neighbors, fathers killed their own wives and children, and friends turned on each other all in the name of Tutsi elimination. (Des Forges, 1999).

The RPF eventually gained control over the country by late June 1994 and pushed the Hutu extremist forces outside of the country. Their takeover resulted in a mass exodus of Hutu refugees to bordering countries as they feared reprisals by the RPF. At the same time, Tutsi exiles who had been living outside of the country, some since 1959, all came streaming back into Rwanda. All this cross migration added to chaos that the mass looting and pillaging had left. By 1996, many Hutu refugees still had not returned to Rwanda. Consequently, the RPF government forced their return from refugee camps in the DRC, seeking to eliminate the border insecurity problems. One million Hutu returned from Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire (Prunier, 1997).

The last eleven years have been a slow and arduous process of recovery for the Rwandan people. Approximately 100,000 accused participants in the genocide remain in local and national jails. The International Tribunal in Arusha has tried and sentenced a number of leading perpetrators, other suspects currently awaiting trial. By 2003, the economy recovered to its pre-genocide level. Over 60 percent of the country lives in poverty, continuing to struggle with myriads of post-conflict issues. The threat from ex-*Interahamwe* who escaped into Burundi and the DRC still remains as well and violence continues in the border regions.

5. Micro-Level Analysis⁵

5.1 The Nature of Social Capital in Akatwa and Nyagasera

To provide for a clearer picture of the change in social capital in Akatwa and Nyagasera during the genocide, it was essential to understand how the daily lives, interactions, associations, and organization of the communities worked in the decades preceding the violence.⁶ A majority of the population were farmers, with only a handful of people who worked non-farming jobs, such as a teacher or store owner. Among the farmers, many worked together in agricultural associations in order to gain more money. There were mixed marriages between Hutu and Tutsi. It was nearly impossible for teenagers to attend secondary school since none existed in all of Ngali sector. There were only two primary schools in Ngali, neither one in Akatwa nor Nyagasera, so children from differing cellules went to the same school. The same was true for churches, where people of the various cellules were able to meet one another at a common church.

The social organization of Ngali provided potential for bridging social capital among the people of Akatwa and Nyagasera. This potential existed primarily in agricultural associations and *tontines*. Agricultural associations were groups of farmers who culled their own resources to harvest a field together. Most of these agricultural associations obtained their communal land from the government. Each member paid a fee to join and had to work on the association's field one to two times a week. Then they took the association's harvest to the market and sold it as a collective. With the profit from the market and money from the membership fees, they deposited a portion in a rural bank and reinvested another portion back into the association in the form of farming equipment, a storage facility, or even a party for the members. *Tontines*, known to Rwandans as *icybinas*, were different from agricultural associations in that they dealt solely with money. A group of ten to twelve people got together and each paid 1,000 to 1,500 Rwandan Francs (RWF)

⁵ All information in this section was compiled from interviews taken from July to September 2004. Only stories of events that could be substantiated by three or more witnesses were considered valid. All names were changed to protect the identity of the interviewees.

⁶ Before the fateful beginning on April 6, 1994 there were approximately 650 people in Akatwa, of which 370 were Hutu, 200 Tutsi, and 80 Twa. The Twa were only one percent of Rwanda's population and did not play a specific role in the genocide in Akatwa. Most of the Twa in Akatwa kept to themselves and were considered "stupid" by a majority of the Hutu and Tutsi interviewees. Nyagasera's population was less ethnically balanced. With a population of 1,000, there were zero Twa, 27 Tutsi, 973 Hutu. Of the 27 Tutsi, 25 of them belonged to the two Tutsi families living in Nyagasera and the other remaining two had moved to the cellule for marriage.

each month to one member. Then each month another member of the *icybina* received the money. Over half of the interviewees had been or were currently involved in one or more forms of these organizations. In Akatwa and Nyagasera, there were eight agricultural associations and more than 20 *icybinas* comprised of people from various cellules in Ngali. These offered many chances for contact and cooperation among the people of Ngali. By all accounts, membership in both of these groups always was ethnically mixed and no one reported any exclusionary tactics before 1990.

The vertical associations were very well organized given the hierarchical structure of the State. This rang true even at the cellule and sector levels. There was an elected counselor for the sector, and each cellule had a responsible who headed a committee of four members. Those who were elected were usually the few who were educated.⁷ The activities of the sector and cellule administrations were well organized and integrated. Each week the counselor of Ngali held meetings with the responsables and the cellule committees to discuss events in the sector, problems, and tasks needed for the commune, namely the *umuganda*. *Umuganda* was the collective work required by the government for all citizens in Rwanda but organized at the local level. (Mamdani, 2000) In Ngali during the meetings with the counselor, responsables and cellule committees, the counselor himself made the final decisions regarding the *umuganda* for the week. On Tuesdays, all youth reported to the sector office for the *umuganda*; on Wednesdays all the men came; and the women were assigned to Thursdays. The counselor himself told the people what their duties were for that day. The organization of *umuganda* showed a strong state interaction in the community, thereby strengthening the vertical associations present on the local level (Coleman, 1988; Woolcock, 1998). Additionally, these political figures in the sector and cellule can be seen as weak links, working together in intra-communal meetings, bridging their respective cellules together.

Another important aspect of Ngali's state-community interaction and levels of vertical associations was that cellules were a *paysannat*, which was a coffee-growing program instituted during President Kayibanda's rule (Save the Children, 2000). Each family was allotted two hectares of land on which they had to grow coffee trees, maintaining them according to a rule of standards set

⁷ The counselor of Ngali sector Francois Gohinga was a Hutu who was a former teacher and came from a powerful family in Akatwa. Head of the Akatwa, Responsible Fidele Rudabo, was a Tutsi farmer and his cellule committee was mixed with one Tutsi and three Hutu representatives. In Nyagasera, however, Responsible Egide Mawiza and all the cellule committee were all Hutu.

by the government. When the people collected the coffee beans from their trees, they had to sell it to OCIR, the national coffee company of Rwanda, at a fixed price per kilogram. In order to instruct the people of *paysannat*, the administration appointed an *agronome* for the entire commune and agricultural monitors who were assigned to three cellules at a time. Those who did not follow this careful maintenance were punished with a fine of 100 RWF per tree. The *agronome* and agricultural monitors came two to three times a month to check on the coffee trees and to punish delinquent coffee growers. Consequently, the *agronome* and agricultural monitors had a lot of sway and power over the lives of the people in Ngali. They were chosen based on their ability to read and having had at least a primary education, which made them admired within their communities. The *agronome* and agricultural monitors acted as weak links, traveling between cellules and interacting with all people throughout the region.

All these examples of interactions would have us believe that there were high levels of social capital through horizontal and vertical associations. However, before making such an assertion, the strength and quality of the social capital needs to be identified. Bridging social capital between Hutu and Tutsi often occurred through inter-marriage, ethnically mixed membership in agricultural associations or tontines, and cooperation during the *umuganda*. But the bridging social capital between the Hutus and Tutsis was weak. It is important to realize that such associations between the residents of Akatwa and Nyagasera were always co-opted by the heavy vertical integrations coming from the state down to the local level. For example, the agricultural associations could be seen as a burgeoning of civil society in the cellules, but they were completely dependent on the government to allot them a piece of communal land and could have their land taken away at any time. During the *umuganda*, the cellule members were all working together, regardless of ethnicity, but the state was always the mediator, demanding that everyone come and do his/her part. As with *umuganda* and the *paysannat*, the government instituted punishments in the way of fines. This only further entrenched the state's involvement in their daily lives, thereby giving the government the ability to direct and control the networks that existed between the people. In this way, we will see how the social capital is able to be manipulated through politicization from these vertical integrations.

5.2 Co-option of Social Capital

The conversion of social capital began taking shape in 1990 when the RPF entered Rwanda from Uganda and made their first attack in Umutara. Habyarimana's forces battled the RPF troops on the border and eventually won, driving the RPF back across the border. The victory was decisive when General Rwigema of the RPF was killed. Although the Presidential soldiers won, the government became nervous at RPF's strength and ability to infiltrate the country (Des Forges, 1999). At that time, some Tutsi families in Rwanda had sons who went and joined the RPF. In both Akatwa and Nyagasera, interviewees named five families with sons who disappeared in 1990 and were known to be a part of the RPF. It was even mentioned a few times in these interviews that some young Hutu men from Ngali also left to join the RPF. But in general, the suspicions fell upon the Tutsi families. They were accused of sending money to the RPF and supporting them from the inside. Even Hutu men who married Tutsi women were said to be financially aiding the RPF. The government's fear of losing power to the RPF was transferred to the populace through messages on Radio Rwanda and local authorities. This, in turn, reignited dormant fear among Hutu resonating from the years before 1959 and heightened their suspicions towards Tutsi in their communities. Many interviewees noted that some people in Akatwa and Nyagasera began referring to their Tutsi neighbors as *inyenzi*, cockroaches, *inzoka*, snakes, and *ibytso*, spies. "People were afraid that the RPF would enter the country," said an ex-prisoner from Akatwa. "Radio Rwanda was talking about the *inyenzi* killed by the soldiers and everyone was thinking that the *inyenzi* were not people but animals with long ears and a tail. The radio said that they looked like this."⁸ When the radio announced that General Rwigema had died, a group of farmers in Nyagasera went to bury a banana tree as an effigy of his body and then had a celebration.

Formal organization of Tutsi house searches began when the communal authorities started giving orders after 1990, a move that would strengthen social capital among the participating Hutu. In Nyagasera, the Burgomaster Regis Babgabo, sent a policeman to Mwizema's house, a Tutsi man with two wives and ten children. This family had one son who had left to fight with the RPF and when word of this reached the Commune, orders were given for the policeman Celestin to go and search this family. Celestin arrived there one morning and beat Jean, another son in the family. He

was beaten so badly that he died. Eloise, a Tutsi survivor in Akatwa, reported having had his house searched twice by a group of young boys who forced themselves into his house looking for Tutsi spies. They had been ordered and organized by one of the local *commerçants* who had ties to Babgabo, the Burgomaster.

Although strong expressions of anti-RPF sentiments seemed to be stirred up, the bonding social capital among Hutus was not strong enough at this point to create widespread ethnic hatred and separation since the RPF advance was quickly quelled. Many interviewees admitted that tensions increased; however, there was no thought to dividing their communities along ethnic lines at that time. As one Tutsi woman in Nyagasera admitted, “They called us *inzoka* and *inkotanyi* (RPF soldiers) but there was not a major problem. The big trouble started in 1991.”⁹ This was the initiation of dividing Hutu and Tutsi by rekindling discordant sentiments. Full-fledged organization of these divisions didn’t begin right away, but as the country opened up to multi-party politics, the political manipulation of social capital was galvanized.

5.3 Social Capital and Political Parties

“In 1991, the different political parties came. Everyone joined, men, women and children. They were always singing and dancing saying that *Rukokoma* would solve everything because it removed Habyarimana’s power, said one Hutu woman in Nyagasera attempting to explain the beginning of the political parties and dominance of the *Mouvement Democratique Republicain* (MDR).¹⁰ Previously Habyarimana had ruled the country as the head of the *Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour le Development* (MRND) and subsequently, every Rwandan citizen was considered part of this party (Des Forges, 1999). When the decision to allow other political parties was announced, organization of opposition parties and meetings quickly began. People identified themselves according to which party s/he belonged. The MDR, an updated version of the 1959 Parmehutu party, gained the largest following in all of Ngali sector, quickly becoming the most important party in both Nyagasera and Akatwa. Referring back to this revolutionary period,

⁸ Interview September 23, 2004, Akatwa.

⁹ Interview August 26, 2004, Nyagasera.

¹⁰ *Rukokoma* was the name of the Arusha sessions in 1991 that eventually led to the agreement to open up the Rwandan one-party government of Habyarimana, clearing the way for a multi-party system (Africa Watch, 1992).

the Parmehutu had been the party of Kayibanda and had its stronghold in Gitarama Province, promoting an anti-Tutsi ideology. It was therefore only natural that so many people in Ngali joined this party again in 1991 and it became labeled as the Hutu party. Other parties were formed, such as the *Parti Social Democrate* (PSD), *Coalition pour la Defense de la Republique* (CDR), and *Parti Liberal* (PL). The PL was referred to as the Tutsi party that had ties to the RPF. In addition to these new parties, the MRND continued its existence as well, and carried a small but powerful contingency in Ngali, including the Counselor of the sector Gohinga.

In 1991, we see the politicization of social capital beginning, as bonding capital formed along party lines. At this time, bonding social capital wasn't strengthened necessarily among those Hutu who hated Tutsi because in the early stages, the MDR's message wasn't initially focused solely on Hutu dominance. Instead, the organization of bonding social capital culminated in those Hutu who adamantly supported the removal of Habyarimana from the presidency. The country had become increasingly poor and it was difficult to make ends meet, especially for people in Ngali when coffee prices began dropping dramatically in 1991 (Verwimp, 2003). "Habyarimana and the MRND were said to give all development money to the Abacyiga region, which were the areas of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, Habyarimana's hometown region," said the current Responsible of Nyagasera, who admitted to having been at some MDR meetings as a teenager.¹¹ As a result, the MDR gave hope to the people that they could bring great change in the way of wealth and higher living standards. Joseph, a *commercant* in Ngali, explained the MDR in terms of *mandazi*, which are fried sweet dough balls frequently eaten in Rwanda:

"The MDR's objective was to show people only the good things to get them to join and to hide the bad. For example, if I make one ball of *mandazi* with eggs, fresh milk, and lots of sugar, and let some people have a piece, then they will tell everyone that I have the best *mandazi*. In reality, I am making all the rest with just flour and water, but everyone will come to buy it and it won't be true. This is how the MDR worked. They promised running water, electricity, hospitals, and new schools when they won the election. They even took the people to the place to show them where the water would run. It was all lies."¹²

The MDR held meetings within the cellules, at the Ngali sector office, the commune office in Bikele, and even in Gitarama ville. When the meetings were in Gitarama or Bikele, sometimes the *commercants* or wealthier leaders who had cars would transport some of the people to these meetings. During meetings in Akatwa or Nyagasera, people would gather outside in the center of

¹¹ Interview August 24, 2004, Nyagasera.

the cellules, carrying flags, wearing their party hats and t-shirts, marching through the streets singing, dancing, and chanting that they would throw Habyarimana out of government. Leaders from the commune and even prefecture level came to some of the sector and cellule meetings to instruct the local leaders on how to conduct the meetings and to give even greater sensitization to the people in the party. Each week there was a meeting at the sector office for the MRND and MDR, but they had to have their meetings on different days or else fighting would break out between members of the two parties. As the ex-responsible of Nyagasera noted, “Many people joined political parties here in 1991, and it was like teams. It changed their personalities and they could not get along with people in other parties. People who used to be good friends and drank together fought against each other and became enemies when they joined opposite parties.”¹³ Members of the MDR had to wear clothes that were black and red, so they could identify each other easily. During the MDR’s weekly marches in Akatwa and Nyagasera, someone who crossed their path and who wasn’t wearing the clothes, the hat, or had a flag would be beaten.

From 1991, bonding social capital within the members of the MDR reached new levels as their party continued to consolidate its power in Akatwa and Nyagasera. Vertical involvement came when the leaders began ordering *kubohozas*, an act of forcing people to join the party (Des Forges, 1999). A *kubohoza* was performed by sending a group of party members to one person’s house who the leaders wanted to join the MDR. In the mildest of cases, this chosen person was given a hat and a card, indicating that he should join the meetings. Some interviewees reported that once they were given the hat and card, then the *kubohoza* group left their houses. However, many interviewees also told of more violent *kubohozas* that involved beatings and continual harassment until they agreed to join the party and wear the hat. The most extreme *kubohoza* was done to the Counselor of Ngali Gohinga, who remained a member of the MRND until late 1992. One day a group of MDR members was driving a car to the commune meeting, but first stopped at his house to try and force him to come to the meeting. They parked the car in front of the counselor’s house, began cursing at him and asking him to come out of the house. When he showed himself to them, they beat him and forced a hat on his head. He refused to get in the car with the group and they eventually left, but not before threatening his death the next time he refused. This same incident

¹² Interview September 2, 2004, Akatwa.

¹³ Interview August 23, 2004, Akatwa.

was repeated one month later, and at that time Gohinga accepted the offer to join the MDR and reluctantly went to the meeting in Bikele.

6. Social Capital and Genocide

6.1 *The Weak Links of Akatwa and Nyagasera*

“Leaders were the intelligent people in the cellules, sector, or commune. They could read, write, or were rich so the people followed them,” said one interviewee.¹⁴ These leaders were integral to the rapid spread of the MDR’s popularity in Akatwa and Nyagasera. These strong personalities organized the meetings and gave announcements for when the next congregation would be. With jobs that afforded them a higher status in society, such as *commercants*, teachers, or the *agronome* and agricultural monitors, they were the people who could have been the weak links between communities. Since they worked outside of their own communities, they had the potential to foster bridging social capital. Instead, they manipulated their positions in the communities to easily disseminate the party ideology to Hutu inhabitants in all the cellules as well as party paraphernalia of hats, t-shirts, and flags. Knowing how the people were already accustomed to high levels of social organization, these leaders were able to pervert this towards the organization of party meetings, demonstrations, and *kubohozas*. It is important to note their positions of power in the pre-genocide period because, in most cases, they used their dominant positions to become leaders during the genocide as well.¹⁵ (See Figure 2 in appendix)

One of the most influential leaders for all of Ngali was Farrad Nwayo, a vice prefet in Ntarama who eventually became the National Vice President of the MDR in Kigali before the genocide started. He was born in Nyagasera and returned often because his family still lived there. When the political parties started, Farrad often came to meetings in Ngali, making speeches to the people, presiding over the elections of who would be local leaders of the MDR and hanging flags outside of their houses. Sometimes he came in his car to drive people to meetings at the commune or prefecture. Since he had been to secondary school and became quite an important figure in the

¹⁴ Interview August 17, 2004, Akatwa.

¹⁵ The MRND and other parties also had leaders; however, in terms of the development of the genocide in Akatwa and Nyagasera, not many of them played a vital part in the organization of the attack groups. Therefore, the research focuses mainly on the MDR leaders.

government, many people admired him and joined the MDR under his persuasion. A few months before the genocide, Farrad left the country to study in Europe and remained outside until after the war. His role in the genocide is still debated and he is awaiting trial in the coming year.

The *agronome* and agricultural monitors were the first to join the political parties. Twagamungu was the communal *agronome* in the years leading up to the genocide. Originally born in Nyagasera, he moved to a nearby sector with his wife and children. However, his father Kayega and brother Ngirumpatse, who were very active members of the MDR as well, still lived in Nyagasera. The three of them worked together as leaders of the Nyagasera MDR and the Ngali sector. They also brought their friend, Innocent, a teacher in a nearby sector, with them to the Nyagasera/Ngali meetings and, consequently, he became a very active member. This family seemed to be one of the leading MDR organizers for all of Ngali. Since Twagamungu had connections to the communal administration through his job, he was able to spread messages from the Burgomaster Babgabo to many people in a very short time, thereby showing again the ability for the vertical integration at the local level.

Two other leading figures of the MDR were the agricultural monitors, Celestin Zimana and Egide Mawiza. Twagamungu was their boss who went with each of them when they visited the fields and *paysannat* of Ngali to help with the coffee trees. Zimana was born and lived Akatwa. In addition to being an agricultural monitor for Ngali sector, he also owned a bar in the center of Akatwa where he flew the MDR flag. Mawiza was not only an agricultural monitor but also served as the Responsible of Nyagasera. He reportedly read out the minutes of each meeting and presided as the secretary for the MDR in Nyagasera. As responsible, many people respected Mawiza and saw his membership in the MDR as a reason to join for themselves.

Twagamungu and his agricultural monitors worked closely with Somijambo Adolfus, the agricultural surveyor of the commune. As the surveyor, he had a list of families to visit each season in Akatwa, Nyagasera, and Sussenge to collect data about their fields and to find out how much each produced. This information was recorded to keep track of the *paysannat* statistics and agricultural records for Ngali. Adolfus joined one of the major agricultural associations in Ngali, and became a youth leader for the sector. This meant that he was in charge of encouraging and

assisting the youth, such as helping them to organize the *umuganda* and to join associations. Well-known and respected due to his high ranking position in the sector and a job that enabled him to know many people, it is not surprising that Adolfus became one of the most prominent leaders in the MDR for all of Ngali. He lived in a nearby but was born in Nyagasera; therefore, he returned to Nyagasera for many of the MDR meetings and was always present at the sector and commune gatherings as well.

Commerçants were also powerful MDR leaders. The most dominant of them in Akatwa was Thomas Yezunga. His house was in Akatwa, but he worked as a tailor and *commerçant*, first in Nyagasera and then in Mogako. Originally he started as a member of the PSD, serving as the sector leader; however, the PSD gained very few members. Since he worked in Mogako, he was good friends with Twagamungu and lived as a neighbor to Zimana. They both gave him a friendly *kubohoza* early in 1992 and he switched to the MDR, immediately rising to be a leading member in Akatwa and Ngali. When people joined the MDR, they went to Thomas's shop in Mogako so he could sew clothes for them out of black and red colored material. Becoming a member of the MDR had lucrative gains as well as an increase in status for Thomas.

Another successful *commerçant*, Gayabaje, became a principal figure for the MDR in Ngali. He was born and lived in Sussenge, Ngali sector. Having a car enabled him to deliver hats, flags, t-shirts and cards to all the cellule leaders. Gayabaje was also neighbors and good friends with Gerard Simbizi, the Assistant Burgomaster of Tongawe Commune and a staunch MDR member as well. Through Gerard, Gayabaje became another virtual mouthpiece for Babgabo the Burgomaster and he wielded much clout with the populace of Ngali.

Two leading MRND were also paramount in the turmoil of the political parties. Most prominent was the Counselor of Ngali, Francois Gohinga. While his sector was virtually taken over by the MDR, he continued to hold weekly MRND meetings and went to all the cellules to promote his party. Eventually he was given a violent *kubohoza* and joined the MDR. The other MRND leader was Jerome Barisa, a rich *commerçant* living in Nyagasera. He had a car and was constantly taking people to and from MRND meeting at the Commune and various sectors. When the MRND and MDR eventually merged to form MDR Power, Barisa became one of the most outspoken members,

and subsequently continued that role during the genocide.

These leading figures had the trust of the community and were the existing weak links. Instead of using their roles for bridging Hutu and Tutsi together, they became the catalysts in the amplification of the networks, bonds and trust among the extremist Hutu. Such organization and leadership, many agents of vertical integrations, was what enabled the genocidal plans to move forward at such a rapid pace and have successful, albeit devastating, results.

6.2 Increased Bonding Social Capital

As the fire of the political parties continued to swell, divisions between Hutu's and Tutsi's became more severe and pronounced. Bonding social capital was reinforced within the Hutu participating in the MDR and consequently breaking down any bridging social capital that was once in existence. By late 1992, six of the eight agricultural associations had disbanded in Akatwa and Nyagasera and over half of the *icybinas* had dissolved. Family relations even became strained as the political party took precedence over people's lives. The cellule committee in Akatwa was mixed, with the responsible and one member being Tutsi. In late 1991, they both noticed that tensions grew between themselves and the other members. Committee meetings used to be friendly and open; however, with the advent of political parties, the relaxed atmosphere changed to one of suspicion, secrecy, and fear. It grew so uncomfortable and strained that the committee disbanded and ended meetings in 1992. In Nyagasera there were very few Tutsi and the cellule committee was comprised of Hutu only. When the MDR came, they all ditched the MRND except for one member, Jerome Barisa, who remained a leader of the MRND.¹⁶

Not only did the cellule committees break down, but the *umuganda* ceased as well. The previous social organization of the cellule eroded and the precedence of the MDR took its place. People followed the leaders of the political party, who were mostly MDR. The old government rules and duties were disregarded, further demonstrating the politicization of the community bonds. Six Tutsi interviewees that had been involved in agricultural associations or *icybinas* talked about these

¹⁶ Previously he and Mawiza, the responsible of Nyagasera, were best friends, lending money to each other, and giving one another cows. But when Jerome didn't join the MDR with Mawiza, their friendship dissolved and they actually

groups becoming separated and excluding them from participating any longer. Following the same trend, citizens of Ngali didn't keep up the maintenance of their coffee trees. The agricultural monitors and *agronome* perfunctorily came to fine farmers up until 1994, but it is reported that most infractions by MDR members were ignored or could be forgotten with a small bribe. However, Tutsi still had to pay for each tree that was overgrown. One survivor from Akatwa explained,

“Mawiza, the agricultural monitor, sometimes made us pay money for no reason. We had to give him beer and then he gave us a fine that was higher than the normal amount due to the commune. If a person wanted land, Mawiza and Twagamungu had the power to divide it up among the people. Tutsi continuously got small areas and Hutu were given the biggest. One time that I wanted land for my son I had to give Mawiza a large sum of money. That was how it was. Mawiza used his job to spread the word of power and genocide.”¹⁷

It wasn't only Tutsi who suffered under the MDR's accession to power. Those Hutu who chose not to join a political party, or who were married to Tutsi spouses, often experienced harassment and fear tactics from members of the party. The party bonds replaced familial bonds in some instances. One man from Nyagasera who married a Tutsi woman talked about his family's treatment towards him when he didn't join the MDR:

“My father had been a member of Parmehutu in 1959 and then joined the MDR again in 1991. He had never liked that I married a Tutsi woman, but it didn't become a problem for our relationship until 1991 when the MDR brought back his old feelings. When I didn't join the MDR myself, my father and brothers called a meeting for us to drink together and talk. They asked me why I didn't join and I told them that I wanted to be neutral and to support the party that won. They cursed me and my wife. I didn't feel safe around them. I went to one meeting and I disliked how the MDR leaders were cursing Habyarimana and Tutsi people. They were promising to get jobs for young people and to bring so much to Nyagasera. I didn't join the MDR and never went to a meeting again.”¹⁸

Sometime in 1992, even greater organization within the MDR occurred as leaders reportedly formed small groups from the cellules and other followers who showed commitment to the MDR philosophy. It was noted in a few interviews that in 1992 and 1993, leaders like Zimana, Adolfus, Twagamungu, Thomas, and Nwayo went to two meetings either at the commune or Ruhango, a bigger town near to Tongawe. These meetings were not announced for all members of the MDR. In Nyagasera, a small group of members was formed to listen to all radio stations and to spy on Tutsi families thought to be helping the RPF. One man who admitted to being a part of this group said that they listened to Radio Murabura, the RPF radio station, to find out when the Tutsi were

fought each other during an MDR street demonstration.

¹⁷ Interview September 23, 2004, Akatwa.

¹⁸ Interview September 14, 2004, Nyagasera.

going to kill the Hutu.¹⁹ The group spied on Rusebago's house, an elderly Tutsi man in the cellule, to find out if he and his friends were sending money to the RPF. Whatever they heard on the radio or had heard in private conversations, their job was to go to the cabaret and to tell all the members of the MDR about their findings. They spread the message heard on the Hutu radio station RTLM that the Hutu in the country should kill the Tutsi before they came and killed all of them. The leaders encouraged them to continue with the small group and to find out as much as they could.

With the loss of many members and growing popularity of the extremist ideology, the MRND joined forces with the MDR in 1993 to create MDR Power, or more commonly known as Hutu Power. Before it became power, there was fighting between the MRND and MDR, but when they united, their energies were all harnessed towards the anti-Tutsi message. Bonding social capital was now within the Hutu who were not just MDR, but those who wanted to exterminate the Tutsi. A woman interviewee who saved two Tutsi children recounted this change:

“The MRND people changed to the MDR and it became MDR Power. When it became Power it added the thought of killing Tutsi people. People who organized the genocide were the leaders, chanting ‘Power, power, power.’ MDR and MDR Power were different. Sometimes they came and forced people to join. If you refused then they beat you or asked for money. The leaders did this themselves.”²⁰

Sometime in November 1993, active participation from all citizens in Ngali was required at the night watch, or *irondo*, which was ordered by the provincial and communal governments. Each of the seven cellules in the sector was assigned to guard the frontier of Ntarama and Ngema one night in the week and the Counselor and Responsibles would organize the people each night. Everyone was told that RPF soldiers were coming and they had to carry stones on their heads to the border and defend Ngali. Both Hutu and Tutsi went to the night watch together with the idea that they were defending their communities against the RPF. Later, in the days just before the genocide, the *irondo* was used as a way to organize attack groups and to trap Tutsi; however, at that time the people were united in the defense of Ngali.

In December 1993, adding to the mounting secrecy, some of the political leaders began taking boys and men from all of Ngali to go for training at Ngema-Gihinga and the Commune office in Bikele. Thomas, Zimana, Twagamungu, and Innocent, leaders listed above, identified and selected those

¹⁹ Interview September 16, 2004, Nyagasera.

²⁰ Interview September 21, 2004, Akatwa.

whom they felt most suitable and obedient for the training. These sessions continued until close to the time that the genocide started. These men went inconspicuously to different houses with orders for those who were to go to the training, but it was never talked about at political meetings and only Hutu boys and men were chosen. On the days of training, they went on foot early in the morning so no one would see them leaving. Burundian refugees were used to assist in the training, instilling violent fighting tactics. During these sessions, the recruits were also repeatedly told that the RPF was coming to kill them, and brothers and sisters of the RPF were in their communities. If MDR Power won the elections and defeated the RPF, the recruits were promised payment and a good job. An ex-prisoner from Nyagasera talked about his experience in the trainings at Ngema:

“They already had an Interahamwe in Ngema in 1990 and started having the killings early so that is where they had the training. The Ngema people weren’t afraid to kill. I was in the second group sent to get training, which didn’t finish because leaders were called away and didn’t come back. The first group that went got guns. The second training was near to the time of the genocide. Radio RTLM talked about distributing machetes but we never got them. We listened to Kambanda on the radio saying that they would give a gun to every cultivator to take to the fields. RPF soldiers were so lazy that we would be able to just hit them on the head with a gun and continue working. But we didn’t receive them. On the way to training, before Habyarimana died, we met at the river with Ngema people who were bringing sorghum from the valley. They said that we must kill Tutsi and if we refused they would come and kill the Tutsi themselves.”²¹

When the Responsible of Akatwa, a Tutsi, received word that these trainings were taking place he made an inquiry to the government for an investigation. As a result, the Vice Prefect came to arrange a meeting for the people of Ngali to discuss the rumors about these trainings. He said he didn’t know if these trainings were true and, if they were, then he would punish those who were arranging it. In reality, the government officials were all a part of the training and the Vice Prefect did nothing to curtail the operations. As these essential plans for the genocide began unfolding months before the genocide was actually carried out, the leaders and small extremist groups kept their operations rather covert. Many people in Ngali truly remained naïve to what was about to happen in April 1994, but the organized networks that were planning the killings were already strongly bonded together and determined in their mission.

6.3 The Potency of Bonding Social Capital

“On the radio we heard about Habyarimana’s death. We were all dancing because we thought this was our freedom. We were all very happy. We did not know that what was going to happen next was even worse.”²²

²¹ Interview September 16, 2004, Nyagasera.

²² Interview August 26, 2004, Nyagasera.

This statement, made by an elderly Tutsi man who was thrown in prison in 1990 for suspicions of aiding the RPF, reflects the thoughts of the general public in Ngali on April 6, 1994. Habyarimana's plane was shot down by an unknown source on his way back from signing a peace agreement with the RPF in Arusha. The plane crash killed both Habyarimana and the President of Burundi who was accompanying the Rwandan president on the trip. Both Hutu and Tutsi alike rejoiced at the end of Habyarimana's reign thinking that all of their lives would improve with a new government. Although the situation remained seemingly calm in Ngali, preparations for the genocide were rapidly coming to fruition.

On April 10th Zimana and Adolfus asked specific people from Akatwa and Nyagasera to come to a meeting in Togende. It was said that this meeting was for people who wanted to start an agricultural association and that Anglican Bishop Musamana²³ from Shyongwe Diocese in Gitarama was supposedly offering five million RWF to initiate its formation. This was a lie told to those who didn't go to the meeting. In reality, Twagamungu was there organizing the distribution of machetes to cellule leaders and talking about the attack groups. Bishop Musamana, Twagamungu's cousin, used to live in Togende and his family was still living there at that time. He had a lot of money with connections to the government as a priest and supporter of MDR Power. Zimana and Adolfus took these machetes back to Akatwa and Nyagasera, distributing them secretly to people who were privy to information about the planned attacks.

At 5:00 p.m. that same day in Imodoka, a central meeting point in Ngali sector, a group of young boys chopped down a large tree and formed a blockade on the main road to stop any car from entering Ngali. Foremost in this group was Gerard Simbizi, the Assistant Burgomaster. Upon his orders, the group went to Umereka's house, a successful Tutsi commercant who lived near to the road block, and began hurling stones. Naturally, the family was frightened and fled to the Counselor Gohinga's house to hide. When they told him about the road block, he went down to Imodoka to find out what was happening. Gohinga went to speak with Gerard, who was still there with the group of people; everyone had machetes. Gerard explained to the Counselor that he had seen "tall people" go into Umereka's house and it had to be the RPF. But when Gohinga tried to

²³ Bishop Musumana was sent to the Arusha Tribunal and died in prison while awaiting trial.

insist that he was wrong, Gerard took a machete to his neck and his group broke the Counselor's bike. They said that he had to be careful who he helped and then released him. Gohinga ran back home and arrived around 2 a.m. The story told by Umereka's family and Gohinga becomes convoluted at this point because it is unclear as to whether he warned the family. In his version, Gohinga came home and told the family that it was dangerous for them and that the group wanted to kill Umereka. According to Umereka's surviving family members, Gohinga told them that they should not worry and could return home. No matter who is correct, the family returned home and no police or government officials ever came. The roadblock remained intact and a group stood watch every day and night.

On April 14th, the killing began when Gayabaje (the commercant), Gerard (assistant burgomaster), Phocas (communal police officer), and Nahayo (assistant burgomaster's friend), entered Umereka's house. These men forced their way inside at 7 p.m., shot him and then cut his body to pieces, leaving his dead corpse in the house while they chased after his older son. The entire family ran away to hide and fortunately escaped the attack. Three days later, on the morning of the 17th, the family came back together and tried to bury Umereka's body in the yard. While they were digging a hole, the attack group returned coming to loot, burn their house and eat their cows. Again the family ran away, but they all escaped to different places. The mother and older sister were refugees in Burundi. The two older sons were murdered while hiding and the youngest boy, age 11, ran to the larger town of Ruhango, hiding in a church with no food until the war ended. In the years before 1990, Gerard, Nahayo and Umereka had been good friends and neighbors. Umereka loaned them money and they gave each other cows. However, in 1990 those men began harassing him about harboring RPF soldiers, frequently searching his house and store. Tensions only worsened when they joined the MDR, culminating in Umereka's death. Nahayo was sent to prison for merely one day and received a gun when he was released. No investigation was ever made, and Gerard remained the assistant burgomaster. The chilling start to the genocide in Ngali had erupted.

On the day that Umereka's family dispersed, April 17th, people saw burning houses over the hills in Mogako, the sector bordering Ngema and Ngali. The Counselor ordered everyone from Ngali to go and defend the sector from the incoming attack. All Hutu and Tutsi went en masse to the border expecting to stop the group from Ngema and Mogako. "I thought that it was the Ngema people

coming to steal our cows, like they had done many times in the past to both Hutu and Tutsi families,” said one man who had been at the attack. At 2:00pm the Ngali defense arrived and gun shots rang out, which signaled the beginning of the looting and killing of cows. Most people did not know that the attacks were meant solely for Tutsi, and so some of them, Hutu included, fled the scene to hide in the fields. That day the attacks advanced as far as Rugindo cellule before everyone returned to their homes. Among the defense group were Adolfus, Thomas, Twagamungu, his brother and father, Zimana, Gayabaje, Gerard, Mawiza, and Barisa- all the big leaders from the political parties. They had prior knowledge as to what was going to happen at the defense of Ngali and informed all the Hutu who stayed that they should begin killing Tutsi as it was their work.

The next day, April 18th, the defense group trotted off to the border again, but this time a large group of the Hutu participants were wearing banana and coffee leaves as their “uniform.” When they arrived at Rugindo, many Hutu began turning on the Tutsi who had returned to the defense without knowing their fate. The attacks then continued on to Nyagasera and Akatwa that day, and the attack groups from each cellule began burning houses and killing there as well. In many interviews, the people initially denied the existence of attack groups from Akatwa and Nyagasera, placing sole blame on the attackers from Mogako and Ngema. But when questioned further about how the attackers knew which houses to burn and who to kill, the responses changed. “The attack groups mixed together and the people from Akatwa showed the Mogako people where to go” said one Akatwa woman.²⁴ A man who was at the defense candidly stated, “Many people say that the attacks were from Mogako and Ngema people, but that isn’t true. Ngali people did it themselves. People in Akatwa and Nyagasera had their own attack groups.”²⁵

6.4 Formal Organization of the Genocide Solidifies

“Road blocks started everywhere and they asked for your ID’s. That is when the genocide started. People were acting like animals, like the devil. They wore banana leaves, were in attack groups, and stole and ate everything they could. People were killed in their houses, or on the paths to where they were hiding. They mostly threw people in the toilets alive.” –A Hutu woman from Akatwa.²⁶

After the chaos broke loose at the defense, all the attack groups set up numerous road blocks in each cellule, stopping to check the ID card of anyone who walked by. If it said “Tutsi” or if they

²⁴ Interview September 10, 2004, Akatwa.

²⁵ Interview September 16, 2004, Nyagasera.

didn't have the card with them, they were considered to be the enemy and killed on the spot, leaving their bodies on the road or dumping them in a nearby toilet, which was a deep hole in the ground. Every morning, the various attack groups met at the center of each cellule and listened to their leaders regarding whose house to go to or where a Tutsi may be hiding. They burned all the houses and stole everything they could, even roof tiles and the bricks of the house. All cows were eaten and the attackers rooted up the Tutsi' fields, leaving nothing behind. Each night, they returned from what participants called having gone to *gukora akazi*, "do the work", as stated by a Hutu participant.²⁷ In effect, they were replacing the *umuganda* with this new type of cooperation. The groups celebrated with singing, dancing, eating, and heavy drinking. Attack groups were about twenty to thirty people. Not everyone who was in the attack groups participated in the killings. Many people joined just to steal and eat cows. Also, the leaders themselves rarely involved themselves directly in the killings, instead choosing to direct the group where to go and who to kill without implicating themselves in the murders. Twagamungu was the main leader for Mogako who brought his men to fight with the Nyagasera and Akatwa attack groups. Twagamungu not only distributed the machetes given to him by his cousin Priest Musamana but also gave kerosene to the groups, which was used to burn the houses. Adolfus had his own group in Sussenge cellule, but was active in helping all groups in Ngali. Thomas and Zimana led the Akatwa *igitero* or attack group. Mawiza and Barisa directed the Nyagasera group. Gayabaje was a floating leader for all Ngali attack groups.

The first killing to happen in Akatwa cellule was that of Daniel Nimezi, a Tutsi Adventist priest and farmer. When the attack groups began, Nimezi had escaped to another sector, but networks of extremist Hutu were so strong that he was immediately discovered in his hiding place, brought back to Akatwa, and killed in front of his burning house. Zimana and Thomas were there and gave the orders to kill him on the road. The current responsible of Akatwa took me to the field where Nimezi had lived. He explained how he watched them kill his friend while hiding in the banana trees, fearing for his own life. After he witnessed the killing, the Responsible fled with his family to Burundi. In the next month and a half, 170 out of 200 Tutsi in Akatwa died. Twenty-one were actually killed in Akatwa and all the others died while escaping to other sectors, communes, and

²⁶ Interview September 21, 2004, Akatwa.

²⁷ Interview September 16, 2004, Nyagasera.

Burundi.

In Nyagasera, Rusebago and his wife Gihozo were the first Tutsi to die in the cellule. Both were elderly, over sixty years old, and could not make it across the valley to Burundi like most of their family had done when the attacks began. Instead, they tried hiding in their coffee fields, but when Mawiza, the responsible, saw them, he blew a whistle indicating to the attack group that he had found someone. The group took Rusebago and Gihozo to the road block, laid their bodies down on the tree trunk, cut their bodies into pieces, and then dumped them in a nearby toilet, which was a deep pit. Nyagasera only had two Tutsi families living there at the time of the genocide and ten of the twenty-five people from those families died. Since Nyagasera is surrounded by the valley, many Tutsi fled through Nyagasera on their way to Ntarama and Burundi. Some escaped, but a majority were murdered before they crossed the border.

The stories about participation vary. Some people said that all men were forced to go to the road blocks and if they didn't, then they were punished by having to give a cow or money. If one did not want to join an attack group, then it was often reported that he was beaten. However, one prisoner from Nyagasera told a different story. For him it was a choice to join, believing that he was saving his country from the RPF and seizing the opportunity to eat meat:

“Yes, I killed someone and I went to prison for six years. I killed Manyimiza Valentina and participated in all the attack groups that went to steal and take cows. I saw the attack group meeting in the center of Nyagasera and I joined them to go to Valentina's house. She was married to a Hutu man and they had a small child. We went to her house and demanded that her husband give us a cow. He had many, but he refused to give us one, so we took his wife to the toilet. At the toilet, we told her husband that he had to kill her. He put the child behind his back and cut her with his machete. We all took turns cutting her and then put her into the toilet. The attack group was about twenty to thirty people. The attacks were so violent because the group was many people and the person would run away and fall, so then each person in the attack would take turns beating him. I thought that all Tutsi would kill us so I didn't want to leave any in the country. Maybe if I didn't kill them then the RPF would come and kill me. I knew that it was a bad thing, but I wanted to eat meat and it was like an order so I did it. We went in groups to steal and sometimes you met a Tutsi who wouldn't leave his cows, so then we fought with him and sometimes people in the attack group died. Each attack group had a leader, someone who was strong and showed leadership, dividing the cows between all the people in the attack.”²⁸

But for some others who went to jail for killing, they did not seem to have a decision about whether to join the attack or not. An ex-prisoner from Akatwa broke into tears explaining how he had been forced to kill and could not live with himself after having committed murder:

“At 10:00am I was in my house drinking beer with many people. I was hiding two Tutsi in my house, a

²⁸ Interview September 16, 2004, Nyagasera.

woman and a son, both my mother's cousins. An *igitero* (attack group) came and so all the people in my house ran away. I tried to lock the door, but I didn't do it in time. The two Tutsi were hiding in the back in the kitchen. The young boy was afraid when he saw the attack and tried to run, but they saw him fleeing. They caught him and found his mother still hiding in the kitchen. Then the attack group beat me and took us all up the hill where they showed us the father who had just been killed. They said to me, 'If you don't kill them then you will be like this in a few seconds.' Then they beat me more and the woman told me to kill them to save myself because if not then they would kill all of us anyway. I did it, but I didn't want to. The group left me to go and kill more people. I went to the road block everyday after that because I was afraid that if I didn't go then they would come back and make me do it again. They never came back to force me again, but everyday I was praying and crying so much because I regretted the killing."²⁹

From mid-April until June, the attack groups swept through Akatwa and Nyagasera, killing, pillaging, stealing, and eating everything that they could find. The bonds between the participating Hutu, both members of attack groups and those opportunists who went along to steal and eat meat, were fortified even further. In Akatwa, 85 percent of the Tutsi population had been murdered, their houses burned, cows eaten, and fields uprooted. Nyagasera lost nearly 40 percent of the two Tutsi families. The genocide did not break down the social organization among those who committed these atrocious acts.

It wasn't until early June that these bonds unravel. As *indanini* (literally, big stomach or the greed for eating other people's meat) took hold, the attack groups started stealing from everyone, even Hutu who had been complicit in the genocide. In one specific instance, Gerard, the Assistant Burgomaster brought an attack group from another sector to steal from a Hutu man's store in Akatwa. Phocas, the communal police officer who had killed Tutsi together with Gerard, organized another attack group to kill him. Phocas was angered because they were supposed to divide what they stole, but Gerard was now trying to take everything for himself. When Gerard arrived in Akatwa, Phocas and his attack group were waiting for him and they killed him on the spot. One Hutu observer recounted, "Gerard cried as he was dying saying that he had killed so many Tutsi and now Hutu were killing him. The dogs came and ate him."³⁰

At this time, the RPF had finally made its way to Akatwa and Nyagasera, only to find that nearly all Tutsi were dead or had fled to Burundi. Many of the identified leaders, or weak links, were killed by the RPF (as noted in Figure 2) as it attempted to purge those who were participants in the killings. Tutsi families and other moderate Hutu returned from refugee camps in Burundi only to

²⁹ Interview September 23, 2004, Akatwa.

³⁰ Interview September 2, 2004, Akatwa.

find that their houses burned and all their possessions gone. In Akatwa, they lived in tents for another four months, receiving food from the Red Cross. Some families received aid from international organizations and churches in order to rebuild their houses. In Nyagasera, the people returned what had been stolen to the two Tutsi families and reconstructed their houses. None of this could erase the trauma and hatred felt by the survivors. Some of the accused murderers were taken to jail, but most remained in the cellules, going on with their daily lives. The *gacaca* trials are now taking place, hoping to make those who participated in the genocide face those people who lost so many families and friends. While this may help survivors to feel a sense of justice, only time will truly begin to heal Rwanda.

7. Conclusion

Genocide is commonly described as a complete degeneration of a society. However, in the cellules of Akatwa and Nyagasera this can only partially explain the event. The bridging social capital between Hutu and Tutsi did indeed collapse. The horizontal associations of the loosely organized agricultural cooperatives and *tontines* that were aimed at economic and social benefits were not strong enough to withstand the political and manipulative powers of the vertical associations. Extremists at all levels in the vertical associations used their roles as weak links to spread racist ideologies against the Tutsi and moderate Hutu. They used rewards for violent behavior as the carrot to train attack groups to kill Tutsi and moderate Hutu long before the genocide occurred. In Rwanda, those who literally held the weapons of the government, held the power to influence the formation of conversions of social capital and then manipulating this converted social capital to induce genocide. It can be seen how the genocide was, in a frightening way, an exercise in communal cooperation and organization among the participating Hutu. Without the conversion of social capital to bond the Hutu together, it is doubtful that the genocide could have been unleashed at such a rapid pace with such tragic consequences. In this context, the theory of social capital has negative ramifications. Negative social capital can be seen as an indicator, which can be used to predict communal action that could lead to mass violence.

As Rwanda slowly rebuilds itself, social capital is an asset that is greatly needed in community development; however, the direction in which it can take shape is at a critical point. If left

unattended, communities may once again organize themselves along divisive lines due to the complete lack of trust between the ethnicities. Horizontal associations like those of the agricultural associations and tontines are undoubtedly advantageous for cellule cooperation but only when they act as mechanisms to bridge groups together. Learning to observe and predict the shifts in social capital could serve as way to monitor potential outbreaks of mass violence or genocide. When bonding social capital builds up, forming rigid in-group and out-group delineations, at the expense of the breakdown of bridging social capital, there is cause for worry. Moods, intentions, and maneuverings of political extremists, even at the local level, have the opportunity to capitalize on the ability to convert social capital as a means to secure and maintain power. The nature of the vertical associations also needs to be monitored, allowing for a healthy state-community relationship, while opening up space for an autonomous civil society to flourish. When vertical associations work to bridge together ethnicities, social classes, and gender in communities, Rwanda will prosper. Furthermore, those people who assume the position of weak links in the community, both Hutu and Tutsi, should support a cohesive society. Trainings that encourage awareness and action by the weak links to bridge communities together can be undertaken by NGO's and the Rwandan government. Rwanda needs to reach a balance of strong horizontal associations and decentralized vertical associations in order for the local-level to thrive. With concerted efforts by the Rwandan government, international donors and NGO's, and the Rwandan people themselves, Rwanda has the opportunity to leave the dark past behind them and raise a generation that knows no violence.

Glossary of Terms

Agronome	Position appointed by Commune government to monitor the paysannat
CDR	Coalition pour la Defense de la Republique
Ibyitso	Spy
Icybina	Rotating savings group, tontine
Igitero	Attack group in the genocide
Indanini	Desire to eat another's food
Inkotanyi	Term for RPF soldiers
Interhamwe	Groups of men trained by the government to lead attack groups
Inyenzi	Cockroach
Inzoka	Snake
Irondo	Night watch
Kubohoza	Act of forcing people to join a party
Mandazi	Fried, sweet balls of dough often eaten in Rwanda
MDR	Mouvement Democratique Republicain
MRND	Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour le Developpment
OCIR	National coffee company of Rwanda
Parmehutu	Party for Emancipation of the Hutu People
Paysannat	Government coffee growing project in Akatwa and Nyagasera
PL	Parti Liberal
PSD	Parti Social Democrate
RPF	Rwanda Patriotic Front, rebel Tutsi army from Uganda
Rukokoma	Arusha sessions in 1991 that led to end of the one-party system
Tontine	Rotating savings group
Umuganda	Communal work imposed by the government

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Appendix

Weak Links in the Ngali Sector

KEY of Relationships

- 1- Family
- 2- Friends/Neighbors
- 3- Co-workers
- 4- Boss:Employee
- 5- Government Meetings (Agriculture, Cellule Committees, etc.)
- 6- Political Party

