

The Commodification of Genocide: Part II. A NeoGramscian Model for Rwanda

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Abstract

In our previous paper, we did a qualitative content analysis of news reports disseminated by international media about events occurring in Rwanda. We grouped these reports into three themes: human rights, security, and foreign relations. Here we add our analysis of four more themes: Hutu menace in the Great Lakes, memorializing the victims, economic situation, and democracy. We argued that news coverage has been de-capitated by the ruling elite and that the western capitalist states have supported this co-optation. To gain access, Western journalists have had to cooperate with the state rather than with critical Rwandan journalists or even NGOs. This follow-up paper thus continues to expose alternatives to the dominant view in each thematic area. We introduce Celeste Condit's NeoGramscian depiction of the subordinate or "unrepresented groups," who in the name of "laws" of justice and through limited (because of the obvious danger) "civic support" dare to contest the dominant ideology. This ideology of Rwandan genocide has become a commodity marketed to the media, so much so that the non-dominant ideology of a civil war is suppressed. Then we adopt Dana Cloud's NeoGramscian model that emphasizes the oppressive structural relations in the commodification, both economically and ideologically.

Keywords: genocide, ideology, commodification of genocide

In 1998 *Africa Today* examined aspects of Rwanda since 1994 under the title "Crisis in Central Africa." Editor Angelique Haugerud (1998) expressed one point of agreement, namely, that history matters much to the process of political activism on the part of scholars: "The 1994 genocide in Rwanda has stimulated profound scholarly reflection on the nature and uses of historical narratives." Catherine Newbury (1998) then identified three factors in recent Rwandan history: the marginalization of moderates, the dynamic of fear, and the political patterns in which "ethnic groups came to be seen as the political actors." Thus indirectly, Newbury leveled a finger at the Western press.

Michele Wagner, Human Rights monitor during 1994-1995, also tried to get behind the press reports by participant observation on the ground. She focused her historical research on the Nyakizucomune in the south of Rwanda on the Burundi border (1998). Here, atrocious killing occurred within sight of the hills of Burundi prior to the 1994 genocide. She demonstrated that ethnic violence was only a short step beyond the routinized violence that its bourgmestre had implemented when he became local representative of the Movement Democratique Republicaine (MDR) in 1991 and mayor in 1993. She also noted that the two Hutu ministers in the national government had resigned after criticizing human rights abuses of the new Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) government, only to succumb to assassination themselves. These examples at the local and the national level point to the same conclusion: gangs burning homes, death threats and insecurity, fear, militia, and disappearances were familiar in Rwanda before, during, and after the events of 1994.

The Hutu genocide against Tutsis in that year required deeper contextualization.

Jan Vansina (1998) then raised the curtain on the massive information available but the extreme lack of reliable information in the Great Lakes. Despite an estimated 125 nongovernmental organizations in Rwanda, a variety of United Nations agencies, and press releases from the regimes in power, the documents that matter -- policy documents, official communiques, and records of diplomatic activity -- were all kept secret since 1994. Vansina leveled a particular critique at the Western press and their "official" informants: "the sources are all part of an intense propaganda war." The purpose of communication, in other words, lies in generating economic support or bolstering claims to power, in enabling leaders to obtain arms or in providing diplomatic cover.

More recently, in a review of conflicts of Africa, Gilbert (2014) wrote that "others while not completely denying the ethnic factor, explain that ethnicity was a colonial (manipulative) creation, fostered and perfected by post-colonial Rwandese politicians for the consolidation and perpetual control of politico-economic power in the country. Therefore, it would be too simplistic and tantamount to over generalization - to limit the analysis of the Rwandan conflicts to ethnic struggle (Prunier, 1995)."

While it is true that we should not limit the analysis to ethnic struggle, in fact Rwandan ethnic categories existed in pre-colonial Rwanda (Newbury, 1988, 1998). Belgian colonial policies favored Tutsi elite and used this elite for indirect rule. Indirect rule implemented via Tutsi elite exacerbated ethnic relations by the political exclusion of Hutu. Post-colonial Hutu elite once in power after 1960 then practiced the political exclusion of Tutsi (Prunier, 2009). In any case, in order to get behind the narrative of ethnic conflict, we want to focus particularly on the role of the media.

1. An Example that Applies a NeoGramscian Theory to the Media

In this example of NeoGramscian theory applied to the media, the ideology-laden discourse practices concern a new reproductive technology called *in vitro* fertilization (IVF). Drawing upon some 350 articles from *Reader's Guide*, *Newsbank*, and *Infotrack*, Celeste Condit (1994) found a variety of social agents favoring the technology (infertile couples, specialist physicians) and others opposing it (generalist physicians, Catholic Church). The hegemonic ideology comes from the sheer dominance of favorable perspectives presented in the media. Relatively absent were such agents as the National Organization for Women and fertile couples, and any ideology that favored adoption over biological births. Also absent were lesbian couples and poor families (p. 224). Insurance coverage for the procedure helps those who can afford insurance, which again excludes the poor. This shows how "accommodation" and "consent" to the dominant ideology leave out certain "unrepresented groups" and the "laws" and "civic groups" that support them.

Dana Cloud (1996) challenged Condit's claim for "concordance" between the new technology and the mass media. In Cloud's case study, Oprah Winfrey is only allowed to be seen as a rags to riches biography on condition that the oppression of blacks be redefined as personal suffering. Gramsky and his interpreters tell us that Capitalist regimes obscure class, race, and gender. There are definite "limits to compromises" between those in power and those governed (p. 118). Similarly in our Rwandan case study, Capitalist countries produce and enforce power both in commodity production and in the structures of ideas, or ideologies. Only some token voices are allowed to be heard. Thus, the argument that Hutus engaged in massive violations of human rights (war crimes and crimes against humanity) is not allowed to be heard in Rwanda and is rarely heard in the West.

Condit had argued that physicians have a ware to sell, that infertile couples are deemed newsworthy for their social utility, and that reporters have more information about the practice and no evidence that it is unsafe. "Concordance," replied Cloud (1997) in a subsequent article, obscures the class struggle conveyed by the term "hegemony." The whole notion of choice, as in reproductive technologies, involves "a system fundamentally based on exploitation and oppression" (p. 195).

Let us apply this framework of NeoGramscian analysis to the Rwandan case. The conventional narrative about the Rwandan genocide is that Hutus killed Tutsis and Tutsis were the victims. Hegemony belonged to Hutus, and now there is a democratic capitalist society governed by Tutsis. The U.S. media support this narrative in large part. The alternative view that we represent here, based on the scholarship since 1994, is that both sides engaged in mass killings and both had extremist perpetrators and victims. Both sides also had moderates whose resisted the killing or managed to flee. Importantly, Tutsi mass killings began with an invasion in 1990, and continued after 1994, the official cessation of hostilities (Straus & Waldorf, 2011, Prutsalis, 1994).

This revised view entails an authoritarian Tutsi or RPF state, and a sham democracy in which Hutus are utterly without power or voice.

In Gramscian terms, this view is occluded by the commodity of information exchange and the structure of ideas “that become the taken-for-granted common sense of the society” (Cloud, 1996, p. 118).

We are puzzled by Condit’s term “mediators.” We replaced it by simply “media.” In an ideal free society, those who entertain opposing viewpoints to those in power can freely express them. It is debatable, of course, to what extent the press is “free” of commercial and political interests in the West. Even more so in Rwanda, we need a framework of analysis that exposes the exercise of power by domination over subordinate entities such as the media. In this regard, we must ask how the Western media relate to those in power and those out of power in Rwanda? Does the Western press convey a “hegemonic world view” or does it exercise a critical function? If forces of resistance exist, what “laws,” “unrepresented groups,” and “civic support” inform its “public vocabulary”? We shall employ a neo-Gramscian model of hegemony as we seek to paint a picture of Rwandan society beyond the imperfect lens of the Western media.

2.1 Definition of Genocide

In order to assess these competing claims by the RPF government and Amnesty International, as well as by the U. S. Secretary of State and the U. N. High Commissioner, let us consider the definition of genocide in the abstract. Article II of the United Nations Genocide Convention defines genocide as follows (Fein, 1994):

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (p. 96).

As shown by this Convention, genocide is a hideous crime. However our goal is to trace its effect on the public discourse in the country, and the special interests this discourse contains.

2.2 Market Economy of Genocide-Related Information

Western audiences remember the Holocaust of the Jews before and during the Second World War. The genocide of the Tutsi has been tied into the narrative of the Holocaust with which Western audiences are familiar (Gourevitch, 1998, p. 96). As reflected in the news reports so far, and illustrated by the quotations from Albright and Robinson, we think we detect a contested control of the framework of genocide. As mentioned (Higiro & Woodward, this issue), we have therefore introduced the term “commodification” to signal the market economy of genocide-related information (Mueller, 1995, pp. 463, 466; White, 1992, pp. 170-172). Human rights violations lead us to consider a political economy of communication in which information is seen as a resource. As in economics, it has utility, value, and power. “As resources and (sometimes) commodities, communication and information are valued, traded, hoarded, competed for, shared, produced, mass produced, distributed, consumed, regulated, prohibited. The task of a political economy of communication and information is to understand *these* processes” (Mueller, 1995, p. 466).

The commodification of genocide might explain why assassinations carried out in Rwanda have investigations which never turn up anything. For example, Pierre Rwangabo, the governor (*prefect*) of the Butare Province, was murdered in March 1995 “because he had publicly protested against mass arrests carried out by soldiers in the prefecture...His murderers have never been found” (Amnesty International, 1995a). Vincent Nkezabaganwa, the President of the State Council and Vice President of Rwanda’s Supreme Court (*Conseild’Etat*) was murdered (with three others) in his home in February 1997 by men in military clothes: “no inquiry is known to have taken place to establish who was responsible for their deaths and the perpetrators have not been brought to justice” (AI, 1997b). The commodification of genocide might suggest that justice is sometimes a vendetta, the application of the talion law, a tool to consolidate the power structure of a social group (Anonymous, 1998a).

The RPF invaded Rwanda from its bases in Uganda on October 1, 1990. Human rights violations committed by its army during and after its military campaign were only gradually reconstructed more than a decade after the events (Davenport & Stam, 2009; Straus, 2006, Straus & Waldorf, 2011).

The British journalist Nick Gordon of *Sunday Express* in London (1996) and the French journalist Steven Smith of *Liberation* (1997) have written long articles documenting the massacres committed by the RPF between April 6, 1994 and July 1994. Smith is a *persona non grata* in Rwanda today. These are the only reporters to have documented the killings of the RPF during its military conquest of power. The massacres at three locations on the Rwandan border to Tanzania are well known (UNHCR Emergency Team, 1994).

We make a distinction between “information” as a commodity and “genocide” as a commodity. They have two different meanings. Information is a commodity news organizations sell to news media consumers. Genocide is turned into a product to build a power structure. The treatment of genocide as a commodity may have helped the current Rwandan regime deflect attacks from Human Rights organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International regarding the condition of prisoners in Rwanda. Officially there are 125,000 prisoners but there are also reports about individuals detained in private houses and in containers.

The excuse of the genocide may sometimes be used to explain why the judges are so few and why the judicial system has to be rebuilt. During the time it takes to rebuild it, people cannot be tried. In other words, genocide as a commodity of international relations may have served as a license to jail people for an unlimited time and to have them submit to inhuman treatment. It may explain why there are no dossiers on individuals, why someone spends four years without anyone collecting a judiciary file on that person, and why people cannot be released. Vice President Paul Kagame stated that Tutsi "genocide survivors" will take justice into their own hands; according to this logic, genocide suspects are in prison for their protection (Gourevitch, 1998).

3.1 Results - Hutu Menace in the Great Lakes

Our sample contains 17 stories that relate to a theme we refer to “the Hutu menace in the Great Lakes” during the years following the RPF invasion of 1990 and victory in 1994. The defeated Hutu fighters fled in large part to the Congo. The victorious RPF or Tutsi dominated fighters pursued and massacred them, however these massacres were suppressed by the media. News sources emphasize the threat of *interahamwe* and former Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) and their links with Burundian Hutus fighting against the minority regime in Burundi (Nduru & Kayagamba, 1997). Notice the reference to Hutus as “rebels” and “insurgency.” One news story refers to an agreement between Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda on the one hand, and on the other to an agreement between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi to eliminate rebels opposed to Burundi, Congo, and Uganda (Gouala, 1998). “The Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda has reached an accord with Uganda and Burundi to strengthen border security and counter armed groups,” Interior Minister GaetanKakudji said Tuesday. David Fox of Reuters wrote from Nairobi on January 7, 1998: “Hutu rebels fighting the Tutsi-dominated governments of Rwanda and Burundi are stepping up their insurgency threatening further destabilisation of Africa’s Great Lakes region, analysts say” (Fox, 1998; Anon, 1998h; Pitman, 1998). From our perspective, the primary destabilization came from the incursions of Tutsi-dominated army into the Congo. As history is witness, their purpose was to establish economies in plunder of the copper, coltan, and other minerals of the Congo.

News reports hardly discuss the intricate web of relations among the regimes controlled by Tutsi elites in Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi. In October 1990 the Tutsi refugees who invaded Rwanda from Uganda were former soldiers in the Ugandan National Resistance Army (NRA). The RPF invasion was made with Ugandan military and political support. Speaking in English at a two-day conference in Butare in January 1998, Ugandan President Museveni said that those responsible for the genocide of Tutsi “should be hanged.” He criticized the U. N. Tribunal on Rwanda for banning the death sentence (Anon, 1998a).

The current Tutsi-dominated Rwandan regime trained rebels from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) who along with the *banyamulenge* launched attacks against Hutu refugee camps in Zaire and finally toppled Mobutu’s regime (Lauras, 1998; Rosenblum, 1998). *Banyamulenge* are Tutsi who settled in DRC before colonization and who were denied citizenship by Mobutu’s regime. It became clear that during and after the conquest of power, Kabila had received support from his neighbors, particularly Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. They wanted to clear their borders of rebels. The Hutu refugee camps were used to destabilize Rwanda.

Burundian Tutsi ruling elites also framed the political conflict in ethnic terms, where Hutu are bent on perpetrating the genocide of Tutsi. The logic is parallel to that in Rwanda. News sources are silent on the domination of Burundi politics by a power structure made up of Tutsi from Bururi and the resistance to that domination by both Hutu and Tutsi who are not from Bururi.

This silence makes Tutsi from Bururi stand for all Burundian Tutsi. Again, political violence is ethnically based. A binary frame oversimplifies social, political, and religious cleavages.

3.2 Results - Memorializing of the Genocide Victims

In our sample, we had eight stories about the remembrance of the genocide. Each year in early April, Rwandans remember the genocide of Tutsi for one week. A report by Reuters dated April 1, 1998 gives a glimpse into how genocide is appropriated. Rwanda has devised a new way of marking its 1994 genocide – a map showing areas where the worst killings took place. It marks more than 100 administrative communes across the Central African country in which hundreds of thousands of people were slaughtered in a three-month genocide that began four years ago on April 6. The same report quotes Youth, Sports and Vocational Training Minister Jacques Bihozagara charged with preparing the anniversary saying that foreign visitors would “be invited to various genocide sites to see (for) themselves the tragedy that befell Rwanda in 1994” (Anon, 1998c). Elsewhere, a prominent ceremony in the news was held in Bisesero, Kibuye. Officials cast them as exercises in “national reconciliation” (Goujon, 1998c).

In Rwandan culture, when a person dies relatives and friends bury him or her shortly after, normally the same day or the next. Then there is a mourning period of seven days. When the mourning period is over, people get on with their lives. The dead become *abazimu* or spirit to whom relatives will give presents in order to maintain a good relationship with them. The bones and corpses of the dead are never put on display.

During the genocide, corpses were left unburied and those who were buried were thrown into shallow graves or latrines. After the war came the task of burying the victims and remembering them. Since then memorials have been erected all over the country. Some memorials seem to be like mass graves with a large tomb with the names of the victims. Others are like the Catholic Church of Ntarama where corpses are left in the state in which they were when they were killed. A collection of skulls enables people to see the horrors of the genocide. In some instances, officials ordered peasants to exhume bones and skulls from cemeteries. At some churches, the RPF authorities brought in fresh bodies after the genocide in order to show the world its horrific nature. As Reuters mentioned, there is a map of the genocide sites so that Rwandans and the world learn about the places where the genocide was committed. Groups in Rwanda and abroad were formed after the genocide to remember the victims. They operate like propaganda channels of the current regime by staging events in Rwanda and abroad (Cahn, 1998d). The spokespersons of these groups are frequently in the news, particularly in the month of April. *IBUKA* is one example. It stages demonstrations in Kigali and around the world (Nduru & Kayigamba, 1998). *IBUKA* describes itself as “a grassroots organization dedicated to the continuing survival of the victims of genocide of Rwanda.” Its flier states that “we are organizing a USA organization to join this struggle (*IBUKA*, 1998). The Cambridge Peace Commission has endorsed it. *IBUKA* is at the forefront of selling genocide as a product to foreign visitors and to the world.

Remembrance ceremonies and groups similar to *IBUKA* are silent on the many Hutu who died at the hands of *interahamwe*, former *Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR)*, and the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Only Tutsi have the right to grieve. We are not suggesting that the past should be buried. What we are arguing for is to remember all the victims regardless of ethnicity and to do this in a way that is respectful of Rwandan traditions of burial and mourning. Otherwise, the genocide allows the new regime to stay in the news, to remind Hutu of their collective crimes, and to consolidate power.

3.3 Results - Economic Situation

In our sample there were six stories on the Rwandan economic situation. Officials quoted by the media blame the situation of the Rwandan economy on the Habyarimana regime and the war. This regime borrowed money from Rwandan banks and international bank institutions to finance the war (Kayigamba, 1997a, b; Goujon, 1998e). Kayigamba writes: “Rwanda’s economy has been shattered by years of ethnic conflict, but it has vowed to repay all foreign debts incurred by the previous regime even if the money was used to repress Rwandans.”

He goes on to say that some experts here have urged the government not to pay: “Paying these debts is unfair,” said an economist here, “Rwanda will simply be reimbursing the money used by the genocidal regime to purchase weapons that were used during the 1994 holocaust.”

News sources seem to explain the current economic situation solely by war and the destruction caused by the genocide. Rwandan official sources are silent on the structural causes of the economic crisis Rwanda has been undergoing since the 1980's. It seems that the following issues are not associated with the genocide: the fall of export prices on international markets, the structural adjustment programs imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, and the devaluation of the Rwandan frank. Other structural causes do not receive the attention they deserve: e. g., population growth, war, impoverishment of the soil, poor agricultural techniques, environmental degradation, ill health and disease, non-democratic governance, and fluctuations of international markets.

The hegemonic discourse needs to say that Rwanda is a land-locked country. The main commercial routes go through neighboring countries, mostly Uganda and Tanzania. After the RPF's invasion in 1990, this road could not be used until late summer 1994. The portions of the routes Kagitumba-Kigali and Gatuna-Kigali which link Rwanda to Uganda were in the hands of the RPF. Rwandan imports and exports had to be shipped through an unpaved route linking Rwanda to Mwanza, Tanzania, and Mombasa, Kenya, which was impassable during the rainy season. On top of these structural causes, Rwanda had to finance the war. Tutsi elite in power and their supporters present the RPF's armed struggle as legitimate and welcomed by the Rwandan people except their leaders and “Hutu extremists.” It is as if the government in power should not have borrowed money to put up a defense. It is as if the war by the invading army was not destroying anything.

The Rwandan author of this paper spent three months from May to August 1993 in the demilitarized zone settling internally displaced persons. He saw the complete destruction of school buildings, health centers, administrative buildings, and houses belonging to peasants. When peasants fled the areas conquered by the RPF, they only carried a few clothes and a pot. The invading RPF army removed the doors and iron-sheet roofs, sinks, toilet seats of modern buildings to take to Uganda to sell to finance the war. The RPF also took cars, bicycles, and anything else of value to be sold in Uganda. Government archives were also destroyed and scattered in and around public buildings (*Comite National*, 1998). The commodification of genocide assists the Tutsi elite in making a case for continued economic assistance despite human rights abuses and corruption during its invasion and after. It is a narrative that arouses sympathy and emotions.

3. 4 Results - Democracy

During the period of our sample, there were only two stories about democracy in Rwanda. In one story, the Vice President and Interim General Secretary of the RPF, Denis Polis, declared to the journalist Emmanuel Goujon that a government of national union and a national transition assembly comprised of all the political forces had been put in place. The transformation of the RPF into a political party in preparation for democratic elections would be slow since the issue of democratization comes after that of hunger, education, health, and security (Lauras, 1998).

The second story reports an interview the newly elected Secretary General of the RPF, Charles Muligande, gave to the correspondent of the Voice of America. He said: “When you talk to the people, when you see how people live, you realize that there is still a long way to go. So we decided to put an emphasis on building the unity of the Rwandese people, reconciling the Rwandese people with themselves, and also starting to democratize our institutions” (Cahn, 1998c). In order to understand the full implications of this statement, one has to go back to the publicly-stated reasons for invasion of Rwanda by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in 1990. One of the RPF's grievances was the right to return and the other was democracy (Guichaoua, 1995).

Before the genocide of Tutsi, political parties were legalized and allowed to operate. Today, political parties have all but disappeared; they exist in name only. They cannot hold political rallies or conventions. The whole political space is occupied by the RPF, which is dominated by Tutsi elites, mostly former refugees who grew up in English-speaking Uganda (Straus & Waldorf, 2011): “viewpoints that diverge from the RPF line are excluded from political debate and often demonized as ‘genocide ideology’” (p. 11). Before the RPF came to power, and briefly thereafter, it had three prominent Hutu members: one was murdered in exile (Seth Sendashoga), another left the ruling structure (Alexis Kanyarengwe), and one remained (Pasteur Bizimungu). Influential Hutu politicians (e.g., Faustin Twagiramungu) left and went into exile. Other Hutu members of the Hutu elite who opposed the genocide of Tutsi and who joined the new regime have been dismissed from government positions under accusations of committing genocide.

A democratic alternative has no space in which to articulate its views. The commodification of genocide has stifled the democratic process which had momentum before 1994 but ended then (Clapham, 1998a). It obscures the major characteristic of the RPF regime, its dictatorial nature, with a core made up of Tutsi military officers who were former refugees in Uganda (Prunier, 1995).

The U. S. and other governments, as well as some from non-governmental organizations, can invoke a moral obligation to support this dictatorial regime and to overlook its human rights abuses because of the genocide of Tutsi.

A new political order has been reinforced by institutions including the media news sources. The propaganda war fuels a war on the ground. Most troubling is the lack of political space for opposition parties to exist (Gready, 2011). By its deeds, the current government has forced its Hutu ministers to resign and not replaced them. To counteract such oppression, Rwanda and the West must guarantee political transparency of the media and the NGOs that report on human rights. Currently, African Rights seems to mirror the RPF's version, while Amnesty and Human Rights Watch report violations on both sides. The news media, in turn, can help to keep the focus on the moderates and the voices of legitimacy, including free press, multiparty rule, and especially the rule of law. Policy prescriptions must not take sides but they must balance political conditionalities about human rights.

4. Conclusion

For reasons of accessibility, we have had to limit ourselves to the Western media available on internet; the media we received can now be seen to have conveyed a dominant ideology that we have identified as “commodification of genocide” under each of seven themes. To gain access to Rwanda, Western journalists have had to cooperate with the state rather than with critical Rwandan journalists or even NGOs. Our paper has exposed alternative views, or ideologies, in each thematic area by drawing upon other sources than the officially sanctioned ones. In fact, as we have shown, human rights monitors have documented numerous disappearances and killings of Rwandan journalists as well as party leaders, professional persons, and NGO employees (Amnesty International, 1999a, 1999b). It is clear by now that any oppositional viewpoints are subject to state intimidation and control.

We distinguish a world hegemony from a RPF hegemony, and both from the NGOs and Hutu peasantry that resist them. The “resisters” include a broad range: NGOs that defend human rights, foreign governments and their institutions, as well as Hutu peasantry, Tutsi survivors of the genocide, Hutu elites opposed to the regime (in Rwanda and in exile), *interahamwe*, former military (FAR), Tutsi dissenters, and Hutu rebels. “World hegemony” refers to Western values embodied in the U.N., NGOs, IMF, World Bank, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the international media. “RPF hegemony” then refers to the Tutsi elite and the co-opted Hutu elite, comprising politicians, military, intellectuals, religious and business leaders, state media, private media, educational institutions, courts, army policy, market economy, and all political institutions.

We have shown the connection of external politics of the hegemony of the Tutsi elite in the Great Lakes with the internal politics of security. Namely, “genocide” justifies indiscriminate killings and political assassinations, disappearances and property takeovers. This genocide ideology in the Western media presents only one side of the ongoing security problem and the news becomes a commodity of political warfare.

We are sensitive to Christopher Clapham's recent cautiously hopeful remarks (1998b): “A more surprising source of reforming leadership lies in those regimes which have fairly recently come to power, usually through guerrilla warfare, in some of Africa's most traumatised areas.” He mentions Museveni's National Resistance Army in Uganda, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, and Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo. He notes “the indulgence over issues of democratization and human rights” that they have received from the United States in hopes that they will lead reform (p. 268). Extending his point, we call upon countries, NGOs, and other progressive forces to denounce this new type of oppression built around the victimology of genocide. Genocide is tragic; it should not be used to stifle opposition, to violate human rights, or to consolidate power in the hands of a military oligarchy.

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